

BOTH SIDES OF THE SHIELD

NO. 2233

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, DECEMBER 6, 1891,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
 ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 14, 1891.

“Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.”
Exodus 17:8, 9.

IN trying to understand the Truth of God we are in great danger of being one-sided. One man catches at part of a Truth of God and says, “That is it and that is the whole of it.” Another man lays hold of another side of the Truth of God and he says, “This is the whole of it” and, straightaway, there arises a contention between them. They are like the men who quarreled as to the material of which a certain shield was made. One of them said that it was a golden shield. The other was equally sure that it was a silver one, whereas it so happened that it was gold on one side and silver on the other. So they fiercely wrangled when they might very well have been agreed if they had known a little more. Most Truths of God have two sides and it is well to try to see both of them. Nearly every doctrine in the Word of God is balanced by some other doctrine and many of the differences among the people of God have arisen from the undue stress which has been laid on one aspect of the Truth while the other side has been altogether neglected. This danger very frequently besets us.

For instance, some see the Sovereignty of God and are so carried away with that sublime Truth, that they deny the responsibility of man! They thus both wrest the doctrine they do know and fight against the doctrine they do not know. Others can see the universality of the Gospel invitation and, with large hearts can urge all men to turn unto God and live—but they have never seen the speciality of this redemptive work of Christ and so fail to understand the eternal purpose of God to save His chosen people. Running away with half a Truth, they are like men that go through the wilderness wearing only one shoe—they become lame in one foot—and that makes them limp all over. It does not matter which foot it is that is lame—the man is a *cripple* if either foot is thus afflicted.

It is essential for us to hold our minds ready to receive whatever the Holy Spirit teaches—and frequently to accept Truths of God which we cannot harmonize. I have long ago given up all attempts to reconcile what God has revealed in one part of the Bible with what He has made known in another part. If I find, in God's Word, doctrines which appear to me to be at variance with the teaching in other passages, I say to myself, “God knows where these things harmonize and if He had wanted *me* to know it, He would have told me. As He has not told me, why should I worry myself about the matter? I am not going to speculate and theorize as to where these Truths meet. Nor will I cast a bridge of gossamer across the deep gulf which I fancy I see and then trust myself to a thread that cannot bear my weight! “The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which are *revealed*, belong unto us and to our children forever.”

One said to me, the other day, concerning two great doctrines, “How do you make these two agree?” I answered by first asking another question, “How do I make two things agree that never fell out? There is no need for me to attempt anything of the kind. These two Truths are perfectly reconcilable and as they come from God's mouth, it would be as difficult for you to show that they do not agree as it is for me to show that they do agree.” God does not say, “Yes,” and “No.” The Lord does not blow hot and cold. If He reveals two doctrines which apparently contradict each other, yet are they both true, since both are spoken by the God who cannot lie! And if I cannot see how they can both be true, it comforts me to think that I am not asked to see it—I am expected to *believe* it—and God's Grace gives me the faith to do even that. In fact, I rather like a difficulty, for then there is an opportunity for the exercise of faith. It is glorious, when

one is sailing, to come right up under the lee of a great rock and to be compelled to say, “Well, I cannot proceed any further this way.” What then? Why, just let your anchor down and make a harbor of the rock, and lie there at rest while stormy winds blow.

That is what you should do with difficult doctrines—make a quiet haven of the mysterious Truth of God and let it shelter you in time of doubt or despondency! When the storm is passed, you will find that there are other ways for you to go where it is perfectly plain sailing. Seeing that the Revelation is *Divine*, there must be mysteries which *mortals* cannot understand at present. Let us comfort ourselves with our Savior’s words, “What you know not now, you shall know hereafter.” Some day the way will be made plain before us, but meanwhile our attitude should be that of trustful children who believe implicitly whatever their loving father tells them, whether they comprehend it or not.

In the present discourse I am going to take up two sets of Truths which are rather varied and yet are very practical. My range of thought will be extensive, but I will not wander from the incident before us. There are four things which have been suggested to my mind while meditating upon this text and its surroundings, each of which may be viewed from two standpoints. First, in this assault of Amalek on the people of God, we see *persecution in its double aspect*. Secondly, in the rod of Moses we behold *instrumentality in its double relation*. Thirdly, in the battle we observe *prudence in its double activity*. And lastly, in the leaders of the people we are reminded of *Christ in His double capacity* as He pleads for us yonder and fights for us here.

I. First, let us look at PERSECUTION IN ITS DOUBLE ASPECT. On the one hand, notice that this attack upon Israel was Amalek’s great sin, on account of which the nation was doomed to be extirpated. Because of this, God said, “I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under Heaven.” But, on the other hand, this assault was the result of Israel’s sin, for it is significantly put after the strife of Massah and Meribah, “*Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim.*” The point is this—persecution may come to you from evil men, distinctly from them—and it may be their wicked free will which makes them assail you. But, at the same time, it may be your sin which lies at the bottom of it, and because you have erred, they have been permitted and even *appointed*, to bring trouble upon you. Let us think of these two things.

Notice well that *assaults upon us may arise from the sins of others*. It is right that we should recognize this, lest in the dark day we should become unduly discouraged. Persecution often arises because we come into conflict with wicked men, but God will judge our adversaries—He will remember His Covenant with His people and deliver us from the hand of all our enemies.

These Amalekites attacked Israel and greatly sinned in so doing, for they were the first that made war against God’s people. He who had so graciously chosen and kept them, who, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm had brought them through the Red Sea, had espoused their cause, and His Word, “Touch not My anointed, and do My Prophets no harm,” had been a kind of shield to Israel in her earliest days. Though Abraham and others had, at times, gone forth to battle, nobody had fought with Israel since she had become a nation and, by mighty signs and wonders, had been delivered from the hand of Pharaoh and the bondage of Egypt. But Amalek was the first among the nations which dared to assail the chosen people of God and, therefore, a stern doom was decreed against him. He had heard what great things God had done for His people and yet he presumed to fight against them! And in so doing, he impiously lifted up his hand against Jehovah, Himself! He became the leader in this particular form of evil and thus assumed a fearful responsibility—and assured to himself a terrible judgment.

But the impiety was still worse, for Amalek went out of his way to attack Israel. The people had not come into his territory—they were a good way from it and were passing quietly by—but we read, “*Then came Amalek.*” His envy was stirred up so much that he came away from his own region to fight with Israel without any provocation. Amalek was a descendant of Esau and the hate of Esau towards Jacob so burned in the breast of Amalek towards Israel that he came a long journey in order that he might at once, without proclaiming war, fall suddenly upon the hosts of Israel. Because the attack was thus wanton, he had to suffer the stern judgment of God. Let not wicked men imagine that because God is in Heaven and they are upon the earth they can, with impunity, oppose His people. “He that sits in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.” Woe be to the man who wantonly attacks the saints of the Most High God! Be not disquieted, O child of God, if this is your case! “Fret not yourself because of evildoers, neither be you envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass and wither as the green herb.”

Moreover, Amalek in this act went forth to fight against God, Himself. It was not with Israel, alone, that he warred—he also battled with Jehovah, the God of Israel. In the words of the 16th verse, as some translate them, Amalek had laid his hands upon the Throne of God and, therefore, God laid His own hand upon the Throne and swore by His Throne that He would uproot Amalek from among the nations. It was because the opposition to the Israelites was distinctly on account of God, Himself, that, therefore, Amalek had to be cut off. Dear Brothers and Sisters, you and I may be assailed by wicked men and we may distinctly trace the whole of it to their malice and to their enmity against God, Himself, but though that may be all true, yet we must not, therefore, be, ourselves, malicious towards them. Neither must we be proud, as though we were innocent and they, alone, were guilty.

Wicked men nailed our Savior to the Cross, but His prayer for them was, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” Dearly Beloved, if the ungodly hate you and persecute you, avenge not yourselves, but rather give way to wrath, for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, says the Lord.” When you are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, the Lord takes notice of it. “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute *Me*?” was the word which came from the excellent Glory to him who journeyed to Damascus, “breathing out threats and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord.” When he persecuted them, he was really persecuting their Master! Be not, then, troubled if men revile you, persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for Christ’s sake, but rather, “Rejoice and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in Heaven: for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you.” Leave the issue with the Lord—the battle is His and He will, in His own time and way, overthrow all His and your adversaries.

Let us now turn our thoughts to the other aspect of this subject. The guilt of ungodly men in persecuting God’s people is not inconsistent with my next statement, that *assaults upon us may also arise from our own sins*. We may have brought the evil upon ourselves and we had better look to it that there is not a sin of our own that lies at the root of what we suffer, for it was so with these people. When they had chided with Moses and murmured against God, “*Then came Amalek.*”

Israel had been quarrelling with God. Do you wonder, then, that other people quarreled with *them*? You may often read your sin in its punishment and, if you had prophetic eye enough, you might see your chastening in your offense. Many a time our severity to others is the reason for God’s apparent severity with us. If we have withheld from the poor, we need not wonder if God withholds from us. And if we have been slow to forgive, we need not marvel if we do not soon get a sense of forgiveness for ourselves. We often urge people to do unto others as we would that they should do unto us. Let me reverently say another thing—do unto *God* as you would that God should do unto you, for, “with the froward God will show Himself froward.” That ink with which we wrote the ill word, God will use in the writing down of our sentence. It was so in this case—Israel quarreled with God—and now Amalek quarrels with Israel.

They put a question about God, “Is the Lord among us, or not?”—a horrible question, since it involved a doubt as to the veracity of Moses and as to the reality of all the great wonders which were worked in Egypt and in the wilderness! And, because they questioned God, God makes it a serious question between them and Amalek—a question which, for a while, seemed to be answered favorably, for Israel prevailed. But soon it was answered unfavorably, for Amalek prevailed. The conflicting hosts sway to and fro on the battlefield—first victors, then vanquished—again conquering, then once more conquered! How will the terrible struggle end? No wonder that God puts the issue in question, when they had put Him in question! If you question God, He will soon leave you to question yourselves. I do not wonder that men say, “Have I any faith?” when they begin to doubt the very Inspiration of Scripture! What is the good of having any faith when there is nothing left for you to believe? You may well fear to build upon that Scripture whose very foundations you have undermined! If we question God, God will make our safety a question—and we shall have a stern fight for it.

Moreover, we find that Israel had uttered threats against Moses, so that he said, “They are almost ready to stone me.” Now, if they would stone the man of God, is it at all amazing that the men of the world were ready to kill them? If you go against Moses, God will send Amalek against you, for remember that God chastens His people! Though He forgives, He chastens. And He chastens all the more because He forgives. He condemns us in our consciences, that He may not condemn us at the Judgement Seat. He afflicts us *here*, that we may not be destroyed with the world at the end! Now is the day of the Believer’s *chastisement* for his benefit. By-and-by will be the time of the unbeliever’s *punishment* which shall bring him no benefit, but shall be the just reward of his evil deeds. Child of God, do you wish to receive chastise-

ment? You have only to go into sin and you may rest assured that you will not escape the rod! If you are a bastard, you may, perhaps, sin and prosper, but if you are a true-born child of God, you cannot sin without smarting for it—

*“Did I meet no trials here,
No chastisement by the way,
Might I not, with reason, fear
I should prove a castaway?
Bastards may escape the rod,
Sunk in earthly vain delight;
But the true-born child of God
Must not, would not if he might.”*

So there is our first point. We may sometimes justly charge our afflictions upon the evil intent of ungodly men and yet, at the same time, we may have to also charge them upon ourselves. It may be equally true that we have procured them by our own slips and stumbling in the ways of the Lord, as that evil men have wickedly raised their hands against us. So, when attacks are made upon us, let us be more careful to search our own hearts and examine our own lives, than to condemn the faults of other men. To their God they will have to render their own account.

II. In the second place, let us think of INSTRUMENTALITY IN ITS DOUBLE RELATION. Here, again, another contrast is to be found in the text and its connection. If you will notice, in the fifth verse, God says to Moses, “Take with you of the elders of Israel; and *your rod*, with which you smote the river.” But when Moses talks about the rod, in the ninth verse, which forms our text, he says, “Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with *the rod of God* in my hand.” In both verses it is the same rod which is spoken of. God calls it the rod of Moses. Moses calls it the rod of God and both these expressions are true. I want you to remember that. The first is true—it *is* the rod of Moses—that is the *human* side. And in this connection it is sometimes called the rod of Moses and sometimes the rod of *Aaron*. But the *Divine* side is just as noticeable and then it is called the rod of God. With reference to the instrumentality which God is pleased to use, we must thus remember its twofold nature and look on both sides of the shield.

One side is that God *calls it the rod of Moses and so honors Moses*. Wherever there is an opportunity of doing honor to the faith of His own servants, God is never slow to use it! He is a King who delights to give glory to His warriors when they behave themselves bravely in the heat of battle. It gives Him pleasure to knight them on the field and let them know that they have done well. At the end He will say to those who have been valiant for His cause, “Well done, good and faithful servants.” Even here He gives His chosen a foretaste of that full approval which will make their Heaven complete. God is not afraid of spoiling His people by saying a good word about them. You remember the story of the man who had a good wife and one said to him, “Why, she is worth her weight in gold.” “Yes,” he said, “she is worth a Gibraltar rock in gold, but I never tell her that. You know that it is necessary to maintain discipline and if I were to tell her how much I really value her, she would not know herself.”

Well, now, that is wrong! It does people good to be told how highly we value them. There is many a Christian man and woman who would do better if, now and then, someone would speak a kindly word to them and let them know that they had done well. God Himself gives us an example of this, for He, here, puts honor on His servant, by saying to Moses, “*Your rod*, with which you smote the river, take in your hand, and go.” Moses was the instrument whom God used against Pharaoh and though his rod was, in itself, only a common stick, yet it was Moses who used the rod and it was really that rod with which he smote the river. God actually did use him and it is not God’s way to use a man and then say nothing about it. God ascribes to Moses what Moses really did! We must never despise the instrumentality which God uses. The tendency of our nature is to run to the other extreme and to rest in instrumentality. We often need to remember that word, “Cursed be the man that trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the Lord.” But in trying to avoid that rock, we must not run on the other and slight all instrumentality. God will have His servants esteemed and, if He puts honor upon them, we cannot be wrong if He also honors them.

Moreover, it really was the rod of Moses and would not so well have fitted any other hand. God does not put into a position of influence a man unfit for the post. Even Moses did not work wonders with the rod until he had renounced the riches of Egypt and borne the burden of life in the wilderness. There was a fitness in the fact of the rod being in the hand of such a man. He had no rod when, in his fleshly energy, he slew the Egyptian whom he found oppressing the Hebrew slave. Had it then been in his hand, what sad havoc he might have made! But now he used it as God directed. In fact, the

rod was the symbol of his authority and that authority was not bestowed upon him until he was qualified to exercise it! Thus, in a very real sense, it was the rod of Moses. In addition to this, it was the *faith* of Moses which gave power to his rod—he, himself, was the conductor of the Divine energy. Had the rod been wielded by another man, self-appointed and lacking the confidence which Moses had come to possess in God, it would have been simply a powerless stick. But because of his authority and because of his faith, it was right to call it, “the rod of Moses.” When a man is evidently used of God, let us be quick to recognize the special qualities which render him worthy to be used, and let us esteem him very highly in love for his work’s sake. Thus we see that God calls the almond branch, which did such wonders in Egypt and at the Red Sea, the rod of Moses.

On the other hand, *Moses calls it the rod of God and so honors God.* He whom God uses, gives God the praise, for God is *always* the source of our strength. And if any work is done that is worth doing, unto Him must be ascribed all the glory! It was not in his own might that Moses turned the waters of the Nile into blood and caused the fish to die. It was not by any power inherent in himself that he made the dust of Egypt to live and become a terrible plague to the people. It was not by any human magic that Moses divided the Red Sea and made a way for the ransomed nation to march through its depths. No one knew better than he that the instrument that branded the breast of the Red Sea and left a dry mark where it fell, was the rod of God, not man’s! It is He, alone, that does great wonders, and unto His name be all the praise! “*Non nobis, Domine,*” must always be our Psalm of adoration unto Jehovah—“Not unto us, O Lord; not unto us, but unto Your name, give glory.”

Let us learn, from these words of Moses, that instrumentality is not to be decried or despised, for God uses it. But the *instrument* must never be allowed to usurp the place of God, for it must be always remembered that it is *God* who uses it. The axe must not exalt itself against him that cuts with it, but, when there are trees to be felled, it would be folly to throw the axe away! The net must not be made a god that we may sacrifice to it, but it would be idle to go fishing without a net! Use your agencies and your instrumentalities to the very fullest extent, but understand that it is *God* that works *in* you, and God that works *by* you, if anything is accomplished that is worthy of record.

Thus I have given you two sets of things in which it is easy enough to blunder if you shut one of your eyes, or if you only look at them in one light—first, the persecution of God’s people and, secondly, the instrumentality used in God’s service.

III. And now, for a third thing. Behold, in this incident, PRUDENCE IN ITS DOUBLE ACTIVITY. You have that in the text. Moses said unto Joshua, “Choose us out men and go out, fight with Amalek.” To which Joshua might have replied, “Yes, I will gladly do that, and you will go, too, Moses, and fight, will you not?” No, no, he will not! “Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.” You see, as Oliver Cromwell would have put it, prudence trusts in God and keeps its powder dry. Prudence prays with Moses while it fights with Joshua. In like manner, in the activities of our holy faith, we must learn to balance work and worship, prayer for victory and conflict with the enemy. In the case before us, we see that *the means are not neglected.* Moses did not call all the people to pray when it was time for fighting! He prayed, but at the same time he set the battle in array. This is true wisdom, for, “faith without works is dead.” We cannot expect to have souls saved if we pray and never preach! We cannot expect to have our children saved if we only pray for them night and morning, and never speak to them about eternal matters, and do not instruct them in the things of God. The *means* must not be neglected!

Observe how Moses prepared to fight the Amalekites. He said to Joshua, “*Choose us out men.*” He did not lose sight of the necessity of having the most fit warriors because his trust was in God. If someone, seeing only one side of the question, had come to him, and said, “The battle is the Lord’s, why do you want to pick out men? Will not one man do as well as another?” Moses would probably have replied, “These Amalekites are mighty warriors. Take *chosen* men—men that are able-bodied—men that are expert in war, the choicest men you can find, and go to war with Amalek. We shall need our best men to overcome such a foe. Choose us out men.”

This is a rule without exception when you go to work for Christ—bring forth the best of everything that you have—your best thought, your best knowledge, your best ability! Let the Church always see to it that she tries to get the best men she can to fight the battles of the Lord. It is a mistake to suppose that just anybody will do for Christian work. Christ may use whom He wills, even the weakest things and the things that are despised—but as for us, we must always

look to that which is most adapted to the work, most suitable for it, always hearkening to the words of Moses to Joshua, “Choose us out men.”

The leader was also chosen—“Moses said unto *Joshua*.” He did not pick up the first youth that he met and say to him, “Go and fight these Amalekites,” but he took the man whom God had fitted for the post of leader in the war, even Joshua, and said to him, “Go out and fight with Amalek.” It is well for us, in carrying on the work and warfare for God, to rally round those whom God has qualified to be leaders. Means are not to be neglected, nor may God’s work be done in a slovenly style. Choose you out men and let the leader of them be a choice man, the man of God’s choice.

The time for the battle was also chosen. “*Tomorrow* I will stand on the top of the hill.” Why not tonight, Moses? These Amalekites have just been falling upon you. Why not fight them at once? Well, because the people were not ready. It would take a little time to get the fighting men in order. Tomorrow was quite soon enough. Besides, Moses felt by instinct that he would fight these children of the wilderness best when he could *see* them—not by night, when they knew the way better than he did—but by daylight. To those of you who earnestly desire to serve God, I would say—Do not be in too great a hurry, lest your indiscreet zeal should bring disaster upon you. “He that believes shall not make haste.” Choose the best time! Serve God wisely. Go about the work as if all depended upon you—and then trust in God, knowing that all depends upon Him! Use the same foresight, the same judgment, the same care that you would use if it were solely your own work. And then, when you have done that, fall back upon God, feeling that all your care and all your foresight will be in vain unless He stretches forth His hand to help and to ensure success!

Note, again, that the battle was most real. Moses did not say, “Choose you out men and go and drive Amalek away like a flock of sheep.” No, but, “Go out and *fight with Amalek*.” Believe me, Brothers and Sisters, we make a great mistake if we think that this world is to be conquered for Christ without mighty efforts. Some talk as if the expenditure of a few pounds and the going forth of a few men will end the whole war. It will do nothing of the sort! If nations are to be subdued to Christ, His Church must exert all her power. All her power without Him is *nothing*, but if He chooses to use her power, He will have the whole of it brought into use before He gives the blessing! “Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek.” When the battle began, it was no child’s play! It was a hand-to-hand conflict, a struggle for life or death, and the end of it was that, “Joshua vanquished Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.” Not merely by *praying*, but, “with the edge of the sword.” Moses on the hilltop is doing his part by holding up the rod—but you must have Joshua down below with the sharp edge of the sword, or else Amalek will laugh at the prayers of Moses! I should like to have this rule written on every man’s mind, that if he is to serve God, and get a blessing from God, he must have both the prayer of Moses and the sword of Joshua!

But, on the other hand, in this battle, *reliance on God is not neglected*. Moses ascends the hill holding up his banner—and that banner is the rod of God. The staff on which God’s servant had been accustomed to lean, God had blessed, and made it to be a scepter, the sign of His royal Presence and a wonder-working thing in the land! Moses holds this up. The banner is the rod of God and the banner-bearer is the chosen servant of God. Everything on Israel’s side is of *God*—Moses and Joshua are ordained of God and the rod chosen of Moses is, at the same time, the rod of God! This is held up where all the people can see it and every warrior, as he turns his eyes, can behold that rod of God which had worked such wonders before, still held aloft above the conflicting armies! When Moses’ hands are heavy, the symbol of God’s Presence need not be lowered, for Aaron and Hur are at hand to hold up his arms. Israel is continually reminded of the interest of God in the battle against Amalek. The rod in the hand of Moses seems to say, “God is fighting for you! God’s servant is holding up the appointed standard!” Undoubtedly that assurance must have largely aided them to go through the battle with a brave heart. The meaning of it would be clear—“Fight, but trust. War with Amalek with the edge of the sword, but prevail over Amalek by prevailing with God in prayer.”

Unfortunately, in our work for God, we generally fall into one of two blunders. Either we get a lot of machinery and think that we shall accomplish everything by that, or else we are like some whom I have known, who have confided so much in prayer that they have done nothing but pray! Prayer is a downright mockery if it does not lead us into the practical use of means likely to promote the ends for which we pray. I have known friends take medicine when they have been ill and never pray about their sickness. There are some others who pray about their sickness, but never take the proper medicine. They are *both* wrong! You must have Joshua and you must have Moses, too, in the time of trial! Go before God

with your sickness, but if there is an appointed means that has been made useful to others, use it, for God will bless you by the use of means.

Try to see two sides of a thing. Do not trust exclusively to either one or the other. It is a very heinous fault to trust the means without God, but, though it is a much smaller fault to trust in God and not use the means, yet still it *is* a fault. Practical prudence will lead you to do both. It gives to Joshua his sword, that he may make it red with the blood of the enemy and it gives to Moses his rod, that he may go with it up to the top of the hill and hold it up there in the sight of the people—that all may know that the battle is the Lord's—and that He *will* deliver the enemy into their hands. God make you wise in these things and enable you to use both the rod of God and the sword of man!

IV. I have to speak of one other Truth and then I am done. Behold here, in a wondrous type, CHRIST IN HIS TWO-FOLD CAPACITY. Christ is represented to us here as Moses on the hill, pleading, and as Joshua in the valley, fighting!

Learn, first, that *Christ is pleading for us*. He is not here. He is risen and He has ascended to the right hand of God, even the Father, and there He is making intercession for His people. It is because He intercedes for us that we win the victory! Cannot your faith's eyes see Him now, on the top of the hill, with the rod of God in His hand, with all power given to Him in Heaven and in earth, pleading with authority before the great Throne of Jehovah? Here is the secret of our strength! He never fails. He never needs to sit down upon a stone, nor does He need any to hold up His hands because they grow weary. No, blessed be His name, He pleads and prevails from generation to generation—and will continue to do so until He shall descend from Heaven a second time to complete the victory of His people! In His mediation is our confidence.

But, then, do not forget that *He is also warring for us*. He is here, though I have just said that He is not here. In one sense He is gone and in another sense He remains. On the very eve of His departure, He said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." And His promise is forever true, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." So, though He has gone into Glory, He is yet here in a *spiritual* sense by the Holy Spirit—He is His Lieutenant, who takes the Kingdom and presides over it, and works in it on behalf of King Jesus. He is that "other Comforter" whom the Lord Jesus promised to send to His disciples. And so, though Christ has ascended, that blessed Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, has taken His place and, by the Holy Spirit, Christ is still here! We need not pray for the Holy Spirit to be poured out. He never will be poured out, again, since He was once poured out at Pentecost and is still here! You may very properly ask to be baptized into the Holy Spirit if you desire to know His power to the fullest and you may go down into His influences till you are immersed therein, but how can we ask that the Spirit should again be poured out, when He has not gone back to Heaven? He came down once and here He stays. "He shall abide with you forever." This is the dispensation of the Holy Spirit and, in Him, Christ is always with us, our greater Joshua, fighting for the people whom He will one day lead into the Promised Land, the heavenly Canaan!

I think that I see our Joshua now, sword in hand, chasing our adversaries. And I turn my eyes upward and see our Moses, rod in hand, pleading for His people. Let us see Him in both capacities and thank God that Christ is All—not one type of the Law, but all the types—not one of the ceremonials, but all the ceremonials, and all the shadows melting into one great substance! Glory be to His name! Believe in Christ in Heaven and trust Him with your prayers! Believe in Christ on earth—range yourself on His side and rest assured that no foe will be able to stand against Him! He is on the battlefield, today, and in the thickest of the fray! When His own people are driven back and His adversaries begin to rejoice, friends and foes, alike, shall yet prove the power of His almighty arm! "Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O most Mighty, with Your glory and Your majesty; and in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and Your right hand shall teach You terrible things."—

*"Fight for Yourself, O Jesus, fight,
The travail of Your soul regain."*

So, you see that though two things may look contradictory, they are often both really true, and are both different sides of one shield. Try, then, to always see both sides of every Truth of God revealed in the Scriptures. Divine Truths often resemble tramcars which travel upon two lines of iron, and yet the two lines make but one tramway. The lines are parallel and do not touch each other. How could the car travel if they did? This is the Truth of God—it is but one Truth—but it has two sides which run parallel to each other. Do not try to join them, nor take them up and make them cross each other, but travel along them till you come to the great terminus above.

God bless you, if you are His people! If not, all is wrong. Oh, may you now trust the living Christ! He is here, ready to hear your cry for mercy! He is there in Glory, ready to plead your cause. He waits to be gracious to sinners here below. He waits in Heaven till His enemies shall be made His footstool. May you bow before the silver scepter of His mercy, that you may not be broken in pieces by the iron rod of His justice—and may the Lord be with you all! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Exodus 17.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—686, 665, 664.

TO THE READERS OF MY SERMONS:

DEAR FRIENDS—I had much enjoyment in preaching the sermon of this week and I trust the same will be the case with its readers. The lessons are rather wide in their range, but they serve as illustrations of the great fact that there are two sides to most questions, and that progress in the Truth of God is along two fixed lines which cannot be made to meet according to human judgment, but are, nevertheless, each of them laid down by Revelation upon the same basis. We believe in the Sovereignty of God *and* in the responsibility of man—and while we conceive that everything is fixed by Divine decree, we perceive that man is a free and self-contained moral agent! We no longer ask, “How can these things be?”—we make inscrutable mysteries into footstools for faith to kneel upon!

The hour of your friend’s death is appointed and the length of his illness—and yet you will pray for the prolonging of his life and the restoration of his health—and your prayer will be answered!

May the Lord deal graciously with all my readers! So prays
Your hearty friend,

C. H. Spurgeon,

Mentone, November 28, 1891.

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