

## **The Minister's Trumpet Blast and Church Member's Warning**

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"Set the trumpet to your mouth. He shall come as an eagle against the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed My Covenant, and trespassed against My Law. Israel shall cry unto Me, My God, we know You!" [Hosea 8:1,2](#).

WE do not use instrumental music in the worship of God because we consider that it would be a violation of the simplicity of our worship. We think it far better to hear the voices of Christian men and women than all the sounds which can be made by instruments. Yet I am sure there is no Christian here who would object to a minister who can play well upon an instrument and, indeed, a minister is good for nothing if he does not know how, spiritually, to give forth instrumental music! A true minister of Christ should know how to blow the ram's horn so that the walls of Jericho may be made to tremble and fall. He should understand how to play the harp, so that when any of you are disquieted, he may be to you as David was to Saul, and may drive away the evil spirits that trouble you. He should be able, also, to play upon the timbrel, and to lead you forth, sometimes, in the sacred song of joy and thanksgiving. He should be able to go forth like Miriam and cry aloud to you, and ask you to follow him while he says, "Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously."

His sermons should often seem to you to fulfill that exhortation of David, "Praise you the Lord. Praise Him upon the loud cymbals: praise Him upon the high-sounding cymbals." The minister of the Gospel should also understand how to blow the silver trumpet to proclaim that the year of jubilee is come and that the ransomed debtors may once more receive their lost inheritance. And there is one instrument upon which he should be well skilled and which he should often use, namely, the trumpet. I do not mean the silver trumpet, but the war trumpet—that clear, shrill-sounding instrument that gives the certain sound whereby men prepare themselves for the battle.

I have to use that trumpet tonight and, in explaining my text, I will speak of several things that are hinted at here. First, there is a command to the Gospel minister—"Set the trumpet to your mouth." There is, secondly, the particular reason for this command, in order that he may warn God's people—"Because they have transgressed My Covenant, and trespassed against My Law." Then, thirdly, there is another special reason appended, because God was about to execute judgment upon these sinners—"He shall come as an eagle against the house of the Lord." In the second verse we find our fourth point—the blessed result of the blowing of this trumpet—"Israel shall cry unto Me, My God, we know You!"

I. First, then, here is A COMMAND TO THE GOSPEL MINISTER—"Set the trumpet to your mouth." The Hebrew has it, "Set the trumpet to the roof of your mouth." Set it to your mouth. Keep it there—do not put it up sometimes and then take it down again—but have it always in readiness, so as to sound the note of alarm. Set it to the roof of your mouth—blow with all your might and let men hear that the alarm comes not merely from your lips, but from within your mouth—from your very heart! With such earnestness shall you sound the trumpet of warning.

What is meant by the minister setting the trumpet to his mouth? I think just this. In the first place, that when the minister is dealing with the souls of men, the tone which he uses should be very decisive. He should not set some little Jew's harp to his mouth, so that people hardly know whether he is making a noise or not—he should blow a trumpet and produce a decisive sound so that men may know what sin is reprov'd—what virtue is commended. They should never have to ask themselves, "What does the minister mean? Does he really intend to condemn sin, or does he palliate it?" The

declaration should be decisive, as the sound of the war trumpet is. When men hear that trumpet sounded in the East, they do not ask themselves, "Does that mean dancing? Is that the sound of them that make merry?" But they say at once, "That means war! We are sure it does. Let us prepare ourselves for the battle." So should it be with the message of God's servant. He has not to say, "If this," or, "if that," but to set the trumpet of Gospel warning to the roof of his month and give out a note that none can mistake.

For the text means not only a decisive sound, but a clear sound. Of all sounds, perhaps that of the trumpet is the clearest and so should it be with the message of Christ's servant. It should not be indistinct and full of hard words that cannot be understood. It should not be a piece of music, the tune of which is so difficult that no man can possibly follow it or even know what is meant by it, but it should be the one, two, three notes of, "Awake! Awake you sleepers! What are you doing?" Or this yet more solemn note, "Awake, you dead, and come to judgment!" "Prepare to meet your God!" There should be something so clear that the moment the minister's statement is heard, those who are willing to understand it should have no difficulty in knowing its meaning.

Again, in setting the trumpet to his mouth, the minister should not only give a decisive and clear testimony in all his ministrations, but it should also be a loud and startling testimony! You know some preachers who send their congregations to sleep—not only because of their monotonous style of address, but because their matter, itself, is sleepy! The people seem to say, "Well, if that is all the man has to talk about, we may as well be asleep as awake." Sometimes they preach the doctrines which teach men to sit still and do nothing. And then the people say, "Well, let us sit still and do nothing—only let us sleep by the way and enjoy ourselves." There are too many droning preachers that Satan employs to rock the cradle of immortal souls while he is standing by waiting till the time shall come for him to carry them

off. "You play," says Satan to the minister, "and I will dance to them. And between the two of us, we will lead them to Hell."

There will be a fearful amount of blood upon the skirts of a man whose ministry has startled nobody. When a trumpet is blown in a besieged city, there are many persons with weak nerves who are quite frightened and many children, too, and many timid souls that are greatly alarmed. And someone might come to the trumpeter and say, "Why did you sound the clarion? Weak women are made to tremble." "Yes," he says, "but better that weak minds should be made to tremble than that stout-hearted ones should perish! It is better these should be alarmed, now, than go quietly on until the enemy infests the city and puts them all to the sword." A startling time is often to come to the minister—he is not to be content to keep to ordinary subjects and deal with them in an ordinary manner. He must go out with a, "Thus says the Lord" and, like a new Elijah, he must speak with fire from Heaven hanging on his lips and the thunders of God rolling around his brow! He will never fully discharge his office if he is always playing on the harp with its soft dulcet notes—he must take down the war trumpet and sound an alarm—that all men may be warned!

I think I may add that when the minister of Christ blows this trumpet aright, it is one that is pretty sure to be heard further than he, himself, is seen. Men do not always see a trumpeter when they hear the sound of his trumpet—and let the minister of Christ fearlessly proclaim his Master's Word and his line shall go out through all the earth. Let him be honest and faithful, and he need not fear that he shall lack hearers. That trumpet sound, it may be, shall be heard all over England—across the Channel shall it be heard upon the Continent—it shall go beyond the Alleghenies and make the Rocky Mountains echo with the sound! Let him but preach the whole Gospel and set the trumpet to the roof of his mouth, and all the world shall hear or, at least, if they hear it not, he shall have performed his duty—but many will hear it, for God will always find ears willing to listen to the sound that comes from an honest mouth!

II. "Set the trumpet to your mouth." That is the command to the Gospel minister and I mean to obey it while I deal

with the second head, THE PARTICULAR REASON ASSIGNED FOR IT. The reason why Hosea was to become a

trumpeter at this particular time was this—the children of Israel had broken God's Covenant—they had gone astray and transgressed His Law. Therefore God was angry with them and was about to smite them with sore judgments. Before, however, He smote them, He warned them. God does not usually give a word and a blow, but He gives a word and another word, and another word and then yet another word and, after all that, there comes the blow! He warns before He strikes. The axe of God, like the axe of the Roman dictator, is bound up in a bundle of rods—He smites first with the rod and if that suffices not, then He draws out the axe and smites with it—and its strokes are enough to destroy the soul.

Now, with regard to this Church—God, I think, has put it into my heart to speak to you about your transgressions and your sins. And, in this matter, the trumpeter includes himself—and while he addresses the Church and congregation,

he intends, thereby, not to exempt a single person unless there is one, indeed, who can claim exemption. Well, my Brothers and Sisters, to begin with ourselves—the members of this Church—is there no good reason that the minister should always have the trumpet to his mouth to warn us of our particular sins? God has blessed us very greatly as a people. We have lived in the sunshine of His Countenance. He has been pleased to give us success in our labors beyond our most sanguine anticipations. Whatever way we turn our hands, God seems to prosper us—if not in our worldly business, yet certainly in our business for Him. There is nothing that I am aware of which this Church has undertaken but God has been pleased to give us success in it. But have we not, with all this blessing, very great sins to confess before God?

When I sit down and think of myself, I am, to my own self, a wonder and a marvel that God has not cast me off—that He has not said to me, "I will no more speak My Word through you. I will leave you to yourself. You shall be like Samson when his hair was gone." And, oh, if He should say that to any of us, where should we be? Brothers and Sisters in the Church, may you not, personally and collectively, cover your faces and mourn and weep by reason of your own private and individual sins? Are you perfect? Are you quite clear of guilt? Are your garments unspotted and unsullied? God forbid that you should say they are, for this were, indeed, to vaunt yourselves in pride! No, every man may weep apart, and his wife apart, and his children apart, for, with us, even with us, there are sins against the Lord our God! I sometimes fear lest, as a people, we should be tempted to pride. Lest we should conceive that the success with which God favors us is owing to something in ourselves—lest we should begin to say, "We are the men, and wisdom shall die with us." We stand in a position in which God has made us eminent by His blessing, but let us take heed lest, by exalting ourselves, we become like Capernaum, once lifted to Heaven, but afterwards brought down to Hell!

There have been many churches which God has left because of their sin. Riding through the country, we can see, every now and then, a chapel, and when we enquire how the cause prospers, we are told that it is in the worst position possible. "But was it always so?" "No," it is said, "there was once a servant of God there and the people gathered round him—and they walked well for a time and there were many conversions." But, alas, they fell into sin, and God left them—and there is "Ichabod" written on every piece of mortar in the walls! If you could see it, there is the great "Tekel" of Belshazzar put upon the pulpit and upon the pew! Pastor and people alike have been weighed in the balances and they have been found lacking! Shall it be so with us as a Church? Shall we be found lacking in the time of testing?

Shall I tell you—and here I speak without the slightest tone of severity—one thing in which some of our friends are lacking? A conscientious regard to social prayer. There are some who are always at the meetings for prayer, but I cannot conceal from myself the fact that there are many whose faces I never see there. Or, if I see them once a year, it is indeed a treat. I doubt not but that their business is so urgent that they could not constantly attend, but then I know there are others, who regularly attend, who have business that seems to me to be equally as urgent and I think these absentees might come sometimes, at any rate. Now, if we begin by some of us neglecting the meetings for prayer, and if our neglect should increase, we shall then be on the high road to the loss of God's favor and to the prevention of all future prosperity!

Besides, may I not also say that there are some, I fear, in the Church, who have lost their first love. It is remarkable to me that there are so few in this church who have turned out to be deceivers. Sorrowful are the meetings when we have to excommunicate, here and there, one. But out of so vast a number we have great reason to thank God that they are comparatively few. But, oh, may there not be many among us who, if they cannot be made amenable to church discipline, are nevertheless rotten at the core? Have we not some that are like trees, fair on the outside, but inwardly their hearts are but fit to be tinder for the devil's tinderbox? Have we not too many among us who are secretly living in sin, whose practice in trade would not bear strict investigation, but who, nevertheless, cannot be laid hold of because there is no gross vice, no open, public and flagrant sin? And, oh, Brothers and Sisters, if these things increase, if this leprosy breaks out in the garments, it will spread and God will come to abhor His own inheritance and will say of this Church, "I will leave this place—I will abide here no longer—I will find a people who shall be more faithful to My Word, who shall live more true to the promises and vows which they have made."

I will set the trumpet to my mouth tonight, on behalf of every member of the Church, and on behalf of myself, also. O Brothers and Sisters, the time past should suffice us to have worked the will of the Gentiles! Let us seek Divine Grace that we may be purged from all our former conversation in the days of our flesh, that we may come out from the world, that we may be more and more separate from it, that there may be a greater distinction between us and the ungodly sons of

men, that we may prove to be what we profess to be—Israelites, indeed, in whom is no guile! O Christian Church, if you shall fall from your integrity, you will soon fall from your prosperity! Suspend prayer and you will suspend success! Break down our hedges, let in the hypocrites—or let them even come in by stealth—and the wild boar out of the forest will soon waste this Church! And where are the goodly clusters now? Where are the grapes of Eschol and where are the winepresses gushing with new wine? Famine has devastated the land! Black death has covered all the vineyards and the vines lament and are burned up with fire. If God forsakes us—and He will do so if we turn aside from Him as a Church— then

this must be the result. The lamentation that I have taken up must be the lamentation of this Church unless God shall keep us true to Him in prayer, diligence and holiness. God does not cast away His people forever, but He often casts away a separate Church from its degree of usefulness. He does not put out His lamps, but He does let them burn very low, indeed, so that there is scarcely anything but a smoking wick left. May it never be so with us!

Having set the trumpet to my mouth for the members of the Church, I blow another blast of it to every one of you. Brothers and Sisters in Christ, in the days of Jesus, there was found a Judas in the midst of His twelve Apostles. "I have chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil." Is there not reason to fear that among the many hundreds in this Church there are to be found some who are like Judas? O traitor, if you are still in the ranks, tremble to hear your doom! O you deceiver, the day is coming when judgment must begin at the house of God! Though chaff is mingled with the wheat, the rushing, mighty wind is rising now! I hear it—I hear it in the distance and soon it will come and winnow this Church and then, where will you be? Where will you be when Christ shall take His fan in His hand and thoroughly purge His floor? Do not think, my dear Friends, members of the Church, that you will be saved if you are out of Christ because you are members of the Church. Remember what happened to Joab—he ran right into the tabernacle and caught hold of the horns of the altar. Solomon said to Benaiah, "Fetch him forth." And Benaiah said, "Come forth from there," and he said, "No, but I will die here." And Benaiah told Solomon what he said—but did the king spare Joab because he had his hands on the horns of the altar? No! He said, "Go and slay him there," and Benaiah thrust his sword through him even while he had his hands upon God's own altar! So will it be with you. You may put your lips to the communion cup, you may come and sit round this table—you may be a deacon, you may even enter this pulpit as a preacher—but, unless your heart is right with God, even with your hands upon the horns of God's altar, you must be damned! From the pulpit you must go to the Pit! You must descend from the table to commune at the feast of fiends! Go from the general assembly and Church of the first-born, to the general assembly and congregation of the lost in Hell! I can blow my trumpet no louder than this to each one of you. Oh, hear it, hear it, hear it, Church members! Listen to it and regard it—and search and try yourselves, and see whether you are in Christ or not!

Yet one more blast from my trumpet and this is for those who are not members of the Church, but who constantly attend the ministry of the Gospel. O ungodly Hearers, the day is coming when you shall have no man to warn you, when you shall have no one to invite you to come to Christ! Sabbaths will not last forever. Eternity is drawing near and bears in its hand the stamp that must seal your doom. I remember a sermon of William Dawson's on Death—the three heads of which were, "First, Death is following after us. Secondly, he will certainly catch us. Thirdly, we don't know when." That third head is a very solemn

one—we don't know when. And what if it should be tonight? Hear the blast of my trumpet—"Consider your ways!" "Prepare to meet your God!" "Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still." "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little."

Sinner, while the lamp holds out to burn, turn to Christ and live! Otherwise know that when that lamp is quenched, God's mercy will be quenched, too, for you, and you will be cast away into the outer darkness, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth! Remember that ancient message, "He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon his own head." If all that is said is of no avail to you, then shall he that blew the trumpet be clear, but on your own head shall be your doom forever and ever!

I have to mourn because I cannot sound this trumpet as I should. Oh, that I had a voice powerful enough to find its way into the poor, dead, stony hearts of sinners dead in trespasses and sins! It were easy work to preach if we preached to none but the living in Zion, but to have to talk to hard stones that will not break, and to speak to icebergs that will not melt—that is a work that requires large faith and often depresses our spirit! Yet must we come back to it again, for the thought of eternity rises upon us. We see sinners plunging down to Hell in one awful stream! We see the grave glutted

with their corpses and Hell swollen with their blood! We mark how every night sucks in its prey and how every day shuts its devouring jaws upon the helpless thousands of our race—and we cannot be still—especially when we have before us some who will go from these galleries and from these pews to help to feed the everlasting burnings!

Did I say there would be some such? I mean, "Except they repent, they shall all likewise perish." If we could but look any one man in the face and know that he would be in torment within a year, oh, what pity we should feel for him! We could scarcely rest under such a burden. I am quite sure I should not sleep tonight—I should lie tossing on my bed, crying to God for mercy on that poor man—and I would not stop a moment before I would go to him and tell him the way of salvation. Ah, but there is not only one, but scores, perhaps hundreds, in this place of worship who have no hope! They are prayerless men and women—those whose knees never bend in prayer before their Maker—hard-hearted people who have never trembled under conviction of sin, and who have never sought and never found Christ as their Savior. Ah, poor Friends, poor Friends, we may well weep for you, and sigh for you, and all the more because you will not weep and will not sigh for yourselves!

To be on the high road to Hell and yet to be trifling with eternal things—to be on the brink of Perdition and yet to be jesting at religion! To be nearing the everlasting burnings and yet to be breaking the Sabbath and treading the blood of Christ beneath your feet—oh, this is mad work! Bedlam has not within its walls a man more insane—a more mad, manacled wretch—than the man who knows that the wrath of God abides on him and yet makes merry

and dances to the sound of his own funeral knell—who goes leaping to the gallows and, chanting a song, bows his neck to the death-block and the gleaming axe! O Spirit of God, it is Yours to wake the dead and Yours to change the heart! Do it, we pray You, for all the blasts of our trumpet cannot do it unless You take the work in hand.

III. Having gone through two parts of the text—the command to the minister and the reason found among his

people—I shall next ask your attention to the third point, THE REASON WHY HOSEA SHOULD, AT THAT TIME, ESPECIALLY SET THE TRUMPET TO HIS MOUTH, NAMELY, THAT JUDGMENT WAS IMPENDING UPON

THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL—"He shall come as an eagle against the house of the Lord."

Different expositors have given various interpretations of this verse and applied it to the peculiar plague which was, at that time, about to fall upon the Israelite people. Some say it was one thing and some, another. I do not care to enter into these diverse interpretations—it is enough for me to believe that there is a visitation threatened here against the Church of God. What does it say? Look at the text again. "He shall come as an eagle against the house of the Lord." But will the Lord let anything come against His own house? It cannot be so, surely! Ah, but it is so—and the emphatic name of God, Jehovah, is used, for you see the word, LORD, is in capitals—"He shall come as an eagle against the house of Jehovah." If sin gets into God's house, He will no more spare sin in His house than He will spare it in the devil's house. God hates sin everywhere and if sin gets into His own Church, He will flog it out. It is of no use at all for this traitor to go and hide himself in the house of God's children—the Lord will drag him out to execution, even though he creeps into our bedchambers! There shall be no sparing him! He may hide under the camel's furniture, but every Rachel shall be made to stand up and God will turn out our bronze images and cast them away from us!

It seems, then, that a visitation is threatened against the Church of God—against God's own house. Notice the form of this visitation—"He shall come as an eagle." Now, an eagle comes in two ways. First, it comes all of a sudden. Poised high in the air, so far aloft that you cannot see it, it keeps its wings fluttering as birds of prey are known to do and, with its sharp eyes so powerful that at that tremendous height it can see the smallest fish in the water, it marks its prey and all of a sudden down it dashes, as if it had fallen from Heaven like a meteorite, or like the lightning flash! It is up there where we cannot see it and suddenly it swoops down and bears away its prey! Now, such is often God's visitation upon His Church—He comes suddenly, like an eagle, and chastens His children.

Besides, here is an allusion to the strong flight of the eagle. When the eagle once stretches his wings to fly, who can stop his wings? He bears up against the wind. He buffets the storm. He cuts through it as a ship sails through the billows or a fish swims through the sea! On, on, like an arrow from the bow, he shoots to his desired target. So shall God's judgments be



to His Church—they shall come on His Church irresistibly—and there shall be no escape, there shall be no deliverance! The eagle shall come with such force that none shall stay his might!

How true this has been of the Church of Christ in many ages! As I have said before, God has never left His chosen people, but He has often left separate churches, when those churches have become mixed with the world. Look at the Sev-

en Churches of Asia. It would be an interesting and an instructive journey for any of us to make, to go to Sardis and to Pergamos, and to Thyatira, and to the other spots where there once were the Churches to which John the Divine wrote a part of the Book of Revelation. We would see that some of them have no inhabitants whatever—only the bittern and the owl, and the ruins of a long-past grandeur. In others a few huts, and Bedouin Arabs pasturing their flocks, with, perhaps, not a dozen Christians to be found within a circuit of a dozen miles! God has taken the candlestick out of its place and quenched His Light in darkness. Just so is it with the Church of Rome. What prosperity there was there once! Paul had, doubtless, a large number who used to gather together in his hired room to listen to him. And if Peter ever went to Rome, and he may have done so, he would, doubtless, have gathered a goodly band around him.

We have good evidence that there was a very large number of Christians there, for, in the catacombs under Rome, all along the corridors, many miles in length, there are inscriptions to the memory of Christians. You look on one and another, and there you see the name—one man with an anchor to show his hope, or another with a dove—and on most of them are these words, "He rests in peace," or, "She rests in peace." And there are thousands of these! The Church in the catacombs must have numbered a great many members, and there they flourished, down there in the darkness of the earth, worshipping God by candlelight when the sun was shining above them and his brightest rays could never reach them in those gloomy caverns. That Church seems to have been a very eminent one—the inscriptions bear the proofs of the very highest and most spiritual forms of piety. And now, the mother of harlots sits upon her seven hills and the ancient candlestick is taken out of its place.

Again, to give you another picture, which will, perhaps, strike you still more forcibly, look at Germany. In the days of Luther it was the stronghold of the Gospel! You know how Luther used to preach the Word and what crowds gathered to hear that mighty thunderer, while in simple language he proclaimed the Truth of God and defied the Pope and the devil, too! Things are improving now, I hope, but it might have been said, some years ago, "How are the mighty fallen!" The Lutheran churches had become nearly all Unitarian or Rationalist. They had forsaken the fountain of living waters. They forgot the Lord who bought them and turned aside to damnable heresy. And why should it not be so here! Unless the Lord will continually preserve unto us a remnant, we will become like Sodom and be made like

Gomorrah! That descent may come in an instant—the eagle may even now be watching in the air—and his swoop may be without any warning. There may come sudden destruction, as pain upon a woman in travail, and we may not escape!

As long as we walk with God, as long as we are true to the faith, as long as we labor for the salvation of souls, so long we are secure. But as surely as sin is permitted to spread among us—if the spirit of lukewarmness, of laxity of doctrine, of prayerlessness should creep in here, it will be all over with us. The Lord will say, "Let me go from there." There will be heard, in this place, what was heard in the Temple just before the time of its destruction by Titus. It is said that there was heard within the veil a rushing of wind and the high priest who was officiating declared that he heard a Voice say, "Arise, let Us go from here." That Voice has been heard in many places. I could point to chapels where that Voice must have been heard—houses of prayer where once there were crowds of hearers but which are now covered with dust and cobwebs, where scarcely anybody cares to enter—and where those who enter are cold, dead, dull and careless. Shall it ever be so with this Church? God forbid!

O God of Benjamin Keach, Your suffering servant! O God of Gill, Your servant who declared Your Truth in all its fullness! O God of the sainted Rippon, whom You have taken to Yourself—You who has been the God of this Church for, lo, these many years! You who has kept us beneath the shadow of Your wings and brought us into a position of high privileges and responsibilities—be You our God even until the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—and then forever and ever!

IV. I think I need not say any more with regard to this great and solemn reason why the trumpet is to be blown. Let

me, in closing, just dwell for a minute or two upon THE VERY BEAUTIFUL AND BLESSED EFFECT OF THIS

BLAST OF THE TRUMPET—"Israel shall cry unto Me, My God, we know You!"

In the Hebrew, this expression is very remarkable, indeed, it runs thus—"They shall cry unto Me, My God, we know you—Israel." I do not know whether you perceive the meaning of this expression. It is, perhaps, difficult for me to say it so as for you to perceive the pith of it. They say, "My God, we know You"—then, as if God did not know who they were, they say, "Israel." "My God, we know You—Israel." They mention their name and plead it before Him. Or else it may be, as another excellent translator says, that they thought perhaps the Lord would not remember them, but He

would remember the man with whom He had made a Covenant, namely, Jacob, Israel, for they say in the Hebrew, "My God, we know You—Israel." Remember Israel. Think of him who wrestled with You and became a prevailing prince.

We will be content, however, to take the passage as it stands. "Israel shall cry unto Me, My God, we know You!" Can you sincerely utter that cry, Brothers and Sisters? If so, a blast of the trumpet will have had a blessed effect if you can say, "Lord, we know You!" What do

you know about Him? There is one point in His Character I want you especially to remember. If you know God aright, you will know that He is a jealous God. That is one of the first things which He said when He spoke to His people in the wilderness, "I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God." I do not know that we fully understand the meaning of that word, "jealous." You know what it means in common life—how, if there is one who has a right to another's love, if that person suspects that the other's heart is given away, there is jealousy. Well, now, there is jealousy in God's heart if His people give to others love that is due to Him. And do you know when we are most jealous? It is an object of utter indifference to me who certain people may love, because I have no affection for them—but if there is one on whom my whole heart is set, if that person's heart were given to someone else, I should feel jealousy.

Now, God is not jealous of sinners—He is jealous of saints, of His own people, especially the people He loves best. I remember that an old Divine says, "It is an awful thing to be one of God's favorites"—I have turned that over in my mind many times and shuddered at the thought—"for," he says, "God does not deal with all His children on precisely the same rule. There are some of His people whom He makes more His favorite's than others. He takes them out and makes them His eminent servants, puts them in the first rank of the battle, and makes them very useful and very serviceable. He is more jealous of them than He is of any others. He is jealous of all His children, but especially of those children upon whom He has bestowed most of His favors."

You remember the story of the poor king of England? When there had been a rebellion against him and he had put it down, He promised that he would give pardon to all who were concerned in it. He had brought to him the list which contained the names of those whom he was to pardon. He read the name of his son, Richard, and he wept—"Is Richard a rebel?" He read the name of his son, Henry, and he wept again—"Is he a rebel?" But he had one favorite son, his son, John, and he saw in the midst of the paper the name of his son John as one whom he had to forgive. He forgave him, but it broke his heart and he died. The more favor there is, the more jealousy there will be. Now, as a Church, we may truly say, not in pride, but in thankfulness, that God has been very gracious to us. He has distinguished us by His Grace. He has caused our candle to shine brightly. He has heard our prayers, but He will be very jealous of us if we begin to ascribe the good work to ourselves. If we take any honor to ourselves and leave off praying to Him. If our zeal diminishes, if we become lax in our lives, if immoral characters are tolerated among us, God will be very angry with us and we must expect that though He will not cast away His own people, yet, as a Church, He will take away our beauty and cause it to fade away like the moth! And the fine gold shall become dim, and the Glory shall depart from this portion of His Israel.

Now what is the lesson of all this? It is just this, Brothers and Sisters, that I would stir you up to continue in prayer! To some of you, perhaps, the exhortation is not needed, but

to others I am sure it is. Thank God we have many in the church who know how to wrestle with God, but, oh, we need more of these! We want not merely to have the few like Gideon's men that lapped, but we want to have you all among the lappers—to have you all wrestlers with God, all diligent in His service and seeking to extend His Kingdom! Let us be, from this day forward, more prayerful than we have ever been before.