

“WHAT HAVE I DONE?”

NO. 169

A SERMON
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AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS

“What have I done?”
Jeremiah 8:6

PERHAPS no figure represents God in a more gracious light than those figures of speech which represent Him as stooping from His throne, and as coming down from heaven to attend to the wants and to behold the woes of mankind. We must have love for that God, who, when Sodom and Gomorrah were reeking with iniquity, would not destroy those cities—although He knew their guilt and their wickedness—until He had made an actual visitation to them and had sojourned for a while in their streets.

Methinks we cannot help pouring out our heart in affection to that God of whom we are told that He inclines His ear from the highest glory and puts it to the lip of the faintest that breathes out the true desire. How can we resist feeling that He is a God whom we must love, when we know that He regards everything that concerns us, numbers the very hairs of our heads, bids His angels protect our footsteps lest we dash our feet against stones, and marks our path, and orders our ways?

But especially is this great truth brought near to man’s heart, when we recollect how attentive God is, not merely to the temporal interests of His creatures, but to their spiritual concerns. God is represented in Scripture as waiting to be gracious, or in the language of the parable, when His prodigals are yet a great way off, He sees them—He runs and falls upon their neck and kisses them.

He is so attentive to everything that is good, even in the poor sinner’s heart, that to Him there is music in a sigh and beauty in a tear. And in this verse that I have just read, He represents Himself as looking upon man’s heart and listening—listening, if possibly He may hear something that is good. “I hearkened and heard; I listened; I stood still, and I attended to them.”

And how amiable does God appear when He is represented as turning aside, as it were, with grief in His heart, exclaiming, “I *did* listen, I *did* hearken, but they spake not aright; no man repented of his wickedness, saying, ‘What shall I do?’”

Ah! my hearer, you never have a desire towards God which does not excite God’s hope. You never breathe a prayer towards heaven which He does not notice. And though you have very often uttered prayers which have been as the morning cloud and as the early dew that soon pass away, yet all these things have moved JEHOVAH’s heart—for He has been listening to your cry and noticing the breathing of your soul, and though it all has passed away, yet it did not pass away unnoticed, for He remembers it even now.

And oh! you that are this day seeking a Savior, remember—that Savior’s eyes are on your seeking soul today. You are not looking after one who cannot see you—you are coming to your Father, but your Father sees you even in the distance. It was but one tear that trickled down your cheek, but your Father noticed that as a hopeful sign. It was but one throb that went through your heart just now during the singing of the hymn, but God, the Loving, noticed even that and thought upon it as at least some omen that you were not yet quite hardened by sin, nor yet given up by love and mercy.

The text is “What have I done?” I shall just introduce that by a *few words of affectionate persuasion*, urging all now present to ask that question. Secondly, I shall give you a *few words of assistance in trying to answer it*. And when I have done so, I shall finish by a *few sentences of solemn admonition to those who have had to answer the question against themselves*.

I. First, then, a few words of EARNEST PERSUASION, requesting everyone now present, and more especially every unconverted person, to ask this question of himself and answer it solemnly—“What have I done?”

Few men like to take the trouble to review their own lives. Most men are so near bankruptcy that they are ashamed to look at their own books. The great masses of mankind are like the silly ostrich, which, when hard pressed by the hunters, buries its head in the sand and shuts its eyes—and then thinks, because it does not see its pursuers, it is safe.

The great masses of mankind, I repeat, are ashamed to review their own biographies. And if conscience and memory together could turn joint authors of a history of their lives throughout, they would buy a huge iron clasp and a padlock to it, and lock the volume up, for they dare not read it. They know it to be a book full of lamentation and woe, which they dare not read, and still go on in their iniquities.

I have therefore a hard task in endeavoring to persuade you one and all to take down that book, and be its pages few or many, be they white or be they black, I have some difficulty in getting you to read them through. But may the Holy Spirit persuade you now, so that you may answer this question, “What have I done?” For remember, my dear friends, that searching yourself can do you no hurt.

No tradesman ever gets the poorer by looking to his books. He may find himself to be poorer than he thought he was, but it is not the looking to the books that has hurt him. He has hurt himself by some ill trading before. Better, my friend, for you to know the past whilst there is yet time for repairing it, than that you should go blindfolded, hoping to enter the gates of Paradise and find out your mistake when alas! it is too late, because the door is shut.

There is nothing to be lost by taking stock. You cannot be any the worse off for a little self-examination. This of itself shall be one strong argument to induce you to do it. But remember, you may be a great deal the better, for suppose your affairs are all right with God—why then you may make good cheer and comfort yourself, for he that is right with his God has no cause to be sad.

But ah! remember there are many probabilities that you are wrong. There are so many in this world who are deceived that there are many chances that you are deceived too. You may have a name to live and yet be dead. You may be like John Bunyan’s tree, of which He said, “’Twas fair to look upon and green outside, but the inside of it was rotten enough to be tinder for the devil’s tinder box.”

You may this day thus stand before yourself and fellow creatures well white-washed and exceeding fair, but you may be like that Pharisee of whom Christ said, “You are a white-washed sepulchre, for inwardly you are full of rottenness and dead men’s bones.”

Now, man, however you may wish to be self-deceived, for my own part I feel that I would a thousand times rather know my own state really than have the most pleasing conceptions about it and find myself deceived. Many a time have I solemnly prayed that prayer, “Lord, help me to know the worst of my own case. If I be still an apostate from You, without God and without Christ, at least let me be honest to myself and know what I am.”

Remember, my friend, that the time you have for self-examination is, after all, very short. Soon you will know the great secret. I perhaps may not say words rough enough to rend off the mask which you now have upon you, but there is one called Death who will stand no compliment. You may masquerade it out today in the dress of the saint, but death will soon strip you and you must stand before the judgment seat after death has discovered you in all your nakedness, be that naked innocence or naked guilt.

Remember, too, though you may deceive yourself, you will not deceive your God. You may have light weights and the beam of the scale in which you weigh yourself may not be honest, and may not therefore tell the truth, but when God shall try you, He will make no allowances. When the everlasting JEHOVAH grasps the balances of justice and puts His law into one scale, ah, sinner, how you will tremble when He shall put you into the other—for unless Christ be your Christ you will be found light weight—you will be weighed in the balances and found wanting and be cast away forever.

Oh! what words shall I adopt to induce every one of you to now search yourselves! I know the various excuses that some of you will make. Some of you will plead that you are members of churches and that, therefore, all is right with you. Perhaps you look across from the gallery and you say to me, “Mr. Spurgeon, your hands baptized me but this year into the Lord Jesus and you have often passed to me the sacramental bread and wine.”

Ah, my hearer, I know that and I have baptized, I fear, many of you that the Lord has never baptized, and some of you have been received into church fellowship on earth who were never received by God. If Jesus Christ had one hypocrite in His twelve, how many hypocrites must I have here in nearly twelve hundred?

Ah! my hearers, in this age it is a very easy thing to make a profession of religion. Many churches receive candidates into their fellowship without examination at all. I have had such come to me and I have told them, “I must treat you just the same as if you came from the world,” because they said, “I never saw the minister, I wrote a note to the church and they took me in.”

Verily, in this age of profession, a man may make the highest profession in the world and yet be at last found with damned apostates. Do not put off the question for that. And do not say, “I am too busy to attend to my spiritual concerns. There is time enough yet.” Many have said that and before their “time enough” has come, they have found themselves where time shall be no more.

Oh! you that say you have time enough, how little do you know how near death is to you. There are some present who will not see New Year’s Day. There is every probability that a very large number will never see another year. Oh, may the Lord our God prepare us each for death and for judgment, and bless this morning’s exhortation to our preparation, by leading us to ask the question—“What have I done?”

II. Now, then, I am to help you to answer the question—“What have I done?”

Christian, true Christian, I have little to say to you this morning. I will not multiply words, but leave the inquiry with your own conscience. What have you done? I hear you reply, “I have done nothing to save myself, for that was done for me in the everlasting covenant, from before the foundation of the world. I have done nothing to make a righteousness for myself, for Christ said, ‘It is finished.’ I have done nothing to procure heaven by my merits, for all that Jesus did for me before I was born.”

But say, brother, what have you done for Him who died to save your wretched soul? What have you done for His church? What have you done for the salvation of the world? What have you done to promote your own spiritual growth in grace? Ah! I might hit some of you that are true Christians very hard here. But I will leave you with your God. God will chastise His own children.

I will, however, put a pointed question—are there not many Christians now present who cannot recollect that they have been the means of the salvation of one soul during this year? Come, now, turn back. Have you any reason to believe that directly or indirectly you have been made the means this year of the salvation of a soul?

I will go further—there are some of you who are old Christians and I will ask you this question—have you any reason to believe that ever since you were converted you have ever been the means of the salvation of a soul? It was reckoned in the East, in the times of the patriarchs, to be a disgrace to a woman that she had no children. But what a disgrace it is to a Christian to have no spiritual children—to have none born unto God by his instrumentality!

And yet, there are some of you here who have been spiritually barren and have never brought one convert to Christ. You have not one star in your crown of glory and must wear a starless crown in heaven. Oh! I think I see the joy and gladness with which a good child of God looked upon me last week, when we had heard someone who had been converted to God by her instrumentality.

I took her by the hand and said, “Well, now, you have reason to thank God.” “Yes, sir,” she said, “I feel a happy and an honored woman now. I have never, that I know of, before been the means of bringing a soul to Christ.” And the good woman looked so happy, the tears were in her eyes for gladness.

How many have you brought during this year? Come, Christian, what have you done? Alas! alas! you have not been a barren fig tree, but still your fruit is such that it cannot be seen. You may be alive unto God, but how many of you have been very unprofitable and exceedingly unfruitful? And do not think that while I thus deal hardly with you, I would excuse myself?

No, I ask myself the question, “What have I done?” And when I think of the zeal of Whitefield and of the earnestness of many of those great evangelists of former times, I stand here astounded at myself, and I ask myself the question, “What have I done?” And I can only answer it with some confusion of face.

How often have I preached to you, my hearers, the Word of God—and yet how seldom have I wept over you as a pastor should! How often ought I to have warned you of the wrath to come, when I have forgotten to be as earnest as I might have been. I fear lest the blood of souls should lie at my door when I shall come to be judged of my God at last.

I beseech you, pray for your minister in this thing, that he may be forgiven if there has ever been a lack of earnestness, and energy, and prayerfulness, and pray that during the next year I may always preach as though I never might preach again,

“A dying man to dying men.”

I heard the moralist whilst I was questioning the Christian, say, “What have I done? Sir, I have done all I ought to have done. You may, as a Gospeller, stand there and talk to me about sins, but I tell you, sir, I have done all that was my duty. I have always attended my church or chapel regularly every Sunday as ever a man or woman could. I have always read prayers in the family and I always say prayers before I go to bed and when I get up in the morning. I don’t know that I owe anybody anything or that I have been unkind to anybody. I give a fair share to the poor and I think if good works have any merit, I certainly have done a great deal.”

Quite right, my friend, very right, indeed—if good works have any merit—but then it is very unfortunate that they have not any. For our good works, if we do them to save ourselves by them, are no better than our sins. You might as well hope to go to heaven by cursing and swearing as by the merits of your own good works.

For although good works are infinitely preferable to cursing and swearing in a moral point of view, yet there is no more merit in one than there is in the other, though there is less sin in one than in the other. Will you please remember then, that all you have been doing all these years is good for nothing?

“Well, but sir, I have trusted in Christ.” Now stop! Let me ask you a question. Do you mean to say that you have trusted partly in Christ and partly in your own good works? “Yes, sir.” Well, then, let me tell you, the Lord Jesus Christ will never be a make-weight. You must take Christ wholly, or else no Christ at all—Christ will never go halves with you in the work of salvation.

So, I repeat, all you have ever done is good for nothing. You have been building a card house and the tempest will blow it down. You have been building a house upon the sand and when the rains descend and the floods come, the last vestige of it will be swept away forever. Hear the word of the Lord! “By the works of the law shall no flesh living be justified.”

“Cursed is every one that continueth not in *all* things that are written in the book of the law to do them.” And in as much as you have not continued in all things that are written in the law, you are transgressors of the law and you are under the curse, and all that the law has to say to you is, “Cursed, cursed, cursed! Your morality is of no help to you whatever, as to eternal things.”

I turn to another character. He says, “Well, I don’t trust in my morality nor in anything else. I say,

‘Begone, dull care, I pray you begone from me.’

“I have nothing to do with talking about eternity, as you would have me. But sir, I am not a bad fellow after all. It is a very little that I ever do amiss. Now and then a peccadillo, just a little folly, but neither my country, nor my friends, nor my own conscience can say anything against me. True, I am none of your saints. I don’t profess to be too strict. I may go a little too far, sometimes, but it is only a little and I dare say we shall be able to set all matters straight before the end comes.”

Well, friend, but I wish you had asked yourself the question, “What have I done?”—it strikes me that if each of you would just take off that film, that films your heart and your life over, you might see a grievous leprosy lurking behind what you have done.

“Well, for the matter of that,” says one, “perhaps I may have taken a glass or two too much sometimes.” Stop a bit! What is the name of that? Stutter as much as you like! Out with it! What is the name of it? “Why, it is just a little mirth, sir.” Stop. Let us have the right name of it. What do you call it in anyone else? “Drunkenness, I suppose.”

Says another, “I have been a little loose in my talk sometimes.” What is that? “It has been just a merry spree.” Yes, but please call it what it ought to be called—lascivious conversation. Write that down. “Oh, no, sir, things are looking serious.” Yes, they are, indeed, but they do not look any more serious than they really are.

Sometimes you have been out on the Sabbath, haven’t you? “Oh! yes, but that has been only now and then—just sometimes.” Yes, but let us put it down what it is and we will see what the list comes to—Sabbath-breaking! “Stop,” you say, “I have gone no further, sir, certainly I have gone no further.”

I suppose in your conversation, sometimes during your life, you have quoted texts of Scripture to make jokes of them haven’t you? And sometimes you have cried out, when you have been a little surprised, “Lord have mercy upon me!” and such things. I don’t venture to say you swear—though there is a Christian way of swearing that some people get into and they think it is not quite swearing—but what it is besides nobody knows, and so we will put it down as swearing—cursing and swearing.

“Oh! sir, it was only when somebody trod on my toes, or I was angry.” Never mind, put it down by its right name. We shall get a pretty good list against you by and by.

I suppose that in trade you never adulterate your articles. “Well that is a matter of business in which you ought not to interfere.” Well, it so happens I am going to interfere—and if you please, we will call it by its right name—stealing. We will put that down.

I suppose you have never been hard with a debtor, have you? You have never at any time wished that you were richer and sometimes half wished that your opposite neighbor would lose part of his custom so that you might have it? Well, we will call it by its right name—that is “covetousness, which is idolatry.” Now, the list seems to be getting black indeed.

Besides that, how have you spent all this year? And though you have sometimes pretended to say prayers, have you ever really prayed? No, you have not. Well, then there is prayerlessness to put down. You have sometimes read the Bible, you have sometimes listened to the ministry—but have you not, after all, let all these things pass away?

Then I want to know whether that is not despising God and whether we must not put it down under that name? Truly, we need go but very little further, for the list already when summed up is most fearful and few of us can escape from sins so great as these, if our conscience be but a little awake.

But there is one man here who has grown very careless and indifferent to every point of morality—and he says, “Ah, young man, I could tell you what I have done during the year.” Stop, sir, I don’t particularly wish to know just now. You may as well tell it to yourself when you get home. There are young people here, it would not do them much good to know what you have done perhaps.

You are no better than you should be, some people say—which means, you are so bad they would not like to say what you are. Do you suppose in all this congregation we have no debauched men—none that indulge in the vilest sin and lust? Why, God’s angel seems even now to be flying through our midst and touching the conscience of some, to let them know in what iniquities they have indulged during the year. I pray God that my just simply alluding to them may be the means of startling your conscience.

Ah! you may hide your sins. The coverlet of darkness may be your shelter. You may think they shall never be discovered. But remember, every sin that you have done shall be read before the sun—and men and angels shall hear it in the day of final account.

Ah! my hearer, be you moral or be you dissolute, I beseech you, answer this question solemnly today—“What have I done?” It would be as well if you took a piece of paper when you went home and just wrote down what you have done from last January to December. And if some of you do not get frightened at it, I must say you have got pretty strong nerves and are not likely to be frightened at much yet.

Now I specially address myself to the unconverted man and I would help him to answer this question in another point of view. “What have I done?” Ah! man—you who live in sin—you that are a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God—what have you done? Do you not know that one sin is enough to damn a soul forever? Have you never read in Holy Scripture that cursed is he that sins but once? How damned then, are you by the myriad sins of this one year!

Recall, I beseech you, the sins of your youth and your former transgressions up till now. And if one sin would ruin you forever, how ruined are you now! Why, man, one wave of sin may swamp you. What will these oceans of your guilt do? One witness against you will be enough to condemn you. Behold the crowds of follies and of crimes now gathered round the judgment seat that have gone before you into judgment. How will you escape from their testimonies when God shall call you to His bar?

What have you done? Come, man, answer this question. There are many consequences involved in your sin and in order to answer this question rightly you must reply to every consequence, what have you done to your own soul? Why, you have destroyed it. You have done your best to ruin it forever. For your own poor soul you have been digging dungeons. You have been piling faggots, you have been forging chains of iron—faggots with which to burn it—and fetters with which to bind it forever.

Remember, your sins are like sowing for a harvest. What a harvest is that which you have sown for your poor soul! You have sown the wind, you shall reap the whirlwind. You have sown iniquity, you shall reap damnation.

But what have you done against the Gospel? Remember how many times this year you have heard it preached? Why, since your birth there have been wagon loads of sermons wasted on you. Your parents prayed for you in your youth, your friends instructed you till you did come to manhood. Since then how many a tear has been wept by the minister for you! How many an earnest appeal has been shot into your heart!

But you have rent out the arrow. Ministers have been concerned to save you and you have never been concerned about yourself. What have you done against Christ? Remember, Christ has been a good Christ to sinners here. But as there is nothing that burns so well as that soft substance oil, so there is nothing that will be so furious as that gentle-hearted Savior, when He comes to be your Judge. Fiercer than a lion on his prey is rejected love. Despise Christ on the cross and it will be a terrible thing to be judged by Christ on His throne.

But again—what have you done for your children this year? Oh! there be some here present who have been doing all they could to ruin their children’s souls. ’Tis solemn what responsibility rests upon a father. And what shall be said of a drunken father—the father that sets his children an example of drunkenness.

Swearer, what have you done for your family? Haven’t you too been twisting the rope for their eternal destruction? Will they not be sure to do as you do? Mother, you have several children, but this year you have never prayed for one of them—never put your arms round their necks as they kneeled at their little chair at night and said, “Our Father.”

You have never told them of Jesus that loved children and once became a child like them. Ah, then, you too have neglected your children. I remember a mother who was converted to God in her old age and she said to me—and I shall never forget the woman’s grief—“God has forgiven me, but I shall

never forgive myself. For, sir,” she said, “I have nourished and brought up children, but I have done it without any respect to religion.”

And then she burst into tears and said, “I have been a cruel mother, sir. I have been a wretch!” “Why,” I said, “my good woman, you have brought your children up.” “Yes,” said she, “my husband died when they were young and left me with six of them—and these hands have earned their bread and found them clothes. No one,” she said, “can accuse me of being unkind to them in anything but this. But this is the worst of all, I have been a cruel mother to them, for while I fed their bodies I neglected their souls.”

But some have gone further than this. Ah, young man, you have not only done your best this year to damn yourself, but you have done your best to damn others! Remember last January when you took that young man into the tavern for the first time and laughed at all his boyish scruples, as you called them, and told him to drink away as you did?

Remember, when in the darkness of night you first led astray one young man whose principles were virtuous and who had not known lust unless you had revealed it to him? You said at the time, “Come with me, I’ll show you London life. I’ll let you see pleasure!”

That young man, when he first came to your shop, used to go to the house of God on Sunday and seemed to bid fair for heaven—“Ah,” you say, “I have laughed religion out of Jackson, he doesn’t go anywhere on a Sunday now except for a spree and he is just as merry as any of us.” Ah! sir, and you will have two hells when you are damned—you will have your own hell and his too—for he will look through the lurid flames upon you and say, “Maybe I had never been here if you had not brought me here!”

And ah! seducer, what eyes will be those that will glare at you through hell’s horror?—The eyes of one whom you led into iniquity! What double hells they will be to you as they glare on you like two stars, whose light is fury, and wither your blood forever! Pause you that have led others astray and tremble now.

I paused, myself, and prayed to God when first I knew a Savior, that He would help me to lead those to Christ that I had ever in any way led astray. And I remember George Whitefield says when he began to pray, his first prayer was that God would convert those with whom he used to play at cards and wasted his Sundays. “And blessed be God,” he says, “I got every one of them.”

O my God, can I not detect in some face here astonishment and terror? Do no man’s knees knock together? Does no man’s heart quail within him because of his iniquity? Surely it cannot be so, else were your hearts turned to steel and your hearts become as iron in the midst of you. Surely, if it be so, the words of God are most certainly true, wherein He says, in the seventh verse of this chapter—“The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the LORD.”

And certainly that prophet was true who said, “The ox knoweth its owner, and the ass his master’s crib; but my people do not know, Israel doth not consider.” Oh, are you so brutish as to let the reflections of that guilt pass over you without causing astonishment and terror? Then, surely, we who feel our guilt have need to bend our knees for you and pray that God might yet bring you to know yourselves, for, living and dying as you are—hardened and without hope—your lot must be horrible in the extreme.

How happy would I be if I might hope that the great mass of you could accompany me in this humble confession of our faith. May I speak as if I were speaking for each one of you? It shall be at your option, either to accept what I say or to reject it, but I trust the great multitude of you will follow me.

“Oh, Lord! I this morning confess that my sins are greater than I can bear. I have deserved Your hottest wrath and Your infinite displeasure. And I hardly dare to hope that You can have mercy upon me. But inasmuch as You did give Your Son to die upon the cross for sinners, You have also said, ‘Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.’ Lord I look to You this morning, though I never looked before, yet I look now.

“Though I have been a slave of sin to this moment, yet, Lord, accept me, sinner though I be, through the blood and righteousness of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Oh Father, frown not on me. You may well do so, but I plead that promise which says, ‘Whosoever cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.’ Lord, I come—

*‘Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid’st me come to Thee;
O Lamb of God, I come.*

*‘My faith doth lay its hand,
On that dear head of Thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.’*

“Lord accept me. Lord pardon me, and take me as I am, from this time forth and forever, to be Your servant whilst I live, to be Your redeemed when I die.”

Can you say that? Did not many a heart say it? Did I not hear many a lip in silence utter it? Be of good cheer, my brother, my sister, if that came from your heart, you are as safe as the angels of heaven, for you are a child of God, and you shall never perish.

III. Now, I have to address a few words of AFFECTIONATE ADMONITION and then I have done.

It is a very solemn thing to think how years roll away. I never spent a shorter year in my life than this one, and the older I grow the shorter the years get. And you, old men, I dare say, look back on your sixty and seventy years and you say, “Ah, young man, they will seem shorter soon.” No doubt they will. “So teach us to number our days, O God, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”

But is it not a solemn thing that there is another year nearly gone, and yet many of you are unsaved? You are just where you were last year. No, you are not—you are nearer death and you are nearer hell, except you repent. And perhaps even what I have said this morning will have no effect upon you. You are not altogether hardened, for you have had many serious impressions. Scores of times you have wept under sermons and yet all has been in vain, for you are what you were.

I beseech you answer this question, “What have I done?” for remember, there will be a time when you will ask this question, but it will be too late. “When is that”—say you—“on the deathbed?” No, it is not too late there.

*“While the lamp holds out to burn,
The vilest sinner may return.”*

But it will be too late to ask, “What have I done?” when the breath has gone out of your body.

Just suppose the monument as it used to be, before they caged it round. Suppose a man going up the winding staircase to the top, with a full determination to destroy himself. He has got on the outside of the railings. Can you imagine him for a moment saying, “What have I done?” just after he has taken his leap? Why, methinks some spirit in the air might whisper, “Done? you have done what you can never undo. You are lost—lost—lost!”

Now remember that you that have not Christ are today going up that spiral staircase. Perhaps tomorrow you will be standing in the article of death upon the palisading, and when death has gotten you, and you are just leaping from that monument of life down to the gulf of despair, that question will be full of horror to you. “What have you done?”

But the answer for it will not be profitable, but full of terror. Methinks I see a spirit launched upon the sea of eternity. I hear it say, “What have I done?” It is plunged in flaming waves and cries, “What have I done?” It sees before it a long eternity. But it asks the question again, “What have I done?” The

dread answer comes—“You have earned all this for yourself. You knew your duty, but you did it not. You were warned, but you did despise the warning.” Ah! hear the doleful soliloquy of such a spirit.

The last great day is come—the flaming throne is set and the great book is opened. I hear the leaves as with terrible rustle they are turned over. I see men motioned to the right or to the left, according to the result of that great Book. And what have I done? I know that to me sin will be destruction, for I have never sought a Savior.

What is that? The Judge has fixed His eye on me. Now it is on me turned. Will He say, “Depart ye cursed,” unto me? Oh, let me be crushed forever rather than bear that sight. There is no noise, but the finger is lifted, and I am dragged out of the crowd, and singly I stand before the Judge. He turns to my page and before He reads it my heart quakes within me. “Be it so,” says He, “it has never been blotted with My blood. You despised My calls. You laughed at My people. You would have none of My mercy. You said that you would take the wages of unrighteousness. You shall have them—the wages of sin is death.”

Ah! me, and is He about to say, “Depart, ye cursed”? Yes, with a voice louder than a thousand thunders, He says, “Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” Ah! it is all true now. I laughed at the minister because he preached about hell. And here am I in hell myself. Ah! I used to wonder why he wanted to frighten us so. Ah! I would to God he had frightened me more, if he might but have frightened me out of this place. But now here am I, lost, and there is no escape. I am in darkness so dark, there is not a ray of light can ever reach me. I am shut up so close, that not one of the bolts and bars can ever be removed. I am damned forever.

Ah! that is a dreary soliloquy. I cannot tell it to you. Oh! if you were there yourselves, if you could only know what they feel and see what they endure, then would you wonder that I am not more earnest in preaching the Gospel and you would marvel—not that I wish to make you weep—but that I did not weep far more myself and preach more solemnly.

Ah! my hearers, as the Lord my God lives, before whom I stand, I shall one day stand acknowledged by your conscience as having been a true witness unto you this morning. There is not one of you here today but will be without excuse if you perish. You have been warned, I have warned you as earnestly as I can. I have no more powers to spend, no more arts to try, no more persuasion that I can use.

I can only conclude by saying, I beseech you—fly to Jesus. I entreat you, as immortal spirits that are bound for endless weal or woe—fly you to Christ. Seek for mercy at His hands. Trust in Him and be saved. And at your peril reject my solemn warning. Remember you may reject it, but you reject not me, but Him that sent me. You may despise it, but you despise not me, but a greater than Moses—even Jesus Christ the Lord.

And when you come before His bar, piercing will be His language and terrible His Words, when He condemns you forever, forever, forever, without hope, forever, forever, forever. May God deliver us from that, for Jesus’ 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.