
THE HORRIBLE EAST WINDS!
A SERMON BY REV. C.H. SPURGEON
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“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also you are called in one body; and be thankful.”— Colossians 3:15.

I DO not know how it is, but during the last two or three days I have been called to sympathize with an amount of sorrow such as I have seldom met with before in so short a space of time. One messenger of misery has followed on the heels of another, each one with heavy tidings. Nor is that all; for I have also been perplexed with a large amount of sinning, quarrelling, and fault-finding. People are murmuring, grumbling, fretting, and fighting on all sides. So much has this tried me that I feel little fitted to act as comforter, for I need comfort myself. I have endeavoured to cheer others till I have drunk of their cup of sorrow and put my own mouth out of taste: I have tried to make peace for others till I am half afraid of losing my own; I have answered the people’s grumblings till I am tempted to have a growl or two on my own account. Perhaps I may relieve my own mind by the sermon which I hope to deliver.

I said to one whom I greatly esteem, “I do not know how it is, but everybody seems out of sorts with everybody else just now.” His wise answer was, THE WIND IS IN THE EAST. This fact accounts for a great deal, for

“When the wind is in the east,

’Tis neither good for man nor beast.”

This is that ill wind which seems to blow no man any good. Some humanities feel the east wind terribly: it sets their teeth on edge, and they feel that they must bite the first person they meet. I am glad to find some sort of excuse for my fellow-Christians, and if I can find it nowhere but in the east wind, I will make the best I can of it; but I earnestly hope that the

wind may soon blow from another quarter, and not come from the east again till we have had a little respite and laid in a new stock of patience. If a cutting wind causes despondency, vexation, discontent, and bad temper, may soft gales visit us frequently, and bring us healing. As fair weather will not last for ever, it will be well to prepare ourselves to breast the blast. It will never do for us to have a religion which can be killed by the wind: we must be made of better stuff than that. Yet this wind is blamed, and I wish therefore that it would take itself off. I am afraid that it would not suit me to be altogether screened from the wind, for trials are necessary to one who is called to this ministry. Troubles and east winds will come to the servants of God, and they are sent to do us good; for perhaps, if we could get our backs against a protecting wall, and sit for ever in the sunshine, with no east wind to interfere with us, we should go to sleep; or waking, we might come to love this world so well as to be loath to leave it. It would be a horrible thing for any one of us if the south wind should softly breathe upon our cheek, and whisper gently in our ear of long continued joy to be found on earth; for then we should be tempted to sit down and say, "Soul, take thine ease. Thou hast at last found a place free from the trials of time; therefore eat, drink, and be merry, and let the future world care for itself."

When I turn over in my mind the events of the last few days I do not suppose that there is more discord or discontent in the world just now than at any other time; but it happens that a number of black lines have all found their centre in my person, and my thoughts have had to travel out in all those directions; all which is trying enough, but all the more so when the wind is in the east. It is a coincidence, but the like has happened before. I have had to unravel many tangled skeins in my time, out of love to others: I did not get the threads into a ravel, but people are very fond of bringing me their snarls to disentangle, and when I have a hope of succeeding, I try my best. Gladly would I be a peacemaker, but it is much easier to make a snarl than to put it straight again, especially in the east wind. I have tried to set things right, and meanwhile I have asked myself, "Is there not a remedy for these mischiefs?" I feel assured there is such a remedy. Family discomfort, husbands and wives that cannot agree, domestic difficulties, brothers and sisters that fall out, church troubles, members that are not treated kindly by others (not generally the kindest sort of people themselves, I notice), difficulties in business, difficulties in preaching—the world teems with these things when the wind is in the east. We meet with many people who cannot earn enough wages, others who do not believe they were ever well treated

since they were born; others, again, who are highly deserving people, but have never yet been appreciated as they should be; and these all come out in crowds when the wind is in the east. Good men become rabid for something new, find fault with old friends, invite debate, and quarrel about nothing; and this happens most often when the wind is in the east.

When this kind of spirit gets among Christian people it is very sad; but surely there must be a remedy for it. Many nostrums are proposed, many quacks are ready to prescribe this and that form of remedy for troubles and discords, but the results of the east wind are not to be removed in that way: a higher power is needed. I have heard of pills for the earthquake, and medicine for the comet; but I have no such patent medicine for the east wind. All I have to tell you is borrowed from an old Book, in which the wisest prescriptions are to be found, prescriptions so excellent that, if they were followed, the inhabitant would no more say, "I am sick."

This windy night I shall take you to the great Physician of souls, Jehovah-Rophi— the Lord who heals us, who is able to cure all our diseases and to give permanent relief from all evil, so that our spirits shall be at rest. I believe that we have a prescription in this verse which, if it be well attended to, will deliver you out of all troubles, make you sing all your lives long, and help you to travel from earth to heaven, and be all the while as happy as the birds in the air. Here it is— "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful."

If we dissect our text we shall find in it four pieces of advice.

I. First, POSSESS THE PEACE OF GOD— "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts." It cannot rule in your hearts if you have never felt its power; therefore, make certain that you are truly reconciled to God by Jesus Christ. Many persons have peace, but, alas, it is false peace! They have the peace of a soft, gentle, timorous, time-serving character— a mean sort of peace, which, if it hurts no one else, often ruins its possessor. Some have the peace of ignorance, the peace of stupidity, the peace of utter indifference, false peace. These are the followers of those false prophets

who cried, "peace, peace," where there was no peace. Woe to the man whose peace of mind is like the deadly smoothness of the current just as it nears the cataract! Many are at ease in a condition which might make a wise man's hair turn grey in a night. They think right well of themselves, but already the axe of judgment is lifted against them.

The peace that we need to possess is the peace of God, which means, I think, first, peace with, God. Oh, what a blessed thing it is to feel that the great cause of quarrel between our fallen spirit and the great Spirit is that taken away,— that we are reconciled to God by the death of his Son,— that sin, the great divider, has been cast into the depths of the sea, and that there is established between us and God a happy fellowship! I hope many of you are at this hour enjoying such peace. If you have it, rejoice in it. If you then, be at peace with God, do not perpetually act as if that peace were questionable and doubtful. Do not sigh and cry as if the matter trembled in the balance. If we believe in Jesus Christ, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Oh! the joy of knowing that "as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us," and that therefore they can never return from so immense a distance yea, never return at all, for the Lord Jesus Christ has cast them into the depths of the sea, and if they be searched for, they shall not be found; yea, they shall not be, saith the Lord. Blessed is that man who has peace with God through the atoning blood!

Growing out of this there comes, next, a peace with God with regard to all his providences, which can only come through a complete and entire submission to the divine will; for some are not at peace with God, even about certain circumstances that afflicted them years ago. They remain quarrelling with God about the decease of a beloved wife, or child, or mother, and they cannot forgive God for having taken a flower out of his own garden. If they were wise, they would not thus rebel, but find in their loving Saviour a recompense for all their losses. Far be it from us to raise a question about what the providence of God has already done! It must be right. The point is to keep on submitting to that providence in what is now transpiring. If for the present the will of the Lord should send me poverty, obscurity, pain, weariness, reproach, I must be at peace with God about it all. If the Lord says to me, "Go across the sea, and leave all your friends," I must not delay. If he says, "Preach unwelcome truth, which will make you enemies I must not hesitate. If he says, "Keep the house with rheumatism," I must not come out of doors. If the Lord says, "Lie on thy back and cough,"

it is not for me to quarrel with him and say it ought not so to be. If he denies us that which we think would make us not only more happy but more useful, it is of no use for us to kick against the pricks. The divine appointment will certainly be fulfilled, and the misery to us will be in struggling against the yoke, in endeavouring to have it otherwise than divine love and infinite wisdom have determined it should be. If you cannot change your place, change your mind, till your mind shall love it. Why, there have been men so helped of God to conquer self that they have hugged their crosses. I think it is Rutherford who somewhere says that he was half afraid lest he should begin to love his cross better than Christ. That is a fear which will seldom need to cross our minds; but, oh, we ought to be perfectly satisfied, perfectly content with that which pleases God! "If this be the Lord's will it is my will. Such a saying comes from a happy heart; but if God has one will and we have another, it is clear that the peace of God does not yet rule our hearts. Though forgiven, and though the grand cause of quarrel is gone, yet we are raising minor points of difference, and these cause strife. It is like a great lawsuit that has been decided on all the grand features of the case, and yet here is the plaintiff picking little points, and raising little questions, and getting up fresh litigation. The point with us is to say, "It is all given up. Whatsoever You will, Lord, I will; or at least I wish to will. I ask for grace that I may will it, because You will it." This voluntary submission to our Father's appointment is the peace of God.

This peace of God is, also, peace such as God commends— such as God approves of. That, you know, is first, perfect peace with himself, and then with all men— certainly with his people, but also with all mankind. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." Take heed that you do not offend; and if you are offended by others, do not offend in return, but accept the offence in patience; forgive it and forget it. Forbear, and, when you have done so, forbear, and, when you have done so again, forbear, and, when you have forborne seven times, still forbear. I will not repeat the advice seventy times seven, though if I did, I should not go beyond the measure of forbearance and of forgiveness which the Lord Jesus would have us display. Be so at peace with God that you feel perfectly at peace with your fellowmen. Whenever I have suffered a grievous wrong, it has been a satisfaction to me to feel that, if my Lord Jesus Christ made atonement for my offences and my wrongs, I can look at his atonement as an atonement for the wrong done to me as well as to God, for he satisfied all parties in that quarrel. Gladly do I say, "Surely, this

poor soul may well be forgiven by me, for You have died as the sinners' Substitute." In comparison with my own offences against God I may well look upon this man's offence as less than nothing. What if men should do the worst they can do to us? What is it? What if they slay us? It is but a small loss to a Christian to die. Therefore, let us harbour no malice, but feel, "No; we have entered into the truce of God, and we are the friends of every man that breathes." For my own part, I have a crusade against the devil and all evil; but the truce of God is upon me with regard to all my fellowmen, and henceforth that peace which was proclaimed at Bethlehem by the angels shall stand for me— "Peace on earth: good will toward men." This is a sweet part of the peace of God; cultivate it carefully.

But this peace is called the peace of God because it is peace which God works in the soul. I think I hear you exclaim, "To have such a peace as that— a perfect consciousness of full forgiveness, complete acquiescence in the will of God, perfect forgiveness towards all mankind, and an intense desire to live in perfect peace with all, both saints and sinners— how can I get such a peace within me?" Ah, indeed, how can you? It is impossible to unrenewed human nature. Man by nature is worse than any one wild beast, for he is a menagerie. There is lion in him, and there is serpent in him; there is tiger in him, and there is wolf in him; there is dog in him, and there is devil in him. He is half beast and half devil through the fall. I do not caricature him; his body allies him to the beast, and sin makes him a child of Satan. Mr. Whitefield used so to describe fallen nature, and he was pretty near the mark. How shall this wild beast be taught to love? Shall the lion eat straw like an ox? It never will till it leaves off being a lion. It cannot do so; it has not fit teeth for eating straw, nor a fit stomach for digesting grass. It cannot live on straw, like an ox, till God changes it, and gives it an ox-like nature. So, it is with us: we need a new nature before we can possess this peace with God. But how is that to be done? Shall the Ethiopian change his skin? No; he cannot do that; and if he could, it would not equal the miracle which we require. Our default is not skin deep only, it is much more than that. Changing skins is difficult, but changing hearts is impossible except to God. Shall the leopard get rid of his spots? Well, that is difficult; but still the task of taking spots out of leopards would be small compared with the miracle of taking evil out of the very core of our wild-beast-like heart and putting into it the peace of God that makes us love. God only can do it. God's own mighty Spirit must put forth that same energy with which he will raise the dead out of their graves at the

resurrection; for nothing short of creation and resurrection power is able to transmute this beastly, devilish heart of ours into a heart in which the peace of God shall reign supreme. Well is it called the peace of God.

My dear hearer, do you know this peace? If so, you will understand that, because of its excellence, it is called the peace of God. It is a Hebraism: for among the Hebrews they called certain mountains that were higher than others the hills of God; and certain gigantic trees, such as the cedars of Lebanon, were the trees of God that were full of sap. So, the peace that is greater than every other peace is called the peace of God— it means the holiest, deepest peace. It is “perfect peace”— peace that nothing disturbs: deep peace— “the peace of God, which passes all understanding”: solemn peace at which you almost stand in awe— a hush within the soul in which there is heard nothing of discord or of fear, but a stillness reigns like that which was maintained in the Holy of Holies, within the veil, where seraphim were silent above the mercy-seat. “The peace of God” signifies the peace that never ends, everlasting peace; the peace that will live with us throughout the whole of our mortal sojourn till we come into the land of the immortal.

“The peace of God.” Oh, I have known it! You, too, my brethren, must have known it when the Lord himself has dwelt within your hearts, and kept all adversaries far away. You have then known days of heaven upon the earth. It has left nothing to wish for except the perpetuation of itself, for you have been satisfied with favour and full of the goodness of the Lord, filled with all the fulness of God, anchored fast, settled, grounded, established.

Win it, dear friends, and wear it. By God’s good Spirit enter into this serene haven. Rest in the Lord, and be happy in him, for he is our peace! When the Lord and Giver of peace once comes to tarry in your heart let him rest there.

II. But now the second piece of advice that grows out of the text let us consider. If you possess this peace of God, let it occupy the throne: **LET THE PEACE OF GOD RULE IN YOUR HEARTS.**

In order to there being any peace in the heart, or anywhere else, there must be a ruler. See how it is in a house! I hear that there was great deliberation over those census papers in many families to know who was the head of the household; but I am quite clear that it was not a happy household where that question took long to answer; for the husband is the

head of the wife, and where he is not so, everything is out of order, monstrous, outrageous. Where the head is not the head, the hand is not the hand, the eye is not the eye, the heart is not the heart; and nothing is itself at all. All is what it should not be, and all is misery. You must have a governing faculty somewhere; and, within your own soul, if nothing governs, I tell you boldly the devil governs. That man who does not control himself is controlled by the devil, for he must have a master somewhere. We cannot have two masters, but it is quite as certain that we must have one. One power or another will master you. Shall it be your Creator, or his enemy? your Saviour, or your destroyer?

It is a blessed gift of grace if a man is enabled by the Holy Spirit to say, "The peace of God shall rule in my heart." Paul advised this: "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts": if it is in your hearts at all, it must rule, for it has power to put down all rebellion. You know, when we have a government and a magistracy with power at their back, if a riot arises, we appeal to the lawful power to come and protect us and put down the uproar. So, in our hearts, if we have a master principle, and that master principle is the peace of God, we may warrantably pray, "O Lord, put down this riot. I am tossed to and fro in my heart about my circumstances: I do not like them, and I quarrel with God about them. Come, peace of God; come, and put down my murmuring. Come and calm my wicked, discontented spirit." Or do I feel some discord in my spirit towards one whom I ought to love? I must cry, "Come, peace of God. Come, and arrest this bad temper of mine. Handcuff it. Take it off to prison. Give it hard labour and short commons; bring it down till it is no longer able to rebel as it does. Come, peace of God, and help me in the struggles of my daily life, that I may not break out into anger, and wrath, and malice, and all uncharitableness. Come, peace of God, put forth thy mighty power over my soul." This is the great remedy for the discord within and the discords without: the grand cure for all distempers of the east wind, and all besides.

Yield yourself to the umpireship of the blessed peace of God, for I find that the Greek word has that force, "Let the peace of God umpire in your hearts." You know the umpire in the Greek games decided how the runners should run, how the wrestlers should wrestle, and he ruled a contest to be, or not to be, according to the law of the festival. He said, perhaps, that such and such a blow in the fight was a foul blow, and if he said so, there was no questioning him: it was decided. He stood at the winning-point when the runners came in, and he declared a certain swift-footed racer to be the

winner. No man ever questioned the dictate of the umpire. His voice ended all debate. He was the man who decided in the games, and whose verdict was never to be disputed. Now, the peace of God is to do the same in our hearts. We ought to be resolved to judge all things by the peace of God. "What should I do in this case? Must I humble myself? I do not like it, but how should I act? Shall I yield?" Pride says, "Never! No, no. Play the man. Never give in." But what does the peace of God say? It says, "Yield: submit." Christ says, "I say unto you, that you resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." Christ decides that it will be good to be a sufferer rather than a revenger. We ought to have the peace of God ruling in our hearts so as to let it decide our course and lead us to do that which is consistent with our own peace with God. I do not know how you find it, but I know that I cannot afford to be angry. It takes so much that is valuable out of me. I am sure it does. It does a man an immense mischief physically; to some men it is a dangerous thing to get excited, it even endangers their lives. But spiritually, I believe that to get into a state of enmity towards anybody is one of the most grievous diseases which can befall a Christian. In such a case you cannot pray as you did; you cannot read some passages of Scripture as you did; you cannot look the Well-beloved in the face, and say, "I am acting in a way that pleases thee." It is, therefore, a very serious thing for a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ to break his own peace— serious to himself as well as to those that are round about him. I pray you, therefore, dear friends, let the peace of God decide for you in all trials of temper, and enduring of wrong, and questions which lead to debate and separation. Set peace in the chariot, and let it hold the reins; for anger will, like Phaeton of old, set the world on fire. Oh, Peace of God, rule thou me!

Pray God that the power of this peace may be constantly upon you. If you lose your peace with God you lose your power to judge under difficulties; you lose your power of self-control under provocations, you lose the best sovereign that ever held a sceptre. I believe that if a man is walking with God in the light, and enjoying full fellowship with heaven, he may go down into any meeting, however turbulent— into any society, however discordant the elements may be— and yet he will be wise to answer, wise to be silent, wise to do, or wise not to do; for the peace of God will keep him calm and quiet. Once let the mind be thoroughly disturbed and unhinged before the Lord, and you are weak as another

man, and you say that which you will have to unsay, and you do that which you would wish to wipe out with your tears. When rest of soul is gone, hard things are spoken and hard things are done, which would not consort with communion with the tender Lord. Let the peace of God always rule, or otherwise you will not always be safe. Especially let the peace of God rule your affections. Be satisfied that you love God, and that your heart cleaves to God, and does not follow after any other. Be at peace with God as to your heart, and, when that is so, and the affections are dominated by conscious love to God, it is then that you fight the battles of life with comfort to yourself, and with honour to the name of him to whom you belong.

III. Very briefly, I want, in the third place, to say, **STRENGTHEN YOURSELF**, dear friend, **BY GOD'S SPIRIT, WITH ARGUMENTS**, in order that you may let the peace of God rule in your hearts, and may be kept from any breach of that heavenly peace.

Remember, you can only yourself be happy in heart and healthy in spirit as long as you keep the peace of God. You are sure to become wretched and unhappy, you are sure to stumble here and there into faults, if that peace of God be gone. As you would be in the best possible condition for walking with God in joy while here below, look to your peace. This is no mean argument; try to feel the force of it.

And, next, only thus can the church of God prosper. I am grieved when I receive members from other churches, who come because they say that they are weary of the incessant bickering and jealousies which have disturbed their rest. I am sure that there can be no blessing where there is no peace. A house divided against itself cannot stand. A church disputing is a church committing suicide. Many and many a church has come to its death by bleeding inwardly through strife; otherwise it might have defied the whole world, and hell itself. It is generally the little churches that squabble most: if they cannot excel in anything else, they certainly claim the first rank in quarrelling. A few Christian people get together to serve God, and the devil comes in at once and sets them by the ears: they are good men and true, but Satan bewitches them so that they dispute about nothing at all. Whenever I have to settle a dispute, I always like to have some big, bad thing in it. This I can point out, and we soon agree to set the matter right. When I cannot with microscopes on my eyes find out what it is all about, I find that brothers and sisters are hardest to be reconciled. It is easier to shoot an owl than a gnat. Little differences rankle like tiny thorns, and you

cannot get them out of the flesh. Oh, that the Spirit of God would come upon the churches and turn them into masses of fire; then they would not fall to pieces through internal strife! When souls are being won, when the gospel is being enjoyed, when Christ is being glorified, when the church is marching on, conquering and to conquer through the divine power that is in her, then is there peace within her borders, and her citizens are filled with the finest of the wheat. But once let the life of God run low, and let the Spirit of God depart, then peace departs too. Oh, may God save this church and save all the churches from missing this blessed peace! Let the peace of God rule in your heart, dear brother, dear sister, for the church's sake.

Remember, next, that God cannot be glorified unless there is the peace of God in our hearts. My dear friend, if you are always troubled, and fretting, and anxious, I do not see how you can glorify God to any large extent. Seek more faith, more trust, more confidence, more calmness of mind, and you will personally glorify God. I am sure a Christian man who always finds fault with everybody is of little service to the cause and kingdom of our Lord. He who, wherever he goes, acts like a carrion crow, that soars aloft with no other design than finding out where a carcass may be, that he may light upon it,— he, I say, is not a man after God's own heart, neither will he advance the Lord's work among men. When you love your fellow Christians so that their faults are covered by your charity, and you rather admire their excellences than publish their infirmities, then it is that God is glorified by you. A happy, peaceful people of whom men can say, "See how these Christians love one another"— these shine as lights in the world, and the darkness feels their power.

The passage from which our text is taken offers us other reasons. It says this, "To the which also ye are called." You were called to the peace of God. My dear brother, if you are not a peaceful man you have not inherited your true calling. When the Lord called you out from the world, he called you to be a peacemaker. He called you on purpose that the Spirit of peace might be shed abroad in your heart, and that afterwards you might carry that peace with you into your own family and amongst all your neighbours and spread it everywhere. The Lord Jesus never called a man to be a maker of strife. If a Christian woman, as she calls herself, goes from house to house with tittle-tattle, she was not called by God to do so: of that I am certain. A man goes into his pulpit and preaches a personal sermon on purpose to empty out his own spleen. God did not call him to that, for God loves not firebrands. The man may have been sent as a messenger

from other regions, but certainly not as an ambassador from heaven, when he preaches gall and wormwood. Some seem, wherever they go, to make mischief as speedily as possible: their mission is contention, whereunto they certainly were not called of God. You who are the true heirs of heaven are called to peace; seek peace and pursue it. Wherever you go, labour earnestly to make peace. If you see two boys fighting, make them leave off. If you see two girls in a bad temper, try to make them happy with one another. If you see two people disagree in business, do not back one of them up, and cry, "Go to law with him," but plead for peace and mutual concession. "Blessed are the peacemakers." Whatever you may be in a household, whether father or child, husband or wife, master or servant, son-in-law or mother-in-law, let your soul be seasoned and savoured with that blessed word, "Peace." There is always a war party in England: I fear the Jingo is no foreigner, but the genuine offspring of the British bulldog. An unconverted Britisher is all for blood, and fire, and glory; and as the unconverted are the majority among us we remain a fighting nation. Fighting— how we delight in it! Down with the Afghans, down with the Zulus! The Boers— destroy them! We cannot get our fill of glory and honour unless we get knee deep in blood. The policy of peace is voted dishonourable, and so we go from land to land till there is hardly a nation which has not been stained with blood by British hands. How fiercely these English talk: but it is not Christian talk. May the Lord teach us the language of peace. Be at peace, "whereunto also you were called."

And then, notice next, "Called in one body." There must, therefore, be peace among Christians because we are called in one body to peace. What would you think of my hand, if it should say, "I will have no peace with the eye. That prying eye looked sharply at me the other day and spied out a spot; I will put it out"? We shall not enjoy much prosperity if the members of the body thus disagree. Suppose my foot should say, "I am not going to carry that heavy body about. See what I have to suffer through it at times." Suppose my knee should say, "I will not have it. I have been tortured quite enough with rheumatism; I will no longer carry that heavy fabric." What will become of me if the members of my body thus fall to quarrelling? And what is to become of the glory of Christ if his members live in contention? What is the Head to do if the members who make up his one mystical body have nothing to do but to be striving one against the other? Oh, no. If you have any differences, end them to-night, I pray you, if you can, even though the east wind is so piercing. If you have unwittingly done anything that grieves

others, try to remedy it. Or if others have grieved you, end the matter by sweet and swift forgiveness. Let it be all ended with the east wind. We are called in one body; therefore, let us dwell in hearty peace; and may God the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of peace, bring us into the peace of God, and keep us there, for thereunto also we are called in one body.

IV. The last point upon which I shall speak is this— to keep yourselves right, OCCUPY YOUR MINDS HEALTHILY. How?” say you. The text says, “Be ye thankful.” That is the way to keep up our peace with God. “Be thankful.” Do not complain but bless his name for everything. Do not quarrel with him but be thankful. Say, “Shall we receive good at the hands of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil? The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord.” That is the way to be at peace with him— to be thankful at all times. Bless God for your mercies and for your miseries; bless him for your gains and for your losses; bless him for your enjoyments and pleasures, and also for your aches and pains. Bless him for every hard thing that comes from him, for there is as much love in the hard as in the soft; and God is as kind when he uses the rod as when he gives a kiss. “Be ye thankful!” Bless him from morning to night, and all through the night watches. What a mercy to be out of the hospital! What a mercy to have the use of one’s limbs and reasoning powers! What a mercy to be out of prison! What a mercy to be out of hell! “He hath not dealt with us after our sins.” Be thankful.

Last Sunday morning when I read this chapter in the great congregation, I tried to ring it out as loudly as ever I could; and I would like to ring it out as with a whole peal of bells now. “Be ye thankful! Be ye thankful! Be ye thankful!” Up, ye murmuring! Up, ye discontented! “Be ye thankful.” Rouse yourselves, ye sullen ones! You that think you have a heavier load to carry than is meet, and say, like Cain, “My burden is greater than I can bear”— “Be ye thankful!” All of you, young and old, “Be ye thankful.” That is the way to keep up your peace with God, and your peace with your fellowmen.

Well, but it does not mean only, “Be thankful to God,” but be ye thankful to your fellowmen. Too many receive all kinds of Christian kindness as a matter of course. They look upon the spontaneous kindness of their brethren as a sort of right. Now, that the poor should be helped by Christian generosity is certainly according to Scripture; but this is an obligation not of debt but of grace. Whatever is done in almsgiving and

charity should be gratefully and heartily received. It is an unholy spirit which scarcely has the courtesy to say, "thank you." Towards one another we ought to have a thankful spirit. How thankful the child ought to be to his mother and his father! What a happy home we should have if children recognised the deep debt of obligation that is really due to those who have nursed them and cared for them so long! How obliged, I think, the husband ought to be to his wife for all her tender kindnesses— those hundred unseen ministries of love! How grateful, I think, the wife should be to her husband, for all his labours and anxieties! She receives a thousand things from him which make life comfortable. If we live in mutual gratitude, feeling that we are, each one of us, indebted to all others, how merrily will the household wheels go round, and what families of love we shall all gather around us! I, of all the people in the world, am most in debt to everybody; and I feel it deeply and truly. There is hardly a person that I look upon from this pulpit, but I owe something to his or her Christian love. Everybody has been kind to me, and I am not unmindful of it. When I have lain upon my bed sick and ill, I have marvelled at the kindness of you all. I wonder why you treat me so lovingly. In all holy work, whether it be College, or Orphanage, you have been my ready helpers, and you are still. I cannot help saying, "God bless you." Surely the wind is changing a point or two: we shall find it blowing from another quarter when we leave this Tabernacle. I feel intense gratitude in my soul towards the dear brethren who surround me, and the sisters that work with me for Christ. You have often made me happy and cheered my spirit by the kind and generous way in which you have worked with me for the Lord, bearing with all my infirmities; and I believe that it is because I feel thankful that I feel peaceful, and so remain the centre of your unity. I am not inclined to quarrel with anybody: I would sooner run a mile than I would fight for half a minute. There is nobody in the world that I would like to contend with: my heart is full of good wishes to all men. It has been a sort of rule with me to measure a man before I fight him: if he is bigger than I am I know he will beat me, and so I decline battle; and if he is smaller, and I can easily beat him, it would be cruel and cowardly to do so. Nobody in the world is worth contending against as to our temporal interests. Even necessary law is troublesome and vexatious. Be ye thankful, then; and if, with thankfulness to God and thankfulness to those around you, you can fill up the day, oh, how happy will the days be! In the family and in the business, God will be

glorified; the church will be sweetened and welded together: we shall see better times and shall no longer grumble at the east wind.

May God bless you!