

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

“FORGET THEE, I WILL NOT.”

A Sermon

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, OCTOBER 28TH, 1894,

DELIVERED BY

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“Thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.”—Isaiah xlv. 21.

THE idols said nothing to their worshippers. They had mouths, but they spoke not. You might go on worshipping an image for twenty years; but you would never get a reply to anything you said to it. It could not see you, it could not hear you, it could not answer you. That is a poor kind of worship. I do not think that I should care to go on worshipping a Madonna even if she did wink; one cannot make much out of a wink, we want something more than that from the object of our adoration.

But God has spoken to his people; we have a revelation from the one living and true God. Jehovah has broken the eternal silences; he has rent the veil behind which he was hidden, and he has revealed himself. I believe this Book to be inspired of God; I accept every word and every jot and tittle of it as God's voice to me. He has spoken, and the record of what he has said is before me, and I can rejoice in it. This was a blessed speech when God said to his ancient people, “Thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.”

I cannot at this time stop to make any preface; but I must speak to you, first of all, upon *the title which the Lord gives to his people*: “My servant.” Secondly, I will remind you of *the promise which he makes to them*: “Thou shalt not be forgotten of me;” and then, thirdly, I will give you *some reasons which assure us that his promise must and will be kept*.

I. First then, dear friends, here is THE TITLE WHICH THE LORD GIVES TO HIS PEOPLE: “My servant.”

Notice what a *practical title* it is: “My servant.” It has to do with action and service; it has to do with the heart, but also with the hand,

with the inner and with the outer life. There is no true Christian but the practical Christian. The merely doctrinal professor has only the dead logs of wood: but there is no fire of devotion, there is no warmth of fervour, there is nothing that is really worth having. The man who talks about his experience as a Christian, who never does anything for Christ, is, I am afraid, only an idle dreamer. There must be practical obedience to God from those who claim to be his servants. A servant is not always at work; but a servant is always a servant, and ever ready for work. I have known some servants who were very particular about what work they did; if there was a little given them to do that they thought was outside their special duty, they went about it in a very grumbling humour. I do not call such a person as that a servant; but the Lord's servants belong entirely to him, they are his property, their time and talents are wholly at his disposal, their whole mind and heart and soul are subservient to his will. Let him say, "Do this," and they do it; let him say, "Go thither," and thither they go.

I want you, dear hearers, to ask yourselves, "Are we servants of God?" Are not some of you servants of sin? Are not others of you servants of self, servants of the world, servants of the devil? Well, there is nothing comforting in the text for you; there is nothing comforting in the whole Bible for you, while you remain as you are. You must quit that evil service; you must, by divine grace, become servants of God. But I know that I am speaking to some who are the servants of the Lord, and who wish that their service was more perfect than it is. The will is present with you, with hearty goodwill you wear the golden yoke of Christ, and you desire that every member of your body, and every faculty of your soul, may be yielded up to him, for that is your reasonable service.

That is the first point, then, this is a practical title, "My servant."

Notice also that, in the text it is a *personal title*. The Lord says, "Thou art my servant." There were a great many who were not God's servants; multitudes of people were the servants of those idol gods of theirs, which they had made with their compass and their rule, their line and their plane. Poor things—the servants of a piece of wood! It must be beggarly service to serve that which you yourself have made. But God says to each one of his people, "Thou art my servant." Could the Lord Jesus go round this Tabernacle, and stop in front of every one of you, and say, "Thou art my servant. Do not judge thy fellow-worshippers, nor try to find out whether this man or that may be my servant; but thou, thyself art my servant"? Oh! would not some of us, if our Master should do this, just leap to our feet, take hold of his hand, and say, "Lord, it is so. Brand us as thy slaves, for we would fain bear in our body the marks of the Lord Jesus. We would let all men know that indeed we are thy servants"? Will you just turn your thoughts away from this great crowd? I am trying to do so, that I may take to myself the personal title, "Thou art my servant." Will you, each one individually, either allot to yourself these words of the Lord, "Thou art my servant," or else honestly put them on one side as not belonging to you?

Next, notice that, as the title is a practical and personal one, so it is

an exclusive title: “Thou art *my* servant. These other people are servants of Baal or Ashtaroth; but thou art *my* servant.” When a man has a servant, he expects him to serve him, and not to be in the employ of other people. God’s servants must serve God; not idols, not the world, not self, not sin, not Satan. “Thou art my servant.” When you get up to-morrow morning, and begin to light the fire, and prepare the breakfast, it is true that you will be your earthly master’s servant; but, as you commune with your God, hear him saying to you, “Thou art my servant.” When you take down the shutters, to begin the business of the day, hear a voice saying to you, across the counter, “Thou art my servant.” You will live better, you will serve better, it will put a glory about your actions, if you can know and feel that you are truly serving God.

“Thou art my servant.” I can tell you that this passage has very greatly comforted me. One has said, “You are altogether wrong.” Another has said, “You are very bigoted;” and so on. “Yes,” I have answered, “but I am not your servant. I am not responsible to you; and if my Master is satisfied with me, I am satisfied with his satisfaction.” Certainly I am not going to be the servant of men, to put my neck under their feet, and do their bidding. Send your own slaves on your business; I shall attend to my Lord’s work, for I have only one Master to serve. I want you to-night, and all the week, when the devil says, “Now here is a fine chance for you to get rich very quickly, you can make a lot of money,” just to say to him, “I am not your servant, and I cannot take your wages. I can do nothing wrong in order to get gain, for I am the servant of God.” And if, young man, there should come in your way, during the week, a pleasurable vice which may seek to win you, flee from it. Say, “How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God, for I am God’s servant?” “Thou art my servant, not the servant of anybody else.” Hold your heads up; be not ashamed; he is a free man whom God has made to be his servant. “Thou hast loosed my bonds,” said David, after he had said, “I am thy servant.” “I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid. Thou hast loosed my bonds. By the very fact of taking me into thy service, thou hast made me a free man.”

Note next that, as this is an exclusive title, so it is *an honourable title*. I will not dwell upon that fact; but it must be so, for God uses the title in this verse twice over. He says, “Thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant.” It is a greater honour to be the Lord’s servant than to be an earl or a duke, a prince or a king. To serve God, is truly to reign. My dear friends, is this high dignity yours? Never mind about earthly stars and garters; this is the grandest degree that you can take, the highest honour that you can win in earth or heaven, to be the servant of the ever-blessed God.

Once more, this is a *title of acceptance*. As God says, twice over, “Thou art my servant,” he means by this, “I accept thee as my servant; I own thee as such.” What a grand thing it will be if, at the last great day, God is able to acknowledge us as his servants! He will do so if he can accept us now. Do you not sometimes have a servant in your employment to whom you say, “Really, I cannot keep you any longer; the sooner that you are gone, the better”? One does not

care to have some people for servants. Now and then a man pleads that he cannot get any work, and begs you to employ him. You give him a broom, and set him to sweep a path, and he sweeps it in such a way that he makes your flesh creep, and you pretty soon sweep him out. You would be ashamed to have anybody know that he was a servant of yours; but when God says, "Thou art my servant: thou art my servant," it means that he is not ashamed of us. Brethren, we are often ashamed of ourselves when God is not ashamed of us. He overlooks a thousand imperfections, and it is well for us that he does, for who among us can serve God perfectly? I have sometimes known Christian people, who were doing a good work for God, get quite downhearted because they found somebody else doing a larger work. Oh, do not envy your brethren who have more service than you have! I daresay that they almost envy you, and think how nicely they could do the work that you have to do. One said to me, the other day, when I had preached, and preached in what I thought to be a very poor way, too, "I feel as if, after hearing you, I cannot preach again." "Oh! dear," I said, "if you knew what I thought of the sermon, you would feel very differently; you would think that anybody could preach better than that." I often think that anybody can preach better than I can, till I sit and hear them, and then I say to myself, "Well, after that, I will try again." But, dear friends, whether we think we fail, or others think we fail, how little does it matter if the Lord says, "Thou art my servant: thou art my servant. It was a poor sermon, dear one, but thou art my servant. That work was very poorly done when you visited the sick, but you did it with all your heart. Thou art my servant. You are not a very brilliant teacher for that class of yours; but you love your scholars, and you love your God. Thou art my servant." He does, as it were, pat you on the back, and say, "Thou art my servant. Go on with thy work for me; I will own thee, I intend to bless thee. Thou art my servant."

One reason why we are God's servants is that he has forgiven us our trespasses. Shall I read to you again the next verse to my text? "Thou art my servant. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins." Is not that a reason why we should serve him? Forgiven sins should bind us to his service with bands stronger than steel. We can never run away from him who has pardoned such grave faults as we have committed. Then he adds, "I have redeemed thee," and in the twenty-fourth verse he goes on to say, "The Lord hath redeemed Jacob." Oh, we must serve him who has redeemed us! If he has bought us, we are not our own; we belong to him, and we must spend and be spent in his service. And then the Lord says, "Jehovah hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel." Well, if he has been able to get any glory out of us, we will keep on serving him. What a marvellous God he must be to glorify himself in such poor wretches as we are; but as he does so, we will continue in so divine a service while life shall last, and then we will serve him for ever above.

Thus have I spoken upon the title which the Lord gives to his people: "My servant."

II. Now, secondly, comes a sweet part of the subject, THE PROMISE WHICH HE MAKES TO US: “Thou shalt not be forgotten of me.”

Men forget us, do they not? And they turn against us. Those for whom you do the most are often those who will be most unkind, and most bitter against you. I will not speak as I might; but I know, and I have felt, and I daresay that you know, and that you have felt, in your measure, too, that “cursed is he that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm.” The whole of mankind put together in the scales are lighter than vanity; there is no use in trusting in them at all; but God says, “Thou shalt not be forgotten of me.” Remember those comforting words that we sang just now,—

“Forget thee I will not, I cannot, thy name
Engraved on my heart doth for ever remain:
The palms of my hands whilst I look on I see
The wounds I received when suffering for thee.”

What does this promise mean? It means, first, that *God will never cease to love his servants*. If you are his servants, he loved you before the world began, he loves you still, and he will love you world without end. “Thou shalt not be forgotten of me.” Do not dream that God can cast away his people. We are members of the body of Christ; do you think that Christ will ever lose any of the members of his body? I should not like to lose my little finger; and Christ will not lose one of the members of his body. You would think, according to the teaching of some, that Christ’s members kept dropping off, something like the limbs of lobsters, and that new ones were constantly growing. There is nothing in Scripture to warrant such a notion as that. You remember Mr. Bunyan’s parable of a child, who is in a room, and a stranger comes in, and says, “Come hither, child, I will cut off thy finger.” “No,” says the child. “Yes, but I will; I will take off your little finger. Here is a knife, I will cut off your little finger.” “No,” again says the child; and he begins to cry. “Oh! but,” says the stranger, “that is a poor little finger that you have, I will take it off, and I will buy you a gold finger, such a brave gold finger, and I will put it on your hand instead of your little finger.” “Oh!” says the child, “but it would not be my finger; I cannot lose my own finger.” Whereupon Mr. Bunyan says, “If Christ could have better people than those he has, he would not make the change, ‘for,’ saith he, ‘they are not my people; they are not a part of my own living self.’” So, the Lord Jesus would not change you for a golden saint, for one much better than you are. That new finger would not be what the Father gave him, nor what he bought with his precious blood. “Thou shalt not be forgotten of me,” means that God will never cease to love his servants.

Next, it means that *the Lord will never cease to think of his servants*. The thoughts of God are wonderful. He can think of every individual saint as much as if there were no other saint in the universe. He never leaves off thinking of each one of his people. The divine mind is distinctly set on you, brother, on you, sister, and it is never taken off from you. If God were to cease to think of us for five minutes, in that five minutes we might be ruined; but he never forgets us; and,

consequently, there shall be no part of our body without its armour, and no portion of our time without a sentinel set to watch over us every single moment of it. Listen to the Lord's promise about his vine: "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." God will never leave off thinking of you as well as loving you.

Next, *the Lord will never cease to befriend his servants.* God's thoughts are always practical; the gifts of his hand go with the thoughts of his mind. Our text means, "Thou shalt not be forgotten of me in the distribution of my benefits." The Lord will not cease to give you bread, and water, and raiment; his providence shall always take care of you. Remember the passage we read at this morning's service, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want." He will never cease to bestow upon you the blessings of his grace. He will go on to pardon you, to guide you, to teach you, to strengthen you, to lead you, until you shall be in his glorious presence without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. "I, Jehovah, will not forget thee. Thou shalt not be forgotten of me."

I think I hear some dear child of God crying, "I was afraid that the Lord had forgotten me the other day." It is you who had forgotten him. "Oh, but I thought surely that he had cast me off!" What right had you to think anything of the kind? Will the Lord cast off his people? Will he be faithful no more? Shame on you that you should think he could or would act in such a fashion! "But, oh, I am so little and so feeble!" Are there any of his saints that are not just the same? "Oh, but I am so unworthy!" And pray, what child of God does not have to make the same confession? The Lord says, "Thou shalt not be forgotten of me;" and he will stand to it, depend upon it, and you shall share with the rest of his people in the high privileges of the covenant of his grace. He will not cease to love you, nor cease to think of you, nor cease to befriend and benefit you. With John Newton, you may sing,—

"His love in time past forbids me to think
He'll leave me at last in trouble to sink;
Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review,
Confirms his good pleasure to help me quite through."

Once more, *the Lord will not cease to commune with his people.* Whenever you desire to commune with him, he is ready to meet you. Knock at his door; the servant will not say that he is not at home, for he waiteth to be gracious. Have you been slipping away from your God of late? Come back to him, come back at once. The Lord Jesus Christ has rebuked you for your Laodicean lukewarmness; but after having said some hard words about you, how does he finish? "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." He will take supper with you to-night, if you are willing. O dear child of God, this is the cure for your lukewarmness, for the Lord to come to you, and have high fellowship with you, and he is waiting for that communion! "Thou shalt not be forgotten of me."

I do not feel that I need say any more upon this promise; but I should like everyone who is a Christian to take it home. “*Thou shalt not be forgotten of me.*” Perhaps, in a few days, you will be lying upon the bed of pain. The Lord bids me say to you in preparation for that affliction, “*Thou shalt not be forgotten of me.*” Or, possibly, during this week, you will have a very serious loss in business that will occasion you a great staggering unless, as you read this promise to yourself, you say, “*But the Lord has said, Thou shalt not be forgotten of me.*” Dear children of God, you never know what trouble or alarm is coming, only you have often proved the truth of Mr. Bunyan’s quaint ditty,—

“A Christian man is never long at ease,
When one fright’s gone, another doth him seize.”

Therefore, be ready for anything, be ready for everything. You will be prepared for whatever may come if you remember this promise, “*Thou art my servant: thou shalt not be forgotten of me.*” The Lord will help you, he will help you right through, he will help you even to the end. Fall back upon this precious promise, “*Thou shalt not be forgotten of me.*” I wish that I could put this passage, like a wafer made of honey, under every tongue where the mouth is full of bitterness, so that you might suck at it, and get the sweetness out of it, and so say to yourself, “*I shall be happy yet, and happy come what may, for the Lord will not forget me.*”

III. My last work at this time is to mention SOME REASONS WHICH ASSURE US THAT GOD WILL NOT FORGET THOSE WHO ARE TRULY HIS SERVANTS.

I should say, first of all, that the very best reason is that *he says he will not forget us*. As he says, “*Thou shalt not be forgotten of me,*” then, he cannot forget us. He is God, who cannot lie, and his every word of grace is worthy of our utmost confidence. You remember what a boy said about his mother. “*How do you know it is true, Jack?*” asked one. “*Mother said so,*” answered the lad. “*Well, but that is no reason at all.*” “*Yes,*” he said, “*it is; it is the best reason of all, for if mother says so, it is so if it is not so.*” That is the way for a boy to trust in his mother’s word; what she said must be true, her son would not believe that it could be otherwise. We have just to trust in God like that; it is so, for He says it, “*Thou shalt not be forgotten of me.*” We cannot tolerate a doubt as to the truth of what the Lord says.

But the next reason is this, *God cannot forget us, since he has made us*. The former part of the verse says, “*Thou art my servant: I have formed thee.*” The Lord has fashioned us; not merely in the common way in which others of his creatures have been formed, but upon the wheel of grace he has made us revolve like the clay in the potter’s hand. With his own fingers he has made us into vessels of mercy, so he cannot forget us. I think I have heard that, before the siege of Paris, Gustave Doré had nearly finished one of his greatest paintings, one of the finest pictures which has ever been produced. Having to fly from the city, on a sudden, as the Germans were coming up, he hid his picture in a cellar, down under a heap of rubbish.

When the siege was over, Doré came back to Paris, and of course when he returned he had forgotten all about his picture, had he not? Not he; he had taken too much trouble with it to forget it. He knew the value of it, and he remembered where he had put it. He did not have to go up and down the house, and say to the people, "Do you know where my picture is?" No, he never forgot where he had himself put it, so he found it where he had hidden it, brought it out to the light of day, and finished it. Now, in a far higher sense than that, God will have respect unto the work of his own hands. The very bodies of the saints, though they are hidden away for a while in the rubbish of the earth, he will fetch out, and he will complete the work of grace which he has begun upon each one of them. The Lord having formed us to be his servants, we shall not be forgotten of him.

A further reason is, that *he has blessed us*. He has blessed us so much already that he cannot forget us now. If you wanted persons to love you, perhaps you would set to work to do them a kindness. Very good and very proper; but you may be beaten over that plan. As a matter of selfish prudence, I would suggest to you that you had better let them do you a kindness, and then they will be bound to you for ever. A boy forgets his mother's love, alas! it is often so; but the mother never forgets the kindness she has shown to her son, because she has done so much for him. The persons you love best are not those who have done most for you, but those for whom you have done the most. If I should bind God to me by anything I can do for him, I should feel that the ties would be very feeble ones; but when God binds himself to me by his blessings and mercies, it is another thing, for then the ties are divinely strong. I say, then, that God has blessed us, and he has done so much for us that he cannot leave off loving us. "Thou shalt not be forgotten of me."

Again, the Lord will not forget us, because *he has loved us so long already*. I was talking with an old saint this week,—once a renowned preacher of the gospel,—who is now some eighty-four years of age. He shook my hands, and he said, "I am with you, my brother, I am with you, my brother. I know what the contention is, and I am on your side, heart and soul." Then he added, "You and I have known the Lord too long to run after this new trumpery." And it is so; you get so bound to the old truth that you cannot give it up, you grow to love the gospel so fervently that you cannot renounce it. Well, now, the effect that such love has upon us is still more clearly seen in God. He has loved us so long that he cannot forget us now. How long has he loved you? "Oh!" say you, "it is about ten years since I was converted." Well, but did not the Lord love you before that? Did not our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ die for you before you were converted?" "Oh, I see!" say you, "then he has loved me more than eighteen hundred years." But did he not purpose and plan that Christ should die for you before the world began? Was there ever a time when the redeemed of the Lord were not written on the heart of Christ? He loved you before the first star began to dart its golden arrows through the darkness of space. Rest you then secure; love so ancient will never die out.

Further, the Lord must continue to love us; he cannot forget us, for *we have cost him so much*. Oh, how much we have cost our Lord! "By thine agony and bloody sweat," by the scourging and the spitting, by the false accusations and the ridicule, by the nails, the vinegar, the spear, that bitter cry, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani," by thy sorrow, even unto death, by all this, Lord Jesus, thou hast bought us! These are the travail pangs of our spiritual birth, and he, by whom all those agonies were borne, can never forget us. In us, he sees of the travail of his soul, and he is satisfied. Look at his hands, look at his side, look at his feet; there are the records of the costly price that he paid down for our redemption, and they are the pledge that he cannot let us be forgotten.

Besides, beloved, if we had no other reason for thinking that we should not be forgotten of God, if we are his servants, we know that *he is too good a Lord to cast us off*. He is a wretch of a man who casts off an old servant simply because he is old; yet many, when they grow old and feeble, find that their employers want to get rid of them. A young fellow has given all his life, ever since he was fifteen, to a firm in the city, and when he gets over sixty, the masters think to themselves, "A nice brisk young man will be better in the place of old Jones," and they pick some little hole in him, and off he goes,—to the workhouse, for all they care, as a general rule. "Ah! but," says the Lord, "thou shalt not be forgotten of me." He does not turn his old servants adrift; but he says, "Even to your old age, I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you."

In olden times, and I am afraid it is so still, masters have been known to get rid of their servants when they have been ill. What did the Amalekite do with the young Egyptian? David found him left behind in the field, and he said that his master was an Amalekite, and he had left him because he fell sick. Ugh! So they say of their sick servants still, "We must get rid of them, they are not strong enough to do their work." But our Lord never forgets his servants when they are ill. Then he is more near, more dear, more tender, more considerate than ever. "Thou shalt not be forgotten of me, O my servant!" Sick and sad, ay, and sinful, and worn out, yet still we shall not be forgotten of our Lord. Young man, enter the service of this blessed Master! You will never rue it. I love my Master, and I would like to see you in his blessed employment. It is always a sign that a man has a good master, when he would like to see his own boys in the same service; and I can truly say that nothing gives me so much joy as to think that both my sons are in the same service as I am in. Sons of godly parents, may God put you in the same service as your fathers are in! Daughters of holy mothers, I do pray that your mother's God may be your God. There is no service like our Master's. If the Lord were a hard master, tyrannical, changeable, unkind, ungenerous, austere; if he discharged his servants right and left, for this fault and for that, or because they grew feeble and faulty, well then, I think I would stand here, and tell you the truth about him, and urge you not to think of entering his employment; but oh! he is a blessed Master, therefore I can plead with you to be his servant, and I can assure you that you shall never be forgotten of him.

This morning,* I spoke about being on the verge of Jordan. When you are about going into heaven, passing over that last stream, dear child of God, you shall not be forgotten. The Lord will be very near you then; he will specially help you in your dying moments.

I cannot at all make out how you who are without a God get on, you poor people especially. With no comfort in this world, with nothing worth living for here, how can you exist without a good hope for the hereafter, without a Saviour to trust in, without a God to run to for protection, as the chickens run to the hen? And you rich people, how can you do without a God? What is to become of you? You will have to quit all that you have, and over you it will be said, "Ashes to ashes, and dust to dust." Members of parliament, or whoever you may be, you will have to go down to the worm, like other people. What a horrible thing for you, Dives, to be dragged down with all your scarlet and fine linen on, and cast into hell, faring sumptuously every day, and then denied even a drop of water to cool your burning tongue! What a change for you! If the poor need a Saviour, so do you, just as much. May the Lord make both rich and poor to be his servants, and then whisper in the ear of each one of you, as you go down the Tabernacle steps to-night, "Thou art my servant: thou shalt not be forgotten of me!"

God bless you all, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

Exposition by C. H. Spurgeon.

ISAIAH XLIV. 1—22.

Verses 1 and 2. *Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen: thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen.*

God cannot bear his people to be sad; he delights to drive away fear, trembling, and mistrust. He loves faith, for faith brings confidence, hope, rest. So he says to us, "Fear not, fear not, be not afraid." It is God himself, who made us, and who chose us, who says to us, "Do not fear." Come, dear hearts, lay aside your disquietude; if God bids you cast away fear, will you not do it? Nothing hushes a babe to sleep like its mother's voice. Let God's voice hush you into sweet and blessed calm whenever you are troubled and full of fear.

3. *For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground:*

God will never do anything by halves. He will not only send rain, but the waters shall pour down from the sky. He will not merely moisten the surface of the dry ground; he will send floods to saturate it. God is great in giving his grace. When once you reach the region of grace, you have entered the region of plenty, even the riches of God's unspeakable grace. If, dear friends, you have at this time no spiritual power, and unction, and savour, and love, you may have it, for here is the Lord's own promise, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground."

* See *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 2,039, "Crossing the Jordan."

3. *I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring :*

Is that your great burden,—trouble about your boy? Does your dear girl grieve you? Well, he who blesses the father and the mother will bless the children; the God of Abraham is the God of Isaac. Pray that this promise may be fulfilled to you, that your seed may get a share of that spirit of grace which has been given to you.

4. *And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses.*

You can track a stream by the willows; standing on a hill, and looking down the valley, you can tell where the little brook winds, for there are the willows. So shall it be with your children; they shall spring up by the waters of grace, and be a joy and a blessing.

5. *One shall say, I am the LORD'S;*

That is the brave son who comes out boldly, and avows his faith: "One shall say, I am the Lord's."

5. *And another shall call himself by the name of Jacob;*

That is the one who goes and joins the church, and does not say much about it; but he has united himself with the Lord's people: "and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob."

5. *And another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD, and surname himself by the name of Israel.*

He cannot speak much, but he can write; he is not so bold as the others, perhaps, but he is quite as true: "Another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord."

It does not so much matter how our children are converted so long as they really are converted; and as to the particular way in which they join the church, we have only to bid them seek the guidance of God's Word and his Spirit, and follow wheresoever they lead. Pray earnestly, dear friends, that the Lord will bless your children. I thank God that most of the members of the church, known to me, have their children saved; there are many families that are altogether in the church. There are others which have not that privilege yet, but, dear friends, you may have it; ask believingly, act faithfully, watch hopefully, and you shall see it joyfully ere long.

6, 7. *Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them.*

Jehovah challenges the idol gods to utter a prophecy. Let them tell the future if they can; but they cannot. Prophecy is ever the mark of the one living and true God.

8—11. *Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any. They that make a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they are their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed. Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image that is profitable for nothing? Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed: and the workmen, they are of men: let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; yet they shall fear, and they shall be ashamed together.*

Well they may. Men who pretend to make a god, ought to be ashamed.

12. *The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms.*

What irony! God-making, with hammers and bellows!

12. *Yea, he is hungry,*
This god-maker is hungry!

12. *And his strength faileth : he drinketh no water, and is faint.*
The god-maker is getting faint. There is a sarcasm about this description which ought to convince the most blind devotees of an idol.

13. *The carpenter stretcheth out his rule; he marketh it out with a line; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain in the house.*

A god in the house! A god shut up in a room! A god that has been made with compasses and planes! How ridiculous it seems!

14. *He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it.*

The raw material for a god is an ash, a watery tree: "The rain doth nourish it."

15—17. *Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: and the residue thereof he maketh a god,*

Oh, the folly of idolatry! Perhaps you do not see your own folly, you who are worshipping yourselves. A man who worships his belly is a worse idolater than the one who worships a god of wood. A man who worships gold and silver, if that gold and silver should take the shape of sovereigns and shillings, is not a bit more justified in his idolatry than if he had made it into the shape of a calf, and had bowed before it in idolatrous homage and reverence.

17—20. *Even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god. They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand. And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? He feedeth on ashes:*

Mad people have been known to do even that, they have thrust cinders into their mouths; and this is what everybody does who is not trusting in the living God: "He feedeth on ashes."

20, 21. *A deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand? Remember these, O Jacob and Israel;*

Think of these false gods, and be ashamed of them.

21, 22. *For thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.*

These wooden gods have done nothing of the sort. Come back to the true God, and worship him, and be happy in his love.