

REHOBAM THE UNREADY

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A SERMON

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*“And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord.”
2 Chronicles 12:14.*

You have probably noticed that, as a general rule, the sacred historians, at the end of each king's reign, sum up the character of the monarch and describe him as either doing evil in the sight of the Lord or doing that which was right in the sight of the Lord. They give a summary of his whole life in one or other of these sentences—and there will come a day when there will be a summary of your life, and mine—and when it is given, it will run on this wise, “He did evil in the sight of the Lord,” or else on this blessed fashion, “He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord.” There is no other course beside these two! These characteristics comprehend all of us and the summary given in our case, as it was in the case of Rehoboam, will be given with great accuracy. It will be Infallible and it will be irreversible. This man Rehoboam was not half as bad as some other kings, still, the Inspired historian was compelled to say, “He did evil.” He was not such an obstinate and outrageous sinner as some were. He was not an Ahab. He was not even a Manasseh—he did not live as that king did in his evil time, yet, “he did evil.” That is the summary of his whole career.

There were some good points about him, as I shall try to show you presently. He sometimes did good, still, when it is all added up, this is the total of it, “he did evil.” And the reason why he did evil is given. One reason, I should think, was that he had a bad mother. Observe how it is written, just before the summary of his life, “His mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess”—one of Solomon's numerous wives—one whom he favored most of all. But she was an idolatrous woman, “an Ammonitess.” And there is little wonder that when the father was no better than he should have been, and when the mother was exceedingly bad, the summary of the son's life should be, “he did evil.”

This makes marriage a most important step, though it is often taken without a single serious thought. See how a woman's life projects itself and either casts a ray of brightness over her children's characters, or a cloud of shame over their entire being. What some of us owe to our mothers, we shall never be able to tell. If we had to write down the choicest mercies that God has bestowed upon us, we would have to first mention the mother who prayed for us and taught us to trust in Jesus, by the Holy Spirit's blessing upon the sweet way in which she spoke to us about the Savior. But a mother, trained in the school of Satan, and who has become a mistress in the art of sin is a terrible source of evil to her children. May God have mercy upon any of you mothers who have sons growing up to follow the evil example which you are setting them! Mothers, by the love you bear your children—and there is no stronger love, I think, on earth—if you will not think of your own soul's best interests, I do pray you, for your children's sake, consider your ways and seek the Lord with the purpose in your heart that your children may, if possible, live in the Presence of God.

But the Scripture does not give this as the reason why Rehoboam did evil. It does not say that he did evil because he had a bad mother, nor because his father had not walked with God as he ought to have done. No, the reason was, “because he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord.” The Hebrew proverb was, “The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge.” But the Lord said to His ancient people through the Prophet Ezekiel, “You shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. . . .” “The soul that sins, it shall die.” God will judge each one according to his own deeds and if you should, unhappily, have been born of the most ungodly parents who ever lived, there is no reason why God's Grace should not begin to work in your family with *you*. If all your training has been adverse to

godliness, the Sovereign Grace that takes one of a city, and two of a family and brings them to Zion, may select you as its objective. I know several Brothers and Sisters here who have each one said to me with great sorrow, “I am the only one out of my family, as far as I can judge, that knows the Lord. Looking back, I can trace no pedigree of saints. And looking around me, neither brother, nor sister, nor uncle, nor cousin seems to have any fear of God.”

Ah, my dear Friend! If you have been so distinguished by the Grace of God, you ought to love Him much and praise Him much! And as you will be sure to be watched and pecked at, like a speckled bird, mind how you live. May your light so shine before men that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father who is in Heaven. No, though Rehoboam walks in an evil way, it is not set down to the examples of his father and mother, but it is written, “he did evil because he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord.” What does this expression mean? I am going to try to find out because I feel sure that the same reason is operating upon a good many other people. It does not say that Rehoboam did evil because he was of a vicious temperament, or because he had strong passions, or because he was a downright thoroughly bad fellow. No, he was not quite that, but he did evil because of something which he did not do—

*“Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do”—*

and as Rehoboam “did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord,” Satan found him evil to do and he did it!

I. So I judge that this expression means, first, that HE DID NOT BEGIN LIFE WITH SEEKING THE LORD.

His father, Solomon, did when he found himself lifted up to the throne of Israel while he was yet a young man. Solomon spread his case before the Lord and asked for wisdom and, in consequence, taking it as a whole, his reign was a grand one, and his kingdom attained to a high state of prosperity. He was faithful to the worship of Jehovah, in the main, though there was a sad turning aside to idols. But he acted wisely in most of his ways, so that the wisdom of Solomon became proverbial. That result was due to the fact that God gave him “wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the seashore.” He asked of God wisdom and God gave it to him. But this foolish son of his asked not for wisdom. The scepter was there, so he grasped it! There was an empty throne, so he sat down upon it. I daresay he fancied it was a very fine thing to be king over Israel and his thoughts did not go much beyond the mere external pomp and splendor of royalty. He did not intend any ill, but he was not very determined upon doing that which was right. And probably he never thought of commencing his career by asking the blessing of God upon it. I hope no one whom I am addressing would resolve to lead a bad life, but, mind you, it may happen to you, as it did to Rehoboam, that the summary of your life will be, “he did evil because he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord.”

So much in life depends upon how we begin that I could wish that no boy ever left his home to go to school—that no boy ever left school to go to a clerkship, or to serve his apprenticeship to a business—without stopping a while and praying the Lord to guide him in every step so that he might act wisely. And I might add that it would be well if older men would do the same and, in beginning anything fresh, prepare their hearts to seek the Lord.

This young man Rehoboam felt that he needed some kind of guidance, yet he did not seek the Lord, but *he called together a number of counselors*. Now, it is quite right to seek counsel of men who are wiser than we are, but he who trusts to earthly counselors instead of to God is guilty of great provocation against Him who is full of wisdom and who ought to be the Guide of our youth and of our whole lives. Calling his father’s wise counselors together at the beginning of his reign, Rehoboam submitted the people’s grievances to them, but, like the fool that he was, he rejected their counsel and followed the foolish advice of the younger men like himself—the fops about the court, the swells, the gilded youths of the period—and so committed a gross act of folly.

It usually happens that when men will not ask counsel of God, if they go to other sources for guidance, *they generally accept the very worst form of advice*. When men trust in men, it is strange how often they trust in the worst and not in the best of men! Yet I know not that it is strange, for that same infatuation which leads a man to reject his God, almost necessarily leads him to despise those upon whom God has bestowed any measure of light and wisdom. So this young prince asked counsel of others who were as foolish as he was and the result of following their advice was that 10 tribes out of the 12 were torn away from him and formed into an independent kingdom. What a different life there might have been, not only for himself, but for those who were dependent upon him, if he had but humbly waited upon God for guidance and had given the people a gentle reply to their very reasonable demands, and had ruled them, not with a rod of

iron, but with gentleness and kindness! There might have been two Solomons succeeding each other which, perhaps, is too much to expect among kings and princes, for Solomons are rather scarce in that direction. However, so it was, because he did not begin by seeking the Lord, he made a fool of himself and a failure of his life.

Perhaps some of you young people say, “Well, we are not going to give our hearts to God, yet we shall not be fools.” Ah, but you are already fools, or else you would not talk like that! And the probability is that before long, in the plenitude of your self-sufficient wisdom, you will take a step which seems plain enough to you, but which will lead you into a world of sorrow and to no end of trouble! Blessed is that young man who says, “My Father, You shall be the Guide of my youth.” Blessed is that young man who gets God on board the vessel of his life at the start, with His hand on the rudder, to steer the vessel through a safe and prosperous voyage till he reaches the Fair Havens and casts anchor in the Port of Peace!

This, then, was the folly of Rehoboam, that he did not begin life by seeking God and, therefore, he began it foolishly.

II. But our text means more than that. It means, next, that REHOBOAM SHOWED NO HEART IN DOING WHAT WAS RIGHT.

He did what was right at the first but he had no heart in doing it. The Prophet came to him when he had mustered his forces, and forbade him to go to war with the followers of Jeroboam—and he disbanded all his troops. That was, truly, a most worthy thing to do, and you and I, looking on at the scene, would have said, “That is a noble young prince. If he obeys the voice of a Prophet like that, surely he fears God.” But he did not. He did right because *from the training his father had given him, he had a high esteem for Prophets of God*. He had seen his father entertain Prophets with great honor and he did not like to despise them.

There is many a young man, nowadays, who has great regard for God’s ministers, though he is not, himself, a Christian. He remembers the times when they used to be at his father’s house, when they slept in the Prophet’s chamber. He remembers many happy evenings he had, as a boy, when they were guests at his home—and he could not bring his mind to despise them, or to make a jest of what they say. No, to some extent, he gives heed to what they have to say, and he tries to shape his moral character according to their teaching, yet he does not yield himself to Christ—so nothing comes of it all.

If it had been a prophet of Baal who had come to him, I am afraid that Rehoboam would have done just what he told him to do. And there are now many young men who appear to be excellent simply because they are in good hands, but if they had been under the influence of evil men, they would have been as bad as could be, for they have no individuality—they have no heart in doing the right thing. It is well to come to the House of God, my dear Friends, but I like to see people come because they *want* to come. I observe some people, even on the Sabbath, walking along to their place of worship with their books under their arm in a most solemn manner and all the while looking as if they were going to be flogged! And when they come out, they look just as if they had passed through that experience!

I like to see people go tripping to God’s House with sacred joy, as if it were the merriest place in all the world. When I come into the Tabernacle, I often repeat those lines by Dr. Watts—

*“Peace be within this sacred place,
And joy a constant guest!
With holy gifts and heavenly Grace,
Be her attendants blest!
My soul shall pray for Zion still,
While life or breath remains!
There my best friends, my kindred, dwell,
There God my Savior reigns.”*

It is well to worship the Lord heartily, with a zest, with holy fervor, to do it because you like to do it and take a delight in it. It is one thing to be right in appearance and another thing to be right in your soul. “But,” says one, “I thought it was best to do right when you do not like to do it. I thought there was something very meritorious if a person was religious though he could not endure it.” No. That is *hypocrisy* and nothing else!

When a person puts on the garb of religion, all the while feeling that he would gladly take it off if he could—only pretending to be a Christian. When, if he could have his own way, he would have a Continental Sabbath—he is nothing but a hypocrite! When he does get his own way, he manages to have his Continental Sabbath and he just amuses himself

all that he possibly can on God's holy day. No matter what the foreigners do, he is among them in the very thick of it, and he thinks they have a very blessed kind of Sunday. When he is at home, he does not do such naughty things—oh, no, certainly not! And this hypocrisy is what you think is virtue? Because you do not like true godliness, you think it must be good for you to pretend to imitate it—but that will never do. The Psalmist rightly says, “Blessed is the man whose strength is in You; in whose heart are the ways of them.” He is the man who runs in the way of God's commandments with intense delight! But this Rehoboam did not do so. When he was doing right, he did it because he felt some respect for the Prophet, but that was all.

It was soon evident that his heart was not right towards God, for *he imitated his father Solomon in his faults*. His father's great fault was the multiplication of wives and into this evil, Rehoboam fell. And, moreover, all the strength of Rehoboam's heart and soul went in what was a very proper direction in itself, namely, in the building of cities and the storing of them with provisions, and fencing and garrisoning the towns. Yet that direction was a very bad one because it took him away from God. I like to see a young man, whatever he does, throw his whole soul into it, but not so act that he throws his soul away from God by it. There was some force in what the first of the Rothschilds is reported to have said when he had been making money. Someone said to him, “You are bringing up your sons to make money, I suppose?” He answered, “Of course I am, what else should they do?” “But, still,” said the other, “I am sure that you must wish them to look to something higher and something better.” “No,” he replied, “I do nothing of the kind! If a man wants to make money, he must give his heart and his soul to it—and that is what these young men have to do. And they must not have their minds distracted from the one pursuit they have in life, namely, to make money, or else they will never succeed at it.”

I have no doubt there is much truth in that remark which also applies to higher things. There is such little real force in man, at his best, that he must put all of it into one thing if he is to have success in it. So this Rehoboam put his whole soul into one thing and, therefore, “he did evil because he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord,” but prepared his heart to seek after other things. “But,” someone asks, “may not a man be attentive to business?” He ought to be! He should be diligent in business, but always with this higher motive outreaching everything else—that he may win Christ and be found in Him and that his life may bring glory to the God who made him and to the Christ who redeemed him with His precious blood. But, oh, young man, if you do not prepare your heart to seek the Lord. If what you do that is good, is done in a happy-go-lucky style. If you are good because you happen to be in a good connection and you stay right because Christian people around you keep you right—and you would not like to grieve your father and vex your friends—then there is nothing in it at all! You will go to the bad, one of these days, when you get into other circumstances and meet with new temptations.

A man ought not to live depending upon somebody else's backbone—he should have one of his own—and if he has none, one of these days he will be crushed. If you profess to be a Christian, throw your whole soul into it and say, “Let others do as they will—as for me, I will serve the Lord and not feel it a bondage, but take a delight, in it. And I will serve Him with all my heart!”—

*“Dare to be a Daniel,
Dare to stand alone!
Dare to have a purpose firm,
Dare to make it known!”*

III. There is a third point about Rehoboam contained in the words of our text, “He did evil because he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord,” that is, HE WAS NOT FIXED AND PERSEVERING IN HIS RELIGION. The original bears that sense.

He began well and, in the first three years of his reign, the nation worshipped God. I do not suppose that he really did so himself, but, still, he was on that side. He was one of the evangelical party. He was one of the God-fearing party and, therefore, he prospered. His apparent reverence for God brought the Levites to live in his dominions and brought others of the best people of Israel to come there and to strengthen his hands. Thus he prospered and you might have thought that as his religion brought him prosperity, he would stick to it. Not he! There was no “stick to it” in him.

As soon as ever he prospered, *he began to grow proud*. He was a fine fellow, he had splendid kingdom, a very attractive dominion. Did not all the good people come there? So growing proud, he began to forsake the Lord and the people, following his evil example, worshipped in groves instead of coming to the Temple at Jerusalem. Worse than that, they set

up graven images and idolatrous pillars. And their heart went aside from God and they practiced the most accursed sin that ever stained and defiled the face of the earth! You know the sin for which God sent the judgment of fire upon Sodom and Gomorrah—and there were some of these people who thus sinned, making an act of worship out of the most bestial crime. Yet Rehoboam did not trouble himself about that. When the people feared God, he was willing, then, they should do so, but now, if they followed Ashtaroth, they might do as they liked. He was, after all, but a young ruler who thought that the principal business of a king was to enjoy himself—so he let things go just as they could. He was king, but, still—well, if God was good, it was proper for good people to reverence Him—but if other people did not, he did not trouble his head much about that matter—it sat very lightly upon him.

In consequence of this, *God brought up Shishak from Egypt* with multitudes of chariots and horsemen and an innumerable host of people. Then were the Jews in a state of great alarm and Rehoboam, who was easily molded any way—for he had a sort of India-rubber heart—humbled himself and the princes of Israel humbled themselves. God knew that these other people were sincere in humbling themselves, so He allowed their sincerity to season the whole bulk and He, therefore, accepted the humiliation of king and people and delivered them.

You see how readily Rehoboam went—first towards God, then towards idols—and then back again towards God. *He was always ready to shift and change.* He worked no great reforms in the land—we do not read that he held a great Passover, as Hezekiah did, or that the high places were taken away, And, as soon as Shishak was gone, he felt perfectly content. There was not anything real and permanent in his religion—it did not hold him. He held *it* sometimes, but it never held him.

O dear Friends, is not this Rehoboam a specimen of a great many people who are now living? They get into a warm-hearted meeting and they feel the power of it. They meet a friend and he takes them into different society altogether, where there are merry songs and plentiful jokes, and they feel the power of that. They hold with the hare and they run with the hounds. They are “everything by starts, and nothing long.” And the result is that they do evil, for, when a man is not fixed in his resolve to do good—when he does not take his stand, in the name of God, with a life and death determination, it is not doubtful which way he will go!

IV. The last point involved in this description of Rehoboam is this—HE HAD NO CARE ABOUT SERVING GOD.

He did not care whether he served the Lord or not and, as to serving Him in a right spirit, that never entered into his head. He never “prepared his heart.” If he went to a service—well, he was there, but that was all. Some people who have come here tonight never thought of breathing a prayer before they came, nor after they entered the building. They would even venture, if we allowed them, to *partake* of the Communion at the Lord’s Table without self-examination and without prayer—they do everything without any preparation of the heart.

But look, Sirs, *if there is no care about making the heart go right, it must go wrong* because the natural tendency of our mind is toward evil. If you leave your heart to follow its own natural impulse, it is impossible that it should seek the Lord. It is only when it is *prepared* to seek the Lord that it ever seeks Him—and that preparation of the heart is from God, so that if we do not ask the Lord to prepare our hearts to seek Him, we shall never seek His face at all!

And look yet again, *all the current in which we are found runs the wrong way*, so that if there is no preparation of the heart, we know which way it will go. Company will draw it, not towards right, but towards wrong. And the set of the age—the general current of the period—is not towards God but away from Him. If you put a barge in the middle of the river, I know which way it will go—it will go with the tide. It is only by adjusting the rudder, and by wise steering, and hard rowing that it could be made to go against it. So, if your heart is not prepared to seek the Lord, it will not seek Him and it is sure to go in the opposite direction. What is preparing the heart to seek the Lord? I should say that it is something like this.

First, *to feel my need of God.* What can I, a creature, do without my Creator? What can I do without a Father in Heaven? I have offended Him. I have sinned against Him. I have gone far away from Him, but I want Him to forgive me and to save me. We must be conscious of this need—may the Spirit of God prepare us to seek the Lord by giving us a deep sense of our desperate need of God’s mercy!

The next thing is *to cry unto God for help*—“Lord, save me! God be merciful to me a sinner! Renew my heart, change my nature, subdue my stubborn will and make me Your child!” Prayer prepares the heart to seek the Lord and you will never seek Him if you do not pray to Him. In fact, prayer is an essential exercise in seeking the Lord.

Then, further, if we would be prepared to seek the Lord, there must be *a submission of ourselves to His guidance*—a coming to Him and saying, “Here I am, Lord. Make me what I ought to be. I agree to Your Commandments. I delight in them, help me to run in them. I yield my proud self and lay down at Your feet my prejudices and my willfulness and ask You to guide me in the right way.”

There must also be *the acceptance of God’s plan of salvation*. He who would live the right kind of life must come to God and say, “My God, You save them that believe. Help me to believe. You give eternal life to as many as believe in Jesus Christ, Your Son. Lord, I believe. Help You my unbelief.” This is the true way of preparing the heart to seek the Lord.

And even when that faith is given, the right preparation is to *serve God always with thoughtfulness and care*—not to go blundering on any way, hit or miss, as some do. It is a terribly sad thing to pretend to serve God without thought, without watchfulness, without care, for God is not such an One that we may rush into His Presence whenever we like, without premeditation, solemnity, or reverence. If you were to go to visit a king, you must be prepared to enter the royal presence under court regulations—and behave yourself in a seemly manner. And much more is this necessary when we seek the Lord. Every holy duty ought to be thought over carefully. Every prayer, every almsgiving, every attempt to serve God should be done with due consideration—and with holy anxiety to do it in the right manner, at the right time, and in the right spirit.

Now, because Rehoboam did not act thus and did not, indeed, care to trouble his brain about such things as this, “he did evil.” And if any man here says, “Well, I do not trouble myself about religion. I believe I shall be all right. I cannot be always sitting down and pulling a long face and reading the Bible, and trying to find out how I am to live. I just take the first chance that comes and do the best I can.” If you talk like that, you will do evil as surely as you are a man, for he who devotes not his whole soul to fighting the battle of life will certainly lose it. To go to Heaven is not such an easy matter that every fool may do it before breakfast. It is a thing which, as it needed the blood of the Son of God to pave the way, and needed the eternal Spirit, Himself, to give us life to run in that way—is a matter of serious import and of solemn moment—and the whole heart, soul and strength must be set upon the attainment of eternal life, or we shall not secure it. “The kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.” So, may God the Holy Spirit help you to think seriously about Divine things, or else you will do evil because you prepared not your heart to seek the Lord.

Now I want just two or three more minutes in order to make an application of my subject. And, first, dear Friends, is it not possible—I want to whisper this round among the members of this Church—is it not quite possible that there may be some nominal professors who come under the description in the text? Their conduct appears to be admirable and, up to now, has probably been so, but they have never prepared their heart to seek the Lord! I fear that, in all our churches, there are people who are called Christians simply because they were brought up among Christians. They need to be brought down, to be converted, regenerated, born-again—for they have only been born after the flesh.

There was an Ishmael in the household of Abraham, so we need not wonder if there are such people in all our churches. They have never prepared their hearts to seek the Lord. It has not been heart-work with them. Perhaps conscience sometimes says to them, “Is it not a pity that you never joined the church?” I know who will take this question home and fret over it—it is you good creatures for whom I do not mean it, but those to whom it applies will say, “Oh, he cannot mean me!” There are, alas, many such people and they are hardly likely to be converted now because they entered the church before they were converted and, consequently, whatever is said, they think, “He cannot mean me.” But, my dear Friend, we *do* mean the very person who says, “He cannot mean me,” and we do not mean some of those who take home those searching questions and are troubled by them.

Whenever anybody says to me, “Oh, I am afraid I am a hypocrite!” I do not think he really is one. I never knew one who was really a hypocrite, who was afraid he was one! Those who are truly so usually have no such fear. Still, it will be well for each of us to ask these, questions, “Is my heart prepared to seek the Lord? Is my heart in my religion? Do I try to serve God with all my heart? Do I make it a matter of serious thought, or is my religion all upon the outside?” If it is so, the probability is that, one of these days, there will come a sudden temptation to you and over you will go! I have known

ministers, deacons, and elders—gray old men—fall into sins which one would have thought only silly boys would fall into! And we can only think, when we see such men apostatize, that they never prepared their heart to seek the Lord. Their religion was only skin-deep—it was not that true Christianity which has its root in the soul by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit.

Now another question. Are there any young men here who are very hopeful and promising characters, who like religious gatherings and attend to everything that is of good repute—and yet have not sought and found the Lord? Shall I tell you what troubled me before I gave my heart to Christ? It was something which had great influence upon me in bringing me to decision. There was a boy at school who was some few years older than I was and he was a very excellent lad. My father (you know that fathers speak thus, sometimes) used to tell me he wished I was half as good as that boy was—he was a kind of pattern lad. Well, he grew up and came to London to a drapery establishment. He wrote home most delightful letters to his mother, telling her that he was going to hear such-and-such a minister on Sunday morning, and such another one on Sunday evening. And I used to hear what a good lad he was. All of a sudden he came home—he could not be kept in the establishment. There was money missing and he was suspected of stealing it. He had not been to those places of worship at all! He had spent his Sundays—well, Satan knew where—he had been as bad as bad could be all the while he was there.

My father never mentioned him to me any more, but I distinctly recollect feeling, “Well, if So-and-So, whom I thought and believed, and who seemed to be such a good lad, to whom I used to look up, has turned out such a downright scamp, may not I do the same?” It seemed to me that if I did not begin in a better way than he did, by really getting a new heart and a right spirit, I might morally come to the same sort of smash as he did. And I may further tell you that among the things that led me to Christ was the Doctrine of the Final Perseverance of the Saints. I heard that Jesus would keep the feet of His saints and I said to myself, “Then, if I give myself to Him, He will ensure the preservation of my character and He will keep me to the end.” And the only bargain I ever made with Him, when I gave myself up to Him, was that He would always have me in His holy keeping. O young men, I can recommend that plan to you! I earnestly entreat you not to commence life even with the best moral resolutions. Go straight away to the Lord Jesus and ask Him to grant you Grace that you may give yourself up wholly to Him. You cannot keep yourself, but He can keep you and He will keep you even unto the end, for He has said, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.”

Lastly, do I address anyone—old or young, it is no matter, who, like Rehoboam, has not sought the Lord and, like Rehoboam has got into a world of trouble through it? Have you lost the 10 tribes? Has Shishak come against you? You did wrong, you know you did, for you forsook your God, and now, after that, do you still refuse to seek Him? For, mark you, Rehoboam did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord even after he had been attacked by the king of Egypt! Chastisements are lost upon some people! There is someone of Rehoboam’s sort here tonight. It is the first time he has been out since his serious illness. Blessed be God that you did not die then, my Friend! You know what the angels heard you say when you were lying on your bed. “Please God, if I am ever raised up from this illness, I will seek the Lord.” That is partly the reason why you are here and I am very glad to see you! But you must not think that coming here will save you. It is no use seeking the Tabernacle—you must seek the Lord! Oh, do not, I pray you, let this warning be neglected, nor let the vow that was registered in Heaven be forgotten—but seek the Savior with all your heart!

And you, my Friend, over yonder, were in a shipwreck. There were many lives lost and you had been a swearing fellow, but you said, “Please God, if I get ashore, I will turn over a new leaf.” Well I do not think the new leaf is much improvement on the old one! That was not what you meant, was it? It was that you would become a better man if you were saved from the jaws of Hell. You were saved from the watery grave, yet you have not prepared your heart to seek the Lord. O my dear Friend, God does not send Shishak many times, you know! After He has sent him once, and there is no softening of the heart, or girding up of the loins to seek Him, He will send another messenger and it will be written of you, as it was of Rehoboam, “He slept with his fathers, and his son reigned in his place.” But where was Rehoboam? He never sought the Lord so, perhaps, when he had passed out of this world, where he had shilly-shallied and vacillated, where he had been pliable and plastic to every influence—when he passed into the next world there was realized by him the terror of that dreadful curse, “Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer. They shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me.”

Then was fulfilled to him that other terrible prophecy, “Because I have called, and you refused. I have stretched out My hand and no man regarded. But you have set at nothing all My counsel, and would none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity. I will mock when your fear comes.” Think of God’s laughing and mocking at a soul that has passed into eternity without Him—it is a most dreadful thing, whatever it may mean, and it will be fulfilled in you—you hopeful people, you plausible people, you undecided people unless you prepare your heart to seek the Lord!

It may be that some of you are standing, at this moment, on the very verge of everlasting life and if the devil can keep you there, he will be perfectly satisfied, for you will perish if you remain there. Do not satisfy him, I implore you! O mighty Grace of God, come upon them, now, and make them, each one, say, “I will stand here no longer! I will cross the line—I will give myself up, once and for all, to Jesus.” That is right, young man, young woman, cross the river, burn the bridges, sink your boats and say—

*“Tis done, the great transaction’s done!
I am my Lord’s, and He is mine.
He drew me, and I followed on,
Charmed to confess the voice Divine!”*

The Lord make it so, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

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