

THE ESSENCE OF SIMPLICITY

NO. 1088

A SERMON
 DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, DECEMBER 29, 1872,
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 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said unto him,
 Do you believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?”
 John 9:35, 36.*

THIS text is from the story of the blind man to whom Jesus had given sight. His narrative of the cure provoked the anger of the Jews and their rulers; and, as the man could not be convinced by them that the one who had opened his eyes could also be a bad man, they cast him out of their assembly, and by that act signified to him that he would be, or already was, cast out of the Jewish church, set aside from the synagogue, and made the victim of the greater excommunication. This was one of the most fearful calamities that could befall a Jew, and I do not doubt but what the man considered it to be so. Now, it is not at all likely that any person here is feeling the same trouble, but many may be suffering from something similar. It may be that you have excommunicated *yourselves!* Within the court of your own bosom, conscience has held a solemn court, and pronounced upon you a sentence which continually rings in your ears. You scarcely dare mingle with those who assemble in the house of God, for you feel yourselves unworthy to be among them. Up till lately you were upon the best of terms with yourselves, and reckoned that all was right with God. You hoped that you stood on as good a footing, at any rate, as other men, and perhaps were somewhat better than many around you; but now a process of enlightenment has come over your mind—practices have been seen to be seriously evil which before were regarded as trifles, and sin itself has worn another aspect than any which it bore in former times. Does such a person stand here this morning? Then let me assure him that his state of mind is well known to me, for I knew its horrors by the space of many months together. I, too, felt that I was cut off from the congregation of the hopeful, and must not hope for God's mercy. I dared not lift so much as my eyes towards heaven, but complained to the Lord as Jonah did—“I am shut out of Your sight.” Therefore with brotherly sympathy I speak to any man or woman who reckons themselves a castaway, shut out from the house of the Lord.

The man in the narrative, most happily for him, at the time when the sentence began to cast its gloom over him, was met by the Lord Jesus Christ, who at once proceeded to afford him the necessary cordial. Christ has come as the consolation of Israel, and where He finds that men are burdened in spirit, He commences His gracious work. But, observe, He brings but *one* cordial, and prescribes but *one* way by which its efficacy can be realized; He spoke to the oppressed man concerning the Son of God, and personal faith in Him, for this is the master consolation for broken hearts, this is the surest and best means of bringing joy to souls which sit in the dungeons of despondency. Our Lord began by saying to the cast-out one, “Do you believe on the Son of God?” Now, if any here present are in the state which I have thus hurriedly sketched, feeling themselves guilty before God with spirits ill at ease, with hearts alarmed at coming and deserved judgment, I come in Christ's name to them this morning with words of comfort! But they will be no other than those which Jesus uttered of old; I have nothing to speak to you by way of comfort but concerning the Son of God, and concerning Him only, by demanding that you believe on Him, for only as you receive Him by faith will He be to you a relief from sorrow. He that believes on the Lord Jesus shall not be ashamed; but without faith you are without salvation!

We shall this morning labor to bring you all to the point in hand. There shall be between the doctrine of the gospel and your soul this morning, O you who are not yet a believer, a direct encounter! You shall

come up this morning, and face the gospel whether you spurn it or accept it; you shall know, if the plainest words can tell it to you, that if you believe in Christ Jesus, you shall be saved, and it shall be put to you whether you will do this or not, and you shall either believe on the Son of God or incur anew the sin of putting from you the only name given under heaven among men whereby you can be saved! I say you shall be brought to this if words can bring you to it; and then I must leave the work of your deciding in the hands of God the Holy Spirit. I entreat you who love the Lord and have prevalence in prayer, to aid me with your supplications; pray that the result of bringing the sinner face to face with the gospel may be that he may decide to believe in Jesus! Pray that faith may be given him! Pray that the Son of God may become the object of his soul's confidence, and that in no case the hearer may be left to continue in unbelief and to reject the Son of God! You have seen at the mouth of the coal pits how the full wagons, as they run down the incline, draw the empty ones up to the pit's mouth, that they also may be filled. I would to God that you who have grace may exert the power God has given you with Himself, and so by prevalent intercession you may draw others to the Savior! While we are preaching, you be praying, and God will work by us both! Look upon the unsaved around you with an eye of pity; then look to Christ, your exalted Savior, with the eyes of faith, and say to Him—"Jesus, You who have redeemed myriads by Your blood, now work by Your eternal Spirit, and redeem also by power; let the Spirit that rested on Your own ministry, the Spirit that was with Your servants at Pentecost, the Spirit that has converted us also to your truth, work mightily among the congregation this morning, that all these may be led to obey You! When your cross is lifted high, let it bring life to the dead throughout the camp, and be to the awakened a lighthouse of safety, and to the despairing a pillar of hope!"

I. The run of our discourse this morning being solemnly practical, we shall, in the most distinct manner lay down and define THE MATTER IN HAND. With you, my anxious friend, the greatest and weightiest business that can concern you is that you find salvation. You have it not at present, your conscience tells you that, and though you are well aware that you must obtain it or be forever lost, you have as yet but small prospect of ever finding it. You have sinned, and punishment awaits you, and neither can you escape! The point above all points with you is that you be saved; and if you are really awakened, you desire to be saved from sin as well as from its punishment. You would not only escape from the consequences of doing wrong, but from the propensity to *do* wrong; from the constant power and defilement of past sin, and from the tendency to sin again. You desire, also, to be forgiven, and by forgiveness to be set clear from the anger of a justly offended God. And you desire to be rendered acceptable to the Most High, and if you are in your right mind, you desire that all this should be done really and truly—not in pretence or fiction, but in deed and in truth! God forbid that you should ever be content with the name of being saved; with an external and professional salvation of outward rites and ceremonies, while your heart remains unpurified and your nature uncleansed! In some other departments we may be deceived, and not be very great losers, but in *soul* matters we must make all things sure, for if we are deceived *there*, it is all over with us! Let me be cheated with base metal instead of gold if you will, but not with lies in the place of the saving truth of God, or deceptive notions in lieu of gracious operations. Let me be deceived as to the food I eat, and find every morsel of it adulterated, if so it must be—but not in the eternal life-bread, which my soul craves after; be true to my soul, if all else is a lie!

Do you, my hearer, desire salvation from the power and guilt of sin? And do you desire it to be thorough and real? Do you not also long for it *now*? If God has at all quickened you, you long to be saved at once; you tremble at the idea of delay! Sin is bitter to you now; it is a present plague. The matter before us now is *present* salvation, *personal* salvation to be realized for yourself; if there is such a thing as looking up to the smiling face of a reconciled Father in heaven, you desire to enjoy it now! If it is possible for the load of sin to be rolled from off a mortal's shoulders forever, you desire to be rid of that burden at this instant! If there is, indeed, a fountain in which, if a man is washed, every stain shall disappear, you long to plunge beneath its cleansing flood at once, and be made whiter than the driven snow! If your soul is so far awakened I bless God, indeed, for there is nothing beneath the sun—and, indeed, there is nothing above it that can rival in importance your soul's salvation.

Now the matter which I must press upon you is this. If you are ever to be saved, God has declared that salvation must come to you as a gift of His grace, as an act of His free favor, and can only be received by you through your believing in His Son. As Christ consoled the man in the temple by saying to him, “Do you believe on the Son of God?” so today there is no consolation, much less *salvation* for you except through believing in God’s own Son! A hundred times have you heard the story of God’s only-begotten Son who is the lover of men’s souls; but we must tell it to you yet again. God will not save men on the ground of their merits; indeed, if they have any merits, they do not require saving! If God owes you anything, produce the account, and you shall have it! If there are obligations on God’s part towards you, say what they are, and if they can be proved to exist, God will never give you less than you can justly claim! Alas, my friend, if you are lodged where you deserve to be, where will it be but in the pit of hell? It were well for you, then, to have done with all claims and demands! God will only save you as a *guilty* person who deserves to be destroyed, but whom He saves because He chooses to save you; because He resolves to manifest in you the abundance of His mercy. “By grace are you saved,” is the immutable purpose of heaven! And it is further decreed that this grace shall be received by men through the channel of *faith*, and by that channel only! God will save only those who trust in His Son! Jesus Christ the Lord came into this world and took upon Himself our nature, as we taught you last Sunday, [See #1087, Volume 18—THE HEXAPLA OF MYSTERY—by the grace of God, for all 63 volumes of C. H. Spurgeon sermons in Modern English, and 574 Spanish translations, visit: www.spurgeongems.org] and being found in fashion as a man, He took the transgressor’s place; the sins of His people were numbered upon Him, imputed to Him, charged to His account, and He suffered for them as if they had been His own sins; He was scourged, tormented, crucified, and *slain*—the stripes He bore were the chastisements due to human sin, and the death He endured was the death threatened to transgressors.

And now, whoever will trust in Jesus shall participate in the result of all the Redeemer’s substitutionary agonies, and the case shall stand thus—the sufferings of Christ shall be instead of the believers’ suffering, and the merits of Christ shall be instead of the obedience which man ought to have rendered. Faith in Jesus makes us righteous through the righteousness of another; it causes us to be accepted in the beloved, perfect in Christ Jesus! As by the first Adam we fell, so by the second Adam we rise again! Now the way to partake in the benefits of the death of the Lord Jesus is simply by believing in Him. Here let it be understood that *believing* in Jesus is not a mysterious and complex action; it does not require a week to explain what faith is; faith believes what God has revealed concerning Christ, and it therefore *trusts* in Christ as the divinely-appointed Savior. I believe that Jesus was God’s Son; I believe that God sent Him into the world to save sinners; I believe that to do so He became a substitute for all those who trust Him, and as I trust Him, I know that He was *my* substitute, and that I am clear before God. Since Jesus died for me, God’s justice cannot put me to eternal death for whom Jesus, my substitute has died. God’s truth cannot demand a second time the debt which has already been fully paid on my behalf! The rationale of the whole thing is as plain as possible, and whoever in this world, old or young, Jew or Gentile, literate or illiterate, rich or poor, debauched or moral, will trust in Jesus shall be saved—he is saved the moment he does so! But whoever of women born *refuses* to trust in Jesus—he is *condemned* already because he has not believed on the Son of God!

Let a man’s character be what it may, if in that character there is no faith, he is a lost soul! But on the other hand, let that character have been what it may, if now he comes to the cross, and believes in Jesus, he begins from that moment a new life—God will give to him all the graces and excellences of character which will adorn his faith and his faith shall save him! Trusting in Jesus, believing in Jesus—that is the matter; I need to bring my hammer down upon this anvil at every stroke, and if the Lord will be pleased to place before me some heart that He has melted in the furnace of conviction, the strokes will count if the eternal God will lay to His almighty arm, and strike with divine energy! If any soul is but brought to faith in Jesus, the work is done! To believe in the Son of God is the point, and nothing else!

II. This being the matter in hand, we will make an advance, in the second place, to notice that there is A QUESTION IN OUR TEXT WHICH INVOLVES THE WHOLE BASIS OF FAITH. The man said to Jesus, “Who is He, Lord that I might believe on Him?” This man all through the narrative proves himself to be a very shrewd fellow; I do not know that Holy Scripture gives us an instance of a more commonsense man than this man whose eyes were opened. And so, when he is told that he must believe in the Son of God, he comes to the point at once, and says, “Who is He, Lord that I might believe on Him?” as if that was all he wanted to know—“Who is He?”—And then the faith would surely come! When a soul is seeking faith, this question is the main point; the hinge of the whole matter lies there. This man did not say, “Lord, who am I that I should believe?”—Not at all! That would have been wide of the point. If I read a story in the newspapers about the truthfulness of which there is a question, I do not begin asking what my *own* character is, as though that had anything to do with it! But I ask who the authority for the story may be; I do not look *within*, but I look to the person claiming belief. The story is true or not, whatever *I* may be; my character does not concern the truth or falsehood of the statement; I must inquire into the statement itself. So this man did not make any remarks about what he might have been or might still be, but he hung the issue on this nail—“Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?” So now, dear hearer, all the arguments for your faith lie within the compass of that question, “Who is He, Lord that I should believe on Him?” You need not say, “Who am I that I should believe? I have lived a life that has been defiled with sin; I have gone from one transgression to another; I have resisted conscience; I have stood out against the gospel; I have defiled myself by sins against light and knowledge.” It matters not! There you stand with all your defilement taken for granted, and God says to you, “Whoever believes on the Lord Jesus Christ has everlasting life.” That is the saving matter—that, and nothing more nor less! Will you believe in the Lord Jesus or not? What you are is nothing to the matter at hand; if God’s witness is true, it is true whether you are black or white, whether you are a big sinner or a little sinner! And if it is false, it will not be any the truer whether you are good or bad, worthy or unworthy! If Jesus is able to save, He ought to be trusted, but if He is not able, none ought to rely upon Him—the whole question turns on that.

Neither raise any quibbles as to your present condition! You say, “But I at this moment feel myself so hard of heart! I cannot weep as some can; repentance is hid from my eyes; prayer is heavy, groaning work with me; even while I am listening to the gospel this morning, my attention is not riveted as it ought to be upon the truth of God which I know to be vital! I am destitute of every good point; I am empty of everything that can recommend me to God’s mercy.” I answer, “So what?” Suppose I tell a man that the sum of 10,000 pounds has been left him in a will—is it anything to the point if he shows me his shack, his empty cupboard, and his wretched bed? Does *his* poverty make *me* a liar? Why does the man introduce such extraneous matter into the good news? Either it is true or it is not! His condition has nothing to do with the truth or falsehood of my declaration; if the man were wrapped in scarlet and fine linen, that would not make my statement any truer, and if the dogs lick him as they did Lazarus, that does not give him a right to deny my truthfulness when I tell him a fact! So, O sinner, your condition has nothing to do with the question whether Jesus is to be trusted or not. “God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Will you believe in Him? Will you trust the Lord Jesus? If you desire to trust Him, the subject for inquiry is, “Is He worth trusting?” But it is a question far away from the point to say, “I am this,” or, “I am that.” Is not this so? I appeal to your own common sense!

“But still, as to the future,” says one. “I might go back to my old sins. I cannot trust *myself*—I have made some reformations before, and they have been but poor ventures; my ship has gone out to sea, and foundered in the first gale. I cannot expect with such temptations as will await me that I shall bear up and enter heaven.” Now, what has the question of believing in Jesus to do with your good resolutions or your miserable failures? Whoever trusts Christ shall be saved! If you are lost trusting Him in the future, God’s word will not be true; the question is, “Can you trust Christ?” And that turns on that other, “Is He worthy to be trusted?” No other question can be admitted for a single moment. The case is something

like that of a man in yonder sea; his ship is wrecked—she is breaking to pieces—her decks have been swept; he barely retains his hold on a floating spar. Look! The lifeboat comes up close to his side, and is ready to take him on board. Now, if there is a question in that man's mind about getting into that lifeboat in order to be saved, the only rational one that I can conceive is, "Will the boat carry me to shore? Is she seaworthy? Will she outlive the breakers? Can she reach the land safely?" You cannot conceive the poor fellow's saying, "I quiver too much with chills to be rescued by that boat," or, "The sea has washed the last rag from off my back; the boat will not suit me," or, "Another time I may be wrecked on the coast of Africa, and there may be a lifeboat." No, no! Man alive, there is the boat! Is she seaworthy? That is the question! If so, get into her! If Christ is not worth trusting, do not trust Him, but if He is worthy of all confidence, then have done with idle questions, and cast yourself upon Him! "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. He who believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who believes not God has made Him a liar because he believes not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record: that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; and he who has not the Son of God has not life" (1 John 5:9-12).

Still, we will keep to this point—Jesus is worth trusting, worthy of the sinner's unwavering faith. He is worth trusting, O sinner, because first of all He on whom you are bid to rely this day by the command of the gospel is God Himself! You have offended God, and it is God who came into the world to save sinners! Against Christ your sins were launched as arrows from a bow, but He against whom those bolts were shot has come in the fullness of His power, and the infinity of His mercy to save them who believe. Can you not trust yourself in almighty hands—almighty to save? Is anything impossible with God? An angel could not save you, but surely God Himself can! How can you limit the Holy one of Israel? How can you set bounds to boundless love, or limits to limitless grace? If Jesus were man, and not God, unbelief would have good excuse! But if the Savior is divine, where can distrust find a cloak for itself?

I feel this morning as if I could not help believing in Christ, now that I know Him to be divine. Faith has grown to be a necessary act of my mind. Save me? Who shall persuade me that He cannot? Come forth, you devils with your arguments, and plead with me, and you cannot inject a doubt into my soul while I know Him to be God! He can shake the heavens when He pleases, and make the earth to tremble! He bears up the universe upon His shoulders—cannot He save my poor soul? Yes, that He can! "Who is He that I might believe on Him?" He is divine, and therefore I believe.

But next, the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom the sinner is bid to trust, is *commissioned by God to save*. He came into the world as a Savior, not alone on His own account, but as Messiah sent of God. He has the full concurrence of the sacred Trinity; it is the will of the Father; it is the will of the Holy Spirit, as well as the will of the Son that whoever believes in Jesus will be saved! He was anointed of the Lord for His peculiar work. Now, I feel as if this were a special ground for trust in Him. If Christ were an amateur Savior who had taken up the trade of saving on His own account, there might be a question. But if God has divinely commissioned Him to save, O soul, why can you doubt any more? Warranted of God, authorized of the Eternal—O heart, rest in Him!

Then, mark, the Lord Jesus Christ *has actually done all that is necessary* for Him to do for the salvation of all who trust Him. Years ago, before Jesus Christ came into the world, if I had been sent to preach the gospel, I would have cried "Jesus will take upon Him the sins of believers, and lay down His life for His church!" But now I have a more encouraging message—Jesus *has* carried His people's sins away forever! He *has* suffered on their behalf all that was required to make an end of their transgressions! Whatever was *demand*ed by the justice of God as a recompense for the injured honor of the Law, He *has* rendered! The equivalent for all the sufferings of all the elect in hell forever, Christ has suffered to the utmost! Everything that was necessary that God might be just, and yet the justifier of whomever believes, Christ has endured! The cup of vengeance is not full, and *to be* drained—it is empty and turned bottom upwards—Jesus has drunk it dry! The labors necessary for our redemption, superlatively greater than the labors of Hercules, have all been accomplished! Christ has gone into the

grave, has gone out of the grave, and gone up to glory! He has entered heaven because His work is done—and now He sits down at the right hand of the Father in the posture of rest and honor because He has perfected forever all those who put their trust in Him! Now, soul, how can you refuse to believe in Jesus? To me the argument seems impossible to be resisted; if it is so, that Christ has died, the just for the unjust, and that all who trust Him shall be saved, I will also trust Him, and I shall find peace through His blood!

Moreover, soul, the point, we trust God's grace is bringing you to, is this—Jesus *deserves* to be trusted, and trust Him, you will! He is full of power to save for He is now upon the throne of God, and all power is given Him in heaven and in earth. He is full of power to save, we know, because He is saving souls every day! Some of us are the living witnesses that He can forgive sin, for we are pardoned, accepted, and renewed in heart! And the only way in which we obtained those gifts was this—we trusted Him; we did nothing else but trust Him! If any soul here that believes in Jesus should perish, I must perish with him; I sail in that boat, and if it sinks, I have no other to flee to. I avow before you all that I have no other confidence; I have not so much as the shred of a reliance in any sacrament I have undergone or enjoyed, in any sermon I have ever preached, in any prayer I have ever prayed, in any communion with God I have ever known! My hope dies in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ! And I shake off into the fire as though it were a viper, as a deadly thing only fit to be burned, all pretence of relying on anything I may be, or can be, or ever shall be, or do! “None but Jesus”—this is the settled pillar upon which we must build! It will bear us up, but nothing else can. Now, since by the authority of infallible Scripture we know that Jesus has this power, why is it that souls seeking rest do not obey the command, and rest themselves freely upon Him? This is the climax of human depravity—that it rejects the witness of God, Himself, and chooses to perish in *unbelief*!

Moreover, remember, also, that Jesus Christ this morning is by no means unwilling to save sinners, but on the contrary He delights to do it! You have never to drag mercy out of Christ as money from a miser—it flows freely from Him like the stream from the fountain, or the sunlight from the sun! If He can be happier, He is made happier by giving His mercy to the undeserving. When a poor wretch, who only deserves hell, comes to Him, and He says, “I have blotted out your sins,” it is joy to Christ's heart to do it! When a poor blasphemer bows his knees, and says, “Lord, be merciful to me a sinner,” it makes Christ's heart glad to say, “Your blasphemies are forgiven; I suffered for them on the cross.” When a poor little child, by her bedside, cries, “Gentle Jesus, teach a little child to pray, and forgive the sins which I have done,” the Savior loves to say, “Allow these little children to come to Me, for this, also, is a part of My recompense for the wounds I endured in My hands, My feet, and My side.” When any of you come to Him and confess your transgressions, and trust yourselves in His hands, it will be a new heaven to Him—it will put new stars into His ever bright and lustrous crown; it will make Him see of the travail of His soul, and give Him satisfaction! Have we not here, also, arguments to prove that Jesus is worthy to be trusted?

III. This leads us in the third place to say by all these answers to the question—“Who is He?” EVERY SINNER IN THIS TABERNACLE IS SHUT UP THIS MORNING TO THE ALTERNATIVE OF FAITH OR UNBELIEF. You are shut up either to trust in Christ, in whom God commands you to trust, or to refuse to trust Him. I am not sent to preach to *some* of you this morning, but to everyone who has ears to hear! I have never learned to preach a restricted gospel to a part of a congregation—the commission received by every true minister of Christ is, “Go you into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature: he that believes and is baptized shall be saved; he that believes not shall be damned.” As you are all creatures, the gospel is hereby preached to all of you—sensible or insensible, spiritually dead or spiritually alive, so long as you are able to hear the gospel, one message comes to you all out of the excellent glory—“Whoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.” “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” But I know what will be your course of action unless the Spirit of God prevents it. Many of you will try to decline the alternative between believing and not believing, which I have put so nakedly before you. You will not like to say, “I will not

trust Christ,” and yet you will not trust in Him! What, then, will you do? Why, you will ring the changes on the old bells, “But I am such a sinner; I am so unworthy!” I have already shown that the plea is not relevant, and ought not to be thrust into the business! The question is one and indivisible—“Will you believe on the Son of God?” Why, then, do you raise another question about yourself which has nothing to do with it? Yet I will take you on your own grounds, and answer you. Granted that you are a special and abominable sinner—then of all men in the world you are the man who should trust Christ, because it is written, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” You have been a drunk, a fornicator, an adulterer, a thief—in fact, a devil of a man. Well, then, you have been a sinner—that is all it comes to, and Jesus Christ came into the world to save *sinners*. Therefore, instead of being shut out by your character, you are shut *in* by it, for you are the sort of man that Christ came to save! You cannot run away and say, “He did not come to save me because I am not a sinner.” You dare not do that!

Very likely you will turn round upon me and say, “My reason for unbelief is that I do not *feel* as I should.” I again say the plea ought never to be urged! Because I feel a pain in my foot this morning, is that a reason why I should not trust in an honest man, or believe a statement which comes to me upon good authority? Yet here we are so false to all that is reasonable that we need to encumber sovereign grace! When God says, “I will blot out your transgressions now, and save you once and for all—only trust My dear Son”—it is strange, ‘tis passing strange, ‘tis madness at its consummation that men should invent objections, and plead for a gospel with conditions and hard terms! Now, what will men do if driven out of this? I have often seen the sinner in the next place turn to downright lies, and say, “It is too late,” though he knows right well it never can be too late, for the gospel says, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” It does not say, if he believes when he is 25 years of age, or 35, or 55, or 105, but it stands the same for all ages! It is never too late to believe a truth of God, and that is the point—“Will you believe on the Son of God?” Then the sinner will say that he feels within himself that there is no hope, and so, because he happens to believe a lie, he will make out that God’s truth also is a lie, and refuse to believe that which God solemnly declares, namely, that there is salvation in Jesus Christ! But I cannot stay to mention all these falsehoods, nor, indeed, to run into all the subterfuges of men who seek to escape from their own mercies.

I saw in Pompeii, on a shop door, the motto, “*Eme et Habe bis*”—“Buy and you shall have”—and I could not but think that if I were walking the streets of the New Jerusalem, I should have seen a very different device, “Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” Now if there could be a shop opened in London in which all the goods were to be had without money and without price, would you quarrel with the shopkeeper and petition for an Act of Parliament to shut his shop up and say it was wicked because you would rather go on the old terms and pay for all you have? Of course not! Yet why is it you stand out against free grace’s golden motto, “Trust in Christ and you shall have.” Here is instantaneous pardon, *perfect* pardon, *everlasting* pardon, sonship through Christ, safety on earth, glory in heaven, and all for *nothing*—the free gift of a gracious God to undeserving sinners who trust in Jesus! Never angel had a more gracious, more God-like message of mercy than I have! How I wish I could glow with a seraph’s zeal, and cry with a cherub’s voice while proclaiming it! Would God that men would leave their foolish reasonings, and believe in Jesus Christ!

IV. Lastly, on this alternative, this day may hang EVERLASTING THINGS TO MANY OF YOU. I remember well, for the anniversary of the season has almost come round, when I was placed in a similar condition to many now present, when I knew myself to be ruined and undone, and heard, for the first time truly to understand it, those Words, “Look unto Me, and be you saved, all you ends of the earth.” I know how it stood that morning. I was like Naaman by the Jordan’s brink; there flowed the flood. The old nature said, “Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?” Human nature said, “I need to *feel* something: I need to have John Bunyan’s experience; I need to have my mother’s experience; I need to feel a broken heart; I need to groan more bitterly; I need to be kept awake so many more nights, and all that sort of thing.” Suppose

I had resisted still? If God's grace had not come in and made all that wicked pride of mine give way, I might have been at this hour I know not where, if still living among men. I might have been in hell, gnawing my tongue to think I should ever have heard a plain gospel sermon, and should have put far from me the gospel when it was proclaimed—and all because I would not believe what is indisputably true—and would not trust in Him whom no one ever trusted in vain!

This morning I know there are some here in my past condition, in whom the Holy Spirit will say, "Wash and be clean," and the soul will sigh, "It seems too good to be true." But the Holy Spirit will reply, "Are not My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts?" Unbelief will say, "Your sins are many." But the Holy Spirit will answer, "Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Then the heart will suggest, "But I have rebelled against You, O God, so long." And the sweet Spirit of God will whisper, "I have blotted out your sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud your iniquities: Return unto Me, for I am married unto you, says the Lord." And I do trust that now, at this very moment, many a heart will say, "I will, then, simply rest my soul's salvation upon Christ, the Son of God, who is the only Savior of the lost—I will never from this day on hope to be a self-saved man, nor look to anything but to Him who on the bloody tree endured the wrath of God on the behalf of as many as believe on Him." Soul, if you do so trust Jesus, as surely as you live you are saved! Go in peace. Not only do I speak these words this morning from these poor lips of clay, but He who was nailed on the tree, whom all heaven adores, speaks this morning through me—and He says to one, "Daughter, be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven you." And to another, my Master says, "Son, your sins are forgiven you: take up your bed and walk." O forgiven ones, I charge you do it! And as you got out of this house this morning, saved, and full of joy, tell others about it! Never leave off telling about it and live to love Him who has saved you!

I saw the other day a picture by Rubens, in which he has painted Mary Magdalene kissing the feet of Christ while they are still gushing with founts of blood on the cross. It was a strange picture, but I felt if I had been there, I would have kissed them, too, though they had been crimson with His gore. O blessed feet! O blessed Savior! O blessed Father who gave His Son to be so blessed a Savior! O blessed Spirit of the blessed God that led our wicked, proud hearts into obedience and trust in Jesus! Yes, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has begotten us unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The Lord bless you. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—ROMANS 3:9-21.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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END OF VOLUME 18

O Spirit of God, use these sermons to bring many to a saving knowledge of my Master, Jesus Christ!