

God's King Magnified

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"His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon Himself shall His crown flourish." [Psalm 132:18](#).

THE Lord Jesus Christ communicates much to men with whom He comes in contact and has a mighty influence upon them. He is blessed and He is made a blessing. To those who love Him, Jesus Christ becomes a savor of life unto life. To those who are rebellious and continue to despise Him, He becomes a savor of death unto death. Our Savior, then, has an influence upon all those with whom He comes in contact and association. If I compare His Human Nature with clay, I must compare it with the scented clay which yields a perfume on all sides. You cannot hear of Jesus Christ without either getting a blessing or involving the responsibility of rejecting a blessing. I repeat it—He becomes a blessing to all those who are round about Him, or else, if that blessing is not received, it brings guilt upon the souls of those who reject Him. He is either the stone on which we build our hope and our trust, or else He becomes a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to those who stumble at His Word, being disobedient.

You see the text teaches very definitely this Truth of God, for it not only speaks of Christ, Himself, but of what will become of those who are His enemies. No doubt we may also very properly draw from the text what shall become of His friends, for that same hand which is sure to clothe His enemies with confusion, will be certain yet to clothe His friends with honor and with glory. He who uses the left hand so powerfully to smite His foes, uses His right hand with equal force to bless His friends.

The text, therefore, divides itself very easily and naturally into the two great declarations. We see the clothing of the enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ with shame, but then, again, the crowning of the Lord with a flourishing diadem of eternal Glory. Let us look, then, at—

I. THE ENEMIES OF CHRIST WHOM GOD SAYS HE WILL CLOTHE WITH SHAME.

Who are these enemies of Christ? In the days of His flesh, you could very easily have discovered them. Some slandered Him, calling Him friend of sinners, gluttonous and a wine-bibber, having a devil and even being a blasphemer. Some took up stones to kill Him. Some cried, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" And others bribed the multitude that they might thus hound Him to His shameful and cruel death. Enemies He had on all sides! But there are many who think today that had they lived in that age they would have been numbered with His friends. If it is so, is it not strange that they are not among His friends now? If they

would have behaved so well 1800 years ago, it is amazing they should behave so badly now. Our belief is—and the common actions of mankind justify it—that had the sinners of this present day who pretend to have so much affection for the Person of Christ, lived in that age, they, too, alas, would have helped to crucify the Lord of Life and Glory, for they do, in effect, crucify Him now!

Who are His enemies, then, today? We will not think about those Scribes and Pharisees, and so on, who are all dead and gone, but let us ask who are His enemies NOW? Of course, everybody says that open sinners are the enemies of Christ Do they not, by their actions, say, "we will not have this Man to reign over us?" His Book they will not read. His day of rest they do not care to keep. To the messages of His ministers they will not listen. His word, "Believe and live," they cast behind their backs—and having done this, they destroy their own souls and do everything that must grieve His Holy Spirit. Are there any such here, now—lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God—some who would even use the word of blasphemy and indulge in the sins of the flesh? We are not harsh if we put you down among the enemies of Christ! You are evidently not with Him and He, Himself, has said, "He that is not with Me is against Me." You are not on the Lord's side—there can be no "between-ites"—you are on the side of His enemies! He Himself declares that it must be so. "If God is God," said Elijah, "serve Him, but if Baal is God, serve him." You do in effect say, "The world is my god—myself, my

own soul, my own pleasures, my own opinions—these are my gods! As for Jehovah and His Christ, I know nothing concerning Them." Well, you must be put among His enemies and I would ask you, then, just to take this text and taste the bitterness of it. And I pray that may save you from knowing its bitterness in another world! "His enemies will I clothe with shame."

But Christ has other enemies, namely, those who are outwardly moral and excellent in conversation and conduct, but who deny the Lord Jesus Christ. There are some very excellent people in all other respects who doubt His Deity, or say they do—who will even say hard things of Him as the Son of God. They say they much revere His Character as a Man, and conceive Him to be, in fact, a very model of what manhood should be, but they will not accept Him in His true Character as the anointed Son of God and the Savior of the world! Now, the Lord Jesus Christ will most certainly consider such to be His enemies. It is no use for a man to say concerning a monarch, "I have a great respect for the monarch in his private character. I would not do anything to injure him—I would even hold him up to respect in his private character—but as a king I will never yield him loyal homage, I will never obey him. Indeed, I will do all I can to pluck the crown from off his head." Could the king do otherwise than reckon such a person to be his enemy? It would be in vain for the man to say, "I am privately your friend." The king would say, "Oh, but I esteem my crown to be as precious as my life." So the Lord Jesus Christ cannot have the crown-rights of His true Deity

touched. He "counts it not robbery to be equal with God," and He is called, "God Over All, Blessed Forevermore." He who trod the waves of Galilee's Lake, whose voice Death heard and gave up its prey—He who opened the gates of Paradise to the dying robber—claims to be none other than equal with the Eternal Father, and like He, "God Over All." And it is in vain for you to say you respect His Character as a Man, if you do not accept Him in His Deity and accept Him in His official Character as the Savior of sinners! You cannot be otherwise than numbered among His enemies! Well, now, if this should seem to be uncharitable, let me say that I cannot help telling you what I solemnly believe to be the truth and I must, therefore, my Friend, leave with you this text, "His enemies will I clothe with shame."

But again, there are other persons who are sound enough in their doctrinal views concerning Christ and who are excellent in their moral character, too, but who are trusting in themselves that they are righteous. You will, perhaps, be startled when I class you among the enemies of Christ! My dear Friend, Christ is the King of Grace. He is in this world to vindicate the plan of salvation by Grace. You, you see, instead of accepting this plan of salvation by Grace, set up the opposite principle of salvation by merit. Merit is anti-Christ! The very essence of Popery, that which is so hateful in it to us and, we believe, so obnoxious to the Lord, is not so much its outward rites and ceremonies as its inward spirit of setting up human merit! There are two merits—your own merit and the merit of Christ. If you trust your own merit, you do in fact proclaim that you are opposed to Christ's way of saving by His merits! Christ claims to be the Author and Finisher of our faith, the Alpha and the Omega, but if you come in and say, "No, I will do this myself—my moral character, my private devotions, my outward attendance at the House of God will serve me in good place as a righteousness," you touch Christ in His most tender point, for He claims among all His Glories this first and chief, that He is the Savior of sinners—and if you say that you can do without Him and if you profess to be your own savior—you shall most certainly, however excellent your life may be, be numbered with His enemies! Oh, it will be a sad case for you respectable people, you good, excellent people, when this text shall be fulfilled in you, "His enemies will I clothe with shame."

There is one other class I would gladly speak to—and I think they are the worst of all—those who acknowledge that salvation is by Grace and profess to be saved by the blood and righteousness of Christ, who unite themselves with Christ's Church, but whose lives are so unhallowed as to dishonor Him. You know how the Apostle, half-choked with his sobs as he speaks, says as he gazes upon such, "There are some of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even with weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ." What a terribly sad reflection! A member of a Christian Church and yet an enemy of the Cross of Christ? I can suggest no better question for each and all of us than this, "Lord is it, I? Lord, is it I?" Why may it not be you? The preacher may ask himself why may it not be he? But whoever it may be among us, this is certain—our Church standing will, so far from excusing

us, only increase our guilt—and so it shall be tragically and sadly true, "His enemies will I clothe with shame." They may clothe themselves with the garments of an outward profession and make broad their phylacteries, but they shall one day be stripped and their hypocrisy shall be discovered! "His enemies will I clothe with shame."

Having thus given you, then, a brief list of who are Christ's enemies and being anxious that you should ask yourselves, my dear Hearers, whether you are among them, I want now to call your attention to the particular phraseology of the text in order to make out what is meant by this being clothed with shame. Do you see it? Shame! Nothing makes a

man feel so cowardly and so mean as shame. There have been persons who would sooner die than be put to shame. Many a man would have been able to burn at the stake who has not been able to face public shame. It is a thing which cuts man's nature to the very quick! Now, if you and I have done anything that makes us ashamed, do you know what we do? Why, we put our shame into the hollow of our hand and we keep it there. We do not tell our wife, our children, our neighbors—and if we can, we go and hide our shame and put it away! Now God seems to say to you and to me, "You have been hiding that shame of yours. You have been wearing the garb of an outward righteousness. Come here! You must put this shame on." "No, Lord," you say, "but I want to hide it." "No," He says, "you shall put it where it must be seen— where nobody shall be able to see you without seeing it! I will clothe you with it—it shall be all over you. You shall put it on as your outward array. You shall be wrapped in it—you shall sleep in it, awake in it and walk abroad in it—you shall be clothed with shame!" And it strikes me that the text may also bear this meaning—that when God comes to fulfill this threat, shame will be the sinner's only garment. He had the garment of a profession once—that is to be torn sharply from him and he is to be arrayed only with his scarlet, blushing shame! Once his filthy rags, bad as they were in the sight of God, gave him a sort of covering, but now they shall all be stripped from him and he will have nothing remaining but his shame. Shame shall be his garb from head to foot, nothing but shame in which to wrap himself! When shame only comes into the cheek, it turns it crimson, but here the man or woman shall be shame all over and this shame shall be conspicuous to all onlookers, for he or she shall be clothed with it as with a robe, from head to foot! This seems to be the unmistakable meaning of the text. Now, when does this come true? And how is it true that God's enemies are clothed with shame?

Well, in the first place, this threat is sometimes very graciously turned into a promise. I cannot wish for some of you a better wish than that you may, in the first sense in which I am going to explain it, be clothed with shame, for when the Lord comes to a soul and says to it with a voice of love, "You have been My enemy, but I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you," then the soul is covered with shame. It cries out, "How could I be an enemy to so dear and true a Friend?" I recollect one being converted to God by reading the hymn—

"Jesus, lover of my soul."

"Oh," said the man, "is He the lover of my soul? Then how is it that I have been an enemy to Him? Did He love me when on the tree of shame and death? Did He love me so as to pour out His heart's blood to redeem me? How can I have lived without honoring Him?" And the man was clothed with shame! Some of us have felt what it is to be thus clothed, so that when we went into the House of God we felt almost ashamed to sit with God's people. They did not know anything about what we were feeling, but we thought they did. And when we went to pray, we felt ashamed to pray, as though our sins would hide God from us and we could not expect to obtain a blessing. We were so clothed with shame that we could not get it away from our eyes! Our whole soul seemed covered with it. No pride, no self-righteousness was left. We could not say, "Lord, I thank You I am not as other men," but we began to cry, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" Oh, it is a mercy when, in a gracious sense, the soul is thus covered with shame—a hallowed shame on account of its many sins! I would pray that this terrible text may be fulfilled in the sweetest possible manner by your being covered with shame for sin!

But alas, dear Friends, it bears on its front a very much more terrible meaning than this. There are some persons who are clothed with shame in this world through disappointment. There are some who think they should put an end to Christianity. They get a notion into their heads, for instance, that if the wife is converted, they will break her of it, or if a child shows some signs of Divine Grace, the man says, "I will laugh it out of him." Or perhaps they do it on a large scale. Like Voltaire, they boast that within another 20 years there will not be a Christian to be found anywhere. They say that the thing is absurd and is dying out. It is very strange that the very press with which Voltaire printed his works is now used in Geneva to print the Bible—and that while Voltaire, himself, is only remembered to be despised, Christianity seems never to have been so strong as it is at the present day! If all those men who have risen up, one after the other, to injure Christ's Kingdom, could just now be called back to life and see what has happened, they would look at their predictions and be clothed with shame to see how mistaken they have all been! Their theories have been exploded. They had their little day and have died out and are generally utterly forgotten. And so will all theories that oppose Christ today die out—and their systems of denial will be all clothed with shame!

In the case of those persecutors who have tried to drive religion out of individuals, they have always been disappointed. They have not succeeded, for the poor, trampled down one has borne it all with supernatural patience and triumphed by endurance—for the Grace of God is not to be expelled from the heart! You know what stout old Martin Luther said. He declared that Grace was like leaven—you put it into the meal and then you may boil it or bake it, fry it

or freeze it—but you can never get out the leaven! Once the meal is leavened, nothing can unleaven it. And so is it with the Grace of God! You may do what you will with the man who possesses it. Put him into a mortar and pound him with a pestle until there are not two atoms of him left together—and yet the immortal spirit leaving the anatomy and all its weaknesses behind it, would but the more clearly lay hold on Christ and more fully rejoice in Him! And so, when the disappointment which this brings, comes upon them, then Christ's enemies are clothed with shame!

Sometimes, again, in this world the enemies of Christ are clothed with the shame of remorse. Look at Judas Iscariot when he took the pieces of money and threw them down in the treasury and went out and hanged himself. There was the covering of shame. And there have been such men since, who, in life and in death, have been clothed with shame because they have apostatized from the faith and, after making a profession, have, Demas-like, turned back again to the world! It is a blessed thing if that shame leads them to true repentance, but in many cases it is only a repentance that comes from a fear of punishment and is not the work of the Grace of God! Oh, how many have gone down to Hell with its fire burning in their hearts before they got there, feeling the guilt of sin upon them even before God began to handle them, having a foretaste of the flames, a foretaste of that eternal flame-shower which must descend upon their heads! God grant, dear Hearers, that not one of you may know what it is to be clothed with the shame of remorse!

But the most terrible fulfillment of my text is left for another world. Then shall Christ's enemies be clothed with shame! Servants of Satan, here is your livery! Do you say you will not put it on? Listen—"His enemies will I clothe with shame." God will put it on you! You would not wear the robe of righteousness—you shall not be able to decline to wear the robe of shame! God, Himself, stands here, as it were, and declares that He will dress His creature in the proper garment for him to wear. You must put it on, there is no escape! You must wear it. Here is your eternal convict's dress and, convicted of being an enemy of God, you must wear it—of all dresses the most terrible! To be clothed with pain would be far less dreadful than to be clothed with shame. I would sooner at any time feel the acute pain that is possible in the body than feel shame, for a prick of the conscience is worse than the thrust of the surgeon's knife! To go crawling about God's world not able to look one's fellow creatures in the face? Why, I would sooner die! And then, in the next world, to be so ashamed that you will not be able to look even the devil in the face, because he never had a day of grace as you have had—never a Savior preached to him, never made any pretence of being converted to God and, therefore, though an enemy of Christ, has no such cause of shame as you will have! Clothed with shame! Why, they shall cry to the rocks to hide them and to the hills to cover them, for when a man is ashamed, he wants to get out of everybody's way and, most of all, out of his own! And you will be so ashamed that you, yourselves, will be ashamed of yourselves! You will be like the man of whom we read that when the king said

to him, "How came you in here, not having a wedding garment?" He was speechless. Why speechless? Shame made his tongue refuse to do its office—and so will shame do with you. You will be ashamed.

Shall I tell you why, when you hear of the Cross of Christ and yet reject it, you will be ashamed? You will be ashamed then of your sins. You are not able, perhaps, to boast of them, now, but you will be ashamed to think, then, that they shall be published. Men are afraid, now, to have some things put in the newspaper, but what will it be when God will gazette your private sins, when He shall publish to the whole assembled world of every age, to Heaven, earth and Hell, the sins which you have committed—when they shall be read out so that all shall hear and all your filth be discovered? What shame will this revelation of secret things produce! And what will be your shame when the hypocritical profession which you have made shall also be laid bare? Then shall those who were open sinners laugh you to scorn and say of you, as the Prophet pictures the kings saying of the great monarch of Babylon, "Have you become like one of us? Have you also become weak as we, and covered with shame?" Most of all, perhaps, will you be ashamed when you see the very people you despised reigning in triumph—when you see the saints whom you laughed at sitting at the right hand of the Judge—those fools who disdain this world's pleasures now entering into everlasting pleasure! And you, the wise man, who took the bird in the hand and would not wait for the bird in the bush—now rewarded for it all by receiving the very worst things, inasmuch as you had your best things, first, and must now have your worst things, last!

It is a sad, sad text I have to preach upon. I would to God it would go into your souls that you may turn to the King and be no more His enemies! God, Himself, has said it—it is no word of mine, "His enemies will I clothe with shame." He Himself, who can do it, who can make you ashamed, however proud you are—who knows how to put His hand inside your heart and touch the strings, thereof, and loosen them, so that your pride can no longer help you to bronze it out with Him—He has said it, "His enemies will I cloth with shame." I pray you, "Kiss the Son lest He be angry, and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little: blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

Now, we shall need a little time to take the second part of our subject—"Upon Himself shall His crown flourish." We are here very clearly taught that—

II. THE SAVIOR WILL WEAR A CROWN, THAT THE CROWN WILL FLOURISH, THAT IT WILL FLOURISH UPON HIM!

Brothers and Sisters, I need not detain you long by mentioning to you the crowns which Jesus wears. He has the royal crown of the kingdoms of Heaven, earth and Hell, for "the government is upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful, The Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords! But He has a crown which He especially now wears as Head of the Church and in this He takes great delight—the crown which is

called in the matchless song, "The crown wherewith His mother crowned Him in the day of His espousals." That is the crown which the Church has put upon Him and which she still delights to put upon His head! Do you not all delight to crown the Savior, my Brothers and Sisters in Christ? What song wakes up your heart more completely than the one—

"All hail the power of Jesus' name! Let angels prostrate fall! Bring forth the royal diadem, And crown Him Lord of All!" Have we not sometimes seemed to make these walls echo again and again as we sang—

"Crown Him, crown Him Crowns become the Victor's brow"? I hope He has a crown from each of our hearts and we wait for the day when we shall be taken up to cast our crowns at His feet, and to ascribe unto Him honor and Glory, and dominion and power forever and ever! Crowned once with thorns for us, He ought now to be crowned with the royal diadem! Everyone of us must seek to spend and to be spent that we may add to the luster of that tiara, that He may be exalted above all principalities and powers in the estimation of men—and that He may have a Kingdom in all men's hearts!

Christ is thus said to have a crown and it is added that His crown shall flourish. There are some crowns that are gradually diminishing in luster. The monarchy is growing weaker and weaker and still more effete and, by-and-by, shall be extinct, "but upon Himself shall His crown flourish." When does a crown flourish? You understand that the very term is metaphorical. Some think that to speak of a crown flourishing is to liken the king to an antlered stag whose horns flourish. Others suppose it to be an allusion to the primitive form of crowns, as Doddridge sings—

"Fair garments of immortal joy Shall bloom on every head."

It is a metaphor expressive of joy, comfort, tranquility in a kingdom. Now, when does a crown flourish? Does it not flourish when the sovereign is beloved by his subjects? The foundations of a throne are always to be found in the love of the people. Christ's crown, then, indeed, flourishes, for the upright love Him! His name is as ointment poured forth! Therefore the virgins love Him. We can truly sing—

"Jesus, the very thought of You With sweetness fills my breast." We are not slaves who scarcely even talk of ourselves as being His subjects, for He has called us friends and not servants, seeing that His secret is with us. He is dear to our souls and His crown thus flourishes.

A crown flourishes when the power of the monarch is victorious in war and acknowledged in peace. It is so with Christ. Oh, that it were more publicly so! We are praying for revivals and may God send them! May this time of God's visitation of London in judgment be attended with a visitation in mercy! And oh, that Jesus Christ's crown may flourish in the conquest of innumerable hearts who shall add fresh territories to the dominion of the Savior—for a crown flourishes when a king's subjects increase and His numbers are multiplied.

It shall be so with Christ. Until the sun has gone down with age and the moon has quenched her nightly lamp and every star has, like a withered fig leaf, fallen from the sky, Christ's Kingdom shall go on and on! First as a brook, it seemed to leap down Calvary's side. It has swollen to a river now. Still it deepens and widens. It becomes an ocean which shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea! Christ rose and it was twilight. Now He begins to climb the steep. And the day is coming and the full noontide draws near when He shall flood the whole earth with the splendor of His Light and His Glory—and when it shall be found that its going forth is from one end of the heavens to the other! May the

long-expected day fully come! May the realms of woe, of sin and death be filled with this great Light of God! His crown shall flourish!

It is remarkable that while all sorts of dynasties have come and gone, the dynasty of Christ still exists! How many mighty monarchs have climbed, with great slaughter, to their thrones—but where are they now? Rome has gone, but the Man of Nazareth is still King! And, besides Rome, how many empires have arisen? Earth has been shaken with the tramping of their legions, but where are their thrones and the men who filled them? They are gone, gone to the dust from which they came! But the name of Jesus shall endure forever—men shall always be blessed in Him and all generations shall call Him blessed! The day shall come, unless the Lord, Himself, appears, when the moss shall grow in the halls of the greatest kings, when the markets of commerce shall have shifted from their places. Perhaps the day may come when this modern Babylon, this emporium of all the riches of the earth, shall cease from her glory. Perhaps to western climes—for everything moves westward—the greatness may yet go. We do not know. We must not expect that our island shall abide forever Mistress of the Sea any more than any other. Venice wedded the Adriatic in her golden days, but now her canals have heard for many a day the clanking of the prisoner's chains and long must it be before her glory can ever return. It may be so with England in days to come. But Zion shall never cease to be the city of the great King! "Those eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation." There is a river that shall not cease to flow, whereon shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby, but there the glorious Lord shall be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams. Your Throne, O God, is forever and ever! A scepter of righteousness is Your scepter. You love righteousness and hate wickedness and, therefore, God, even Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows." This, then, is the crown that flourishes!

But do notice, once more, and then we have done, it is said, "But upon Himself shall His crown flourish." Does it mean that the crown shall always be seen to have reference to Himself? Does it also mean that it shall be by His own power and His own Person that He shall sustain the dignity of His crown? Sometimes the crowns of monarchs seem to flourish upon the heads of their prime ministers or privy councilors. It seems as if the empire flourishes because of some admirable person at its back. But it is not so with Christ. "Upon

Himself, shall His crown flourish." He won it! He wears it. He sustains it. He throws down the gauntlet to every foe who would rob Him of it! Now, this seems to say to us when we preach His Gospel, we must preach Christ, because it is upon Truths of God concerning Him that His crown shall flourish! If we do not, therefore, preach up Christ, Himself. If He is not the great Subject of our discourse. If He is not held up manifestly crucified among the people, we have kept back the mightiest theme! It is upon Himself that His crown must flourish! Brothers, suppose we give ourselves up to the preaching of Doctrine, only? What comes of it? Well, those persons who always delight in Doctrines may be, and some of them are, the very best of people, but, as a rule, there is bitterness of spirit engendered by it from which may the Lord deliver us. Even the constant preaching up of experience is pretty sure to bring such people into spiritual bondage and to make them rather care to grovel in the dust than to mount up towards the sun. But preach Christ! Make Him first and make Him last and there will be souls won and saints comforted, for, "upon Himself shall His crown flourish."

What is needed in the midst of His Church, then, is that the King Himself should appear in His Glory! That He should once again make bare His arm and use that mighty sword of His which cuts through coats of mail and pierces to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, joints and marrow! And when He comes, oh, when He comes, His crown, indeed, flourishes! We must pray for Him to be constantly with us by His Spirit. We must watch, also, for His personal Advent, for He whom the disciples saw go up to Heaven shall in like manner appear again. Then the Glory! Then the manifestation of the hidden ones! Then the declaration of the love of God towards those who have been under reproach and under adversity! Be of good courage, Brothers and Sisters, for He comes, He comes and then, "upon Himself shall His crown flourish!"

I have thus tried to preach both to saint and sinner. Oh, that He would bring the sinner to Himself tonight! Oh, dear Hearer, I cannot bear the thought that you should have to wear shame as your everlasting covering! Tomorrow morning, when you are putting on your clothes, just consider how you would like to be clothed with shame. Ah, fine lady, when you are decking yourself out in all your pretty things, remember that you shall have no waiting maid to dress you in that day, but another—even God, Himself, shall come into your robing room and clothe you with a dress you would gladly never wear!

"His enemies will I clothe with shame." See what your livery is to be forever and ever? See what your everlasting garment is to be? God grant that you may, instead of being clothed with shame, breathe the prayer, "Lord, clothe me

with Your righteousness. Wash me in Your precious blood. Make me Your friend and allow me no longer to be among those of whom it is written, 'Shame shall be the promotion of fools.'" God bless you for Jesus' sake, Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: PSALM 95.

Verses 1, 2. O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before His Presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto Him with Psalms. There must be, there should be joy in our worship—it is the very juice, the wine that flows from the trodden grape. It is the cream of the soul when the heart takes delight in God and joys in Him. To worship as if it were mere duty would be but the reverence of slaves before one who is dreaded, but to worship with delight—this is the adoration of children who come to One whom they love! God grant us that joy while we adore the Lord. Let us, however, mingle great reverence with joy.

3. For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods. "For the Lord is a great God." Jehovah is a great God, "and a great King above all gods," above all that are ever called gods, whether they are kings or magistrates, or whatever they may be.

4. In His hands are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is His also. Low and high, mysterious, sublime, the dominion of God encompasses all Nature!

5. The sea is His, for He made it: and His hands formed the dry land. Creation is the best ground for possession— what He made is His own, the great Freeholder, the Sovereign Lord of all!

6. 7. O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our Maker For He is our God. "For He is our God." Oh, that is the sweetest of it all—"He is our God." Let lords and lands have what masters they will—let us obey and worship our own God!

7. And we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. He is the Shepherd leading, feeding, protecting, guarding us every day.

7-10. Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My work. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation. Was not that enough? Is there any need to grieve Him again? Think with sympathy of what God endured from one generation and let not another generation follow in their evil footsteps!

10. And said, It is a people that do err in their heart Not merely through ignorance, but "in their heart." They were not alone with their feet and their tongue, but in their hearts.

10. And they have not known My way. They have seen them but not understood them. He says, "They saw My work," but you may see and yet not know, for what is merely seen with the eyes but not understood by the heart is not known—they were a willful, erring people—and an ignorant people.

11. Unto whom I swore in My wrath that they should not enter into My rest. Ah me!