

FACTS AND INFERENCES

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A SERMON

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“I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree, Yet he passed away, and lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.

Psalm 37:35-37

WE must never judge by appearances, for many things that we see with our eyes and hear with our ears are not really what they appear to us to be. Our senses, like everything else within us, are imperfect, so that it is safer to walk by faith than by sight. Especially is this the case with regard to God's providential dealings with men.

If we were to conclude, for instance, that all those who prosper in this world are peculiarly favored of God, we should make a very great mistake. And if, on the other hand, like Job's friends, we should imagine that all persons who are grievously afflicted and tried are suffering because they have grossly sinned, we should equally err. It is true that there sometimes are manifest judgments upon individuals, communities, and nation, but every trial or affliction is not a judgment—nor would it be right for us to so regard it.

Yet the man who walks through the world with his eyes opened and his understanding enlightened, must notice certain facts about which there can be no question—facts which are so important and so instructive that he will want other people to also notice them and to learn the lessons they are intended to teach.

There are two facts mentioned in our text. And I am going to talk to you concerning them, coupling with them certain inferences and revelations which must not be separated from them. The first fact is concerning the wicked—we have seen them in great power, spreading themselves like a green bay tree—yet they have passed away and soon been forgotten. The second fact is concerning the righteous—we have not merely once, but many times, seen a godly man die, and from our own experience we can confirm the testimony of the Psalmist, “the end of that man is peace.”

I. So let us for a while meditate upon THE FIRST FACT AND THE INFERENCE AND REVELATION CONCERNING IT.

It is a fact that we have seen the wicked in great power and that we have seen them suddenly cut off. Those of you who are much older than I am can remember the terror that was associated with the name of one who was for a while in great power and who spread himself like a green bay tree—the branches whereof cast a baleful shade over most of the nations of Europe.

Napoleon Bonaparte aimed at absolute sovereignty in France and won it. And then he aimed at universal sovereignty over all his fellow monarchs and for a time it seemed as though there would be no human limit to his great power. You know how he waded through slaughter and snatched crown after crown from other men to put upon his own head.

But you also know how he led his vast army into Russia, and left the bulk of his followers to sleep in death beneath the snow, or to be devoured by wolves. And you remember how, afterwards, he met with men who could play the devil's game of war more skillfully than even he could, and in the end, the imperial eagle, that had torn so many others in pieces with its cruel talons, was chained for the rest of its life to the lonely rock of St. Helena.

Who that saw Napoleon's empire in the height of its glory could have imagined that it would melt away like a snowman in blazing sunshine? I grant you that its grandeur [Mr. Spurgeon was, of course, referring to the state of affairs in France in 1863. But he lived to see the second empire also pass away, and the French republic firmly established in its place.] has been somewhat revived in our day, but the failure of the "great" Napoleon should teach the whole race of mankind that, although a wicked man may be in great power and may spread himself like a green bay tree, yet no greatness will permanently endure unless it is founded upon goodness and upon God.

There are some who have had great power because they have had great wealth. Many of us can recollect persons who seemed to have unlimited riches, which enabled them to exercise enormous power over their fellow men. Solomon said that "money answereth all things," and they certainly made it answer their ends. Everybody was obsequious to them—whole nations yielded up their treasures at the bidding of these multi-millionaires.

They said to the North, "Give up," and to the South, "Keep not back"—and gold and jewels, and articles of *vertu*, and works of art came pouring into their palaces and mansions—yet those very men were reduced to beggary before they died and at the same door where they had repelled poor Lazarus with scorn, they themselves stood as suppliants craving alms. I need not mention names. Many of you can remember such men who were in great power and spread themselves like a green bay tree—yet they have passed away, and if you seek them, they cannot be found.

I find that the Hebrew has in it the idea of a tree indigenous to the soil, a tree that has never been transplanted. So David means that he had seen the wicked flourish like a tree whose roots had never been disturbed. You may have heard a rich man boastfully say, "My father lived in this house and his father lived here before him. And through a long line of ancestors, these estates have belonged to our family." He had no trouble in his youth and no labor in his manhood—he is the man who, in his prosperity, said, "I shall never be moved."

But he has been moved—the ancestral hall, of which he was so proud, has a new owner—those estates which he surveyed with such manifest delight, have been sold to another family. And if you go to the district today and ask anyone whom you meet, "Where is that rich man who used to own all these broad acres?" you will receive the reply, "Nobody knows." And you may say with the Psalmist, "I sought him, but he could not be found."

This has been the case with some who have gained honor among men. The bay tree was highly esteemed among the Greeks and Romans—they crowned their heroes with wreaths made from its leaves—yet neither the wreath nor the honor lasted very long. So, if a man receives honor from his fellows, yet is all the while a wicked man, his honor is like the dissolving-view which appears upon the sheet and quickly fades away—or like the *mirage* of the desert which makes the burning sand look like a lake, but which only mocks all who run to drink from it. Or like the will-o'-the-wisp that frightens timid folk at night, but itself is without any enduring substance.

So passes away the glory of this world and so passes away the man who has honor among men, but who is without that divine grace which alone brings true honor, and glory, and immortality. I can say of more than one such man, "He passed away and lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found."

Have you not noticed, dear friends, how complete has been the disappearance of certain "great men" whose greatness has been founded upon wealth or upon sin? Every trace of them seems to have been destroyed—in the places where they used to live, nobody remembers them—their escutcheons have been broken up by the battle-axe of Time—and all their glory of heraldry has been burned in the fire. Why, as I am speaking of them, you can scarcely recall their names though they used to be as familiar as household words. Their names were written in the sand and time's ever-rolling waves have utterly effaced them. If you seek them, you cannot find them.

Some men have appeared to be "great" because their true character had not been discovered. They were playing a very crafty part in the drama of life. Before the curtain, they appeared to be truthful,

upright, even religious. But behind it, they were rogues, thieves, liars, everything that was bad. Then, all of a sudden, the curtain was torn in twain and they were revealed to all men as they had been all the while to the all-seeing eyes of God. And the whole world looked on and wondered.

There was a man who always wore a mask when he walked abroad and everyone said, "What a beautiful sight it is to see such a man!" But one day the mask was broken and all could plainly see the signs of leprosy on his brow—the deadly disease was there all the time—it was only hidden from the public gaze by the mask.

Discovery has often trodden on the heels of sin—the guilty one has been caught red-handed—and swift justice has been meted out to the criminal. But suppose, sinner, that for years you conceal from your fellows your real character as so many others have done, God knows all about you, and His Word still contains the warning that Moses gave to the Reubenites and Gadites, "Be sure your sin will find you out."

Judas stood revealed at last as the son of perdition—his fellow apostles did not suspect him even up to the night of the betrayal—but Jesus had known from the first that he had the heart of a traitor, and only awaited a convenient opportunity to sell his Master for thirty pieces of silver. Simon the sorcerer, who had "bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one," professed to believe in Jesus and was even baptized. Yet Peter afterwards had to say to him, "Thy heart is not right in the sight of God...For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." And alas! both Judas and Simon Magus have many representatives even to this day.

Other "great" men have been laid low by some striking disaster. A man seems to climb up one of the tallest cedars of Lebanon, and to build his nest there, and you say to yourself, "How can that man ever be pulled down from such a height as that?" But the Omnipotent hand lays hold of him, scatters his nest upon the ground, and ere long he and his nest are alike forgotten.

Perhaps the man has built himself what he calls an impregnable castle and in his marble halls he fondly hopes that no power can successfully attack him. But God has only to make a slight fissure in the earth's surface, and the man and his castle and all that he has shall disappear even as the earth once before opened her mouth, and swallowed up Korah and all that appertained to him. God has many ways of putting down the mighty from their seats and exalting them that are of low degree.

An Eastern potentate could not sleep on a certain memorable night and hence it came to pass that proud Haman was hanged on the gallows he had built for Mordecai, the Jew—while the despised Mordecai was publicly proclaimed as the man whom the king delighted to honor. Mysterious have been the workings of God's providence by which the mightiest monarchs and the most powerful princes have passed away so completely that they have been like the wicked man of whom David says, "I sought him, but he could not be found."

If in no other way the wicked man is removed from his pinnacle of greatness, he passes away at the call of death. We need not say much about his death, but when he is gone to his final account, he has few, if any, to mourn his loss. He lived for himself and he died for himself—no sorrowing widows, whose poverty he has relieved will keep his grave green with their grateful tears—no mourning children, whose ignorance he has dispelled by his instruction, will remember and revere his name. No sympathetic souls, turned from darkness to light through his instrumentality, will gratefully look up to him as their spiritual father.

I have thus called your attention to the fact that the wicked, who have been in great power, have passed away and been forgotten. Now, *what is the inference from this fact?* I think a very safe inference is that as these men failed to attain that which was the great end and object of their lives, they cannot have succeeded in that about which they were not at all concerned, namely, the everlasting interests of their never-dying souls. It is certainly fair to infer that, as they made such a lamentable shipwreck in this life, they made an even worse shipwreck in the world to come. And as they passed away from everything in which they took pleasure here, it is reasonable to infer that, whatever expectation and hope

they may have cherished with regard to the next life, they are certain to have been totally and finally disappointed.

This, however, is not a mere matter of inference, *for the teaching of divine revelation agrees with it and confirms it*. The wicked man, who was in great power here, in due course, dies—and he wakes up in the next world to find himself only a feeble worm exposed to all the fury of divine wrath. He had servants and slaves on earth to do his bidding, but there are none to crouch at his feet now. He was held in honor in this world but there are no praises or flatteries for him now. His wealth could at one time buy for him anything that his heart might wish, but he had to leave it all behind him—and even if he still possessed it, he could not purchase even a drop of water to cool his parched tongue.

Nothing remains for him, now, but shame and everlasting contempt in that terrible prison-house where the worm dies not and the fire is not quenched. Throughout all heaven and hell there is nothing that can afford him even a moment's solace—he has made an awful and an eternal failure of his whole life—and his dolorous cry is, “Lost! Lost! LOST!”

But just in passing, though my text speaks especially of the wicked who are in great power, I must remind you that their doom will be the doom of *all who believe not in the Lord Jesus Christ*—whether they are in the higher or lower walks of life. So, dear friends, whoever and whatever you are, if you live only for this life, you too will pass away and be forgotten here—but you will not be forgotten in the next world.

Remember that “it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” And make the only fitting preparation for that judgment by repenting of sin and trusting in Him who died, “the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God.” O man, play not with shadows. Let not that which is the only real and substantial thing pass by you unheeded! If you must have something to play with, let it not be your immortal soul, for though you can play your soul into hell, you can never play it out, nor pray it out, nor weep it out, nor work it out. Once there, it is there forever.

Do you ask, “What is there that is real and substantial? What is there that will abide when all earthly glory has passed away?” Listen. “All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”

So, my dear hearer, believe that Gospel, lay hold on the hope set before you, trust in that blessed Savior who died in the stead of sinners, put your eternal interests into the hands of the one Mediator between God and men, and then, with the apostle Paul, you will not be afraid to look forward even to the great day of judgment, but you will be able to confidently say, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” Man, woman, sinner—whoever or whatever you are—give no sleep to your eyes nor slumber to your eyelids until you can truthfully say, “Jesus is my Savior. My Beloved is mine and I am His.”

II. Now, with great brevity, I pass on to THE SECOND FACT AND THE INFERENCE AND REVELATION CONCERNING IT. “Mark the perfect man and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.”

It is a fact that we have seen the righteous die and that we know that their end is peace. It is a fact that those who are accounted perfect in the sight of God through the blood and righteousness of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and whose lives have been made upright through the effectual working of the ever-blessed Spirit, do end their earthly careers in peace, and then enter into that eternal peace which has no end. I am not speaking of dreams and fancies, but of facts that have happened in my own experience.

Never shall I forget the deathbed of one who had often walked with me many a weary mile to preach the Gospel in country villages. I have told you before how I found him, when he was near his end. His sight had so completely failed that not a ray of light entered his eyes, but when he heard my voice, he sat up in the bed, and said to me, oh! so joyously,—

*“And when ye hear my eye-strings break,
How sweet my minutes roll!
A mortal paleness on my cheek,
But glory in my soul!”*

Verily, the end of that man was peace.

There is a beloved brother behind me on the platform, who went with me to see one of the members of this church who was dying of consumption. While we talked with her, she told us that her only fear was lest she might live, for she dreaded the temptations of living far more than the pangs of dying. A few hours after we saw her, she passed away from this world of sorrow and sin—and entered the land of everlasting peace—but the rapture with which she anticipated death almost made us exclaim, after the manner of Thomas, “Lord, let us die with her.” As we came away, we felt that hers was the happy lot and that she was the one to be envied because she had gone to be “with Christ, which is far better.”

Look at the dying Christian—what blessed peace he has! He is at peace even with those who have been his enemies. He says to those around him that, if there are any who have done him harm, or said what was false concerning him, he not only freely forgives them, but his most earnest wish for them is that he may meet them all in heaven. He is at perfect peace concerning the past, for he knows that all his sins have been forgiven him for Christ’s sake, and that they will be remembered against him no more forever. He is full of peace in the present, even though he is near the end of his earthly life.

His wife weeps and well may she grieve at the thought of parting with such a godly husband, but he reminds her of that ancient promise, “Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me.” And of that inspired declaration, “A father of the fatherless, and a judge (or advocate) of the widows is God in his holy habitation.”

He looks at his dear children gathered around his bed, and although he would fain have lived longer for their sake, he knows that it is his Lord’s will that he should depart out of this life, so he does not repine. He commits into the hands of God, his household, his business, and all that concerns him, and he says, “I have nothing more to do with them, I am dead to them all. And now I am only waiting until the messenger arrives to summon me into the presence of the King.”

As for the future, he is at peace concerning that also. He knows that it is a solemn matter to pass through death’s iron gate, but he is confident that Christ will come and meet him there, so he looks forward to the great transition without a tremor and without a murmur. He is fully aware that existence in a disembodied state is something very mysterious and awe-inspiring, but that mystery has no terrors for him, for he has the same assurance that Paul had when he wrote, “We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

He is not in the least troubled because the poor old worn-out tent is being taken down, for he knows that he is going to exchange it for one of the abiding mansions in his Father’s house. Indeed, he is so happy in the anticipation of going home that he begins to sing the very hymn that we afterwards sing at his funeral,

*“My Father’s house on high,
Home of my soul! how near,
At times, to faith’s foreseeing eye,
Thy golden gates appear!”*

*“Ah! then my spirit faints
To reach the land I love,
The bright inheritance of saints,
Jerusalem above!”*

“Forever with the Lord!”

*Father, if 'tis Thy will
The promise of that faithful word
E'en here to me fulfill.*

*“So when my latest breath
Shall rend the veil in twain,
By death I shall escape from death,
And life eternal gain.”*

The good man believes in the resurrection of the body, so he says with Job, “I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.” It is a blessed thing for such a man to die, and the many deaths of that happy kind that I have witnessed have made me also—

*“Long for evening to undress,
That I might rest with God.”*

What is the inference from all this? I think it is but fair to infer that if, in the pain, and agony, and weakness of death, the Christian has such perfect peace, surely his peace will be even more profound when he enters that blest world where “there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.”

If in this stormy world he has such peace of mind even amid the swellings of Jordan, surely there must be for him, in the life that is to come, stormless seas and cloudless skies—days that have no night and years which winter’s cold can never reach. And truly, *revelation confirms this inference*. For a Christian to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

What it must be to be present with the Lord, no mortal tongue can fully tell, but we know that “His servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever...And he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

What a change, beloved, it will be from all the strife and turmoil of this world to the perfect peace of the world to come! Here, you and I have to work, work, work—either with the sweat of the brow or the sweat of the brain—and the latter is not the lighter of the two. But there, brain and brow shall both be perfectly at rest.

Here we are sometimes perplexed by the prosperity of the wicked—but there, we shall see that we have no cause to envy them. Here, we are often made to grieve over losses and crosses, adversities and afflictions—but there, we shall always be on the bright side of the hill—our dark night of sorrow and trial shall be forever over and our everlasting morning shall have come. Here, we are constantly losing some of our best friends, they pass away as sweet flowers wither and die. But there,—

*“Oh, it will be joyful
When we meet to part no more!”*

Here we are plagued and tormented by sin—but there, “they are without fault before the throne of God.” Here the fiery darts of the wicked one are continually flying all around us—but there, they are out of range of the devil’s most deadly artillery. Yet let no one of us sigh and cry for the wings of a dove, that we may fly away and be at rest. In God’s good time, He will beckon us across the narrow stream of

death. And till then let us patiently wait and earnestly work for Him who is all our salvation and all our desire.

Now, my hearers, I have set before you two men representing two very different classes—those who have their portion in this life, and those whose inheritance is in the heavenly Canaan, the land of perfect peace and perfect bliss. What is the great object upon which your soul is set? To get on in this world, to make money, to win fame, honor, glory, power? Oh, that is a poor ambition. And if you could attain it all, your wreath of bay leaves would soon wither and then what would you have left?

“What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” Profit him? It would be an eternal and irretrievable loss. Oh! seek not such “gain” as that, but “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”—insofar as God sees that it shall be for His glory, and your own and others’ good for you to have them. May the Lord give you the grace to make the wise choice this very hour, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

PSALM 37

May the Spirit of God graciously apply this Psalm to our hearts, comforting us as no one else can! Is He not the Comforter, and what better cordial has He for our spirits than His own Word?

Verses 1-2. *Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.*

Evil cannot last. It is a feeble plant, like the grass and weeds which the mower’s scythe soon cuts down and leaves to wither in the blazing sunshine.

3-4. *Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.* [See Sermon #454, Sunshine in the Heart]

This is a most precious verse—its sweetness who can tell? Do not think first of the desires of your heart, but think first of delighting yourself in your God. If you have accepted Him as your Lord, He is yours, so delight in Him and then He will give you the desires of your heart.

5. *Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.*

Give it over into God’s hands and then confide in Him as completely as a little child confides in its mother. “He shall bring it to pass.” It is quite certain that you cannot “bring it to pass,” so you will be wise if you leave it with Him who can do what you cannot.

6. *And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.*

You cannot make the light and the noonday—that is a work that is far beyond your power—but your God can give you both light and noonday. He can clear your character from any slander that may have befouled it, and He can crown you with honor and glory in place of the contempt that is now cast upon you.

7. *Rest in the LORD*—[See Sermon #2393, A Comforting Message For The Closing Year]

That is the sweetest word of all—“Rest.” Go no further. Fret no more. Bear your burdens no longer. Make this day a Sabbath to your soul—“Rest in the LORD,”—

7. *And wait patiently for him:*

Do not be in a hurry. The Lord has infinite leisure, so partake of it as far as you can—“Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him.”

7-8. *Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.*

You cannot do that unless you “rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him.” Angry passions boil upon the fire of fretfulness. Therefore, “cease from anger”—

8-9. *And forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.*

Their turn will come in due time. It comes last, but then it comes to last, for there is nothing to come after the last.

10. *For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.*

The house in which he lived, or the place that was called by his name is often destroyed.

11-12. *But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. The wicked plotteth against the just,*

That has been the style of things from the beginning. And the old serpent's seed will be like the old serpent and he, "was more subtle than any beast of the field." "The wicked plotteth against the just"—

12-13. *And gnasheth upon him with his teeth. The LORD shall laugh at him:*

He plots against the Lord's people, but "the LORD shall laugh at him,"—

13-18. *For he seeth that his day is coming. The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as be of upright conversation. Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken. A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the Lord upholdeth the righteous. 18 The Lord knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever.*

He gives them an eternal portion by an everlasting covenant.

19. *They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.*

There is nothing that they can get, but God will give them what they cannot get themselves. He will ransack heaven and earth to find food for His people. "In the days of famine they shall be satisfied."

20-23. *But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away. The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth. For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord:*

Even his "steps"—the little movements of his life—not only his great plans and his ambitious projects, but "the steps of a good man are ordered by JEHOVAH;"—

23. *And he delights in his way.*

He loves to see him walk, even as parents delight to watch the first tottering steps of their little children, so that He, who "taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man," takes pleasure in the ways of His people.

24. *Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down:*

For a while it may seem as if he had been finally defeated—things may seem to go altogether wrong with him—but "though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down"—

24-25. *For the LORD upholdeth him with His hand. I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.*

And we can also still speak of the faithfulness of JEHOVAH. He who took care of His people in David's day has not changed since then. We have not seen the righteous forsaken.

26. *He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.*

God has a special regard for the children of believers. grace does not run in the blood, but it often runs side by side with it. The God of Abraham is the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and the God of Joseph, and the God of Manasseh and Ephraim.

27-29. *Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore. For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off. The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.*

I have frequently remarked to you that, although the wolf is very strong and fierce—and the sheep is very weak and timid—yet there are more sheep in the world than there are wolves. And the day will

come when the last wolf will be dead—and then the sheep shall cover the plains and feed upon the hills. Weak as the righteous often are, they “shall inherit the land” when the wicked shall have been cut off from the earth.

30. *The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment.*

That which is down in the heart will come up into the mouth—and you may rest assured that men are fairly judged by the common current of their conversation.

31-33. *The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide. The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him. The Lord will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged.*

How dreadful it would be for the godly man if the Lord were to leave him in the hand of the wicked! You remember how David sought to avoid that calamity when he had to choose famine, pestilence, or the sword of his enemies? “Let me fall,” said he, “into the hand of the LORD, for very great are his mercies; but let me not fall into the hand of man.” Let us thank God that even if we should get into the hand of the ungodly, the Lord will not leave us there, nor condemn us when we are judged.

34-37. *Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it. I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.*

There is no end to that man, for he is to endure, world without end. In any sense in which there is an end to him, his end is everlasting peace.

38-39. *But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off. But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: He is their strength in the time of trouble.*

Have you not proved it so, dear brethren in Christ? I know that you have had times of trouble, but has not God been your strength in a very peculiar way in all such times?

40. *And the LORD shall help them—*

He is and He shall always be their Helper. “The LORD shall help them”—

40. *And deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.*

That is the point—not because of any merit of theirs, nor because of any skill of theirs—but “he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.” So, Lord, help us to trust in You! Amen.

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.