

Behold, I Stand and Knock.

The door is closed;—cold, damp and drear decay
Cling round the windows, shutting out the day,
Rank weeds and grasses tall block up the way.

A weary traveller, worn and sad of heart,
Enters the gate; pushing the briars apart,
Forces a path. His tread makes owl start.

The moss-grown step is reached; he loudly calls;
"Behold, I stand and knock; fling wide your halls.
And doors of inner rooms! What spell enthalls
Your slumbering souls? If any man will open the door,
Be he of high estate or lowliest of the poor,
I'll come and sup with him, with him divide my store."

No answer to this call. What means this silence drear?
O man, would thou wert hot or cold, alive or dead;
Then Mercy's call would rouse thee with this "living bread."

"But now thy riches fill thee, and thine own good deeds
Supply thy spirit's wants and all thy deepest needs.
Know, pride and self-esteem are only broken reeds.

Come buy of me the gold that's passed the fire,
The garments white, a righteousness that's higher
Than all thy goodly merits, which the mire
Of earth has stained and spotted. For thine eyes,
Which sin and self have clouded, now be wise
And buy mine eye-salve: for each one that buys
Sees past this world of sickness, grief and moans;
Sees worlds of radiant glory, golden thrones;
These vacant seats and crowns each saved one owns.

Now, now, I plead! O now be wise, repent,
For Mercy's day is not entirely spent:
Hear Love's sweet whisper, "Dear heart, now relent."

CLEIA.

Baltimore, May 1884.

Visitor Pulpit.

A HEAVENLY PATTERN FOR OUR EARTHLY LIFE.

A Sermon by Pastor C. H. Spurgeon, Preached at Exeter Hall, London, at the Anniversary of the Baptist Missionary Society.

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."—Matt. 6: 10.

I. May the Holy Spirit be with us, while I first lead you to observe that the comparison is not far-fetched. That our present obedience to God should belike to that of holy ones above is not a strained and fanatical notion. It is not far-fetched, for earth and heaven were called into being by the same Creator. If, then, heaven and earth were created by the same God, and are sustained by the same power, and governed from the same throne, we believe that the same end will be subserved by each of them, that both heaven and earth shall tell out the glory of God. They are two bells of the same chime, and this is the music that peals forth from them: "The Lord shall reign forever and ever, Hallelujah!" He that made can remake. The curse which fell upon the ground was not eternal; thorns and thistles pass away. God will bless the earth for Christ's sake, even as once he cursed it for man's sake.

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." It was so once. Perfect obedience to the heavenly will upon this earth will only be a return to the good old times which ended at the gate of Eden. Those who desire to set up the kingdom of God are not instituting a new order of things; they are restoring, not inventing. Earth will drop into the old groove again. As it was in the beginning so shall it be yet again. History shall, in the divinest sense, repeat itself. The temple of the Lord shall be among men, and the Lord God shall dwell among them. "Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven."

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

IT WILL BE SO AT THE LAST.

I shall not venture far into prophecy. Some brethren are quite at home where I should lose myself. I have scarcely yet been able to get out of the gospels and the epistles; and that deep book of Revelation,

with its waters to swim in, I must leave to better instructed minds. "Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of that book;" to that blessing I would aspire, but I cannot yet make claim to interpret it. This much, however, seems plain—there is to be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." This creation, which now "groaneth and travaileth in pain," in sympathy with man, is to be brought forth from its bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Blessed be the Lord Christ, when he brought his people out of their bondage. He did not redeem their spirits only, but their bodies also; hence their material part is the Lord's as well as their spiritual nature, and hence again this very earth which we inhabit shall be uplifted in connection with us. The creation itself shall be delivered. Materialism, out of which there has been once made a vesture for the Godhead in the person of Christ, shall become a fit temple for the Lord of hosts. The New Jerusalem shall come down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride is prepared for her husband. We are sure of this. Therefore unto this consummation let us strive mightily, praying evermore, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

Meanwhile, remember also that there is an analogy between earth and heaven, so that the one is the type of the other. You could not describe heaven except by borrowing the things of earth to symbolize it; and this shows that there is

A REAL LIKENESS

between them. What is heaven? It is Paradise, or a garden. Walk amid your fragrant flowers and think of heaven's bed of spices. Heaven is a kingdom; thrones, and crowns, and palms are the earthly emblems of the heavenlies. Heaven is a city; and there, again, you fetch your metaphor from the dwelling-places of men. It is a place of "many mansions"—the homes of the glorified. Houses are of earth, yet is God our dwelling-place. Heaven is a wedding feast; and even such is this present dispensation. The tables are spread here as well as there; and it is our privilege to go forth and bring in the hedge-birds and the highwaymen, that the banqueting-hall may be filled. While the saints above eat bread in the marriage supper of the Lamb, we do the like below in another sense.

Between earth and heaven there is but a thin partition. The home country is much nearer than we think. I question if "the land that is very far off" be a true name for heaven. Was it not an extended kingdom on earth which was intended by the prophet rather than the celestial home? Heaven is by no means the far country, for it is the Father's house. Are we not taught to say, "Our Father which art in heaven?" Where the Father is the true spirit of adoption counts itself near. Our Lord would have us mingle heaven with earth naming it twice in this short prayer.

II. Secondly, this comparison is eminently instructive. Does it not teach us that what we do for God is not everything, but how we do it is also to be considered? The Lord Jesus Christ would not only have us do the Father's will, but do it after a certain model. And what

AN ELEVATED MODEL

it is! Yet is it none too elevated, for we would not wish to render to our heavenly Father service of an inferior kind. If none of us dare to say that we are perfect, we are yet resolved that we will never rest until we are. We do not desire that our pattern should be lowered, but that our imitation should be raised.

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Mark the words "be done," for they touch a vital point of the text. God's will is done in heaven. How very practical! On earth his will is often forgotten, and his rule ignored. My brethren, I am afraid that Christ's will on earth is very much more discussed than done. Too often we are satisfied with having approved of that will, or with having spoken of it in words of commendation. But we must not stay in thought, resolve, or word; the

prayer is practical and business-like. "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." An idle man stretched himself on his bed when the sun had risen high in heaven, and as he rolled over, he muttered to himself that he wished this were hard work, for he could do any quantity of it with pleasure. Many might wish that to think and to speak were to do the will of God; for then they would have effected it very thoroughly. Up yonder there is no playing with sacred things; they do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his Word. Would God his will were not alone preached and sung below, but actually done as it is in heaven.

In heaven the will of God is done in spirit, for they are spirits there. It is done in truth with undivided heart, and unquestioned desire. On earth, too often, it is done and yet not done; for a dull formality mocks real obedience. Here obedience often shades off into dreary routine. We shine with the lips, but our hearts are silent. We pray as if the mere utterance of words were prayer. We sometimes preach living truth with dead lips. It must no longer be so. Would God we had the fire and fervor of those burning ones who behold the face of God. We pray in that sense, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

In heaven they do God's will constantly, without failure. Would God it could be so here! They do God's will universally, without making a selection. Here

MEN PICK AND CHOOSE—

take this commandment to be obeyed, and lay that commandment by as non-essential. We are, I fear, all tinctured, more or less, with this odious gall. A certain part of obedience is hard, and therefore we try to forget it. It must no longer be so; but whatsoever Jesus saith unto us we must do. We should often make diligent search, and go through our churches to see wherein we differ from the divine pattern. Some goodly Babylonish garment or wedge of gold may be as an accursed thing in the camp, bringing disaster to the Lord's armies. Let us not neglect anything which our God commands lest he withhold his blessing.

His will is done in heaven instantly, and without hesitation. We, I fear, are given to delays. We plead that we must look the thing round about. "Second thoughts are best," we say, whereas the first thoughts of eager love are the prime production of our being. I would that we were obedient at all hazard, for therein lies the truest safety. Let us pray the Lord that we may do his will on earth as it is done in heaven; that is, joyfully, without the slightest weariness. When our hearts are right, it is a glad thing to serve God, though it be only to unloose the latches of our Master's shoes. Even as they are glad in heaven, with a felicity born of the presence of the Lord, so should we be glad, and find our strength in the joy of the Lord. In heaven the will of the Lord is done right humbly. There perfect purity is set in a frame of lowliness. Too often we fall into self-gratulation, and it defiles our best deeds. Brother, pray the Lord to keep thee low at his feet, for in no other place canst thou be largely used of him.

The comparison being thus instructive, I pray that we may be the better for our meditation upon it. I do not find it an easy thing even to describe the model; but if we essay to copy it: "this is the work; this is the difficulty." Unless we are girded with the Divine strength we shall never do the will of God as it is done in heaven. Here is a greater labor than those of Hercules, bringing with it victories nobler than those of Alexander. To this the unaided wisdom of Solomon could not attain; the Holy Ghost must transform us, and lead the earthly in us captive to the heavenly.

III. Thirdly, I beg you to notice, dear friends, that this comparison of holy service on earth to that which is in heaven, is based upon facts.

The fact will both comfort and stimulate us. Two pieces are mentioned in the text which seems very dissimilar, and yet the likeness exceeds the unlikeness—earth and heaven.

We have the same fare on earth as the saints in heaven, for "the Lamb in the midst of the throne doth feed them;" he is the shepherd of his flock below, and daily feeds us upon himself. His flesh is not indeed, his blood is drink indeed. Whence came the refreshing draughts of the immortals? The Lamb doth lead them to the living fountains of waters; and doth he not even here below say to us, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink?" The same river of the water of life which makes glad the city of our God above, also waters the garden of the Lord below.

Brethren, we are in the same company below as they enjoy above. Up there they are with Christ, and here he is with us, for he hath said—"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." There is a difference as to the brightness of his presence; but not as to the reality of it. "But heaven is a place of peace," say one; "there they rest from their labors." Beloved, our estate here is not without its peace and rest. "Alas!" cries one, "I find it far otherwise." I know it. But whence come wars and fightings but of our fretfulness and unbelief? "We which have believed do enter into rest." "But we have not their victory," cries one, "for they are more than conquerors."

Yes, and "our warfare is accomplished." We have

PROPHETIC TESTIMONY

to that fact. Moreover, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." In the Lord Jesus Christ the Lord giveth us the victory, and maketh us to triumph in every place.

"Up there," says a brother, "they are all accepted, but here we are in a state of probation." Did you ever read that in the Bible? for I never did. A believer is in no state of probation; he has passed from death unto life, and shall never come into condemnation. "Aye," saith one, "but heaven is the place of perfect service; for his servants shall serve him." But is not this the place, in some respects, of a more extensive service still? Are there not many things which perfect saints above and holy angels cannot do? If we had choice of a sphere in which we could serve God with widest range, we should choose not heaven but earth. There are no slums and overcrowded rooms in heaven to which we can go with help, but there are plenty of them here. There are no jungles and regions of malaria where missionaries may prove their unreserved consecration by preaching the gospel at the expense of their lives. In some respects this world has a preference beyond the heavenly state as to the extent of doing the will of God. Oh, that we were better men, and then the saints above might almost envy us!

Do not be impatient to go to heaven. Nay, do not have a wish about it. Set very loose by the things of earth; yet count it a great privilege to have a long life in which to serve the Lord on earth. Our mortal life is but a brief interval between the two eternities, and if we judged unselfishly, and saw the needs of earth, we might almost say, "Give us back the antediluvian periods of human life, that though a child we might serve the Lord in suffering and in reproach, as we cannot do in glory." This life is the vestibule of glory. Array yourselves in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, for this is the court dress of earth and heaven. Manifest at once the spirit of saints, or else you will never abide with them. Now begin the song which your lips shall carol in Paradise, or else you will never be admitted to the heavenly choirs; none can unite in the music but those who have rehearsed it here below.

IV. Lastly, this comparison, which I feel I can so feebly bring out, of doing the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven, ought to be borne out by holy deeds. Here is the urgency of the missionary enterprise. God's will can never be intelligently done where it is not known; therefore, in the first place, it becomes us as the followers of Jesus to see to it that the will of the Lord is made known by heralds of peace sent forth from among us. Why has it not been already published in every land?

Is it not probably true that the selfishness of christians is the main reason for the slow progress of christianity? If christianity is never spread in the world at a more speedy rate than the present, it will not even keep pace with the growth of the population. If we are going to give to Christ's kingdom no larger percentage than we have usually given, I suppose it will require about an eternity-and-a-half to convert the world; or, in other words, it will never be done. The progress made is so slow, that it threatens to be like that of the crab, which is always described in the fable as going backward. What do we give, brethren? What do we do? It is not for us to say, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; but, Lord, Thou hast many ways and means of accomplishing that will; I pray thee do it, but let me not be asked to help on the work." No, when I utter this prayer, if I am sincere I shall be searching my stores to see

WHAT I CAN GIVE

to make known the truth. I shall be inquiring whether I cannot personally speak the saving word. You who fail to support missions when it is in your power to do so should never say, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done," but leave out that petition for fear of mocking God.

We want to bless the world; we have a thousand schemes by which to bless it, but if ever God's will is done in earth as it is done in heaven it will be an unmixed and comprehensive blessing. Join the Peace Society by all means, and be forgiving and peaceable yourself; but there is no way of establishing peace on earth except by God's will being done in it, and that can only be done through the renewing of men's hearts by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. By all manner of means let us endeavor so to control politics, as christian men, that oppression shall not remain in the earth; but, after all, there will be oppression unless the gospel is spread. This is the one balm for all earth's wounds. They will bleed still until the Christ shall come to bind them up. Oh, let us then, since this is the best thing that can be, show our love to God and man by spreading his saving truth.

The text says, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Suppose any one of you had come from heaven. It is but a supposition; but let it stand for a minute; suppose that a man here has come fresh from heaven. Some would be curious to see what his bodily form would be like. They would expect to be dazzled by the radiance of his countenance. However, we will let that pass. We want to see how he would live. Coming newly from heaven, how would he act? Oh, sirs, if he came here to do the same as all men do on earth, only after a heavenly sort, what a father he would be, what a husband, what a brother, what a friend! I would sit down and let him preach this morning, most assuredly; and when he had done preaching, I would go home with him, and have a chat.

I should be careful to observe what he would do with his substance. I do not think this man coming fresh from heaven would say, "I must have this luxury; I must have this goodly raiment; I must have this grand house." But he would say, "How much can I save for the God of heaven? How much can I invest in the country I came from." I am sure he would be pinching and screwing to save money to serve God with; and he himself, as he went about the streets, and mingled with ungodly men and women, would be sure to find out the ways of getting at their consciences and hearts; he would always be trying to bring others to the felicity he had enjoyed. Think that over, and live so—so as he did who really did come down from heaven. For after all, the best rule of life is, what would Jesus do if he were here to-day, and the world still lying in the wicked one? If Jesus were in your business, if he had your money, how would he spend it. For that is how you ought to spend it.

Now think my brother, you will be in heaven very soon. Since last year a great number have gone home: and before next year many more will

have ascended to glory. Sitting up in those celestial seats, how shall we wish that we had lived below? It will not give any man in heaven even a moment's joy to think that he gratified himself while here. It will give him no reflections suitable to the place to remember how he amassed, how much he left behind to be quarrelled over after he was gone; he will say to himself, "I wished I had saved more of my capital by sending it on before me, for what I saved on earth was lost, but what I spent for God was really laid up, where thieves do not break in and steal."

O brothers, let us live as we shall wish we had lived when life is over; let us fashion a life which will bear the light eternal. Is it life to live otherwise? Unless we are striving to honor Jesus, and bring home his banished, we are dead while we live. Let us aim at a life which will outlast the fires which shall try every man's work.

If I may have moved any person here to resolve, "I will so live," I have not spoken in vain. I have at least stirred myself with the intense desire to cast off the mere outsidings and husks of life, and to ripen the real kernel of my being. Thy will by me be done on earth, as yet, my Lord, I hope to do it in the skies. May I begin here a life worthy to be perpetuated in eternity. God bless you, for Christ's sake.

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