

THE TWO GATHERINGS

NO. 3216

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1910.

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 16, 1863.

“Gather My saints together unto Me, those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.”
Psalm 50:5.

JUST a few sentences must suffice concerning the first meaning of the text. I think there can be little doubt that we have here a prophecy of our Lord's Second Advent and of the gathering together in one assembly of all the chosen people of God—both those who shall then be in Heaven and those who shall then be alive and remaining upon the earth. Having made a Covenant with Christ by sacrifice, these shall all be gathered together unto Him, to be partakers of His Glory when He reigns at the latter day in all the splendor of His millennial Kingdom here below.

The text, however, seems to me to have two other meanings. I believe that it relates, first, to *the gathering together of all God's chosen people by the preaching of the Word and by other means*. And that, secondly, it also has a bearing upon *the great gathering of all the chosen around the Throne of Christ in everlasting Glory*.

I. So, first, I have to speak concerning THE GATHERING TOGETHER OF ALL GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE BY THE PREACHING OF THE WORD AND BY OTHER MEANS. The text appears to me to be a message to God's people from the living lips of Him who redeemed us by His blood. He speaks to the *heavens* as though He would make all the Providences of God to be His servants for this great work, and to the *earth* as though the willing hearts of His people, there, would gladly obey the summons, “Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.”

My first question will be, who are to be gathered? I think we must understand the text as relating to all the chosen people of God, including those who, as yet, have not been called and quickened and have not, in the strict sense of the term, made a personal covenant with God by faith. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Divinely-appointed Representative of all the elect—whatever He did, He did as their Covenant Head, their Sponsor, Surety and Substitute. When He made a Covenant with God on behalf of His people, they virtually made that Covenant, too. As Adam's covenant concerned us all, and was practically our covenant with God, so Christ's Covenant concerns all who are in Him and is reckoned as the Covenant that they, also, have made with His Father. And I believe that the mission of the Gospel is to gather out from among the rest of mankind all those whose names are written on the roll of the Everlasting Covenant—those who were given to Christ by His Father before the foundation of the world!

I know, of course, that the Gospel is to be proclaimed to all. And you know that I have not shunned to declare it in all its freeness and fullness. When we are giving the invitations of the Gospel that we find in the Scriptures, we never think of limiting them! Though we believe the special purpose of Christ's Atonement was the redemption of His Church, yet we know that His Sacrifice was Infinite in value and, therefore, we set the wicket gate as wide open as we can and we repeat Christ's own invitation, “Whoever will, let him take the wafer of life freely.” Yet we do not flinch from the solemn Truth of God that none will ever be saved but those whom God foreknew and predestinated, whom in due time He calls, justifies and glorifies—and the great objective of the Gospel, whatever other ends it may have, is to gather together unto Christ these chosen ones who are to be His in the day when He makes up His jewels. I come into this pulpit and I trust that you, dear Friends, go forth to your various spheres of service with the comforting thought that we are not laboring in vain, or spending our strength for nothing—because there are some who must be saved, or, to use the expressive words of Paul concerning the rest which so many missed, “it remains that some *must* enter therein.” We read concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, “He must go through Samaria,” because there was one poor sinning woman there who was or-

dained unto eternal life, as well as many others who, through her instrumentality, were to be brought to Christ and to believe on Him! We also must preach, or teach, or serve the Lord in other ways because it is written concerning Christ, “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.” The Gospel is to be preached to every creature in order that Christ’s chosen ones may be gathered unto Him. We cast the net into the sea, for we do not know where the fish are, but God knows and He guides into the net those He means us to catch for Him. You know that a magnet will attract steel to itself—well, the Gospel attracts souls that have an affinity to itself—and thus Christ draws His chosen ones unto Himself with the cords of a man, and bands of love!

My next enquiry is, *Who is to do this work of gathering Christ’s chosen ones unto Himself?* Brothers and Sisters in Christ, you know that every true child of God is to be employed in this blessed service! Some seem to think that this work devolves upon only ministers, or upon them and their Brothers in office—their deacons and elders—and that it is to extend no further. We hear much about, “lay agency” nowadays, but we know nothing of any distinction between “clergy” and “laity” in this matter! All God’s people are God’s *kleros*—God’s clergy—or if there is any laity, any common people, *all God’s people are the laity*, “a, peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Nothing has been more disastrous to the cause of Christianity than the leaving of the service of Christ to comparatively few of His professed followers! We shall never see the world turned upside down, as it was in Apostolic times until we get back to the Apostolic practice and all the saints are filled with the Holy Spirit and speak for Christ as the Spirit gives them utterance! My dear Brother, surely you will not say, “I pray you have me excused from serving Christ.” Remember your Lord’s own words, “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let *him that hears say, Come.*” Everyone who has heard and heeded the Gospel invitation is under a solemn obligation to repeat that invitation to others! Every Christian, whatever his talents, or abilities, or circumstances, or opportunities may be, should realize that he has a commission to help in gathering together Christ’s saints unto Him. All are not required to do the same work, but each Believer is bound to do some work for the Master who has done so much for him. And everyone should enquire, “Lord, what will You have me to do.”

Some of you can distribute tracts, and there are some tracts that are worth distributing. I met with two, this afternoon, which will help me in my sermon. And if you get such tracts and give them away discreetly, they may be read and may benefit the readers. Some tracts are never likely to be read, but good, pithy, striking narratives—tracts with much of Christ and the Gospel in them—may be distributed with the prayerful confidence that a blessing will rest upon their perusal. There are some people who have special qualifications for this kind of work for Christ. While travelling last week, I was delighted to see at every station where the train stopped, a gentleman moving from carriage to carriage and offering a tract with the air of a man who was a practiced hand at the business! At a junction where some of us had to change, there were no less than four trains, and he was as busy as he could be giving his tracts to passengers in each train. I watched an American gentleman get out on to the platform and go up to the tract-distributor and begin to talk about the war and other topics—but very soon, the earnest servant of Christ had brought the conversation round to the subject of personal godliness. By-and-by, he came to me. He was glad to see a minister of the Gospel and I was glad to see him—and I hope that I might be as faithful in my sphere of service as that good man was in his!

But some of you can go a little beyond tract-distributing. You can stand up at the corner of the street and preach the Gospel in a simple but earnest style. I thank God every time I remember the scores of young men we have here whose mouths have been opened to speak for Christ. Go, on, my brave sons, bearing your testimony for the Master! Even if the police should sometimes move you off, be content to be moved and go and blow the Gospel trumpet somewhere else! But take care to proclaim the good tidings of salvation, for you have your Lord’s commission to do so! When a man receives a commission from the Queen, he is not a little proud of it. But you have a commission from the King of kings empowering you to gather together unto Him all who are included in the Covenant of His Grace!

Those of you who are not able to preach may find opportunities of talking to individuals one by one. There is great power in “button-holing” people and speaking to them personally about their souls. Some of you can visit the sick and read and pray with them. Or you can look out for those in distress—the brokenhearted and hopeless ones who need to be directed to Him who alone can deliver and heal them. Try to say something for your Master wherever you go, remembering that He has sent even the humblest and feeblest of you to gather together unto Himself those who have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice.

My third question is, Where are they to be gathered? The Lord says, “Gather My saints together unto Me.” We are not told to gather them into the Baptist denomination, or into the Presbyterian kirk, or into the Episcopal establishment, or into any particular church! Our Lord’s command is, “Gather My saints together unto Me.” I have never been ashamed of being called a Baptist since I became one. And if I did not believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ordained the immersion of Believers on profession of their faith, I would not preach and practice it. But, dear as Christ’s own ordinances ought always to be to all Christians, our main business is not to bring men and women to Baptism, but to bring them to Christ! Our principal objective is not even to bring people into Church membership, or to communion at the Lord’s Table, but to bring them, by faith, to Calvary where the one great Sacrifice for sin was offered, where the precious blood of Jesus was shed, where His perfect righteousness was forever completed, where the tearful eyes may see the suffering Savior and where the broken heart may find healing and salvation in His grievous wounds! Labor, my beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, in all that you do or say, in your personal dealings with sinners, in your tracts, in your preaching, in your teaching, to set forth the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ—for so will you best obey your Lord’s command, “Gather My saints together unto Me, those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.”

Perhaps someone asks, “*Where are the chosen ones that are to be gathered unto Christ?*” Where are they? Why, some of them may be sitting in the same pew where you now are! If you really want to gather Christ’s saints together unto Him, begin with those who are close beside you now. If you want to bring Christ’s chosen ones to Him, you can find some of them just outside this Tabernacle. You can find some of them as you are walking to your homes. You can find some of them in the streets, the courts and alleys all around us! You can find some of them in Whitechapel and others of them in the West End. I verily believe that missionaries of the Cross are just as much needed in Belgravia as in Shoreditch. And perhaps some who live in the biggest houses in the wealthiest parts of London are less likely to have the message of salvation carried to them than are multitudes of the poorer citizens of this great city! Then there are the people in our suburban towns and villages where so many neglect the ordinances of God’s House, or have not the religious privileges which abound in this metropolis. And beyond them are great masses in the country for whom few or none are caring. And the almost innumerable hosts of heathens, Muslims and others in distant lands who have never yet even *heard* the name of Jesus and know nothing of the glorious Gospel which He commanded His servants to preach to them in His name! So dear Friends, wherever you may be, seek to gather some to Christ! Begin with those who are in this congregation now, or with those who are in your own household and then cease not from this blessed work as long as you live! As long as there is another jewel to be found to adorn Christ’s crown—as long as there is another wandering sheep to be brought back to the Good Shepherd who bought it with His own blood—keep on at this blessed work in obedience to your Lord’s command, “Gather My saints together unto Me, those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.”

II. Now, secondly, I want to show you that the text has a bearing upon THE GREAT GATHERING OF ALL THE CHOSEN AROUND THE THRONE OF CHRIST IN GLORY. In His intercessory prayer before He suffered, our Lord Jesus Christ prayed “Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My Glory which You have given Me.” And in the text Christ says to His servants in the heavens above and on the earth beneath, “Gather My saints together unto Me, those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.”

I ask again, as I asked in the previous part of my discourse, *Who are to be gathered?* They are those who have made a covenant with the Lord by sacrifice, and here I take the text to mean those who have made a personal covenant with God in Christ Jesus—those who, by an act of faith, have accepted the Covenant which Christ made with His Father on their behalf. This Covenant has been made by Sacrifice and through the mediation of the crucified Savior they have joined hands with the reconciled God. By His one offering, Christ “has perfected forever them that are sanctified,” those who are set apart unto Him to be His sanctified ones, or, as the text calls them, His “saints.” All of us who have been thus sanctified may boldly “enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus by a new and living way which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh.”

Dear Friend, have you entered into this personal Covenant with God in Christ Jesus? Have you, by faith, made a personal appropriation of what Christ did upon the Cross when He suffered and died as the Substitute and Surety of all who trust in Him? If you are one of Christ’s chosen ones, you will accept Him as your Savior. As long as you are content with your own doings and trust in them, you cannot be numbered among His saints. So—

“Cast your deadly ‘doing’ down,

*Down at Jesus' feet!
Stand in Him, in Him alone
Gloriously complete!"*

"He that believes on Him is not condemned." Do you believe on Him? If you do, you are not condemned and, therefore, you are justified and you shall, in due time, be glorified and so you shall be among those who shall be gathered together unto Christ at the last. But the Lord expressly says, "Gather My saints together unto Me." Those who have repented of their sin and turned from it. Those who have been constrained by His Grace to live holy lives and who have entered into a covenant with Him to hate the sin that cost Him so much to redeem them from it!

Now I repeat another question that I asked before, *Where are these chosen ones to be gathered?* Let me beg you again to look at that little, all-important word, "Me," in the text, "Gather My saints together unto Me." The Lord does not say, "Gather My saints together unto Heaven, to the general assembly and Church of the First-Born." They are to be gathered there, but He does not say so here. He says, "Gather My saints together unto Me." Is it not the very joy of Heaven, the quintessence of its bliss, that we are to be gathered unto Christ? It is very delightful to think of Heaven as the place of the perfect communion of saints, as the place of perfect worship, as the place of perfect rest and at the same time of constant unwearied activity—but, after all, though it may be a great comfort to us to think of Heaven under any of these aspects, yet it is a far sweeter thought to us to remember that Heaven is the place where Jesus is—and where His saints are to be gathered together unto Him! So with delight we sing—

*"There shall we see His face,
And never, never sin!
There from the rivers of His Grace,
Drink endless pleasures in."*

The very glory of Heaven is that we shall see Him—that same Christ who once died upon Calvary's Cross—that we shall fall down and worship at His feet! No, more—that He shall kiss us with the kisses of His mouth and welcome us to dwell with Him forever! There are ineffable delights in the very name of Jesus! It is indeed like ointment poured forth! Then what unspeakable delights must there be in His Presence in Glory! If all His garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and casia, what must Christ, Himself, be? For one glimpse of Him, I would give a life of broken bones, fever and every conceivable pang! No, more—I think I may even venture to say with Rutherford that if there were seven Hells between my soul and Christ—and He should bid me dash through them all, I would count the distance all too short if I might but get to Him at the last, to behold His face, and to dwell with Him forever! I do not know whether there are any degrees in Glory and I do not trouble about whether there are or are not—but this I do know, that all the saints shall be gathered together unto Christ—and that degree is high enough for any of them!

How are these chosen ones to be gathered? The verse before our text tells us that the Lord shall call to the heavens from above and to the earth beneath, so we may be sure that the work which He commands shall be accomplished! We sometimes say of a man, when he is very determined to do a certain thing, "He will move Heaven and earth to do it." And Christ will move Heaven and earth to accomplish His great purpose of gathering together unto Himself all those that have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice! Heaven shall have a part in this great work. The angels are intensely interested in the saints who are to be their companions in Glory forever, for, "are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" God gives the holy angels charge over His saints to keep them in all their ways, and to bear them up in their hands lest they should dash their feet against the stones. And they act at last as a spiritual convoy escorting them to Heaven even as Lazarus "was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." Even Satan, himself, and all his hosts are under the supreme control of Christ. And He can use them as He pleases in the accomplishment of His purposes concerning His saints. At all events, they shall not be able to frustrate those purposes, but they shall most certainly be fulfilled. Earth, too, shall have its share in gathering Christ's chosen ones unto Him. Every wind that blows will speed them to their goal. Every wave shall wash them towards their desired haven. Everything that happens shall be overruled to the same end—the gathering of Christ's saints together unto Him in Glory!

Sometimes you and I lament when Christ's saints are gathered unto Him by death, but is not this wrong? They must go Home to Christ at some time or other, so why not go when God pleases and as God pleases? I do not know that I would pray for sudden death, though sudden death is, to a Believer in Christ, sudden Glory—but I certainly would not pray that I might not be called home suddenly. So far as I am personally concerned, I would like to have a similar expe-

rience to that of good Dr. Beaumont who was preaching the Word on earth, and just as he finished uttering a sentence of his sermon, was singing the praises of God in Heaven! Or an experience like that of another minister, Brother Flood, whom I knew. He had just given out that verse—

*“Father, I long, I faint to see
The place of Your abode.
I’d leave Your earthly courts and flee
Up to Your seat, My God”—*

when he fell back—for his desire was granted and he had gone from the earthly courts of the Lord’s House up to the seat of God on high! Still, it does not matter how or when the saints are gathered unto Christ—whether by plague, or fever, or long lingering affliction, whether by accident on land or on the sea, or in any other way—they shall all be gathered together unto Him in due time! And when the muster-roll is called at the last, not one will be missing of all those that have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice!. The great question for all of us is shall we be among them? In order to answer that question, we must ask a few others. Have we entered into personal covenant relationship with God through relying upon Christ’s Sacrifice upon the Cross? Have we repented of sin and trusted in Christ as our own personal Savior? Does He count us among His saints, those who are seeking, by His Grace, to live in righteousness and holiness before Him all our days? If so, then we may rest assured that we, too, shall be gathered unto Him with all those whom He has redeemed with His most precious blood!

But what am I to say to those who cannot answer these questions satisfactorily? Possibly the tracts I mentioned in the earlier part of my discourse will help to give me a message to them. There may be some people here who have no hope, no good hope, concerning the hereafter. Perhaps you do not even believe in any hereafter! If so, just listen to this little narrative. “Some time ago, there lived in a certain market town a watchmaker, an honest, sober and industrious man, but he was an infidel. He did not believe in the Bible. He said that it was a book that was only fit for old women. As for what some said concerning the terrors of Hell, they never alarmed him—and as for what they said concerning the glories of Heaven, he reckoned they were only fancies or dreams. Suddenly, in the midst of life, he was stricken down and it was soon manifest that he was dying, and dying rapidly. On the day of his death, early in the morning, he began to say, ‘I’m going, I’m going—I don’t know where!’ And then, as rapidly as he could speak, he continued, for the space of twelve or thirteen hours, to say the same words over and over and over again, ‘I’m going, I’m going—I don’t know where! I’m going, I’m going—I don’t know where.’ As his strength failed him, his voice became more weak and tremulous, but still his utterance was just the same, ‘I’m going, I’m going—I don’t know where.’ And, at last, he died with those words upon his lips, ‘I’m going, I’m going—I don’t know where!’”

O My dear Hearers, I do pray that this may not be the dying cry of any one of you, for if it is, the dreadful sequel is given in our Lord’s declaration concerning the rich man, “in Hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments.” I cannot imagine anything in the whole work of the ministry that is more painful than trying to talk to those who have neglected Christ until the last hours of their lives and who, even then, feel no sorrow for sin, but pass out of this world into the next without the least ray of hope! There is, in my memory, a scene of this character which comes to me very vividly at this moment. Many years ago, when the cholera was raging in London, I was summoned, at three o’clock one morning, to go to a house near London Bridge where a man was very ill. He had been attacked by the cholera and knew that he must die. But although he was a godless, blasphemous man, he could think of no one but me whom he would like to see. So I had to be sent for in hot haste. I went to him, but he could do little more than express his horror at what was before him and his utter despair of any hope of escape. He asked me to pray, and I did so. But before I had finished, he was unconscious and soon he was in the pangs of death. I left him a corpse. I remember that for long afterwards I felt sad and grieved concerning the state of that man’s soul. Yet, by nature, we were the children of wrath even as that man was—and but for Divine Grace, we might have spent our last day on earth as he did, in Sabbath-breaking-and our last hour of life in despair. God grant that we may always feel devoutly thankful for the Sovereign Grace that has made us to differ from others whom once we resembled, at least as far as this—that we were all, alike, the children of wrath!

In the other tract I read about a working man who was passing by an infidel lecture hall. He stepped in, although he was a Christian and, as he entered, someone on the platform, who had the appearance of a gentleman, was saying that it was all nonsense for anyone to say that infidels died a miserable death. He had just been to see one of their number and he

could assure them, on the word of a gentleman, that he had died very happily. When the speech was over, the working man asked whether he might be allowed to say something. “Yes,” said the chairman, “certainly you may.” So he rose and said, “I have just heard something that has greatly surprised me—I have heard of an infidel who has died happily. I have never before heard of such a thing as that happening, but as the speaker assured us, on the word of a gentleman, that it is true, I must not question the statement. I am, therefore, under the necessity of admitting that one infidel has died happily, but I feel sure that he must have lived a very miserable life, or else he could not have died so happily. Now I have a dear, loving wife, who makes my home right and cheerful. And when I come back from work, she always receives me with a smiling face and with my meals tastefully prepared. So I am sure that if I had to die and leave her—and to go I know not where—I could not die happily. I have four children—as smiling and happy children as you ever saw—and I love to hear their musical voices and their pretty prattle. But if I had to die and leave them—and to go I know not where—I could not die happily. So the only supposition that I can draw from the life of the man of whom this gentleman has told us is that he and his wife lived a cat-and-dog life, so that he was glad to be free from her at any cost. And that his children must have been so wicked or tiresome that he was glad to get away from them even though he did not know where he was going. My wife and children make me so happy that I do not want to leave them—and the only thing which makes me look forward to death without sorrow is the thought that I am going to a better world than this where there is One who loves me even more than my wife and children do, and where I hope one day to meet my dear ones again, to be parted from them no more forever.”

When I read that tract, I thought that the working man’s reasoning was perfectly sound. And I wish that all of you, dear Friends, had just as good cause as he had to live happily and to die happily! You will have that if you will only trust in the same Savior in whom he trusted! May God the Holy Spirit enable you to do so now! This is the way of salvation. “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” He saves all who put their trust in Him! “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” All who believe on Him are His chosen ones—His *saints*, as our text calls them—and those who truly trust Him are known by the holiness and graciousness of their lives! They are gathered unto Him, here, as they are, by His Grace, called out from the mass of mankind and, in God’s good time, they shall all be gathered unto Him in that great general assembly and Church of the First-Born which are written in Heaven! May God grant that everyone of us may be there, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:

PSALM 50.

A Psalm of Asaph.

It is mentioned, in the life of Hezekiah, that “the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David and of Asaph, the Seer,” so that very likely this Psalm was sung in the Temple after it had been cleansed and reopened for worship. The first part of the Psalm contains a majestic prophecy of the Second Advent.

Verses 1-3. *The mighty God, even the LORD, has spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shined. Our God shall come and shall not keep silent; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him.* He came once under the old legal dispensation and then, “there were thunders and lightning, and a thick cloud upon the mount...Sinai was altogether on a smoke because the Lord descended upon in it fire.” And when Christ shall come, in the latter days, with equal splendor, there shall be fire and tempest to swell the pomp of His court.

4. *He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people.* Heaven shall yield up the blessed who are already there, and earth shall give up those that are alive and remain until Christ’s coming. And so “the whole company of the redeemed shall stand in the Presence of their great Lord and Savior when Christ shall come to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believe.” This is the summons that is to ring out to the heavens above and the earth beneath—

5, 6. *Gather My saints together unto Me, those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare His righteousness: for God is Judge, Himself. Selah.* Now the subject of the Psalm changes, but let not the Doctrine of the Second Advent pass from our thoughts. Christ will surely come again, but are we all prepared to meet

Him? Shall we behold that glorious Appearance with joy or with sorrow? When He reigns gloriously with His ancients, shall we share in the splendors of that reign? Lord, call us to Yourself now! Help us to suffer with You now! Help us to bear reproach for You among men, now, and then, though—

*“It does not yet appear
How great we must be made”—*

yet we know that—

*“When we see our Savior here,
We shall be like our Head.”*

Now the Lord addresses His own people—

7. *Hear, O My people, and I will speak, O Israel, and I will testify against you: I am God, even your God.* Note, then, that with all the faults which Christ can find in His people, He is still their God! All the sins of the saints cannot separate them from Christ. They may blot the indenture, but it is only a copy of the Covenant made by Christ on their behalf—the real title-deeds are in Heaven beyond all risk of loss. Sinner though you are, O child of Israel, yet God is still your God—and all your imperfections, follies and backslidings can never rob you of your eternal interest in Him!

8-13. *I will not reprove you for your sacrifices or your burnt offerings, to have been continually before Me. I will take no bullock out of your house, nor he goats out of your folds. For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you: for the world is Mine, and the fullness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?* The Lord puts a slur upon the Levitical sacrifices in comparison with evangelical offerings. He sets prayer and praise before the blood of bulls or the sacrifices of goats! Yet we are not to understand that God despises the gifts of His people. If you give to God as though He needed your help, He will have none of it! But our gracious God is so condescending that although He needs nothing, He permits His people to bring their thank-offerings and to lay them at His feet. My God, will You accept a gift from *me*? Then I will not be slow to give it to You! Let everyone of us feel in his heart that though God needs nothing from us, yet we need the privilege of giving to Him.

14, 15. *Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay your vows unto the most High; and call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.* [See Sermons #1505, Volume 25—PRAYER TO GOD IN TROUBLE AN ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE and #1876, Volume 31—ROBINSON CRUSOE’S TEXT—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] See the three ways of praising God? One is by giving Him your grateful thanksgiving. Banish your murmurings. Sweep away your mistrusts and let your mouth be filled with His praise all the daylong! Then the next way of praising God is by paying your vows unto Him—let your constant prayers and offerings to God prove the gratitude of your heart. And the last and sweetest way of praising God is to call upon Him in the day of trouble. There are many of you who are in trouble at this moment, therefore call upon God! Perhaps you say, “That will benefit me, but how will it glorify Him?” Why, God gets much honor out of hearts that dare to trust Him! If you can cast your burden upon the Lord, you will as much honor Him as angels do when, with veiled faces, they cry, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of His Glory.” We adore His wisdom, His faithfulness, His love, His Grace, His Truth, His power when we believe that in the darkest night He can bring us sudden daylight and that in the ebb tide of our affairs He can bring the floods back again. Christian, honor your God by calling upon Him! With all your difficulties, doubts and fears, call upon God and He will deliver you, and you shall glorify Him! Now comes another change—

16. *But unto the wicked God says, What have you to do to declare My statutes, or that you should take My Covenant in your mouth?* Unconverted preachers, unsaved Sunday school teachers—what answer can you give to this question of the Most High?

17-20. *Seeing you hate instruction, and cast My Words behind you. When you saw a thief, then you consented with him and have been a partaker with adulterers. You give your mouth to evil and your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother’s son.* Slander, you see, is put side by side with adultery and theft and, indeed, I do not know whether it is not the worst of the three! You might almost as well cut a man’s throat as slander his character. You had better steal his purse than steal his good name. “What shall be given unto you? Or what shall be done unto you, you false tongue? Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.” There are no coals hot

enough to burn slanderous tongues! There are no punishments severe enough for those who slander their own mother's son.

21. *These things have you done and I kept silent.* An amazing thing is that silence of God, that long-suffering with sinners! And another amazing thing is the impudent interpretation which the sinner gives to that silence!

21. *You thought that I was altogether such an One as yourself: but I will reprove you, and set them in order before your eyes.* "I will do what I have not yet done. If you think Me in arrears, I will clear myself with you soon. I will ease Me of My adversaries." When God arises in judgment, He may make it to be a slow work, but He will make it to be a sure work.

22, 23. *Now consider this, you that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver. Whoever offers praise, glorifies Me: and to him that orders his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God.* How blessed, then, is it to praise the Lord both with your lips and with your life!

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307

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