

“PRICKED IN THEIR HEART”
NO. 2102

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD’S -AY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 1, 1889,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?”
Acts 2:36, 37.

THIS was the first public preaching of the gospel after our Lord was taken up into glory. It was thus a very memorable sermon, a kind of first fruits of the great harvest of gospel testimony. It is very encouraging to those who are engaged in preaching that the first sermon should have been so successful. Three thousand made up a grand take of fish at that first cast of the net. We are serving a great and growing cause in the way chosen of God, and we hope in the future to see still larger results produced by that same undying and unchanging power which helped Peter to preach such a heart-piercing sermon.

Peter’s discourse was not distinguished by any special rhetorical display; he used not the words of man’s wisdom or eloquence. It was not an oration, but it was a heart-moving argument, entreaty and exhortation. He gave his hearers a simple, well-reasoned, scriptural discourse, sustained by the facts of experience, and every passage of it pointed to the Lord Jesus. It was in these respects a model of what a sermon ought to be as to its contents. His plea was personally addressed to the people who stood before him, and it had a practical and pressing relation to them and to their conduct. It was aimed, not at the head, but at the heart. Every word of it was directed to the conscience and the affections. It was plain, practical, personal and persuasive. And in this it was a model of what a sermon ought to be as to its aim and style. Yet Peter could not have spoken otherwise under the impression of the divine Spirit—his speech was, as the oracles of God, a true product of a divine inspiration. Under the circumstances, any other kind of address would have been sadly out of place. A flashy, dazzling oration would have been a piece of horrible irreverence to the Holy Spirit; and Peter would have been guilty of the blood of souls if he had attempted it. In sober earnestness he kept to the plain facts of the case, setting them in the light of God’s word. And then with all his might he pressed home the truth of God upon those for whose salvation he was laboring. May it ever be the preacher’s one desire to win men to repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ! May no minister wish to be admired, but may he long that his Lord and Master may be sought after! May none bewilder their people with the clouds of theoretic philosophy, but refresh them with the rain of the revealed truth of God. Oh, that we could so preach that our hearers should be at once pricked in their hearts and so be led at once to believe in our Lord Jesus and immediately to come forward and confess their faith in His name!

We must not forget, however, to trace the special success of the sermon on the day of Pentecost to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, in which Peter had shared; this, it is, which is the making of the preacher. Immersed into the Holy Spirit, the preacher will think rightly and speak wisely; his words will be with power to those who hear. We must not forget, also, that there had been a long season of earnest, united, believing prayer on the part of the whole church. Peter was not alone; he was the voice of a praying company and the believers had been with one accord in one place crying for a blessing. And thus not only was the Spirit resting upon the *preacher*, but on all who were with him. What a difference this makes to a preacher of the gospel, when all his comrades are as much anointed of the Spirit as himself! His power is enhanced a hundred-fold! We shall seldom see the very greatest wonders worked when the preacher stands by himself. But when Peter is described as standing up, “with the eleven,” then is there a twelve-man ministry concentrated in one! And when the inner circle is further sustained by a company

of men and women who have entered into the same truth of God, and are of one heart and one soul, then is the power increased beyond measure! A lonely ministry may sometimes effect great things, as Jonah did in Nineveh, but if we look for the greatest and most desirable result of all, it must come from one who is not alone but is the mouthpiece of many. Peter had the one hundred and twenty registered brethren for a loving bodyguard, and this tended to make him strong for his Lord. How greatly I value the loving co-operation of the friends around me! I have no words to express my gratitude to God for the army of true men and women who surround me with their love, and support me with their faith. I pray you never cease to sustain me by your prayers, your sympathy, and your co-operation; until some other preacher shall take my place when increasing years shall warn me to stand aside.

Yet much responsibility must rest with the preacher himself. And there was much about Peter's own self that is well worthy of imitation. The sermon was born of the occasion, and it used the event of the hour as God intended it to be used. It was earnest, without a trace of passion—and prudent, without a suspicion of fear. The preacher himself was self-collected, calm, courteous and gentle. He aired no theories, but went on firm ground, stepping from fact to fact, from Scripture to Scripture, from plain truth to plain truth. He was patient at the beginning, argumentative all along, and conclusive at the end. He fought his way through the doubts and prejudices of his hearers, and when he came to the end, he stated the inevitable conclusion with clearness and certainty. All along he spoke very boldly, without mincing the truth: “You with wicked hands have crucified and slain Him whom God has highly exalted.” He boldly accused them of the murder of the Lord of Glory, doing his duty, in the sight of God and for the good of their souls, with great firmness and fearlessness. Yet there is great tenderness in his discourse. Impulsive and hot-headed Peter, who, a little while before, had drawn his sword to fight for his Lord, does not, in this instance, use a harsh word. He speaks with great gentleness and meekness of spirit, using words and terms all through the address which indicate a desire to conciliate and then to convince. Though he was as faithful as an Elijah, yet he used terms so courteous and kindly, that if men took offense, it would not be because of any offensiveness of tone on the speaker's part. Peter was gentle in his manner, but forceful in his matter. This art he had learned from his Lord. And we shall never have master-preachers among us till we see men who have been with Jesus and have learned of Him. Oh, that we could become partakers of our Lord's Spirit and echoes of His tone! Then may we hope to attain to Pentecostal results, when we have preachers like Peter, surrounded by a band of earnest witnesses and all baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

When we follow the run of Peter's argument, we do not wonder that his hearers were pricked in their hearts. We ascribe that deep compunction to the Spirit of God. And yet it was a very reasonable thing that it should be so; when it was clearly shown to them that they had really crucified the Messiah, the great hope of their nation, it was no wonder that they should be smitten with horror. Looking as they were, for Israel's King, and finding that He had been among them, and they had despitefully used Him—had even crucified Him; they might well be smitten at the heart! Though for the result of our ministry we depend wholly upon the Spirit of God, yet we must adapt our discourse to the end we aim at. Or, say rather, we must leave ourselves in the Spirit's hand as to the sermon itself, as well as in reference to the result of the sermon. The Holy Spirit uses means which are adapted to the end designed. Because, beloved, I do desire beyond all things that many in this congregation may be pricked in the heart, I have taken this concluding part of Peter's discourse to be the text of my sermon this morning. Yet my trust is not in the word itself, but in the quickening Spirit who works by it. May the Spirit of God use the rapier of His word to pierce the hearts of my hearers!

First, note that Peter speaks to his hearers about their evil conduct to the Lord Jesus; and, secondly, he declares to them the exaltation that God had bestowed upon Him. When we have dwelt on these two things, we will notice, in the third place, the result of knowing this grand fact: “Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

I. First, then, Peter dwelt tenderly, but very plainly, upon THEIR EVIL CONDUCT TOWARDS THE LORD JESUS. “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.” As a nation, Israel had rejected Him whom God had sent. The inhabitants of Jerusalem had gone further and had consented un-

to His death. No, had even clamored for it, crying, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!” Solemnly had the Jews exclaimed, “His blood be on us and on our children.” None of them had protested against the murder of the innocent One. But many of them had been eager to make an end of Him. This, Peter, in plain words, charged upon them, and they could not deny it—nor did they pretend to do so. It is well when a sense of guilt compels a man to stand silent under the rebuke of God. We then have hope of him that he will seek pardon.

Brothers and Sisters, we are not in Jerusalem, and the death of our Lord happened more than eighteen hundred years ago; therefore we need not dwell upon the sin of those long since dead. It will be more profitable for us, practically, to consider how far *we* have been guilty of similar sins against the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us look at home; let each one consider his case. I may be addressing some today who have blasphemed the name of the Lord Jesus. I do not suppose that you have been guilty of the vulgar language of blasphemy, which is coarse and revolting, as well as profane. But there are politer methods of committing the same crime. Some, with their elaborate criticisms of Christianity, wound it far more seriously than atheists with their profanities. In these days, wiseacres, with their philosophy, derogate from the glory of our Lord’s nature, and with their novel doctrines, undermine His gospel. Denying the atonement, or teaching it as something other than a substitutionary sacrifice; they try to make away with that which is the very heart and soul of the Redeemer’s work. Men nowadays drink in opinions which lessen the guilt of sin, and of course lower the value of the atoning blood. The cross is still a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense; men do not now accept the words of the Bible as authoritative, nor the teaching of the apostles as final. They set themselves up to be teachers of the great Teacher, reformers of the divine gospel. They do not accept the teaching of the Lord Jesus one half as much as they criticize it. If any here present have been thus guilty, may the Holy Spirit convict them of their sin! Since the Lord God has made this atoning Jesus both Lord and Christ, and set Him on His right hand, any teaching which does despite to Him—however learned, however advanced, however cultured it may seem to be—is a grievous sin against the Lord God, Himself! By such conduct we are, as far as in us lies, again putting the Lord Jesus to death; we are attempting to make away with that which is the very life and glory of Christ. O my hearer, if you have denied His Deity, rejected His atoning blood, ridiculed His imputed righteousness, or scoffed at salvation by faith in Him, may you be pricked in the heart as you see that God has made that same Jesus to be Lord of all!

Much more common, however, is another sin against our Lord Jesus—namely, neglecting Him, ignoring His claims, and postponing the day of faith in Him. I trust that none here are willing to die unconverted, or would even dare to think of passing away without being washed in His precious blood. Yet, my hearers, you have lived to manhood; you have lived, by God’s divine grace, to ripe years—perhaps even to old age without yielding your hearts to the Lord Jesus and accepting Him as your Savior. To say the least of it, this is a very sad piece of neglect. To ignore a man altogether is, in a certain sense, as far as you are concerned, to kill that man. If you put Him out of your reckoning; if you treat Him as if He were nothing; if your estimate of life is made as if He were a cipher, you have put your Lord out of existence in reference to yourself. You treat Him with empty compliment by observing His day and hearing His word; but you have no real regard for Him. Is not this a cruel fault? From morning till night your Lord is not in all your thoughts. He never affects your dealings with your fellow men. You never endeavor to catch His spirit of love and considerateness and meekness. And thus, as a Leader and Exemplar, He is dead to you. You have never confessed your sins before Him, nor sought for pardon at His hands, nor have you looked to see whether He has borne your sins in His own body on the tree. O soul, this is base neglect—ungrateful contempt! God thinks so much of His Son that He cannot set Him too high; He has placed Him at His own right hand, and yet you will not spare Him a thought! The great God thinks heaven and earth too little for Him, and magnifies Him exceedingly above all, as King of kings and Lord of lords. And yet you treat Him as if He were of no account, and might be safely made to wait your time and leisure. Is this right? Will you treat your Savior thus? May this prick you in the heart, and may you cease from this base ingratitude!

There are others who have done more than this—for they have absolutely rejected Christ. I now allude to those of you who have not been able to resist the appeals made to you by the Lord’s ministers; you have felt a good deal—felt more than you would like to confess; you have been so inclined to seek the Savior that you have almost done so—sin has flashed in your face like the flames of Tophet, and in alarm you have resolved to seek salvation. You have gone home to bend the knee in prayer; you have read the Scriptures to learn the way of eternal life; but, alas, an evil companion crossed your path and the question came, “Shall it be this man, or Christ?” You chose the man: I had almost said, you chose Barabbas and rejected Jesus! A sinful pleasure came before you when you had begun to be serious and the question arose, “Shall I give up this pleasure, or shall I renounce all hope of Christ?” You snatched at the pleasure and you let your Savior go! Do you not remember when you did violence to your conscience? There was an effort about it, as you stifled conviction; you had to put forth a decided act of the will to quench the Spirit of God, and to escape from the strivings of your awakened conscience. I know not to whom this may apply. But I am certain—as certain as Peter was when he spoke to the crucifiers of Christ—that I am speaking to some who have been rejecters of the Lord Jesus Christ! Some of you have distinctly rejected Him almost every Sabbath, but especially when the Word of the Lord has been with extraordinary power, and you have felt it shake you, as a lion shakes his prey. Thank God, you are not past feeling yet! I pray you; do not presume upon the continuance of your tenderness. You will not always feel as you have felt; the day may come when even the thunders of God may not be heard by your deafened ear, and the love of Christ will not affect the heart which you have made callous by willful obstinacy. Woe to the man when his heart is turned to stone! When flesh turns to stone, it is a conversion unto eternal death; just as the turning of stone to flesh is conversion to eternal life. God have mercy upon you and prick you in the heart this morning, while you yet have tenderness enough to feel that you have rejected Him whom you ought to embrace with all your heart!

I must come a little closer to some of you, who have forsaken the Lord Jesus Christ. There are a few unhappy persons here this morning, over whom I greatly grieve, because of their wanderings. And yet I am glad that they have not quite forsaken the courts of the Lord’s house. These once professed to be disciples of Christ, but they have gone back and walk no more with Him. They were once numbered with us and went in and out of our solemn assemblies for prayer and breaking of bread; but now we know them not. They were not backward to confess themselves Christians, but now they deny their Lord. In former days they were zealous and apparently devout. They were quick in the service of God and sound in their creed. But there came a day; I need not describe the circumstances, for they differ in different cases; when two roads were before them and they must go either to the right or to the left. And they took the road by which they turned their back upon Christ and upon the vitality of godliness. They went off into sin and apostatized from the faith. We fear, “They went out from us but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us.” They have gone aside unto crooked ways, and we fear that the Lord will lead them forth with the workers of iniquity. O my backsliding hearer, I hope you are not a Judas; my trust is that you may be a Peter! You have denied your Master, but I hope you will yet weep bitterly and be restored to your Lord’s service, for your good I must bring home your wanderings to you. May the Lord prick you in the heart about them! Why have you left your Lord? Wherein has He wearied you? There may be present persons from the country, or friends from America who were once glad to be numbered with the children of God—but now they care nothing for God, or His people. Alas, they take part with the adversaries of Christ and the despisers of His precious blood! Friend, you are here this morning that I may bring your sin to remembrance, and ask you why you have done this thing! Were you a hypocrite? If not, why have you turned aside? God has exalted to His throne the Savior on whom you have turned your back; have you not acted madly in what you have done? The Most High God is on the side of Jesus, and you are avowedly on the other side—is this right, or wise? It is painful to me to speak of these things. I hope it is far more painful for you to hear them. I want you to feel as David did, when his heart smote him. What have you been doing? Has the Lord Jesus deserved this at your hands? Turn, I pray you, from your evil ways, and turn unto the Lord with full purpose of heart.

II. After Peter had dwelt upon the sin of his hearers in treating the Lord so ill, he declared to them **THE EXALTATION BESTOWED ON HIM BY GOD.** The great God loved and honored and exalted that same Jesus whom they had crucified. O my hearers, whatever you may think of the Lord Jesus, God thinks everything of Him! To you He may be dead and buried, but God has raised Him from the dead. To God He is the ever-living, the ever well-beloved Christ; you cannot destroy the Lord Jesus, or His cause; if you could do all that the most malicious heart could suggest, you could not really defeat Him. Men wreaked their vengeance on Him once; they put Him to a felon’s death; they laid Him in the grave and sealed the stone. But He rose again, for God was on His side. My hearer, whatever you do, you cannot shake the truth of the gospel, nor rob the Lord Jesus of a single beam of His glory! He lives and reigns, and He will live and reign, whatever becomes of you. You may refuse His salvation but He is still a Savior and a great one. His gospel chariot rolls on, and every stone which is placed to hinder it is crushed into the earth and compelled to make a road for Him. If you resist the Lord, you do it at your peril. And, fool, you do it in vain; you might as well hope to reverse the laws of nature, quench the sun, and snatch the moon from her orbit, as hope to overthrow the cause and kingdom of the Lord Jesus; for God is on His side, and His throne is established forever! God has raised His Son from the dead and taken Him up to sit at His right hand—and there He will remain while His enemies shall be made His footstool. By this you may see what evil you have done through rejecting Christ, and may know who He is whom you have neglected, refused and forsaken.

Let me remind you that when we read of our Lord as being at the right hand of God, we perceive that He enjoys infinite happiness. At the right hand of God there are pleasures forevermore. And David said, as the representative of our Lord, “You have made known to me the ways of life; you shall make me full of joy with Your countenance.” He who was the Man of Sorrows now overflows with gladness! All His work and warfare done, He rests in boundless blessedness; His priestly work being finished, He sits down; no more does He feel the cross and nails, no more does He endure the mockery of cruel eyes and ribald lips. He is full of joy, that joy which He bids His people share when He says, “Enter you into the joy of your Lord.” His portion is measureless, infinite, inconceivable delight. Can it be that you are opposed to Him and neglect Him, while God lavishes upon Him more than all the bliss of heaven, and makes Him to be the fountain of unspeakable delight to all His redeemed ones? Grieve that you should grieve Him whom God thus loads with blessedness!

Moreover, remember that at the right hand of God our Lord sits in infinite majesty. Jesus, whom you think little of; Jesus, from whom you turn aside; is today adored of angels, obeyed by seraphs, worshipped by just men made perfect. He is the highest in the highest heavens. Do you not hear the blast of heaven’s trumpets which proclaim Him head over principalities and powers? Do you not hear the song which ascribes to Him honor and glory and power and dominion and might? My faith anticipates the happy day when I shall stand a courtier in His unrivalled courts and behold Him, the Lamb upon the throne, reigning high over all, with every knee in heaven and in earth gladly bowing before Him! Can it be that you have neglected Him whom God has exalted? Can it be that you have refused Him, that you have done despite to Him, that you have, as far as you could, put Him to death—whom Jehovah has made Lord of all?

Nor is this all; for the place at the right hand of God, to which He is now exalted, is the place of power. There sits the Mediator, the Son of God, the man, Christ Jesus, while His enemies are being subdued under Him. Do not believe it, O proudest of doubters, that you can take away from Christ any measure of His power! He overrules all mortal things; He directs the movements of the stars; He rules the armies of heaven; He restrains the rage of His adversaries, and what He allows to be let loose He turns to His glory. All power is given to Him in heaven and earth. He reigns in the three realms of Nature, providence and grace. His kingdom rules over all and of His dominion there shall be no end. O sirs, what do our hearts suggest but that we bow at His feet? That we worship Him with loving reverence? That we yield to that supreme power which is used for purposes of love? Yet it is this Christ, this mighty Christ, who is set at nothing by some of you, so that you run the risk of perishing because you have no heart for Him and His great salvation!

Learn, next, that He is at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, seated as our Judge. If we refuse Him as a Savior, we shall not be able to escape from Him as Judge in the last great day. All the acts of men are being recorded, and in that day, when the great white throne shall be set in the heavens, all things shall be made manifest, and we must stand unveiled in His presence. You have often heard and sung of Him whose face was more marred than that of any man, when He was here as a sacrifice for guilty men; if you refuse Him, you will have to stand before His bar to answer for it! The most awful sight for the impenitent in the Day of Judgment will be the face of the Lord Jesus Christ. I do not find that they cry, “Hide us from the tempest,” nor, “Hide us from the angelic guards,” nor, “Hide us from their swords of fire,” but, “Hide us from the face of *HIM* that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.” Love, when once it turns to wrath, is terrible beyond compare; as oil when set on fire blazes with great force, so the meek and loving Jesus, when finally rejected, will exhibit a wrath more terrible than death—

*“You sinners, seek His grace,
Whose wrath you cannot bear;
Fly to the shelter of His cross,
And find salvation there.”*

Perhaps, through ignorance you have rebelled; repent and take another course. You supposed that when you kicked against a sermon, you had only put down the minister’s words, but in reality you resisted the Savior’s love! You thought that when you turned away from Christ and His people, it was only leaving a church and having your name crossed out of a book. Ah, sirs, take heed, for I fear you have left the Lamb of God and renounced your part in His Book of Life! At the last it may turn out to have been an awful thing to have been put forth from the Church of Christ on earth; for when we, as a church, do our Lord’s bidding, that which we bind on earth is bound in heaven. In refusing the Lord’s Word, you refuse Him who speaks from heaven—you refuse not only His words, but Himself, and He shall be your Judge—your Judge most just, most holy. Oh, how will you bear it? How will you bear to stand at the bar of the despised Savior?

Peter also showed his hearers that the Lord was greatly exalted in heaven as the head over all things to His church, for He had that day shed abroad the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit comes, He comes from Christ, and as the witness of His power; He proceeds from the Father, and the Son, and He bears witness with both; Christ’s power was marvelously proved when, after He had been but a little while in heaven, He was able to bestow such gifts upon men—and especially to send the tongues of fire and the rushing mighty wind, which betoken the energy of the Holy Spirit! He is such a Lord that He can save or destroy. The Christ that died upon the cross has all things committed into His hands. He can, this morning, send forth salvation to the ends of the earth, so that multitudes shall believe and live. For Him has God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins. Or, He can turn the key the other way and shut the door against this unbelieving generation, for He opens, and no man shuts; and He shuts and no man opens. In any case, be sure of this, you Gentiles, even as Peter would have the house of Israel be sure of it, that, “God has made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

I notice that, at this time, few writers or preachers use the expression, “Our Lord, Jesus Christ.” We have lives of Christ and lives of Jesus, but, brethren, he IS THE LORD. Jesus is both Lord and Christ—we need to acknowledge His Deity, His dominion, and His divine anointing. He is “God over all, blessed forever,” and we can never praise Him too much. A great and grievous error of the times is a lack of reverence for our Lord and His sacrifice. To sit in judgment on His sacred teaching is to spit in His face; to deny His miracles is to strip Him of His own clothes; to make Him out to be a mere teacher of ethics is to mock Him with a purple robe; and to deny His atonement, in philosophical phraseology, is to crown Him with thorns and crucify Him afresh, and put Him to an open shame. Be not guilty of this, my hearers, for God has made this same Jesus, “both Lord and Christ.” Let us worship Him as Lord, and trust Him as Christ.

III. Now I come to my closing point, which is, THE RESULT OF KNOWING THIS ASSUREDLY. May I here pause to ask—do you know this assuredly? I hope all of you believe that God has made Jesus

Christ the Mediator, in His complex person, as God and man, to be “both Lord and Christ.” He was Lord, as God, always; but as God and man, He is now Lord and Christ. Manhood and Godhead are in Him united in one wondrous person, and this person is, “both Lord and Christ.” You believe it. But do you so believe it that it is a fact of the utmost importance to you? Will you assuredly believe it, that the man of Nazareth, who died on Calvary, is today both Lord and Christ? If you do now believe this, what are your feelings as you review your past misconduct towards Him? Does not your past neglect prick you in the heart? If you do not so believe, it is of little use for me to describe what the result of such belief would be, for that result will not take place in you; but if you have so believed, and Jesus is to you Lord and Christ, you will look on Him whom you have pierced and mourn for Him. As you remember your negligence of Him, your rejection of Him, your backsliding from Him, and all your ungrateful acts which show contempt of Him, your heart will be ready to break, and you will be seized with a great sorrow and a hearty repentance. The Lord work it in you, for His Son’s sake!

Observe, that as the result of Peter’s sermon, his hearers felt a mortal sting—“They were pricked in their heart.” The truth of God had pierced their souls; when a man finds out that he has done a fearful wrong to one who loved him, he grows sick at heart and views his own conduct with abhorrence. We all remember the story of Llewellyn and his faithful dog; the prince came back from the hunt and missed his infant child but saw marks of blood everywhere. Suspecting his dog, Gelert, of having killed the child, he drove his vengeful sword into the faithful hound, which had been bravely defending his child against a huge wolf, which lay there, all torn and dead, “tremendous still in death.” Yes, he had slain the faithful creature which had preserved his child! Poor Gelert’s dying yell pierced the prince to the heart. And well it might. If such emotions fitly arise when we discover that we have in error, been ungenerous and cruel to a *dog*, how ought we to feel towards the Lord Jesus, who laid down His life that we, who were His enemies, might live?

I recall an awfully tragic story of an evil couple, who kept an inn of base repute. A young man called one night to lodge. They noticed that he had gold in his purse, and they murdered him in the night. It was their own son, who had come back to gladden their old age, and wished to see whether his parents would remember him. Oh, the bitterness of their lamentation when they found that through the lust of gold they had murdered their own son!

Take out of such amazing grief its better portion, and then add to it a spiritual conviction of the sin of evil-entreating the Son of God, the perfect One, the Lover of our souls—and you come near the meaning of being “pricked in the heart.” Oh, to think that we should despise Him who loved us and gave Himself for us, and should rebel against Him that bought us with His own blood while we were His enemies! I would to God that everyone here that has not come to Christ would feel a sting in his conscience now; and would mourn that he has done this exceedingly evil thing against the ever-blessed Son of God, who became man and died for love of guilty men.

When we read, “they were pricked in their heart,” we may see in it the meaning that they felt a movement of love to Him—a relenting of heart, a stirring of emotion towards Him. They said to themselves, “Have we treated Him thus? What can we do to show our horror of our own conduct?” They were not merely convinced of their fault so as to be grieved, but their desires and affections went out towards the offended One, and they cried, “What shall we do? In what way can we acknowledge our wrong? Is there any way of undoing this ill towards Him whom we now love?” To this point I would have you all come. I would have you know the meaning of Newton’s hymn—

*“I saw One hanging on a tree,
In agonies and blood,
Who fixed His languid eyes on me,
As near His cross I stood.
Sure never till my latest breath
Can I forget that look;
It seemed to charge me with His death,
Though not a word He spoke.
My conscience felt and acknowledged the guilt,*

*And plunged me in despair;
I saw my sins His blood had spilt,
And helped to nail Him there.
Alas, I knew not what I did;
But now my tears are vain;
Where shall my trembling soul be hid?
For I, the Lord, have slain.”*

Let us tearfully inquire how we can end our opposition and prove ourselves to be His friends and humble servants.

As a consequence of Peter’s sermon, preached in the power of the Holy Spirit, these people exhibited obedient faith. They were roused to action, and they said, “Brothers and sisters, what shall we do?” They believed that the same Jesus whom they had crucified was now Lord of all, and they hastened to be obedient unto Him. When Peter said, “Repent!” they did, indeed, repent. If repentance is grief, they grieved at their hearts; if repentance is a change of mind and life, they were, indeed, altered men. Then Peter said, “Be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” Take the open and decisive step—stand forth as believers in Jesus and confess Him by that outward and visible sign which He has ordained! Be buried with Him in whom your sin is buried; you slew Him in error; be buried with Him in truth. They did it gladly, they repented of the sin; they were baptized into the sacred name; and then Peter could tell them—“You have remission of sins: the wrong you have done to your Lord is cancelled: the Lord has put away your sin forever. Remission of sins comes to you through Jesus, whom you slew, whom the Father has raised up. You shall not be summoned before the bar of God to account even for the hideous crime of murdering the Lord, for by His death you are forgiven. In proof of forgiveness you shall now be made partakers of the great gift which marks His ascending power. The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, even upon you, His murderers, and you shall go forth and be witnesses for Him.”

O my hearers, to what a place have I brought you now! If, indeed, the Holy Spirit has helped you to follow me in my discourse, see where we have climbed! However black your crime, however vile your character—if you have seen the wrong that you have done; if you have repented of having done it because you see that you have sinned against your loving Lord; and if you will now come to Him repenting and believing, and will confess Him as He bids you confess Him in baptism—then you have full remission, and you shall be partakers of the gifts and graces of His Holy Spirit! And from now on you shall be chosen witnesses for the Christ whom God has raised from the dead. Beloved, you need no choice speech from me—pure gold needs no gilding, and as I have told you the most wonderful of all facts in heaven or in earth, I let it remain in all its simple grandeur.

May God write out this old, old, story on your hearts! Oh, that He would issue a new edition of His gospel of love, printed on your hearts! Every man’s conversion is a freshly-printed copy of the poem of salvation. May the Lord issue you, hot from the press this morning, a living epistle to be known and read of all men; and especially to be read by your children at home, and your neighbors in the same street! The Lord grant that hearts may be pricked by this sermon, for His name’s sake! Amen.

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

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