

A FAITHFUL FRIEND

NO. 120

A SERMON
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AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS

“There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”
Proverbs 18:24

CICERO has well said, “Friendship is the only thing in the world concerning the usefulness of which all mankind are agreed.” Friendship seems as necessary an element of a comfortable existence in this world as fire or water, or even air itself. A man may drag along a miserable existence in proud solitary dignity, but his life is scarce life, It is nothing but an existence, the tree of being stript of the leaves of hope and the fruits of joy. He who would be happy here must have friends. And he who would be happy hereafter, must, above all things, find a friend in the world to come, in the person of God, the Father of His people.

Friendship, however, though very pleasing and exceedingly blessed, has been the cause of the greatest misery to men when it has been unworthy and unfaithful. For just in proportion as a good friend is sweet, a false friend is full of bitterness. “A faithless friend is sharper than an adder’s tooth.” It is sweet to repose in some one, but oh, how bitter to have that support snapped and to receive a grievous fall as the effect of your confidence.

Fidelity is an absolute necessity in a true friend. We cannot rejoice in men unless they will stand faithful to us. Solomon declares that, “There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” That friend, I suppose, he never found in the pomp and vanities of the world. He had tried them all, but he found them empty. He passed through all their joys, but he found them “vanity of vanities.” Poor Savage spoke from sad experience when he said—

*“You’ll find the friendship of the world a show!
Mere outward show! ’Tis like the harlot’s tears,
The statesman’s promise, or false patriot’s zeal,
Full of fair seeming, but delusion all.”*

And so for the most part they are. The world’s friendship is ever brittle. Trust to it and you have trusted a robber. Rely upon it and you have leaned upon a thorn. Ay, worse than that, upon a spear which shall pierce you to the soul with agony. Yet Solomon says he had found “a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” Not in the haunts of his unbridled pleasures, nor in the wanderings of his unlimited researches, but in the pavilion of the Most High, the secret dwelling place of God—in the person of Jesus, the Son of God, the Friend of sinners.

It is saying a great thing, to affirm that, “There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” For the love of brotherhood has produced most valiant deeds. We have read stories of what brotherhood could do, which, we think, could hardly be excelled in all the annals of friendship.

Timoleon, with his shield, stood over the body of his slain brother to defend him from the insults of the foe. It was reckoned a brave deed of brotherhood that he should dare the spears of an army in defense of his brother’s corpse. And many such instances have there been, in ancient and modern warfare, of the attachment of brethren.

There is a story told of two brothers in a Highland regiment, who, whilst marching through the Highlands, lost their way. They were overtaken by one of the terrible storms, which will sometimes

come upon travelers unawares, and blinded by the snow, they lost their way upon the mountains. Well nigh frozen to death, it was with difficulty they could continue their march. One man after another dropped into the snow and disappeared.

There were two brothers, however, of the name of Forsythe—one of them fell prostrate on the earth and would have lain there to die, but his brother, though barely able to drag his own limbs across the white desert, took him on his back and carried him along—and as others fell one by one, this brave true-hearted brother carried his loved one on his back, until at last he himself fell down overcome with fatigue, and died. His brother, however, had received such warmth from his body that he was enabled to reach the end of his journey in safety and so lived. Here we have an instance of one brother sacrificing his life for another.

I hope there are some brothers here who would be prepared to do the same if they should ever be brought into the same difficulty. It is saying a great thing to declare that, “There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” It is putting that friend first of all in the list of loved ones. For surely, next to a mother’s love, there is, and there ought to be, no higher affection in the world than the love of a brother to one begotten of the same father and held on the same knee.

Those who have “Grown in beauty side by side, and filled one house with glee,” ought to love one another. And we think there have been many glorious instances and mighty proofs of the love of brothers. Yet, says Solomon, “There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”

To repeat our assertion, we believe that this friend is the blessed Redeemer, Jesus Christ. It shall be ours first, *to prove*, this morning, *the fact* that He sticks closer than a brother. Then as briefly as we can, to show you *why He sticks closer than a brother*. And then to finish up by giving you *some lessons which may be drawn from the doctrine* that Jesus Christ is a faithful Friend.

I. First, then, beloved, we assert that CHRIST IS “A FRIEND THAT STICKETH CLOSER THAN A BROTHER.”

And in order to prove this from facts, we appeal to such of you as have had Him for a Friend. Will you not, each of you, at once give your verdict that this is neither more nor less than an unexaggerated truth? He loved you before all worlds, long ere the day star flung his ray across the darkness, before the wings of angels had flapped the unnavigated ether, before aught of creation had struggled from the womb of nothingness, God, even our God, had set His heart upon all His children.

Since that time, has He never swerved, has He once turned aside, once changed? No. You who have tasted of His love and know His grace will bear me witness that He has been a certain Friend in uncertain circumstances.

***“He, near your side hath always stood,
His lovingkindness, oh! how good!”***

You fell in Adam. Did He cease to love you? No. He became the second Adam to redeem you. You sinned in practice and brought upon your head the condemnation of God. You deserved His wrath and His utter anger. Did He then forsake you? No!

***“He saw you ruined in the fall,
Yet lov’d you notwithstanding all.”***

He sent His minister after you—you despised him. He preached the Gospel in your ears—you laughed at him. You broke God’s Sabbath, you despised His Word. Did He then forsake you? No!

***“Determined to save, he watched o’er your path,
Whilst Satan’s blind slave, you sported with death.”***

And at last He arrested you by His grace, He humbled you, He made you penitent, He brought you to His feet, and He forgave all your sins. Since then, has He left you? You have often left Him—has He ever left you? You have had many trials and troubles—has He ever deserted you? Has He ever turned away His heart or shut up His heart of compassion?

No, children of God, it is your solemn duty to say, “No,” and bear witness to His faithfulness. You have been in severe afflictions and in dangerous circumstances—did your Friend desert you then? Others have been faithless to you. He that eats bread with you has lifted up his heel against you. But has Christ ever forsaken you? Has there ever been a moment when you could go to Him and say, “Master, You have betrayed me”?

Could you once, in the blackest hour of your grief, dare to question His fidelity? Could you dare say to Him, “Lord, You have promised what You did not perform”? Will you not bear witness now—“Not one good thing hath failed of all that the Lord God hath promised. All hath come to pass”? And do you fear He will yet forsake you?

Ask, then, the bright ones before the throne—“You glorified spirits! Did Christ forsake you? You have passed through Jordan’s stream, did He leave you there? You have been baptized in the black flood of death, did He there forsake you? You have stood before the throne of God—did He then deny you?” And they answer, “No. Through all the troubles of our life, in all the bitterness of death, in all the agonies of our expiring moments, and in all the terrors of God’s judgment, He has been with us, ‘a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.’”

Out of all the millions of God’s redeemed, there is not one He has forsaken. Poor they have been, mean and distressed, but He has never abhorred their prayer, never turned aside from doing them good. He has always been with them.

*“For His mercy shall endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.”*

But I shall not longer stay, since I cannot prove this to the ungodly, and to the godly it is already proven—for they know it by experience. Therefore it is but little necessary that I should do more than just certify the fact that Christ is a faithful Friend—a Friend in every hour of need and every time of distress.

II. And now I have to tell you THE REASONS WHY IT IS WE MAY DEPEND UPON CHRIST AS BEING A FAITHFUL FRIEND.

There are some things in Himself which render it certain that He will stick close to His people.

1. *True friendship can only be made between true men*, whose hearts are the soul of honor. There can be no lasting friendship between bad men. Bad men may pretend to love each other, but their friendship is a rope of sand, which shall be broken at any convenient season. But if a man has a sincere heart within him, and be true and noble, then we may confide in him.

Spenser sings in fine old English verse—

*“Ne, certes can that friendship long endure,
However gay and goodly be the style,
That does ill cause or evil end enure,
For Vertue is the band that bindeth Harts most sure.”*

But who can find a stain in the character of Jesus or who can tarnish His honor? Has there ever been a spot on His escutcheon? Has His flag ever been trampled in the dust? Does He not stand the true witness in heaven, the faithful and just? Is it not declared of Him that He is God who cannot lie? Have we not found Him so up to this moment? And may we not, knowing that He is, “Holy, holy, holy Lord,” confide in Him, knowing that He will stick closer to us than a brother? His goodness is the guarantee of His fidelity—He cannot fail us.

2. *Faithfulness to us in our faults* is a certain sign of fidelity in a friend. You may depend upon that man who will tell you of your faults in a kind and considerate manner. Fawning hypocrites, insidious flatterers, are the sweepings and offal of friendship. They are but the parasites upon that noble tree. But true friends put enough trust in you to tell you openly of your faults.

Give me for a friend the man who will speak honestly of me before my face—who will not tell first one neighbor, and then another, but who will come straight to my house and say, “Sir, I feel there is such and such a thing in you, which, as my brother, I must tell you of”—that man is a true friend. He has proved himself to be so. For we never get any praise for telling people of their faults, we rather hazard their dislike. A man will sometimes thank you for it, but he does not often like you any the better.

Praise is a thing we all love. I met with a man the other day who said he was impervious to flattery. I was walking with him at the time and turning round rather sharply, I said, “At any rate, sir, you seem to have a high gift in flattering yourself, for you are really doing so, in saying you are impervious to flattery.” “You cannot flatter me,” he said. I replied, “I can, if I like to try,” and perhaps, may do so before the day is out.

I found I could not flatter him directly, so I began by saying what a fine child that was of his. And he drank it in as a precious draught. And when I praised this thing and that belonging to him, I could see that he was very easily flattered. Not directly but indirectly. We are all pervious to flattery. We like the soothing cordial, only it must not be labeled flattery, for we have a religious abhorrence of flattery if it be so called. Call it by any other name and we drink it in, even as the ox drinks in water.

Now, child of God, has Christ ever flattered you? Has He not told you of your faults right truly? Has He not pricked your conscience even upon what you thought to gloss over—your little secret sins? Has He not provoked conscience to thunder in your ears notes of terror, because of your misdeeds? Well, then, you may trust Him, for He shows that faithfulness which renders a man right trustworthy.

Thus I have pointed out to you that there are reasons in Himself for which we may trust Him.

3. In the next place, *there are some things in His friendship which render us sure of not being deceived when we put our confidence in Him.* True friendship must not be of hasty growth. As quaint old Master Fuller says, “Let friendship creep gently to a height. If it rushes to it, it may soon run itself out of breath.”

It is even so. I think it was Joanna Baillie said,

*“Friendship is no plant of hasty growth.
Though planted in esteem’s deep fixed soil,
The gradual culture of kind intercourse
Must bring it to perfection.”*

In vain do you trust the gourd over your head, O Jonah. It will not be of much use to you. It came up in a night—it may wither in a night. It is the strong stiff oak, of ages growth, which shall abide the tempest—which shall alike put out its wings to shield you from the sun and shall afterwards find you a hovel in its heart, if necessary, in its grey old age, when its branches tremble in the blast.

Friendship is true when it begins—but we must have a man’s friendship long before we can say of him that he will stick closer than a brother. And how long has Christ loved you? That you cannot tell. When the ages were not born He loved you. When this world was an infant, wrapped in the swaddling clothes of mist, He loved you. When the old pyramids had not begun to be builded, His heart was set upon you.

And ever since you have been born He has had a strong affection for you. He looked on you in your cradle and He loved you then. He was affianced to you when you were an infant of a span long and He has loved you ever since. Some of you I see with grey hairs, some with heads all bald with age. He has loved you up till now and will He now forsake you?

Oh, no, His friendship is so old that it will last. It has been matured by so many tempests, it has been rooted by so many winds of trouble that it cannot but endure, it will stand. The granite peak of the mountain shall not be melted, because unlike the young snow, it has braved the blast and borne the heat of the burning sun. It has stood out always, catching in its face every blow from the fist of nature, and yet been unmoved and uninjured. It shall last, for it has lasted.

But when the elements shall melt, and in a stream of dissolving fire shall run away, then shall Christ's friendship still exist, for it is of older growth than they. He is "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." His friendship is a hoary friendship—hoary as His own head, of which it is said, "His head and His hair are white like snow, as white as wool."

4. But note, further, *the friendship which will last does not make its rise in the chambers of mirth, nor is it fed and fattened there.* Young lady, you speak of a dear friend whom you acquired last night in a ballroom. Do not, I beseech you, misuse the word. He is not a friend if he was acquired merely there. Friends are better things than those which grow in the hot-house of pleasure. Friendship is a more lasting plant than those.

You have a friend, have you? Yes, and he keeps a pair of horses and has a good establishment. Ah! but your best way to prove your friend is to know that he will be your friend when you have not so much as a mean cottage. And when houseless and without clothing, you are driven to beg your bread. Thus you would make true proof of a friend.

Give me a friend who was born in the winter time, whose cradle was rocked in the storm. He will last. Our fair-weather friends shall flee away from us. I had rather have a robin for a friend than a swallow. For a swallow abides with us only in the summer time, but a robin comes to us in the winter. Those are tight friends who will come the nearest to us when we are in the most distress—but those are not friends who speed themselves away when ill times come.

Believer, have you reason to fear that Christ will leave you now? Has He not been with you in the house of mourning? You found your Friend where men find pearls, "In caverns deep, where darkness dwells." You found Jesus in your hour of trouble. It was on the bed of sickness that you first learned the value of His name. It was in the hour of mental anguish that you first laid hold of the hem of His garment.

And since then, your nearest and sweetest communion has been held with Him in hours of darkness. Well then, such a Friend, proved in the house of sorrow—a Friend who gave His heart's blood for you and let His soul run out in one great river of gore—such a Friend never can and never will forsake you. He sticks closer than a brother.

5. Again, *a friend who is acquired by folly is never a lasting friend.* Do a foolish thing and make a man your friend—'tis but a confederacy in vice and you will soon discover that his friendship is worthless. The friendships you acquire by doing wrong, you had better be without. Oh! how many silly friendships there are springing up, the mere fruit of a sentimentalism, having no root whatever, but like the plant of which our Savior tells us, "It sprang up because it had no depth of earth"

Jesus Christ's friendship is not like that. There is no ingredient of folly in it. He loves us discreetly, not winking or conniving at our follies, but instilling into us His wisdom. His love is wise. He has chosen us according to the counsel of His wisdom. Not blindly and rashly, but with all judgment and prudence.

Under this head I may likewise observe, that *the friendship of ignorance is not a very desirable one.* I desire no man to call himself my friend, if he does not know me. Let him love me in proportion to his knowledge of me. If he loves me for the little he knows, when he knows more he may cast me aside. "That man," says one, "seems to be a very amiable man." "I am sure I can love him," says another, as he scans his features.

Ay, but do not write "friend" yet. Wait a wee bit, until you know more of him. Just see him, examine him, try him, test him, and not till then enter him on the sacred list of friends. Be friendly to all, but

make none your friends until they know you and you know them. Many a friendship born in the darkness of ignorance has died suddenly in the light of a better acquaintance with each other.

You supposed men to be different from what they were, and when you discovered their real character, you disregarded them. I remember one saying to me, “I have great affection for you, sir,” and he mentioned a certain reason. I replied, “My dear fellow, your reason is absolutely false. The very thing you love me for, I am not, and hope I never shall be.” And so I said, “I really cannot accept your friendship, if it be founded upon a misunderstanding of what I may have said.”

But our Lord Jesus never can forsake those whom once He loves, because He can discover nothing in us worse than He knew, for He knew all about us beforehand. He saw our leprosy and yet He loved us. He knew our deceitfulness and unbelief, and yet He did press us to His bosom. He knew what poor fools we were, and yet He said He would never leave us nor forsake us. He knew that we should rebel against Him and despise His counsel often. He knew that even when we loved Him our love would be cold and languid. But He loved for His own sake. Surely, then, He will stick closer than a brother.

6. Yet again, *friendship and love, to be real, must not lie in words but in deeds.* The friendship of bare compliment is the fashion of this age, because this age is the age of deceit. The world is the great house of sham. Go where you may in London—sham is staring you in the face. There are very few real things to be discovered.

I allude not merely to tricks in business, adulterations in food, and such like. Deception is not confined to the tradesman’s shop. It prevails throughout society. The sanctuary is not exempt. The preacher adopts a sham voice. You hardly ever hear a man speak in the pulpit in the same way he would speak in the parlor.

Why, I hear my brethren, sometimes, when they are at tea or dinner, speak in a very comfortable decent sort of English voice, but when they get into their pulpits, they adopt a sanctimonious tone and fill their mouths with inflated utterance, or else whine most pitifully. They degrade the pulpit by pretending to honor it—speaking in a voice which God never intended any mortal to have. This is the great house of sham. And such little things show which way the wind blows.

You leave your card at a friend’s house. That is an act of friendship—the card! I wonder whether, if he were hard up for cash, you would leave your banker’s book! You write, “My dear sir,” “Yours very truly”—it is a sham—you do not mean it. “Dear!” that is a sacred word. It ought to be used to none but those you regard with affection. But we tolerate lies now, as if they were truths. And we call them courtesies. Courtesies they may be, but untruths they are in many cases.

Now, Christ’s love lies not in words, but in deeds. He says not, “My dear people.” But He let His heart out and we could see what that was. He does not come to us and say, “Dearly beloved” simply. But He hangs upon the cross and there we read, “Dearly beloved” in red letters. He does not come to us with the kisses of His lips first—He gives us blessings with both His hands, He gives Himself *for* us and then He gives Himself *to* us.

Trust no complimentary friend. Rely upon the man who gives you real tokens worth having, who does for you deeds to show the truthfulness of his heart. Such a friend—and such is Jesus—“sticketh closer than a brother.”

7. Once more, and I shall not weary you, I trust. *A purchased friend will never last long.* Give to a man nineteen times, and deny him the twentieth, and he shall hate you, for his love sprang only from your gifts. The love which I could buy for gold I would sell for dross. The friendship that I could buy for pearls I would dispense with for pebbles. It is of no value, and therefore the sooner lost, the better.

But oh! believer, Christ’s love was unpurchased love. You brought Him no present. Jacob said, when his sons went to Egypt, “Take the man a present, a little oil, a little balm, a few nuts and almonds,” but you took Christ no presents. When you came to Him, you said—

*“Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.”*

You did not even promise that you would love Him, for you had such a faithless heart, you durst not say so. You asked Him to make you love Him—that was the most you could do. He loved you for nothing at all—simply because He would love you. That love which so lived on nothing but its own resources will not starve through the scantiness of your returns. The love which grew in such a rocky heart as this, will not die for want of soil. That love which sprang up in the barren desert, in your unirrigated soul, will never, never die for want of moisture. It must live, it cannot expire. Jesus must be “a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”

8. Shall I stay to urge more reasons? I may but mention one other, namely, this—that *there cannot, by any possibility, arise any cause which could make Christ love us less*. You say, “How is this?” One man loves his friend, but he on a sudden grows rich, and now he says, “I am a greater man than I used to be, I forget my old acquaintances.”

But Christ can grow no richer—He is as rich as He can be, infinitely so. He loves you now—then it cannot be possible that He will by reason of an increase in His own personal glory forsake you, for everlasting glories now crown His head. He can never be more glorious and great, and therefore He will love you still.

Sometimes, on the other hand, one friend grows poorer, and then the other forsakes him. But you never can grow poorer than you are, for you are “a poor sinner and nothing at all.” Now, you have nothing of your own—all you have is borrowed—all given you by Him. He cannot love you, then, less, because you grow poorer, for poverty that has nothing is at least as poor as it can be and can never sink lower in the scale. Christ, therefore, must love you for all your nakedness and all your poverty.

“But I may prove sinful,” say you. Yes, but you cannot be more so than He foreknew you would be and yet He loved you with the foreknowledge of all your sins. Surely then, when it happens it will occasion no surprise to Him. He knew it all beforehand and He cannot swerve from His love. No circumstance can possibly arise that ever will divide the Savior from His love to His people and the saint from his love to his Savior. He is “a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”

III. Now then, AN INFERENCE TO BE DERIVED FROM THIS.

Lavater says, “The qualities of your friends will be those of your enemies—cold friends, cold enemies; half-friends, half-enemies; fervid enemies, warm friends.” Knowing this to be a truth, I have often congratulated myself, when my enemies have spoken fiercely against me. Well, I have thought, “My friends love me hard and fast. Let the enemies be as hot as they please. It only indicates that the friends are proportionately firm in affection.”

Then we draw this inference—that if Christ sticks close, and He is our Friend, then our enemies will stick close, and never leave us till we die. Oh, Christian, because Christ sticks close, the devil will stick close too—he will be at you and with you. The dog of hell will never cease his howlings till you reach the other side of Jordan. No place in this world is out of bow-shot of that great enemy.

Till you have crossed the stream, his arrows *can* reach you and they will. If Christ gave Himself for you, the devil will do all he can to destroy you. If Christ has been long-suffering to you, Satan will be persevering, in hopes that Christ may forget you. He will strive after you and strive until he shall see you safely landed in heaven.

But be not disappointed, the louder Satan roars, the more proof you shall have of Christ’s love. “Give me,” said old Rutherford, “give me a roaring devil rather than a sleeping one. For sleeping devils make me slumber, but roaring ones provoke me to run to my Master.” Oh! be glad, then, if the world rant at you, if your foes attack you fiercely. Christ is just as full of love to you as they are of hatred.

Therefore,

***“Be firm and strong;
Be grace thy shield, and Christ thy song.”***

And now I have a question to ask—that question I ask of every man and every woman in this place, and of every child, too—Is Jesus Christ your Friend? Have you a Friend at court—at heaven’s court? Is the Judge of the quick and the dead your Friend? Can you say that you love Him and has He ever revealed Himself in the way of love to you?

Dear hearer, do not answer that question for your neighbor. Answer it for yourself. Peer or peasant, rich or poor, learned or illiterate—this question is for each of you. Therefore, ask it—“Is Christ my Friend?” Did you ever consider that question? Have you ever asked it? Oh! to be able to say, “Christ is my Friend,” is one of the sweetest things in the world.

A man who had lived much in sin one day casually entered a place of worship. Before the sermon, this hymn was sung—

“Jesus, lover of my soul.”

The next day the man was met by an acquaintance who asked him how he liked the sermon. Said he, “I do not know, but there were two or three words that took such a hold of me that I did not know what to do with myself. The minister read that hymn, ‘Jesus, lover of my soul.’ Ah!” he said, though he was by no means a religious man—“to be able to say that, I would give up all I have got! But do you think,” he asked, “that Jesus ever will be the lover of such a man as I am? ‘Jesus, lover of my soul.’ Oh! could I say it?” And then he buried his head in his hands and wept.

I have every reason to fear that he went back to his sin and was the same afterwards as before. But you see, he had a conscience enough to let him know how valuable it was to have Christ for his lover and his friend.

Ah! rich man, you have many friends. There be some here who have learned the faithlessness of friends. There be some here who have toiled for their country’s good, and deserve a meed of honor at their country’s hands, who, for one mistake—or what perhaps was a mistake—have been neglected by too many who once appeared to be their most trusty adherents.

Oh! put no confidence, you great men and you rich, in the adherence of your friends. David said in his haste, “All men are liars.” You may one day have to say it at your leisure.

And oh! you kind and affectionate hearts, who are not rich in wealth, but who are rich in love—and that is the world’s best wealth—put this golden coin among your silver ones and it will sanctify them all—Get Christ’s love shed abroad in your hearts, and your mother’s love, your daughter’s love, your husband’s love, your wife’s love, will become more sweet than ever.

The love of Christ casts not out the love of relatives, but it sanctifies our loves and makes them sweeter far. Remember, dear hearer, the love of men and women is very sweet, but all must pass away, and what will you do if you have no wealth but the wealth that fades, and no love but the love which dies, when death shall come?

Oh! to have the love of Christ! You can take that across the river death with you. You can wear it as your bracelet in heaven and set it up as a seal upon your hand. For His love is “strong as death and mightier than the grave.”

Good old Bishop Beveridge, I think it was, when dying, did not know his best friends. Said one, “Bishop Beveridge, do you know me?” Said he, “Who are you?” and when the name was mentioned, he said, “No.” “But don’t you know your wife, Bishop?” “What is her name?” said he. She said, “I am your wife.” “I did not know I had got one,” said he.

Poor old man! his faculties all failed him. At last one stooped down and whispered, “Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ?” “Yes,” said he, making an effort to speak, “I have known Him these forty years and I never can forget Him.” It is marvelous how memory will hold the place with Jesus, when it will with no one else. And it is equally marvelous that—

“When all created streams are dry,

Christ's fullness is the same."

My dear hearers, do think of this matter. Oh that you might get Christ for your Friend. He will never be your Friend while you are self-righteous. He will never be your friend while you live in sin. But do you believe yourselves guilty? Do you desire to leave off sin? Do you want to be saved? Do you desire to be renewed? Then let me tell you, my Master loves you!

Poor, weak, and helpless worms, my Master's heart is full of love for you. His eyes at this moment are looking down with pity on you. "Oh! Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" He now bids me tell you that He died for all of you who confess yourselves to be sinners and feel it. He bids me say to you, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." He tells me to proclaim salvation full and free—full, needing nothing of yours to help it. Free, needing nothing of yours to buy it.

*"Come, ye thirsty, come and welcome;
God's free bounty glorify:
True belief and true repentance,
Every grace that brings us nigh—
Without money,
Come to Jesus Christ, and buy."*

There is nothing I feel that I fail so much in as addressing sinners. Oh! I wish I could cry my heart out and preach my heart out, to you and at you.

*"Dear Savior, draw reluctant hearts;
To Thee let sinners fly,
And take the bliss Thy love imparts;
And drink, and never die."*

Farewell, with this one thought—we shall never, all of us meet together here again. It is a very solemn thought, but according to the course of nature and the number of deaths, if all of you were willing to come here next Sabbath morning, it is not at all likely that all of you will be alive. One out of this congregation will be sure to have gone the way of all flesh.

Farewell, you that are appointed to death, I know not where you are—yon strong man, or yon tender maiden, with the hectic flush of consumption on her cheek. I know not who is appointed to death. But I do now most solemnly take my farewell of such a one. Farewell poor soul—and is it farewell forever? Shall we meet in the land of the hereafter, in the home of the blessed, or do I now bid you farewell now forever?

I do solemnly bid farewell to you forever, if you live and die without Christ. But I cannot bear that dreary thought. And I therefore say, poor sinner! stop and consider—consider your ways and now—"Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" "Why will you die?" "Why will ye die?" "Why will ye die?" Ah! you cannot answer that question.

May God help you to answer it in a better fashion, by saying—"Here, Lord!

*Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
O Son of God, I come to Thee."*

"I trust my soul in Thy kind hands."

The Lord bless you all for Christ's sake! Amen.

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.