

THE DISOWNED NO. 2808

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, DECEMBER 7, 1902.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, APRIL 22, 1877.

“Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of Heaven; but he who does the will of My Father in Heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name? And in Your name have cast out devils? And in Your name done many wonderful works? And then I will declare to them, I never knew you: depart from Me, you that work iniquity.”
Matthew 7:21-23.

ONE of the best tests by which we may try many things is to ask, “How will they appear at the Day of Judgment?” Our Lord here says, “Many will say to Me in that day.” He used no other words to describe that memorable period because that terse, brief expression suggests so much—“in that day”—that terrible day—that Last Great Day—that day for which all other days were made—that day by which all other days must be measured and judged. I pray, dear Friends, that we may, each one of us, begin to set in the light of “that day” the things that we most prize. The riches upon which you have set your heart—how will their value be reckoned “in that day”—and how much of comfort will they then afford you? As for the way in which you have been spending your wealth—will that be such as you will remember “in that day” with satisfaction and comfort? Value your broad acres and your noble mansions, or your more moderate possessions according to this gauge of their real worth—how will they be valued “in that day”? And as to the pursuits which you so eagerly follow and which now appear so important to you that they engross the whole of your thoughts and arouse all your faculties and energies—are they worthy of all this effort? Will they seem to be so “in that day”?

What is the chief objective of your life? Will you think as much of it “in that day” as you do now? Will you then count yourself wise to have so earnestly pursued it? You fancy that you can defend it, now, but will you be able to defend it *then*—when all things of earth and time will have melted into nothingness? You value the esteem in which you are held among men and you do rightly, for, “a good name is better than precious ointment.” But are you really worthy of the good name that has been given to you? Is that favorable judgment of your fellow creatures the verdict of the Infallible Truth of God? Will you be as highly honored “in that day” as you are now? Will as much credit be given to you for honesty and virtue, then, as is given to you now? Is there no tinsel, no veneer, no deception, no counterfeit coin about you? O my Brothers and Sisters, who among us can submit his position and his fellow men to such a test as this without the most solemn questioning and searching of heart?

You young men are, perhaps, rejoicing in your youth and letting your heart take full liberty in the enjoyment of earthly pleasure. God forbid that I should deprive you of any real pleasure, but let me ask, concerning those enjoyments, how will they appear “in that day”? Will they bear serious reflection even now? Then, how are they likely to endure the more sober judgment that will be exercised then? “In that day,” when the glare of this world’s lamps shall have died out and the glitter of its pomp shall forever have passed into the eternal darkness, how will your pleasures look then? Especially if you have sold yourself for those pleasures—if you have bartered your peace of mind for them—if you have disobeyed your God in order that you might enjoy them! How will they then appear when, at the end of the feast, the cost of it has to be met and you have to give in your last account? It is truly wise for a man to be familiar with his last hours. It is well for him to often rehearse that grand act when he must gather up his feet in the bed and die—and meet his father’s God.

But it is still wiser for him to leap over the chasm which divides him from the realities of eternity and, by the force of faith rather than by imagination, picture himself standing in that mighty throng of the risen dead from every part of land and sea—the innumerable population of this great globe—every eye turned in one direction, all looking to Him who shall sit upon the Great White Throne, that Christ who was once crucified in weakness, but who shall come in power and great Glory, appointed Judge of all mankind! I know that I am inviting you to think of something that you do not wish to have brought to your mind. The world plucks you by the sleeve and says, “Come away,” but I would gladly detain you for a little while as the ancient mariner held the wedding guest—yet not to tell you a quaint story of far-off seas and strange adventures, but to solemnly talk to you about your immortal soul—and to stir you up to see to its future destiny, lest Christ should come and you should be as unprepared for His coming as the men in the days of Noah were for the flood which swept them all away!

Well, then, as everything is to be regarded as it will appear “in that day,” we will try to judge our profession of religion by that test, for it will mainly be to those who think themselves Christ’s people that I shall speak. And I pray that a strong North wind may blow through us and if there is any chaff in this great heap, may it be speedily discovered and be driven out from amidst the wheat!

We shall, first of all, notice that the persons mentioned in our text, whom Christ “never knew” in a saving sense, *went a long way in religion*. Secondly, *they kept it up a long while*. Thirdly, *they were fatally mistaken* and, fourthly, *they found it out in a very terrible way*.

I. First, then, there are some to whom Christ will say, at the last, “I never knew you,” yet who WENT A LONG WAY IN RELIGION. Who were they and what did they do?

Well, first, *they were persons who made an open profession*. Jesus said, “Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of Heaven.” They called Christ, “Lord,” so they virtually declared that they were His disciples. They said this plainly, as though they were not at all ashamed of it and were, indeed, even proud of it. They said it twice over, zealously, frequently, “Lord, Lord.” They said it as if the saying of it were so sweet to them that they could not say it often enough. They said it in all sorts of company. They sometimes said it when wiser men would not have said it. We know many persons who have never made any profession of being Christ’s followers. They that are outside of Christ, God judges. But let those who are within, those who have come into the fellowship of the Church and have said, “Lord, Lord,” judge themselves lest they should be deceived into a false security! It is not everyone who has been called by the name of Christ whom He will acknowledge “in that day.” There has been many a loud profession that will count for nothing in that heart-searching time. O my Brothers and Sisters, I am speaking to myself as I speak to every member of this Church and every member of any other Christian Church—I beseech you to see to it that you have something more than a mere profession, for these condemned ones had made an open profession of religion, yet Christ will say to them—“I never knew you.”

Note, next, that they *had undertaken religious service, and that of a high class*, for Christ says of them, “Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name?” They had not served in any mean capacity, for they had prophesied or preached in the name of Christ! This is one of the things to which false professors are very prone—they love to take the chief places in the synagogue. There is many a true servant of Christ who prefers to be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord, while many a hypocrite, who would not keep the door on any account, would very cheerfully occupy the Prophet’s chair and prophesy in Christ’s name! Ah, my Brothers, this thought comes home to those of us who hold any office in the Church, and especially to those of us who are preachers of the Gospel! If preaching could save a man, Judas would not have been damned! If prophesying could save a man, Balaam would not have been a castaway. We may preach with the tongues of men and of angels, yet, if we have not love, it profits us nothing. We may be even leaders of the Church in the noblest and highest enterprises and yet, for all that, Christ may say to us, at the last, “I never knew you.” “But, Lord, the world blazed with my fame!” “I never knew you.” “I gathered thousands round about me.” “I never knew you.” “Wherever I went, they flocked to listen to my words.” “I never knew you.” Some of you may say, “Lord, I was a deacon of the Church,” or, “I was an elder. I was accustomed to visit the sick and to speak to enquirers. Everybody in the Church knew me and I was held in high repute.” Yet He may say, “I never knew you. I am an utter stranger to you. Your name was never familiar to Me. I never knew you. Depart from Me.” This Truth of God comes close to home and it ought to, to everyone of us who has ever professed to be engaged in Christ’s service!

These people, too, *had obtained remarkable success*, for they went on to say, “Have we not, in Your name, cast out devils?” It is grand success to cast out devils and they might well rejoice in it. But, dear Friends, if you and I should be able to cast devils out of others, yet the devil would not be cast out of ourselves and we will be in a woeful plight at the last! If you knew a man who had the power to cast out a devil, you would probably say to yourself, “I wish I were as sure of salvation as he is. Did I not see Satan, as lightning, fall from Heaven while he spoke in the name of the Lord?” Suppose that did happen—it would not prove that his name was written in the Lamb’s Book of Life. Rejoice in your success, my dear Friend, as I may rejoice in mine, but let us both rejoice with trembling, for, although we may have brought ten thousand souls to Christ, yet, after all, we may never have come to Him, ourselves! And if so, He will say to us, at the last, “I never knew you.”

And, once more, these people were not merely professors, and doers of great works, and very successful, but *they were exceedingly zealous and were noted for their practical energy*, for they said, “Have we not, in Your name, done many wonderful works?” They had done many works in Christ’s name. They were busy night and day—they had a great many irons in the fire. They seemed as if they could never do too much and what they did was really very wonderful! In fact, they did not like to do anything unless it was wonderful. A great part of the charm of it, to them, was that people wondered at them, and it kept them diligently at their work because they were so much wondered at. Yet is it possible that a wonderful life should, after all, be a lost life—that a doer of many wonderful works should, at the last, be found wanting? Can it be? Yes, for so the Lord Jesus puts it in our text and, therefore, I invite each professed Believer here, however highly favored he may have been in his Master’s service, to put away from him everything that might tend to false security and to ask himself, “Shall I, in that Last Great Day of account be proved to be right?”

I can imagine what some of you have been saying to yourselves while I have been speaking. You have said, “Well, I am not a professor of religion. I am not a prophet. I never thought of attempting to cast out devils! I never did any wonderful works.” And you have comforted yourselves with the thought that my message did not concern you. But immediately after my text there is something that relates to you—“Whoever hears these sayings of Mine.” Now, you are, at least, all *hearers*—and if the Gospel that you hear shall be so perfectly pure that it may be truly called the sayings of Christ, yet remember that there are multitudes of hearers who, through not being doers of the Word, will find at last that Christ never knew them, either! “But, Lord, I always sat in my seat. I was never absent from the services—I used to be there whenever the doors were opened. I was there as regularly as the minister, himself.” Yes, that may all be true, yet the Lord Jesus will not know you unless your heart has truly known Him!

If you remain without repentance and without faith, you may go to the House of Prayer till you totter on your staff and you may never once have been an inattentive hearer—but, unless faith comes to you by the hearing of the Word—and that faith makes you a doer of it, verily, verily, I say unto you, when the winds shall blow, the floods shall rise and the rain shall descend, your house shall be proved to have been founded on the sand and shall be swept away forever! So take our text with that which goes before it—and that which follows after it—and you will find that there is something here for each of you! These people went a long way in religion, but they did not go far enough.

II. Now, secondly, THEY KEPT IT UP A LONG WHILE.

Have you ever noticed how long some people will manage to keep a business going even after the capital has been spent for years? The whole concern is thoroughly rotten, but, somehow or other, in divers ways they succeed in keeping up the appearance of prosperity. There gets to be, at last, a little suspicion abroad that things are not quite as they seem, yet the clever people avoid the crash that appears to be inevitable. I expect there is many a firm in the city that is just like tinder, yet, for all that, it does not catch on fire for a time. There are certain artful ways by which men can prop up a thing which, otherwise, would soon tumble down. It is so with religion. You can very easily patch up a profession when a nasty, ugly hole comes in it—you can daub it over and if a sudden temptation comes like the blast of a tempest and takes off a piece of the roof, there are plenty of roofers to be had who will soon put on a few new slates and make the broken place look neat and sound. And even when the old hovel is only fit to be taken down and burned, you can still get some ivy and a few flowers to grow over it and make quite a picturesque thing of it. And there are people who do just that with their old rickety religion. It never was worth having, yet they managed to keep it up for a very long while!

It was so with the people mentioned in our text, for, first, *they were not silenced by men*. They prophesied in Christ’s name, yet nobody said to them, “You shall not prophesy again, for you are living such inconsistent lives that we will not

listen to you.” This does not appear to have happened with any of these people. The man who went about casting out devils was not stopped and he kept on doing so and he even declared to Christ that he had done it, and done it continually. Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, some of us have seen ministers whose characters have been ruined so that they will never be likely to preach again! We have known some church members whose hypocrisy has been found out, so that they will never come to the Communion Table again unless the Lord shall, in His Grace, grant them repentance. Yet, what may be the difference between them and some of us except that they have been found out and we have not? Or it may be that had we been exposed to the temptations to which they yielded, or had we been tested as they were, we would have fallen with as great a crash as they did, for it is quite possible that we are no more sound at heart than they were! May the Lord give us the Grace to lay this matter to heart, for, if a man is conscious of being right, it will not hurt him to search himself—and there is not one among us to whom it will be an injury to have it suggested that we should try and test ourselves in the sight of God.

Further, *it does not appear that Christ Himself openly disowned these people during their lifetime.* He held His tongue concerning them until “that day.” There they were, preaching, teaching a Sunday school class, distributing the bread and wine at the Communion Table, going about among their fellow members, actively engaged in Christian service and everybody saying of them, “What good people they are! “Yet the Lord Jesus Christ knew that they were not! Why, then, did He not, in His righteous wrath, at once expose them? He did not, for such is His gentleness that He will bear long—even with a Judas—so He let these hypocrites alone throughout their whole lives. And they died “in the odor of sanctity,” and somebody preached a funeral sermon upon them and wrote their memoirs and it was only at the Last Great Day that the lie was discovered and then, for the first time, Christ said publicly to them, “I never knew you. I had nothing to do with you. How came you to be professedly in My Church? What right had you to preach in My name? What authority had you to speak to devils in My name? I never knew you. You were always an impostor from the first day until now.” He knew all about them all the while, yet He did not expose them until the last.

And note, once more, that *they clung to their false hopes right to the end.* They did not really know of the deception themselves. “What?” you ask, “did they never think that they were deceived?” Perhaps they did, now and then, but they always said to themselves. “We must not get into a doubting frame of mind. This looking within and searching our hearts will not do—it will only disturb and distress us.” So they went on daubing themselves with untempered mortar. They were as wrong as wrong could be, yet everybody treated them as though they were right, so they thought at last that they *were* right. For a man may, in time, make himself believe what he knows to be a lie. I have heard persons tell stories about themselves which had not any foundation in fact, but they have told them so often that I am sure they believe that they are really speaking the truth, though if they would only think seriously, they would perceive that their tale is all invention. A man may go in and out among Christians, join in their prayers, and praises, communions and even preach their Gospel or hear it, till, at last, without any reason for his belief, he may persuade himself that it is all right. He may even pass through the portals of death undeceived! The righteous are often troubled when they come to die, but it is with these self-deceived people as the Psalmist said, “There are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.” Take heed, I beseech you, of self-deception. I say it first to myself and next to you, lest, not until “that day” should we hear the Lord Jesus say to us, “I never knew you,” and lest, even “in that day,” we should say to Him, “Lord, Lord,” and begin to argue that we were all right—but Christ should put an end to it all by saying, “Depart from Me, you that work iniquity.”

III. I must be brief upon my third division. These people went a long way in religion and they kept it up a long while, but **THEY WERE FATALLY MISTAKEN.**

They were mistaken, first, *because their tongues belied their hands.* They said, “Lord, Lord,” but they did not do the will of the Lord. They were very glib of tongue when they took to prophesying, but the message never came out of their *hearts.* They never did the things they told others to do—they were earnest to exhort, but not diligent to set a good example to their hearers. They cast out devils, but, at the same time, they did not, themselves, escape from the power of the devil by giving up sin and following after righteousness. They failed in the matter of practical holiness. They had not the Grace of God in their souls, displaying itself in their ordinary, everyday actions. They could talk. They could sing. They could prophesy, but they were not obedient to the Divine commands and they did not walk in the ways of God.

Then, next, *they used the name which is dear to the disciples of Christ, but they did not possess the nature of disciples*. They used Christ's name, for they said to Him, "Have we not prophesied in Your name? And in Your name have cast out devils? And in Your name done many wonderful works?" They knew Christ's name, but they had not His Nature! They quoted His name, but they never copied His example. They had never come to Him and trusted and loved Him. They knew His name, but they did not know Him. And, alas, He knew their names, but He did not know them. There was no communion—no intimacy between them.

Next, *they prophesied, but they did not pray*. Prayer is a vital evidence of Christianity, but prophecy is not. A thousand sermons would not prove a man to be a Christian, but one genuine prayer would. It is easy enough to speak to men, but quite another thing, from our inmost soul, *to speak to God*. They failed in that point and, therefore, their failure was fatal.

Further, *they attended to marvels, but not to essentials*. They neglected the important things which should have been done in secret. They did much that could be seen in public, but they failed in the plainer, simpler things that nobody saw. Let me just say to you, Brothers and Sisters, that herein lies a great part of our danger—the risk of getting a religious character without having a renewed heart—doing religious actions without really being born-again—learning the brogue of the New Jerusalem without having been born as a citizen of the heavenly city—becoming fluent talkers and earnest workers, but not having confessed sin, or repented of it, or laid hold on Jesus Christ by living faith. I beseech you, young professors, to *covet most of all secret holiness*—the holiness that does not wish to be seen—plain, honest dealing with God in private—much secret prayer and meditation upon the Word—in brief, a life of true consecration to God. You may prophesy if God calls you to do so. Perhaps you will cast out devils, I hope you may and, in Christ's name you may do many wonderful works, but, first of all, "you must be born-again." You must become as little children to sit at the feet of Jesus and to learn of Him. You must be obedient to His commands and yield yourselves up to Him, or else you will be fatally mistaken, whatever profession you may make.

IV. Now, last of all, I want to remind you that THESE PEOPLE FOUND OUT THEIR MISTAKE IN A MOST TERRIBLE WAY.

Oh, if they could only have found it out before! Possibly, they attended a ministry that was very soothing. Or, if they heard a sermon that seemed to plow them up, they said, "The preacher is very rough, he has not enough love"—as if it were not the truest love to bid men search, test and try themselves, lest they should be mistaken and so be lost! There are some whose preaching is all sweetness—it would do very well for catching flies—but it is no use in winning souls. It would be more than my soul is worth for me to come here and cajole you into a lying confidence and, as long as these lips can speak, there shall be no man self-deceived here for lack of warning and earnest exhortation to lay himself before God and ask God to search him and try him, and see if there are any wicked ways in him—and lead him in the way everlasting! It is not sufficient to feel quite sure of Heaven, and to begin singing—

"Happy day! Happy day!"

Suppose that, after all, you are not saved? "Ah," says one, "I cannot endure that supposition." No, dear Friend, but perhaps it may be true. And if it is true, what a mercy it would be for you to find it out *now*, when, in a moment, you may look away to Jesus and find eternal life! Whereas, if you do not find it out till the time when the unhappy men and women, mentioned in our text, found it out, that is to say, "in that day," you will then find it out too late! Once become a bankrupt in the great business of life and you are bankrupts forever! Once lose the battle of life and your defeat is eternal! Imagine not—dream not—conjure not up to yourselves any false notion of a larger hope lest you sink at last into a still deeper disappointment. "The Holy Spirit says, Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." But He tells none of us to hold out to you any hope but that which hangs upon the winged moment in which you are now existing! "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned." This is part of the great commission that Christ gave to all His disciples and he that dares to fall short of it, or to go beyond it, is a traitor to his Lord and a murderer of the souls of men! And this we pray that we may never be.

Notice how these people found out their fatal mistake. *They found it out from what Christ said*. He said to them, "I never knew you." Not passionately, or angrily, but in stern, sad, solemn tones He said, "I never knew you." "But we used Your name, good Lord." "I know you did, but I never knew you, and you never truly knew Me." I can almost imagine

someone turning around, “in that day,” and saying to some Christians who used to sit in the same pew, “You knew me.” “Yes,” they will reply, “we knew you, but that is of no use, for the Master did not know you.” I can picture some of you crying out to your minister, “Pastor, did you not know us? Surely you recollect what we used to do.” What can he reply? “Ah, yes, sorrowfully do I acknowledge that I know you, but I cannot help you. It is only Christ’s knowing you that can be of any use to you.”

Note, also, *the terror that is implied in what Christ did not say*. He says, “Depart from Me, you that work iniquity.” But who can tell all that those words mean? What happened to these people after that sentence was pronounced upon them by Christ? It was that “nameless woe” of which we sang a little while ago. There is no name that can ever fully describe your state of woe if Christ does not know you—and says that He never did know you. If you have no acquaintance with the Redeemer—if in His loving heart there is no recognition of you—if He says, “I never knew you,” ah, then, woe! Woe! Woe a thousand times! Woe without hope for you, for, to be unknown of Him is to be devoid of hope forever and forever!

Perhaps the worst thing of all was, *the solemn truth of what Christ did say*. He never tells a lie, so, if He ever says to a man, “I never knew you,” His words are true. Just think a minute about that short sentence. I wonder whether it is true concerning any of you here? Christ knows all who have ever sought His face with repentance and faith—but these people, though they had prophesied in His name, cast out devils and done many wonderful works, had never repented, or believed in Jesus. You remember those verses by John Newton—

*“Do you ask me who I am?
Ah, my Lord, You know My name!
Yet the question gives a plea
To support my suit with Thee.
Once a sinner near despair
Sought Your Mercy Seat by prayer—
Mercy heard and set him free—
Lord, that mercy came to me!”*

If that is true of any of you, you can say to the Lord, “You know me, Lord, for I came to You and said, God be merciful to me a sinner.” But, “in that day,” these pretenders will have to recollect that they never did that! David said to the Lord, “You have known my soul in adversities.” Beloved, some of you know what it is to go to God with every trouble that ever comes upon you, but these pretenders did not—and they had to remember, “in that day,” that they had never resorted to God—never had fellowship with Christ—never, indeed, became acquainted with Him. “No,” says Christ, “I never saw you come as a beggar to My door. I never saw you sit as a disciple at My feet. I never saw you as a humble follower treading in My footsteps. I never saw you as a sheep that knew My voice and followed Me. I never knew you. You were a stranger to Me—you and I never exchanged a word with one another. We were not friends. You never leaned your head on My bosom. You had nothing to do with Me and now I have nothing to do with you.”

If Christ ever thus shakes you off and says to you, “I never knew you,” you will, indeed, be shaken off! It may be that my words upon this solemn theme distress you, but how much more will His words distress you when His own dear lips shall say, “I never knew you!” O Christ of God, never say those words to any of us! O blessed Lamb of God, You who are all our salvation, and all our desire, we know that You can never say such words as those to some of us, for you have known us even from eternity and we have long known You! You know whom You have chosen—You know whom You have redeemed with Your precious blood—you know whom You have called by Your Grace. You know whom You have quickened, preserved and kept even to this day, but, oh, never let us be among the self-deceived who shall, “in that day,” hear You say, “I never knew you!”

There is more thunder in those four words than you ever heard in the most terrible tempest that has rolled over your heads! There is no stamp of the foot or fire-glance of the eye to accompany them—they are spoken calmly and deliberately, yet they are terrible and overwhelming! “I never knew you.”

Judge, dear Friends, whether you know Christ or not, and whether Christ knows you and, as you judge yourselves, whatever your verdict may be, take this last word of advice—whether He knows you or not, come to Him! Trust Him! Rest in Him! I felt, as I was thinking over this subject, “Well, perhaps my Lord does not know *Me*.” So I made sure that He should, for I sought Him, then and there, and I exhort you to do the same. If you fear whether you know Him, trust

Him this very moment! Then if you have made a mistake up to now, and have not really known Him, you will begin to know Him, now. And if you have known Him, you will blessedly renew your acquaintance with Him and the question that has troubled you will disappear! And you will say, “Yes, Lord, blessed be Your name, I do know You, by Your Grace, and You know me, and You will know me forever and ever.” May the Lord give each one of us this blessing, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
MATTHEW 7.

Verses 1. 2. *Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged: and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.* Some people are of a censorious disposition. They see nothing in others to praise, but everything to blame—and such people generally find that they are condemned according to their own wicked rule. Other people begin to judge those who are so fond of judging. If they are so wise and so discriminating, others expect more from them and, not finding it, they are not slow to condemn them. It is an old proverb that chickens come home to roost, and so they do. If you judge ill of others, that judgment will, sooner or later, come home to yourself.

3-5. *And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but consider not the plank that is in your own eye? Or how will you say to your brother, Let me pull out the speck in your eye; and, behold, a plank is in your own eye? You hypocrite! First cast out the plank in your eye, and then shall you see clearly to cast out the speck in your brother’s eye.* At the bottom of all censoriousness lies hypocrisy. An honest man would apply to himself the judgment which he exercises upon others, but it usually happens that those who are so busy spying out other people’s faults have no time to see their own! And what is that but insincerity and hypocrisy?

6. *Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and tear you in pieces.* Zeal should always be tempered by prudence. There are times when it would be treason to the Truth of God to introduce it as a topic of conversation—when men are in such a frame of mind that they will be sure to quibble at it rather than to believe it. Not only speak well, but speak at the right time, for silence is sometimes golden. See that you have your measure of golden silence as well as of silver speech.

7. *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you* Here is a three-fold encouragement to us to pray! When we cannot use one style of prayer, let us use another, for each shall be successful at the right time. O child of God, let nothing keep you from prayer! It has been well said that a Christian may be hedged in, but he cannot be roofed in—there is always a passage upwards to the Throne of the great Father and asking, knocking, seeking, he shall be sure to be successful with his suit!

8. *For everyone that asks, receives; and he that seeks, finds, and to him that knocks it shall be opened.* Ask the people of God whether it is not so! Go among them and question them upon this matter. They know the power of prayer, so let them tell you whether they have been deceived or not. Well, then, as it has been so with them, let this encourage you to expect that it shall be the same with you!

9-12. *Or what man is there of you whom if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him? Therefore all things whatever you would that men should do to you, do you even so to them for this is the Law and the Prophets.* Is there a connection between this conduct on our part and answers to our prayer? Undoubtedly it is so from the position of the text. If we will never grant the requests of those who need our help—in cases where we should expect to be ourselves helped, how can we go to God with any confidence and ask Him to help us? I doubt not that many a man has received no answer to his prayer because that prayer has come out of a heart hard and rocky, which would not permit him to grant the requests of others. O child of God, do you to others as you would that they should do to you—*then* can you go to your God in prayer with the confidence that He will hear and answer you!

13. *Enter you in at the strait gate.* Do not be ashamed of being called a Puritan, precise and particular—“Enter you in at the narrow gate.”

13. *For wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leads to destruction. Do not choose that way.*

13-21. *And many there are who go in there because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads unto life, and few there are that find it. Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. You shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? Even so every good tree brings forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you shall know them. Not everyone who says unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of Heaven; but he who does the will of My Father in Heaven.* That still remains as the great test of the true heir of Heaven—the doing of the Divine will. All the talking, thinking and posturing in the world will not save a man. There must be in him such a faith as produces holiness.

22-25. *Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name? And in Your name have cast out devils? And in Your name done many wonderful works? And then I will declare to them. I never knew you: depart from Me, you that work iniquity. Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house.* Whoever you are, and whatever you build, it will be tried. No matter how firm is the rock beneath you, the winds will blow and the rains will pour down upon your building. Whether you are in a palace or in a hovel, trial and testing must and will come to you! “The floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house.”

25. *And it fell not.* There is the mercy—“it fell not.”

25-27. *For it was founded upon a rock. And everyone that hears these sayings of Mine, and does them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house.* Even if you live to the world, or live to Satan, you will not live without trial. The ungodly, who have their portion in this life, have to eat some bitter herbs with it and have to dip their morsel in vinegar quite as much as Believers do. “The floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house.”

27. *And it fell.* Just when the tenant most needed shelter, it fell! He did not need it so much till the floods came and the winds blew. But now, when he would gladly have crouched down beneath his roof-tree, and have been at peace from the howling hurricane, then, “it fell.”

27. *And great was the fall of it.* The fall was so great because he could never build again.

28, 29. *And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at His doctrine: for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.* Not quoting Rabbi So-and-So, to show how well He was acquainted with his writings, but speaking as one who knew what He had to say, and who spoke out of the fullness of His heart, truth that was evidently Inspired! And His hearers felt the force of the solemn message which He thus delivered.

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307

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