

Rough, But Friendly

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"Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provisions for the way: and thus did he unto them." [Genesis 42:25](#).

AN immense number of persons came down into Egypt from all parts of the world to buy corn. Many of these Joseph never saw. Many others came into his presence. I do not find that of all who came, he treated any of them roughly, except his own brothers. "Strange!" you will say, and if you did not know the sequel of the story, it would not only seem strange, but cruel. You would not know how to account for such a thing.

Very like this is the manner of God's Providence. There are thousands of people living in this world, with all of whom God deals according to wisdom. We all bear trouble in a measure, for, "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upwards." Some have more troubles than others and these often happen to be those who are dearest to the Lord. If any man escapes the rod, the true-born children of the royal family of Heaven never can! Some may sin and prosper, but the righteous, if they sin, suffer. The ungodly are permitted to fatten like sheep for the slaughter, to have no bands even in their death. Their strength is firm, they are not in trouble, as other men, neither are they plagued like other men. But as for God's people, the waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. Through much tribulation they inherit the Kingdom. To them is a special promise which is sure to be fulfilled—"In the world you shall have tribulation." Now, if we did not know the end of the Lord and His great design in thus dealing with His people, it would seem to be a strange, inexplicable mystery that the best beloved should be the most afflicted and that the Brothers and Sisters of the reigning Savior should be those whom He treats most roughly. Others take their sacks of corn and go—these, 'tis true, shall have their sacks filled and more—but they shall not go until first there have been some rough passages of arms between them and the Brother, who, though he loves them so well, speaks so shortly to them!

Laying it down, then, as a rule, that God's servants will be dealt roughly with by their Master, that the Brothers and Sisters of Christ must accept it, I shall now proceed to offer a few thoughts, which, perhaps, may be comfortable to those of God's people who are in trouble. From the text and its surroundings, I gather this Truth of God—

I. WHEN THE LORD IS ABOUT TO GIVE GREAT FAVORS, HE OFTEN DEALS ROUGHLY WITH THOSE

WHO ARE TO RECEIVE THEM.

Joseph intends to bless his brothers. He has the most liberal of the royal designs towards them, but he first deals roughly with them. Before the Lord Jesus Christ shall come to give His Church her last and most transcendent blessing in His millennial reign of splendor, there are vials that are to be poured out. There will be wars and rumors of wars. There will be the shaking of Heaven and earth—great distress, famine, pestilences and earthquakes. The greater the blessing, the greater the trial that shall precede it! So, too, with our own souls. When the Lord Jesus Christ intended to save us and to give us a sense of pardon of our sins, He began by convincing us of our iniquity. He dealt heavy blows at our self-righteousness. He laid us in the dust and seemed to roll us in the mire. It seemed as though He delighted to tread upon us and to crush our every hope and destroy every fond expectation! It was all to wean us from self-righteousness, to pull us up by the roots, to prevent our growing and taking fast hold on the earth, to compel us to rest in His blood and righteousness and to seek our soul's life entirely from Him! That great blessing of salvation was, with the most of us, at any rate, preceded by thick clouds and tempests! We were convinced of sin, of self-righteousness, of judgment to come, and our heart trembled! And afterwards, when He had dealt roughly with us, He said, "Your sins, which are many, are all forgiven you: go in peace." It seems, then, our experience is general and common, that the love letters of our Lord Christ

have come to us in black envelopes and there has generally been a thunderstorm preceding a shower of special mercy! The clear shinings have been after the rain. The flood tide has come in most gloriously, but there has first been an ebb. It has always been so with us till now. I think experienced Christians begin to dread their joy and to expect blessings from their sorrows. When things apparently go bad, they know they really go well, and when things apparently go well, we are very apt to fear and tremble for all the good which God makes to pass before us and fear, lest in the dead calm, there may lurk some mischief to our souls.

Why does the Lord deal roughly with His servants when He means to bless them? Is it not to keep them sober? High spiritual joys have about them an intoxicating element to our poor nature. "Lest I should be exalted above measure," said the Apostle, "there was given unto me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me." Sometimes the trial comes before the mercy, sometimes with the mercy, sometimes after the mercy—but a trial and a high degree of spiritual joy are usually wedded together so that when you get the one—you may look out of the window for the other. 'Tis to keep us sober. Here is a brisk gale of spiritual influence upon our fluttering sail. What then? And why? Our poor boat would soon be upset, but God ballasts us with a weight of affliction, so that the vessel may keep steady amidst the waves. Master Brookes gives us a simile in which he shows us the danger there is even in the best and most spiritual enjoyments—he says, "Suppose a man loved his wife so very dearly and gave her so many rings, jewels and earrings, that she prized these and

wore them till she began, by-and-by, to dote upon her ornaments and to forget her husband? You could not blame him if he took these away because he wants her love for himself, not for his gifts." Now, instead of taking away these things, which it would be necessary for Him to do in order to keep us from spiritual ruin, the Lord is pleased to checker our lives. There are the bright stripes, or evidences of Grace, and then there are the black squares of our troubles and afflictions. In that way an equilibrium is kept up—we are balanced—we do not grow top-heavy. And we are enabled to walk safely in the ways of the Lord. That is one reason He speaks roughly and deals graciously, to keep us sober.

Is it not likewise, to keep us humble? When a child of God gets one inch above the ground in his own esteem, he gets an inch too high! Whenever the man of God says, "I am rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing," he is very close to spiritual bankruptcy! None are so rich in Grace as those who pine for more. None are so near to fullness as those who mourn their emptiness—the men who find their fullness not in themselves, but in Christ Jesus the Lord! Brothers and Sisters, those 10 sons of Jacob must have felt their importance evaporate when Joseph put them in prison. Here they were "true men," as they said, "the sons of one man," but no respect is paid to the Patriarch or to their patriarchal descent. They are put in prison as if they were common spies whose fate is generally the most ignoble. Now they begin to think of themselves in a very different light from that in which they did when they set out with their money in their hands to pay for their corn and have their money's worth. They were gentlemen, merchant traders when they entered Egypt, but after awhile they seemed like beggars in their own esteem and better still, they begin to remember their faults! They call to remembrance that they were verily guilty concerning their brother. And the Lord never intends us to ride the high horse in thinking large things of ourselves. One thing I have always noticed as an observer, that whenever any man of God begins to get great, God always makes him smart. I think I have never seen a Brother prospering in the ministry, or anywhere else, who began to be too large for association with his brethren, too good and too holy, perhaps, even to meet with common Christians—such a man has never kept up long—that balloon has come down—that bubble has, before long, gone to pieces. The profession of very extreme holiness has generally ended in the most dolorous iniquity and the professed exaltation of the heart on account of talent and success has generally led to degradation and shame! Hence the Lord, who would not have us exalted above measure, speaks roughly to us to keep us humble, as well as to keep us sober.

Why does He deal roughly with us? Is it not to give us another reason for coming to Him? Jacob's sons might not have come down to Egypt again. They might have said, "We would rather starve than go to be bull-baited by the lord of the land." But when Simeon is in prison they must go down. They have a reason for going and a reason which overcomes them, let them strive against it as they may! And, child of God, when the Lord favors you with His smile and with the light of His Countenance, He takes care at the same time to give

you a trouble that shall compel you to come to the Mercy Seat. Oh, but I think it is a blessed thing to go to the Throne of Grace on an errand! Many pray out of custom, perhaps that is well, but I believe there is no praying like the praying of a man who has got an errand—he who goes to God because he needs, must go because he has something to ask for—and these rough dealings of God keep us well stocked with

motives for being much on our knees, for much pleading with the Father of Mercies that He would deliver us out of affliction and out of temptation—and is not this kindness on our Father's part thus to deal roughly with us that He may compel us to the sweet duty of prayer?

Moreover, Brothers and Sisters, does it not strike you that the Lord's rough dealings with His children, when He intends to bless them, have the effect of making them see how utterly dependent they are for that blessing from Him? Why, Jacob's sons could now see that Joseph could lock them up for life, or take away their lives, or could send them back, if he pleased, with empty sacks to starve! They were entirely in his hands. They had no more power to escape than the dove has from the talons of the hawk. So God would have us know that we are entirely and absolutely in His hands, as the clay in the hand of the potter. If He pleases to withhold His hand, all the world and all Heaven cannot help us! If the Lord did not help you, how shall I help you out of the barn floor, or out of the winepress? That well stopped, all the world is walled up—there are no other bottles that can water you. Child of God, you are as dependant today upon the bounty of Heaven as at your conversion! A babe in Grace is not more dependent upon God than the mature and venerable Christian! Our life is in the hands of Christ. Our breath is in His nostrils. Let the foundations of our lives, either natural or spiritual, be taken away by a cessation of Divine Power and we crumble into spiritual and into physical death! We shall hold on our way, glory be to God, but not from any power that is in us, nor through our own innate strength! These shall melt away and droop and die under the exigencies of our spiritual pilgrimage. It is from the overflowing fountains of inexhaustible strength we must derive our supplies and so hold on to the end. Thus, treating us roughly makes us like bottles in the smoke—we become dry, shriveled up and empty—but still, it leads us to see how much the Lord can do for us. Being brought into need, it shows that all that is done, is done of His mercy and His sovereignty—not of our merit, nor through any concurrent help from us—but altogether, utterly and alone of Him!

Now, child of God, let me put this point to you very plainly. Without saying anything further, are you in very deep trouble tonight? Do all God's waves and billows go over you? Does deep call unto deep at the noise of His waterspouts? Then expect that now some great blessing will come of it! That stone on the lapidary's wheel has been cut, and cut, and cut again. That other stone in the corner of the shop is but a common pebble and he never vexes it upon the wheel, for it is worthless. But the more precious the stone is in His esteem, the more diligently does He cut its facets. You are dear to God. Therefore is it that He tries you

again and again, but good shall come of it and you shall blaze and sparkle, and glitter with Divine Grace which would have been otherwise unknown to you! Your tribulation shall work patience in you, and patience shall work experience, and experience hope, and hope shall make you not to be ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in you. You are trading in a profitable market! There is no usury so heavy as the interest of affliction. The black ships of trouble come home laden with pearls of Grace. Therefore, be of good cheer. Take the rough usage from your Brother Joseph—you must and will prevail! But I must change the tune. Our next observation upon the text is that while the Lord deals roughly with His servants—

II. HE USUALLY GIVES THEM AT THE SAME TIME PROVISION BY THE WAY so that they may be enabled

to bear His roughness and to endure all the difficulties through which they are called to pass.

You observe Joseph had put Simeon in prison and had treated his other brothers very roughly, yet he gave them their sacks full of corn and put money into the mouths of their sacks. And then, as a third blessing, he gave them provisions for the way. Never does a child of God pass through trial without some special provision being made for him during his time of need.

But what provision is this? Why, dear Brothers and Sisters, there are different provisions according to different needs! Sometimes the child of God under trial has a wonderful sense of Divine Love. "Oh, how He loves me," he says. There comes stroke after stroke—husband dies, child is buried, the property is wasted—yet the dear child says, "I cannot weep or repine, for I feel God loves me. I know not how it is, but I feel it so fresh and strong upon my soul and I have such a wonderful impression of that dear love of His, that it quite overcomes my sorrows and takes the edge off my grief." And, let me say, there is nothing that under trial can support a soul so well as the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit, which is given unto us! To know that my Father sees it all and orders all in love—in special love to me—oh, this makes the back strong enough to bear a very world of trouble and yet not to be wearied!

At other times God's servants have been fed on a joyous view of the Covenant of Grace. I have known some who in their trouble have come to understand the deep doctrines of the Word of God as they never understood them before and could then say with David, "Although my house is not so with God, yet has He made with me an Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure." And as they look to the provisions of that Covenant, to the sureness of the Covenant, to the blessings of the Covenant, to the everlasting nature of the Covenant, their souls have been so ravished and transported with joy that they could beat poverty, or pain, or whatever form of roughness their heavenly Joseph might choose to put upon them!

Others of the Lord's people have been sustained in their trouble by a delightful outlook to the end of their sorrows and the better land on the other side of Jordan. Oh, there have been saints upon sick beds who have scarcely felt the torture of their pain or their disease, through the excess of bliss they have enjoyed in foretastes of the better land! Martyrs have been heard to call the fiery branches a bed of roses! And sometimes it has been almost questionable whether they suffered or not! The bodily pain must have been there, but the wonderful excitement of sacred joy in the thought that they were so soon to be with Christ and that their burning pile was but a chariot of fire to bear them to their Beloved has lifted them up above the tormenting sensation! They have been treated roughly, but they have had such provision by the way that they forgot the roughness as they rejoiced with unspeakable joy and full of glory! Well may the traveler trip over a rough road when his home is so near before him—the glittering spires of the new Jerusalem, the everlasting rest, the sweet fields arrayed in living green, the rivers of delight—

"Oh, could we stand where Moses stood,

And view the landscape o'er—

Not Jordan's stream nor death's cold flood

Should fright us from the shore." Roughly treat us as You will, good Lord, if we have this money in our sack's mouth and this provision by the way, we will be well content!

The Lord sometimes sustains His people under His own roughness by the recollection of their past experiences. "My God, my soul is cast down within me; therefore will I remember You from Hermon and from the hill Mizar." The faithfulness of God in the past has been so vividly remembered that the child of God could not dare to doubt! The evidence of God's love was so strong, vehement and fresh in his soul that he cried, "Though He slays me, yet will I trust in Him; let Him do what He will to me, yet do I know that in very faithfulness He has afflicted me." He could hear these silver bells, thousands of them, all around, above, below, beneath—ringing out this tune—

"For His mercy shall endure, Ever faithful, ever sure."

Oh, let the Hell drum be beaten as loudly as the devil can beat it and let affliction come from Heaven, earth and Hell all at once—as long as we know that God's mercy endures forever, our mouth shall be filled with laughter and we shall boast in the name of the Lord!

The saints of God have also had this provision by the way. In their sufferings they have enjoyed a sight of the greater sufferings of Christ—

"Why should I complain of want or distress,

Temptation or pain? He told me no less.

The heirs of salvation, I know from His Word,

Through much tribulation must follow their Lord.

How bitter that cup, no heart can conceive,

Which He drank quite up that sinners might live!

His way was much rougher and darker than mine—

Did Christ my Lord suffer, and shall I repine?" A sight of the steps of the Crucified One has often checked the tears which have been flowing, while the enraptured child of God would stand and sing in holy wonder—

"Christ leads me through no darker rooms

Than He went through before—

He that into this Kingdom comes

Must enter by this door."

Thus I might continue to show what kind of provision it is that the Lord gives by the way, but the time fails me. Indeed, for me to tell you of it has nothing to do with receiving it. Oh, child of God, let me rather put it close to you and

may the Holy Spirit comfort you with it! You shall never be sent on a journey without provender and you shall never have to go to battle at your own charges. If the Lord tries you, it shall never be above what you are able to bear, for He will, with the temptation, make a way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. He may treat you roughly, but He will fill your sack. He may speak sharp words, but He will put your money into your sack's mouth. He may take your Simeon and bind him before your eyes, but He will give you provision by the way till you get to the goodly land where you shall need no more provision and the Lamb shall be forever with you—and you with Him! The third lesson which we draw from this is that though sometimes the Lord treats His people roughly, more roughly than He does any other people, yet—

III. HE GIVES THEM THE BEST OF THE BARGAIN IN THE LONG RUN.

These, his brothers, were the only ones Joseph spoke roughly to, but they were the only ones upon whose necks he afterwards fell and wept. They were the only ones that made the tears come into his eyes. They were the only ones of whom he said, "I will preserve you alive." They were the only ones for whom he sent the wagons to bring them down, saying, "Regard not your stuff, for the whole land of Egypt is yours." They were the only ones whom he brought in before Pharaoh and said, "Behold my father and my brothers." They were highly favored and they dwelt in the land of Goshen and they had rest. Child of God, you will have the best of it soon! Even now you are the only ones that Christ deigns to call His Brothers and Sisters. You are the only people of whom it is written that you are a people dear to Him. You are the only people for whom Christ prayed, for He said, "I pray not for the world, but for those whom You have given Me out of the world, that they may be one." You are the people for whom all things work together for good. As many of you as have believed in the Lord Jesus and are resting upon Him for salvation, though your path may be rough and thorny, you are the only people who have God, Himself, to be your Captain, who have His fiery cloudy pillar to be your direction and who shall have the everlasting rest, the eternal portion! Be of good courage. Your riches in reversion are such that you can smile

at poverty. Your rest which is yet to come is such that you may well despise the labor which makes you eat your bread in the sweat of your face. Your glory which is to come so excels that you may forget your poverty and your reproach. Your being with Christ will be so superlatively, Divinely blessed, that you may well, for awhile, bear to have a rough word or two from Him—

"Forever with the Lord! Amen, so let it be!"

When it shall be so, when you are forever with the Lord, if you could be ashamed, you would be ashamed and confounded to think that you ever murmured, or ever entertained a thought of complaint against the kind and gracious God who ordered all things for the best for you to promote your profit and His Glory! May that thought cheer you, you who are depressed and cast down—and may you go on your way rejoicing!

As for such as have never trusted Christ, it often makes my heart bleed when I talk of these things, to think that I cannot speak to them, that I cannot tell them that these comfortable things are theirs. Oh, unbeliever, you are an alien and a stranger to the privileges of heavenly citizenship! For you there is no blessedness, either now or hereafter! Why will you remain an unbeliever? Why will you continue to be careless and godless, Christless? I trust the Lord has designs of love to you. Leave your sins, for you must either leave them or be lost! Trust the Savior. Rely wholly upon His blood and righteousness, for there is no other righteousness that can ever help you. But if you cast your soul upon Him, it shall be well with you forever! God grant that we may all be found in the day of the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, as Brothers and Sisters who are in allegiance to Him. So may it be with you all. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: MATHEW 7:13-29; 15:1-12.

Verse 13. Enter you in at the strait gate. It is very unpopular. The great ones will recommend to you great liberality and breadth. But enter yet in at the strait gate.

13. For wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many there are which go in there. That is a rule that is very unfashionable in these times, but depend upon it, the Lord who gave it to us, meant it for all times. That which seems narrow, which costs you self-denial—that which is contrary to the will of the flesh—that which does

not seem to charm the eye and fascinate the senses—go after that! "Enter you in at the strait gate." You will not be likely to err much, or too much on that side. Let this be a gauge to you. That kind of preaching which allows you to indulge in sin—that sort of teaching which lowers the standard of God's Word for you and makes you think more of your own judgment than of the teachings of Christ—away with it! Let others have it if they like. "Enter you in at the strait gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many there are which go in there."

14. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leads unto life, and few there are that find it It is still so. Indeed, none find it unless Grace finds them! He who made that

gate must go after the wandering sheep and bring them through that gate. They will never choose it of themselves.

15. Beware of false prophets. Some honor and esteem all prophets. "Is not it a very high office? Is not a prophet a man sent from God?" Yes, and no! For the very reason there are counterfeits whom God has never sent. Beware of false prophets.

15. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. They look just like sheep. They look just like shepherds, but it is only their clothing. The mere hypocrite is the goat in sheep's clothing. But a false prophet is a wolf in sheep's clothing because he can do so much more harm—and will do so much more damage to the Church of God!

16. You shall know them by their fruits. They are sure to come out in their actions. If you have not got the knowledge of theology and the like, to be able to judge their teaching, yet the simplest persons can judge their actions "You shall know them by their fruits," which are sure to come out sooner or later.

16. Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? Did you ever find a cluster of grapes growing upon a thorn bush? Grapes and figs are pleasant fruit, and holy living, true devotion, communion with God—these are the things that are sweet to God and to good men. But they come not of false doctrine. They are not seen in false prophets. Such prophets despise such things as these. They are for worldly ways and places of worldly gaiety they can frequent. Not so the servants of God!

17-19. Even so, every good tree brings forth good fruit: but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. That is what comes of it in the end. It may spread itself abroad and may gather much admiration to itself for its verdure, but there is an axe being sharpened and a fire being kindled!

20. Therefore by their fruits you shall know them. You cannot judge them by their bark or by the spread of their branches, or by the verdure of their leaves, or even by the beauty of their blossoms in springtime. "By their fruits you shall know them." The Savior here gives us a very earnest and very necessary warning, lest we should be deceived, for there are such who are not only deceived by their own sins, but deceived by false prophets who are among Satan's best agents!

21. Not everyone that says unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. They were very sound in Doctrine. They called Jesus, "Lord." They believed in His Deity. Apparently they were very devout. They said, "Lord." They worshipped Him. They were very importunate and earnest. They said, "Lord, Lord," crying to Him again and again. But "not everyone that says unto Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." External utterances, however orthodox—professions, however sound, are not enough!

21. But he that does the will of My Father which is in Heaven. Oh, dear Friends, there must be holiness in us, for without holiness no man can see the Lord! It is not knowing the will of the heavenly Father, but doing it which is the mark of Divine Election. If God's Grace has really entered into us, we, like the Prophets, shall be known by our fruits! But if we are not doing the will of our Father who is in Heaven, we shall not come to the Heaven where He is!

22. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name? Yes, so did Balsam. Was not King Saul also among the Prophets, and yet neither Balsam nor Saul was accepted of God, but they were castaways! "Have we not prophesied in Your name?" A man may be a preacher and an eloquent preacher, and he may even have some blessing upon his preaching—and yet be cast away forever!

22. And in Your name have cast out devils? Yes, and there was one that cast out devils and he was a devil, himself, namely, Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. He went out and worked miracles in the name of Christ—and then sold Christ for 30 pieces of silver!

22. And in Your name done many wonderful works? Yes, and we may do many wonderful works and yet be wonderfully deceived! It is not wonderful works—it is holy works! Not works that amaze men, but works that please God, which are the proof of Grace in the soul. Well, there will be some who will be able to say that they prophesied—that they cast out devils—that they did wonders.

23. And then, will I say unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, you that work iniquity. "I was never acquainted with you. I never had anything to do with you. I was never on speaking terms with you. You never had any fellowship with Me. I never had any fellowship with you. Your motives and designs were very different from Mine. I never knew you." If Christ once knows a man, He will never forget him. But He says, "I never knew you. Depart from Me, you that work iniquity. Get you gone—you are none of Mine." Oh, that we might never hear that dreadful sentence pronounced upon us in the day when Christ shall come! And yet we may be preachers! We may be wonderworkers! We may be famous in the visible Church of Christ and yet, He may say, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you that work iniquity." These are solemn thoughts. Let them sink into your hearts.

24. Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him unto a wise man who built his house upon a rock. It was the doing of those sayings that was the building on the rock. You may hear and only increase your condemnation—but to do what you hear is to have a good foundation! This man built his house upon a rock. He was not, therefore, free from troubles. Oh, no!

25. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house. Wherever you build, troubles will reach you—and if you are a child of God you are sure to have troubles! "A Christian is seldom long at ease." The road to Heaven is usually a rough one and there are thieves, lions, giants, and all sorts of enemies on that road. It was

a house built on a rock. But the rain descended, the floods came and the wind blew and beat upon that house.

25. And it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock Is not that glorious? "And it fell not." Then the more rain, the more flood and the more wind, the more was the house praised for its good foundation and for its stability. "It fell not, for it was founded upon a rock." Oh, if God has made us holy in life so that we are doing what Christ preaches, especially this Sermon on the Mount, of which this is the close, then we need not fear all the troubles of life or death, for it shall be said, "It falls not, for it was founded upon a rock!"

26-27. And everyone that hears these sayings of Mine and does them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew. For fools get into trouble, too! However big a fool you may be, you will have big troubles all the same for that. "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked." Houses built on sand must still be tried. "And the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds

blew."

27. And beat upon that house and it fell: and great was the fall of it For it could never be set up again! It was down once and for all. A man may fail in life and yet commence again and succeed. But once a bankrupt with your soul and you are broken forever! "It fell and great was the fall of it." Do not believe those who tell you that to lose your soul is a small affair which will be made right, by-and-by, by either annihilation or restoration. It is all a ruinous lie! This is the Truth of God concerning it—"It fell, and great was the fall of it."

28, 29. And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at His Doctrine. For He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. He did not quote this learned Rabbi and that—or propose this theory to their thoughtful consideration—He spoke the Truth of God and left the Truth to work its way upon the minds of men, knowing that many would reject it, for it would be a savor of death unto death to them—but knowing, also, that some would receive it, whom He had ordained unto eternal life, to whom it would be a savor of life unto life. Let us copy our Divine Master's example and speak boldly as we ought to speak.

MATTHEW 15:1-12.

Verses 1, 2. Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread. A very amazing omission, certainly! But it seems to have struck them as a very great crime. "They wash not their hands when they eat bread"—as if the commands of God were not enough—men must overload us with their own commands, and sometimes the very people who would see us break God's commands without being at all distressed are dreadfully shocked if we do not keep theirs, showing clearly that they have a higher estimate of themselves than they have of God!

3-6. But He answered and said unto them, Why do you also transgress the Commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honor your father and mother and, He that curses father or mother, let him die the death. But you say, Whoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift by whatever you might be profited by me, and honor not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have you made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. The cant said, "I cannot give you any help. I have vowed to give it as a subscription to the synagogue, or to the temple, therefore I cannot give it to you," and if he could plead that he had given it as a gift in the form of a religious offering, he was exempted from assisting his own parents. "Well," said Christ, "you do by this make the commandment of God of no effect." "You hypocrites"—our Savior is the most gentle of men, but how plainly does He talk—and how honestly does He denounce everything like hypocrisy!

7-9. You hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people draws near unto Me with their mouth and honors Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me. But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. Now, may God save us from these two faults! The first is that of being content with the outside worship of God. Unless our very hearts worship, there is nothing whatever in the outward performance of religious rites or religious worship! Indeed, it is hypocrisy to draw near to God with the lips and knees when the heart is not there. The next evil to be dreaded is teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. Whatever is not plainly taught in Scripture is of no binding force upon any conscience! And it is evil to invent rites and ceremonies which are not taught in Holy Scripture. We must mind what we are doing! If we have not the plain warrant of Christ's command for our teachings and our doings, we shall rather vex the Spirit of God than honor Him. Whatever our intention may be, we have not any right to worship God otherwise than according to His own mind. If we do, it will not be worship and not acceptable with Him.

10, 11. And He called the multitude and said unto them, Hear, and understand. Not that which goes into the mouth defiles a man; but that which comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man. "And He called the multitude and said unto them—"Not that which goes into the mouth defiles a man"—not that which he eats and drinks, "but that which comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man." That is—what he says—that is the point.

12. Then came His disciples, and said unto Him, Know You that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? Some very kind friends are very jealous of the preacher lest he should offend anybody—and they will come in all tenderness of spirit and say, "Know you that the Pharisees were offended after they heard this saying?"