

WAY TO SHILOH

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Out on a limb

MANY a man may see his portrait here! The spendthrift hacks away his estate and falls into destitution and disgrace. The drunkard cuts at his health and strength, his family comfort and household peace, and when he has finished his mad work, he drops into ruin, through his own folly. The man of low, debauched habits, is chopping, with fearful effect, at his own body and soul, and will, ere long, rue the lusts which hurl him into disease, agony, and death. There are other fools beside the man in the woodcut, who are lopping off the branch which holds them up. It is base ingratitude when men are malicious and cruel to those who are their best friends. Wives and parents often have to feel sharp cuts from those whom they lovingly support and are anxious to preserve from ruin. Shame that it should be so!

Self-righteous reader, you are ready to join with us in any censure which we may pass upon the madness of the sins we have just hinted at; but permit us to ask you, whether you yourself are not photographed in our picture? You are resting upon the bough of good works, and yet, every day, your faults, imperfections, and sins are rendering it less and less able to bear your weight. It never was a firm support, and if you know yourself, and are candid enough to confess your shortcomings, you will at once perceive that it has become, in the judgment of conscience, a very frail dependence, quite unworthy of your confidence. Had you never sinned, and, consequently, never made one gash in the bough, we might tolerate your trusting to it; but since you have cut at it again and again, and it is ready even now to snap beneath you, we pray you, leave it for a surer resting-place. All reliance on self in any form or shape is gross folly. Feelings, works, prayers, almsgivings, religious observances, are all too feeble to support a sinful soul. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid - Jesus Christ the righteous." "Whosoever believeth in him is not condemned." "He is able also to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Trust Jesus and he will never fail you.

By *C.H. Spurgeon*