

A DIVIDED HEART

NO. 276

A SERMON
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AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS

“Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty.”
Hosea 10:2

THIS passage may be taken as referring to the people of Israel as a nation, and it is not less applicable to the church of God. It is one grand and grievous fault with the church of Christ at the present day, that it is not merely divided somewhat in its creed, and somewhat also in its practice of the ordinances, but alas, it is also somewhat divided in heart. When the differences are of such a character, that as people of God we can still love each other, and still unite in the common battle against the cause of evil and in the common end of building up the church, then there is but little that is faulty.

But when our doctrinal divisions grow to so great a head that we cease to co-operate, when our opinions upon mere ordinances become so acid towards each other that we can no longer extend the right hand of fellowship to those who differ from us, then indeed is the church of God found faulty. “A house divided against itself cannot stand.” Even Beelzebub with all his craft cannot stand when once his hosts are divided. If Beelzebub be divided against himself, even he must fall and assuredly this must be the case with those who lack that craft which might tend to overcome disunion.

Oh, my brethren, nothing can so soon cast down the church from its high place, mar its glories, and diminish its opportunities of success, as divisions among the hearts of God’s people. If we would grieve the Holy Spirit and cause Him to be gone, if we would provoke the anger of the Most High and bring down trying providences on the churches, we have nothing to do but to be divided in our hearts and all will be accomplished.

If we wish that every vial may empty out its ill, and that every vessel may withhold its oil, we have but to cherish our bickering till they become animosities, we have but to nurse our animosities till they become hatreds, and all the work will be fully completed. And if this is the case in the church at large, it is peculiarly true in those various sections of it which we now call Apostolic Churches.

Oh, my brethren, the smallest church in the world is potent for good when it has but one heart and one soul, when pastor, elders, deacons, and members, are bound together by a threefold cord that cannot be broken. Then are they mighty against every attack. But however great their numbers, however enormous their wealth, however splendid may be the talents with which they are gifted, they are powerless for good the moment that they become divided amongst themselves. Union is strength. Blessed is the army of the living God in that day when it goes forth to battle with one mind, and when its soldiers as with the tramp of one man, in undivided march, go onwards towards the attack.

But a curse awaits that church which runs hither and thither and which, divided in itself, has lost the main stay of its strength with which it should batter against the enemy. Division cuts our bowstrings, snaps our spears, hoofs our horses, and burns our chariots in the fire. We are undone the moment the link of love is snapped. Let this perfect bond be once cut in twain and we fall down, and our strength is departed. By union we live, and by disunion we expire.

I intend, however, to take the text this morning specially with reference to our individual condition. We shall look at the separate individual heart of each man. If divisions in the great main body—if separation among the distinct classes of that body should each promote disasters, how much more disastrous must be a division in that better kingdom—the heart of man.

If there be civil tumult in the town of Mansoul, even when no enemy attacks its walls, it will be in a sufficiently dangerous position. If the Isle of Man is governed by two kings, then is it disorganized, and it will soon be destroyed. I address myself this morning to some of whom it can be said, “Their heart is divided, now shall they be found faulty.” And thus shall I address you, first of all noticing *a fearful disease*, secondly, its *usual symptoms*, thirdly, its *sad effects*, and fourthly, its *future consequences*.

I. Observe then, that our text describes a FEARFUL DISEASE.

Their heart is divided. I have called it a fearful disease, and this will very readily appear if you observe, first of all, the seat of it. It affects a vital part, it is not merely a disease of the hand, that reformation might cure, it is not merely a disease of the foot, that restraint might sometimes mollify, it is not merely a disease of the eye which has but to be couched to let the light stream in upon it. It is a disease of a vital region—of the heart, a disease in a part so vital that it affects the whole man. The utmost extremity of the frame suffers when once the heart becomes affected, and especially so affected as to be divided.

There is no power, no passion, there is no motive, no principle, which does not become vitiated, when once the heart is diseased. Hence it is that Satan, who is always crafty, endeavors to strike at the heart. He will give you the hand if you please, you may be honest. He will give you the eye if you please, you shall be outwardly chaste. He will give you the foot if you please, you shall appear to run in the way of righteousness. Only let him keep the heart, only let him rule in the citadel, and he will be well content to give up all the rest.

John Bunyan describes this as being one of the terms which old Diabolus was said to make with King Shaddai—“Oh!” said he, “I will give up all the city of Mansoul, if you will but permit me to live in the citadel of the heart.” Surely there was but little in his terms and conditions. Ay but give up everything else, if you retain the heart, you retain all, O, fiend! for out of the heart are the issues of life.

Thus the disease of our text is one that touches a vital part, a part which if once affected, tends to corrupt the whole frame. But you will observe, the disease here described not only deals with a vital part, but touches it after a most serious fashion. It does not simply say the heart palpitates, it does not declare that the life-floods that issue from it have become more shallow and less rapid, but it declares something worse than all these, namely, that the heart was cleft in twain, and utterly divided.

A stony heart may be turned to flesh, but turn a divided heart into whatever you please, so long as it is divided, all is ill. Nothing can go right when that which should be one organ becomes two, when the one motive power begins to send forth its life-floods into two diverse channels, and so creates intestine strife and war. A united heart is life to a man, but if the heart is cut in twain, in the highest, deepest, and most spiritual sense, he dies. It is a disease which is not only affecting a vital part, but affecting it after the most deadly fashion.

But we must observe again of this divided heart, that it is a division in itself peculiarly loathsome. Men who are possessed of it do not feel themselves to be unclean, in fact they will visit all society, they will venture into the church, they will propose to receive her communion, and to be numbered with her members, and they will afterwards go and mingle with the world, and they do not feel that they have become dishonest. They think themselves fit to mingle with honest worldlings, and with sincere Christians too.

If a man had spots upon his countenance, or some disease that stared everyone else in the face as often as he was beheld, surely he would retire from society and endeavor to keep himself a recluse. But not so the man with a divided heart. He goes everywhere, utterly unconscious that his disease is of the most loathsome character.

Shall I show you how it is so? Take the glass and look at the man’s heart, and you will discern that it is loathsome, because Satan and sin reigns there. Although the man goes about and has sufficient ideas of what is right and what is wrong, to be uneasy in his sin, yet he has such an intense love of all manner of iniquity, that he allows the loathsome demons to come and dwell in his heart.

But his loathsomeness is worse than this, because all the while that he is really living in sin, he is a loathsome hypocrite, pretending that he is a child of God. Of all the things in the world that stink in the nostrils of an honest man, hypocrisy is the worst. If you be a worldling, be a worldling. If you serve Satan, serve him. If Baal be god, serve him, but mask not your service of self and sin by a pretended service of God.

Appear to be what you are, tear off your masks. The church was never meant to be a masquerade. Stand out in your true colors. If you prefer Satan's shrine say so, and let men know it, but if you will serve God, serve Him and do it heartily, as knowing Him who is a jealous God and searches the hearts and tries the reins of the children of men. It is a terribly loathsome disease, this of a divided heart. If the man were but known, his disease is so loathsome, that the most wicked men in the world would have nothing to do with him.

I have known sometimes instances of this. A man who pretended to be religious and regularly attended his place of worship is seen on one occasion entering into a ballroom of the very lowest class. He begins at once to plunge into its gaities, with the most evil intentions. He is at once observed. The right senses even of the wicked themselves are awakened. "Kick that man downstairs," is the unanimous verdict, and he receives it and he deserved it right well.

When a man has a divided heart—tries to do right and to do wrong, to serve God and to serve Satan at the same time, I say his disease is of so loathsome and degraded a character, that the very worldling, whose leprosy is on his brow, despises, hates him, and avoids him.

And yet again, not merely is the disease loathsome, but I must observe it is one always difficult to cure, because it is chronic. It is not an acute disease, which brings pain, and suffering, and sorrow with it, but it is chronic, it has got into the very nature of the man. A divided heart, how are you to get at that? If it were a disease in any other part, the lancet might find it out, or some medicine might heal it. But what physician can join together a divided heart? What skillful surgeon can set together the disrupted members of a soul that has been divided between God and mammon?

This is a disease which enters into the very nature, and will lie in the blood, though the most powerful medicines search it out. This is a disease, in fact, which nothing but omnipotent grace can ever overcome. But he has no grace whose heart is divided between God and mammon. He is an enemy to God, he is an injury to the church, he is a despiser of God's Word, he is a sheaf ripening for the harvest of eternal fire. His disease is deeply rooted within him, and if left alone it will come to a most dreadful end—its end is sure destruction.

I must observe once more, and then I will leave this point of the disease, that according to the Hebrew of my text, this disease is a very difficult one to deal with, from the fact that it is a flattering disease. The text might be rendered—"Their heart flatters them; now are they found faulty." There are many cunning flatterers in the world, but the most cunning is man's own heart.

A man's own heart will flatter him even about his sins. A man is a grasping miser—his heart flatters him that he is only exercising proper business habits. A man on the other hand is extravagant and spends the good gifts of God upon his own evil passions, then his heart tells him that he is a generous soul. The heart turns "sweet into bitter and bitter into sweet." It is so "deceitful above all things," and so "desperately wicked," that it has the impudence to "put darkness for light and light for darkness."

Now when a man has a divided heart, he generally flatters himself. "Well," says he, "it is true I drink too much, but then there is never a time that I refuse a guinea towards a charity. It is true," says he, "I am not certainly what I should be in my moral character, but still, see how regularly I keep to my church or chapel. It is true," says he, "I don't now and then mind a trick or two in my trade, but I am always ready to help the poor." And so he imagines that he blots out an evil trait in his character with a good one, and thus flatters his heart.

And see how self-contented and satisfied he is. The poor child of God is trying his own heart with the deepest possible anxiety, this man knows of no such thing. He is always fully assured that he is right. The true believer is sitting down and turning over his accounts day by day to see whether he be really on

the road to heaven or whether he has mistaken his evidence and has been deceived. But this man, self-satisfied, bandages his own eyes and walks deliberately on, singing at every step, straight to his own destruction.

I know of some such now. It will not suffice for me simply to state what their character is unless God the Holy Spirit opens their eyes. They will be sure not to know their own likeness, even though I should paint it to the very life, and put in every touch and stroke, yet they will say, "Ah he could not refer to me. I am *so* good and *so* godly, there could have been no reference to me in anything that he said."

Do you know a class of people that pull the most tremendously long faces, who always look so serious, who talk the English language with a kind of unctuous twang, who give a savory pronunciation to every word they utter? Beware of them. When a man wears all his religion in his face, he has generally but a very small stock in his heart. Those tradesmen that put such a great display in their windows, frequently have very little behind. So with these professors, no one could know they were religious, so they label themselves that you may not make a mistake.

You would think they were worldlings, if it were not for their sanctimonious appearance. But by putting that on, they think to glide through the world with credit. I hope they are not imagining that they shall stand accepted before the bar of God and deceive the Omniscient. Alas for them! Their heart is divided.

This is no uncommon disease, despite its loathsomeness and its terrible fatality. Rife is it in this day, tens of thousands of Englishmen who are reckoned good and honorable are afflicted with it. Their whole head is sick, and their whole heart faint from the fact that their heart is divided. They lack the courage to be thorough-going sinners, and they have not sincerity enough to be truly devoted people of God.

II. Having thus described the disease, I proceed to notice its USUAL SYMPTOMS.

When a man's heart is divided, one of the most frequent symptoms is *formality* in his religious worship. You know some men perhaps, who are very stringent believers of a certain form of doctrine, and very great admirers of a certain shape of church rule and government. You will observe them utterly despising, and abhorring, and hating all who differ from their predilections. Albeit the difference be but as a jot or a tittle, they will stand up and fight for every rubric, defend every old rusty nail in the church door, and think every syllable of their peculiar creed should be accepted without challenge. "As it was in the beginning, so must it be now, and so must it ever be even unto the end."

Now it is an observation which your experience will probably warrant, as certainly mine does, that mostly these people stand up so fiercely for *the form*, because lacking the *power*, that is all they have to boast of. They have no faith, though they have a creed. They have no life within, and they supply its place with outward ceremony. What wonder therefore that they fiercely defend that?

The man who knows how precious the life of godliness is, the man who understands its vitality, its deep-seated, deeply-rooted heart power, he also loves the form, but not as he loves the Spirit. He approves the letter, but he likes the pith and marrow better. He is apt perhaps, to think less of forms than he should do, for he will mingle first with one body of sincere Christians and then with another, and he will say, "If I can enjoy my Master's presence, it is but little matter to me where I am found. If I can but find the name of Christ extolled, and His simple Gospel preached, this is all I desire."

Not so the man whose heart is divided, who has no soul in godliness. He is bigoted to the extreme, and well—I repeat it—he may be, poor man, all he has is the empty shell. What wonder therefore that he should be ready to fight for it? You will notice many persons punctilious with regard even to the form of our own simple worship. They will have it that there must always be observed, not simply reverent behavior in the house of God, but something more than mere reverence, there must be an abject slavish, tyrannical fear upon the hearts of all who are gathered. They will have it that every jot and tittle of our worship must always be conducted with a certain traditional decorum.

Now these people, as frequently as not, know nothing whatever of the power of godliness, and only contend for these little shells because they have not the kernel. They fight for the surface albeit they

have never discovered “the deep that coucheth beneath.” They know not the precious ores that lie in the rich mines of the Gospel, and therefore the surface, covered though it be with weeds and thistles, is quite enough for them. Formality in religion is very often a trait in the character of a man who has a divided heart.

But this, perhaps, is not the most prominent symptom. Another mark in such a man’s character is his *inconsistency*. You must not see him always, if you would have a good opinion of him. You must be guarded as to the days on which you call upon him. Call upon him on a Sunday and you will find him like a saint, don’t call upon him on the Saturday night—you might perhaps find him very much like the worst of sinners.

Oh! of all the men in the world whom I fear most for, because I know their dangerous and deceitful position, they are those among you who try with all your might to follow the church and yet follow the world. You can come up and sing the sacred hymns of Zion one evening, and another time you can go to your haunts and sing a profane and lascivious song. You can drink one day at the table of the Lord and another day at the table of devils. You appear to run first of all with God’s people in His service, and then afterwards run with the multitude to do evil.

Ah, men and brethren, this indeed is a terrible fact—a terrible index of a frightful disease. You must have a divided heart if you lead an inconsistent life. It is a happy circumstance when a minister can believe of his church that he has no hypocrite in the whole number, but I am bold to say, though with the deepest sorrow, this is more than I could believe of so large a church as that over which I am called to preside.

Ah, friends, there may be some of you who practice sins unseen by your pastor’s eye. Neither elder nor deacon has yet tracked you out. You have been cunning in your iniquity. Perhaps your sin is of such an order that church discipline would altogether fail to touch it. You know, however, and your conscience tells you, that your life is not consistent with your profession.

I adjure you, by the living God, as you and I must stand at the last great day face to face at His tremendous bar, either give up your profession, or be true to it. Cease to be called a Christian, or else be a Christian in truth. Seek more grace, that you may live up to the example of your Master, or else I entreat you—and do it honestly, and if you would take me at my word, I should rejoice that you had done so—renounce your membership, and no longer make a profession of godliness. An inconsistent life, I say, is a sure token of a divided heart.

And again, I must observe there is another token of a divided heart, namely—*variableness in object*. I might depict a character which you have met with often in your life. A man who attends a public meeting upon some religious matter is seized with a sudden enthusiasm to do good. If he will not be a missionary to the heathen himself, yet he will undertake to devote of his substance to the cause, and for the next week there is nothing on his tongue but the missionary enterprise.

A little while after he attends some political meeting, and now there is nothing before him but the reformation of politics. Another week and he is called to attend some sanitary commission, and now there is nothing wanted but proper drainage.

Religion, politics, social economy, each in its turn, and everything else must give place to the last topic which has engrossed his attention. These men run first in one direction—then in another. Their religion is all spasmodic. They are taken with it as men are taken with an ague. They shake by fits, and anon they are calm. They are sometimes hot and feverish, and anon they are chilly and cold. They take up their religion, and then they lay it down again. What does this prove concerning them, but that they have a divided heart, and they are in the sight of God diseased, loathsome persons, who shall never see His face with joy.

To conclude the list of symptoms. Once more, *frivolity in religion* is often a token of a divided heart, and here I address myself more immediately to those of my own age. It is perhaps too common a sin with young persons to treat religion with a light and frivolous air. There is a seriousness which is well becoming, especially in youthful Christians. Cheerfulness should be the constant aim of the aged. Their

tendency is towards sadness. Perhaps a proper seriousness and solemnity should be the aim of the youthful believer, whose tendency will rather be to levity than to despondency.

Oh, my brethren, when we talk about religious things with flippancy, when we quote texts of Scripture in order to make jests upon them, when we come up to the Lord's table as if it were but a common repast, when we come to baptism as though it were but an ordinary observance, about which no solemnity is to be found—then I fear we prove that our heart is divided.

And I know that any soul conscious of its guilt, if it has really been brought to know the love of Christ, will always come to sacred things in a sacred manner. We do not come to the Lord's table with lightness of heart. There have been times when it has seemed too solemn a matter for us to come at all, and as for baptism, he that comes to baptism without having searched his heart, without having looked well to his motives, and without true devotion of spirit, comes altogether in vain. As the wrong communicant may eat and drink damnation to himself, so may he who would be thus wrongly baptized receive condemnation instead of a blessing. Frivolity of spirit is often a sign of a divided heart.

III. This brings us to the third point, the SAD EFFECTS of a divided heart.

When a man's heart is divided, he is at once everything that is bad. With regard to himself he is an unhappy man. Who can be happy while he has rival powers within his own breast. The soul must find a nest for itself, or else it cannot find rest. The bird that would seek to rest upon two twigs would never have peace, and the soul that endeavors to find two resting places, first the world and then the Savior, will never have any joy or comfort.

A united heart is a happy heart, hence David says, "Unite my heart to fear thy name." They that give themselves wholly to God are a blessed people, for they find that the ways of religion are "ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Men who are neither this nor that, neither one thing nor another, are always uneasy and miserable. The fear of discovery, and the consciousness of being wrong, conspire together to agitate the soul and make it full of unease, disease, and restlessness of spirit. Such a man is unhappy in himself.

He is, in the next place, *useless in the church*. Of what good is such a man to us? We cannot put him in the pulpit to propound that Gospel he does not practice. We cannot put him in the deaconship to serve the church which his life would ruin. We cannot commit to his charge the spiritual matters of the church in the eldership, because we discern that not being spiritual himself, he is not to be entrusted with them.

In no respect is he of any good to us. "Reprobate silver shall men call them." His name may be in the church book, but it had better be taken away. He may sit among us and give us his contribution, we would be better without it and without him than with either, though he should double his talent and treble his contributions. We know that no man who is not united in his heart vitally and entirely to Christ, can ever be of the slightest service to the church of God.

But not only this, he is a man *dangerous to the world*. Such a man is like a leper going abroad in the midst of healthy people, he spreads the disease. The drunkard is a leper set apart by himself, he does but little harm comparatively, for he in his drunkenness is like the leper when he is driven from society. His very drunkenness cries out, "Unclean, unclean, unclean!"

But this man is a professor of religion and therefore tolerated. He says he is a Christian, and therefore he is admitted into all society, and yet he is inwardly full of rotteness and deception. Though outwardly whitewashed like a sepulcher, he is more dangerous to the world, I say, than the most vicious of men. Tie him up—let him not go loose, build a prison for him. But what am I saying? If you would build a prison for hypocrites, all London would not suffice for ground for the prisons.

Oh my brethren, notwithstanding the impossibility of binding them, I do say that the maddest dog in the hottest weather is not one-half as dangerous to men as a man who has a divided heart, one who runs about with the rabid poison of his hypocrisy upon his lips, and destroys the souls of men by contamination.

Not only unhappy himself, useless to the church, and dangerous to the world, but he is contemptible to everybody. When he is found out nobody receives him. Scarcely will the world own him, and the church will have nothing to administer to him but its censure.

The most solemn consideration, however, is that this man is *reprobate* in the sight of God. To the eye of infinite purity he is one of the most obnoxious and detestable of beings. His heart is divided. A pure and holy God hates, first, his sin, and secondly, the lies with which he endeavors to cover it. Oh, if there be a place where sinners are more loathsome to God than anywhere else, it is in His church.

A dog in its kennel is well enough, but a dog in the throne room is quite out of place. A sinner in the world is bad enough, but in the church he is hideous. A madman in an asylum is a creature to be pitied, but a madman who protests he is not mad, and will thrust himself among us that he may obtain means of doing mischief, is not merely to be pitied, he is to be avoided, and needs to be restrained.

God hates sin anywhere, but when sin puts its fingers upon His divine altar, when it comes and lays its insolent hand upon the sacrifice that is burning there, then God spurns it from Him with disgust. Of all men, who stand in the most likely place to receive the mightiest thunderbolt, and the most terrible lightning flash, those are the men who have a divided heart, and profess to serve God while with their souls they are serving sin.

Take heed, sinner, take heed, running on in your sin you will meet with punishment, but after all, O hypocrite, look well to your ways, for your sin and your lie together shall bring down a dread and swift destruction upon your devoted head.

IV. In conclusion I have to address some remarks to you with regard to the FUTURE PUNISHMENT of the man whose heart is divided, unless he is rescued by a great salvation.

I have endeavored to preach faithfully this morning, as faithfully as I could, but I am conscious that many of the children of God do not find food under such a sermon as this, nor is it my intention that they should do so. It is not rightly possible to blend the sieve of sifting, with the bushel of the Gospel. We cannot well bring you the wheat and the sieve too.

This morning I have sought to take the fan ministerially into my hand, and thoroughly purge this floor, in the name of Him who shall be the great "Purger" at the last day. We all need it whether we know it or not. The best Christian needs sometimes to question himself as to his motives. And when God's children are not fed, it is often more profitable to them to be led to examine themselves, than it would be if they had some rich promise to feed upon.

My hearers, out of so vast a number this morning, are there none among you with divided hearts? Is it possible that this whole congregation is made up of sincere Christians, truly enlightened, called, and saved? Is there not one man, who, mistaking his place, has put himself among the sheep when he should have been among the goats? Is there not one man here who without making a mistake has dared impudently to thrust himself into the number of God's priests, when he is really a worshipper of Baal? Let me then, in the last place, that I may with faithfulness discharge my mission, describe the terrible condition of the hypocrite when God shall come to judge the world.

He comes with brazen face, he comes in the midst of the congregation of the righteous. The mandate has gone from the throne, "Gather out first the tares!" He hears the mandate, and his cheeks pale not. His impudence continues with him even now. He would still knock at the door and say, "Lord! Lord! open to me." The dividing angel flies. Terror is on the face of the wicked, as on the left the tares are bound in bundles to burn. Imagine, however the still greater consternation of this individual, who, standing in the midst of ministers, saints, and apostles, suddenly finds himself about to be gleaned from them.

With a tremendous swoop, like an eagle descending from its lofty height, the death angel bears upon him, snatches him away, and claims him as his own. "You are," says the black angel, "You are a tare. You have grown side by side with the wheat, but that has not changed your nature. The dew that falls upon the wheat has fallen upon you, the sun which shone upon it you have enjoyed also, but you are still a tare, and your doom remains the same. You shall be bound up with the rest in bundles to be burned."

O hearer, what must be his consternation when with mighty hand that angel plucks him up by the roots, carries him away, and he that thought himself a saint is bound up with sinners for destruction!

And now imagine the reception that he meets. He is brought into the midst of the wicked—the wicked who once with Pharisaic tongue he had reproved. “Here he comes,” say they, “the man who instructed us, the *good* man who taught us to do better, here he comes himself, found out at last to be no better than those whom he despised.” And then imagine, if you dare, the inner dungeon, the reserved seats of that fiery abode, and the heaviest chain of despair—imagine, I say, if you can, the terrible destruction, terrible beyond every other, which shall overwhelm the man who in this world deceived the church and dishonored God, but who is now detected to his shame.

Common sinners have the common prison, but this man shall be thrust into the inner prison, and made fast in the stocks of despair. Tremble professors, tremble, you who are half and half religious men, tremble, you who pretend to fear God, but like the Samaritans, worship your idols. O, tremble now lest your trembling should come upon you in a day when you are not aware of it, when you shall long for the rocks to hide, and for the mountains to cover you, but shall be without a shelter in the day of the fierce anger of the God of the whole earth.

And now, I cannot send you away without preaching the Gospel for a moment or two. I have, perhaps, one here who is saying, “Sir, my heart is not only divided, but it is broken.” Ah, there is a great deal of difference between a divided heart and a broken heart. The divided heart is cut in twain, the broken heart is broken in pieces, all asunder, and yet it is not divided. It is all in pieces, in one sense, as to its proud hope, and it is melted, in another sense, as to its earnest longing that it may be saved.

Poor, broken heart, I was not rebuking *you*. Are you desirous this morning to have your *sins* put away? Then from the bottom of your poor broken heart cry today, “Lord, save me from hypocrisy. Whatever I may be, do not permit me to think I am one of Yours if I am not.” Are you breathing out this prayer to God, “Lord, make me truly Yours. Put me among Your children. Let me call You ‘my Father,’ and not turn away from You. Give me a new heart and a right spirit, O wash me in the blood of Christ, and make me clean. Make me what You would have me be, and I will praise You forever”?

Remember, my dear hearer, if that is the desire of your heart, you are this day bidden to believe that Christ is able to save you, and willing to save you, and waiting to be gracious unto you, and more ready to bestow mercy than you are to receive it.

Therefore you are commanded to trust Him, for all your sins have been punished on Him as your surety, and for the sake of Christ, God is willing now to receive you, now to bless you. Come close with Him this morning. Lift your eye to Him who died upon the tree. Put your trust in Him who is my Redeemer, and your Redeemer too, let the blood which flows from His side be received into your heart. Open your poor wounds and say, “My Master, heal these wounds for me. O Jesus! I know no other trust. If You will save me I will know no other love. My heart is undivided in its love, it looks alone to You, it shall be soon undivided in its gratitude, I will praise You and You alone.”

Poor heart-broken penitent, I said not ill when I contradicted myself by saying, “Though thy heart is broken, it is not divided.” Bring it just as it is and say, “Lord, receive me through the blood of Christ, and let me be Yours now, and Yours for ever, through Jesus.” 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.