

Words of Expostulation

by C.H. Spurgeon

The sermon 'Words of Expostulation' by C.H. Spurgeon challenges Christians to examine their relationship with sin and to seek to live a life of obedience to God.

Duration: 42:14

Scripture: Exodus 14:12, Psalm 42:1, Isaiah 30:1, Jeremiah 18:15, Romans 2:15, Ephesians 4:30, Hebrews 10:29

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Heart Transformation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by describing a vision of a great feast where armies have met and there has been a terrible slaughter. He relates this vision to the spiritual battle between sin and righteousness. The preacher then shares his personal experience of being a captive to sin and the bitterness he felt under the law. He also acknowledges the struggles and desperation that many in the audience may have faced in their own journey towards salvation. The sermon concludes with a call to self-examination and a plea for the Holy Spirit to convict and transform the hearts of the listeners.

Transcript

The Prince of Preachers Charles Haddon Spurgeon has been called England's greatest contribution to the spread of the gospel in the 19th century. One of his contemporaries said that the chief secret of Spurgeon's attractiveness was the fact that in every sermon, no matter what the text or the occasion, he explained the way of salvation in simple terms. Spurgeon's messages remain one of the great treasure houses of Christian literature, still bringing the light of the gospel and the comfort of the scriptures to hungry souls long after the preacher has passed into glory.

This is Charles Kelch inviting you to listen to a message from the Prince of Preachers. C. H. Spurgeon preached this message on January 20th, 1861 at the Exeter Hall. It is entitled, Words of Expostulation.

The text is in Jeremiah chapter 2 and verse 18. And now, what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihur? Or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river? The Jews had been chosen by God to be a special people, separated to Himself forever. By sundry miracles, by divers mercies, by strange deliverances, He had proved Himself to be to them a God worthy of their trust.

Yet, strange to say, and yet not strange when we know that they were fallen men like ourselves, the Jews were constantly desirous to mix with the nations. They broke down the hedges with which God had

enclosed them as a sacred garden. They desired to be like common lands and to be joined with other peoples.

Nay, more than this, they forsook their own true and loving God who had never deserted them, and they adopted sometimes the deities of Egypt and at other times the false gods of Assyria. They seemed never to be content even with the gorgeous ceremonials of their own temple. They must need to build altars after the fashion of Damascus.

They must have altars on every high place according to the custom of the accursed nations whom the Lord their God had driven out before them. And they seemed as if they had never reached the full desire of their hearts till they had mingled with the rites of God all the filth and the abominations with which the heathens adored their gods. Constantly did the Lord reprove them for this.

For this infatuation of theirs which made them turn aside from Him the living water to hew out themselves broken cisterns which could hold no water. They were often reprov'd, but they often hardened their necks. Often were they chastened, and they were smitten so often that the whole head was sick and the whole heart was faint.

They had been chastened so sorely that from the sole of their foot even to the head they were full of wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. Yet they still went after evil. Still they turned aside from the righteous and true God.

Our text contains one instance of God's expostulating with His people. He says to them, What hast thou to do in the way of Egypt to drink the waters of the muddy river? For so it may be translated. And, of course, that term is applied to the Nile by way of contempt.

Why needest thou to go drink of that muddy river? Or what hast thou to do with Assyria to drink the waters of Euphrates? Why dost thou turn aside and leave thine own cool streams of Lebanon? Why dost thou forsake Jerusalem to turn aside to Naph and to Toppenese? Why art thou so strangely set on mischief, that thou canst not be content with the good and healthful, but wouldst even follow after that which is evil and deceitful? Taking the text just as it stands, I intend, by God's help, to make a question of it to you. To myself and to you may God the Holy Ghost apply it. And may this be a time to all God's people, to every convinced soul, yea, and to the careless too, a time of searching of heart.

May God question us, and may we be prepared honestly to answer. May the Holy Spirit push home the solemn inquiries, and may we with truthful heart search and look, and give earnest heed thereunto. I shall apply the text to three characters.

First, to the Christian. Secondly, to the awakened conscience. And thirdly, to the careless sinner.

My sermon is not intended to instruct your minds, but to stir up your hearts. Addressing myself to the Christian, I shall use the text in three senses, while I expostulate with you in regard to sin, to worldly pleasure, and to carnal trust. And first, O true believer, called by grace and washed in the precious blood of Christ, what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of the muddy river? What hast thou to do with the sins which once delighted thee, and which now find happy pastime for the world? What hast thou to do with thy deceitful lusts, with the indulgence of thine old passions? What hast thou to do to follow the multitude which do evil? Believer, answer these questions, especially if thou hast lately fallen into sin, if thou hast backslidden in heart, and if thou hast been led to backslide in thy ways.

Answer me. What hast thou to do? What excuse hast thou for what thou hast done? Do you see yonder a gang of men, dragging, like so many beasts of burden, a tremendous load? Hark to the cracking of the whip of the overseer! Do you see how they pull and strain, till it seems as if their every sinew would snap? Do you observe them as the hot sweat stands upon their brow? Look at them. Let the gang stay a while, while we examine.

I can understand why all these are oppressed with sore labor, for I can see the brand of the slave owner upon their backs. Their flesh is scarred. But what meaneth this? There is one among them who is not a slave, a man who is free.

What meaneth this? How is it that he doeth the slave's work, that he bends his back to the taskmaster's yoke when he is a free man? Can you answer the question? Let me ask it in your own case. I see the sinner burdened in the evils of his way. I see him pulling iniquity as though it were with a cart-rope, laying hold with both of his hands everything that is full of iniquity.

But what hast thou to do there? The slaves of Satan are but acting out their condition. But what hast thou to do to be his slave, since thou hast been redeemed with blood and set free by power? Why, man, thou art no slave now. Thou art a son of God.

Thou art an heir of all things. Thou art joint heir with Christ. What hast thou to do, then, in the service of sin and of Satan? Why dost thou follow these menial tasks? They ill become a man who is to wear a crown in heaven and who even now can read his title to it.

Answer, Christian, and be ashamed and be confounded, because thou art demeaning thyself in thus sinning against thine own soul. A vision flits before my eye. The Lord God hath made a great feast.

Armies have met together. Terrible slaughter has been the consequence. Men's arms have been read up to the very elbow in blood.

They have fought with each other, and there they lay strewn upon the plain, thousands of carcasses bleeding. The vultures sniff the prey from far-off desert wilds. They fly, keen of scent.

God hath made a great feast to the fowls of heaven and to the ravenous beasts of the earth. Hark to the whirring of their wings as they come in multitudes, for where the body is thither shall the eagles be gathered together. But what is that I see? I see a dove flying with the same speed as the vulture towards the carrion.

O dove, what hath brought thee there in dangerous connection with thy fierce enemies? Whither art thou going? Is there anything in that bloody feast that can content thee? Shall thy meek eyes glare with the fires of anger? Shall thy fair white plumage be stained with gore? And wilt thou go back to thy dovecock with thy pinions bloody red? I appeal to you, my hearers. Can ye answer the question? Can ye explain the strange vision? How is it, then, that I see you, Christian, going with sinners after evil? Is it your food? If you are a child of God, sin is no more food for you than is blood for doves. If you have been begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, your peaceful soul will be as much out of its element as a dove upon a battlefield.

And the sight, the sight of sin, will be as horrible to you as the sight of slaughter to that timid dove, which even now hides itself with rapid wings to the cleft of the rock. Christian, I say, if thou doest as a whirling doeth, thou dost go against thy nature, against thy newborn nature. To him it is not strange.

Should not the swine eat husks? Is it not his proper food? Should not the sinner love to sin? Is it not his very element? But what hast thou to do? What hast thou to do, quickened of the spirit and renewed in the image of Christ? What hast thou to do? You have seen in Scripture a dreadful picture of a madman, where Nebuchadnezzar the king runs with oxen and eats grass till his hair is grown like eagle's feathers and his nails like bird's claws. Is he not the pitiful picture of a backslider? For what is a Christian when he plunges into sin, but is one who makes himself like the beast that perish and who herds with the common yea and the unclean beast of the earth? O believer, if it be a pitiful thing to see a man make himself a beast, how much more lamentable to see a Christian make himself a worldling. Come ye out from among them.

Touch not the unclean thing. Why should the soul of my turtle dove be given to its enemies? Why should the lamb flock with the wolves? Come out, I pray thee. Leave this stige and filth, and be thou clean, thou vessel-bearer of the Lord.

Come forth from the midst of that plague land, where thou canst get nothing but the ashy hue of leprosy, and be thou clean. Today the Lord invites thee. Refuse not His invitation, but return, ye backsliding children of men.

The question then cannot be answered, because when a Christian goes into sin, he commits an inconsistent act, inconsistent with the freedom which Christ has bought for him, and inconsistent with the nature which the Holy Spirit has implanted in him. Let us press forward. Christian, what hast thou to do with sin? Hath it not cost thee enough already? What man, hast thou forgotten the times of thy conviction? If thou hast, my brother, I have not.

At the very mention of that word, I think I hear my chains rattling in you. Was there ever a bond-slave who had more bitterness of soul than I? Five years a captive in the dungeons of the law, till my youth seemed as if it would turn into premature old age, and all the buoyancy of my spirit had been removed. O God of the spirits of all men, most of all ought I to hate sin, for surely most of all have I smarted beneath the lash of thy law.

And as I look round, knowing the experience of some of you, I can recall to my mind the stories you have told me, how when in this hall you first felt your need of a Saviour, you could not endure yourselves. Ah, there are those among you who, when you were under strong convictions of sin, were ready to commit self-destruction. You prayed, but found no answer.

You sought, but obtained no mercy. There were not creatures out of hell more wretched than you were. What? And will you go back to the old curse? Burnt child, wilt thou play with the fire? What man, when thou hast already been rent in pieces with the lion, wilt thou step a second time into his den? Hast thou not had enough of the old serpent? Did he not poison all thy veins once? And wilt thou play upon the hole of the asp, and put thy hand upon the cockatrice den? Hast thou not seen enough of the leopards and of the dragons? And wilt thou step a second time into their dens? O be not so mad! Be not so foolish! Did sin ever give thee pleasure? Didst thou ever find any solid satisfaction in it? If so, go back to thine old drudgery.

Go back, I say, and wear the chain again if it divides thee. But inasmuch as I know and thou knowest that sin did never give thee what it promised to bestow, inasmuch as it did delude thee with lies and flatter thee with promises which were all to be broken, I pray thee, be not beguiled a second time. Be not a second time led into captivity.

Be free, and let the remembrance of thy ancient bondage forbid thee wear the chain again. There is yet another light in which to put the sin of the believer. Let me repeat the question once again.

What hast thou to do in the way of Egypt to drink the waters of the muddy river? There is a crowd yonder. They have evidently assembled for some riotous purpose. They are attacking one man.

There are very many of them. Oh, how they howl, how they yell! They give him no space to take his breath, no time to rest. Let me press through the throng and look at the man.

I know him at once. He hath a visage more marred than that of any other man. Tis he.

It is the crucified one. It is none other than Jesus, the Son of Man, the Savior of the world. Hark to the blasphemies which are poured into his ears.

See how they spit in his face and put him to an open shame. Onward they bring him, and you hear them cry, Crucify him, crucify him, crucify him! They are doing it. They have nailed him to the tree.

Yonder is the man with a hammer in his hand who has just now driven in the nail. Look round upon the mob. I can well comprehend why yonder drunkard, why yonder swearer, why the whoremonger and the like of infamous notoriety should have joined in this treacherous murder.

But there is one man there. Methinks I know his face. Ay, I have seen him at the sacramental table, eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ.

I have seen him in the pulpit, saying, God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. I have seen him on his knees in prayer, pleading what he called the precious blood. What hast thou to do in this council of the ungodly, this scene of sin without a parallel? What doest thou here, Elijah? In the name of love's own self and of every holy thing that can ever pertain to a human heart, what doest thou here? Are ye second at heart at such a spectacle? A Christian crucifying Christ? That spectacle is one in which you have had a share.

You too, when you have backslidden and have sinned, you have crucified the Lord afresh and put him to an open shame. Is there any other picture needed to set my text in the very strongest light? What hast thou to do, O Christian, in the way of Egypt, to drink the water of the muddy river? Cry revenge against thyself, because thou shouldst have murdered thy Lord and opened his wounds anew. Have patience with me a moment while I turn my question over and revolve it yet again.

Believer, thou hast rebelled against thy God. Thou hast done despise unto his Spirit. How wilt thou answer for this? What wilt thou say to a scoffing world when the quick eye of the sinner shall detect thee? What wilt thou say when he hisses out, There's your religion! How wilt thou answer him? Thou mayest pretend to do so, but dost thou not feel that he will get the best of the argument? If he goeth his way and saith the religion of Christ is a lie and an hypocrisy, what wilt thou have to say? Surely thou wilt have to hide thy face in confusion and bemoan thyself, because by this act thou hast given the enemy cause to blaspheme.

And what wilt thou say to Christ's church when the church shall say to thee, What doest thou here? How wilt thou excuse thyself for dishonest acts in business or for any lust into which thou hast fallen? Wilt thou tell the church it was thy old nature? But how wilt thou answer when the church shall say, They that are in Christ have crucified the flesh and its affections and lusts? More than this, how wilt thou answer thine own

conscience? Wilt thou use some antinomian quibble and apply that as a plaster to thy wounds? No. If thou art a child of God, thou wilt have to smart for it. The waters of the muddy river may be sweet to the Egyptians, but they will be bitter to thee.

Thou shalt have, as it were, a cauldron in thy bowels if thou dost drink thereof. Christians can never sin cheaply. They pay a heavy price for all the pleasures that they ever find in evil.

And what wilt thou say to thy lord and master next time thou art at the sacramental table? How wilt thou dare to eat that bread and drink that wine? And when thou art alone on thy knees and seeking fellowship with him, how wilt thou dare to seek it when thou hast just now been following his enemies and imitating them that hate him? Wilt thou say unto him, Come unto me, my spouse, from the top of Lebanon, from Ammanah? Ah, well may he say to thee, I have withdrawn myself, I have gone, for thou hast grieved my spirit and vexed my soul. Believer, if Jesus Christ were here, what wouldst thou say to make an excuse for thy sin? Surely thou wouldst be speechless as the dumb and silent as the grave. Thy tears might make confession, thy shudders should bespeak thy guilt, but thy lips could not make an apology.

What hast thou to do, O Christian, in the way of evil? What doest thou here, O God's Elijah? I do not know whether there are any Christians here who have fallen into any special sin during this last week. If there be, brother, open your heart to this question. It may be my master has sent me to you to nip your sin in its bud, to bring you back before you have backslidden very much.

Turn thee, my brother. He has not forgotten his love to thee. Turn thee.

His grace is still the same. With weeping and with bitter lamentation come thou to his footstool, and thou shalt be once more received into his heart, and thou shalt be set upon a rock again, and thy goings shall be established. To take a different view of the subject, the pleasures of this world do sometimes entice the people of God, and they find some degree of mirth therein.

To those Christians who can find pleasure in the common amusements of men, this question may be very pertinently put. What hast thou to do to drink the water of that muddy river? I may be speaking to some believers who try, if they can, to keep their conscience quiet while they frequent places of amusement. They lend their sanction to things which are not spiritual, and sometimes even not moral.

Now I put this question to them. Christian, thou hast tasted a better drink than the muddy river of this world's pleasure can give thee. If thy profession be not a lie, thou hast had fellowship with Christ.

Thou hast had that joy which only the blessed spirits above and the chosen ones on earth can know, the joy of seeing Christ and leaning thine head upon his bosom. And do the trifles, the songs, the music, the merriment of this earth content thee after that? Hast thou eaten the bread of angels, and canst thou live on husks? Good Rutherford once said, I have tasted of Christ's own manna, and it hath put my mouth out of taste for the brown bread of this world's joys. Methinks it should be so with thee.

Again, believer, hast thou not already learned the hollowness of all earth's mirth? Turn to thy neighbor and ask him. Does he frequent the playhouse? Does he go from one party of pleasure to another? Does he indulge in the common pleasures of the world? Ask him whether they have ever satisfied him. If he be a worldling and be honest, he will say, No.

He will tell thee that his soul pants after something better than fashion and dissipation can afford him. He will tell thee, too, that he hath drained that cup, and it is not the wine which he thought it was, that it excites

for the moment, but leaves him weak and miserable afterwards. And I say, what wise men, according to the discretion of this world, cast away? Shall the yet wiser man, the Christian, made to salvation wise, lay hold upon? What? Shall the pairings and offals of this world's joys suit the air of heaven? You who profess to be of nobler birth than to be brother to the angels, nay, next akin to the eternal God Himself, are you to wallow in this mire and think it a soft and downy couch fit for a royal resting place? Get thee up, believer! Thou art not lost to every sense of shame.

Betray not thyself in seeking satisfaction wherein worldlings confess that they have never found it. But let me ask thee, will these pleasures yield to thee any helps in thy growth and grace? Thou sayest the world is crucified unto thee. Will these pleasures help to crucify it? Thou hast prayed that thou mayest be made like Christ.

Will these things help to conform thee to His image? Often dost thou cry, O Spirit of God, purge out the old leaven from me. Will these help to purge out the old leaven? Unless thou wilt fling the lie into the face of all thy prayers, I pray thee, shun these things. Fly at higher gain than this.

Let the mere hawk fly at the sparrow. But the eagle needs something nobler to be the object of its chase. If ye were of the world, it would be right for you to love her.

If she were your mother, ye might suck. But even then ye should not be satisfied with the breast of her consolation. But ye confess that not this world, but the next, is the mother of your soul.

I pray you, then, be not content with what this world yields, but lift up your eyes and expect your manna to spring not from the earth, but from heaven, and may it drop into your hands. I can never understand that Christianity which alternately goes out to find joy in worldly amusement and returns home to have fellowship with Christ. In the life of Madame Guillaume, who, though professedly a papist, one must ever receive as being a true child of God, I have read an anecdote something to this effect.

She had been invited by some friends to spend a few days at the palace of Saint-Cloud. She knew it was a place full of pomp and fashion and, I must add, of vice also. But being over-persuaded by her friend and being especially tempted with the idea that perhaps her example might do good, she accepted the invitation.

Her experience afterwards should be a warning to all Christians. For some years that holy woman had walked in constant fellowship with Christ. Perhaps none ever saw the Saviour's face and kissed His wounds more truly than she had done.

But when she came home from Saint-Cloud, she found her usual joy was departed. She had lost her power in prayer. She could not draw near to Christ as she should have done.

She felt in going to the lover of her soul as if she had played the harlot against Him. She was afraid to hope that she could be received again to His pure and perfect love, and it took some months ere the equilibrium of her peace could be restored and her heart could yet again be wholly set upon her Lord. He that wears a white garment must mind where he walks when the world's streets are so filthy as they are.

He that hath a thousand enemies must take care how he expose himself. He who hath nothing on earth to assist him towards heaven should take care that he goeth not where the earth can help towards hell. O believer, shun, I pray thee, fellowship with this world, for the love of this world is enmity against God.

Now some will say that I am an ascetic and wish you to become Puritans. I wish we were Puritans most certainly, but I am no ascetic. I believe the Christian man ought to be the happiest man in the world, and I believe he is too.

But I know that this world does not make him happy. It is the next world. I say that the believer has a more sure and certain right to be a happy and a cheerful man than any other man.

But if in this world only we had hope, we should be of all men the most miserable, because this world yields no joy to us. For one minute I shall now take my text with regard to the Christian in a third sense. We are all tried with the temptation to put our trust in things which are seen instead of things which are not seen.

The Lord hath said it, Cursed is he that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm, but blessed is he that trusteth in the Lord. Yet Christians often do trust in man. And then our text comes home.

What hast thou to do in the way of Egypt to drink the water of that muddy river? Some trust in horses and some in chariots, but we will stay ourselves upon the Lord God of Israel. Look at yonder believer. He trusts in Christ and only in Christ for his salvation, and yet he is fretted and worried, even though this be the day of rest, about something in his business.

Why are you troubled, Christian? Because of this great care, saith he. Care? Hast thou care? I thought it was written, Cast thy burden upon the Lord. Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication make known your wants unto God.

Cannot you trust God for temporals? Ah, says the believer, I wish I could. Believer, if thou canst not trust God for temporals, how darest thou trust Him for spirituals? Surely if He be worthy to be trusted with eternity, He must be fit to be relied upon in time. Can you trust Him for your soul's redemption and yet not rely upon Him for a few paltry pounds? Then what are you trusting in? Oh, I wish I had a good friend, says one.

I wish I had someone at my back to help me. Indeed, sir. What hast thou to do to go in the way of Egypt to want a drink of that water? Is not God enough? Dost thou want another eye besides that of Him who sees all things? Dost thou want another arm to help Him who bears the earth's huge pillars up and spreads the heavens abroad? Is His heart faint? Is His arm weary? Is His eye grown dim? If so, seek another God.

But if He be infinite, omnipotent, faithful, true and all-wise, why gaddest thou abroad so much to seek another confidence? Why dost thou rake the earth to find another foundation when this is strong enough and broad enough and deep enough to bear all the weight which thou canst ever build thereon? Christian, be single in your faith. Have not two trusts, but one. Believer, rest thou only on thy God, and let thy expectation be from Him.

God bless thee, believer. Let this question ring in thy ears this week, and if thou be tempted to sin or to worldly pleasure or to carnal trust, think thou seest thy minister, and think that thou hearest him saying in thine ears, What hast thou to do in the way of Egypt to drink the waters of that muddy river? Or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria to drink the waters of Euphrates? I now come to the second part of my subject. Let not our friends grow weary.

I shall be brief on the matters that remain that the word may be felt. Convinced sinner, I hope I have some such here, some of those precious ones of God whose eyes are bejeweled with the tears of penitence and

whose hearts are like the fragrant spices which, when broken, send out a sweet perfume. And so, my friend, you feel your lost estate.

God's Holy Spirit has kindly looked upon you and begun a good work in your soul. And yet, during the past week, you have fallen into your old sin. Ah! Ah! Smarting and yet sinning, wounded and yet rebelling, pricked with the ox-goat and yet kicking against the pricks.

It is hard for thee. It is hard for thee. To sin with a steeled conscience is easy, but to sin when conscience is raw is hard indeed.

You have a hard task. You have to go on and sin and tread its thorny path when your feet are tender, having just been burned in the fire. And what was the cause of your sin after all? Was it worth sinning for, to grieve your conscience and vex the Holy Spirit? I have heard of a man who had just begun the Christian life and he had some months of sorrow owing to a hasty temper.

His neighbor had let some of his cattle stray into the field. He had asked him to fetch them out again and mend the fence. His neighbor would not, and he flew into such a passion with him that afterwards he sat down and cried.

Said he, Why, if all the cows in the field were sold and I had lost the money, they were not worth the bother I made about them, nor worth one moment of the grief which I have to suffer. Oh, what fools we are! Let us, however, write ourselves fools in capital letters if when conscience is tender we go and do the very thing which we hate and choose the very cup which was so bitter to our taste, so nauseous to us just now. And then convinced sinner, another question, you are under conviction of sin and you have been lately, as it is a festive season, you have been frequenting the dancing room or the theater.

Now these are amusements for worldlings. Let them have them. I would not prevent them for a moment.

Let every man have his own amusement and his own joy. But what is this to you? What hast thou to do with that? Why, you know, you thought the place would fall down while you were sitting there. What business had you there? Suppose the devil had come in to take one of his own away, and had taken you.

He might have been forgiven for his mistake, for he found you on his grounds. You were trespassing, and therefore if the old giant grim had taken you away to despair's castle, who could have blamed him? Were you not for the time in his own limits? Had he not therefore a right to do as he would with you? But you have a tender conscience. How could you be merry there, listening to light music while you had a heavy heart? I never like to see a newly made widow at a wedding, and I do not like to see a convinced sinner where others are making merry.

When you have joy in your heart, you may join with the kindred sympathy of other men's joys. But while your soul is bleeding, what a mockery, what a farce it is for you to be pretending to find joy in the very thing which has given you the pain. You have heard the old and oft-repeated story of the celebrated clown who was under conviction of sin.

He went to a certain doctor and told him he was exceeding melancholy, and he wished that he could advise him something that would cheer his spirits. The doctor prescribed for him some remedies, but they failed. He went at last to a celebrated, popular preacher, who ought not to have been a preacher, for he did not understand the gospel at all.

And he, fool that he was, said to the poor man, Well, I do not know what will cheer you up, but I should say if you were to go and see the tricks and antics of such and such a person, the clown at such and such a theatre, if anything would make you merry, that would. Alas, sir, said he, I am that man myself. So strange must have been his position, making others roar with laughter while he himself was roaring with terror.

And yet this is just your position, convinced sinner, if you can find merriment in the world. Let other men have it. It is not the place for you.

Stand aloof from it, and go not there. And then again, Take care, convinced sinner, that you do not trust in yourself in any degree. What have you to do to go to Egypt to drink the waters of the muddy river? Your works have ruined you.

How can they save you? Your works have damned you. How can they wipe out the sentence of damnation? Fly to Christ. Fly to the flowing wounds and to the open heart.

There is hope for you there. But at the foot of Sinai there is thunder and fire and smoke. And if Moses did exceeding fear and quake, how much more should you, when the mountain seems as though it would roll upon you and crush you and bury your spirit in eternal destruction? God help thee, convinced sinner, never to go in that way of Egypt to drink the waters of Sihur, for these are not things for thee.

Lastly, to any here present who are careless, I have a hard task, but a few moments for the attempt to bring a reasonable request to unreasonable men. Ye tell me, sirs, that ye love the vanities of this world and that they content you. I look you in the face and remind you that there have been many madmen in this world besides yourselves.

Yet as there is some spark of reason left, let me see if I can kindle a flame of thought therewith. Sinner, God is angry with the wicked every day. What have you to do with joy? You are condemned already because you believe not on the Son of God.

What have you to do with peace, a condemned man dancing in his cell at Newgate with chains about his wrists? You are a dying man. You may drop down dead in this hall. What have you to do with merriment? You! If you were sure you should live a week, you might spend six days, if you would, in sin.

But you are not sure you will live an hour. What have you to do with sin and its pleasures? God is furbishing His sword today. It is sharp and strong as the arm which shall wield it.

That sword is meant for you, except you repent. What have you to do with taking your ease and eating and drinking and being happy? That man yonder with his neck in the noose and his feet upon the treacherous drop, is it fitting he should sing songs and call himself a happy man? This is your position, sir. Sinner, you are standing over the mouth of hell upon a single plank, and that plank is rotten.

Your hope is as the spider's web. Your confidence is as a dream. Death follows you, not as the slow-paced footman, but on horseback.

The skeleton rider on his pale horse is rattling after you with speed tremendous. And, ah, hell follows him. Hell follows death, the sure and certain consequence of sin.

And what have you to do with making merry? Have you made appointments for the next week? Keep them if you dare. If, in the name of God, you can make it consistent, if you can make it consistent with reason to

be busy about the body and neglect the soul, to fritter away that time on which eternity depends, then go and do it. If it be a wise thing for you to leap before you look, if it be a prudent thing to damn your soul eternally for the sake of a few hours of mirth, say so.

Go and do it like an honest man. But if it be unwise to forget forever and only think of today, if it be the strongest madness to lose your life to gain the mere apparel with which the body is to be covered, if it be madness to fling away jewels and hoard up dust as you are doing, then, I pray you, I beseech you, answer the question, what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt to drink the waters of Sihur? Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God. Wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Lo, the cross is lifted up before you. Jesus bleeds, his wounds are streaming with his lifeblood, I, and with yours too.

Believe, sinner, trust him, with all thy heart trust him. Come to him, come to him, with weeping and supplication, I pray you, come. Knowing the terrors of the Lord, I beseech you, as one that pleaded for his own life, I plead with you, by heaven, by hell, by time flying so swiftly, by eternity approaching so silently, by death, by judgment, by the awful soul-reading eye, by the rocks whose stony bowels shall refuse your prayer to fall upon you, by the trumpet and the thunders of the resurrection morning, by the pits and by the flame, I pray you, think and believe in him who is the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.

God bless my words to you through his Spirit's energy, and he shall have the praise forever and ever. Amen. This message, Words of Expostulation, was preached by Charles Haddon Spurgeon on January 20th, 1861.

This is Charles Kelsch inviting you to join me again for another message from the Prince of Preachers.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/1/SID1682.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ch-spurgeon/words-of-expostulation/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net