

THE SOUL-WINNER;

OR,

HOW TO LEAD SINNERS TO THE SAVIOUR.

BY C. H. SPURGEON

“The salvation of one soul is worth more than the framing of a
Magna Charta of a thousand worlds.”—*Keble*.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

This volume is issued in accordance with a plan formed by Mr. Spurgeon; indeed, he had already prepared for the press the greater part of the material here published, and the rest of his manuscripts have been inserted after only slight revision. It was his intention to deliver to the students of the Pastors' College a short course of Lectures upon what he termed "that most royal employment"—Soul-Winning,—and, having completed the series, he purposed to collect his previous utterances to other audiences upon the same theme, and to publish the whole for the guidance of all who desired to become soul-winners, and with the hope also of inducing many more professing Christians to engage in this truly blessed service for the Saviour.

This explanation will account for the form in which the topic is treated in the present book. The first six chapters contain the College Lectures; then follow four Addresses delivered to Sunday-school teachers, open-air preachers, and friends gathered at Monday evening prayer-meetings at the Tabernacle; while the rest of the volume consists of Sermons in which the work of winning souls is earnestly commended to the attention of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

For more than forty years, Mr. Spurgeon was, by his preaching and writing, one of the greatest soul-winners; and by his printed words still continues to be the means of the conversion of many all over the world. It is believed, therefore, that thousands will rejoice to read what he spoke and wrote concerning what he called "the chief business of the Christian minister."

HOW TO RAISE THE DEAD.

Fellow-labourers in the vineyard of the Lord, let me call your attention to a most instructive miracle wrought by the prophet Elisha, as recorded in the fourth chapter of the Second Book of Kings. The hospitality of the Shunamite woman had been rewarded by the gift of a son; but, alas! all earthly mercies are of uncertain tenure, and after certain days the child fell sick and died.

The distressed but believing mother hastened at once to the man of God; through him God had spoken the promise which fulfilled her heart's desire, and she resolved to plead her case with him, that he might lay it before his Divine Master, and obtain for her an answer of peace. Elisha's action is recorded in the following verses:

“Then he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way; if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon the face of the child. And the mother of the child said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose, and followed her. And Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but there was neither voice, nor hearing. Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, The child is not awaked. And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed. He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord. And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands; and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him; and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunamite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son. Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.”—2 Kings iv., 29-37.

The position of Elisha in this case is exactly your position, brethren, in relation to your work for Christ. *Elisha had to deal with a dead child.* It is true that, in his instance, it was natural death; but the death with which you have to come in contact is not the less real death because it is spiritual. The boys and girls in your classes are, as surely as grown-up people, “dead in trespasses and sins.” May none of you fail fully to realise the state in which all human beings are naturally found! Unless you have a very clear sense of the utter ruin and spiritual death of your children, you will be incapable of being made a blessing to them. Go to them, I pray you, not as to sleepers whom you can by your own power

awaken from their slumber, but as to spiritual corpses who can only be quickened by a power divine. Elisha's great object was not to cleanse the dead body, or embalm it with spices, or wrap it in fine linen, or place it in an appropriate posture, and then leave it still a corpse: he aimed at nothing less than the restoration of the child to life. Beloved teachers, may you never be content with aiming at secondary benefits, or even with realising them; may you strive for the grandest of all ends, the salvation of immortal souls! Your business is not merely to teach the children in your classes to read the Bible, not barely to inculcate the duties of morality, nor even to instruct them in the mere letter of the gospel, but your high calling is to be the means, in the hands of God, of bringing life from heaven to dead souls. Your teaching on the Lord's Day will have been a failure if your children remain dead in sin. In the case of the secular teacher, the child's fair proficiency in knowledge will prove that the instructor has not lost his pains; but in your case, even though your youthful charges should grow up to be respectable members of society, though they should become regular attendants upon the means of grace, you will not feel that your petitions to heaven have been answered, nor your desires granted to you, nor your highest ends attained, unless something more is done—unless, in fact, it can be said of your children, "The Lord hath quickened them together with Christ."

Resurrection, then, is our aim! *To raise the dead is our mission!* We are like Peter at Joppa, or Paul at Troas, we have a young Dorcas or Eutychus to bring to life. How is so strange a work to be achieved? If we yield to unbelief, we shall be staggered by the evident fact that the work to which the Lord has called us is quite beyond our own personal power. We cannot raise the dead. If asked to do so, we might each one of us, like the king of Israel, rend our clothes, and say, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive?" We are, however, no more powerless than Elisha, for he himself could not restore the Shunamite's son. It is true that we by ourselves cannot bring the dead hearts of our scholars to palpitate with spiritual life, but a Paul or an Apollos would have been equally as powerless. Need this fact discourage us? Does it not rather direct us to our true power by shutting us out from our own fancied might? I trust we are all of us already aware that the man who lives in the region of faith dwells in the realm of miracles. Faith trades in marvels, and her merchandise is with wonders.

"Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to that alone;
Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, 'It shall be done.'"

Elisha was no common man now that God's Spirit was upon him, calling him to God's work, and aiding him in it. And you, devoted, anxious, prayerful teacher, remain no longer a common being; you have become, in a special manner, the temple of the Holy Ghost, God dwelleth in you, and you by faith have

entered upon the career of a wonder-worker. You are sent into the world not to do the things which are possible to man, but those impossibilities which God worketh by His Spirit, by the means of His believing people. You are to work miracles, to do marvels. You are not, therefore, to look upon the restoration of these dead children, which in God's name you are called to bring about, as being a thing unlikely or difficult when you remember who it is that works by your feeble instrumentality. "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" Unbelief will whisper to you, as you mark the wicked giddiness and early obstinacy of your children, "Can these dry bones live?" But your answer must be, "O, Lord, Thou knowest." Committing all cases to the almighty hand, it is yours to prophesy to the dry bones and to the heavenly wind, and ere long you, too, shall see in the valley of your vision the signal triumph of life over death. Let us take up at this moment our true position and let us realise it. We have dead children before us, and our souls yearn to bring them to life. We confess that all quickening must be wrought by the Lord alone, and our humble petition is that, if the Lord will use us in connection with His miracles of grace, He would now show us what He would have us to do.

It would have been well if Elisha had recollected that he was once the servant of Elijah, and had so studied his Master's example as to have imitated it. If so, he would not have sent Gehazi with a staff, but have done at once what at last he was constrained to do. In the First Book of Kings, at the seventeenth chapter, you will find the story of Elijah's raising a dead child, and you will there see that Elijah, the master, had left a complete example to his servant; and it was not until Elisha followed it in all respects that the miraculous power was manifested. It had been wise, I say, if Elisha had, at the outset, imitated the example of the master whose mantle he wore. With far more force may I say to you, my fellow-servants, that it will be well for us if, as teachers, we imitate our Master—if we study the modes and methods of our glorified Master, and learn at His feet the art of winning souls. Just as He came in deepest sympathy into the nearest contact with our wretched humanity, and condescended to stoop to our sorrowful condition, so must we come near to the souls with whom we have to deal, yearn over them with His yearning, and weep over them with His tears, if we would see them raised from the state of sin. Only by imitating the spirit and manner of the Lord Jesus shall we become wise to win souls.

Forgetting this, however, Elisha would fain strike out a course for himself, which would more clearly display his own prophetic dignity. He gave his staff into the hand of Gehazi, his servant, and bade him lay it upon the child, as if he felt that the divine power was so plenteously upon him that it would work in any way, and consequently his own personal presence and efforts might be dispensed with. The Lord's thoughts were not so. I am afraid that very often the truth which we deliver from the pulpit—and doubtless it is much the same in your classes—is a thing which is extraneous and out of ourselves; like a staff

which we hold in our hand, but which is not a part of ourselves. We take doctrinal or practical truth as Gehazi did the staff, and we lay it upon the face of the child, but we ourselves do not agonise for its soul. We try this doctrine and that truth, this anecdote and the other illustration, this way of teaching a lesson and that manner of delivering an address; but so long as ever the truth which we deliver is a matter apart from ourselves, and unconnected with our innermost being, so long it will have no more effect upon a dead soul than Elisha's staff had upon the dead child. Alas! I fear I have frequently preached the gospel in this place, I have been sure that it was my Master's gospel, the true prophetic staff, and yet it has had no result, because I fear I have not preached it with the vehemence and earnestness and heartiness which ought to have gone with it! And will you not make the same confession, that sometimes you have taught the truth—it was the truth, you know it was—the very truth which you found in the Bible, and which has at times been precious to your own soul, and yet no good result has followed from it, because while you taught the truth you did not feel the truth, nor feel for the child to whom the truth was addressed, but were just like Gehazi placing with indifferent hand the prophetic staff upon the face of the child? It was no wonder that you had to say with Gehazi, "The child is not awaked," for the true awakening power found no appropriate medium in your lifeless teaching. We are not sure that Gehazi was convinced that the child was really dead; he spoke as if it were only asleep, and needed waking. God will not bless those teachers who do not grasp in their hearts the really fallen estate of their children. If you think the child is not really depraved, if you indulge foolish notions about the innocence of childhood and the dignity of human nature, it should not surprise you if you remain barren and unfruitful. How can God bless you to work a resurrection when, if He did work it by you, you are incapable of perceiving its glorious nature? If the lad had awaked, it would not have surprised Gehazi; he would have thought that he was only startled from an unusually sound sleep. If God were to bless to the conversion of souls the testimony of those who do not believe in the total depravity of man, they would merely say, "The gospel is very moralising, and exerts a most beneficial influence," but they would never bless and magnify the regenerating grace by which He who sitteth on the throne maketh all things new.

Observe carefully what Elisha did when thus foiled in his first effort. *When we fail in one attempt, we must not therefore give up our work.* If you have been unsuccessful, my dear brother or sister, until now, you must not infer that you are not called to the work, any more than Elisha might have concluded that the child could not be restored. The lesson of your non-success is not—cease the work, but—change the method. It is not the person who is out of place, it is the plan which is unwise. If you have not been able to accomplish what you wished, remember the schoolboy's song:

“If at first you don’t succeed,
Try, try, try again.”

Do not, however, try in the same way unless you are sure that it is the best one. If your first method has been unsuccessful, you must improve upon it. Examine wherein you have failed, and then, by changing your mode, or your spirit, the Lord may prepare you for a degree of usefulness far beyond your expectation. Elisha, instead of being dispirited when he found that the child was not awake, girded up his loins, and hastened with greater vigour to the work before him.

Notice where the dead child was placed: “And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed.” This was the bed which the hospitality of the Shunamite had prepared for Elisha, the famous bed which, with the table, the stool and the candlestick, will never be forgotten in the Church of God. That famous bed had to be used for a purpose which the good woman little thought of when, out of love to the prophet’s God, she prepared it for the prophet’s rest. I like to think of the dead child lying on that bed, because it symbolises the place where our unconverted children must lie if we would have them saved. If we are to be a blessing to them, they must lie in our hearts—they must be our daily and nightly charge. We must take the cases of our children to our silent couch with us: we must think of them in the watches of the night, and when we cannot sleep because of care, they must share in those midnight anxieties. Our beds must witness to our cries: “Oh, that Ishmael might live before Thee! Oh, that the dear boys and girls in my class might become the children of the living God!” Elijah and Elisha both teach us that we must not place the child far from us, out of doors, or down below us in a vault of cold forgetfulness, but, if we would have him raised to life, we must place him in the warmest sympathies of our hearts.

In reading on we find, “he went in, therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord.” Now the prophet is at his work in right earnest, and we have a noble opportunity of learning from him the secret of raising children from the dead. If you turn to the narrative of Elijah, you will find that Elisha adopted the orthodox method of proceeding, the method of his master Elijah. You will read there, “And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. And he cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord, my God, hast Thou also brought evil upon the woman with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord, my God, I pray Thee, let this child’s soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah, and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.” The great secret lies, in a large measure, in powerful supplication. “He shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord.” The old proverb is, “Every true pulpit is set up in heaven,” by which

is meant that the true preacher is much with God. If we do not pray to God for a blessing, if the foundation of the pulpit be not laid in private prayer, our open ministry will not be a success. So it is with you; every real teacher's power must come from on high. If you never enter your closet, and shut the door, if you never plead at the mercy-seat for your child, how can you expect that God will honour you in its conversion? It is a very excellent method, I think, actually to take the children one by one into your room alone, and pray with them. You will see your children converted when God gives you to individualise their cases, to agonise for them, and to take them one by one, and with the door closed, to pray both with them and for them. There is much more influence in prayer privately offered with one than in prayer publicly uttered in the class—not more influence with God, of course, but more influence with the child. Such prayer will often be made its own answer; for God may, while you are pouring out your soul, make your prayer to be a hammer to break the heart which mere addresses had never touched. Pray with your children separately, and it will surely be the means of a great blessing. If this cannot be done, at any rate there must be prayer, much prayer, constant prayer, vehement prayer, the kind of prayer which will not take a denial, like Luther's prayer, which he called the bombarding of heaven; that is to say, the planting a cannon at heaven's gates to blow them open, for after this fashion fervent men prevail in prayer; they will not come from the mercy-seat until they can cry with Luther, "*Vici*" "I have conquered, I have gained the blessing for which I strove." "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." May we offer such violent, God-constraining, heaven-compelling prayers, and the Lord will not permit us to seek His face in vain!

After praying, Elisha adopted the means. Prayer and means must go together. Means without prayer—presumption! Prayer without means—hypocrisy! There lay the child, and there stood the venerable man of God! Watch his singular proceeding, he stoops over the corpse, and puts his mouth upon the child's mouth. The cold, dead mouth of the child was touched by the warm, living lips of the prophet, and a vital stream of fresh, hot breath was sent down into the chill, stone-like passages of the dead mouth, and throat, and lungs. Next, the holy man, with loving ardour of hopefulness, placed his eyes upon the child's eyes, and his hands upon the child's hands; the warm hands of the old man covered the cold palms of the departed child. Then he stretched himself upon the child, and covered him with his whole body, as though he would transfer his own life into the lifeless frame, and would either die with him, or would make him live. We have heard of the chamois hunter acting as guide to a fearful traveller, who, when they came to a very dangerous part of the road, strapped the traveller firmly to himself and said, "Both of us or neither," that is to say, "Both of us shall live, or neither of us; we are one." So did the prophet effect a

mysterious union between himself and the lad, and in his own mind it was resolved that he would either be chilled with the child's death, or warm the child with his life. What does this teach us?

The lessons are many and obvious. We see here, as in a picture, that if we would bring spiritual life to a child, we must most vividly realise that child's state. It is dead, dead. God will have you feel that the child is as dead in trespasses and sins as you once were. God would have you, dear teacher, come into contact with that death by painful, crushing, humbling sympathy. I told you that, in soul-winning, we should observe how our Master worked; now how did He work? When He would raise us from death, what did it behoove Him to do? He must needs die Himself: there was no other way. So is it with you. If you would raise that dead child, you must feel the chill and horror of that child's death yourself. A dying man is needed to raise dying men. I cannot believe that you will ever pluck a brand from the burning without putting your hand near enough to feel the heat of the fire. You must have, more or less, a distinct sense of the dreadful wrath of God and of the terrors of the judgment to come, or you will lack energy in your work, and so lack one of the essentials of success. I do not think the preacher ever speaks well upon such topics until he feels them pressing upon him as a personal burden from the Lord. "I did preach in chains," said John Bunyan, "to men in chains." Depend upon it, when the death that is in your children alarms, depresses and overwhelms you, then it is that God is about to bless you.

Thus realising the child's state, and putting your mouth upon the child's mouth, and your hands upon its hands, you must next strive to adapt yourself as far as possible to the nature, and habits, and temperament of the child. Your mouth must find out the child's words, so that the child may know what you mean; you must see things with a child's eyes; your heart must feel a child's feelings, so as to be his companion and friend; you must be a student of juvenile sin; you must be a sympathiser in juvenile trials; you must so far as possible, enter into childhood's joys and griefs. You must not fret at the difficulty of this matter, or feel it to be humiliating; for if you count anything to be a hardship, or a condescension, you have no business in the Sunday school. If anything difficult be required of you, you must do it, and not think it difficult. God will not raise a dead child by you, if you are not willing to become all things to that child, if by any possibility you may win its soul.

The prophet, it is written, "stretched himself upon the child." One would have thought it should be written, "he contracted himself!" He was a full-grown man, and the other a mere lad. Should it not be "he contracted himself?" No, "he stretched himself;" and, mark you, no stretching is harder than for a man to stretch himself to a child. He is no fool who can talk to children; a simpleton is much mistaken if he thinks that his folly can interest boys and girls. It needs our best wits, our most industrious studies, our most earnest thoughts, our ripest

powers, to teach our little ones. You will not quicken the child until you have stretched yourself; and, though it seems a strange thing, yet it is so. The wisest man will need to exercise all his abilities if he would become a successful teacher of the young.

We see, then, in Elisha, a sense of the child's death and an adaptation of himself to his work; but, above all, we see *sympathy*. While Elisha himself felt the chill of the corpse, his personal warmth was entering into the dead body. This of itself did not raise the child; but God worked through it—the old man's heat of body passed into the child, and became the medium of quickening. Let every teacher weigh these words of Paul, "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children; so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, *but also our own souls*, because ye were dear unto us." The genuine soul-winner knows what this means. For my own part, when the Lord helps me to preach, after I have delivered all my matter, and have fired off my shot so fast that my gun has grown hot, I have often rammed my soul into the gun, and fired my heart at the congregation, and this discharge has, under God, won the victory. God will bless by His Spirit our hearty sympathy with His own truth, and make it do that which the truth alone, coldly spoken, would not accomplish. Here, then, is the secret. You must, dear teacher, impart to the young your own soul; you must feel as if the ruin of that child would be your own ruin. You must feel that, if the child remains under the wrath of God, it is to you as true a grief as if you were under that wrath yourself. You must confess the child's sins before God as if they were your own, and stand as a priest before the Lord pleading on its behalf. The child was covered by Elisha's body, and you must cover your class with your compassion, with the agonising stretching forth of yourself before the Lord on its behalf. Behold in this miracle the *modus operandi* of raising the dead; the Holy Spirit remains mysterious in His operations, but the way of the outward means is here clearly revealed.

The result of the prophet's work soon appeared: "the flesh of the child waxed warm." How pleased Elisha must have been; but I do not find that his pleasure and satisfaction caused him to relax his exertions. Never be satisfied, dear friends, with finding your children in a barely hopeful state. Did a girl come to you and cry, "Teacher, pray for me?" Be glad, for this is a fair token; but look for more. Did you observe tears in a boy's eyes when you were speaking of the love of Christ? Be thankful for it that the flesh is waxing warm, but do not stop there. Can you relax your exertions now? Bethink you, you have not yet gained your end! It is life you want, not warmth alone. What you want, dear teacher, in your beloved charge, is not mere conviction, but conversion; you desire not only impression, but regeneration—life, life from God, the life of Jesus. This your scholars need, and nothing less must content you.

Again I must bid you watch Elisha. There was now a little pause. "Then he

returned, and walked in the house to and fro.” Notice the restlessness of the man of God; he cannot be easy. The child waxes warm (blessed be God for that, but he does not live yet); so, instead of sitting down in his chair by the table, the prophet walks to and fro with restless foot, disquieted, groaning, panting, longing, and ill at ease. He could not bear to look upon the disconsolate mother, or to hear her ask, “Is the child restored?” but he continued pacing the house as if his body could not rest because his soul was not satisfied. Imitate this consecrated restlessness. When you see a boy getting somewhat affected, do not sit down and say, “The child is very hopeful, thank God; I am perfectly satisfied.” You will never win the priceless gem of a saved soul in that way; you must feel sad, restless, troubled, if you ever become a parent in the Church. Paul’s expression is not to be explained in words, but you must know its meaning in your hearts; “I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.” Oh, may the Holy Ghost give you such inward travail, such unrest, disquietude, and sacred uneasiness, until you see your hopeful scholars savingly converted!

After a short period of walking to and fro, the prophet again “went up, and stretched himself upon the child.” What it is well to do once, it is proper to do a second time. What is good twice, is good seven times. There must be perseverance and patience. You were very earnest last Sabbath; do not be slothful next Sabbath. How easy it is to pull down, on any one day, what we have built up the day before! If by one Sabbath’s work God enables me to convince a child that I was in earnest, let me not convince the child next Sunday that I am not in earnest. If my past warmth has made the child’s flesh wax warm, God forbid that my future chilliness should make the child’s heart cold again! As surely as warmth went from Elisha to the child, so may cold go from you to your class unless you are in an earnest state of mind.

Elisha stretched himself on the bed again, with many a prayer, and many a sigh, and much believing, and at last his desire was granted him: “The child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.” Any form of action would indicate life, and content the prophet. The child “sneezed,” some say because he died with a disease of the head, for he said to his father, “My head! my head!” and the sneeze cleared the passages of life which had been blocked up. This we do not know. The fresh air entering afresh into the lungs might well compel a sneeze. The sound was nothing very articulate or musical, but it betokened life. This is all we should expect from young children when God gives them spiritual life. Some church members expect a great deal more, but for my part I am satisfied if the children sneeze—if they give any true sign of grace, however feeble or indistinct. If the dear child does but feel its lost estate, and rest upon the finished work of Jesus, though we only find out the fact by a very indistinct statement, not such as we should accept from a doctor of divinity, or expect from a grown-up person, should we not thank God, and receive the child, and nurse it for the Lord?

Perhaps, if Gehazi had been there, he would not have thought much of this sneezing, because he had never stretched himself upon the child, but Elisha was content with it. Even so, if you and I have really agonised in prayer for souls, we shall be very quick of eye to catch the first sign of grace, and shall be thankful to God if the token be but a sneeze.

Then the child opened his eyes, and we will venture to say Elisha thought he had never seen such lovely eyes before. I know not what kind of eyes they were, the hazel or the blue, but this I know, that any eye which God helps you to open will be a beautiful eye to you. I heard a teacher talking the other day about a “fine lad” who had been saved in his class, and another spoke of a “dear girl” in her class who loved the Lord. No doubt of it; it would be a wonder if they were not “fine” and “dear” in the eyes of you who have brought them to Jesus, for to Jesus Christ they are finer and dearer still. Beloved friends, may you often gaze into opened eyes which, but for divine grace owning your teaching, would have been dark with the film of spiritual death! Then will you be favoured indeed.

One word of caution. In this meeting is there a Gehazi? If there be among this host of Sunday-school teachers one who can do no more than carry the staff, I pity him. Ah! my friend, may God in His mercy give you life, for how else can you expect to be the means of quickening others? If Elisha had been a corpse himself, it would have been a hopeless task to expect life to be communicated through placing one corpse upon another. It is vain for that little class of dead souls to gather round another dead soul such as you are. A dead mother, frost-bitten and cold, cannot cherish her little one. What warmth, what comfort, can come to those who shiver before an empty grate? And such are you. May you have a work of grace in your soul first, and then may the blessed and Eternal Spirit, who alone can quicken souls, make you to be the means of quickening many to the glory of His grace!

Accept, dear friends, my fraternal salutations, and believe that my fervent prayers are with you that you may be blessed, and be made a blessing.