

SOMETHING WORTH KNOWING

A SERMON

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“Acquaint now yourself with him and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto you.” Job 22:21

THERE is in the speeches of Job’s three friends a legal twang; men evidently not yet so taught as to renounce all confidence in the flesh, and for their faith and hope to be in the Lord alone. And hence they, just as nature will judge of the Lord’s dealings, supposed, and did not hesitate pretty plainly to insinuate it to Job, that there must have been some enormity of conduct somewhere, or else the Lord never would have dealt with Job in the way in which he did deal with him. “Surely if you were innocent, he would arise for you;” and of course the next step in the same direction would have been very natural; that is, when the Lord turned Job’s captivity. Now then, as Job came into all this trouble through something very bad that he had done, of course, now that his captivity is turned, he has got out of the trouble by something very good that he has done. And this is just the way that nature judges of God and of his dealings. There is a man, and a viper fastens upon his him, well, no doubt he is a murderer; for surely a viper would not fasten upon that man’s hand unless there was something very wrong somewhere; he must be a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, vengeance suffers not to live. But when they looked that he should have swollen, supposing that this viper had sent its poison into the system of the apostle, when they thought he should have swollen or fallen down dead, he shook the beast off into the fire, and felt no harm; and then they said, well, then, he is a god. Always wrong, you see; then he is a god. He was neither a murderer nor a god. And Job had neither done anything wrong as the ground of his calamity, nor had he done anything good as the ground of that turning of his captivity which the Lord favored him with. And such, alas! is human nature; and so, Christians, and even ministers, and all the ages have found it. Hence the apostle, when he was at Lystra, and the miracle there wrought, and the wonderful way which he preached. Why, they said, gods are come down unto men; and they began to prepare a sacrifice to offer unto the apostle and his companions; and then the next day they changed their minds and dragged them out of the city and thought they had killed them. So much for falling into the hands of men; so much for human friendship, so much for creature integrity. And so, with Jobs friends. Why, as he said, after all they had said to him. “I desire to reason with God. But you are forgers of lies; you are all physicians of no value.” And so Eliphaz here, he tells Job to acquaint himself with God, and to be at peace, and thereby good shall come unto you; as

though he should say, that is what I do. Yes, but you have never been in Job's place. But by and by we draw nearer to a conclusion; And the Lord steps in, and he meets these three friends of Job, and he says, "you have not spoken at me the things that is right, as my servant Job has. Therefore, take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering, and my servant Job shall pray for you, for he will I accept. "Why, you are so ill mannered in your very prayers you did not pray as I will receive; there is so much Pharisaism mixed up with your prayers; you have been so among evil communications, you have not yet learnt good gospel manners; so that you cannot even pray in a way that is pleasing in my sight. But my servant Job knows he is but dust and ashes; He is mean in his own eyes; He is humbled down; he will pray in faith; he knows something of the perfection that is in mediation; "He shall pray for you, for him will I accept, least I deal with you after your folly." And they were blessed with grace enough to bring the sacrifice, and to come to Job, and to be glad for Job to pray for them. No doubt previously to this, one would say to the other, oh, that bigoted Job, calling us forgers of lies, and physicians of no value. The Lord will reprove him for that; the Lord will put him to rights for that; the Lord will chastise him for saying such things of such dear pious creatures as we are. That would be their reasoning. But how confounded must have been their carnal reasoning when the Lord came in and took the part of poor afflicted Job and put these low doctrine men to rights. I think afterwards they became high doctrine men; for I think these three friends of Job, we should call them in our modern phraseology, low Calvinists; Job himself was a high Calvinist, a thorough hyper-Calvinist. And you will get, in his next chapter, the answer to this advice given by Eliphaz in this chapter. In the next chapter. Job goes on to describe what his experience was; that he could not find the Lord when he pleased; that it was his desire to find the Lord; that he had tried but could not do so; he was obliged to wait. But still Job was not without his consolation; Job knew that he should come forth as gold, and Job knew that the Lord was of one mind, and none could turn him; so that Job had to do with the counsels of God, the settlements and the decrees of the most high God; in these he stood fast.

But though the advice here of Eliphaz has in it this legal twang. I think we may nevertheless make use of his language in the gospel sense of the word and put a better meaning to his words than he himself at that time associated with them. We shall therefore take the subject in a gospel form; and in doing so, there are things before us in our text, and connected therewith, understood according to the analogy of faith; that is, according to the order of the new covenant there are things which I hope and pray may in the few moments we speak thereon be profitable unto us. I will therefore in the first place describe *what this acquaintance with the Lord is*, or what it is to have a saving acquaintance with the Lord. Secondly. *The reconciliation*; "be at peace." Thirdly and lastly. The good that in this order of things shall come unto all such persons.

I notice, then, first, *the acquaintance*. Now, then, in this saving acquaintance with the Lord, there are two things to be considered. First, the object to be acquainted with; and, secondly, the nature of this saving acquaintance with the blessed God. Now, first then, Job, this very person to whom Eliphaz spoke, was already acquainted with God; Eliphaz was a man that was not acquainted with God, I mean, not clearly acquainted with God. Here is a man that is not clearly acquainted with God advising one that is clearly acquainted with God to make himself acquainted with God. Here is a man trying to get Job to receive the doctrine of Duty Faith, of free will, have you and human power. But, as shown in the next chapter, Job's scouts the whole of it; and I like Job for it; I glory in it; I glory in being brought to nothing that Christ may be all in all. I will take it, then in a gospel

form, and I will take Job's own testimony, for Job is a great favorite with us all that know anything of our hearts, and a what tribulation is, and that know anything of God's dealings and blasting away many of our hopes in many respects; and on the other hand turning captivities, rolling in mercy's were perhaps we expected nothing but destruction; such will prize Job as a servant and a witness of God. I will therefore take his testimony which he has given us in his 19th Chapter. He there describes how it was he was acquainted with God. "I know that my redeemer lives;" and I will not now quote all the words; suffice it to say there are four things to be considered there in the object of his acquiescence. First, there is a living Redeemer; second, there is Christ's humiliation; third, there is the resurrection; fourth, there is the realization of personal and eternal interest. All this, Job, in his 19th Chapter, reads out very beautifully and gives his friends a word of advice on the ground thereof. He says, "I know that my redeemer lives." Now the Redeemer their means three things, taking the Hebrew word *goel* for my guide. It means first *a kinsman*; secondly, *one that buys or redeems*; and thirdly *an avenger*. It means first *a kinsman*. Job therefor knew that there was a New Covenant relationship constituted in the councils of God between God and man. He knew that there was a person who's going first we're from a old, even from everlasting; and that this divine person stood in covenant relationship to the Father, and to the Holy Spirit, into the whole election of grace; that there is that here was an eternal relationship, founded in a covenant ordered in all things and sure; and in this relationship Job saw this divine persons responsibility, that he was the surety; and it was his right to redeem; and that he came into the relationship to man that made it Christ's right to redeem; as the Savior himself says "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"

Here, then, Job saw that the mighty debt that sin had entailed was paid; here Job saw that every power that might otherwise, and must otherwise hold him fast, had lost its hold; he saw it was redemption from hell; a redemption from the curse; a redemption from sin; a redemption from the grave and having this eternal redemption, he rejoiced that this same Redeemer lived. "I know that my Redeemer lives." And as he saw, then, this relationship exist, and saw in this new covenant relationship eternal redemption, he saw also the humiliation of Christ; "that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." Some apply this to an age yet in the future, called the millennial age; but no one would wish me, I am sure, to advance upon that subject what I do not believe; and I am sure you would not wish me to occupy your time upon controversial matters. I shall, therefore, take that scripture in the same light that I have ever taken it. "That he shall stand at the latter day upon the Earth," the latter day of the Jewish dispensation. The Jewish dispensation was about to expire, and Christ at this latter day of the Jewish dispensation should stand upon the Earth. And there is another point, which I would not have you pass over for the world and that is the form of speech in which it is put. I understand it not to be a declaration merely of his humiliation, that he should just be made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death and be crowned with glory and honor; but I understand it to mean something more. "But he shall *stand*;" just let the emphasis lie upon that one-word *stand*; "He shall *stand* upon the earth." Adam was placed upon the earth; but the last Adam, when he comes to the earth, shall not fall. The first Adam stood upon the earth a little while, but he fell; but the last Adam shall *stand*, he shall not fall. And the Jewish priesthood and the Jewish royalty fell, and the Jewish nation fell; but when Christ shall stand upon the earth, he shall stand firm in the characters he bears and shall not fall. He shall stand upon the earth; for he is the last Adam and the representation of his people; and all that pertain to their eternal inheritance, to their eternal life, in a word, their eternal all, depended upon him; it was all in trust to him. Now if he fall, all is finally gone; he did not fall; he stood up under the weight of

his responsibilities; he never staggered, he never stumbled, much less did he fall. And then, the priests of old, they had merely to offer sacrifices, not themselves, but they had to offer such sacrifices as the Lord appointed; but Jesus Christ had to bear the sins of his people in his own body; he had to pour out his own soul; he himself must be made a curse; he himself must feel the weight of these things; he himself must encounter the sword of justice. And yet he stood upon the earth, he never fell. It did not matter where he was; his heart was fixed, and its steps were all ordered; he never stumbled nor fell and then the Jewish royalty was lost, but Christ never lost his royalty; he stood in all the glories he bore. Oh, what a sweet thought is this then that he stood up under our sins and against them, till there was not a sin left; that he stood up under the curse due to us, until there was not a curse left; that he stood up under the threatening, until there was not a threatening left pertaining to those for whom he died; that he stood up against the powers of darkness, until Satan and all his legions were destroyed; and he stood against the monster death, until death was destroyed. "I know my redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." here is the acquiescence. Why, this knowledge, to know this Jesus Christ in this new covenant relationship, to know him in this humiliation and to see, believer, what ten thousand stumbles you have had, not only before you knew the Lord, it was all stumble then, but since you have known the Lord; and can you take refuge in your own supposed good life? Can you take refuge in your own supposed good works? No; you will be glad to fly from the good and the bad and be glad to receive Jesus Christ as the hiding place from the wind as the covert from the storm as the water in a dry place to refresh our parched souls, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Here, then, is a Redeemer. "Acquaint now yourself with him." Ah, Eliphaz, we can only do this by the grace of God; we can acquaint ourselves with him only as he is pleased to teach us; in no other way. We cannot do it in the way that Eliphaz would here exhort; we can do it in God's way; for no man can know the Son in the way I have now described, but he to whom the Father shall reveal him. Here, then, is acquaintance with the blessed God. And I tell you that as you go on, you will find the wilderness get more and more dreary; as you go on, you will find old nature more and more troublesome; you will find adversities thicken, and clouds darken; all to make you prize the Lord in that order in which Job was thus so nicely acquainted with him. Then the third point in that testimony is the resurrection. "And though after my skin;" Job's skin was already gone in a sense; disease had destroyed his skin till it appeared gone. Satan has smitten me with sore boils, and my skin seems one mass of corruption. Still, though it is gone, and according to the order of fleshly nature I can never be restored, still, if the Lord put his hand to it, I know that even my mortal health can be restored, which, indeed it was for there is not anything too hard for the Lord. But "that after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Just now it was a redeemer, and then secondly, he stood upon the Earth and now he is God. Why, this is like Thomas, "My Lord and my God." I see an incarnate God die; I see him rise triumphant; I see him ascend on high; I see in oneness with him the resurrection of all that are his. Job understood the doctrine, though the words were not yet given, in Isaiah, when the Father said to the Son and there is the Son's glorious reply, and then in comes the efficient testimony of the Holy Spirit, "your dead men shall live", and that they shall, for although worms destroy this body, I shall rise a spiritual body, yet it will be a body, it will be flesh, though not mortal, corruptible, perishable flesh; it will be immortal flesh, incorruptible flesh; "Yet in my flesh shall I see God" "Your dead men shall live." then comes the redeemer's answer, "With my dead body shall they arise." then comes the testimony of the Holy Spirit, "Awake and sing, you that well in the dust; for your dew is the dew of herbs." many times does he waken us up now to sing of his precious blood, to sing of eternal redemption; and at the great day, in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, when the

Redeemer shall come down the partings sky's, and his people shall hear his voice, and waken their slumbering bodies to life, it will be to awake to sing; "Awake and sing," not awake and come to judgment and that I see who has done the most good or the most evil; who has done the least evil and the most good; but "awake and sing." and so the saints as they arise from the grave the songs of heaven shall fall into their very mouths as it were; and the song shall burst forth, there and then, of "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God."

That is saving acquaintance with the Lord, to be thus acquainted with Christ as the Redeemer, Christ in his humiliation, Christ in his resurrection, "Whom I shall see for myself." Job was not a Roman Catholic: he was not content with a priest to intercede for him; but "whom I shall see for myself." He was not a Church of England man. My parson says, If I have been christened, and if I have been confirmed, and if I come to the sacrament, all will be well. No, no; Job would trust no one. "Whom I shall see for myself; and my eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." Never mind, I shall realize his presence; I shall see him at that day; I shall see him as he is. "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should thus be called the sons of God. Therefore, the world knows us not, because it knew him not; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Ah, human learning, excellent in your place, I cannot applaud you too highly in your place, but when you come to meddle with eternal things, then that which in its own place is wisdom, when it gets out of its place is nothing but foolishness. Hence, how many learned men, especially among the Germans, have written to prove that Job knew nothing whatever of the doctrine of the resurrection. But the Christian knows better than this; he knows that Job did know something of the resurrection.

Now, the next point in this acquaintance with him is, that of the kind of acquaintance. What was it? Why, it was that kind of knowledge, it was that kind of vital acquaintance with the truth, that Job would not, could not part with at any price. Ah, says the devil, he is nothing but a hypocrite, Lord. Why, look at his seven thousand sheep, and his five hundred yoke of oxen, and his three thousand camels, and his five hundred she asses, look at his great household, and see how you has made a hedge about him, and all that he has. That Job, he does not care much about the truth. Just put forth your hand, and take his property from him, and turn him into a poor man, and you will find then, that when his property is gone his religion is gone. But the lord knew better than that. Then the lord says, very well, go then. See when Satan gets loose, what ravages he makes. Well, how did matters turn out? After the messengers had told Job of the destruction of his property, and lastly of his children, Job said, well, "The lord gave, and the lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the lord," for he is not taking himself away, I have no desire to take myself away; he is stopping, and I myself will stop; though my earthly property is all gone, yet there is eternal life, and all the promises of salvation and eternal glory left, and I won't go away, I won't give it up; and he could not give it up; here then, is the spirit insisted upon by the savior as essential to choose discipleship, "Except a man forsake all that he has, he cannot be my disciple;" that is, except he has that spirit that if he were put to the test he would rather part with all than part with the truth. Well now, have you considered my servant Job? He is still perfect you see, after all; he is still upright; he's still eschews evil; he still holds fast his integrity, although you moved me against him. Yes, says the devil; I made a little mistake, Lord: "skin for skin, yes, all that the man has will he give for his life." I forgot, Lord. I began at the wrong end. If I have begun with affecting him, then that would have made him curse you. Very well, he in in your hand; see what you can do; but

save his life, mind that. Satan could not go beyond his mission, notice that. Your adversaries can come so far to injure you, but no farther; and they will injure you just far enough for their own destruction, just far enough for their own ruin; they will injure Mordecai, and get the gallows up, and come to the king for authority to hang him; but just as they come up to the point, Haman, not Mordecai, shall be hanged thereon. Save his life, says the devil; that's the worst of it. Ah, well, I will do what I can. So, the devil went forth, Satan went forth. and afflicted poor Job, until sat down on the ground, in a solitary, afflicted state; and his wife, poor thing, a weak-minded woman, evidently so, perhaps did not savingly know the truth, "Do you still retain your integrity?" That is your religion, is it? I would not have such a religion as that. You are one of the elect, Job, are you? Ah, I wouldn't be one of the elect for all the world, that I wouldn't. You are one of the favorites of heaven, are you? You talk about your being a Christian, and your God told you that you were perfect, and that you were upright, and that you feared him, and eschewed evil, and that you were everything he would wish you to be and now he has served you like this. I wouldn't be of such a religion as that. Anathematize God and die. When she said, "Curse God and die," it did not mean what we commonly attach to that word, but Anathematize God; that is, give up God; give up your religion; give up those high doctrines; do not be so extravagant; become more pious, and everybody will like you. Ah, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks;" not as one that is made wise unto salvation. "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. What, shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?" He has his end in view. I know not what he means as yet. These things are not joyous, but grievous; but afterwards they yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness. "In all this Job did not sin with his lips." That is a saving knowledge, sir. And this accords, you see, with the prophets and apostles; their sufferings could not make them give up the truth. Satan and the flesh would set all their troubles down to their religion. If you would but give up your religion, at least this gospel form, which subjects you to so much trouble, things would go better with you. I wonder what Job's friends did when the Lord turned Job's captivity? How wise they must have looked. Depend upon it, they walked off home, each by himself, would not go together, ashamed to look each other in the face; they would walk home, and meditate over the thing for six months together, and say, how wrong we were, how stupid, how misled we were. It was, no doubt, a lifetime lesson to these men. Ah, does not this apply to some of you? Such were some of you. The very truths you now love, did you not once despise. Did you not say of those ministers, Ah, they go so far; they go too far; they are presumptuous, they are extravagant, they are Antinomian, they are dangerous, till, by-and-bye, the Lord brought you into such a consciousness of your own wretchedness, sinfulness, and destitution, and helplessness, and gave rise to adverse winds and waves where hitherto all been smooth, and then your pious motives and doings all came to nothing and you are as bad as the best of us, and the worst cannot go too far for you now; the gospel cannot be too good for you now; Jesus Christ cannot be too great a Savior for you now; the promises of God cannot be too certain for you now. Now, you glory in these things; your language is, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Ah, then, happy the man that has this saving acquaintance with the truth; he will hold it fast at any price, and part with it at no price. See how the Lord turned Job's captivity; see, after his faith and patience had been tried, how the Lord proved himself in the end, to be very pitiful and very tender of mercy. But I suppose I must say no more upon this part, and I had better go on to the next; "Acquaint now yourself with him." this would be a very nice text for low Calvinists they would appeal to the natural man, and say, "Acquaint yourself with him." Well, what would you say? I should say this was a piece of Eliphaz's legal doctrine, and I should say to the natural man, Sir, you are dead in trespasses and sins; you are bound, tied, and fixed; and unless

God has mercy upon you, and opens your eyes, quickens your soul, and brings you to know him, you could no more make yourself acquainted with him, then the dust, of which Adam was formed, could form itself into a man without the forming hand of God. It is the work of God to make a Christian as much as to make a world; I would not give three straws for that acquaintance with God and salvation matters that the natural man can obtain. The natural man can obtain a great deal of acquiescence with the letter of God's word, and the theory of salvation but then that acquaintance and the acquaintance which the Lord gives are two different things. Men, if they came by the truth experimentally, would not turn and twist about in the way they do.

But then the next part is, "Be at peace." Now, here is a word of advice with reference to the dealings of the Lord with his people. It is very much easier to give such kind of advice than it is to take it, very much; nevertheless, it is a very desirable thing to be at peace; and I shall have a word or two upon that first, for I see I shall not be able to meddle this morning with the good that is to come, though there is a great deal in that part. Now, first, a word or two upon the desirability of being at peace with God in his dealings, and I shall mention two or three grounds of encouragement. First, that there is no trouble that he suffers, I use that form of speech, because we make a great many of our troubles ourselves, but still the Lord suffers them. If he sees I am going to row myself into great waters, he can stop the boat, and turn the wind, and drive me the other way; but in a variety of ways, he suffers us to make a great many mistakes, and sow a great many blackberries; and, we thought they were something else, and they grow up, and there are a quantity of thorns, and we wonder where they came from, why we sowed them! It is easy to go right when there is nothing to make you go wrong; it is easy to go along quietly when there is nothing to perplex you; and it is easy to be pleased, when there is nothing to offend you; and it is so easy to be reconciled when everything is just as you could wish it. But the first ground of encouragement to reconciliation is, that all he suffers is in loving kindness, and all he suffers to take place is in wisdom, to stain the pride and the glory of all flesh. There is no curse in any trouble that you have; no, not in any trouble, let it be what it may. There is no curse to them that are in Christ Jesus; the curse is gone I abhor with all my soul the doctrine that God frowns upon me, and chastens me and lays stripes upon me, and flogs me, and beats me about like a block of wood, because of something wrong in me. I hate such a doctrine. God does chasten his people, but he does it sovereignly, and not retributively. The main idea in chastisement is that of discipline. And the Lord intended to discipline Job. Job needed that discipline. I am not prepared to explain exactly how or where; but the Lord saw that he needed that kind of discipline; and what the Lord did to Job was in mercy, in loving kindness, and in wisdom. Is not this encouragement to make us kiss the rods?

"Not a single shaft can hit,
Until, until the God of love sees fit."

Come, then the Lord banish from your minds, those of you that are tried, that so-and-so happened because the Lord is angry with you. No such thing unless you'd like to set aside is immutable oath. He has sworn not to be angry with you, nor rebuke you. I would rather be deprived of my life, I would rather draw my last breath today, then be deprived of the sweet freedom that I have in Christ. I can look at God and Christ only as a God of love; I can look at Christ only as full of grace and compassion, in accordance with the perfection of his work; I can look at the Holy Spirit only in the positive decision of the new covenant. On the ground, therefore that God wisely sufferers' things to take place mysterious unto us, it is encouraging for us to be at peace. The second ground

of encouragement is that everything that is adverse, trying, and painful, will it surely come right, as that we exist, let it be what it may. If there be a vast extent of pardoning mercy needed, that pardoning mercy, like a mighty ocean, will roll in; if there be an infinity of skill needed to put the crooked things that have attended your pilgrimage into such a form as to bring everything straight at last, that's skill will be employed; so that the Lord might at last appeal to you, and say, "There, out of that which was crooked I have formed that which is straight; out of that which was rough, I have made that which is plain; out of that which was pit like, I have formed a level. That which seemed like overhanging, and rugged, and threatening mountains, ready to fall upon you and crush you, make it impossible for you to go any further, I have levelled to a plain; out of darkness have I brought light; out of evil have brought good; out of death have brought life. Sin itself I have made to subserve, and always be subservient to good." As the Lord lives, it will come right at last. If I were to go home and die today, everything is right, perfectly right. God suffered some mysterious things in the life of David, but it came right at last, "all my salvation, and all my desire." Ah, then, let not your troubles and adversities, let not conscience and Satan persuade you that they are evidence of God's wrath against you. Such reflections will give you gloomy views of the Lord, put the Lord at a distance, and make you have hard thoughts of God; and just in proportion as you have hard thoughts of God, just in like proportion will your hearts sink, your faith be weakened, your hope falter, your love grow cold, and the soul be at a distance from God. But when you are enabled to believe in the infinite sufficiency of the redemption of Christ, the infinite sufficiency of his mediation, to believe in that, and to say with Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him," just to be once satisfied that your soul has a divine acquaintance with God in Christ Jesus, and with what Christ has done that none of these things that take place are curses. They are tribulations, but the Lord suffers them, and they are not evidences of his wrath.

Secondly, I have said they shall come right at the last. This is but delightful truth, come right at the last. I often smile at the ditties that I read in books about such and such a man, if he had not made a little mistake there, if he had not happened to have done this or done the other, he could have gone down to his grave with such beautiful spotless name. That is it; that is what the flesh glories in ten times more than its glories in the Lord Jesus Christ. Such doleful ditties I have read. But when I come to the word of God, and read the eloquence there, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth. Yes, says the spirit, that they may rest in their labors and their works do follow them," not the works of the flesh, no these will not follow them; Christ's atoning blood has put them all away, but they're works of faith shall follow them. "Cornelius your prayers and your arms", not their sins their faults, and their fallacies, but your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God."