

AM I CLEAR OF HIS BLOOD?

NO. 461

A SERMON

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“The voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground.”

Genesis 4:10

CAIN was of the wicked one and slew his brother. “The way of Cain” is not hard to describe. He is too proud to offer atonement for his sin, he prefers his own way of sacrifice, he presents a bloodless oblation, he hates the obedience of faith, he smites the faithful Abel. See you the way of Cain, and beware, O proud self-righteous ones, lest you run therein, for the steps are few from self-righteous pride to hatred of true believers, and murder is not far in advance.

There is the seed of every infamy in the proud spirit of self-justification, and it is a great mercy that it does not oftener show itself in all its terrific ripeness. Look you, bold boasters of your own merits, at the mangled body of the first martyr, for this is the full-blown development of your rebellious self-conceit. From all pride and vainglory, from all self-righteousness and hatred of the cross of Christ, good Lord deliver us.

This is not, however, the drift of my discourse this morning. I have rather to indicate the method in which we also may be guilty of this sin of blood-guiltiness concerning our brother.

Dear friends, I feel assured that the text of this morning, terrible as it must have been in the ears of Cain, ought to ring in your ears and mine, and it may be that while that cry is heard again, though at the distance of many thousand years, it may awaken some here present to a sense of guilt, and to a desire for amendment, and thus the blood of Abel may speak good, though terrible things to them, and prepare their ears to listen to the voice of that other blood, “which speaketh better things than that of Abel.”

First, we shall this morning *inquire for the criminals whose brothers’ blood cries from the ground*, next, we will endeavor *to show the execrable character of the crime*, then, thirdly, *we will select the judgment*, and fourthly, *we will exhort the guilty ones to turn from their ways, and to hear the voice of mercy*.

I. First then, we are to MAKE A SEARCHING INQUIRY FOR THE CRIMINALS.

I do not intend to say much this morning, about the act of actually slaying one’s brother. The question of the rightness of war is a moot point even among moral men. Among those who read their Bibles, the allowance of defensive war may, perhaps, still be a question, but any other sort of war must certainly be condemned by the man who is a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. We shall say nothing, however, or but very little, concerning the criminality of those ambitious and unscrupulous persons who hurry nations into war without cause.

Lust of dominion and a false pride are setting the United States on a blaze. I know at this time a tragic incident connected with the present war in America. Four brothers left one of our villages in Oxfordshire, two of whom, if now alive, are in one army, and two of them in the other, and I doubt not, as desperately as any of their comrades, they are thirsting for each other’s blood.

What horrors cluster around the iniquity of civil war. On yonder soil it is the blood of brothers that crieth from the ground. Men are fighting the one against the other in this lamentable conflict *for no justifiable cause*. The one cause which justified the war, as we thought—the snapping of the fetters of the slave—is gone, emancipation is not proclaimed, the bondman is forgotten. What might have been a struggle for the rights of man is now a shameful and abominable slaughter of brothers by brothers, and a

cry is going up to heaven from those blood-red fields which God will hear, and will yet avenge on both sides.

Oh that they would sheathe their swords and end it once and for all! What mattereth it if there be two nations or one, better two in peace, than one divided with intestine strife! How much better to have even twenty nations of living men, than one nation of mangled corpses! What signifies it to the survivors if they have all the honor and dignity of conquerors, when they are stained up to their elbows in the blood of their fellow men?

Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, “Consider your ways.” Arise, you who draw your sword against your fellows, and weep like the weeping of Ramah of old, and make your cities like Bochim, because of your iniquities, go back to your homes in peace, beat your swords into ploughshares, and your spears into pruning hooks, for JEHOVAH will have none of them, He casts out your armies like dung upon the field because ye smite every man his kinsman and his fellow!

That however, is not my subject this morning. May God grant that whatever may come of this terrible struggle, His name may be glorified, at present I see nothing but a carnival of madmen—hell let loose, and much I fear that an evil demon has deceived both nations, and made them like ravening wolves, and roaring lions.

I have to deal with *you*, however, and not with those across the ocean, let us come therefore to the point. There are many persons whose brother’s blood cries to God from the ground. *There is the seducer*, he spoke with honeyed words, and talked of love, but the poison of asps was under his tongue, for lust was in his heart. He came to a fair temple as a worshipper, but he committed infamous sacrilege, and left *that* to be the haunt of demons which once was the palace of purity.

Such men are received into society, they are looked upon as gentlemen, while the fallen woman, the harlot-sister, she may hide herself beneath the shadow of night. None will make excuse for her sin, but the man, the criminal—he is called a respectable and reputable man—he may fill places of trust, and posts of honor, and there are none who point the finger of scorn at him.

Sir, the voice of that poor fallen sister’s blood crieth to heaven against you, and in the day of judgment her damnation shall be on your skirts, all the infamy into which you have plunged her shall lie at your door, and among the dreadful sights of hell, two eyes shall glare at you through the murky darkness like the eyes of serpents, burning their way into your inmost soul. “Thou didst deceive, and decoy me to the pit,” saith she, “thine arms dragged me down to hell, and here I lie to curse thee forever and ever as the author of my eternal ruin.”

I know I address some such this morning, it were not possible that all men here were pure and spotless. Hear you while yet there is time for your repentance, for the voice of her blood crieth unto God from the ground for vengeance.

Then, there are men *who educate youth in sin*. Satan’s captains and marshals, strong men with corrupt hearts, who are never better pleased than when they see the buds of evil swelling and ripening into crime. We have known some such, men of an evil eye, who not only loved sin themselves, but delighted in it in others, patted the boy on his back when he utters his first oath, rewarded him when he commits his first theft.

Satan has his Sunday school teachers, hell has its missionaries who compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and make him tenfold more a child of hell than they are themselves. Most of our villages are cursed with one such wretch, and is there a street in London which is not the haunt of one such fiend, or more?

Oh, do I speak to any here who have applauded and praised young persons when they have commenced walking in the paths of infamy? Wretch, have you sought to entangle them in your net? Have you, like the spider, thrown first one film about them and then another, till you have them safely in your coils to drag them down to the den of Beelzebub? Then the voice of your brother’s blood crieth from the ground, and at the judgment this shall be a witness which you shall not be able to confute, the

witness of the blood of souls ruined by your foul and evil training. Beware you who hunt for the precious life!

Ay, and I know some base men who, *if they see young converts, will take a pride in putting stumbling blocks in their way*. They no sooner discover that there is some little working of conscience, than they laugh, they sneer, they point the finger. How often have I seen this in the husband who seeks to prevent the wife's attendance at the house of God, and in the young man who jeers at his companion because he felt something of the power of religion!

Is not this too frequent in our great establishments in London, where one young man kneels to pray and many are found to laugh at him and hurl some foul term at his head, not content to perish themselves. Like dogs pursuing a hart so will the wicked haunt the godly.

Oh! you who are the enlisting sergeants for the Black Prince of Darkness, you who seem never so happy as when you set your traps for souls to inveigle them to destruction, solemnly do I warn you. Oh! take the warning, lest God's avenging angel, without warning, should soon overtake you with the dividing sword which shall smite you even to the neck, and make you feel how terrible a thing it is to have tried to ruin the servants of the living God.

Then, *there is the infidel*, the man who is not content to keep his sin in his own breast, but must needs publish his infamy, he ascends the platform and blasphemes the Almighty to His face, defies the Eternal, takes Scripture to make it the subject of unhallowed jest, and makes religion a theme for comedy. Take heed, sir, there will be a tragedy by and by, in which you shall be the chief sufferer!

What shall I say of those men who are more diligent by far than half of God's ministers are, whose names we see placarded on every wall, who will go from town to town, especially where in greatest numbers artisans are dwelling, and never seem content unless they are preaching against everything that is pure, and lovely, and of good report, uttering things which would make your cheeks blanch if you heard them, and at the very reading of which the marrow of your bones might melt—dreadful things against the Most High, such as David heard when he said, "Horror hath taken hold of me because of the wicked that keep not your law."

Oh, sirs! should I address such persons here, the voice of your brother's blood cries to JEHOVAH this day. The young men you have deluded, the working men you have led astray, the sinners whose lullaby you have sung, the souls that you have poisoned with your foul draughts, the multitudes, the multitudes that you have deceived—all these shall stand up at the last, an exceedingly great army, and pointing their fingers at you, shall demand your swift destruction because you decoyed them to their doom.

And *what shall I say of the unfaithful preacher*, the slumbering watchman of souls, the man who swore at God's altar that he was called of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word of God, the man upon whose lips men's ears waited with attention while he stood like a priest at God's altar to teach Israel God's law, the man who performed his duties half a sleep, in a dull and careless manner until men slept too and thought religion but a dream?

What shall I say of *the minister of unholy life*, whose corrupt practice out of the pulpit has made the most telling things in the pulpit to be of no avail, has blunted the edge of the sword of the Spirit, and turned the back of God's army in the day of battle? Ay, what shall I say of the man who has amused his audience with pretty things when he ought to have roused their consciences, who has been rounding periods when he ought to have denounced the judgment of God, who has been preaching a dead morality when he ought to have lifted Christ on high as Moses lifted the serpent in the wilderness.

What shall I say, brethren, of those who have dwindled away their congregations, who have sown strife and schism in churches of Christ once happy, peaceful, and prosperous? What shall I say of the men who, out of the pulpit, have made a jest of the most solemn things, whose life has been so devoid of holy passion and devout enthusiasm that men have thought truth to be fiction, religion a stage-play, prayer a nullity, the Spirit of God a phantom, and eternity a joke?

Among all who will need eternal compassion, surely the unfaithful, unholy, unearnest minister of Christ will be the most pitiable! What did I say? Nay, rather the most contemptible, the most despicable, the most accursed! Surely, every thunderbolt shall make his brow its target, and every arrow of God shall seek his conscience as its mark.

If I must perish, let me suffer anyhow but as a minister who has desecrated the pulpit by a slumbering style of ministry, by a want of passion for souls. God knows how oftentimes this body trembles with horror at the thought lest the blood of souls should be required at my hands, and I cannot, and I hope I never may, I cannot understand that lifeless performance of duty, that cold and careless going through of services which, alas! is too common. How shall such men answer for it at the bar of God—the smooth things, the polite and honeyed words, the daubing of men with the untempered mortar of peace, peace, when they should have dealt with them honestly as in God's name?

Oh, sirs, if we never play the Boanerges, we shall hear God's thunder in our ears, and that for ever and ever, and cursed of men, and cursed of the Most High, shall we be without end. In Tophet we shall have this wail peculiar to ourselves, "We preached what we did not feel, we testified of what we did not know, men received not our witness, for we were hypocrites and deceivers, and now we go down, richly deserving it, to the very lowest depths of perdition."

But my hearers, think not when I thus speak of the ministry that I am about to permit you to escape. The voice of your brother's blood crieth to God from the ground, even though you be no infidel lecturer, though you have never been debauched, though you have taught no heresy, though you have spread no schism.

If your life is unholy your brother's blood is on your skirts. "Oh," saith one, "if I sin I sin to myself." Impossible! As well might the miasma say, "I am deadly to myself alone," as well might the cholera say, "My deadly breath is for myself only." Your example spreads, you, like the leper, leave uncleanness on everything you touch. The very atmosphere which surrounds you breeds contagion. What others see you do, they learn to do. Some may rival you, and exceed you, but if you taught them their letters, and they learn to read in hell's book better than you, all that they learn afterwards will come to your door, because of the elements of sin they learned from your practice.

I am afraid many people never look at their transgressions in this light. Why, you cannot help being leaders and teachers. If in your own house you are a drunkard, your boys will be drunkards too! I have heard of a man who flogged his boy for swearing, swearing at him all the time he did it. We know instances of men who feel as if they would sooner bury their children than see them grow up such as they are themselves, but yet how can it be helped? Your practice must and will influence your children, nay, not your children only, but all with whom you come into connection in the mercantile world.

Do not think, sir, if you are a great employer that your men can know what your life is without being affected by that knowledge. There may be some among them who have an inward principle which will not yield to temptation, but I know of hardly anything more dangerous than for a number of operatives to come constantly into contact with one whom they look up to as a master, who is also a master of the arts of sin, and a doctor of damnation to their souls.

Oh! take care, if not for yourselves yet for others, or else, as sure as you live, the voice of your brother's blood will cry unto God from the ground.

To come yet closer home to this present audience. *How much of the blood of man will die at the door of careless professors.* You that make a profession of being Christians and yet live in sin, you are the murderers of souls by the thousands. And you too, who are moral enough in your conversation, and regular in your attendance on the outward forms of religion, you who never weep over sinners, you who never pray for them, you who never speak to them, you who leave all *that* to your minister, and think you have nothing to do with it, the voice of your brother's blood crieth from the ground to heaven.

There died a man in your court the other day, you spoke not to him about his soul, his blood crieth to heaven against you. You live in a villa in the country, there was a neighbor of yours, you were on speaking terms with him, but you talked not to him about his soul, he is dead, he is gone, his blood

crieth to God against you! You have relations, relations to whom you could speak with familiarity, you have talked to them of business, you have befriended them perhaps in their needs, but you have never said a word to them about escaping from hell and fleeing to heaven. When you shall hear the mournful news that they have departed this life will not their blood cry against you from the ground where they are buried?

You work, young man, in an establishment where you are somewhat respected, and without intrusiveness you might often say a good word for your Master, but you do it not, the blood of your fellows shall cry against you if they perish! Do not think the minister is the only man who is responsible for souls. God has made you all watchmen, all of you, in your spheres, are to be watchers for the souls of men, and “If the watchman warns them not,” saith the Lord, “they shall perish, but their blood will I require at the watchman’s hands.”

I know you do not think of this, and I am sorrowfully conscious that I do not feel it myself as much as I ought to do. Ah! the servants of Satan shame me, they shame me, they shame me! There comes at night a message to some of you who are the servants of Satan—“The master is come, and he calls for you.”

You leave your wife and your children without a tear, you go to your master’s house, and there are cups, foul cups, passing round, and you will drink, and drink, and drink, and drink still on, never denying your master, confessing him with many an oath, saying to your comrades many things which injure your poor souls, and yet you do it so bravely, oh, so bravely!

You hardly know how you get home at night, but when the morning comes, and you wake, there is the redness of the eyes, the headache, and the sickness, but the next night when your master wants you, you go again, and so you will do year after year, even though delirium tears you like a whirlwind.

But here am I, a servant of God, and when my Master calls for me and bids me go and confess Him, I am tempted to be still, and when He tells me to speak to yonder man I would wickedly avoid the task, and whereas you confess your master and imprecate a curse upon your head, how often do some of us confess our Master as timidly as if we feared a curse, when instead thereof it is by confession that the curse is turned away!

Oh, it is enough to make us Christians ashamed to think how sinners will confess their god! Hear them at night, as they reel home through the streets, they are not ashamed of their lord and master. Hear how they swear, and defy heaven! They are ashamed of nothing for their lord, and yet we, who have heaven for our reward, and such a Christ to serve, and one so good and gracious to us—look at us—look at us! What poor lovers of our Savior are we! What poor lovers of the souls of men!

I know this is not true of all of you, for there are some of you who love men’s souls. I have delighted to see in many of you that deep earnestness which makes you yearn for the conversion of others. You will sometimes take your stand at the corner of the street, and though you cannot speak as you would, yet, the tears running down your cheeks prove your earnestness.

There are many women among you too, who have spoken a good word for Christ in strange places, and have never been ashamed of Him. But oh! there are some of you, the members of this church, over whom the angels of glory might weep, for what do you do for Christ? What do you give to Christ? You are content to go to heaven yourselves, but you let your neighbors perish for lack of knowledge, and neither the Mission will you help, nor anything else besides. The blood, the blood of dying London crieth from the ground against you before God.

The perishing crowds of every street, and every court, and every alley send up their wail to heaven—“O, God! Your professing people have forgotten us.” The daughter of Zion is become like the ostrich of the desert, the tongue of the sucking child cleaves to the roof of its mouth for want of moisture! O, God, will You not visit Your church for this, and make these, Your people, that forget the souls of men, smart even to the quick!

I do not know whether I have seized hold of any of your consciences, but if I have, may God the Holy Ghost get such a grip of you that He may never let you rest till you say, “Great God, in Your name

I will do something, that the next time I hear the bell toll I may be able to say, 'I did what I could for that man, and if his soul has perished, his blood does not lie at my door, for I did tell him the way of salvation, I did exhort him to flee from the wrath to come.'" I am afraid none of us are altogether guiltless here, we must all take some degree of sin to our own consciences. I fear against every one of us, to some extent, the voice of our brother's blood crieth unto heaven because of our sloth.

II. But to pass on, I was, in the second place, to HOLD UP THIS CRIME TO EXECRATION, the chief point being whose blood it is, it is the blood of *our brethren*. "The voice of *thy brother's* blood crieth unto me from the ground."

All men are our brethren, let any of them perish, if we have not done our best for their conversion, their blood has a fearful and telling cry against us when it reaches to heaven. But I shall rather dwell this morning upon certain special cases. Perhaps, young man, *it is your natural brother's blood* that cries against you. You have been converted to God say these three, four, ten, or twenty years. You have done nothing for your brother's conversion, never written him a letter begging him to think of his state, never spoken a kind and gentle word to him about Christ. No, you have been content to let him know you were a Christian, and were half afraid of that, but you have done nothing for him.

Will not your brother, if he perishes, be well able to say, "My brother and I did hang at the same breast, and were rocked in the same cradle, we played together, 'we filled one home with glee,' he professed to know the way of life, but he never told it to me, he professed to have pardon for his sins, but he never told me how I might find it too, he suffered me to go unpitied to my doom without a tear"? Will not the voice of such blood as that cry against us if we have been guilty?

It may be, however, it is *the blood of your father or mother*. Some of you young people have come to London, and God has met with you in this house of prayer, you still have ungodly parents in the country, have you quite forgotten them? What if your grey-headed sire should die? You know he never thinks of God, what if he should die before his son has talked to him! Oh, you have a strange power, you sons and daughters, if you will only pluck the old man by the sleeve and say, "Father, by the child's love I bear you, I would fain to see you saved!"

And do you fling this power away? Would you see your father and mother sold to slavery, and if it were in your power to redeem them would you keep the sordid pelf? Or if you saw them sick, would you spare your feet and not run for a physician? Or if you saw them sinking in the stream, would you not leap in at the peril of your own life, and rescue them? And will you let them perish, perish forever, without a struggle on your part? Will you see them go down to the depths without stretching out a helping hand? I cannot think thus of you if God has touched your hearts!

But what shall I say to those who are not only careless of parents, but are *neglecting their own children*? Mother, what if the voice of your child's blood should cry to God against you! You trained that child up without the fear of God. You sent your boy and girl to school on the Sunday it is true, but that was only to get rid of them. What was your own example to them? Bad. What was the father's example? Vicious.

When your boy grows up he becomes reckless. You cannot get him to come to a place of worship with you *now*. No, but if you had brought him when he was a child, it may be he would have been here now, and inasmuch as you have tutored him for Satan, if that boy of yours goes down to the pit, his soul shall cry against you.

Up to heaven shall it send its shriek—"Oh God! the mother that did bear me, and the man that did beget me, were as cruel to me as if I were not their child, for they suffered me to come here without weeping for me, without praying for me, without taking me in their arms of loving supplication, and pleading that I might be saved!"

Look at this again in the case of some of you against whom the indictment lies, that *you have done injury to your servants*. Oh! I know great cotton-factors, builders, and traders that have many men in their employment, and have much to answer for.

Sirs, though it is your skill and your capital that brings in your wealth, have you no responsibility towards the men who day and night toil for you? You pay them their wages, but think you your responsibility has ceased with that? Are they not the very bones and sinews of your establishment, and after taking everything into consideration, do you not owe far more to them than ever the best remuneration can pay?

And what if you have left their spiritual state uncared for, have you said, “Oh, it is no business of mine what they do with their Sundays, I do not care what they do when they are out of the mill, or away from the workshop”? What, sirs, do you think that as those hundreds of souls go before God they will lay no impeachment against you? Do you think they will not arraign you at God’s bar?

I tell you, and I think I speak in the Spirit of God when I say this, you shall find that the voices of your neglected workers, the voices of those whom you never sought to bless with spiritual instruction, shall cry against you from the ground.

Would that I had an audience, for the moment, consisting more largely of such persons! There are some here who can, I think, plead exemption, for they have done much to spread spiritual light among those who toil for them. But I do fear they are rather the exception than the rule, and that there are many who think no more of the men that work for them than of their horses, and some not so much, and who take as much interest in the spirit of the beast that goes downwards as in the soul of man that goes upwards. Let it be so no more.

Employers, contractors, you that have great influence, I do entreat you—shall I fall upon my knees to do it? I could not then do it more earnestly—see to it that your brothers’ blood lie not on your skirts throughout eternity!

Oh! there is one sinner who can look upon this in a solemn light! Who is it that has gone down to the pit? You man yonder—who is it who died but a few days ago? The woman that loved you as she loved her own soul, who idolized you, who thought you an angel. Shall I say it before God and to your face?—you ruined her.

And what next, sir? You cast her off as though she were but dirt, and threw her into the kennel with a broken heart. And being there, her god having cast her off—for you were her god—she fell into despair, and despair led to dreadful consequences, and to direr ruin still. She has gone, and you are glad of it, *glad of it*, for you will hear no more of her now you say.

Sir, you *shall* hear of it, you *shall* hear of it, you *shall* hear of it! As long as you live her spirit shall haunt you, track you to the filthy joy which you have planned for a future day, and on your death bed she shall be there to twist her fingers in your hair, to tear your soul out of your body, and drag it down to the hell appointed for such fiends as you, for you spilt her blood, the blood of her that trusted you—a fair, frail thing, worthy to be an angel’s sister, and you pulled her down, and made her a devil’s tool! God save you! for if He does not, your damnation shall be seven-fold.

Oh! you son of Belial, what shall be your doom when God deals with you as you deserve? Are these hot words? Not half as hot as I would make them. I would send them hissing into your souls if I were able, not so much to condemn you as with the hope that though you cannot make good the mischief you have done, you may yet turn from the error of your ways to seek a Savior’s blood, and find pardon for this great iniquity.

Oh! dear friends, let us all take something of our text home. When we think of friends who are dead and gone, are there none over whose corpses we must say, “I did not do what I could for this man, I did not do what I could for this woman”?

I know when I go down to the village where I used to preach, and as I look upon the houses, I am apt to question myself—Was I as earnest with the people as I used to be? I can say I hope I never flinched from telling them all the truth, though sometimes it had to be very rudely and roughly spoken, but yet God knows I do sometimes smite myself to think I did not weep over them more, and did not entreat them more to be won to Christ.

And you too, who sit in these pews so often, many of you are joyful converts to Christ, but numbers of you are still unsaved. What if any of you should be able to say at the last, “We trusted our minister, we hung upon his lips, we were never absent, we loved the Sabbath day, but oh, he did not tell us of our sin, he did not plead with us to be saved, he left us to ourselves, he was cold when his heart should have been hot, he was a man without tears, and had a heart without sympathy for us!”

Oh! sirs, God grant you may never be able to say that of me. God save you, for my soul longs for you. He is my witness how earnestly I long for you all in the bowels of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Come unto Him! Come unto Him! Let not your blood cry out against me!

Oh, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and trust Him, trust Him now, that you may be saved, and that at last I may be able to say, “Here am I and the children whom thou hast given me; thou hast kept them through thy power, and they are preserved even to the end; unto thee be glory for ever and ever!”

III. We are in the third place, and that only for a moment, TO EXPECT THE JUDGMENT.

“The voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground.” It does not cry to a deaf ear, but to the ear of One who hears and feels the cry, and will certainly make bare His arm to smite the offender and to avenge the wrong.

Seducer, infidel, tempter of the young, God hears the cry that goes up against you, and this is its burden, it comes from souls damned through your influence, and they say—“Lord give him his portion with the tormentors, let him suffer, for *we* suffer, he slew *us*, avenge our death!” He will do it, and the day shall come when swift destruction shall overtake you, and as with a rod of iron will He break you, as a potter’s vessel so will He dash you in pieces, and who shall deliver you out of His hands?

The cry goes up to heaven against barren, careless, cold-hearted professors, from many in London, untaught and untrained, who are on their beds today in the jaws of death. They cry out I say against you, careless Christians, and they say, “Lord, take away their privileges from them. Lord, take them away from the church which they disfigure and dishonor. Lord, take away these trees that bear no leaves for the healing of the nations, sweep away this salt which has lost its savor. Lord, cast these candles that give no light into the fire. O Lord, take away, take away once for all these cities that are not set on hills, but are hidden from the sight of men.”

What would you say if God should visit this church for instance, and take out of it all of you who are useless? How would the catalog be thinned! How would our lists show here and there the black mark of erasion! Unless you are doing something to win souls, the voice of your brother’s blood crieth to God from the ground, and it cries that your privileges may be taken away, and the candlestick moved out of its place. And it will be so, my hearers, it will be so except all of us arise to serve our Master.

We are happy when God does prosper us, but if we get many in our midst who do nothing for Christ we shall have “Ichabod” written on these walls. The walls that now ring with the song of the multitude shall hear only the wail of a desolate few, the pulpit that now thunders out God’s own voice will become a dead, dreary, and voiceless platform. The time will come when your deacons and your elders shall be no more men of earnest hearts, and when you shall grope as the blind in the midnight, and say—“Oh, that God would give us back once more such times as we used to have, which we frittered away through our carelessness, and lost through our lukewarmness.”

Further, *how awful must be the cry of this blood from the ground against a minister!* I think I hear it, a cry from earth, from heaven, from hell, “Hurl him from his pulpit. Tear away his vestments! Snatch the book from his blood-stained hand! Smite upon the mouth the dog that will not bark, let his corpse fall before men’s eyes, let him be made a hissing and a byword, because being made a winner of souls, he dared to trifle, and being made a watchman of a besieged city, he dared to lie down and slumber.

Tear him down, tear him down, tear him down,” a hundred voices cry, “Though he be a bishop or a great man in the church, though his eloquence is unrivalled, though his power be matchless, pluck him down from his high places, miscreant that he is to waste men’s time and ruin men’s souls forever!”

And what shall the cry be against *you who still continue by your ill-example to lead others into sin—open sinners and infidels?* It would be an awful thing to pray for a man’s damnation, but there are some

people I know of who while they live do so much mischief, that if they were dead, men would breathe more freely.

I know a village where there lives a man who contaminates half the population. There is a sneer upon his face at which virtue blushes, there is a sneer at which even courage quails. He is a wretch so well taught and so deeply instructed in the highest science of iniquity, that wherever he may go he finds none a match for him, either in his reasoning or in the infamous conclusions which he draws, a man who is a deadly Upas tree, dropping black poison upon all beneath his shadow.

I did think once I would half pray that the man might die and go to his doom, but one must not, and yet, were he gone, the saints might say, "'Tis well," and as over Babylon when she is destroyed and the smoke of her torment goes up forever, the saints will say "Hallelujah," so have I thought that over these against whom the blood of many young people cries to God from the ground, when they go at last to their doom, men might almost say, "Hallelujah, for God hath judged the great sinner who did make the people of the earth drunk with the wine of his fornication."

IV. I hope that these terrible things have prepared our minds to hear the better THE VOICE OF EXHORTATION.

If there be the voice of blood crying against us today, and we affirm that none of us can altogether escape from it, what shall we do to be rid of the past? Can tears of repentance do it? No. Can promises of amendment make a blank page where there are so many blots and blurs? Ah, no! Nothing that we can do can put away our sin. But may not the future atone? May not future zeal wipe out past carelessness? May not the endeavor of our life that is yet to come, make amends for the indolence or vice of the life that is past? No. The blood of our brethren has been shed, and we cannot gather it up. The mischief we have done is not to be retrieved!

O God! souls that are lost through us cannot be saved now, the gates of hell are so shut that they can never be opened. No restitution can we make. The redemption of the soul is precious, and it ceases forever, the sin is not to be washed away by repentance, nor retrieved by reformation.

What then? Hopeless despair for you and I, and every one of us, were it not that there is another blood, the blood of one called Jesus, that crieth from the ground too, and the voice of that blood is "Father, forgive them; Father, forgive them." I hear a voice that says, "Vengeance, vengeance, vengeance," like the voice of Jonah in Nineveh, enough to make every man clothe himself in sackcloth.

But a sweeter and a louder cry comes up—"Mercy, mercy, mercy," and the Father bows His head and says, "Whose blood is that?" and the voice replies, "It is the blood of Your only begotten, shed on Calvary for sin. The Father lays His thunders by, sheathes His sword, stretches out His hand, and crieth to you, the sons of men, "Come unto me, and I will have mercy upon you; turn ye, turn ye; I will pour out my Spirit upon you and ye shall live." "Repent ye, and believe the gospel."

Hate the sin that is past, and trust in Jesus for the future. He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him, for the blood of Jesus Christ, God's dear Son, cleanseth us from all sin. Flee, sinner, flee! The avenger of the blood that you have shed pursues you with hot haste, with feet that are winged, with a heart that is athirst for blood, he pursues you.

Run, man, run! The refuge city is before you. It is there, along the narrow way of faith. Fly, man, fly, for unless you reach that city ere he overtake you he shall smite you, and one blow shall be your everlasting ruin. For God's sake do not loiter, man! Those flowers on the left-hand side—care not for them, you will dye that field with your blood if you linger there. That ale house on the right hand. Stay for none of these things.

He comes! Hark to his footsteps on the hard highway! He comes, he comes, he comes now! Oh, that now you may pass the portals of the refuge city! Trust the Son of God, and sin is forgiven, and you have entered into everlasting life.

Good Lord, add Your blessing! We are powerless, we can say no more. For Christ's sake, "By His agony and bloody sweat, by His cross and passion, by His precious death and burial," bless these souls. 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.