

TEMPLE GLORIES

NO. 375

A SERMON
 DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING, MARCH 31, 1861
 DELIVERED BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON
 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

*“It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one,
 to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD;
 and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music
 and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever:
 that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD;
 so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud;
 for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God.”*
 2 Chronicles 5:13-14

*“Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven,
 and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house.
 And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD,
 because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD’S house.
 And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house,
 they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement
 and worshipped, and praised the LORD, saying,
 For he is good. For his mercy endureth for ever.”*
 2 Chronicles 7:1-3

IN the wilderness God showed His glorious presence in the midst of the camp of Israel. To show His secret indwelling in His church—in the innermost chamber of the sacred tent there perpetually beamed the bright and ineffable light of the Shekinah. And to manifest His visible presence to protect and guide His flock, a pillar of cloud covered the people by day, screening them from the burning heat of the sun, so that in that extremely hot and terrible region, they were delivered from excessive heat.

And at night, lest they should feel forsaken in the midst of the desolate darkness of the desert, this pillar of cloud became a pillar of fire. There was light throughout all their dwellings, for I suppose that this pillar of fire, like a luminous atmosphere covered the entire camp. They had thus a sun and a shield, light in darkness, salvation from the heat, their shelter was God’s wing, their light gleamed from His eye.

Now, the thought had fallen into the heart of David to build for God a house instead of the tent in which He was wont to dwell, which, by reason of years, had no doubt grown old and somewhat shorn of its glories. He purposed to build a permanent structure. Solomon, his son, carried out the purpose of David. The temple was built.

We have no precise idea of the architecture and appearance of this glorious edifice. The two pillars, Jachin and Boaz, are thought by some to have been vast castings of brass, set up in front rather for ornament than service, like the enormous obelisks in the gateways of the Egyptian temples. While others conceive that these renowned columns supported the entablature of the portico. In either case they were stupendous in size and beautified in the most elaborate manner.

The building itself was not large, but exceedingly magnificent. We make a great mistake when we think of Solomon’s temple as being famous for size—it was scarcely half as long, and barely half as wide as this present house, or that the area was not one fourth of this which is now crowded with immortal souls.

It was sixty cubits long in the clear, which with the most liberal calculation which can be given for the cubit, is but one hundred feet, while if the cubit be half- a-yard, the breadth was but thirty feet. There are hundreds of Christian churches which excel that marvelous building in mere size. Its chief fame lay in the countless treasures lavished upon it.

One of the most reasonable calculations of the expense of that gorgeous structure is one hundred and twenty million pounds, while other estimates arrive at the inconceivable sum of one thousand millions. The wonder is how they could have used such an amount as even the smaller sum. Whatever it might have been, it would have been a vain-glorious work, unless in that temple there had been the same manifestation of the divine presence as had been given in the tabernacle.

Now, these were two, *the cloud* and *the fire*. The two passages of Scripture which I have read to you give you two pictures. In the first you have the cloud, in the second, you have the fire, and in these two together you have the sacred mystic symbols of the presence of the Eternal God in the midst of His people.

Oh, that now, tonight, though no visible cloud shall be seen, though no fire shall burn the bullock and the ram, yet may faith discern *the cloud*, and may experience in the heart perceive *the fire*, and may each of us say, "God was with us of a truth," and add, "Did not our hearts burn within us, while he spake with us by the way?"

I. The first passage of Scripture, which I read in your hearing, affords me the first head of my discourse. You will perceive that the people were gathered together to praise God. Then THE CLOUD appeared—the priests were no longer able to minister, for God had claimed the great house as being exclusively His own.

Let us note the *occupation* in which they were engaged. They were praising God. Let us mark how they performed this work. You will perceive that they did it *unanimously*. "It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD."

What a joyous thing it is to hear the thousands praise God at once; every man contributing to the song; the poor coarse voice belonging to some of us, who never can learn music, let us try as much as we will; the flute-like voices of our sisters, the deep resounding mellow bass of the full-developed man; all the different tones, and notes, and voices, perhaps expressive of our different degrees and growths in grace, of our different trials, and our different temperaments, all join to swell one common hymn which rolls upward to the throne of God.

Every man who refuses to praise God mars the song. Every dumb lip spoils the music. Every silent tongue has a disastrous effect upon the unanimity and oneness of the choir. Let us *all* praise the Lord. Let all creatures that have breath praise Him. Let the heaven of heavens extol Him. Yea, let the dragons and all deeps howl forth His praise.

We can never expect to have God in this house, or in our own houses, or in our own hearts, until we begin to praise Him. Unless as a people we unanimously, with one heart, though with many tongues, extol the King of kings, farewell to the hope that He will give us His presence in the future.

Oh, my dear brethren, let us look back upon the past! Who among us is not debtor to mercy? "Let those refuse to sing, who never knew our God," and never tasted of His grace. Be silent, O tongue, if you have never tasted of the goodness of the Lord. Breath, be thou wasted on the air, if your mouth has never been satisfied with good things.

But my soul, if your life be His gift, and your joy His mercy, let no wicked silence bury His praise. He has been so good, so kind, so generous to every one of us without exception, that we can and must, each one of us, according to our ability, with heart and voice, praise, laud, and bless His name always.

But then, you perceive they not only sang unanimously, but they shouted *heartily*. In some of our churches, there are half-a-dozen people dressed in white, who stand up to praise the Lord or rather to magnify the music-master. In many of our dissenting congregations, some five or six who are the choir, sing to the praise and glory of themselves, and the people sit still and listen, not daring to spoil music so

magnificent. In many other places, it is thought most seemly to delegate the work of human hearts, and tongues, and lips, to some instrument which shall praise the Lord. May that never be the case here.

As often as we meet together here may the song roll up to heaven like the voice of many waters and like great thunders. A little God might deserve little praise, but the Great God deserves the great praise of all His creatures. I have noticed that in business many men show a great deal of energy, but in singing God's praises, they are almost as mute as Matthew's fish. They can listen to the notes, but they do not attempt to join. They have no objection that others should sing, but they are mute themselves.

Oh, let us sing to our God! and heartily too! and if the voice is not so well-tuned as we could wish, yet if the heart be in tune God will accept the song, and even angel notes shall not be more acceptable. Fathers love to hear the voices of their own children—why should our heavenly Father have a dumb family?

Mr. Rowland Hill was one day in the pulpit, and an old woman among the crowd got right up to the pulpit steps. She had the art of singing through her nose, and she sung so desperately bad, that good old Rowland turned round and said to her—"Hold your tongue, my good woman, you spoil the singing." "Oh, sir!" said she, "it comes from my heart, Mr. Hill. It comes from my heart." "Sing away, good soul," said he, "sing away as much as ever you like. I am sure I beg your pardon for interrupting you."

And so would I say to every man who, in God's house, cannot sing as he would, yet if it comes from the heart we could not interrupt you, for the very stones would speak if they who fear God and have tasted of His grace did not exalt and extol Him. Well, if you will not praise God in earnest, you must not expect to see *the cloud* of His presence, for it was when with one heart, with a mighty sound, they praised God that the cloud suddenly made its appearance.

Then notice next, that their praise was *Scriptural praise*. They sung that old Psalm, "His mercy endureth for ever." Now you, I dare say, thought when I was reading that Psalm, there was not much in it. It was a repetition—a monotony. It was striking the same note again and again—ringing the same bell.

Well, this just shows that God does not require in our song the display of great poetical ability. He does not need that the verses should have in them flights of rhapsody or dreams of fancy. Let the rhyme be good by all means, let the syllables each of them have their proper length. God always should have the best of the best.

But better is the wild song of the revivalist with the homely street tune, sung from the very soul, than the noblest music that was ever penned, or ever flowed from human lips, if the heart be absent, and if the strain is not in accordance with God's Word. The more Scriptural our hymns are the better. In fact, there will never be found music which can excel old David's Psalms.

Let us interpret them in an evangelical spirit, let us fill them full of the Gospel of Christ, of which they are, indeed, already full in prophecy, and we shall sing the very words of the Spirit, and shall surely edify each other, and glorify our God.

If tonight, then, our music has been Scriptural, if our praise has been hearty, if our song has been unanimous, if we have sung of that mercy which endures forever, we have good cause to expect that God will manifest Himself to us, and faith will perceive the cloud.

That is a grand old Calvinistic Psalm, "*His mercy endureth for ever.*" What Arminian can sing that? Well, he *will* sing it, I dare say, but if he be a thorough-going Arminian, he really cannot enjoy it and believe it. You can fall from grace, can you? Then, how does His mercy endure forever? Christ bought with His blood some who will be lost in hell, did He? Then how did His mercy endure forever?

There be some who resist the offers of divine grace, and after all that the Spirit of God can do for them, yet disappoint the Spirit and defeat God! How then does His mercy endure forever? No, no, this is no hymn for you—this is the Calvinist's hymn. This is the hymn which you and I will sing as long as life shall last, and going through the dark valley of the shadow of death we will make the shades resound with the joyous strain—

*“For His mercy shall endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.”*

It was while the people were thus engaged that on a sudden that cloud which aforetime floated over the tabernacle made its appearance over the temple. But this time, instead of hanging over the roof, it descended and entered into the courts and filled the sacred places. The priests were standing, each of them, in his proper place, swinging to and fro the sacred censers, and making a sweet perfume. Others of them were standing at the altar waiting till the time should come for sacrifice.

But no sooner did this cloud fill the house than the priests ceased to minister. They felt there was no room for man, for God had filled the place. Brethren, will you give me your attention while I try to picture to you what shall be the effect if God shall be pleased to fill this house with His glory? I can conceive the effect upon that vast assembly on that august day of the dedication.

The glory of God had filled the house, and *the priests were set aside*. Where God is, man is forgotten. You will think little of the minister, save for his work’s sake—you will talk the less of the man when you shall see the Master. This house shall cease to be called by my name, and shall be called by God’s name. If God shall fill the place, it will be to your souls not the house where you can sit to hear this man or that, but the place where you shall see the beauty of God, and inquire in His temple.

You will love your pastor; you will cherish your elders; you will rally round your deacons; you will, as a church, recognize the bonds of your church-relationship; but pastor, elders, deacons, church—all will be merged and all forgotten if the glory of the Lord shall fill the house.

This has been the effect always of great revivals—no man has ever been very apparent. When God blessed the world through Whitefield and Wesley, who were they, and what thought they of themselves? “Less than nothing they became when God was all in all.”

The up-going of priests is the dishonor of the High Priest Christ Jesus, but when priestcraft ceases to be, and is cast down—then the Lord alone is exalted in that day. May the Lord here, while He uses human instrumentality, yet let you all see that, “It is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD.”

This has indeed been my mission, to show the power of God in human weakness. I do acknowledge and confess what is so continually said of me, “The man is not educated.” *Granted*. “His periods are unpolished.” *Granted*. “His manner is rough.” *Be it so, if you will*. “Himself a fool”—*Ay, amen, and whatever else you choose*.

Gather together all the epithets in the catalog of abuse—come, heap them here. But who has done *this*, who has saved souls, and called the people to His footstool? Why, if the instrument is mean, the more glory be to Him who used it. And if the man be nothing, “I glory in infirmity, that the power of God may rest upon me.” Make me less and less. I pray you do it, let it be so. But still, O God, use You this poor ox-goad, make it still mighty to the slaying of Philistines, and make Your Word still a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Let the Lord fill the house and man will be forgotten.

Besides this, you can easily picture in your minds what *a solemn awe fell on all who were gathered that day*, when once that cloud had filled the house. Perhaps there were in that vast assembly some who came there flippantly, to see the edifice. There were some who had heard of its plates of gold; they had heard of its brazen laver; they had listened to the stories of the great stones which Hiram, King of Tyre, had floated on rafts to Joppa, and they came to see the place.

There were others, too, who had contributed largely to the erection—they came to be seen—that the king might thank them for the gift—that the people might see their generous benefactors. These motives, we admit, were base, but the motives were lost and forgotten when once the glory of God filled the house.

Then, they felt the place was too solemn to be looked at as a mere display. They thought it, then, too awful to be regarded as their own, and on the breast of every Israelite might have been read these words, “This is none other than the house of God, and the very gate of heaven,” for God had filled the house.

Then, too, you may believe right well that *the saints of God rejoiced*. They had sung before, the prayers made sweet melody, but oh! what music was in their souls when once that cloud had covered all! Methinks they wept for joy. They could not speak. I know I should have been transfixed to that spot. I would have said—

“Come, then, expressive silence; hymn His praise,”

for oh! when God is present how can we tell our joys! Sing unto Him, sing unto Him. Praise Him on the cymbals, praise Him on the high-sounding cymbals. But when you have done all your joy overflows your words—the music of your hearts excels the music of your lip.

And then, I think I may add safely enough, *the suppliants* of that day *felt they might pray more earnestly* because they prayed surely. God had filled the house—now He would hear their prayers. Whenever they turned their eye to the temple, they would meet the eye of God. When for deliverance from sin, pestilence, war, drought, mildew, locusts, or caterpillars, they turned their eye towards Zion’s hill—they felt they must be heard, for God had filled the house.

Oh, that tonight the people of God may be glad! Oh, that you may go home as they did from Solomon’s temple, blessing the king, each man, in the gladness of heart, and feeling that you may pray, for God *will* hear—that God has so manifestly owned His house as His that whensoever we shall meet for supplication, though we be but two or three, where prayer is wont to be made, there Christ is in the midst of us to bless us. I ask, my brethren, that we may have such a manifestation of God that all these effects, in the very highest and fullest degree, may be received and participated in by us.

I have thus preached upon my first text as briefly as I could, leaving the more time to enforce the lesson of the second. You have sung His praise, now Lord fill the house. You have chanted His name, you have lifted up your voices to Him whose mercy endures forever. Oh, King of kings shine forth! Oh, Thou that dwellest between the cherubim, display Yourself to each of us, and do it now, for Jesu’s sake!

II. The first text has had reference to the past. For mercies received we must praise God if we would be favored with His presence. The next text dwells specially upon the future. The people, after praise joined with one another in solemn prayer and sacrifice—then was it that THE FIRE came down. They had the cloud before, but now they had the fire, and then once again they stood up, after having bowed themselves, and they worshipped the Lord and sang once again, “His mercy endureth for ever.”

I have said in this place five or six times already, that unless my church shall pray for me, and God shall hear their prayers, I am of all men the most miserable, but if your supplications shall be heard in heaven, I am of all men the most blessed by God. Think of this assembly, repeated as it will be Sabbath after Sabbath—what if we should have no food for the saint—what if the Word should never be spoken earnestly to sinners, and should therefore be unblest—it will be in vain that this house is filled!

In vain did I say? Infinitely worse than that! Will it be nothing that we are associated together in church-fellowship. Nothing! It will be everything that shall foretell our future misery unless God be here. In vain the rearing of this structure with all the perseverance that has been used, and with all the smiles of God, unless we have His blessing *now*.

If ever you prayed for me and for this church before, pray for us seven times now. Oh! you that are my sons and daughters spiritually—who have been born to God by the preaching of the Word—to you I make my first appeal. I beseech you never cease to pray that here God’s Word may be a quickening, a convincing, a converting Word.

The fact is brethren, we *must* have conversion work here. We cannot go on as some churches do without converts. We cannot, we will not, we must not, we dare not. Souls must be converted here, and if there be not many born to Christ, may the Lord grant to me that I may sleep in the tomb of my fathers and be heard of no more. Better indeed for us to die than to live, if souls be not saved.

You, then, who have already been saved under our ministry, make this, I pray you, a matter of daily prayer. You who are members of this church, who have been long ago in Christ, before our time—I

charge you by Him that lives and was dead, be instant in season, and out of season with your constant supplications.

O sirs! what shall I do if I have the misfortune to lose my prayer book? And you are my prayer book—my litany, my daily prayers are all written on my people's hearts. Where am I? Like a poor shipwrecked man, floating far out at sea upon a raft, with no friendly sail in sight, unless I have your daily prayers.

But if I have them, I shall be as some well-laden ship floating in the midst of its convoy, with many larger vessels and fairer sails which keep it gladsome company in storm and in fair weather, till we all shall reach our port together and at once. Pray for us that our faith fail not, that our pride break not forth. Pray for *us* that *we* may pray.

Pray that we may read the Word with a greater understanding of it, and that when we stand up to speak, a horn of the oil of the Spirit may anoint our head that we may speak the words of God and not the words of man. And with your prayers mingle your sacrifices.

Bring each day, each one of you, the precious blood of Christ. Take in your hands handfuls of the frankincense of His merits. Stand each morning and each night before the divine throne as the king's remembrancers, putting Him in remembrance of what Jesus did. Plead with Him by *His* agony and bloody sweat, by *His* cross and Passion, by *His* precious death and burial.

Plead with Him to save souls. Use the strong arguments of Jesu's veins. Take to yourselves the Almighty logic of a bleeding Savior's groans. Stand to it that you will not let the angel go except He bless you. Back up your prayers with tears. Prove the sincerity of your tears by acts. Live out your prayers. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem and then work and strive for it. As one man, with one heart, be you daily crying to your God, and seeking by acts of faith to prove the reality of your supplication.

And then, mark you—then shall *the fire* come down. We have, I trust, the cloud already. God this week has acknowledged this house to be His. We want the fire. "But what is the difference?" say you. Why, there may be the presence of God in a house after a certain fashion, inasmuch as His people there worship Him, but yet it may not be His *active* presence.

We want not the cloud—the *symbol* of only His being there in mystery. We need the fire which is the symbol of His acting while He is present. Oh! my brethren, how much the *preacher* wants the fire! He that has the tongue of flame can soon melt hearts, but what are these poor pieces of clay unless God bid the seraph touch them with a live coal from the altar? Preaching is a farce unless the minister has fire within him. But when the fire is there, preaching is God's ordained and guaranteed way of bringing souls to Himself.

You have heard preachers, I do not doubt, with an erudition so perfect that you could not fathom their meaning. You have heard them with an eloquence so exalted that you could not descry what it was that they would set forth. You have listened to some who rather seemed to have lips of ice than lips of fire.

You have heard of many who are successful in giving sleep to those who never sleep at home. There be some preachers who can distribute narcotics with a bounteous hand, and send at one motion of their deadly arm a whole crowd to sleep. May it never be so here. If we cannot keep you awake, it is better ourselves to go to sleep. When the congregation is asleep, it is a sign the minister ought to be in bed—where he could be comfortable—rather than in a pulpit where he is mischievous.

But attention may be riveted without feeling being excited. We need *the fire* to make the feeling. Oh! I have heard a man preach a sermon to which an angel might have listened for its faultless truthfulness, but it lacked fire. But I have known another whose ministry was faulty in many respects, rough were his words, the Gospel which he preached was not a full-orbed Gospel, but yet he spoke like a man who meant what he said, with his heart boiling over at his eyes, with his soul rolling out of his mouth in one tremendous cascade, and men were moved, and the masses flocked, and thousands listened, and souls were saved, because the man was in earnest.

Ah! when I see a man go up into his pulpit and ask the Lord the Holy Spirit to assist him, and open wide his manuscript and read it all—I wonder what he means. And when he prays that he may have the tongue of fire, and then speaks in such a mumbling cold unearnest manner that his hearers detect at once that there is no heart about him—I wonder what he means.

Oh! fire of God, come down upon the tongue of the minister! But we need this fire upon the *hearers too*. How well people listen when they come to hear something! When they come up, and do not expect to get anything, it is not often they are disappointed—but when they are willing to listen to whatever is to be said in God’s name, how delightful, how easy, how pleasant it is to address them! We need much that kind of fire.

Oh! how we want the ear that is circumcised—the heart that is softened! The minister is the sower. O God, plow the furrows first! The minister is the waterer. Great God, plant the cedar first! We are but the lights. Great God, give the eyes. We are but the trumpets. O Lord, open Thou the ears. We do but speak—Great God, give life, that when we speak we may not speak to dead men, but that life may be given through our word. Fire is abundantly wanted upon the hearers.

What a noble effect is produced when once the fire comes down upon a congregation! I will picture you a church without fire and then one with it. There is a chapel—we will not say where—anywhere you like. On Sabbath morning, the minister enters his place, he hardly expects to see it half full. He comes in about five minutes after time. He gives out the hymn—two or three singers rise up and slaughter the praise.

The people keep dropping in all through the hymn. Prayer begins, and they are dropping in still. The chapter has been read, and the second hymn going on—they are still coming in. At last they have got quietly settled. The clerk has just finished the last verse, he composes himself to his usual sleep—the congregation also prepare themselves for what they are about to receive.

Firstly has produced its effect; secondly is telling upon the people very manifestly; and by the time that thirdly has been given out, perhaps the last pair of eyes will have ceased to gaze upon the pulpit, and the vacant face within it.

But as you stand in the aisle, you say to yourself, “Well, this is a sight indeed! That is a good man in the pulpit, but what right has he *there*? These are good people, but what do they come *here* for? There is no earnestness, no life.”

The notices have to be given out—“Prayer meeting on Monday evening, lecture on Thursday.” Well, we will come on Monday evening. So we go. There is the minister and about four people besides ourselves. There are hardly enough to ask to pray. After one has prayed, the minister will have to pray twice to make up the time. The prayers are twenty minutes long—they are not prayers, they are sermons. If anything, the prayer meeting is duller than the service, for there were people at the one, if no life, but here, there are neither people nor life. Well, we will go and speak to the deacons.

“Well, friend, how has your church increased of late?” “Well, sir, we do not increase. We have not looked to that lately, but still, things are very well. We are going on very comfortably.” “How long since you have had a baptizing?” “Oh! we had a baptizing in old Dr. So-and-So’s time. That is about, I think—let me see—fifteen years ago, I think.” “You have not had one since?” “Well, I do not know, we may have had one. We have had some members join from other churches, but we certainly have not had many.”

“And are you doing anything in the neighborhood for good?” “Well, no. We have some young people that are a little too rash and hasty. They will not be quite quiet, but our minister does not think there is any use in going out of the old ways. Besides, he says revivals are all wildfire—that the Lord will certainly have His own, and that we ought not to exert ourselves beyond the proper limit. You know, he says that ministers who preach too often, always die prematurely. Our minister wants to live to a good old age, and therefore he is careful of his valuable life.”

We will go and see the minister now. We will ask him to let us into the study. Sets of manuscripts!—a bad sign. Shelves full of sermons, and very little Puritanic theology. Bad sign again. I wonder whether he will let us stop by while he is making a sermon?

The way to begin to make a sermon is to bend the knee and to cry to God for direction. That is the first point. He does not do that. He has marked two or three-score texts for the next month or two, and he has had a bill printed, and told the people what he means to preach from, to prove that he is guided by the Spirit for months in advance, and not in the same hour when he needs it.

So he looks to see what the text is, and takes down various books that he has upon the subject, writes out his epistle to his church, and the thing is done, and he may go out visiting. No groaning over souls, mark; none of Baxter's compassion; no knocking of the knees together as he goes up the pulpit stairs; no sleepless night because he cannot preach as he would; no groaning when he comes home because he thinks there has been a failure where there ought to have been a success. No, the reason is because there is no fire. O God! send down the fire and what a change there will be!

The fire has come. The next Saturday the minister is in his study again, and the thought—an awful thought—strikes him, "What if the blood of souls should be at my door?" He gets up. He paces the room, puts his hand upon his forehead. He had never thought of that before! Preaching these years, but he never thought he was responsible for men—never imagined that he must certainly be either his brother's keeper or his brother's murderer.

He cannot stand it. That discourse he was going to deliver will not do, he will take another. A text comes to his mind, it shall be this—"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!" When he wakes on Sabbath morning, he is all in fear—suppose he should break down! He lifts up his heart to God—he prays for help.

He goes up into the pulpit. He is trembling. He begins to speak. The people do not know what to make of it—the minister is different from anything he was before. He begins to speak to every one that thirsts, and now he begins to cry, "Ho!" He never spoke so loud as that before! Now he begins to plead, "Come ye to the waters!"

They never saw him stretch his hands out to plead before. "And he that has no money, come, buy wine and milk." And the tears roll down his cheeks, and he begins to plead with all the pathos of his nature while he begs souls to come to Christ, to come to Christ, to come to Christ.

The old sleepers find they cannot sleep. Those who have had the most comfortable nap before cannot effect it now. Eyes gleam—rays flash from many eyeballs which had for months been unconscious of a sympathetic glance. Tears are seen. The minister pleads with God after he has pleaded with men.

He comes down to the vestry. The old deacon takes hold of both his hands—"Bless God for such a sermon as this, sir. It has quite stirred me up. This is how old Dr. So-and-So used to preach." And the next deacon says, "I bless God for this. Don't you think we ought to have a special prayer meeting about it? Better give notice of it this evening."

Prayer meeting next Monday. There are not many, but there are four times as many as there were before. And oh! how they pray! Twenty minutes does not do. They pray ten minutes each. They keep to the point—they do not preach—they pray for God to bless the minister.

Next Sabbath morning, a fuller house. Sabbath evening, crowded—souls are awakened, God is blessing the Word—saints pray, sinners tremble. The neighborhood is changed and Christ is glorified. This is the effect of the fire. O God, send the fire here!

But you will perceive, it is said that the priests could not enter into the house of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled the house. The first time the priests could do nothing, but they stopped where they were. The second time, they had to be more forgotten still, for they could not stay in the house. Let God send the fire of His Spirit here, and the minister will be more and more lost in His Master. You will come to think less of the speaker, and more of the truth spoken—the individual will be swamped—the words spoken will rise above everything.

When you have the cloud, the man is forgotten. When you have the fire, the man is lost, and you only see his Master. Suppose the fire should come here and the Master be seen more than the minister—what then? Why, this church will become two, or three, or four thousand strong! It's easy enough in God to double our numbers, vast though they are.

We shall have the lecture hall beneath this platform crowded at each prayer meeting, and we shall see in this place young men devoting themselves to God. We shall find young ministers raised up and trained, and sent forth to carry the fire to other parts. Japan, China, and India shall have heralds of the cross who have here had their tongues touched with the flame.

The whole earth shall receive benedictions. If God shall bless us, He will make us a blessing unto all. Let but God send down the fire, and the biggest sinners in the neighborhood will be converted. Those who live in the dens of infamy will be changed. The drunkard will forsake his cups, the swearer will repent his blasphemy, the debauched will leave their lusts.

*“Dry bones be raised and clothed afresh,
And hearts of stone be turned to flesh.”*

If there be anywhere within these walls tonight a man who has not been within a place of worship for these last twenty years, if there be others who have forfeited all claim to honor, and all title to respect, Great God, make these the first-fruits of Your power! Make them instances of Your mercy, trophies of Your grace!

This will be the effect of that fire which of old consumed the sacrifice, and which today consumes our sins, and fires our works, our songs, our prayers, till all smoke up to heaven, and God accepts them as an offering of a sweet smell.

I shall not detain you longer, having thus set before your mind's eye the two things for which we should earnestly seek, and for which we should cry to God. I shall close by simply preaching the Gospel, and I do not think that on this first occasion I can do it better than by simply telling the story of how I was brought to Christ myself.

I had been for years as a child in secret the prey of the most desponding feelings. One thought had crushed me. I was a sinner and God was angry with the wicked every day. I began to pray, prayer gave me no comfort, but made my burden more heavy. I read the Bible—the Bible was full of threatenings to me. I could find no promises there.

I attended the house of God constantly, but I never knew from all the preaching that I heard what I must do to be saved—my eyes were blind and my soul ignorant. I heard a practical preacher, but what was the use of practice? It was like teaching a man to march who had no feet. I heard the law thundered, but it was not thunder that I wanted, but notes of mercy.

I hope that no creature ever had more intense and awful sorrow of heart than I under conviction of sin—feelings which I strived to conceal from all—and I was thought to be dull and idle because I had little heart for anything. As I have said before, I prayed daily and constantly, but my groanings seemed to be reverberated from a brazen heaven, and God gave no mercy to me.

It might have been so to this day if it had not been for the purpose and providence of God which prevented me from going to my usual place of worship, and compelled me to turn into a little Primitive Methodist chapel. Now that day was so snowy that there were very few people there, and the minister did not come, I think he was snowed up.

But they found out some poor man, a local preacher, and he was put into the pulpit. Blessed be God. Blessed be God for that poor local preacher. He read his text. It was as much as he could do. The text was, “Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth.” He was an ignorant man, he could not say much. He was obliged to keep to his text. Thank God for that.

He began, “*Look*, that is not hard work. You need not lift your hand, you do not need to lift your finger. *Look*, a fool can do that. It does not need a wise man to look. A child can do that. You don't need

to be full grown to use your eyes. *Look*, a poor man may do that, no need of riches to look. *Look*—how simple—how simple.”

Then he went on, “Look unto Me. Do not look to yourselves, but look to Me, that is, Christ. Do not look to God the Father to know whether you are elected or not, you shall find that out afterwards, look to Me. Look to Christ. Do not look to God the Holy Spirit to know whether He has called you or not. That you shall discover by and by. Look unto Jesus Christ.”

And then, he went on in his own simple way to put it thus—“Look unto *Me*, I am sweating great drops of blood for you. Look unto *Me*, I am scourged, and spit upon. I am nailed to the cross, I die, I am buried, I rise and ascend, I am pleading before the Father’s throne, and all this for *you*.”

Now, that simple way of putting the Gospel had enlisted my attention, and a ray of light had poured into my heart. Stooping down, he looked under the gallery and said—“Young man, you are very miserable.” So I was, but I had not been accustomed to be addressed in that way. “Ah!” said he, “and you will always be miserable if you don’t do as my text tells you. That is, look unto Christ.”

And then he called out, with all his might, “Young man, look. In God’s name, look and look now.” I did look, blessed be God! I know I looked, then and there, and he who but that minute ago had been near despair, had the fullness of joy and hope. And that instant, he who was ready to destroy himself, could have stood up there and then to—“Sing of Him, whose pardoning blood had washed sins away.”

And now, here I stand to preach in this great building the self-same Gospel in the same simple tones. Sinners, look to Christ and be saved.

*“E’er since by faith I saw the stream,
His flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.”*

Oh, sinners! what if God should make this your spiritual birthday, and it can only be thus by your simply looking to Christ. Ay, by the prayers of an earnest wife, I beg you look. Oh, young man! by the groans of a loving mother, I beg you care for your soul and look. Ay, old man! by the decline of years, and by those grey hairs, and the nearness of your grave, I pray you look.

Ay, you sons of poverty, by all that you have to suffer here, look, look to Jesus, that you may find in Him eternal riches. And you rich men, if you would not be cursed by your riches, look and find the healing for the diseases of this life. To one and all is the word of this salvation sent—“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.” “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house.”

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.