

THE OLD WAY OF THE WICKED

NO. 859

A SERMON
 DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 7, 1869,
 BY C. H. SPURGEON,
 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Have you marked the old way which wicked men have trodden? Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood: Which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them?”
 Job 22:15-17.*

“HAVE you marked the old way?” Antiquity is no guarantee for truth. It was the old way, but it was the wrong way. If our religion is to be settled by antiquity, we shall presently pass back to the worst form of idolatry, for we would have to become Druids. It is not always that “the old is better.” Sometimes, by reason of the depravity of human nature, the old is the more corrupt. The oldest of all would be the best, but how shall we come at it? Adam was once perfection—but how shall we regain that state?

Old, exceeding old, is the path of sin and the path of error, for as old as the father of lies is sin. Antiquity is, moreover, no excuse for sin. It may be that men have long transgressed, but use in rebellion will not mitigate the treason before the eternal throne. If you know better, it will not stand you in any stead that God winked at the ignorance of others in former ages. If you have had more light than they, you shall have severer judgment than they. Therefore plead not the antiquity of any evil custom as an excuse for sin.

It was an old way, but they who ran in it perished in it just as surely as if it had been a new way of sinning entirely of their own invention. Antiquity will be no consolation to those who perish by following evil precedents. It will serve no purpose to lost souls that they sinned as thousands sinned before them, and if they shall meet long generations of their ancestors lost in the same overthrow, they shall by no means be comforted by such grim companionship. Hence, it becomes all of us to examine whether those religious dogmas which we have accepted on account of their apparent venerableness of age and universality of custom are indeed the truth.

We are not amongst those who believe that the traditions of the fathers are the ultimate tests of truth. We have heard the voice which says, “To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” We would not affect novelty for its own sake—that were folly, neither will we adore and venerate antiquity for its own sake, for that would lead us into idolatry and superstition. Is the thing right? Then follow it, though you have discovered it but yesterday. Is it wrong? Then, though the road were trodden by sinners of the first ages, yet do not you pursue it unless you desire to meet with the same end as they.

Search and look to your creeds, your worships, and your customs, for this world has long enough been deluded by hoary superstitions. Search, my hearer, search and look right carefully within your heart, for you may be deceived, and it were a pity if it should be so with you, while there are such opportunities given you to discover and rectify your mistakes.

We shall now, this morning, in the words of the text, mark the old way of wicked men, observe it carefully, and consider it well. There shall be three points this morning, *the way, the end, the warning*.

I. The first shall be THE WAY—“the old way which wicked men have trodden.” First, *what it was*. There is no doubt that Eliphaz is here alluding to those who sinned before the flood. He is looking to what were ancient days to him. Living as he did in what is olden time to us, his days of yore were the

days beyond the flood, and the old way he speaks of is the way and course of sinners before the world was destroyed by water.

Now this way, in the first place, was *a way of rebellion against God*. Adam, our first parent, knew God's will—that will ought not to have been irksome to him. The command was a very easy one. The denial of the one tree to him should have been no great loss. He ought to have been well-content when all the rest of the garden was his own leasehold, to have let that one tree belong to the Great Freeholder of all—but he set his will in direct antagonism to the will of the Most High. The sin itself looked small, the act of plucking the forbidden fruit appeared to be trivial, but within the loins of it lurked a dark hostility to the mind of God, which led to open breach of the Lord's command.

That is the way in every transgressor's case, for every sinner is a rebel against God. Though the man at the time when he commits the sin may claim that he was not thinking of God, yet the fact of his acting without regard to Him whom he ought always reverently to consider, was in itself a sin. Sin is a defiance of divine authority, it throws down the gauntlet, and challenges the rights of the King of kings.

Are there any here this morning who are pursuing that old way which wicked men have trodden? Do not many of you neglect as a rule the consideration of what is God's mind? Do you not act as unrestrainedly as if there were no God at all? Do you not constantly follow after that which the Lord abhors? I fear many of you are traversing the way of rebellion, and are daily provoking the Great Judge. I pray you beware, for this is the old way which wicked men have trodden, and you may be sure that as God met with them, and their rebellion soon ended in terrible destruction, so will He also meet with you, for God's ways are equal, and He deals out justice to sinners now as He did then.

In the next place, the old way was *a way of selfishness*. Why did Eve take of that fruit? It was because she believed that the taking of it would delight her appetite, and would also make her wise. It was to gain something for self that evil was done, and her children also have participated in the same feeling. It was this that made Nimrod the mighty tyrant of the world. It was this which led the sons of God before the flood to look upon the daughters of men, for they were fair, because they sought their own pleasure and not the service of God. Self reigned.

The men cast themselves down before their own natural propensities, indulged their wantonness, and had no delight in God. This is the old way which wicked men have trodden, and I fear it is a well-trodden path today. How do the mass of mankind cry? "Show us any good. Show us something that shall give us pleasure, amusement, sport—we care little what it is. Let it be decent and respectable, if so it may be, but by any means let us disport ourselves, and find pleasure, or get gain, or heap to ourselves honor," for man seeks himself still, and this is the root of man's sin. He cannot believe that if he would find himself he must not seek himself. He cannot believe the Savior's testimony that he who would save his life must be content to lose it. That in looking after God and denying self we follow the highest and surest road to promote our own happiness.

No, the sinner resolves to serve self first, and then perhaps, he will condescend even to follow God Himself out of self-love, and be religious, and devout, and worship God after his fashion, in order to save himself, still seeking self even at the foot of the throne of God. Well, dear friend, if you this morning have not been taught that you must live unto God, and not to self, if you are still following out your own ends and aims, and if the main object of your life is to acquire wealth, or to get position, or to live in comfort, or to indulge your passions—then depend upon it, you are treading in the old way which wicked men have trodden, and as it has always ended in disappointment, so will it with you. The apple stolen out of God's garden has turned to ashes in the hand. The Abimelech of self has become a tyrant. Fire has come forth from the bramble which men have made a king, and their cedars have been burned. Be wise, I pray you, and forsake the road which leads to misery.

The old way, in the third place, was *a way of pride*. Our mother Eve rebelled against God because she thought she knew better than God did. She would be as a god, that was her ambition, and the same thought had entered into her husband's mind. He was not content to be what his Maker would have him, he would, if he could leap into the very throne of deity, and put upon his own head the diadem of

universal dominion. An ambitious pride led them both astray, and this, I fear, is the road in which many are constantly treading. Content to be as nothing before God! no, that they will not. They boast that they are something, and they lift up their heads, and claim dignity, and ask for respect. Lie at the feet of Jesus Christ, and receive salvation as a gift of mercy, pure mercy! Nay, that they will not—they talk of merits, prayers, tears. They will, if they can, find something of their own in which to trust. They wrap their miserable rags about them, and claim that they are well clad, and being fascinated by self-deceit, they imagine that they are rich and increased in goods when they are naked, and poor, and miserable.

This old way which wicked men have trodden is still frequented by the mass of those who hear the Gospel, but who reject it, to their own confusion. O you who are pilgrims in it, remember Pharaoh and how the Lord crushed the pride of that haughty monarch! Remember He has always cut down the lofty trees, and leveled towering hills, and it is His sworn purpose to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the excellency of earth. Tarry awhile, O pilgrim of pride, and humble yourself in dust and ashes that you may be exalted by the hand of God.

Hoping that each one before me is undergoing the process of self-examination, I would further remark that the old way which wicked men have trodden is *a way of self-righteousness*. Cain especially trod that road. He was not an outwardly irreligious man, but quite the reverse. Inasmuch as a sacrifice must be brought, he will bring an offering on his own account. If Abel kneels by the altar, Cain will kneel by the altar also. It was respectable and reputable in that age to pay deference to the unseen God—Cain therefore does the same, but mark where the flaw was in his religion!

Abel brought a bloody sacrifice, a lamb, indicating his faith in the great atoning sacrifice which was to be offered in the end of the world in the person of the Lamb of God, Christ Jesus, but Cain presented an unbloody offering of the fruits of the earth, the products of his own toil, and he thought himself as good as Abel, perhaps better. When the Lord did not accept his service, the envious heart of the self-righteous man boiled over with indignation, and he became a persecutor, ay, a murderer. None are so bitter as the self-righteous. None so cruelly persecute the righteous as those who think themselves righteous and are not.

It was because Saul of Tarsus boasted in a fancied righteousness of his own that he breathed out threatenings against those who found their righteousness alone in Christ. The old way of self-righteousness, then, was trodden by the feet of the first murderer, and it is trodden still by tens of thousands of men. Ah, your church-goings and your chapel-goings, your eatings of the sacrament, your baptism, your confirmation, your ceremonies of all sorts and kinds, your gifts to the poor, your contributions to charities, your amiable speeches, and your repetitions of your liturgies, or of your extemporaneous prayers—these, put together, are rested on as the rock of your salvation.

Beware, I entreat you, for this is the old way of the Pharisee when he thanked God that he was not as other men. It is the old way of universal human nature which evermore goes about to establish its own righteousness, and will not submit itself to the righteousness of Christ. As surely as the Pharisees were condemned as a generation of vipers, and could not escape the damnation of hell, so surely every one of us, if we set up our righteousness in the place of Christ's righteousness, will meet with condemnation, and will be overthrown by God's sudden wrath. Mark that old way, and I beseech you, men and brethren flee from it. By God's grace, flee from it now.

The old way which wicked men have trodden was, in the next place, *a way of unbelief*. Noah was sent to tell those ancient sinners that the world would be destroyed by a flood. They thought him an old dotard, and mocked him to scorn. For one hundred and twenty years that "preacher of righteousness" continually lifted up his warning voice. He threatened that the world would certainly be deluged, and the ungodly sons of men would surely be swept away. He pointed to the ark of safety which he was building in testimony against them, and besought them to humble themselves and break off their sins by righteousness, but they would not believe the prophet, preacher of righteousness though he was—they turned his most earnest words into jests, and his tenderest invitations were made the subject of their scorn.

This was the old way and the old way has not lost its pilgrims. In different forms and different ways, the atheism of the human heart still continues to discover itself, ay, and discover itself in Christian congregations, for you that are unconverted, surely do not believe that you will be condemned by the righteous justice of God, or you would not be so much at ease. Did you solemnly believe in the justice of God, you would not dare to bring it down upon your heads. Did you really and in very truth believe in the great assize, and in the Judge of all, you would not spend your lives in violation of His law and in bringing upon yourself the penalty.

Oh, did you believe that there is a hell for such as die out of Christ, you would be afraid to remain out of Christ another day, you would seek your chambers, fall upon your knees, and cry to God in mercy that He would now accept you, and let you now be reconciled to Him through His blood. Alas! you hear of God's anger, and you profess to believe in it, but you act like infidels, and as you act, so you are.

This old way of disbelief has always ended in confusion, for the flood did come, and their disbelief could not arrest its rising. The angry waters burst out from their lairs like beasts of prey, hungry for human life, and the rebellious race was utterly destroyed. Even thus most surely shall the vengeance of God overtake us, whether we believe it or not, unless we fly to Christ, the Ark, and are housed in Him from the coming tempest.

I will not detain you much longer over this very terrible story, but the old way which wicked men have trodden is a *way of worldliness, and carelessness, and procrastination*. What did those men do before the flood? They married and were given in marriage till the flood came and swept them all away. If any of them believed in Noah, they at any rate said, "We will wait a little longer, there will be time for us to escape from the threatened flood when the first appearance of the descending rains, and the upheaving fountains shall be visible to us."

The whole world seems to have been making festival on that black day that closed the years of mercy. Never did the joy-bells ring more sweetly. Never was the marriage dance more merry, never did eyes more sweetly look love to eyes that spoke again, than when the first boomings of the terrible battle were heard afar off, and JEHOVAH came forth to vengeance, dressed like a man of war, resolved to ease Him of His adversaries.

In this old way of worldliness, are there not some of you, dear hearers, treading this very morning? Perhaps you are professors of religion, and yet treading in this way. I mentioned the sons of God just now who are said by Moses to have looked upon the daughters of men, and formed alliance with them. Perhaps you may be contemplating the same act, and when the flood comes your profession will be no refuge to you, but you shall be swept away with the rest.

Alas! this is the world's great catechism, "What shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" And this is the world's trinity in unity, "The lust of the eye, and the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life." And this is the course of this world—ever does it seek after its own gain and its own pleasure, saying to more solemn and serious things, "When I have a more convenient season I will send for you." Though the King of heaven has spread a banquet, yet men make light of it. Though He has killed His oxen and His fatlings, they go their way, every man to his farm and to his merchandise, and so will they do till—

***"God's right arm is bared for war,
And thunder clothes His cloudy car."***

Where shall the ungodly fly in that tremendous day? They have chosen this old way, and have walked therein, but how will they escape Him when His flood shall sweep them away?

Eliphaz says, "Have you marked the way?" I want you to stop a little while, and look at that road again, and mark it anew. The first thing I observe as I look at it is, that it is *a very broad way*. Our Savior's words are most true, "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." The road of sin is so wide that it has room for rebels, for selfish

sinners, for proud sinners, for professors of religion, for infidels, for the worldly, and for the hypocrite. Those who tread the narrow way must all go in at one gate. They must all partake of one washing in the Savior's blood. They must all be renewed by one Holy Spirit. They must walk in one command, but as for the ungodly, they may follow—

*“Each a different way
Though all the downward road.”*

The road is so wide that there may be many independent tracks in it, and the drunkard may find his way along it without ever ruffling the complacency of the hypocrite. The mere moralist may pick a clean path all the way, while the immoral wretch may wade up to his knees in mire throughout the whole road. Behold how sinners disagree and yet agree! how the Sadducee and the Pharisee are opposed to each other in most respects, and yet agree in this, that they are opposed to God! It is a broad road.

Observe that *it is a very popular road*. The way downward to destruction is a very fashionable one, and it always will be. To follow God and to be right has always been a thing espoused by the minority. Holy Richard Baxter says that, when a child, he marveled that if he ever met with a man who was much more holy than other men—spoke more of Christ, was more prayerful, was more scrupulous in business, he was always the man of whom the neighbors spoke worst. And he wondered more as he read history, that the children of God always were the nicknamed ones, the persecuted ones, the despised ones—until he began to understand that text of Scripture, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed.”

It must be so. The people of God must expect to go against the stream, as the living fish always do. They must stem the torrent of custom and of fashion, but if you want to follow the old way which wicked men have trodden, you will find plenty of companions, and everyone will give you good cheer.

It is *a very easy way, too*. You need not trouble yourself about finding the entrance into it, you can find it in the dark. And the path is so exceedingly smooth that you need not exert yourself much to make great progress in it.

If you desire to go to heaven, and you ask me what is to be done, why I am earnest to inform you rightly, but if you ask me what you are to do to be damned, well, nothing at all, it is only a little matter of neglect. “How shall we escape,” says the apostle, “if we neglect so great a salvation?” Leave your boat alone, slip the oars, just sit still, and fold your arms, and she will descend to the rapids swiftly enough. The way to total destruction is most easy. But ah! if you would escape, grace must make you work out your own salvation. You must trust in Jesus, and by His grace tug at the oars like a man, for if the righteous scarcely are saved, where shall the ungodly and the wicked appear?

This old way, if you look at it, is *the way in which all men naturally run*. I called it a popular road, and a crowded road, but indeed it is the road of universal human nature. Only put a child on his feet and leave him alone, and his first footsteps are towards this broad way. He will need no teaching. You shall have no difficulties in training him. He will find out the evil path, and he will run in it. Ay, and will delight in it, and unless the grace of God shall turn him, he will continue in it even when he leans upon his staff, and when his hair grows grey, he will still persevere in the old way which wicked men have trodden.

For all that, it is a most unsatisfactory road. Dangerous I should think it must clearly be seen to be, even by those who think the least of it. For you set out on it, my brother, how many have perished from the way? Look back, I pray you, upon your companions—where are they now? They have gone to the place appointed for all living one by one, and I will ask you now what testimony have they left behind as to the way?

When I speak of the pathway to the skies, I can recount a thousand testimonies of dying Christians who have all spoken well of the ways of God. Their unanimous testimony borne, mark you, in the light of another world where hypocrisy will be impossible—the unanimous testimony has been that her “ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.” But who ever heard of the testimony of an

ungodly man when dying, to the sweetness of sin, and to the excellence of unholiness? Why, I think I might stake the whole matter upon the testimony of such a one as Byron, a man of gigantic genius, having an experience of the widest kind, who had drank of the bowl of pleasure, and of fame to its very dregs. But his testimony put into other words is precisely that of Solomon, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.”

He became an unhappy man, wearied of life, and died disgusted with all that he had seen. Better far for him had he lived the obscurest believer in Christ, who dying could have exclaimed, “I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of life that fades not away!”

Let the testimonies, then, of those who have trodden this road, and found it out to be so poor a one, convince you that it is dangerous for you to tread it, for all along the route you meet with nothing but disappointments. If you wish to spend your money for that which is bread, and your labor for that which truly profits, you will leave this tempting but deceptive pathway, and fly to another road in which you shall have present comfort, and everlasting felicity.

One thing more I want you to notice before I take you away from this old way which wicked men have trodden, and it is this, that across it here and there *divine mercy has set bars*. Along the road of sin men dash with increasing rapidity every year. It is marvelous the rate at which wickedness will travel when it has once overmastered all the drags and brakes of common sense, and of respect to one’s fellows. The course of sin is downhill, and the rate of sinning is every day accelerated. Across the first part of the ungodly man’s course, God has been pleased to place many chains, and bars, and barricades—and one of those, though it may be but a frail one, is to you, dear hearer, the subject of this morning.

You were led here that I might say to you as solemnly as I can, if you are selfish, if you are proud, if you are self-righteous, if you are indulging the lusts of your flesh, you are on the old way which wicked men have trodden, and for your own sake, stop! The angel of mercy stands before you now and bids you tarry. Why will you die? Why will you choose a path that even now gives you no rest? Why select a way which hereafter shall fill you with eternal misery? O tarry awhile and ask yourself whether it is well to fling away your everlasting hope, and ruin yourself for present willfulness! O pause awhile.

That dead child at home lies in your pathway like the dead Amasa who, as he lay weltering in his blood, made an army pause. That sickness of yours from which you have just recovered, that loss of property which has made you so sorrowful, that dire affliction which you see in a beloved wife—all these are bars and chains. Will you overleap them—will you go steeple-chase to hell? Oh, sorry exertion for so miserable an end!

Nay, but let mercy arrest you. God’s hand is put upon the bridle now—He reins up your horse, He thrusts back the steed upon its haunches—man, will you heed your Maker, will you let your conscience listen to His voice? Stay you on the plains of mercy. If you break this warning through, you may have another and another, but the further the road is traveled, the fewer the barricades and the impediments become, till the last part of that tremendous road which leads down to death is all smooth as glass, and a soul may take a dreadful slide, as down the steep sides of an Alpine mountain, and so glide into hell without the soul being disturbed.

The Lord may give you up, and then like the train of which we read the other day in the newspapers, when the engine had become overpowered by the weight, and the brakes were of no further use, the whole will run down the tremendous decline to destruction. God permits the last end of many men to be just such an awful descent. Oh, for God’s sake, put the breaks on this morning, for Christ’s sake, I pray you seek to arrest the growing force of your lusts—its growing tendency towards evil, and may His Spirit make use of the words which the text has suggested to us, to come to a dead halt, and to be saved by faith in Jesus!

II. We come now to say a little concerning THE END—“Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflowed with a flood.” The end of these ancient travelers was that the flood came and swept them all away. It is a parallel case to the end of all ungodly men. I do not intend, however, to

detain you long upon the horrible subject, but only to utter these few words. The end of these travelers was not according to their unbelief, but according to the despised truth. They would not believe Noah, but the flood came.

You may reject the testimony of God's Bible, you may despise the daily warnings of God's ministers, but the result will be as we have said. God is bound to make true His threatenings as well as His promises. His people bear witness that He has never lied to them in a single gracious word, and you may be sure He will never lie to you if you persevere in your sin—every single threatening word will be fulfilled. He is very loath to punish, but He will do it. He will bathe His sword in heaven, and He will smite, and none shall stand against the stroke. God did not fail at the end of the one hundred and twenty years to visit the guilty world, and He will not fail when your iniquities are full, to visit you. If your ears refuse the language of His grace, as surely as there is a God in heaven, you shall be made to feel the power of His vengeance.

Those who will not be covered by the wings of mercy, as a hen covers her chicks, shall see justice darting upon them as with the wings of an eagle. Power reigned in the world's creation, providence reigns in the world's preservation. Mercy reigned in its redemption, but justice will reign in its condemnation. Remember this, then, unbelief will not, laugh as it may, remove one jot of the penalty.

The flood, like the destroying fire which will come upon ungodly men, was total in its destructiveness. It did not sweep away some of them, but all, and the punishments of God will not be to a few rebels, but to all. It will find out the rich in their palaces, as well as the poor in their hovels. The sword of vengeance will not be bribed, neither will it be made quiet by prayers and entreaties—when it is once drawn out of the scabbard of mercy, it shall find out the sinner, even though he seeks sanctuary in the church of God, and lays hold on the horns of the altar of profession. He that is not washed in Jesus' blood, and covered with His righteousness, shall find the overthrow of God to make no exceptions.

It will be an overthrow of the most awful kind. What a sight the angels must have seen as they saw the miserable men and women of that old world fleeing to the hills and to the mountains, and to the tops of the craggy rocks, if possible to escape the ever-advancing flood. I shall not try to make your ears listen to their cries and their imprecations. Oh! will it ever be your fate thus hopelessly to fear the floodgates of divine vengeance drawn up, and the wrath of God, like flaming fire, let loose upon you and your fellow sinners?

Moreover, it was a final overthrow. None out of the ark outlived the flood. They perished every one. So shall it be when the wrath of God comes—it shall be eternal destruction from the glory of the Lord, and from the presence of His power. There is no hope for those with whom God deals in justice—no expectation—nay, not a ray of expectancy can ever reach the gloomy chambers of their despair. Their death-knell is tolled, their prison is fastened forever. God has turned the key in the lock and hurled that key into the abyss where even He will never find it to unlock and to unloose. The fetters of the damned are everlasting. The fires that burn about them never can be quenched, and their worm shall never die.

O that men would take heed of this, and not wantonly incur that tremendous wrath of which the Scripture, if it speaks but sparingly, yet speaks most solemnly. I am not of those who delight to dwell upon this subject. I have sometimes accused myself that I have so seldom spoken of the terrors of the law, that I have not entered into details with regard to the wrath to come, and the judgments that await the wicked. O let me urge you not to tempt the mercy of God, nor provoke His wrath, lest you should know in your own experience with a bitter and fearful knowledge far more than I either care to say to you this morning, or could say if I cared. Consider the old way which wicked men have trodden, and how they were swept away with the devouring flood.

The text gives us two pictures, and these two may suffice to bring out the meaning of Eliphaz. First, he says, they were "cut down out of time." The representation here is that of a tree with abundant foliage and wide-spreading boughs to which the woodsman comes. He feels his axe, it is sharp and ready, and

he gives blow after blow, till the tree begins to shake and quiver, and at last, leaning to the side to which it must fall, with a tremendous crash it falls headlong on the turf.

Such is the sinner in his prosperity, spreading himself like a green bay tree—birds of song are among his branches, and his fruit is fair to look upon, but the axe of death is near, and where the tree falls there it must forever lie. Fixed is its everlasting state. The crash which we hear in this world as the sinner dies, does but foretell to us his perpetual doom.

The other picture of the text is that of a building which is utterly swept away. Here I would have you notice that Eliphaz does not say that the flood came and swept away the building of the wicked, but swept away their very foundations. If in the next world the sinner only lost his wealth or his health, or his outward comforts of this life, it would be subject for serious reflection, but when it comes to this—that he loses his soul, his very self. When not the comfort of life, but life itself is lost, not the comforts of the mind, but the mind itself—oh! then it becomes a thing to consider with all one's reason, and with something more of the enlightenment which God's Spirit can add to our reason.

O that we would but be wise and think of this! May God grant that we may not run the risks of having the foundation of our hope, our comfort, our very joy uptorn by an overwhelming torrent, and swept away every stone of it, while we poor fools who built on sand shall wring our hands with anguish to think that we would not take the warning and build on the rock while we might have done so.

III. And now our last word is THE WARNING of the text.

And its warning seems to me to be summed up in the inquiry of everyone of us, "Am I or am I not treading in that broad way?"

I would not like a hearer to go out of this place this morning without my having accosted him personally, as best I may while standing here, and put to him the question, Are you treading in the old way which wicked men have trodden? "Ah," says one, "I do not know." Do you want to know? I will help you to answer it. Are you traveling in the narrow way in which believers in Christ are walking? "I cannot say that," say you. Well, then, I can tell you without hesitation that you are treading in the broad way, for there are but two ways—the one, the way of mercy that leads upward to the chambers of peace, and the other the way of sin, that leads down to the gates of hell.

Be not deceived, there are no neutrals here. Christ's word is, "He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathers not with me, scatters abroad." Do you say, "I take no part in this quarrel. I am not for God, and I am not against Him"? Nay, then, out of your own mouth are you condemned. If you are not for God, who made you, then you have thrown off your allegiance, and denied the rights of God to possess the creature which He Himself has formed. You are in the wide and broad way. The Lord help you!

But if you cannot answer the question, I will help you in another way. Friend, did you ever experience a great change? Are you a new man? If not, you are in the old way, for the way of nature for every one of us is the old way, and none ever runs in the way of righteousness, but such as are renewed by the interposition of the Holy Spirit. "You must be born again." "Except a man is born again from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Do I hear one say, "Then I trust I am changed. I trust I have come into the narrow way"? Brother, bless God for it this morning. Hang your head in shame to think you have been in the broad road, but bless the grace which has taken you from it. And be sure to prove your gratitude by trying to rescue others. This very day as much as lies in you, tell of the Gospel of your salvation, that it may be the Gospel of their salvation too. Have you bread to eat while others starve? Eat not your morsel alone. Have you light while others are in the dark? Lend them your candle—you shall see all the better for the loan. God help you, dear brethren, to prove by your life to others that you love God because you love your brother also.

As for you who confessedly are in the old way, would you turn, would you leave it? Then the turning point is at yonder cross, where Jesus hangs a bleeding sacrifice for the sons of men. Stop there,

stay there. Look up and count the purple drops which flow from His dear hands, and feet, and side, and if the Holy Ghost shall help you to say, “Jesus, accept me. Wash me from my sin, and take me to be Your servant, and lead me in a right way, even the way everlasting,” then it is done, and this very day you may go your way rejoicing. The turning point is not a thing of months, weeks, and years, but rather of seconds, when the grace of God comes to work with man.

My prayer is that some who came in here today the slaves of Satan, may go out the Lord’s free men, and that pilgrims on the way to ruin may become travelers on the road to heaven, and God’s be the glory. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—2 PETER 3.

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