

# Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

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A TRAITOR SUSPECTED AND CONVICTED.

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## A Sermon

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JANUARY 10TH, 1886,

DELIVERED BY

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“The carnal mind is enmity against God.”—Romans viii. 7.

**MEN** naturally mind the things of the flesh. This is as sad as if a seraph should rake upon a dunghill. It is not wonderful that a brute beast cares for the flesh, for it is only flesh; but it is lamentable in the highest degree that man, in whom there is a principle infinitely superior to mere materialism, should nevertheless so generally give himself up to minding the things of the body—the things of time and earth.

The world's catechism is, “What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Wherewithal shall we be clothed?” Men begin with these questions as soon as they leave their father's roof, and they often die with them upon their lips. It is said of the peasants around Nice that they seem to have no thought of anything but how they can make a living, and save a little money; and I am afraid they are by no means a singular people: in some form or other the world is in all men's hearts and thoughts. The dust of earth has blinded eyes that were meant for heaven. You would think, from the talk of many a human being, that he himself was meant to walk about for a few years, and then to occupy six feet of earth, and never be heard of more. The creature's life seems in consistency with such a destiny, and is by no means suggestive of a life to come, or an existence in a nobler sphere. Yet there is in us an immortal spirit: the very heathen were convinced of this. Man has an inborn consciousness that he is not to be extinguished by death: his strange longings, hopes, and fears, are, in a disjointed way, the proofs of this primeval knowledge, which he can never quite forget. It was not needful that Scripture should reveal the future existence of the soul: when you miss a clear statement of that truth, you only miss that which is supposed to be already known. The existence of God and of an immortal soul in man is taken for granted in Scripture. A future state is plain upon the face of things. Every thoughtful man can see

that there is a wide difference between the brute that grovelleth and man that aspireth.

Now, if this be so, one would have supposed that this immortal being would, in thought, have projected himself into the next state, and that he would have been very much occupied with the consideration of where he should be, and what he should be, in the world to come. One would have suspected that he would have shaped the actions of the present with a view to the future, and so have ceased to be earth-bound and hide-bound, and would have risen into something superior to the life of the mere animal. Yet men by nature do not give dominion to their nobler part, but allow the brute in them to overrule the mind in them. They are earthly-minded; and then, because they are earthly-minded, spiritual things are despised by them, and the great God, who is the Spirit of all spirits, is most of all neglected, and treated as if he were of small account. The minding of the flesh sours the soul against God, so that he who minds the flesh is soon filled with enmity against God.

Our apostle declares this fact, and declares it very positively. He does not say that the carnal mind is *at* enmity to God, but he gives us the solid noun: he says "the carnal mind *is* enmity against God." It is enmity in essence: altogether and always enmity against God. It is a solid block of aversion to God, and animosity against him. It is very strong language to use, but so he puts it under the guidance of inspiration; and therefore he does not mistake or exaggerate. The mind that looks after the flesh, the carnal mind, is a mass of downright, undiluted enmity to the Most High God. Such a mind is opposed, not merely to the things of God, the laws of God, and the truth of God, but to God himself. The mind which is under the dominion of the flesh cannot endure the being of God: his character is the object of its hate; nay, such a mind is hate itself towards God.

Of some men this need not be stated, for they declare it themselves. There are men (God be merciful to them, and change them!) who deliberately say that they do not believe in God, and who use all kinds of opprobrious epithets towards our Lord, and the divine truth which he has been pleased to reveal. These men's sins "go before them unto judgment." They will need no witnesses against them at the bar of their Maker: they themselves have testified against themselves. Their mind is evidently, confessedly, intensely enmity against God.

Many others would not care to confess their enmity so distinctly, and yet their lives proclaim it. Their outward conduct shows that they are not only enemies to God and to his Christ, but that their heart is a mass of enmity to him: their speech betrays the fact that they are not reconciled to God. Some of these even make profession of being his friends; and yet of such Paul said, "Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are *the* enemies of the cross of Christ"—*the* enemies beyond all others, for they have entered into the church by treachery, and thus have attacked the Lord in his own house, where they can do most mischief. They blasphemously misuse their profession of faith to comfort them in their sins; and while they vow that they are God's servants, their lives show that they are the willing slaves of a very different master.

I am not at this time intending to speak to these persons, of whom

I will only say—The Lord have mercy upon any of us if that be our unhappy case! If we have dared to play the Judas, if we have ventured to enrol ourselves among the friends of Jesus, and yet are giving him a traitorous kiss, may infinite grace yet convert us! Oh, that we may not turn out to be sons of perdition, but may we be delivered from hypocrisy, and made honest in the sight of the Most High!

But I am going to deal at this time with another class of persons who would say, each one for himself, “I am not a Christian, but I hope to be so one of these days. I do not think that I am converted. I could not claim to be a believer in Christ savingly, or a lover of God so as to take my place among his people; but yet I do not think that I am an enemy to God.” The accusation of our text is very distasteful to such persons, they think it too harsh a charge to bring against them. Yet, dear hearer, you live not for the world to come, nor for spiritual things, nor for God; and, therefore, according to the teaching of the text, your mind, being carnal or fleshly, is enmity against God. I do not like to say any hard thing of you, because you are a very kind person; but I dare not say less than the Word of the Lord, and you would not respect me if I were wicked enough to flatter you. You are moral, and excellent, and amiable, but still you are enmity against God in your heart, for the things of the flesh are uppermost in your mind. Are you angry that I tell you this? What would you have me do? You expect your physician to spy out your disease, and your lawyer to discover any flaw there may be in the deeds of an estate you are purchasing; should not your minister tell you of the evils of your heart? If you want to hear soft falsehoods, go elsewhere: I will have none of your blood on my skirts. If you are not born again from above, I am compelled to say, even of the best of you, that your fleshly mind is enmity against God.

At this time my business shall be, first, to *discover that enmity*; secondly, to *deplore it*; and then, thirdly, may God the Holy Spirit be pleased to *deliver you from it*, and deliver you from it even while we are talking about it! O thou eternal Spirit, renew us in the spirit of our mind, and cause us to receive that spiritual mind which is the mark of the friend of God!

I. First, then, I HAVE TO DISCOVER THIS ENMITY which is in your heart. I know what you are saying, “You cannot do so. I am indifferent, but I am not enmity; and I will not be called so.” I hear your denial, but the cap will fit you very well before I have done, and you will be obliged to wear it; I am sure you will. If you are not obliged to plead guilty, none will rejoice more than I if you can prove that you are reconciled unto God by the death of his Son.

The man who does not love God, nor serve him, nor even profess to do so, has in his heart a settled enmity against God. Let me show it to you. Do not shut your eyes to clear evidence.

First, the carnally-minded man is enmity against God as a *servant*. Take this description of yourselves, and see if it does not lead to your conviction. You are all servants to God, for he has made you, and not you yourselves, and he that made you ought to have the use of you. You are under obligations to your Creator, your Preserver, your Redeemer; and these obligations ought to be recognized, but you do not

recognize them ; on the contrary, you act in a way which leads me to charge you with enmity against God, your liege Lord and King. Judge ye if it be not so. Here is a servant of yours, and he will not serve you. Set that down to laziness if you please, and the case will be bad enough. But you find him working very hard for somebody else ! Then it cannot be laziness which makes him decline your service. See him : he is toiling for your enemy from morning to night ; but though he is your servant, he altogether refuses to serve *you*. What can be his motive ? Many of you are not serving God, and yet you are not lazy. Your neglect of obedience to the Lord is not caused by love of ease. You are working very hard for something else—for yourselves, for your family, for approbation, for wealth, or some other object, so that while you will not obey your God, whom you ought to honour, you are serving some other lord. Does not this create a natural suspicion that you are not on good terms with your Maker ?

But suppose, in the case of your servant, it should turn out that he actually does heavier work for another than he would have been expected to do for you. Suppose that he does harder and more degrading labour than you could have required of him ; and that he does it willingly, does it with all his might ; and yet he will not serve *you*. I think you would say, "This man must be filled with enmity to me. He works for another, and will not work for me ; he does far harder work for another than ever I have proposed that he should do for me." Forget not that the slavery of sin is much harder, and much more degrading, than the service of God. The service of the world is much sterner, much more exacting, much more wearisome, than the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. They that have served the world best will tell you that there is but little solace in the labour, while those who serve God best continually say that his yoke is easy, and his burden is light. They that serve God with all their heart find an intense delight in his service ; and this is not true of the vassalage of sin. "His commandments are not grievous ;" but the ways of sin are full of travail and disappointment and anguish. If a man prefers to bear the weary burden of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and will not take upon his shoulders the lighter load of Christ, what can be the reason of it but that he is at enmity with God ?

And suppose, moreover, that your servant, who is working for somebody else, should get very poor wages, while you are willing to pay to him the largest wages that can be proposed, and yet he will take the harder work and the less wage, and will not come to you and take the easier work at higher wages ; how could you account for this, except upon the supposition that the man hated you ? Sirs, the case is thoroughly parallel with yours. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life." Let a man work as hard as ever he may for himself and for the world, the whole that he can make of it is death : why, then, does he choose a bitter toil and a deadly wage ? "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ?" Why does a man follow such a profitless business ? You know how the world's poet makes Wolsey say, when he comes to die,

"Had I but served my God with half the zeal  
I served my king, he would not in mine age  
Have left me naked to mine enemies."

The service of God is a remunerative service : he gives wages in the work, and an abundant reward, according to his grace, when the work is done : if men refuse such service, what can their motive be ? The wages of sin is death—eternal death : infinite misery follows upon the course of this world : if men choose such service, what can be their motive, what but downright hatred of God as a Master, and a resolve to have the devil himself for lord, and hell for a wage, sooner than serve the living God ? Why then, sir, it must be so, if I take you on the footing of a servant, that, inasmuch as you will serve other things with all your might at the poorest wage, and will not serve God when the recompense of his reward is altogether boundless, then my reason forces me to the conclusion that your mind is enmity against God.

Let me consider you under another figure. This time it shall be that of a *subject* towards a king. Suppose that we are living in times in which there is a king, a rightful monarch upon the throne, but there is also a pretender who has set up a claim for the crown, and there is a war going on between the true monarch and the pretender. You are one of those who do not side with the pretender ; at least, you say you do not. You dwell among the subjects of the king ; and though you act somewhat strangely, yet you deny that you are the king's enemy. But, listen to me. There might be, in this city of London, certain persons who would not be willing to confess that they were on the pretender's side ; and yet their course of action might lead you to feel that they must be so, and that they must be enemies of the king. Suppose that a certain man lives in your street, and you meet with him in business, in trade, and in common conversation from day to day, and yet you never hear him mention the name of the king ; would not his silence be suspicious ? If anybody else mentions the king's name, he edges off from it. He never utters a word that would enable you to feel that he is a loyal subject. He does not openly propose three cheers for the pretender in a public meeting, nor does he hang out the pretender's flag ; but, on the other hand, you noticed that the last time they were crying, "Bravo" for the king, he was as quiet as if he had been dumb ; and you have also seen that whenever conversation has gone that way, he has been as mute as a fish. He has no opinion upon politics ; he says that he has enough to do to mind his own business. I am half afraid that the fellow is an enemy. Still waters run deep, and I fancy that we shall find a deep traitor under the coat of this silent gentleman. I begin to think that he must be on the wrong side ; and it grows upon my mind that he must be an enemy to our lawful sovereign ; for, month after month, while all the country has been ringing with the war-cry, and the whole nation has been divided into two camps, this man has never said a good word for the king—has never so much as mentioned him. I feel morally certain that in his heart this close-mouthed being must be an enemy to the king. Are you not very much of my mind ? Do you want me to explain the parable ? Does it not fit your case, my friend ? All these years you have been hearing about God and his Christ, but you have not had a good word to say for either of them. When you are in company, you manifest a discreet silence. If there were a debate upon vital godliness, you would take no side. You have nothing to say for Jesus and his precious blood. You are neutral and silent ; and why ? You are

such "a good easy man" that you are not willing to fight for truth and righteousness. I suspect you greatly. I am solemnly afraid that you are an enemy.

Now, suppose that the king has achieved a great success. News has come that in a great battle the pretender has sustained a heavy defeat. The flags are hanging out along the streets, and there is an illumination at night. There is no flag at your house. At night there are no candles in your window. You have nothing to say upon the important tidings. Friends, what are we to make of this man? He never says a word about our king or his doings; and he does not share in the joy when everybody is in the street at night, hurraing because of his Majesty's victory. He walks along as if he had no interest in it. I am afraid that, if there were any spies about, they would report him for an enemy; and I do not think they could be much blamed if they did so. Dear hearers, some of you feel no interest in the triumphs of Messiah's kingdom, and are under no concern about his gospel. So many persons were converted under a revival, but it is nothing to you. Whole streets in this city are Godless and Christless; but what of that? You do not really care whether this nation or that shall begin to own the sway of Christ. You show no opposition to King Jesus; but still you take no delight in the growth of his dominion, or the increase of his glory. If true religion were banished out of the land, you would not lose a single night's rest; and if it covered the whole earth, it would excite in you no enthusiasm. Does it not look as if you might be very shrewdly suspected to have the carnal mind which is enmity against God? I might work out this subject further, but I only need to light the candle of your conscience, and you will not have to look far to find a traitor.

Further than that, they have been raising regiments in the city to help the king. There have been enthusiastic meetings of young men who have enlisted in his cause. They have shouldered their rifles, and have been ready to shed their blood on the behalf of their lawful sovereign. There is news of an invasion: the enemy's ships are near the shore: the citizens have come together in crowds. This man was not at the meeting. He did not propose to be a soldier: he did not contribute a farthing to the expenses of the campaign: he did nothing whatever for his king. Putting all this with the rest, it seems to me that he must be an enemy. Why, surely, if we had foemen at London's gates to-day—if we knew that they were about to sack this city, and kill our wives and children, why even the peace men among us would forget our peacefulness, and shoulder arms on behalf of our hearths and homes! If any man said, "Yes, they have been blowing up some of the houses, they are about to destroy our city, but it is no concern of mine; I am not going to bear a hand in the struggle, one way or the other;" we should say, "Why, the fellow is not a true-born Englishman! He is an enemy. Depend upon it he is a traitor." In such a world as this, where sin is rife, if a man does not contend against evil, he is on the side of it. If a man does not serve Christ, and endeavour to extend his kingdom, however humble may be his power, surely it must be that his carnal mind is enmity against God. Jesus saith, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."

And suppose, further, that this man should find that the king had issued a certain proclamation, and promulgated a code of laws, and that this man should say, "Read them? No, not I! I would not read such dry book-stuff as that!" But these laws affect your daily life, your business, your prosperity, your very life. "I do not care what they affect," says he, "they are very dry and dull reading. I do not care to hear them, much less to study them." The proclamation of the king is posted up publicly, and the man turns his back upon it. A play-bill is pasted on the wall; he reads that, and is very interested in it. Now, I should say that he must be an enemy, for he will not even read what is the will of his king, and what is the law of his country. There must be in his heart some enmity against the law-giver who promulgated that law. My hearer, your non-searching of the Scriptures, your weariness under gospel-preaching, your want of care to understand the mind of God, is *primâ facie* evidence that there is some enmity in your heart against the Most High. When your King sends you a message of love, and you are not willing to hear it, surely you have a prejudice against him. When you do not even wish to know what he promises to those who are his friends, you must have made up your mind to be his foe.

But, further, suppose, as in some olden time, this king were to say to all his subjects, "You are surrounded by the enemy. The city is straitly shut up, and famine threatens you; but I am going to feed you all out of the royal granaries. There will be so much of bread, and so much of provender, for all of you who choose to come and have it, a daily portion freely given to all who ask it. Suppose this man, though evidently very hungry and thirsty, never went to eat at the public table. He need not say anything against the king and his table; but suppose he persistently abstained from putting himself under any obligation to the royal provider, and would sooner go and eat with dogs, or pluck meat out of the hog's dish, than he would be nourished by the king's bounty; I should say that the fellow who starved himself in that fashion must have deep enmity in his heart against the king. Your case is just the same. You will not go to Christ Jesus that you may have eternal life. You do not go to the Creator of your spirits that you may find comfort and joy in him; you are willing rather to perish than to apply to the Father of mercies. You look for pleasure and happiness anywhere else rather than in God; ay, in places only comparable to the kennel of the dog, or the sty of the swine! Hence you cannot persuade me out of my solemn anxiety that your heart is enmity against God. I am sure that, hungry as you are, you would go to his table to be fed; naked as you are, you would go to his wardrobe to be clothed; if it were not that you have an enmity in your heart against the Lord, terribly deadly even though unacknowledged by yourself. He that will sullenly perish rather than accept the gift of God must entertain desperately evil thoughts of God.

Suppose, once more, that you had offended this king, and you had been tried for treason against him, and had been found guilty, and he were to say to you, "Freely confess your treason, and there is the pardon drawn out for you by which your life shall be spared, and you yourself shall be taken into favour;" if you were to reply, "I will not have it,"

ay, and if you were not even to say as much as that, but only neglected to accept it, and just sat carelessly in prison until the day of execution, I should say that you must have a most awful enmity in your heart against your sovereign ! He that will not even accept pardon must be rancorous indeed. My hearer, your not accepting the free pardon of Christ, your not receiving the benefit of the act of amnesty and oblivion which the great God has passed, proves that your traitorous heart is dyed to the very core with the blackest enmity against the Majesty of heaven. I am not talking about the villains of whom we have been reading lately in the newspapers, who would commit the foulest deeds of unmentionable crime ; but I am talking about you good people who are not far from the kingdom, and yet are base enough to spurn your Saviour's love and blood. If you have not accepted the favour of your King, and the pardon provided by a bleeding Saviour, there must, at bottom, be a cruel enmity in your heart against the King of love. Is it not so ? Do you not begin to suspect yourself of not being quite all you fondly hoped you were ?

So I will use yet another similitude, and but one, that I may not weary you. This time it shall merely relate to the common conduct of one *person* to another. I might profess of a certain person that I had no enmity against him ; but suppose that whenever I met him in the street, I would not see him, and if he was on my side of the street, I somehow or other had a call over the other side of the way ; and suppose that when I came into a room to meet friends, I saw him there, and always backed out, and went somewhere else ; I should think that people would, before long, suspect that I had great enmity towards that person. There are people who act in that manner towards God. They find hearing sermons very dull work. Talking with Christian people about divine things they cannot endure. Reading a religious book is slavery : they find themselves very soon reduced to a state of slumber by treatises upon true religion. They have no care about such things. They want to get out of God's way. Their heart has no delight in the thought of God. If there were information in to-morrow morning's paper that God was dead, would not some of you be very happy ? You would say, "Then there will be no day of judgment, and I may enjoy myself ; for my greatest dread is gone." To us who love the Lord it would be a calamity worse than ten thousand deaths if we could lose our God ; but your condition of mind towards God is clear proof of enmity against him.

Again, suppose that a person has written you a letter, and you have taken no notice of it. When did it come ? It came last Monday morning. Have you read it ? "Oh, no !" you say, "I do not bother to read his letters." You have had a good many, then ? "Oh, yes ; hundreds of them !" What have you done with them ? I have done nothing with them. I leave them alone, and do not trouble to read them." Are these letters rational ? "Yes, they are wise and kind." Yet you do not care to read them. Did you say that you are not the writer's enemy ? Ah ! my friend, I suspect that there is not much affection in your heart to him. There must, indeed, be a good deal of animosity. When you did read one of his letters, what was it about ? "Well, it was about wishing to be at peace with me, and desiring to do me good. He spoke of my being in great danger, and said that he

would help me; and of my being poor, and offered to make me rich." Did he talk so, and have you never read any more of his letters? What can ail you? Were these letters full of bitter upbraidings, and fierce threatenings? Do you reply, "Oh, no, they were kind, and good, and affectionate, and I have no doubt they were meant to benefit me; but I don't care about them! I think that other people ought to read them, but I have no mind to do so"? From this I feel sure that you hate the writer very heartily. Have I not described your conduct towards your Bible. That blessed Book is a love-letter from God, the great Father, and you do not read it, nor care about it; and, therefore, I am sure that there must be in your heart enmity against him. I do not think that you can argue me out of that conviction. I would, therefore, be glad to convince you of your wrong state of mind, until you become ashamed of it, and turn unto God.

Is prayer neglected by you? Is it a burden? Have you no pleasure in it? Then how can you say that you are a friend of God? Do you utterly neglect all communion with God? Do you never speak with him? How can you think that you love him? If I had a son who lived in my house, and fed at my table, and was clothed by my kindness, and that boy were to say to people outside, "I never speak to my father; he speaks to me, but I never listen to him: I live in his house, but I treat him as if he were dead;" would not everybody rightly conclude that there was a deadly animosity in the heart of such a son towards his father? I cannot help thinking that if you live without speaking to God, or hearing him speak to you, you have a carnal mind which is enmity against God.

There I leave the matter, hoping that conscience will awake, and concern itself about this business. If these things should suggest a suspicion of your horrible and unnatural enmity against the good God, and that should send you to your knees, I shall bless the Holy Spirit that it is so. Come, O thou great Convincer, and cause my unregenerate hearers to know their own true condition before the Lord, and then guide them to Jesus, the Saviour!

II. But now, secondly, and very briefly, LET US DEPLORE THIS ENMITY AGAINST GOD. Come, gracious Spirit, and melt our hearts to penitence!

For, first, *what an injustice it is!* I cannot bear for anybody to speak ill and think ill of one who is good, and kind, and generous. I would interpose, if possible, to rectify that mistaken judgment. But for you not to think well of God, for you not to love the God of love, for you not to be at peace with the sweet Lord Jesus, for you not to delight in Christ, is a gross injustice to him. Oh, do not continue in it! If you have any sense of rightness, may God make you to feel shame that you should treat him ill!

Moreover, I venture to say that it is more than an injustice. *What an infamy it is!* If any one in this country could point to a person, and say, "There is a man who hates the Queen, and who, wherever he goes, speaks against her," we should feel that he was no man of honour, no person of right feeling. Yet to slander a lady of blameless life is nothing compared with hating the perfect Lord. When I think of a man's not loving God, not loving Christ, I feel that it is an awful thing

for him, an infamous thing for him. Come hither, angels, if ye will! If ye can turn your eyes from the august sight of your crowned Lord, come and look in this direction! Here is a man whom God has made, who does not love his Maker! Here is a monster that is fed every day by God's bounty, and never thanks him! Here is an immortal being who hears of the death of Christ, and is told that if he believes in him he shall live in happiness for ever; and he will not believe in him, and does not care for Christ, or for his love, his life, or his heaven! Surely those blessed spirits avert their faces. They stretch their wings for flight from such loathed company. They cry, "Let us not look on such a monster. He is not fit to live." There is an infamy about not loving Christ.

In addition to all this I would say *what an injury is this to yourself!* It is a very great injury to any man not to be perfectly at peace with God. You are losing happiness; you are losing holiness, which is still more; you are losing the full development of your being; you are missing the destiny for which a God-created soul is intended. You are finding your way into darkness which will gather blackness upon blackness for ever. Oh, sirs, I cannot bear that this should be the case—that you should be at enmity with God! Oh, the mournful consequences of living and dying at enmity with God! You cannot succeed in this enmity. You have no power with which to contend against the Lord, and to prosper. You need not wish that you could have such power. Why should you want to contend against love, and mercy, and truth, and goodness, and righteousness? Oh, that the Spirit of all grace would lead you to loathe yourself! You have never committed adultery; you were never a thief; you were never a swearer; but do not compliment yourself upon being free from those crimes: *it is sin enough not to love God.* It is proof enough of a base heart not to have delighted in the Lord. When I take a friend to see a landscape that enchants me, and he looks at it, and mutters, "I see nothing in it," I feel sorry for him. When I cause him to hear the delightful strains of Handel's music, and he murmurs, "There is a deal of noise, and I can hear a big drum," I feel greatly sorry for him that he has no ear for music. So it is when I think of the glories of God, and meet with men who do not appreciate them; I feel grieved for them. I would sooner be blind, and deaf, and dumb, and lose all feeling, than lose the sense of the beauty and perfection of God. The capacity to enjoy God, and to understand his superlative excellence, is the grandest faculty that a being can possess, and he that has it not is dead while he liveth. He who does not love the ever-blessed Lord, is a very Nabal, whose heart is like a stone within him. He is a fool writ large who knows not God. May the Lord manifest his grace to those of you who are in such a condition, and bring you to deplore it, and escape from it!

III. This brings me to a close. The third point was to be—LET US SEEK DELIVERANCE FROM THIS CONDITION OF ENMITY AGAINST GOD. How is it to be done?

Truly, I do not believe it ever will be done in any man except by the Holy Ghost. This incapacity to see the beauty and loveliness of God is such an inveterate disease that none can remove it but the Holy Ghost. Ye must be washed, I know. Ye must be healed, I know. Ye must be

clothed, I know. But I know another thing quite as clearly—"Ye must be born again." Do you say, "How can a man be born when he is old?" There is but one way: he that first made you must make you over again. The change in you must be radical and thorough, and you cannot work it of yourself. You are cast upon the omnipotent mercy of God, and that omnipotent mercy will freely come to your rescue if you will accept of it in the Lord Jesus Christ. The crucified Son of God alone can be your salvation from all this spiritual inability and aversion. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to lead you to accept of Jesus, and so to be delivered from your enmity.

Next, the enemy of God needs to be delivered from the great guilt of not having loved God. How is that to be done? That can only be accomplished through the infinite atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. Great guilt has accrued to you from having lived so long without loving God. The first precept of the law is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might;" and that you have not done. Now, the guilt of that unjust omission can only be put away through the bloody sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. By that one omission you have violated the whole law of God, and nothing but the blood of Jesus can make an amend to its honour. Thanks be to God, that precious expiation can cleanse you! Trusting in that glorious sacrifice, the guilt of your not loving God shall vanish quite away.

How can the enmity itself go? I have shown you that this must be removed by the heart being changed by the Holy Spirit; but the means of it will be this—your enmity will depart by a sense of God's love to you. I think that it is Aristotle who says that it is impossible for a person to believe that another loves him, without feeling some kind of love in return. I concede that it is almost impossible; but I am not sure that it is quite so. However, this I know—if you could but believe at this moment that God loves you; if, trusting in Christ, you could but know the infinite affection that there is in the heart of the great Father towards you, his child, you would love God in return: you could not help it. Oh, could you understand the love that dropped from those five wounds, the love that forced your Saviour to a bloody sweat, the love that cried, "It is finished," as he gave up the ghost; the love which, when he rose from the dead, still thought on you, and which, when it mounted to its throne, still remembered you; the love that pleads for the guilty now, and intercedes for sinners now—oh, could you understand it, you would cry, "I cannot be at enmity with God any longer! I must love him who has done so much for me." The love of Jesus has such a melting power that even a heart of hell-hardened steel softens, and flows away in streams of penitence beneath its influence.

"Law and terrors do but harden,  
All the while they work alone,  
But a sense of blood-bought pardon  
Soon dissolves a heart of stone."

May you receive a sense of that love at once, and you will then find that your enmity is gone, that you are spiritually-minded, and that you love God!

For that—to conclude with—is the main thing. While the man continues to mind the flesh he cannot love God. While his first business is his body, and the things of time and sense, he is and must be at enmity with God. But when the Lord Jesus Christ wins his heart, when the Spirit of God renews his mind, when he comes to love God, then he cares for spiritual things, then his treasure is in heaven, and his heart is there also. Then his hopes are in the advent of the Lord Jesus Christ when he shall come a second time, and then his life tends towards glory, and honour, and immortality. Thus the man is raised from being a worm of the earth to kinship with angels. He drops the serpentine slough, and puts on the seraphic wing. He gets away from the mole-life, burrowing under ground in the dark, and gains the eagle's eye, and the eagle's pinion. He quits the gloom and night of earth, and mounts aloft with his eye upon the sun of glory, delighting in the holy, and the heavenly.

God bring you to that state by faith in Jesus Christ! Amen.

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PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans viii.

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HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—385, 639, 461

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