

# Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

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SIN SUBDUED.

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A Sermon

DELIVERED BY

C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

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“He will subdue our iniquities.”—Micah vii. 19.

BUT lately I tuned my harp to the music of forgiven sin, and we sang of pardon bought with blood, finding our key-note in the words of David,—“Who forgiveth all thine iniquities.” It was a sweet subject to all our hearts, for we all have a portion in it, seeing we are all sinful, and have need to be forgiven: therefore did our souls dance to the high-sounding cymbals as we rejoiced in the complete pardon which our gracious God has given to all who believe in Jesus. But, beloved, the pardon of sin is not enough for us: we have another equally urgent need. If the Lord would forgive us all our sin we could not be happy with that alone. “Who forgiveth all thine iniquities” is not perfect music till we add to it the next note, “who healeth all thy diseases.” We feel that we have within us a tendency to sin, and that tendency is our misery: from this tendency we must be emancipated, or we are no more free than the captive who has had the manacles removed from one wrist but feels the iron eating into the other arm. We wish to be delivered from every propensity to sin: ay, to be rescued altogether from its power. God has now given us a new life, and this will never be easy till the last link of the chain of sin is utterly removed. Since our new birth there remains no rest for us short of being perfectly like our God in righteousness and true holiness. The heavenly seed within us must and will grow, and as it increases in the soul it will expel the power of evil, for it cannot endure the least particle of it. We may now be called “the Irreconcilables,” for we can never be at peace with evil. We cannot tolerate sin. The thought of it pains us; and when we fall into a sinful act we are cut to the quick. We thirst to be pure, we pant to be holy, and we shall never be satisfied until we are perfectly so.

We, dear friends, who have been awakened by the Holy Spirit, find that we are by nature under the power of sin. It will not be an easy thing for us to escape from the terrible tyranny of sin; not without the putting forth of great power can the iron yoke be broken. What little experience we have had in the divine life leads us to see that there is an immense difficulty before us, making our upward progress one of

conflict and labour. A dreadful power has our nature in subjection, and that power cannot easily be overcome. Ever since the Fall sin has taken possession of us. This flesh of ours lusteth to evil: the propensities of our nature which are not in themselves sinful are made by our depraved hearts to be the occasions of concupiscence and transgression. We cannot eat, or drink, or talk, or sleep, but what there is a tendency to sin in each of these conditions. Out of the simplest movements of our being evil can arise. Actions which are incidental to the very fact that we are men—actions which are neither morally good nor morally evil—yet nevertheless become the nests in which sin lays its eggs and hatches them, so that every propensity of ours, even that which is in itself natural and fitting, readily becomes polluted and depraved through the indwelling of sin in our nature. Sin poisons the well-head. Sin is in our brain; we think wrongly. Sin is in our heart; we love that which is evil. Sin bribes the judgment, intoxicates the will, and perverts the memory. We recollect a bad word when we forget a holy sentence. Like a sea which comes up and floods a continent, penetrating every valley, deluging every plain, and invading every mountain, so has sin penetrated our entire nature. How shall this flood be assuaged? This enemy so universally dominant, so strongly entrenched, how shall he be dislodged? It has to be driven out somehow, every particle of it, and we shall never rest until it is; but by whom shall iniquity be subdued? How satisfactory the assurance of our text, "He will subdue our iniquities."

We find that our inward enemies are assisted by allies from without. The world which lieth in the wicked one is ever ready to assist his dominion within us. We cannot walk down a street but we hear language which pollutes us; we can scarcely transact business in our own counting-houses without being tempted. If we stay at home there is temptation there, and if we go abroad it is the same. The most retired are not free from sin, nay, their very retirement may only be a sinful selfishness which shirks imperative duty. We cannot do good to others without running some risk ourselves, and if we cease from godly endeavours because we would not hazard our own spiritual comfort, we are already taken in the snare. We cannot mix in politics in any degree, with the purest desire for our country's welfare, without breathing a tainted air; we cannot try to curb the social evil but we feel that we are on treacherous ground: yet we may not flinch from duty because of its perils. We shrink like the sensitive plant that is touched by the finger; we fold and furl up all the feelings of our being, because of the sin which touches us when we mingle with men. We often close up all the gates and windows of the soul because we are conscious that the enemies without are calling to the enemies within, and saying, "We will conquer him yet." Moreover, that mysterious spirit, the devil, is always ready to excite our flesh, and to urge on the world. I have heard that some people doubt his existence. Very likely they are so friendly to him that they would not like to betray him, and so they deny that he hides in their hearts; but those who are his enemies do not try to conceal him, but own with sad humiliation of heart that they are very conscious of his power. A wind from him will come sweeping through our spirit in the calmest hour of devotion, and in a

minute we are disturbed and distracted. We have had our thoughts all going up towards heaven, and in a moment it has seemed as if they were all sucked down into the bottomless pit, merely because that evil spirit has spread his dragon wing mysteriously over us, and created a horrible down-draught which our poor brain could not at once resist.

We have to fight, then, not only with sin, but with the flesh, which, like a Gibeonite, has become a hewer of wood and a drawer of water for the devil: we have to fight with the world which "lieth in the wicked one," steeped up to the throat in sin; and we have to fight with Satan himself. "We wrestle not with flesh and blood," or else we would gird on the sword, and go in for knocks and blows, and cuts and thrusts, and have the battle out; but we wrestle with "principalities and powers and spiritual wickednesses in high places;" and what is to become of such poor, frail, feeble, weak creatures as we are? Who can subdue these great and mighty kings? With so many in league against us what can we do? What is to become of us? My text is the answer to that question: "*He will subdue our iniquities.*" That same blessed God who has pardoned our sins will conquer them. They may fight against us, but he will be more than a match for them: their fighting will end in their destruction. Omnipotence has marched into our hearts to trample down the power of sin. Eternal faithfulness has called in invincible strength and divine majesty to do battle against the serried hosts of darkness, and we shall overcome. "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

I am going to speak briefly upon seven points, if time shall hold out for me to do so, and each of these seven points will show phases of the energy of evil which God will subdue.

One of the first powers of evil which a man perceives when the heavenly life begins to breathe within him is THE FASCINATING POWER of sin. When grace in the soul is only like a little spark, and has not come to its brightness, yet the man discovers with alarm that he is held under the enchantment of evil. I do not know any other word which quite gives my idea except that one. Satan casts a spell over men. They come and hear the gospel, and they are impressed by it, and they see the reasonableness of the endeavour to escape from sin; they perceive the beauty of holiness, and they see that the way of God's salvation is a very glorious one, namely, by faith in Jesus Christ, and they begin to yield; but yet they neither flee from their sins nor lay hold on the salvation of Christ, but remain as persons besotted, who act contrary to reason. In some cases one sin, in some cases another, seems to fascinate men like the eyes of the fabled basilisk. As certain snakes paralyse their victims by fixing their eyes upon them, so do certain sins paralyze those who are under their influence, so that none can arouse them to escape. Sin makes men mad. Against their reason, against their best interests, they follow after that which they know will destroy them. They are slaves, though they wear no fetters of iron; captives, though no walls enclose them. The magic arts of evil have taken them in a net, and wrapped them about with invisible bonds, from which they cannot escape.

In many cases Satan exercises over men a kind of soporific power. He puts them to sleep. I do not know whether there is anything in

mesmerism or not, but I know that there is a devilish sleep-creating charm which Satan casts over men. They are no sooner a little awakened, and startled, and persuaded to escape for their lives, than suddenly they fold their arms again, and crave a little more sleep. They are nodding over a prospect which, a few hours ago, made their hair almost stand on end. They go back to do the deed which they dreaded, and which they know to be evil and destructive. They forget the Saviour whose charms began to tell upon them, and renew their covenant with Satan from whom they had almost escaped. In the matters of the soul you have not merely to get men awake, but to keep them awake. Over the arctic traveller there comes a tendency to sleep in the cold—a tendency which he cannot resist. He may be awakened by his fellow and shaken out of his torpor, but by-and-by he is anxious to sleep again; they march him on between two, perhaps, and try to keep him awake, but still he cries, "Let me sleep." He begs to be allowed to lie down and slumber. Such is the power of Satan over some of you who are present here: you wish that we would let you be quiet, and go on in your sins, without worrying you with our warnings. I have shaken you sometimes; at least, I have tried to do so; and then, after all, you have gone to sleep, and still you are asleep, nodding with hell beneath you, with the wrath of God abiding on you. It seems as if you could not be decided,—you could not be resolute,—you could not run away from sin, but were held by mysterious bonds—held, worst of all, by a dreadful indifference which makes you slumber yourselves into ruin. Do you think one ungodly man in his senses would remain what he is and where he is while there is a hope of being renewed, if it were not for some strange enchantment which is exercised upon him by sin? What art of wizard can equal the magic of sin? What other witchery can cast men into such insensibility? If I were to cry "Fire! fire!" in this place to-night the most of you would rush to the first door or window; but yet when we tell you of what is infinitely worse—namely, of the wrath to come, and the anger of Almighty God, you are in no great alarm, nay, you sit at your ease and hear all about it. The story of your future destiny is heard and heard, till men think no more of it than of an old wives' fable, but still sleep on in their sin.

I have known this witchery to enthrall men who have been somewhat awakened. By the month and by the year together they have been aroused, and have been apparently very earnest; and after all sin has charmed them with its siren song, and they have returned like the dog to its vomit, or the sow which was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

Now, I am rejoiced to think that, if there is any life in you, if the Lord enables you to look to Jesus Christ, his Son, for salvation, he will subdue your iniquities. Man, he will help you to escape from the magician's wand. Sin shall no longer delude and ensnare you. He will so set eternal things before you by the power of the divine Spirit that you will not dare to sleep any longer: he will so convince you of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come, that he will slay the enchanter, break his spell, and free you from his black arts. May the Lord set every fascinated one free at this good hour. May he pronounce the word which will unbind the enchanter's charm, and we shall then have one fulfilment of the text, "He shall subdue our iniquities."

A second form of the force of sin in most men is ITS DEPRESSING POWER. When men are really awake, and no longer under the witchery of sin, then Satan, and their flesh, and the sin that dwells in them, conspire to make them think that there is no hope of salvation for them. The evil ones mutter "It is no use your trying to be saved. You do not stand the smallest chance." Jeeringly the tempters cry, "Look at your sins! Look at your sins!" Satan, who aforetime did not want us to look at sin, becomes all on a sudden eager that we should take to self-examination and confession. He who is the father of lies sometimes finds truth answer his purpose so well that he uses it with terrible effect; but even then he uses it to support a lie. He suggests to the heart the thought, "If you had not sinned so much you might have been forgiven, but you have piled on the last ounce that has broken the back of mercy; you will never be saved." Then comes the second suggestion, "You know you have tried already. You did keep yourself pretty steady for a time, but it all broke down. There is not the slightest use in venturing again upon this hopeless business. Depend upon it, there is a divine decree against you: you are one of the reprobate. There is no hope for you at all. Don't you see how false you are? You never make a resolve but you break it. You made an awful failure of it last time, and so you will again." Then there comes up again in the soul the depressing thought, "Perhaps it is not true after all that there is any mercy for sinners. It is very possible that there is no such power in the blood of Jesus as the preacher wants you to think." Once get a man upon the rails of doubt and you can draw him on as far as you please. It is interesting to see a man go on doubting in the style I once followed. I doubted everything till at last I doubted my own existence. Now I have at least a little bump of common-sense, and I laughed outright at myself when I got as far as that, and the ridiculousness of the situation brought me back again to believe. To run right on to a *reductio ad absurdum* and prove the absurdity of your own unbelief is a very useful method of bringing a doubting spirit to a measure of belief.

Yes, I know that this is the way of sin. It depresses the man. "I would, but cannot believe," says he. "I would have a hope, but I cannot believe that my name is amongst God's elect ones. I cannot think that the blood of the atonement was shed for me"; and so on. What is to be done when you feel this, and wish to conquer it? What is to be done but to fly to a promise like this in the text, "He will subdue our iniquities"? Yes, this despondency of yours the Lord Jesus will subdue. Believe that he is able to cut off Giant Despair's head, and dismantle his castle, and set his prisoners free. Some have almost gone to the knife and to the halter in their despair, and yet the Lord Jesus Christ has restored them to joy. Many a despairing soul have we had to deal with, and we have seen the Lord vanquish its misery and chase away its sorrow. Satan did his best to keep the soul from the joy which it might have had there and then; to keep it from the feast which was spread for it, from the blessing which God had prepared for it; but he could not prevail, for the hour of hope had struck. O, cast-down one, be comforted, the Lord will subdue your iniquities in this respect. If you will but look to Jesus Christ he will say to you, "Be of good

comfort." He will tell you that your sins are forgiven, and breathe hope into your soul.

This is a second blessed way in which God subdues our iniquities: by casting out their depressing power. This he does by showing what a glorious Saviour Christ is: how he is divine, and therefore equal to any emergency, how his atonement is of a value that never can be limited, how he is "able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." This he does by applying the precious promises to the soul by his own Holy Spirit, who leads men to believe in God despite their despair, hoping against hope, and thus the snare is broken, and their iniquities are subdued. O glorious victory of all-conquering love, sin's iron yoke of dark despondency is broken, and the captives lead their captivity captive. Hallelujah!

But now, thirdly, the Lord has power to subdue sin in another form of its force, namely, ITS DOMINEERING POWER.

What a domineering thing sin is over men. Any one sin will lord it frightfully over a man. I know a man in his senses: at any rate, he has never been in Bedlam yet: in business he is as sharp and cute a man as can be, and yet he drinks himself into foolishness, into madness, and even into delirium tremens. He has done this several times, and owns to the madness and wickedness of the deed, and yet he will repeat his insane and suicidal course. He has drunk away all his estate; from a man of property he has descended to become a very inefficient working-man. He has drunk away all his wife earns, for he does not earn much himself now, and he is mean enough to let the poor woman kill herself to find him with food. He drank a horse and cart a fortnight ago. He went out of the house upon a business errand for his wife, pulled up at a drink-shop, drank till his money was gone, and so he sold the means by which his wife has kept him out of the workhouse. I dare say he is here: let him take it home to himself, he knows that it is true. He never went home again till the last ear of that horse had been drunk. And yet he would not like anybody to say that he is a fool, though I beg leave to have my doubts. His sin domineers over him. Only let drink come to him and say, "Go and do a mad thing," and he does it directly. Expense, pain, disgrace, disease, poverty, and an early death—all these are demanded by the drink demon, and his victims cheerfully pay the tax. Why, now, if I were persuaded that it was the duty of any one of you to go and spend every penny that you have, and starve your own children, in order to support a child at the Orphanage, you would not see it, I dare say. I should be a very long while before I could persuade you to such a thing as that. I am sure I should not wish you to do so; but even if it were right I could not get you to do it. Yet things far more preposterous are done greedily at the bidding of drink. This devil of drunkenness comes to a man, and he says, "Come along with me. Leave your fireside, and your wife and little ones, and associate with the lowest of the low. Come and spend everything you have upon stuff that will muddle your head, harden your heart, and destroy your character. Sell your household furniture, and drink till all your comrades call you a jolly good fellow. Pawn your children's shoes, so that the little ones cannot even go to Sunday-school." The man goes along as meekly as a lamb. And he has done that scores

of times. He knows what a fool he is, and yet he will do it again if he gets a chance. Oh, the domineering power of sin! It is not the one sin of drunkenness only, for there are other men who are domineered over by their lusts. It is a delicate question to talk about, but I dare say there are some here who are slaves to the vilest of lusts, and it becomes me to be plain with them, and assure them that persons living in fornication or adultery cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Then there is anger, which carries men away as with a flood; they cannot restrain themselves; the least thing sets them off boiling with passion. They say they cannot get the mastery in this respect, and it is perfectly true; but there is a stronger power than ours which can be brought in, by which the victory can be won. Sin in some form or other has bound us hand and foot, and made us slaves. Do you wish to be free? Do you wish to be delivered from the tyranny of sin? Then I do not advise you to do anything in your own strength in the hope that you can accomplish deliverance; but cry to Christ at once, whose precious blood can blot out the past, and change you for the future. Give yourself up to him, and be made a new man in Christ Jesus. Oh, you did try to mend, you say. One of our kings used by way of swearing to say, "God mend me"? That was his regular expletive till somebody said that he had tried that oath long enough; he thought that God could more easily make a new one than mend him. That is just the truth about you. There is no mending you. You need to be made new creatures in Christ Jesus. It will be by far the easier work of the two, though in itself it will be impossible to you. The Lord can do it, he can make you such a new man that you will not know yourself the next time you meet yourself; you will be so entirely new that you will begin to fight against your former self as your worst enemy. Oh for an earnest cry at this good hour, "Lord, save me! I am sinking in the depths of my sin. Jesus, stretch out thy hand as thou didst to sinking Peter. Save me, or I perish." Jesus will lift his royal hand, and cause both winds and waves to lie still before him; for it is written, "He will subdue our iniquities." The domineering power of sin is readily broken when Jesus enters the heart, but never till then. We refuse to obey our lusts when we bow our necks to the pure and holy Saviour. What a change he works! Speak ye, who best can tell, ye who have felt it! Ah, Lord, we bless thee that it is even so "thou wilt subdue our iniquities."

Now, fourthly (for I must be brief on each point), there is another power about sin, namely, ITS CLAMOURING POWER. I do not know any other word just now which so nearly expresses what I mean. Some of us know that we are forgiven, and we know that the domineering power of sin is broken in us, and our old sins have been long washed away by the blood of Christ, so that God does not know anything about them. You say that is a strange expression. It is no stranger than the Scriptures warrant, for the Lord says of our sins that he will remember them no more for ever: and I believe that he means what he says. But as for my transgressions, I recollect them when God does not, and they come up before me, and they howl at me. "You be saved?" says one of my sins: "You?" "Remember what you did while yet a youth." Sometimes a thousand of them at once make an awful din, and

howl out, "Guilty, guilty, guilty, and doomed to die." Then one or two bigger sins than the rest take the lead, howling with a deep bass, "Condemnation! condemnation! condemnation!" I have tried to argue with these memories of sins. When the dogs have barked in that fashion I have tried to put them down. Conscience has come out with his big whip, and he has whipped them till they howled more than ever. Conscience has said "Why, even now that you are a Christian you are not what you ought to be. You still fall short of your own standard. You condemn yourself while you are preaching. You know you do." Then all the dogs have howled again, as if they were only now beginning their horrid music. You have never heard, perhaps, a whole kennel full of sins all howling at once, but it is a most awful noise at night. If you listen to the voice of these clamorous dogs you will wish that you had never been born, or could cease to exist. No voice that I know of, short of the one in the text, can make them lie still. But the Lord Jesus can subdue our iniquities, and when he steps into the middle of these dogs they lie cowed at his feet. As he speaks with gracious words of pardon the hell-hounds vanish; and instead of their baying you hear the sweet voice out of heaven: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Did you ever experience this delightful change? It is something like the case of a new comer at a court of law, who one day went with a magistrate and sat on the bench. A prisoner was brought up, and evidence was given, and the counsel against the prisoner spoke; and this person said to his friend, the magistrate, "You may as well end it, the man is clearly guilty. Wind the case up, and let us go to dinner." But the magistrate said, "You must listen and hear the advocate on the other side, and the case will look very different." When he listened to the advocate on the other side, he began to whisper, "I have my doubts about that now." As he listened further, he said, "I am glad you did not condemn that man. What a mistake I made; he is as innocent as a new-born babe. That advocate has done his work wonderfully." The prisoner was acquitted. It is so with us. When our sins plead against us we readily allow that we are hopelessly ruined. But, oh, when our blessed Advocate takes up his brief, when the Wonderful, the Counsellor urges his plea, and pleads that our sins were laid on him, what a change comes over the face of things! The sin is owned and then covered, lack of righteousness is acknowledged and then supplied, condemnation is recognized as just, and then seen to be with equal justice put away for ever. Picture yourself in court. There are the bills, and they are put in evidence against you. "Do you owe those bills?" "Yes." "Have you anything to say why you should not be treated as a defaulting debtor?" "No." But when the man is able to reply, "Yes: the charges are all paid:" that settles the matter. So when the believer can say, "Lord Jesus Christ, thou hast paid all my debts for me"; and when Christ shows his wounds, and says, "I have put them all away, for I bore them in my own body on the tree,"—oh, then the case is ended, and the clamour of our iniquities is subdued; and so the text is again true "He will subdue our iniquities."

But I shall have my time gone, otherwise I wanted to say that this text is true as to THE DEFILING POWER OF SIN. Do you know, brothers-

and sisters, that after we are quite forgiven, and after the domineering power of sin has gone, yet the defiling power of sin is a great affliction to us? Our experience is embittered by the corruption of sins long ago dead, which send forth a dreadful rottenness, and make our thoughts a terror to us. Some of you were converted late in life, and you have very much, I am sure, to trouble you about in the influence of evil upon your memory. Perhaps this very night while I am speaking there has come up into your mind—though you cannot bear to think of it—some wretched scene in which you played a guilty part. Even the holiest words when you are in prayer will sometimes suggest to you a loose song that you used to sing, and a casual expression which has no special meaning to others will arouse a thousand vile remembrances in you. This is what I mean by the defiling energy of sin: it is a great plague to many believers, especially to those converted after years of gross sin. In addition to that, many of you may have experienced the defiling power of sin in another form—when Satan has suggested blasphemous thoughts and abominable ideas to you. You cannot bear them. You are ready to fly to the ends of the earth to escape the venom of these hornets, but still they buzz around you, and will not be quiet. You could almost tear your heart out of your body if you could thereby expel these vile suggestions, but they will not go. They descend in perfect floods, they are mud showers, or worse than that, fire showers, and they fall upon your poor brain, and there is no getting out of the diabolical tempest. Ah, I remember when words I never heard from human tongue rushed through my ear, filling my heart with blasphemies which I never thought of—profane suggestions which made me tremble like a leaf as they poured through my poor brain; I could have died sooner than they should be there; and yet they were rushing through my mind, and bearing all before them. Many of God's people are tried in that way. What is to be done? If old memories, and if satanic suggestions come upon you to defile you, what is to be done but to fly to this text—"He will subdue our iniquities"? Let us plead this in prayer. Lord, conquer my memory, and wash it from the filth which clings to it: put away its pollution from me. Lord, chain up the devil, and rebuke his suggestions. Let thy poor child have space for breath, and time to sing, and opportunity to pray; and do save me, I beseech thee, from the infernal suggestions which now torment me.

Some of you know nothing about this, and I hope you will abide in happy ignorance of it; but those of you who do know it will perceive whereabouts I am, and you will triumph in this priceless promise, "He will subdue our iniquities." Look to Jesus Christ for power over infernal suggestions, and over evil memories, and he will give you that mastery; and it may be you shall never again be tried in that way as long as you live; for frequently the Lord gives such sudden and decisive deliverance that, between that one battle and heaven, the Christian pilgrim pursues his way and never meets Apollyon again.

We have now reached sixthly. The Lord our God will subdue sin in ITS HAMPERING POWER. I am speaking, of course, to Christians in these latter points. There is a hampering power about sin. I will just hint at some instances of it.

Many believers might do a great deal of service for Christ and his

church, but they are hampered by shame. They are ashamed, afraid, alarmed, where there is nothing to be troubled at. They indulge a foolish distrust of God. Their fear may once have been modesty, but it has grown rank, till it is not now the kind of modesty which is wholesome. They might serve God, but they are ashamed to make the attempt: ought they not to be ashamed of such cowardice? Some, again, are hindered in their joy and their peace by unbelief. They are always doubting, inventing fears, planning suspicions, compiling complaints. This cometh of evil and leadeth to no good. It is a dreadful thing to be hampered from doing good, and hampered from glorifying God, by an inveterate tendency to unbelief.

Others are hampered by frivolity. Many of us have merry spirits, but some are all levity. They were cradled in a bubble, and made to ride upon thistle-down. It is a pity when a man has no solidity of character, and runs to froth, for this sin dwarfs his manhood and dries up his vigour. Oh that the Lord would subdue this form of iniquity.

Some I know, too, are very unstable: they are never the same thing two days together. They might have borne fruit if they had kept where they were, but they have been transplanted every week, and so have never taken root. They have undertaken a dozen works, but they have done nothing. Unstable as water, they shall not excel.

Some, again, are hampered by pride. There is no use in denying it. The natural tendency of many persons is to a silly pride. When they were children they could not have a new frock but they gloried in it; and since then they cannot have twopence more than their neighbours but they become almost unbearable. I know some who I hope are Christians, but they have a dreadful tendency to swell; they will grow before your very eyes if any one will but favour the process. They have always looked upon the many—the multitude—as being far inferior to them because their grandfather's grandfather was either a knight, or a baronet, or a foreigner of unknown degree: they feel that they are superior sort of people. This is a great drawback to godly workers, especially when it makes them feel that they could not go amongst poor people. Those who do go to visit the sick poor are often quite unable to reach their hearts, because of their stiffness of manner.

Some professors are slothful. They have a torpid liver, and are always afraid of doing too much. They are lethargic, Dutch-built, broad-wheeled-waggon sort of Christians, and slow are all their movements in the work of the Lord. They do not move at all by express; indeed, they are distressed by zeal, and disgusted by enthusiasm. The Lord subdue these iniquities for us.

Others are hampered by a quick temper. They cannot take things calmly; they snap and snarl, and scarcely know why. They boil over so soon; they are very sorry for it directly afterwards, but that does not cure the scalds. There is no use in breaking the tea things because you can rivet them afterwards: they are not much improved by it. Some must be for ever fighting, for peace is stagnation to their burning spirits.

I have given a long list of these hampering sins. What is to be done with them? "Well," says one, "I do not think we can do anything, sir; these are our besetting sins." Now, do not make any mistake about

it, if there is any sin that gets the mastery over you, you will be lost : you are bound to conquer every sin, mind that. You may call it a besetting sin or not, but it must be either overcome by you, or it will be your ruin. A man may plead that a certain fault is his besetting sin ; but I am not so sure of it. A sin that you wilfully indulge, is that a besetting sin ? Certainly not. If I had to cross Clapham Common to-night and three stout fellows beset me to take away whatever I had got, I would do my little best in self-defence. That is what I call besetting a man. A besetting sin is a sin that sometimes surprises a man ; and then he ought to show fight and drive the besetting sin away. If I were to walk over the common every night, arm-in-arm with a fellow who picked my pocket, I should not say that the man " beset " me. No, he and I are friends, evidently, and the robbery is only a little dodge of our own. If you go wilfully into sin, or tolerate it, and say you cannot help it—well, you have to help it or you will be lost. One thing is certain—either you must conquer sin or sin will conquer you, and to be conquered by sin is everlasting death. Well, what is to be done ? Fall back upon this gracious promise—" He will subdue our iniquities." They have to be subdued : Jesus will do the deed, and in his name we will overcome. If we are slothful, we will, in God's strength, do ten times as much as we should have done had we been naturally of an active turn. If we are angry we will school ourselves till we become meek. Some of the most angry men that ever I have known have come to be the meekest of men. Remember Moses, how he slew the Egyptian in his heat, and yet the man Moses became very meek by the grace of God. You must overcome your sin, my dear hearer, be that sin what it may. Whatever else you forget of this evening's sermon I want to leave that in your heart : you must overcome sin. By the blood of the Lamb it is to be done. By the power of divine grace it must be accomplished. Up ! slay this Agag that you thought to spare. Hew him in pieces before the Lord, or else the Lord will hew you in pieces one of these days. God give you grace to get the victory.

Now, the last and seventh point, God will deliver you from THE INDWELLING POWER OF SIN. Sin nestles in our nature. Its lair is in the jungle of our heart, and if we are believers in Jesus Christ we must hunt it out. The first thing the Lord does with this indwelling sin is to neutralize it. He puts in his indwelling Spirit to subdue it and overcome it. Next, he begins to drive it out. He said of the Canaanites, " By little and by little I will surely drive them out." Thanks be to God, he has driven out certain of our sins already. I know that I speak to some who are not tempted now to vices that once ruled them with a rod of iron. You have conquered the grosser shapes of sin. Brother, the day will come when there will not be one Canaanite left in the land ; when, if you should search through and through, there will be no tendency to sin, no wandering of heart, no error of judgment, no failure of righteousness, no inclination to transgression. You will be as perfect as your covenant head, Jesus Christ. Where will you be then ? Not here, I trow. I notice that God always puts his jewels into fit settings, and the proper setting for a perfect man is the perfect joy of heaven. In a pure region the pure heart shall dwell ; and you,

believer, shall go on towards that sacred height, till, one of these days, your Lord will say, "Dear child, you have fought long enough with corruption and sin; come up hither; the conflict is all over now." You will look back when you get up to heaven, and you will say to yourself, perhaps—if you can have any such regrets—"I wish I had conquered those sins earlier, fought against them more earnestly, watched against them more vigilantly. Oh, that I had honoured and glorified my Lord more." However, forgetting all about regrets, what a song we will raise when we find ourselves quite free from the power of sin! What a song! O, you bad-tempered brother, when that anger is all gone, and you will never be angry again, will you not sing? Ah you, brother, a little inclined to laziness, when you find that you can serve God night and day, will you not sing? And some of us who are inclined to despondency, when our gloom is all gone, and life becomes everlasting joy and sunshine, will not we sing? Yes, I was going to say—

"Then, loudest of the crowd I'll sing,  
While heaven's resounding mansions ring  
With shouts of sovereign grace";

I did utter that resolution once in the pulpit, and when I came down the stairs an aged woman said to me, "You made a mistake in your sermon to-night." "Dear soul," I said, "I dare say I made a dozen." "Ah," she said, "but you made one great one. You said that you owed more to God's grace than anybody, and therefore you would sing the loudest. But," she said, "you won't, for I shall." I find all my fellow Christians, both men and women, are resolved that they will sing the loudest to the praise of grace divine. This shall be heaven's only contest. There shall be a grand contention among the birds of paradise which shall sing most sweetly of free grace and dying love. What a heaven there will be, and what music there will be in heaven, when our iniquities are subdued. How will the Lord look down with joy upon us all when he shall see us all made like his Son, perfect, faultless, glorious. Then we will sing, "He has subdued our iniquities. Oh, come let us sing unto the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously, and all our iniquities has he cast into the sea."

Anticipate that joy, and begin to sing to-night, and let this be the matter of your song, "Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord." May that victory be yours and mine. Amen.

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PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans vii. 7 to  
viii. 1.

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HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—489, 552, 652.