

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

FEVER, AND ITS CURE.

A Sermon

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DELIVERED BY

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“And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her. And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.”—Luke iv. 38, 39.

PETER was of Bethsaida; but yet he had a house at Capernaum. Is it not highly probable that he had moved there to be near our Lord's headquarters, to hear everything that he said, to see all his miracles, and to yield him constant attendance and service? I think it was so. This is what we should expect from the Lord's true-hearted followers; and I am sad when I remember how many professed disciples of Jesus nowadays act on another principle. When they are removing they do not consider whether they shall be near the house of prayer or the place of usefulness. Though their souls have been fed, and they have declared intense love to the church and the pastor, they nevertheless go away with a light heart to places where there are no means of grace. Should these things be so? In choosing our residence, we should have large respect to its relation to our soul's work and welfare. We should ask, “Shall we be where we can honour our Lord?”

In his house, Simon willingly entertained his wife's mother, which is presumptive evidence that he was a good man, willing out of love to run risk of discomfort. We have evidence that his wife's mother was a good woman; for the moment that she was healed, she arose and ministered unto them; whereas, in too many cases, an invalid and aged person would demand to be waited upon. She was a blessing to any house, for she evidently lent all the strength she had to the work of the family. I know just such women, whose very life is to minister to others. Happy Peter to have such a mother-in-law! Happy mother-in-law to have such a son!

Good as the tenants were, sickness came to the house. Capernaum was situated, like several other towns, in that low, marshy district which surrounds the northern part of the sea of Galilee, near the spot where the Jordan runs into it. There was always a great deal of ague about; and that ague, putting on its very worst form, had come to Peter's house as "a great fever," and had laid low his excellent mother-in-law, much to the grief of all. However dear you may be to the heart of God, and however near you live to him, you will be liable to sorrow. "Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward." None of us can hope for entire exemption from affliction: I am not sure that we should wish for it.

But then, it so happened—and it so happens always—that just when the trial came, Jesus came too. It is very beautiful to see the Lord of life close on the track of the fever, ready to deliver his chosen one. When a great affliction comes to a house, a great blessing is coming too. As our tribulations abound, so do our consolations. I have often noticed that when we are exceeding glad, some ill news will hurry up to calm our excitement. It has happened so to me this very week: returning from a happy meeting, a telegram met me to announce a sorrowful bereavement. On the other hand, when we are exceeding sorrowful, the Lord, by his Holy Spirit, causes a sense of peace and rest to steal over us, and sustain us. How often have I found the divine presence more consciously revealed, and more sweetly sustaining in the hour of trouble than at any other season! I would not invite the fever to my house; but if Jesus would come with it, I would not be alarmed at its approach. If we do see our Lord riding on the pale horse, we will welcome the horse for the sake of its rider. Come, Lord Jesus, come how thou wilt; but suffer not the trial to come alone!

When Jesus came, they told him of her. Make a practice of telling the Lord about all your family concerns. Bring sicknesses and other troubles to your best friend. Do it at family prayer, but do it also at your bedside alone. If Jesus has come to stay with you, he will not hold himself aloof from your anxieties. He comes with his great sympathetic heart to be afflicted in your afflictions. Keep no secret from him, since he keeps none from you; for, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." So Peter and the rest told Jesus of the good woman who was bedridden with fever, and at once the Lord Jesus went into the room, and brought his divine power to bear upon the disease, that she might be at once restored. He stood over her; he rebuked the fever; he took her by the hand and lifted her up, and in a moment the fever was gone, and she was not only well, but strong.

You have heard this incident preached from before, but not in the way in which I shall use it. It is a very singular thing that, as far as I know, in the whole range of homiletics there is not one in which this cure of the fever is treated as the other healing miracles have been. The other miraculous cures have been legitimately regarded by preachers of the Word as types of the removal of certain forms of sin. When we preach about the leper, we talk to you concerning great sin, and grievous defilement. When we consider the story of

Lazarus, who had been dead, we perceive that every point of his resurrection bristles with spiritual teaching. If it is so in other miracles, why not in this? Why is one miracle to be looked upon as instructive as to spiritual and moral truth, and another be left unused? I shall use this miracle of the healing of the fevered one for ourselves, since it may be that some of us are mentally or spiritually sick of a fever. There is a fever of soul, which comes even upon gracious people, which only Christ can heal. Oh, that he may heal us now!

Here will be the run of my discourse. First, *spiritual fevers are common*; secondly, *they arise from several causes*; thirdly, *these are mischievous in their action*; and fourthly, *there is One who can cure these fevers*. Oh, that I may be helped so to speak of this spiritual disease at this time, that while you hear my voice, you may also feel my Master's touch, and go your way restored from your fever!

I. Let me, first, remind you, that SPIRITUAL FEVERS ARE VERY COMMON. *A fever begins with a kind of restlessness*. The patient cannot be quiet, nor be at ease in any position. He is not pleased with anything for more than a moment. He cannot help it; he is tossed to and fro, and is like the troubled sea. He suspects everybody, and has confidence in nothing. Are there not many who are in that condition with regard to spiritual things? Their religion is a question, rather than a doctrine; an experiment, and not an experience. Their own interest in Christ is a grave anxiety, rather than an assured delight. They believe the promise, but cannot grasp it for themselves, so as to feel sure and happy. A sermon full of good cheer does not afford them a cup of comfort. They are so feverish that they settle to nothing. No promise, no truth, no heavenly gift, can yield them repose: they are tossed up and down like the locust.

This restlessness affects them with regard to temporal things too: they are always anxious, doubtful, timorous. There is that excellent woman Martha. She is here to-night, but she has had a task to tear herself away from the washing and mending; and while she has been sitting here she has been wondering all the while whether she put the guard before the fire when she came out. She has felt three or four times in her pocket for her keys. She is half afraid that an accident will happen to the baby before she gets back. She is anxious about everything she can think of, and anxious about some things she has not thought of. Will her husband be home before she gets back? How will he be? Will he like his supper? Will the children all be well to-morrow? Evidently she has the domestic fever upon her, and rest is out of the question. She must worry and fidget: there is no consoling her. I know what it is as a minister to feel very feverish about the characters and proceedings of the members of the church. I have been told that farmers are very liable to the weather-fever. It is either too wet or too dry. There may be good times for the root-crops; but then, it is bad for the corn. Merchants have the speculative fever, and workmen the strike fever. Some of you tradesfolk are wonderfully feverish in reference to your shop and your stock-taking. Will you, after all, have a good season, and make a fair profit? When a man falls into that state, although we do not call in a doctor, there is great need to call in the heavenly Physician. A Christian in good,

sound, spiritual health, is calm, quiet, peaceful, happy, full of repose, for he is obedient to that sweet verse of the psalm, "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him." This restlessness is a sign of the times, but it is a great pity that it should afflict the people of God.

Some folks with this fever are troubled with the *burning heat of irritability*. They take offence where none is intended. You cannot put your words in the right order to satisfy them. Members of churches who get into this irritable state are always imagining that they have enemies all around them: everybody has not been quite respectful to their royal highnesses; they treasure up little slights, and feel highly indignant. I know more people with this fever than I should like to mention. It is a happy thing to live with a brother who is spiritually and mentally sound; for then you may speak freely, and you need not be afraid of being misunderstood; but feverish folk make you an offender for a word, or a look. They are grieved because you did not see them, or did see them: either way you are wrong. One feels that he is like a man walking among eggs: he has to be careful, even to a painful degree. Let us be gentle with the irritable brother. He cannot help it, poor man! It is not the man so much as it is the fever that is on him.

The influence of fever is seen in other ways. It is *intermittent*, and makes the patient *change from hot to cold*. Feverish persons love a religion of excitement. They are eager and impatient, omit repentance, and leap into a false security. Their zeal is not according to knowledge; and so it is fierce as the blaze of thorns under a pot, and it dies out as soon. What haste they make! Everything must be done immediately; the patient waiting of faith is too slow for them. They are determined to drive the church before them, and drag the world after them; but to plod on in Scriptural ways they cannot endure. We like to see the healthy heat of earnestness; but theirs is the burning heat of passion. This fever heat soon turns to a chill; and they shiver with dislike of the very thing they cried up so loudly. They are as cold as they were hot; and again they turn to be as hot as they were cold. A strange fever is upon them, and you know not where to find them. The steady warmth of vital principle, intelligent faith, true love to Christ, and zeal for the conversion of souls, has little in common with the fever of fanaticism. May God grant that we may always have the warmth of healthy life, but may we be saved from being delirious one day and lethargic the next! Religious inflammation is the dangerous counterfeit of holy zeal. Be as hot as you will; but do not turn cold directly, or else we shall tremble for you.

A worse kind of fever, perhaps, is that which shows itself in *thirst* of different kinds. Some suffer from the yellow fever of avarice: they thirst for gold-water, and the more they drink the more the thirst consumes them. They rise up early, they sit up late, they eat the bread of carefulness, and all they long for is to gain and hoard; but the love of Jesus is not near their hearts. They are all hack and hurry, toil and turmoil, woe and worry. The deadly yellow fever is upon them—they must lay up much goods for many years, and add field to field till they are left alone in the earth. God save his people from even a touch of this fever!

Some are smitten with the scarlet fever of ambition. They must be everybody. Some would be great, greater, greatest, and then greater still, always sighing for the pre-eminence, like Diotrophes. Ambition, kept in due check, may be right enough; but when it rises to fever heat, it is a great sin. The man does not enjoy what he has because he is lusting for more; and meanwhile he treads down his brethren and becomes high-minded, and unkind. While anyone is still a little higher than himself, he is envious and malicious. May the Lord cure us of these fevers, if we have even the smallest trace of them!

Alas, alas! I have to mention one other fever, which is a kind of gastric fever, a *fever of the stomach*! It comes to men who have degraded themselves below the brutes by intoxication. When they seek to abstain and quit the cup, a drink-fever hinders them. Some imagine that it is an easy thing to escape from drunkenness; but it is not so. Those who are now true children of God have given us an awful description of the hankering which came upon them months after they had given up the drink. Often it seemed to them nothing but a miracle that they kept clear of the temptation: they felt as if they must drink or die. O dear friends, have great pity upon the drunkard in his struggle to escape. Help him all you can by words of encouragement, and especially by the grand encouragement of your own example; for, believe me, it is a horrible fever, and happy is he who has never felt it. If any of you have it upon you, look to almighty grace for deliverance; for if you look to anything short of this, I fear you will go back to your sin.

Yet one more fever I would mention. There is one which I may well call *brain-fever*—a very common disease nowadays. Persons cannot be satisfied with the old doctrines of the gospel; they must have something new. They do not know that in theology nothing new is true, and nothing true is new. God has given us a faith which he once for all delivered unto the saints, with no intent that it should ever be changed. Do you think that revelation is imperfect, and that we are to improve upon it? After all, then, it is not God's revelation that we are to believe, but our own deductions therefrom, and our own improvements thereupon. God forbid that we should fall under such a delusion! Very many young men—and I dare say young women, too, though I do not so often meet with them—have begun to feel that they must *think*; which, also, we should be glad for them to do. But they dream that they must think their own thoughts, and they will not submit their thoughts to the instruction of the Spirit of God. This is a vain thought. They claim that they may think as they please; and so it comes to pass that their thoughts are not God's thoughts. They diverge more and more from the eternal truth of God, till they wander among the dark mountains of error, and perish in utter infidelity. God keep us from this. If this fever is upon any one of you, may the cooling hand of the Holy Spirit, and the sobering influence of a divine experience, bring you back to spiritual and mental health again. These fevers are as common as they are fatal. If you, dear hearer, have not suffered from them, many others have done so, and we are anxious for their cure; therefore, we would bring them to Jesus, who can rebuke the fever, and heal the sick ones.

II. Secondly, THESE FEVERS ARISE FROM MANY CAUSES.

Peter's wife's mother may have been smitten with fever through the undrained and boggy spots around the sea of Galilee, especially where the Jordan makes a marsh. *She dwelt in a low spot*, where the air was full of malaria, and the fever pounced upon her. Ah, Christian people! if you live below your privileges, if you live in the marsh-land of worldliness, if prayer is neglected, if the Bible is not read, if the great truths of the gospel do not fill your meditations, if you sojourn much among ungodly folk, and make them your companions, you are living in a low situation, where you will get one or other of these fevers before long. If you climb the mountains of confidence in God, and dwell near to God, and rest your souls upon him, the fever will soon vanish; but if you continue in the hollows of unbelief, and the damp places of worldliness, you will grow more and more anxious and restless, and will thirst for evil things. You who dwell in the misty lowlands doubt your own love to Jesus. If you climbed the hills of joy, and dwelt on the heights of fellowship, you would know your love to God, and find it daily growing. The sunlight of his countenance is a sure cure for the fever of anxiety. Abide with him, and the heat of anxiety will depart, and your irritability will disappear, and you will be calm and joyful.

A second great cause of spiritual fever is *allowing things to stagnate*. The moment the sanitary authorities cut drains, and let the waters run out of the land, and carry away the filth, the fever begins to abate. Stagnant water breeds miasma, and fever is sure to come. When the waters are no longer putrid, but have free course, then the source of fever is taken away. How many people get into a feverish state through having everything stagnant! You do not teach in the Sunday-school: your teaching power is stagnant. You never go out to the village station to preach: your talking power is stagnant. You have nobody to pray for: your intercessory power is stagnant. Everything about you is still and stale. You have nothing to live for, nothing to do; and therefore your whole being is shut up within itself, and this breeds mischief. The Lord help you to cut a good wide drain, and let your life run out to some useful purpose, instead of hoarding it up by selfishness. Spiritual fever soon disappears before holy, unselfish activity.

Fever, again, come on through excessive heat. In countries where the temperature rises high, fever is more common and fatal than with us. The white man dies, and even the black man finds it hard to live in parts of Africa. I fear that life in London is growing very much like the tropical regions. Our forefathers took things rather more coolly than we do. In Cromwell's time, a writer tells us that he walked all down Cheapside in the early morning, and found all the blinds down, because at every house they were having family prayer. Where will you go to find such a state of things in this burning age? You are up in the morning, and at it; and all day long you are at it, and at it, and at it. Little rest is given to our minds; and yet we want holy rest. We need to sit at Jesus' feet with Mary, and because we do not do so, the burden and heat of the day are telling upon our spiritual constitutions, and we are not strong as we need to be.

But, worst of all, *fever is often born of filth*. I suppose that even excessive heat would not produce it if it were not for decaying matter which, in rotting, gives out evil vapours and deadly gases. There is nothing more putrid in the natural world than sin is in the moral world. Flee from sin as you would from a reeking dunghill of rottenness. I charge you, children of God, be clean in yourselves and your surroundings. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." It is hard to avoid contact with evil in these days; but yet we must aim at it. Our public walls disgust us with indecencies of the most staring kind: they make us blush for the times. We can, however, keep ourselves from the resorts of the frivolous, the vicious, and the drunken; and I beseech you, as you love the Lord, and as you desire to be healthy in his sight, stand not in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scorers. Run not with the multitude to do evil. Come ye out from among them: be ye separate: touch not the unclean thing, for then God will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be his sons and daughters. The corruption which reeks around us has the dread tendency to breed fevers in our minds of the most perilous kind: we must, therefore, use our utmost endeavours to keep ourselves disinfected by the grace of God.

Fever also comes of overcrowding. Where people are closely packed together in their sleeping places, breathing exhausted air, there disease lurks as in its chosen lair. I am afraid that we most of us get too crowded by fellowship with men; conversing with them from morning to night, working with them, dealing with them in business; and thus learning their ways and catching their spirit. Oh, to get into the purer atmosphere of heaven, and to be alone with God! In the spiritual realm we find space and air enough for a soul to breathe freely. Where God manifests himself to us, we are refreshed with breezes from the eternal hills. Why are we wearied with man's talk, or with women's chat, when converse with God would revive our spirits? Oh, to be quit of men, and quiet with God! Amid this crowd we find our souls suffocating; but when we are on the mount of God we breathe freely and feel revived.

Not to leave out any one thing which may instruct us, I would remind you that *fevers are often caused by poor diet*. Persons have not enough to eat, and the fever germs fructify in their weakness. With many Christians the rule seems to be one spiritual meal a week. Sunday morning is the occasion for baiting the religious horse. Your very respectable Christian person goes out to worship on Sunday morning; but at no other time. What does he do on Sunday afternoon? This deponent sayeth not. What does he do on Sunday evening? He is at home taking his ease. At a prayer-meeting, some time ago, one brother prayed that the Lord would bless those who were at home "on beds of sickness and on sofas of well-ness." The last words were unexpected, but very needful. Certain of our friends practise the art of tarrying at home; but I fear they do not divide the spoil. As to prayer-meetings, and week-night lectures, these are regarded rather as tasks than privileges by many professors. They live on one meal a week. Would any of you, who are doing this, oblige me with a trial of this regimen in reference to your bodies? Will you only eat on a Sunday morning? You shall take what you please at that one meal,

and consume as much as you can of it; but you must have only that one meal till next week. Do you decline the experiment? I think you are wise. I should not expect to see you here often to report your experience. I feel sure you would break through the regulation before it had reached its full result. Therefore, I pray you, do not carry out the experiment of spiritual starvation, lest you die in the operation. This neglect of heavenly food brings many Christians into so low a state that spiritual fever readily fastens upon them. Alas! many have poor spiritual diet. Spiritual meals nowadays, when they are taken, do not amount to much. In many a place where Christ was preached by the good old man, who is now in heaven, you will find that anything else is held forth except the Lord Jesus. Your cultured gentleman sickens at the idea of preaching about the precious blood. He calls the cardinal doctrine of the atonement "the theology of the shambles." Shame on his profane tongue! He is ashamed to speak of original sin, or the new birth, or to tell men that if they are not saved, they will be cast into hell. He is too refined to speak plain truth. You may eat a thousand meals of his sort of meat before you will know that you have had a mouthful; for it is all light as air, and unsubstantial as froth. Such wind can never satisfy a hungering soul; but it can starve it down so low that disease preys upon it.

Some become fevered, not so much by what they do themselves, as by being in *contact with others who are full of the disease*; for it is exceedingly contagious. I can bear witness to that. It has been my lot to deal with the fevers of doubt, depression, anxiety, and despair, and it is hard to deal with these without catching them. I remember that one day I saw several mournful cases of depression. I will not say that the patients ought to have been in an asylum; but I am sure that many in those places are as reasonable as those I conversed with. They were sadly doubting, fearing, trembling, and dreading; and it was no light work to treat their unhappy cases. I tried to comfort them, and I hope that I succeeded in a measure; but by the time that I had borne the burdens of a half dozen of them, I needed comfort myself. It is not easy to lift others up without finding yourself exhausted. I went over all the gospel arguments for salvation by faith, and I heard their objections, and pressed the truth upon them, and when they went away smiling, I stayed behind to pray God to make the work effectual, and also to lift up the light of his countenance upon *me*; for I needed to be filled again after pouring out my soul for others.

The fever of depression may be caught while we are acting as surgeons to other fevered ones. If you live with a friend who is always playing on the minor key, you will find your own music growing mournful. If you have companions in life who are nervous, fretful, fearful, melancholy—or, what is worse, full of doubts of God—you will be likely to be warped as they are, and you will soon feel that the sunlight has gone out of your life. What must you do? Run away from these sorrowful ones? By no means. But you must seek more grace, that, instead of being dragged down by them, you may draw them upward to God and brighter things. Be filled with spiritual life, and then you will survive your contact with the feeble and

diseased. I could not help mentioning this; for to me it is a frequent cause of fever, and I would that I could rise far above it.

III. Thirdly, and as briefly as I can, THIS FEVER, IN ANY OF ITS FORMS, IS MISCHIEVOUS. What does it do? Well, fever *puts you altogether out of order*. You cannot precisely say where a fever begins or ends, or in what organ it operates most powerfully; for it puts the whole system out of gear. Nothing is right. You feel as if you could not sit, or lie, or be quiet in any position. You cannot do anything, and yet you must be doing. Now, when a soul gets into the fever of unbelief, and fear, and anxiety, it is in general disorder. The prayer is fevered; the song languishes; the patience fails; the service drags. The mind is like a harp whose strings are out of tune. It is a mischievous thing, this fever—mischievous to every faculty.

And then *it brings pain and misery*. In the commencement of a fever, pain is usually felt in the joints and other parts of the body. If I am fearful and anxious, I am in mental pain. If I am doubting and dreading, I am in pain. If I am fretty, irritable, petulant, murmuring, I must have pain; and hence it is an evil thing to be overtaken by a spiritual fever.

Mental fever *takes away his beauty* from the Christian. A man who has a fever has his features pinched and drawn. A practised doctor can tell when a patient has the fever by the very look of his face. Looking at his eyes, and other features, he says, "This man has a typhoid upon him. I am sure of it." Are there not some Christians who do not look as they used to look? for they are ill-humoured, or timid, or fretful, or hasty, and all through the inward fever. Their voice has lost the joyful note it used to have, and their whole deportment is dreary. The hallelujahs have gone; the hosannahs have died out. The Lord would have his people beautiful and gladsome. He made them that they might show forth his praise. It is no small evil when the heat of spiritual fever dries up the moisture of our graces, and turns our comeliness into corruption.

This mental heat brings with it *languor and weakness*. The man is a Christian, but he is not much of a Christian. He lives, but he does not grow, nor exhibit strength. What a difference there is between the able-bodied worker and the invalid! Here is a railway cutting to be made through a hill, and we need a number of working men to do it. They tell me that we can get a hundred men at once if we apply to the Hospital for Consumptives. But we do not see the wisdom of the advice. Poor fellows, what a misery it would be to see them doing their little best with pain and labour! I had rather not be the leader of such a band. Give me a company of stout English navvies, with bone and muscle. Why, the mountain flies before their spades like the waters before the blast of the north wind. The road is cut through the mountain, and the men are gone to perform like wonders elsewhere. We want, in these days, Christian men with stamina in them. What work healthy souls will do! But when they catch fever in their souls, what painful and futile efforts they make!

Dear friends, it is to be feared that *those who give way to fever may drift into delirium* by-and-by; for fevers often lead to that. My good friend who begins complaining just a little, does not know that he will

grow to be one of the most obstinate grumblers in the world. My good sister yonder, who is only a little nervous and fretty, does not know into what an abyss of unbelief she will yet plunge. If you say one word against God, there is no reason why you should not say two; and if you say two, the devil will soon teach you to say twenty, till at last you rave at the Lord God. Oh, that we could be silent before him, in holy calm and peace! We should then escape that delirium of rebellious dread into which so many are hurried.

If by God's grace we are delivered from this fever, *it may leave behind it sad remains*. Any doctor will tell you that fevers are not only to be dreaded for what they are, but for what they leave behind them. When a man is cured of fever, he may yet be injured for the rest of his life; and if you and I do not keep quiet before God, and calm and happy, but begin to get anxious, and wilful, and avaricious, and ambitious, we may hurt ourselves seriously for all time; and, it may be, even on our death-bed we shall look back with sorrow to that day of unbelief when we grieved the Lord and lost his presence. The Lord keep us from these fevers in every degree!

I must also remind you of one thing more, beloved: *this disease*, as I have said, *is catching*. I brought this fact forward under our second head, but I must mention it yet again. If some of you could fret, and trouble, and worry yourselves, and did not at the same time injure others, it might not so much matter; but the sad fact is, there are some Christians who drag others down into their own wretchedness. You spoil the joys of the saints. They are willing to comfort you, but you ought not to be so ready to cause them disquietude. Some of you are enough to give the fever of despondency to a whole parish. God's ministers are willing to comfort you; but they ought not to be called upon to spend so much time in entering into your case. It is a dreadful waste of time and thought—this looking after the fevered ones. When an army has to carry half its number in ambulances, it takes well-nigh the other half to carry them, and no fighting can be done. The cruelties of war are great; but I am told that the aim is now to be, not to kill the opposite party, but to wound them. If you kill a man, he counts one as a loss to the other side; but if you wound a man, and another man is called out to look after him, that counts as a loss of two from the fight. This is the sort of craft whereby Satan injures the host of God. He does not kill off some of you by leading you into gross sin, but he wounds you, so that you need more than one to look after you; and thus the strength of the army of salvation is greatly diminished. I ought to be spending my strength in winning souls, instead of which I have to look after you who have the fever. I am content to be a nurse, but I had rather be winning souls.

IV. Lastly, THERE IS ONE WHO CAN CURE THE FEVER. I am afraid that I have given rather a sad description, and I am sorry that some of you have been obliged to say, "However sad, it is true of us." But observe, dear friends, the cure, which is not wrought by medicine, or surgery, or any profound system of the doctors. The cure lies here. The poor patient lies flat in her bed. We read, "She was laid, and sick of a fever." She could not therefore sit up, much less rise from the bed. When she opened her eyes, and looked up, she saw the Lord

Jesus Christ *standing over her*. O fevered soul! open thine eyes to-night, and see Jesus standing over thee. With tender love and infinite compassion he looks down upon thee; he shields thee, thinks of thee, and watches over thee for good. He will help thee; therefore, fear not. Over thee to-night he broods, as doth an eagle over its young. Jehovah-Jesus bows over thee with fulness of love and power. In thy present trouble, fear, and depression of spirit, Jesus stands over thee, and his eye and his heart are upon thee.

Then, next, to her great surprise, *the Lord touched her*. Dear Master, touch the fevered ones to-night. Oh, to feel that he is a real man like yourself, your brother, very near to you! This is the touch which will drive out the fever. I love the old verse—

“A man there was, a real man,
Who once on Calvary died;
That same dear man exalted sits
High at his Father's side.”

The Lord Jesus is a real man, and so he touches you in your feeble and suffering nature, and he seems to say, “In all your afflictions I am afflicted.” When saints are in the furnace, one like unto the Son of God is there with them. They are sufferers, but he is “the Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” The Lord give you to feel the touch of the true humanity of Christ!

We read that, when our Lord had touched her, *he rebuked the fever*. Your feverishness deserves his rebuke. Oh, that he would bid it begone! Oh, that he would say to-night, “Begone unbelief! Begone anxiety! Begone fretfulness! Begone doubt and fear”! The winds and the waves heard his rebuke, and from their noise and clamour they hushed themselves to a great calm. Oh, that Jesus would come now, and speak to your feverishness, and you shall be as happy as the birds of paradise. I had a great trouble last night: I will not tell you what it was—a great trouble to my heart; but this morning I had a great joy, which I will tell to you. It is this note: “Dear Sir,—I feel so happy to tell you that the Lord has pardoned a poor outcast of society. I got into your place in a crowd, hoping nobody would see me. I had been out all night, and was miserable. While you were preaching about the leper,* my whole life of sin rose up before me. I saw myself worse than the leper; cast away by everybody. There is not a sin I was not guilty of. *As you went on I looked straight away to Jesus*. A gracious answer came, ‘Thy sins, which are many, are forgiven.’ I never heard any more of your sermon. I felt such joy to think that Jesus died even for a poor harlot. Long ere you get this letter I trust to be on the way to my dear home I ran away from. Do please pray for me, that I may be kept by God's almighty power. I can never thank you enough for bringing me to Jesus”—and so on. If it had not been for that bit about going home, I might have had some doubt about it; but when a fallen girl goes home to her father and mother, it is a safe case. This gives me joy: do you wonder? To see souls saved is heaven to me. I find that my

* See Spurgeon's Sermons, No. 2,162. “And why not me?”

Lord has a gracious way of laying on a plaster where he makes a sore. If the heart be heavy with grief, he can balance it with consolation.

The next thing Jesus did was to raise her up. You must have felt, when lying very ill, as if you were buried in the bed. So the Saviour gave his hand to her, and *he lifted her up*. She did not think that she could rise, but with his aid she sat up. Then he gave her an instant cure, and at the same time renewed her strength. No trace of fever remained. She was perfectly well. Her instinct, as a matronly woman and head of the household, was to rise at once to prepare a meal for her Benefactor and his disciples. Oh, that you doubting ones, you fevered ones, might at once be cured and lifted up, so that you would immediately set about serving the Lord, and ministering to those around you! Come, let us be as happy as ever we can be, and as useful as it lies in our power to be, and may the fever never visit any one of us again! On the contrary, as you go home, trip over the pavements with a sense of spiritual health; and when you get home, say at once, "I must minister unto Jesus. He has driven out my cares and fears, and soothed my mind, and therefore out of love I will spend and be spent to his praise." God bless you, for the Saviour's sake! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm xxxvii.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—708, 37 (Song II.), 746.

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON.

DEAR FRIENDS,—By God's goodness, though compassed with infirmity, I have preached right on through the year, although I have felt gradually growing feeble. During the last week of the term I was obliged to keep my bed: the body was in pain, and the mind would not work. It was a general running down of all my powers.

So I left home thoroughly exhausted. The journey to this delightful haven is a long one; but sitting here in the warm, clear sunlight, I feel that I am none the worse for the thousand miles of travelling. The change in climate is almost beyond belief. A few days in such air as this will set me up. What a change from being steamed to death in the almost solid fogs of London! Thanks be unto God for such a place of recovery for those who are spent in service! I would get out of it all the benefit I can, that my ministry may show vigour of mind and power of divine grace.

Bright upon the tablet of my heart is the record of what was done by Tabernacle friends on Friday, November 7; when the people willingly offered of their substance unto the Lord, and all that was needed for the repair of the house of our assembly was brought in at one stroke. A thousand times do I thank all those generous givers. Outside friends have also sent in grand amounts to provide for the other funds, and thus the Lord has put his servant beyond care for the needs of the work at this present.

I write because continually requested to do so, and to assure you of my love in Christ Jesus.

Yours truly,

C. H. SPURGEON.

Menton, November 15, 1890.