

Questions Which Ought To Be Asked

A Sermon

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Delivered by

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(This was followed by a farewell address from his son, Thomas Spurgeon.)

‘But none saith, Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night; who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven?’ [Job 35:10-11](#).

ELIHU PERCEIVED the great ones of the earth oppressing the needy, and he traced their domineering tyranny to their forgetfulness of God: ‘None saith, Where is God my Maker?’ Surely, had they thought of God they could not have acted so unjustly. Worse still, if I understand Elihu aright, he complained that even among the oppressed there was the same departure in heart from the Lord: they cried out by reason of the arm of the mighty, but unhappily they did not cry unto God their Maker, though he waits to be gracious unto all such, and executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. Both with great and small, with oppressors and oppressed, there is one common fault in our nature, which is described by the apostle in the Romans, ‘There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.’ Until divine grace comes in and changes our nature there is none that saith, ‘Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night?’ This is a very grave fault, about which we shall speak for a few minutes, and may the Holy Ghost bless the word.

I. And first, LET US THINK OVER THESE NEGLECTED QUESTIONS, beginning with ‘Where is God my Maker?’ There are four questions in the text, each of which reminds us of the folly of forgetting it. First, *Where is God?* Above all things in the world we ought to think of him. Pope said, ‘The proper study of mankind is man’; but it is far more true that the proper study of mankind is God. Let man study man in the second place, but God first. It is a sad thing that God is all in all, that we owe everything to him, and are under allegiance to him, and yet we neglect him. Some men think of every person but God. They have a place for everything else, but no place in their heart for God. They are most exact in the discharge of other relative duties, and yet they forget their God. They would count themselves mean indeed if they did not pay every man his own, and yet they rob God. They rob him of his honor, to which they never give a thought they rob him of obedience, for his law has no hold on them; they rob him of his praise, for they are receiving daily at his hands, and yet they yield no gratitude to their great Benefactor. ‘None saith, Where is God?’ My

dear hearer, do you stand convicted of this? Have you been walking up and down in this great house, and never asked to see the King whose palace it is? Have you been rejoicing at this great feast, and have you never asked to see your Host? Have you gone abroad through the various fields of nature, and have you never wished to know him whose breath perfumes the flowers, whose pencil paints the clouds, whose smile makes sunlight, and whose frown is storm. Oh, it is a strange, sad fact God so near us, and so necessary to us, and yet not sought for!

The next point is, 'None saith, Where is God *my Maker?*' Oh! unthinking man, God made you. He fashioned your curious framework, and put every bone into its place. He, as with needlework, embroidered each nerve, and vein, and sinew. He made this curious harp of twice ten thousand strings: wonderful it is that it has kept in tune so long; but only he could have maintained its harmony. He is your Maker. You are a mass of dust, and you would crumble back to dust at this moment if he withdrew his preserving power: he but speaks, and you dissolve into the earth on which you tread. Do you never think of your Maker? Have you no thought for him without whom you could not think at all? Oh, strange perversity and insanity that a man should find himself thus curiously made, and bearing within his own body that which will make him either a madman or a worshipper; and yet for all that he lives as if he had nothing to do with his Creator! None saith, Where is God my Maker?

There is great force in the next sentence: '*Who giveth songs in the night.*' That is to say, God is our *Comforter*. Beloved friends, you that know God, I am sure you will bear witness that, though you have had very severe trials, you have always been sustained in them when God has been near you. Some of us have been sick'nigh unto death, but we have almost loved our suffering chamber, and scarce wished to come out of it, so bright has the room become with the presence of God. Some of us here have known what it is to bury our dearest friends, and others have been short of bread, and forced to look up each morning for your daily manna; but when your heavenly Father has been with you speak, ye children of God have you not had joy and rejoicing, and light in your dwellings? When the night has been very dark, yet the fiery pillar has set the desert on a glow. No groans have made night hideous, but you have sung like nightingales amid the blackest shades when God has been with you. I can hardly tell you what joy, what confidence, what inward peace the presence of God gives to a man. It will make him bear and dare, rest and wrestle, yield and yet conquer, die and yet live. It will be very sad, therefore, if we poor sufferers forget our God, our Comforter, our song-giver.

Two little boys were once speaking together about Elijah riding to heaven in the chariot of fire. One of them said, 'I think he had plenty of courage. I should have been afraid to ride in such a carriage as that.' 'Ah!' 'Ah!' said the other, 'but I would not mind if God drove it.' So do Christians say. They mind not if they are called to mount a chariot of fire if God drives

it, We speak as honest men what we do know and feel, and we tell all our fellow-men that as long as God is present with us we have no choice of what happens to us, whether we sorrow or whether we rejoice. We have learned to glory in tribulations also when God's own presence cheers our souls, Why do not they also seek to know the Giver of songs?

And then there is a fourth point. 'None saith, Where is God my Maker, who *teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and make/h us wiser than the fowls of heaven?*' Here we are reminded that God is our *Instructor*. God has given us intellect; it is not by accident, but by his gift, that we are distinguished from the beasts and the fowls. Now, if animals do not turn to God we do not wonder, but shall man forget? Strange to say, there has been no rebellion against God among the beasts or the birds. The beasts obey their God, and bow their necks to man. There are no sin-loving cattle or apostate fowls, but there are fallen men. Think, O man, it may have been better for thee if thou hadst been made a frog or a toad than to have lived a man if thou shouldst live and die without making peace with thy Maker. Thou gloriest that thou art not a beast: take heed that the beast do not condemn thee. Thou thinkest thyself vastly better than the sparrow which lights upon thy dwelling: take heed that thou do better and rise to nobler things. Methinks if there were a choice in birds, and souls dwelt in them, their minstrelsy would be as pure as now it is: they would scorn to sing loose and frivolous songs, as men do, but they would carol everlastingly sweet psalms of praise to God. Methinks if there were souls in any of the creatures, they would devote themselves to God. as surely as angels do. Why then, O man, why is it that thou with thy superior endowments must needs be the sole rebel, the only creature of earthly mould that forgets the creating and instructing Lord?

Four points are then before us. Man does not ask after his God, his Maker, his Comforter, his Instructor: is he not filled with a fourfold madness? How can he excuse himself?

II. Supposing you do not ask these questions, let me remind you that THERE ARE QUESTIONS WHICH GOD WILL ASK OF YOU.

When Adam had broken God's command he did not say, 'Where is God my Maker?' but the Lord did not therefore leave him alone. No, the Lord came out, and a voice, silvery with grace, but yet terrible with justice, rang through the trees, 'Adam, where art thou?' There will come such a voice to you who have neglected God. Your Judge will enquire, 'Where art thou?' Though you hide in the top of Carmel, or dive with the crooked serpent into the depths of the sea, you will hear that voice, and you will be constrained to answer it. Your dust long scattered to the wind will come together, and your soul will enter into your body, and you will be obliged to answer, 'Here am I, for thou didst call me.'

Then you will hear the second question, 'Why didst thou live and die without me?' And such questions as these will come thick upon you, 'What did I do that thou shouldst slight me? Did I not give you innumerable mercies? Why did you never think of me? Did I not put salvation before you? Did I not plead with you? Did I not entreat you to turn unto me?

Why did you refuse me? 'You will have no answer to those questions: and then there will come another question' ah! how I wish it would come to you while there is time to answer it 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' To-night I put it to you that you may propose a way of escape, if your imagination is equal to the task. You will be baffled even in trying to invent an escape *now*, and how much more when your time of judgment really comes! If you neglect the salvation of God in Christ you cannot be saved. In the next world, how will you answer that question 'How shall we escape?' You will ask the rocks to hide you, but they will refuse you that dread indulgence. You will beseech them to crush you, that you may no longer see the terrible face of the King upon the throne, but even that shall be denied you. Oh, be wise, and ere you dare the wrath of the King eternal and dash upon the bosses of his buckler, turn and repent, for why will ye die?

III. Now, if any seek an answer to the grave enquiries of the text, and do sincerely ask, 'Where is God my Maker?' let us GIVE THE ANSWERS. Where is *God*? He is everywhere. He is all around you now. If you want him, here he is. He waits to be gracious to you. Where is God your *Maker*? He is within eye-sight of you. You cannot see him, but *he* sees *you*. He reads each thought and every motion of your spirit, and records it too. He is within ear-shot of you. Speak, and he will hear you. Ay, whisper'nay, you need not even form the words with the lips, but let the thought be in the soul, and he is so near you 'for in him you live and move and have your being' that he will know your heart before you know it yourself. Where is your *Comforter*? He is ready with his 'songs in the night.' Where is your *Instructor*? He waits to make you wise unto salvation.

'Where, then, may I meet him?' says one. You cannot meet him 'you must not attempt it' except through the Mediator. 'There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.' If you come to Jesus you have come to God. 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself; not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation,' which word we preach. Believe in Jesus Christ, and your God is with you. Trust your soul with Jesus Christ, and you have found your Creator, and you shall never again have to say, 'Where is God my Maker?' for you shall live in him, and he shall live in you. You have found your Comforter and you shall joy in him, while he shall joy in you. You have also in Christ Jesus found your Instructor, who shall guide you through life, and bring you to perfection in yon bright world above.

May the Holy Ghost use this little sermon as a short sword to slay your indifference; for Christ's sake.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON 'Psalms 42, 53.

HYMNS FROM 'Our Own Hymn Book' 550, 711, 606, 522.