

## **Soul Murder—Who Is Guilty?**

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 30, 1866, BY C. H. SPURGEON  
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"Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation, And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness." [Psalm 51:14](#).

DAVID had been grossly guilty towards his faithful and veteran friend Uriah. He had given instructions that Uriah should be led into the hottest part of the fight and then suddenly deserted so that he might be struck by the sword of the Syrians, and might appear to have died in the natural order of battle. Whereas, of course, his death was a cowardly murder, planned and devised by the very man who ought to have been his protector.

It is pleasing to observe in David's penitence that he plainly names his sin. He does not call it manslaughter. He does not speak of it as an imprudence by which an unfortunate accident occurred to a worthy man, but he calls it by its true name, bloodshed. It is true he did not actually slay the husband of Bathsheba—it was by another hand that Uriah died. But still it was planned in David's heart that Uriah should be slain, and he was before the Lord the murderer of Uriah. He calls a spade a spade, and names his crime as bloodshed.

Let us learn in our confessions to be honest with God. Do not give fair names to foul sins. Call them what you will, they will smell no sweeter. What God sees them to be, that you must labor to feel them to be, and with all openness of heart acknowledge their true character. Observe, too, that David not only gives it the right name, but is evidently oppressed with a sense of the heinousness of his sin. It is easy to use words, but it is difficult to feel their meaning. He prays like one who is consciously guilty. The blood of Uriah was now not on his hands, alone, but on his conscience. The bloody hand was before him continually and the impossibility to purge away the stain, except by the sacrificial hyssop, made David's heart lay low in the dust.

The fifty-first Psalm is the photograph of a contrite spirit. Oh, let us seek after the like brokenness of heart, for however excellent our words may be, yet if the heart is not conscious of the blackness and Hell-deservingness of sin, we cannot expect to find mercy with the Judge of all the earth! Possibly, my Brethren, you will think that I ought not to use such a text as this in addressing you, for there are no murderers here. "A sermon from this text to someone who had strangled another, or fired the deadly shot through his enemy's heart might be well enough, but are there any here," says one, "that are guilty of bloodshed?"

Yes, Friend. The preacher is guilty, at any rate, if no one else is! And he believes that there is not a person here who will be able to go out of this house unconvicted of sin in this respect, if God the Holy Spirit is but here, first, to enable the preacher to lay the charge clearly, and secondly, to enable your conscience honestly to take that home which really belongs to you. There are other ways of being guilty of bloodshed besides stabbing with a

knife, or poisoning with a deadly drug. There is another kind of murder far less detested, but equally black in God's sight—not the destruction of the body—but the destruction of the soul! Not the destruction of the mere shell, the outward man, but the murder of the real man, the inward self, the inner spirit, the soul murder which cries for vengeance before high Heaven, concerning which we have need to offer the prayer of David, "Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation."

Before I proceed to the heavy work of this morning, which is to bring home sin to our consciences, I would like to put in a word by way of caution. I shall have to speak of some who "destroy with their meat those for whom Christ died," and of others who, "crucify the Lord afresh, and put Him to an open shame." And when I do so, there will be some who will not dare to take exception to the Scriptural phraseology, because everyone yields to that, but they will fight hard against the supposed meaning of the very expressions which they are forced to put up with. They will say to me, "It is impossible that any should be destroyed for whom Christ died."

And I may add it is equally impossible that Christ should be crucified afresh. I shall quite agree with them in this, but if they, therefore, gather that it is impossible for anyone to be guilty of the two sins mentioned, I shall not agree with them, because such offenses would not have been mentioned in Scripture as having been committed if they could not be committed.

Do you not know, dear Friends, that a man may be guilty of a sin which he never could actually commit, but which he committed in his heart? For instance, in very deed and act, I can never destroy a man for whom Christ died. It is not in my power nor in the power of even devils to destroy such souls! But if I commit an action which in the ordinary nature of things would destroy such a soul. If I utter teachings, or if I present an example which, if God did not prevent, would destroy such a soul, then I am guilty because I should have destroyed that soul if it had not been for God's interposing. His interposition does not take away my guilt though it prevented its effects.

Though I cannot crucify the Lord afresh, that is to say, He is so exalted in Heaven that all Hell could not drag Him down to the Cross—yet if I do an action which would crucify Him again, if it could be done—an action which has a tendency to put Him to an open shame, though I may not be able to complete the thing in act, yet, since its natural influence would lead to such a result, I am guilty of it. This is easily illustrated. Suppose that a man who had the management of certain points on a railway should willfully turn the points in such a way that two trains must come into collision and the passengers must be killed.

Imagine that an angel should descend from Heaven and stand between those two trains and prevent the collision. Where would be the difference between the man's guilt whether the people were killed or not killed? The guilt is the same, because the thing would have happened if it were not for a miraculous interposition. So by bad teaching, and by unholy

living, those for whom Christ died would be made to perish if it were not for a Divine interposition. And by inconsistency of conduct Christ could be nailed again to the tree if it were not prevented by Divine power. But that prevention does not at all alter my sin. I am just as guilty as if the natural effect had followed. If you should fire at a man and the bullet were unexpectedly turned aside, you would be as truly guilty as if your victim had died!

Human law might not call you a murderer, because human law is obliged very much to judge a sin by the effect, but the Lord looks at the heart and weighs the motive, the desire and the design. Please understand, then, that when I shall be speaking this morning about your destroying souls, I do not mean that you will in the end defeat the Divine purpose of Divine Grace, but you will be as guilty as if you could. Jesus Christ will not lose a soul whom He has determined to save, or be thwarted in any of His designs of mercy—but this will not extenuate your guilt, or mine. I put this in by way of caution, lest any should think me dubious of the great doctrines of Sovereign Grace which are every day dearer than ever to me.

I. The first business this morning is to awaken and bring home to the conscience of this assembled multitude A STARTLING CRIME. There are many ways of being guilty of bloodshed. Every man is guilty of it in one respect, namely, concerning the death of our Lord. I will not say that we are all guilty of His actual murder upon the tree, for we were not then born. Yet, as it was the common sin of mankind which rendered it necessary that He should suffer, we cannot escape from a share in His death.

This I can see very clearly, that those who reject, despise or neglect the claims of the Lord Jesus, and refuse to bow before Him, do, in effect mock Him, scourge Him, and put Him to death. In speaking against His Gospel, in deriding His servants, in neglecting His Book, in denying His Deity, and in refusing to believe in Him, men are virtually guilty of crucifying the Lord of Glory—for they thus do that which proves that if they had been in a like condition with the Roman soldiers and with the Jewish priests—they would have nailed Him to the Cross. We have committed actions tantamount to the crucifying of the Savior, and therein His blood comes upon us to our condemnation—unless by faith it comes upon us to our acceptance and forgiveness.

Oh, Sinner, let this be forever a subject of trembling to you, that you have necessarily something to do with the Cross! That having heard of it, it shall be unto you either a savor of death unto death, or of life unto life! Either the blood of Jesus shall fall upon your heart to cleanse you from all guilt, or it shall fall upon your head to condemn you. You have said, "I know Him not. I will not obey Him. I will not yield to Him. I will, as far as lies in me, put out His light and quench His dominion in the midst of mankind." What is this but aiming at the very life of Christ, and being guilty of His blood?

Another form of bloodshed, and I am only hinting at these two, is that of anger without a cause. We are told on Inspired authority that he that is angry with his brother is a murderer. Unless there is good and sufficient cause for anger, in which case a man may be angry and

sin not, anger is murder! When I have a hasty thought against a man and wish him out of the world, I have killed him in thought, and even though I may disguise the wish under the expression of wishing him in Heaven, there is guilt in the desire! Oh the hard, cruel, black thoughts which men have towards one another when they are angry! Why, they kill and slay a thousand times over! These hasty sins are soon forgotten by us, but they are not soon forgotten by God. Let us weep over our hot tempers, for the fire of Hell burns in them!

And let us be forever free from that lingering malice which harbors resentment and will not be brought to forgive, for this, especially, is before God a form of bloodshed, and concerning it we have need to pray, "Deliver me, O God, from malice, and evil temper, and envy, and all uncharitableness, lest the guilt of bloodshed should be at my door." Having hinted at these, I now come to what I am driving at, namely, those sins against men's souls by means of which blood may be at our door.

Let me call to your remembrance, some of you, your early days and your first youthful transgressions. It is taken for granted in the world that young persons ought to be allowed to sow their "wild oats." And then it is hoped that afterwards they will settle down. But these wild oats are more easily sown than reaped, and many men might weep tears of blood to think of what a harvest has sprung from them. We sinned very carelessly and joyously, and led others into sin without a thought of the future. And now that we are converted to God we have to look back, and wish in vain that others could be turned from the dangerous paths into which we led them! I do not want to bring any needless bitterness into the heart of any person who is saved and pardoned, but I should like to cast a dash of gall into men's hearts who have never sought the Savior and who are growing gray.

I would make them seriously reflect upon the mischief of their early days. Alas, you cannot undo the evils of your sins! Your children, trained amiss with a bad example before them, are not now to be tutored for God. Your acquaintances who have copied your habits are not now to be reclaimed. Perhaps some of you have had companions with whom you used to drink and feast who are now in Hell and brought there very much through you. How sad should be those depraved men who have been partners in the sin of guilty women, or women who have lured giddy young men into the paths of vice. I feel sure that even when such persons repent and find forgiveness the thought of the past cuts like a knife.

I can hear one of them sighing. "Alas, I cannot undo my deeds! Those with whom I sinned are gone, gone where I cannot reach them even with a prayer. And although others linger upon earth, they are gone, now, to such extremes of sin that it is almost hopeless to think that they shall be reclaimed, and all this is due to my youthful follies. Oh that I could wipe them out, even with my blood!" "Deliver us from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of our salvation."

Many unconverted persons here will perhaps feel, I trust they may, the point of the next observation, namely, that false teaching involves the guilt of bloodshed. Some, who afterwards

have become ministers of Christ, were at one time ministers of Arianism, Socinianism, Deism, or infidelity. Now the man who leads the young mind astray from the Truth of God and guides youth into doubt and skepticism must not think that he shall go unscathed. Those who err from the Truth perish, but their blood shall be laid at the door of the teachers who first sowed the seeds of evil thought within them.

There was a despot in Italy who was wont to shoot poisoned adders at passersby in the street, and there are men who delight to shoot sharp, stinging doubts into young minds. They will not deny any one grand Truth of God, but they will insinuate covert doubts which assail the whole Gospel system. Pity, Brethren, heartily pity those false teachers who have been able to attain to eminence by the fatal gift of unsanctified talent. What must be at their door who have denied the Deity of Christ, who have despised and spoken slightly of God's Atonement? To have beguiled the minds of men till they have looked upon you as their oracle, and then to have taught them false doctrine—what is more horrible? With what solemnity is the teacher's office invested when we remember that God will require at our hands the blood of souls!

You who are now converted, but were once infidels, or miscalled Unitarians, I pray you go not to your bed tonight till you breathe this prayer, "Deliver me, O God, from the blood of souls! Let none go down to the pit cursing me because I taught them error and led them away from the fountain of life. Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation." It is a dastardly thing to poison the wells of a city, but what is it to poison the well of the Truth of God and make soul-thirst the medium of soul-ruin?

It was an accursed thing, in the old story, for a man to pour poison into his sleeping brother's ear, and yet hundreds have done the same! Sometimes by word of mouth, and still more often by infamous literature. Who knows the evil caused by evil books scattered broadcast over the land, which, like the ashes that Moses hurled into the sky, have brought a grievous plague wherever they have fallen? O you authors and editors of newspapers who teach ungodly principles and sneer at Divine Truth—take heed lest the blood of souls cry out against you—as the blood of Abel did against the first manslayer!

Our text has a voice in another direction. Some men actually trade in luring others into sin. By this craft they get their wealth. Pandering to the drunken and vicious habits of the multitude, they literally fatten on the ruin of those whose evil tastes they gratify and excite. Satan has many soul-hunters in his pay who hunt for the precious life. It is an amusement to some to decoy others into the snares and meshes of the Evil One. I have known beings of this class. I will paint one whom I knew who is gone to his last account. He was an old drunkard, hoary with years of infamy. His language—profanity. His life—abomination. I should blush to mention the sins of which he would speak with a delighted leer.

Never came there a young man within his range but what he tempted him to the tavern and to places still worse. If one saw any youth of the congregation walking with that man,

you knew that he would soon be missing from the House of Prayer. It was impossible for a person to be five minutes with that old wretch without being infected by the contagion of his filthiness. His whole heart went with his foul tongue in the work of depraving the youthful mind! It was a sight to see the man's lips as he spoke lusciously of a dainty sin, and to see the contempt that was in his countenance as the minister of righteousness looked sorrowfully at the destroyer and his victim. His joy was greatest when he had been the means of casting down a professor of religion, or could see young Hopeful become as vile as himself!

When he saw those die—whom he had led into sin and educated in profanity till they became as bad as himself—no twitch of conscience ever came over him! When he died and was buried, one almost thanked God for his removal, for he was a most fearful hindrance to the kingdom of the Lord Jesus. Oh, should I address some such who delight to sing lascivious songs, and to talk loosely, God forgive you! You are a great sinner, and may He take that black heart out of you, and give you a new heart and a right spirit, for, if He does not, double damnation must be your portion, since as he that, by God's Grace, turns many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever, so shall you who have turned many to unrighteousness be plunged in the blackness of darkness forever!

This, I dare say, comes home to but very few—indeed, I trust to none of you here—but the next point may touch us all in some respects. Bad example is a way by which the blood of souls may come upon us. If a man should live in a densely populous neighborhood, and should carry on a trade which sent forth deadly fumes into the air so that everybody who breathed them would be infected with disease and die, who could acquit him of murder? Granted that he clearly knows that the fumes which he makes are deadly—if he, for any hope of gain—causes such ruin, he deserves to die himself.

But what is bad example? Is not that in the family and in the social circle just such a deadly vapor? I spoke just now of bad teaching, but bad example is even more dangerous, because its range is wider. Bad example reaches those who would not have listened to false doctrine, but who receive the poison through their eyes. How do you know, Mother, but that the girl who breaks your heart learns her first sin from you? Father, can you be so angry with your child when you are not quite sure but what he has imitated you?

Master, you, the other day, spoke very severely about a certain servant who forfeited your trust—are you sure there was not some irregularity in your conduct which misled him? Every man, especially in a great city like this, is responsible not only for himself but for his neighbors, and there are some of us who are like the church clock—other people set their watches by us. It becomes such of us as are religious teachers to be particularly careful. There are some things which I feel I might do, as far as I am concerned, which I believe I might do without suffering any personal hurt. But I do not do them for your sakes, and which I dare not do for the sake of many who would take license from my example to do a great

deal more than I would do, and would make me the horse on which they would put the saddle of their sin.

Christian parents, you must not always say, "I can do this." Yes, but would you like everybody else to do it? Because, if it is unsafe for one, it seems to me you have no business to touch it. "If meat offends my brother, I will eat no meat while the world stands," is a grand old Christian saying of one who was not a whit behind the very chief of the Apostles. We must be careful even of things indifferent. But when it comes to those things which are positively evil, the bad example of a Christian is ten times worse than that of one who is not a Christian. If I see a sinner commit sin, his example is poison, but it is labeled. The inconsistent life of a professor is unlabeled poison, and I am very likely to be injured by it. Inconsistent Christians, false professors, you that have a name to live and are dead, take care lest bloodshed be at your door, and much of it, too!

But these are things of which the ungodly have their share, and therefore I come, now, to talk a few quiet words to the Christian only. I want to single out those Brothers and Sisters who love the Lord, and who are saved from the wrath to come through Him. I want to ask you, Do you not think that you and I may have been guilty of the blood of souls, though we are set by God to be, instrumentally, their salvation? Though we are the lights of the world and the salt of the earth, yet may we not have been darkness, and salt that has lost its savor? Answer, I pray, such questions as these! May we not have bloodshed laid to us from neglect of family duties? I fear that this is one of the sins of this age.

The Puritans were noted for the care in which they brought up their children—they never fell into the fault of sparing the rod, and their children were catechized every Sunday. They were prayed for and wept over, and the Puritan household was a very Heaven upon earth. But oh, if some of us see our children running into sin, and growing up to be thoughtless, careless, and giddy—what can we say—who shall we blame? Are there none here, like Eli, who have only said to their children, when they have done wrong, "My sons, why do you do this?" but have let them go unchastised? Remember the character of Hophni and Phinehas, and the message of Samuel concerning them—"Thus says the Lord, I will do a thing at which both the ears of everyone that hears shall tingle: I will judge the house of Eli because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."

Let us take heed, lest God bring the like on us! Oh, Sirs, it is no small charge to be a parent, and to neglect that charge brings no small guilt upon us! When I see so many children of Christians turn out worse than others. When I find some of the sons of ministers among the ringleaders in sin—what can I do but pray that I may sooner die than have such a curse fall upon myself? If any of us have neglected home duties, let us beware lest we have the blood of our children laid at our door!

Have we not often neglected the souls of seekers in distress who would become very glad of our attention? At our meeting for prayer and fasting last Tuesday, a Brother who

was, I think, the best man among us, made a confession of cowardice and we all looked at him and could not understand how he could be a coward. A bolder man I do not know! He told us that there was a man in his congregation who was a wealthy man. If he had been a poor man he would have spoken to him about his soul. But, being a wealthy man, he thought it would be taking too much liberty. At last, one of the members happened to say to him, "Mr. So-and-So, have you found a Savior?" and bursting into tears, the man said, "Thank you for speaking to me! I have been in distress for months, and thought the minister might have spoken to me. Oh, I wish he had. I might have found peace."

I am afraid that often you good people have sinners convicted of sin sitting beside you in your place of worship, and when the sermon is over you ought to get a word with them—you might be the means of their comfort—but you forget it, and you go your way. Now, is this a thing to be forgotten, as if it were no great offense? Let me give you a picture which may set it forth. See yonder poor wretches whose ship has gone down at sea? They have constructed a poor tottering raft and have been floating on it for days. Their supply of bread and water is exhausted and they are famishing. They have bound a handkerchief to a pole and hoisted it, and a vessel is within sight. The captain of the ship takes his telescope, looks at the object, and knows that it is a shipwrecked crew.

"Oh!" he says to his men, "we are in a hurry with our cargo, we cannot stop to look after an unknown object. It may be somebody perishing, and it may not be, but, it is not our business," and he keeps on his course. His neglect has murdered those who died on the raft! Yours is much the same case, only it is worse because you deal with immortal souls! And he only deals with bodies which he allows to die. Oh, my Brother, I do implore you before the Lord, never let this sin lay at your door again! If there is one who is impressed, and needs a word of comfort, fly on the wings of Mercy to such a soul and help cheer him as God enables you!

May we not be guilty, in the next place, of neglecting to warn many that are not impressed? If I saw a man go reeling on towards a precipice, and knew, as he went staggering forward, that in a few minutes he would go over the edge and be plunged into eternity—if I did not shout out and warn him to draw back—I should feel that when he fell I had a share in his death. When you hear a funeral bell toll for a neighbor, can you say, "If that soul is gone to its last account, I did at least tell him of the way of mercy"? No, I fear there are many now slumbering in the sepulcher whom you can never warn now, but whom you ought to have warned—your brothers, your sisters, your own children, your next door neighbors—they are gone, gone from where they never can return. And among the things they will have to say at the Day of Judgment will be this, that they can bear witness against you that you never warned them to flee from the wrath to come.

O God, we are all guilty here! "Deliver us from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of our salvation." Further, have we not been guilty of the blood of souls by exposing them



to danger? When a father puts his boy apprentice, if he only cares about his worldly gain and not about his soul's interest, I cannot acquit him, nor will God acquit him. Parents have sometimes put their girls to school and their boys to trade where if they had obtained any good it would have been a miracle, and where if they met with mischief it was only what they might expect.

Now it is according to law that if I expose my child to the cold and it perishes through my negligence I am punished. Surely it must be so with sin. So with our servants, our neighbors, and work people—if we expect them to do for us what we would not do for ourselves we are guilty of their sins. Some here may possibly be carrying on unnecessary trades which require working men to toil all Sunday (works of necessity, of course, I speak not of), but there are systems of trading which for no justifiable reason involve the keeping away of the men employed from a place of worship. Now when these men are lost, I ask at whose door will their blood lie? Who had the profits of their labor? Who fattened on their gains? Who sucked the very blood of their souls to coin it into wealth for himself? If there is such an one, let him cease from the sin, and pray, "Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation."

Christian, do you not think that sometimes you may have been guilty from unholy silence? When I hear God's name profaned and offer no rebuke, but take it quietly, is there no sin there? When I see my neighbor going into sin, and have an opportunity of speaking and do not, is that silence without blame? When I go up and down the street and meet people in many ordinary avocations to whom I might speak of Christ and never do—when they perish, shall I be clear? Oh the thousands that some of us come in contact with, and yet leave them as if we had no care about their eternal state! Shall we be clear, Brothers and Sisters, shall we be clear?

May not another sin also be charged upon some of you? Some have a way, not only of doing no good, but doing a deal of mischief by their harsh conversation to young beginners. I have known elderly professors who, instead of encouraging the young, would seem as though they would snap the child's head off if it spoke of Divine things! They doubt the possibility of the conversion of little ones and will ask knotty questions, and raise difficult points to perplex those who have but lately found Christ. They delight to insinuate that the convert's joy is nothing but mere excitement, and they do all they can to thrust seeking souls into despair.

Unlike the Master, who never broke the bruised reed, they break all they can! And, unlike He who never quenched the smoking flax, they would, if they could, quench even those that have begun to blaze! Is there no guilt here? Are there none such in this House? I know there are! May they have Divine Grace to feel the sin and to plead for mercy! Unhallowed levity about Divine things is another home-born sin. Do we ever trifle about God's Word? Are we not tempted to joke and utter a silly jest when it would have been prudent to have urged a

warning? I fear, Brethren, and fear sorrowfully, that many of us who ought to know better are verily guilty here. To trifle with eternal things is no small crime.

But here is a point upon which I would speak more earnestly, still—how often have we withheld prayer concerning others? We know they are perishing, but we do not pray for them! We are conscious that their state will be one of woe, but yet no tears flow from our inhuman eyes, and our spirits are not affected. Neglected closets shall call upon them to speak against us. I shall leave our lack of prayer in private to be a matter of personal confession, but I am afraid that after having thought it over we shall feel we have been guilty of bloodshed.

Then there is a general need of earnestness especially chargeable upon us who are ministers. That I should ever have preached to you as I have sometimes done ought to break my heart. And that some of you should teach in Sunday school as you teach ought to cause you deep regret! And that you should go even about tract distributing in so cold a manner as you sometimes do should make you smite upon your breasts. Oh if we were half as earnest to serve God as others are to win gold, what success we might expect! And we have not had it because of our want of earnestness! Deliver us from the guilt of bloodshed, O God!

II. In the second place, let us make AN EARNEST CONFESSION. Let us not deny our responsibility or we shall be like Cain, who said, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Shun a Cainish spirit. Let us not try to shift the responsibility to God's shoulders by saying, "God's decree will be fulfilled." That is true, but Divine sovereignty is no excuse for human negligence. Let us feel, "We are guilty here," and do not let us murmur, "Well, we have a right to do as we like. It is a voluntary work."

It is so, but, Brethren, we are debtors unto the Jew and Gentile. Loved with such mercy as that which we have received, we ought to have done more for souls and we are guilty because we have not done it. Let us not soothe ourselves with, "Well, we will do better in the future." Look to the past—how can you undo that? And the souls that have gone, past recall, down the cataract of death—what can you do for them? Bestir yourself! Bestir yourself for the future! For there you can do much. But for the past, what is to be done but weep! Let us make a clean breast of it when we are alone, and solemnly confess that we have been guilty of the blood of souls.

III. In the third place, our text has in it AN EARNEST PRAYER which I commend to you. You observe it is addressed to God. It is not a resolution made in his own strength, but it is addressed to God. "Deliver me, O God." You observe that it is addressed to the God of salvation. Thanks be to His name, He can save us! He is the God of salvation. It is His prerogative to forgive. It is His very name and office to save those who seek His face. Let us go to the God of salvation!

Better still, the text calls Him the God of my salvation. Yes, blessed be His name, guilty as I am I am saved! Though the blood of others once lay at my door—and my sin humbles me—yet through Jesus' precious blood I can rejoice in the God of my salvation! Then look at the word, "Deliver." It has two meanings. "Deliver me from the guilt of the past— whatever I may have been in the years gone by forgive it. But Lord, deliver me from the power of it for the future." If I am a minister, Lord, make me more prayerful. If I am a Sunday school teacher, help me to teach the children as though they would be dead before we met again. If I am a father or a mother, help me to instruct my dear children as though their salvation rested upon me.

If I am a neighbor, let me not neglect the street, or court, or lane where I live. If I am a citizen, let me not neglect the claims of those who live in the same city with me. If I am a Christian, do not let me be a dark lantern, do not suffer me to be unsavory salt. Some of you professors are of no use to anybody. I know some professing Christians who hoard their money just as if they did not owe Christ anything. They never give to the cause of God and their gold and their silver are red with blood—the blood of those who might have had the Gospel preached to them if there had been the means of sending it. I know others who come in and out and occupy seats and sing and pray as others do, but take no part in the work of the Church. They are useless idlers, like the mixed multitude that came out of Egypt with the children of Israel.

If such are present now, the Lord send the darts of conviction through them! If you are His people, I hope you have the Grace to receive the rebuke in the spirit in which it is sent to you and profit by it. If you have been bought with blood, live as one who is not his own! If you are a mere worldling, why do you come here and make a profession of Christianity? But if you have been saved, ask to be delivered from the great sin of bloodshed!

IV. The psalmist ends with A COMMENDABLE VOW. It is about the only vow that I can advise any of you to make. He says, first of all, if God will deliver him, he will sing. And I vow I will. If I am only able to say as George Fox said, when he was dying—honest Quaker as he was—"I am clear"—oh if I can say, "I am clear," I will sing, indeed! It is enough to make any man sing if he can be minister to such a congregation as this and be clear.

Sometimes when I have gone down out of the pulpit, and somebody has said, "There are six or seven thousand people without excuse because they have heard the Gospel," I have said, "Yes, it is so," but I have thought, "Have I preached it as earnestly as I ought?" And many a time it has made me toss on my bed to think of the responsibility of this mass of human beings, and the twenty thousand or more who regularly read the sermons as they come from the press. Who is sufficient for these things? Truly a saved minister will be an everlasting wonder!

Then it is said, "My tongue shall sing aloud." Oh yes, indeed! Who can sing in any other style if such a mercy as this is afforded us? If, indeed, we are found faithful, we will not sing

in a whisper! If we have discharged our conscience, and no man can say, "You have been unfaithful to me," our tongue shall sing aloud! But note the subject, note the subject! It does not say my tongue shall sing aloud of my faithfulness, of my integrity, or of my earnestness. Oh no! When I have done my best. When I am delivered from all guilt of bloodshed, and my tongue begins to sing—it shall not sing of anything but Your righteousness, YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, O Jesus!

We cannot sing of ourselves. We must sing of the finished work of a precious Savior. "Ah," said one to a dying saint, "you have fought a good fight!" "Ah," said he, "do not tell me that. I am thinking of how Jesus Christ said, 'It is finished.' " This is solid comfort for our souls. We must come as sinners, still! I would like to have some such verse sung over my dead body as was sung over dear Rowland Hill when they buried him under his pulpit at Surrey Chapel. He had asked them to sing the hymn—

"Jesus, Your blood and righteousness

My beauty are, my glorious dress" and that verse was sung slowly and solemnly—

"When from the dust of death I rise,  
To take my mansion in the skies,  
Even then shall this be all my plea,  
'Jesus has lived and died for me.'"

Yes, we shall sing and sing aloud, too, but we shall not sing of goodness, but of the righteousness of our dear Redeemer!

Now, poor Sinner, what do you say of Christ's righteousness? Do you not see that you are guilty of many sins? Oh that you may have Divine Grace to confess them! Remember the righteousness of Christ can wash away all sin, and however black and foul we may have been, we have but to come to the fountain filled with blood, and if we wash there, we shall be white as snow! The Lord give us such a washing, and we will sing aloud of His righteousness!