

PREPARATION FOR REVIVAL

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

“Can two walk together, except they be agreed?”—Amos 3:3

IF we would have the presence of God, it is necessary that we should be agreed with Him. We must be agreed with God as to the *end*¹ of our Christian existence. God hath formed us for Himself that we may show forth His praise. The main end of a Christian man is that, having been bought with precious blood, he may live unto Christ and not unto himself. O brethren! I am afraid we are not agreed with God in this. I must say it, painful though it be: there are many professors,² and there are some in this church, who at least appear to believe that the main end of their Christian existence is to get to heaven, to get as much money as they can on earth, and to leave as much as they can to their children when they die. I say, “To get to heaven,” for they selfishly include that as one of the designs of divine grace. But I question, if it were not for their happiness to go to heaven, whether they would care much about going, if it were only for God’s glory—for their way of living upon earth is always thus: “What shall I eat? what shall I drink? wherewithal shall I be clothed?” (cf. Mat 6:31). Religion never calls out their thoughtfulness. They can judge, weigh, plot, and plan to get money, but they have no plans as to how they can serve God. The cause of God is scarcely in their thoughts. They will pinch and screw³ to see how little they can contribute in any way to the maintenance of the cause of truth or to the spread of the Redeemer’s kingdom. They will so far condescend to consider religion, as to think how they can profess it in the most economical manner, but nothing more. You will not hear me speak so foolishly and madly, as if I thought that it were not just and laudable⁴ in a man to seek to make money to supply the wants⁵ of his family or even to provide for them on his own decease; such a thing is just and right. But whenever this gets to be the main thought, and I am persuaded it is the leading thought of too many professors, such men forget Whose they are, and Whom they serve. They are living to themselves; they have forgotten Who it is that has said, “Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as with silver and gold” (1Pe 1:18).

Oh! I pray God that I may feel that I am God’s man, that I have not a hair on my head that is not consecrated⁶ nor a drop of my blood that is not dedicated to His cause. And I pray, brethren and sisters, that you may feel the same—that selfishness

¹ **end** – purpose; goal.

² **professors** – those who profess faith in Christ outwardly.

³ **pinch and screw** – become tightfisted and stingy.

⁴ **laudable** – worthy of high praise.

⁵ **wants** – things lacking.

⁶ **consecrated** – dedicated to a sacred purpose.

with a confidence in our own zeal, or even in the prevalence¹² of our own prayers of themselves, we have not come low enough to be blessed. A humble church will be a blessed church. A church that is willing to confess its own errors and failures and to lie at the foot of Christ's cross is in a position to be favored of the Lord. I hope we are agreed, then, with God, as to our utter unworthiness and helplessness, so that we look to Him alone.

I charge you all to be agreed with God in this thing that if any good shall be done, any conversions shall occur, all the glory must be given to Him. Revivals have often been spoiled, either by persons boasting that such-and-such a minister was the means of them or else, as in the case of the North of Ireland, by boasting that the work was done without ministers. That revival, mark you, was stopped in its very midst and seriously damaged by being made a kind of curiosity, and a thing to be gazed at and to be wondered at by persons both at home and abroad. God does not care to work for the honor of men—minister or laymen—or of churches either. If we should say, "Ah! well, I should like to see the presence of God with us that we may have many conversions and put it in the magazine, and say, 'That is how things are done at the Tabernacle,'" we should not have a blessing that way. Crowns! crowns! crowns! but all for Thy head Jesus! Laurels and wreaths! But none for man—*all for Him* Whose own right hand and Whose holy arm hath gotten Him the victory. We must all be agreed on this point, and I hope we are.

Now, let us put away all those things that offend our God. Before God appeared upon Mount Sinai, the children of Israel had to cleanse themselves for three days. Before Israel could take possession of the promised rest of Canaan, Joshua had to see to it that they were purified by the rite of circumcision. Whenever God would visit His people, He always demands of them some preparatory purging that they may be fit to behold His presence; for two cannot walk together unless that which would make them disagree be purged out (Amo 3:3). A few suggestions then, as to whether there is anything in us with which God cannot agree. Here I cannot preach to you indiscriminately, but put the task into the hand of each man to preach to himself. In the days of the great weeping, we read that every man wept apart and his wife apart, the son apart, and the daughter apart; all the families apart. So it must be here.

Is there pride in me? Am I puffed up with my talent, my substance, my character, my success? Lord, purge this out of me...for none shall ever say that God and the proud soul are friends: He "giveth grace to the humble" (1Pe 5:5). As for the proud, He knoweth them "afar off" (Psa 138:6) and will not let them come near to Him.

Am I slothful? Do I waste hours that I might usefully employ? Have I the levity of the butterfly, which flits from flower to flower but drinks no honey from any of them? Or have I the industry of the bee, which, wherever it lights, would find some sweet store for the hive? Lord, Thou knowest my soul. Thou understandest me. Am I doing

¹² **prevalence** – effective force or power; influence.

little where I might do much? Hast Thou had but little reaping for much sowing? Have I hid my talent in a napkin? Have I spent that talent for myself, instead of spending it for Thee? Slothful souls cannot walk with God! “My Father worketh,” saith Jesus, “and I work” (Joh 5:17); and you who stand in the marketplace idle may stand there with the devil, but you cannot stand there with God. Let every brother who is guilty of this purge away his sloth.

Am I guilty of *worldliness*? This is the crying sin of many in the Christian church. Do I put myself into association with men who cannot by any possibility profit me? Am I seen where my Master would not go? Do I love amusements that cannot afford me comfort when I reflect upon them, and that I would never indulge in, if I thought that Christ would come while I was at them? Am I worldly in spirit as to fashion? Am I as showy, as volatile,¹³ as frivolous as men and women of the world? If so, if I love the world, “the love of the Father is not in” me (1Jo 2:15); consequently He cannot walk with me, for we are not agreed.

Again, am I *covetous*? Do I scrape and grind? Is my first thought not how I can honor God, but how I can accumulate wealth? When I gain wealth, do I forget to make use of it as a steward? If so, then God is not agreed with me; I am a thief with His substance; I have set myself up for a master instead of being a servant, and God will not walk with me until I begin to feel that this is not my own but His, and that I must use it in [the fear of God].

Again, am I of an *angry spirit*? Am I harsh towards my brethren? Do I cherish envy towards those who are better than I am or contempt towards those who are worse off? If so, God cannot walk with me, for He hates envy, and all contempt of the poor is abhorrent to Him.

Is there any *lust* in me? Do I indulge the flesh? Am I fond of carnal indulgences by which my soul suffers? If so, God will not walk with me; for chambering, wantonness, gluttony, and drunkenness separate between a believer and His God: these things are not convenient¹⁴ to a Christian. Before the great feast of unleavened bread, a Jewish parent would sweep out every piece of leaven from his house. So anxious would he be, and so anxious is the Jew at the present day, that he takes a candle and sweeps out every cupboard; no matter though there may have been no food put in there at any time, he is afraid lest by accident a crumb may be somewhere concealed in the house. So, from the garret¹⁵ to the cellar, he clears the whole house through to purge out the old leaven. Let *us* do so!

I cannot think you will do so as the effect of such poor words as mine—but if my soul could speak to you and God blessed the utterance, you would. For my own part, I cry unto my Master that if there be anything that can make me more fit to be the messenger of God to you and to the sons of men, however painful might be the preparato-

¹³ **volatile** – readily changing from one interest or mood to another; fickle.

¹⁴ **convenient** – fit; suitable; proper.

¹⁵ **garret** – attic; that part of a house that is immediately under the roof.

ry process, He would graciously be pleased not to spare me of it. If by sickness, if by serious calamities, if by slander and rebuke, more honor can be brought to Him, then hail! and welcome! all these things. They shall be my joy, and to receive them shall be delight. I pray you, utter the same desire: “Lord, make me fit to be the means of glorifying thee.”

From a sermon delivered Sunday morning, October 30, 1864, at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington; available from CHAPEL LIBRARY with two other sermons in a booklet entitled *Revival*.

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892): English Baptist minister; history’s most widely read preacher (apart from those found in Scripture); born at Kelvedon, Essex, England.

