

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

OUR SANCTUARY.

A Sermon

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“A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary. O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters. Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise.”—Jeremiah xvii. 12, 13, 14.

THIS book of Jeremiah is a very thorny one: it might be called, like his smaller work, “The Book of Lamentations.” Our text is as a lily among thorns, as a rose in the wilderness; the solitary place shall be glad for it, and the desert shall rejoice. The words sound like sweet music amid the crash of tempest. The bitter tree yields us sweet fruit. The weeping prophet wipes away our tears. I do not know that the whole of Scripture contains more delightful promises than those which fell from the lips of this son of sorrow, who has been to so many a son of consolation. May God grant that this lily to-day may be exceeding lovely in your eyes as you see it in the sunlight of the Holy Spirit.

It seems to me that in this passage the mourning prophet is sitting alone in communion with his God, speaking out his steadfast faith, and washing the feet of his sorrows in the laver of the promises. The singular change of the pronoun from *thee* to *me* shows how near the Lord was to him; so near, indeed, that Jehovah not only speaks by the prophet, but breaks in with personal language, and speaks himself. All men who have to deal with great multitudes of people for God must be much alone, or they will lose their power. Jeremiah was sick at heart, for he prophesied but he was not believed; he entreated and persuaded, but his affectionate appeals were rejected; he saw the nation hastening to destruction, and he could not avert the doom: all this made him cry out in the anguish of his soul, “I am the man that hath seen affliction.” Hence he could not have lived if he had not found sanctuary in his God. He often stole away into secret places that he might pour out his breaking heart before the Lord, and commit himself to the tender care of him whom he so faithfully served. Let us imitate him, and overcome our griefs by secret fellowship with the happy God.

The passage before us is a very broken one. Those who are acquainted
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with the original tongue will tell you that it is difficult to construe it. It is a fragmentary passage, and several meanings have been given to it. Do you not know the reason of this? Should not a broken heart use broken words? When have you been in great trouble, and have drawn nigh to God, you have often had to pour out your heart in faltering accents. Nor does this destroy our prayer, or even shorten its power. Our God can put our speech together when we cannot put it together ourselves. A sigh here and a cry there, an utterance of faith at one moment and a groan of sorrow at the next: these make up a singular patchwork to ourselves, perhaps; more singular still to anyone who should overhear us in our solitary sighs; but such supplications are not at all singular to God. He reads the meaning of his saints, and understands the language of their sighs. However, it seems to me that the translators of the Authorised Version have given us the true meaning of the original, as I think they generally do. The men are not yet born who will give us a better rendering either of the Old or the New Testament than is to be found in our old English Bibles, and it is my belief that they never will be born. These men wrote a marvellously pure English, and really translated the Bible into our mother tongue, being helped of God not only to see the meaning, but to write it in words which are understood of the people. Learned men in our day for the most part know every tongue except English; and they fall into the error of mistaking long Latinized words for our native language. Give me plain expressive Saxon. You may place every confidence in your grandmother's Bible; whatever small improvements the translation may require, it is in the main so good that its rivals have had but short lives, while it retains all its primitive power.

In this text no doubt the prophet had in his eye the temple at Jerusalem. Seated upon the summit of a hill, with deep valleys surrounding it, the temple stood aloft, above all, a noble structure, seen from afar. To the Jew it was "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth." When God dwelt in it the temple might be fitly described in the language of Jeremiah as "A glorious high throne" for God. That glittering temple of snow-white marble, adorned with abundance of gold, seemed as it gleamed in the sun to be the lofty seat of Jehovah, whereon he reigned in the midst of his people. The temple, I say, may have been in the prophet's eye, but I do not think that it was in the heart of his meaning. The passage which we read just now, in the seventh chapter of Jeremiah, shows you that Jeremiah was by no means a devotee for the material temple, nor did he rest his confidence in its outward ceremonial. He had reached a more spiritual region. That evangelical spirit which spake by Isaiah also rested upon Jeremiah. He had come to understand that God is not to be worshipped as if he dwelt in temples made with hands, nor to be served by merely outward rites; but that God is a spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. It seems to me to be clear that the prophet here speaks of God himself as being to his people the place of their sanctuary and a glorious high throne. With this I shall begin,—*the true place of our sanctuary.* Secondly, I shall have a little to say about *the departers from God*, the true place of our sanctuary,—they are to be ashamed, and written in the dust. Then, thirdly, *the comers to God as the true sanctuary.* How do

they come? They come with the language of the fourteenth verse; "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved."

I. First, let us consider **THE TRUE PLACE OF OUR SANCTUARY**. It is not at Jerusalem, nor yet at Samaria; it is not at Rome, nor yet at Canterbury. The place of our sanctuary is not the meeting-house wherein we gather; the place of our sanctuary is our God himself. "God is our refuge and strength." "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations."

He is viewed under the aspect of *a sovereign reigning in majesty*—"A glorious high throne is the place of our sanctuary." Many refuse to worship God as reigning: they have not yet grasped the idea that the Lord is King, so that they cannot understand the song, "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice." For that includes, first, divine sovereignty, and some men grow black in the face with rage against that truth; they cannot endure it. Not even over his own mercy will they allow God to exercise any sovereignty: he is to be bound by their rules and compelled to deal alike with all; so they say. But he will not have it so; for this is his word: "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." The crown rights of God include this amongst the rest, that he hath the power of life and death, and can punish or pardon according to his royal pleasure. While he will deal justly with all mankind, yet he hath a special favour towards his chosen, passing by their iniquity through the sacrifice of Calvary. He will make his own election, and he will distribute his mercy as seemeth good in his sight. To all who rebel against this sovereignty he makes this answer: "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?" When any cavil at his acts, his only answer is: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" Now this God whose sovereignty is so much disputed is our God; a glorious high throne for absolute dominion and sovereignty is the place of our sanctuary. To him whose sovereign grace is the hope of the undeserving we fly for succour.

Besides sovereignty, of course, his glorious high throne includes power. A throne without power would be but the pageantry of vanity. There should be power in the King who ruleth over all: and is there not? Who shall stay his hand, or say unto him, "What doest thou?" God is ruler even at this hour. The floods lift up their voices, yea, the great waves of the raging sea roar in their pride, but "the Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever." Hallelujah. Do not imagine that Jehovah has vacated his throne or left the affairs of his kingdom to chance, or to the free-will of man. Whatever you think you see of chance has an underlying order about it which shows that God is there: whatever you see of man's free agency, and you do see it, yet over it and above it there is the overruling hand of him that worketh all things according to the counsel of his will. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." Oh, it is such a blessed thing to me that the place of our sanctuary is the reigning God, as long as he is on the throne it must be well with the righteous. Oh, but they say, evil reigneth. Yes, but God reigneth over the evil,

and through the evil still produces good. Do not imagine that Satan is an independent power, a sort of second Deity, outside of the dominion of the Lord, for even he is subordinated to the eternal purpose. "Alas," cries despondency, "sorrow reigneth, and the effect of the curse!" I know it; but the Redeemer also reigneth, lifting up his people from that curse; and the creation itself also, which has been made subject to vanity, shall be delivered, and rise into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Wherefore, rejoice in this, that the Lord reigns as absolute monarch, full of power to execute his own purposes of infinite love. In all times of disturbance and trouble flee ye to the Lord of all as to a sanctuary, and find your comfort in him.

Forget not that *the Lord reigns in exceeding glory*. The excellence of his dominion surpasses all other, for he is the blessed and only Potentate. Every act of his empire exhibits his glorious character, his justice, his goodness, his faithfulness, his holiness. Other kings need the tinsel of pomp, and the trickery of policy to make them great, but the Lord God is essentially glorious, and those who know him best are most struck with his grandeur. The chronicles of Jehovah's kingdom are honourable and glorious, the forces of his throne are infinite, the purposes of his majesty are holy, and his name is to be praised from generation to generation. We shelter beneath no insignificant principedom—a glorious high throne is the place of our sanctuary.

The text teaches more than this, however. It says, "A glorious high throne *from the beginning* is the place of our sanctuary." It is a very blessed thing to come back to the fact that the Lord has not newly assumed a throne, from which he has newly cast out some former king. Nay, "A glorious high throne *from the beginning* is the place of our sanctuary." As his is the most potent of empires, so is it the most ancient. There was a time before all times when there was no day but the Ancient of Days, and then God was supreme, purposing, determining, counselling, arranging all things according to the good pleasure of his will. "With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him?" Then there came a day when he had created worlds, I know not how many, but in them all he found no rival. Perhaps all the stars we see are worlds full of inhabitants who worship the infinite Creator, and perhaps all the stars that have ever been seen by the telescope are to the whole universe of God as a little dust behind the door might be to a large room. But in all these worlds from the beginning the Lord is a glorious high throne. When he made this world and put man upon it, he did not make it without a plan and a purpose from the beginning. He never lifted his finger upon any work of his hand without first knowing what he was going to do, and what would come of it. God is never taken by surprise, he has foreseen all things and worked them into his grand plan. The arrangements of providence which seem so complex to us are not complex to him; they are simple, direct, and effective. God is working evermore for a glorious purpose, which shall one day make the universe and all eternity to sing with rapturous joy that ever God determined to do what he is now doing. Let us rest in that truth. From the beginning a glorious high throne ordained everything, and it arranges all things to-day: this is the place of the sanctuary of God's people. Oh, be ye not cast down and troubled, for the Lord

reigneth: beneath his royal pavilion we may rest in peace. There is evil and there is sorrow, there is sin and there is bold rebellion; but infinite goodness is still regnant upon the throne of glory. Be ye not worried as though truth would be defeated by falsehood, and goodness would be exterminated by evil; for the Lord of holiness wears the crown, and he will break the hosts of wickedness with his sceptre, as with a rod of iron. A glorious high throne, higher than the throne of Satan, higher than the heights of pride, higher than the loftiness of ambition, higher even than the heaven of heavens, is still the throne of God for ever and ever, and this is the refuge of all his saints. The Lord hath graciously said of his people, "Although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary"; and he has also said, "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary."

When the prophet alludes to *the place* of our sanctuary, our mind is naturally led to feel that there must be some kind of place where God especially reveals himself. We all know that he manifests himself in heaven; and we expect ere long to be there to swell the number of his courtiers; but he has also revealed himself on earth, and very significant are the places where he has done so. The place where he mainly revealed himself among men was the temple, to which I have said Jeremiah somewhat alludes. Now, where was the temple built? It was built upon that mountain whereon Abraham took his son Isaac to offer him up as a sacrifice. Wonderful scene! There, all in lonely quietude, the servants left at the foot of the hill, the great patriarch, the father of the faithful, laid the wood upon the altar and unsheathed the knife to slay his only son. There the scene ends, and the curtain drops; but what a wonderful picture it was of the greater Father, the everlasting God, who did in very deed and truth offer up his Son, the heir of the promise, that we might live through him! A ram caught in the thicket was the substitute for Isaac; but there was no substitute for Jesus, the Son of God. He died the just for the unjust to bring us to God. But there, where the most instructive of all types of the heavenly Father's love was exhibited, there must be the temple wherein God would converse with men and make for men a place of sanctuary. The temple itself was built upon that site, and there it was that God dwelt visibly between the wings of the cherubim, above the ark of the covenant, over that golden lid which was called the mercy-seat. What was that ark of the covenant, but a type of our Lord Jesus Christ in a most instructive way? There stood the cherubim above the golden lid of that coffer; and Jesus also was "seen of angels." The cover made the mercy-seat, or propitiatory, and this the Lord Jesus is to us. He, as the blood-besprinkled mercy-seat, is the place where God meets with us, hears our prayers, and accepts our persons and our praises. Look within the lid with holy reverence, and first you see two tables of stone upon which the law of God was engraven. Did not Jesus say, "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart"? Looking again, you observe a golden pot filled with manna, and you remember him who is the bread which came down from heaven, whereof if a man eat he shall live for ever. Nor may we fail to notice a rod, a rod that has budded and blossomed and brought forth almonds; for by it we are reminded that the sceptre of rule is

with the Lord Jesus Christ, and the government shall be upon his shoulder. This is his living and productive sceptre, with which he rules the souls of his people. Do you wonder that the Lord in meeting his people ordained as the trysting place such an eminent type of his dear Son? The ark of the covenant was made according to the pattern which Moses saw in the holy Mount; and above its mercy-seat was the place where God dwelt, and where he communed with his people.

But the sacrifice of Isaac and the ark of the covenant were only types of that greater sacrifice when he who is the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, went up to the cross, and on Calvary "it pleased the Lord to bruise him." It is natural that the Lord should meet with us in grace in the place where he put his Son to grief. There, where he made his soul an offering for sin, the Lord becomes well pleased with us. O friends, the cross is the place where God hath his throne of salvation, and truly we may say of it—"A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary." In the great plan of salvation by the sacrifice of the Son of God, God is indeed enthroned. Upon the cross he is extolled and made very high. Would you see his majesty? Behold, it in the person of the Only Begotten, full of grace and truth. Would you see his justice? Read it written in crimson lines upon the dying person of the Son of God. Would you see his love? Ah, I will not speak of it, but simply say—Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us! In giving us his own dear Son, he has glorified his grace by an unspeakable gift. God is never so revealed in all the works of his hands as in the cross of Christ. That is a glorious high throne indeed. Its moral excellence, its infinite love, its spiritual beauty, can never be equalled. Earthly kings and princes often rule by injustice, breaking the laws which they pretend to make; but he, our God, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, is lifted high, high above all censure as to his justice, his holiness, his grace, his truth, his love. "A glorious high throne is the place of our sanctuary."

Now then, dear friends, *the place where we worship is God himself revealed in the person of his dear Son.* I pray you, never try to worship anywhere else. Christ is the one altar, the one temple, the one sanctuary. Set not up your high places of will-worship; erect not images to Baal in the form of self and sin. God in Christ Jesus should absorb all the worship of all the sons of men.

In addition, *the Lord God is our refuge;* for a sanctuary was a place to which men fled in the hour of peril. Is not Jesus our refuge from present guilt and from the wrath to come? Does he not deliver us from the guilt of sin? Ay, he is our refuge from temptation, our refuge in the hour of trial, our sanctuary in every season of sorrow, distress and pain. This glorious high throne affords us an abiding shelter under the assaults of the enemy. I do not think I can preach on such a text,—so there I must just leave it for you to think it over, or, better still, for you to flee to it, and fleeing to it to abide in it, worshipping in spirit and in truth.

II. Secondly, I am to speak but a few words, but those very solemnly, concerning THOSE WHO DEPART FROM GOD. Alas, that there should be such!—men who leave the river for the desert, the living for

the dead! *Who are they?* The text says, "All that forsake thee," and "they that depart from me." See, then, that this text has a bearing upon us, because these people of whom we are now going to speak were not an ignorant people who did not know God, or how could they be said to forsake him? They were not like the heathen who have never heard his name. You cannot forsake a person with whom you have no acquaintance. They were a people who knew a great deal about God, since he had given them his law and sent his prophets among them. They were the people of Israel: God had dwelt among them: in open type and visible glory he had been in the midst of their host; they had seen the sacrifice, they had beheld the great wonders which the Lord wrought for them in Egypt and at the Red Sea; and yet they forsook him. Alas! there are among his own professed people a company that forsake him. They mix for a time with the people of God, but they ultimately go out from them because they are not truly of them. In this land we have a people to whom God has been very gracious in sending the gospel to them; but they are forsaking Christ for Rome, turning aside from faith in the Redeemer's merit that they may trust in priestcraft. It will not do, my brethren, it will not do. But there are many such, and many that did run well for a time; what did hinder them that they should not still obey the truth? They went back to the world for gain or for ease: because of poverty, or because of riches, or because of fear of man, they turned aside and went away from God. We still sorrowfully know that an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God remains amongst us. Those who forsake the Lord are not an infidel people altogether, they are not a people who refuse even to hear his name; but their hearts are not right with Jehovah, neither are they steadfast in his covenant. At one time evidently these people had something to do with the Lord, but after awhile they forsook him. What did they do? They no longer sought unto the Lord as once they did, but ceased to be fervent in their service. At first they ceased to worship him, they took no delight in his ways; they tried to be neutral, they were lukewarm, careless, indifferent, they forgot God. After thus declining in zeal, and refusing outward worship, they went further; for he says they had departed from him—they could not endure the Lord, and therefore went into the far country. They said unto God, "Depart from us; we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." They went into open sin; they disowned their God and broke his commands: some of them even dared to blaspheme him. The course of sin is downhill. The man who once forgets his God soon forgets himself; and then he throws the reins on the neck of his lusts and goes from sin to sin, forgetting his God more and more. I may be addressing such this morning; I fear I am. To such I have to tell *what will become of them* one of these days. This will become of you,—you "shall be ashamed." I do not know a more painful feeling to a true man than to be ashamed, when he feels—"I was foolish and wrong": it makes his cheeks crimson, his heart swells, his eyes overflow. The most hardened of sinners will one day be ashamed, saying, "I acted unprofitably to myself." Such shame will come over you forgetful ones one of these days. You that live without God will ere long be disgusted with yourselves for it. It may not come upon you till you die, but it

is very probable that it will assail you then. When in your dying hours, what a dreadful thing it will be to be filled with shame at the remembrance of the past, so as to be afraid to meet your God, ashamed to think that you have lived a whole life without caring for him! What will it be to wake up in the next world and to see the glory of God around you—the glory of the God whom you despised! Oh, the shame that will come over the ungodly in judgment! It is written, “They shall wake up to shame and everlasting contempt.” Every intelligent being that is right towards God will despise the man that forsook God and turned away from him. “They shall wake up to shame and everlasting contempt.” What a waking! It is as terrible as our Lord’s word, “In hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments.” How fearful to think that the contempt will never end! Everlasting contempt! What a word! I hope you have never acted so as to feel ashamed before your fellow-men; for it must be a dreadful thing when such a charge is brought against a man that he has to appear before the judgment-seat of his own country, and knows that he is guilty. He has only his fellow-men to face; but what a hang-dog look he has! He cannot face the the jury; he is afraid to cast his eyes upon the judge! He is ashamed to be seen even by the meanest wretches in the court. In the next world there will be none of that hardihood which enables big villains to brazen it out before their neighbours. Conscience will be awakened then, and therefore shame will have all the greater power. Great men and proud men will be small enough ere long; and careless and profane persons will be miserable enough when that word shall be fulfilled—“All that forsake thee shall be ashamed.”

And then it is added that they “shall be written in the earth;” that is, if they turn away from God they may win a name for awhile, but it will be merely from the earth, and of the earth. They may obtain a fortune, and enjoy outward prosperity; they may be like David’s green bay-tree that spread itself far and wide; but in the end it will turn out that they were like bullocks fattened for the slaughter, or like the swine that lie down in their sty, too well filled to move, but all the more sure to be killed. What an awful thing that a man should have his portion in this life and nothing to come hereafter! O worldlings, you have your riches in this poor country which is soon to be burned with fire. Your pleasures and treasures will melt in the fervent heat of the last days. Your life’s pursuits are a short business, ending in eternal misery. They that have forsaken God will have their little day; but the more they prosper, and the richer they become, and the more famous they grow, so much the worse for them; for the higher they mount the more desperate shall be their fall.

We read that they “shall be written in the earth,” and that means that they shall go into oblivion. If you were to go to a school in the East you would find that the children have no slates, and very few of them have wax tablets, for these are rather expensive; and so the schoolmaster spreads the floor with sand or earth, and you see the boys writing their copies on the ground. Then, of course, when they had finished their writing the master would just sweep the floor, and all the writing disappeared. Was this the meaning of our Saviour when he stooped down and wrote on the ground? When they brought to him

the woman taken in adultery, hypocrites that they were, you remember he stooped down and wrote on the ground as though he heard them not; as much as to say, "I shall rub it all out again: all that you have to say will be forgotten." So will it be with men who do not trust in God. Their names will be written in the sand, and in a little time the great foot of Providence will obliterate them all, and they will be quite forgotten. If you get honour in this life by sin, your fame carries its death within its own bowels. The greatest name that ever rung forth from the clarion of fame shall die out into oblivion or infamy if its honours are earned by an evil life. Oh, ye who dread a cold forgetfulness, live unto God, and then your names shall shine on for ever; but if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die, and leave your names for a curse unto the Lord's people!

The text tells us that there shall come something besides this: they that forsake God shall one day be sore athirst even unto death, "because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters." There is for the soul but one fountain of water, flowing, cool, clear, ever refreshing. "All my springs are in thee," said David; and so may we say, for our only source of supply is the Lord our God. If a man turns away from God then he forsakes the cool fountain, he goes to broken cisterns that hold no water, and he will perish of thirst. Oh, my well-beloved hearers, I wish I were able to put this very strongly before you! You are such creatures that you must trust and love God, or else you will never possess that which you were created to enjoy; you must always be without the grand necessary of your being. You are vessels, but what will be the use of you if you are not filled? You are denying yourselves bread when you deny yourselves God—I mean bread for your souls. You must have God in Christ Jesus or else you will be as one that is parched with thirst in the Sahara. He looks around him eagerly for a well, but sees nothing save an ocean of sand. He rushes this way till the hot sand beneath his feet burns out of him all power to move; anon he struggles to his feet, and turns in the other direction, but with equal disappointment. He lifts his hands; he cries; he tears his hair in utter despair; he stoops down, he scoops a hole in the ground, he would fain dig to the very centre to find drink, but all in vain, he must pine away and die. His mouth is an oven, his tongue a firebrand, himself the victim of death. So, poor heart, there is nothing for you but God: if you forsake him you die. Young man, you are miserable to-day; you used to enjoy the theatre, and even baser amusement; but you cannot rejoice in them now, and I am thankful you cannot. You are becoming dissatisfied and wretched, but you need not remain so. Here is the living water fresh and free, and the Spirit bids me cry, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The supply for your soul is only to be found in this one well, the well of Bethlehem, the well which springs up from the depths of eternal love in Christ Jesus our Lord. God still sits enthroned in Jesus as upon a glorious high throne; he there receives thirsty sinners to himself, and gives them to drink till they are filled to the full.

Oh, when I take hold of my God I do not seem as if I wanted anything else. If I have God in Christ then am I all content, filled with all the fulness of God. "But troubles will come." Never mind troubles

as long as you have your God. I feel sometimes like Rutherford when he said he could swim through seven hells to get at Christ. So a man might well do. You will not mind the trials of life when once you know that God is yours. A boy once said to his fellow, "John, would you like to have been Elijah? Would you have dared to get into that chariot of fire with horses of fire?" "Yes," said the other, "I would not mind *if God drove.*" That is how believers feel about everything. If God drives let us be fully at ease, for all must be well: if the Lord be King, those who trust in him are safe. Since Jehovah rules, and over-rules, we mount the chariot of fire or walk the waves of the sea and we are secure in either case. If the worst comes to the worst, we shall be wafted to the best place of all, up to the throne of God, to the right hand of the Most High. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words all ye who find sanctuary in your God; but if you trust not in the hope of Israel, you must thirst for ever and never attain to satisfaction.

III. Thirdly, and lastly, let us look at THE COMERS TO GOD. Those who come to God—how do they come? Very briefly, *they come away from all the world.* Poor Jeremiah had nobody to help him or comfort him: the best of the men that he met with were sharper than a thorn hedge, they only wounded him; therefore he came right out from them, and confessed that Jehovah, the hope of Israel, was his God and his sanctuary. He set himself quite alone for God and his fear. Come, then, you that wish to come to God, and find him to be your sanctuary; come right out from the world. I do not ask you just now, as my dear brother Moody does, to stand up, but I believe that if I were to say, "Let those that follow after God stand up," the bulk of you would gladly rise and acknowledge your Lord. If we do not at this moment adopt that mode of confessing Christ, yet we will do it in some way. Oh, brethren, own your Lord! "Come out from among them, and be ye separate; touch not the unclean thing." Come away, Lot, you cannot prosper and be happy in Sodom; you do not know or love the ways of the place. Lot settled there and thought he was going to get on first rate; but he was never happy. His righteous soul was vexed by the wicked citizens. I am glad it was so. Their ungodly conversation vexed righteous Lot, and he deserved to be vexed. If you try to be like worldlings, I hope they will not welcome your imitation. Whenever I am told of a man's holding with the hare and running with the hounds, I am always glad to hear that the dogs bite him. What business has he with the dogs? Come right out! O soul, if thou wouldst have peace, come away to your God. Never take your place with those who shall be written in the earth.

How did believers come to God of old? Jeremiah *came sick and needing to be saved*, for he cried, "Heal me, O Jehovah, save me." That is the way to come. If you want to have God and his glorious high throne to be your shelter, come just as you are, sick and sorry. Do not stop till you have bettered yourself; all bettering is mere battering till we come to Christ; then he betters us in real earnest, for he makes us new creatures in himself. Come along then, and say, "Heal me, and save me."

But *come to God with faith.* It was grand faith of Jeremiah which enabled him to say "Heal me, and I shall be healed." Sick as I am, if

thou wilt act as physician to me I shall be cured: if thou save me, lost as I am, I shall be saved. Come along, poor sinner. "Where, sir?" say you. To God in Christ Jesus. This is the gospel: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Come to your God, come to your God in Christ Jesus with the full conviction that he can and will heal you. "Heal me, and I shall be healed: save me, and I shall be saved."

And come with this acknowledgment on your tongue,—"*For thou art my praise.*" Some of you can say already, "Thou art my praise." "O Lord, I will praise thee." "Jehovah is my strength and my song." Oh, I think if I were worn out with disease, and if I had to a large extent lost my powers of speech, and powers of thought too, I could, if I were startled at the dead of night sit up in my shirt sleeves and speak to the praise of the Lord my God. That is a subject upon which a child of God can surely talk in his sleep. We have a good God, a loving God, a tender God, a gracious God, a God full of long-suffering and mercy and faithfulness to us poor sinners.

"I'll praise him in life, I'll praise him in death,
I'll praise him as long as he lendeth me breath;
And say when the death dew lies cold on my brow,
If ever I loved thee, my Jesus, 'tis now."

This is good argument in prayer;—"I have made my boast in thee, O God, I pray thee let not my glorying be stopped. Be to me as I have declared thou wilt be."

But suppose you cannot say so much as that, then put it this way:—"Heal me, O Lord; heal me this morning; save me, O Lord; save me at once, and thou shalt be my praise. Lord, I promise that I will never rob thee of the honour of my salvation; if thou wilt but save me thou shalt have all the glory of it." Oh, how I used to feel when I first sought the Lord, that if saved it must be all of grace; I felt that I should never have a word to say in my own praise, but every syllable should be for Jesus. I was ashamed and confounded, and could never open my mouth any more in my own defence, but all must be to my Redeemer's praise? When I get to heaven how I will bless and magnify his name; meanwhile I would practise the holy exercise even here. O troubled ones, come to him just as you are; trust him, and he will save you. Then will your heart say—

"Now for the love I bear his name
What was my gain I count my loss;
My former pride I call my shame,
And nail my glory to his cross."

Henceforth I give myself up wholly to that one work of praising and magnifying and adoring the name of the Most High. After fifty years of life I have no ambition but to glorify my Lord. Beloved, if you get the glorious high throne to be your sanctuary, I am sure you will praise the Lord your King for ever and ever.

How is the preacher going to close with an appeal for the hospitals? This is the day for the Hospital Collection, and I hope you will give largely: I think the text suggests it. If you pray for healing, help others who need healing. If your prayer is, "Save me," if you expect the Lord to have mercy upon you, have mercy upon others. As you serve a great God, have large hearts, and give liberally, like followers of the generous Lord Jesus. If the beloved Physician has healed all your diseases, show your gratitude by what you do for the sick poor in the hospitals of London this day. Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Jeremiah vii. 1—14;
xvii. 1—14.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—113, 148 (Part II.),
148 (Part I.)
