

HOME.

Oh! who is home? that sweet companionship. Of life the better part; The happy smile of welcome on the lip...

Visitor Pulpit.

THE ORPHAN'S FATHER.

A New Sermon by Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.

"For in thee the fatherless findeth mercy."—Hosea, 14: 3.

I. First, here is encouragement. Here is encouragement, though such as none spy out but needy ones. You notice that the people who said, "In thee the fatherless findeth mercy," are the people who had fallen by their iniquity...

A tear in the eye is a fine thing to clear it. He that never saw his sin has never seen the mercy of God. David never sang of the loving kindness and tender mercies of God so well as in that fifty first Psalm...

Have I here any sin-stricken sinner? Are you desponding and despairing? Did you come here feeling that there would be no mercy for you? Catch at this word. "In Thee the fatherless findeth mercy."

THE FRIEND OF THE FRIENDLESS, be a friend to me?" It looks like a candle put in the window of your Father's house to guide you home through the darkness.

This encouragement is, moreover, one which is a strong inducement to cast away all other confidences. If God be the friend of the fatherless, he may be a friend to me; would it not be well for me to trust him...

some little hope, then he says to himself, "I will even venture to look to the Lord." When the prodigal son in the far-off country had spent all his living...

WHAT THE DEVIL WILL DO;

he will tell you that there is no mercy for you. He is an old liar. There is abundant mercy for the greatest sinner. What does the devil know about it? He never sought mercy...

"May I trust in Jesus Christ?" says one. "May I?" Of course you may; it is your sin if you do not, and, indeed, the chief and most ruinous of sins. Many of you are trusting in your sacraments and your priests...

Furthermore, there is much encouragement in my text, because it gives us a clear look into the heart of God. I always like to see how a man treats children. You learn a great deal about a man when you see that. Some men abhor children, and almost wish that they could exterminate them...

Who knows the sufferings of the little ones when father dies? I confess it touches my heart that little children should suffer as they do. When men are wicked, one is almost thankful that there should be poverty following their sin to whip them out of it...

Great God, the seraphim adore Thee. Angels, day without night, in serried ranks stand waiting to do Thy bidding. Thy voice is the thunder, and the glance of Thine eye is the lightning. At Thy bidding kings die, dynasties decay, and empires are blotted out...

THE FATHER OF JESUS,

I am sure of it. Oh, how like the Son is to the Father, for if the Father is thus the children's Patron, what think ye of the Son, and of his likeness to his Father, when he said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

There is this encouragement too,

that our asses are like those of the widow and the fatherless. The orphan has no father, no helper, no means of sustenance. And you, my hearer, are in that state, without God. If there be no God, you have no father. If you have no God to trust to, you have no protector, and you are undone.

If there is a heart here that wants encouraging, it will spell out my meaning. But if you do not need it, and some of you do not, for you are fine fellows, full of your own righteousness, then I have nothing to say to you but this, "The whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

WHAT TO DO.

First, if you want to find salvation to-night, take the text as a sort of spiritual guide-book, and plead your need. Do not say anything about your merits; the less said about them the better. Your position is like that of the Irish servant, who said when asked for his character, that the gentleman at his last place told him he would do better without his character than with it.

"Lord," it says in the text, "in Thee the fatherless findeth mercy. It does not say that they are good and holy, but simply that they are fatherless. It does not say that they find reward, but that they find mercy. Lord, that is all I have to say to Thee. I am in need; I am in awful need; and because I am such a sinner, it makes my need all the worse, for that is where my need lies; I need righteousness; I need a new heart; I need a right spirit. I need a total change. I need everything, for I have nothing but sin and misery. O Lord, I only urge that as Thou dost help the fatherless, simply and only because they are needy, I pray Thee save me irrespective of my character, for my need is great."

The next lesson for you is this; be sure to take hold of this text by the handle, and

ASK FOR MERCY.

"In Thee the fatherless findeth,"—what? Findeth mercy. Mercy is the handle of the text. When you go to God, ask for mercy, not for justice. A mother once went to the Emperor Napoleon to ask for mercy for her son. He had committed some breach of the French law; and the emperor replied, "Madam, this is the second time the boy has offended; justice requires that he should die." She answered, "Sire, I did not come to ask for justice. I beg for mercy." He answered, "He does not deserve mercy." "Sire," said she, "it would not be mercy if he deserved it. I ask for mercy." When she put it in that way, the emperor replied, "Well, then, I will have mercy."

My unsaved hearer, you deserve to be in hell to-night. It is of the Lord's mercy that you are not consumed. Do not dream of asking for justice, for justice will be your ruin; but get a hold of this word, "Lord, I ask for mercy," and if something whispers, "Why, you have been a hardened sinner," say, "Lord, it is true: but Lord I ask for mercy."

What do the fatherless expect of us when we stand in God's place to them, and take them into our Orphanage, and try to be as a father to them? What do they expect of us? Well, I do not know that the younger ones have intellect enough to know all they expect, but they expect everything. They expect all that they want, and although they do not quite know what they do want, they leave

me, I beseech Thee. That is the way to plead. Mind you keep to it. That is the straight way.

YOU WILL GET HEAVEN SO,

for you will get Christ so, since his mercy endureth forever.

Learn another lesson, you that want to get peace with God at once, and I hope that some of you do. Cast your sin, trial, and sorrow upon God. The text says, "In Thee the fatherless findeth mercy;" so the business of the fatherless ones is to come to God, and just look to him for mercy; and that is your business. Do not, I charge you, look to anybody else but the living God to help you. It is a snare, and a horrible one, for people to trust to priests; and I will say, in addition to that, to trust to ministers, to trust to any man whatever. I have known persons when they have heard an address and have been impressed, to say, "Oh, I shall find Christ in the inquiry-room!" That inquiry-room may be a snare to you if you talk thus. You want to speak to the man who preached to you, do you? Do not speak to him; go to Jesus direct. "But I wish to see that good man who spoke to me the other day." Very well, so you may by-and-by, but mind you do not put that good man or that good woman in the place of Christ. The text says, "In Thee the fatherless findeth mercy," and it is in Christ, and in him alone, that mercy is to be found. Go directly and distinctly to Jesus.

God is everywhere. Let your spirit be conscious that God is present, and now let your heart speak to him. To him confess your sin; do not pour that rubbish into the ear of mortal man. To God lay bare your heart, and to him alone; it is not a fit sight for any human being. Tell the Lord Jesus all your wants and woes, and he will help you, for in the Son of God is the help of the sons of men. Oh, that I knew how to speak these things, but they will surely go home to those who are in spiritual need! You that are not in need, you, that are good you that are self-righteous, will see nothing in the text for you. No, and there was not meant to be, for the Lord has a people that he will draw unto himself, and these people are known by this—that they are weary of themselves.

God's chosen people exercise the natural art of the weak, namely, clinging. They are made to feel their poverty and their need, and then when they hear of the fulness of Christ they haste to lay hold on him. Have you never noticed how the plants that God has made weak are all endowed with

A NATURAL FACULTY FOR CLINGING?

One of the first things that the vine does is to put forth its tendrils for something to cling to. The hop, the woodbine, the sweet pea, they have all a little hook ready to lay hold on a support. Now, if God is about to bless you at this hour, you have a little tendril that is being put out to find something to lay hold of, and as the gardener carefully puts his stick for the sweet pea, or as the farmer puts his pole for the hop, I have tried to set my text in your way. I would set the blessed Lord before you, and say, In him the fatherless findeth mercy, cling to him; cling to him! It is our life to do it. Cling firmly! The limpet by the seashore can do little, but it can cling, and so it does cling, and very firmly too. That is the one thing you can do, poor sinner, and I pray the Holy Spirit to lead you to it at once. God help you at this moment to cling to Christ, and if you do, you are saved, yes, saved at once. In him the fatherless findeth mercy. Cling to him, and you shall find mercy too.

WHAT TO EXPECT

of God. "In Thee the fatherless findeth mercy." What do the fatherless expect of us when we stand in God's place to them, and take them into our Orphanage, and try to be as a father to them? What do they expect of us? Well, I do not know that the younger ones have intellect enough to know all they expect, but they expect everything. They expect all that they want, and although they do not quite know what they do want, they leave

it to us. They believe that all will be found that they require. I like a poor christian who does not know all he wants; but yet knows that his God will supply all his needs. He trusts Jesus for all. He trusts his heavenly Father as a child; he does not know what he may require to-day, and require in the unknown future, but then his heavenly Father knows, and he leaves it all to him.

As our orphan boys grow older, however, they begin to have a perception of their wants, and they trust that they shall have everything provided for them, and more, perhaps. So is it with us when we come to the great Father. We say: all that I would provide for my children, if I had everything, and could give them all that wisdom could desire, my God will provide for me, for he will be a Father to me. If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall he, who has taken you into his family, though you once were fatherless, give all good things to you. You shall have food and raiment, and sufficient for this life. You shall have protection, guidance, instruction, and tender affection. You shall have

A TOUCH OR TWO OF THE ROE every now and then, and that is among your choice mercies; but you shall also have all the cherishing of his sweet love; and by-and-by when you are fit for it, he will take you home from school, and you shall see his face, and you shall live forever in his house above, where the many mansions be.

Oh, if you come and put yourself by a simple faith into the blessed custody and keeping of God. He will admit you into his Salvation Orphanage, and he will take care of you; and you shall find him a better Father than you will be to your own children—a better Father than the best of fathers could ever be to the best beloved of sons. "I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." I will not say more, but I should like to leave John's choice sentence as my last word. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" Blessed be Thy name, O Lord, that we also have been led of Thy Spirit to prove that in Thee the fatherless findeth mercy!

SEVEN SHORT RULES FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

- 1. Never neglect daily private prayer; and when you pray remember that God is present, and that he hears your prayers. (Heb. xi: 6.)
2. Never neglect private Bible reading; and when you read remember that God is speaking to you, and that you are to believe and act upon what he says. I believe all back-sliding begins with the neglect of these two rules. (John v: 39.)
3. Never profess to ask God for anything you do not want. Tell him the truth about yourself, however bad it makes you; then ask him for Christ's sake, to forgive you what you are, and to make you what you ought to be. (John iv: 24.)
4. Never let a day pass without trying to do something for Jesus. Every night reflect on what Jesus has done for you, and then ask yourself What have I done to-day for him? (Matt. v: 13-16.)
5. If ever you are in doubt as to a thing being right or wrong, go to your room, and kneel down and ask God's blessing upon it. (Col. ii: 17.) If you cannot do this it is wrong. (Rom. xiv: 23.)
6. Never take your Christianity from Christians, or argue that because such and such people do so and so, therefore you may. (2 Cor. x: 12) You are to ask yourself, "How would Christ act in my place?" and strive to follow him. (John x: 27.)
7. Never believe what you feel if it contradicts God's Word. Ask yourself, Can what I feel be true if God's Word be true; and if both cannot be true, believe God, and make your own heart the liar. (Rom. iii. 4: 1 John v: 10, 11.)—Brownlow North.

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