

LOVELY, BUT LACKING

NO. 3334

A SERMON
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“One thing thou lackest.”
Mark 10:21

THOUGH the Gospel of Jesus Christ most certainly addresses itself to the vilest of the vile, it is not exclusively to such that the message of salvation is sent. There are indeed no characters so far gone in vice that the Gospel does not speak to them. However abandoned they may be, still is this inviting voice sent to the very chief of sinners, “Come to Christ and live.”

But the Gospel, with equal affection, addresses itself to those who are not upon any common estimation to be numbered with the chief of sinners, to those whose moral integrity has been unimpeachable, whose outward propriety has been scrupulous, whose lives in all their domestic and social relations have been commendable. There are always some such individuals in our congregation. We are very thankful that there are.

We have an invitation for them as frank, as honest, and as earnest, as for wanton sinners, heinous transgressors and hardened criminals, and our sincere desire is that such may be saved, for we believe that they also will make illustrious trophies of divine grace, when grace decides them to decide for Christ.

Amongst us we have a large number of most hopeful people, to whom it may be said, “One thing thou lackest.” *A word of congratulation to you, that you only lack one thing*, then I propose therefore to utter *a warning because you do lack one thing*, and after that *a few words of instruction to show how this one lack may be supplied*. May God grant that His power may rest upon His Word, so that you may lack the one thing no longer.

I. First then, this is A WORD OF CONGRATULATION.

Let us take this young man’s case as descriptive of that of many here present. *He did not lack morality*. He could say, “All these things have I kept from my youth up,” nor did the Savior tell him that he was uttering a falsehood, He looked upon him and loved him, which He would not have done if he had been a willful liar. No, he had been neither unchaste, nor dishonest, nor profane. He had been all that could be desired in these respects.

I congratulate you if such is your case. It will save you from a thousand sorrows to have been kept from those grosser sins. You have not formed habits which will lead you in after years into temptation. You have not formed associations which it will be difficult to break. You have not learned words, and phrases, and sentiments which will defile your memory in after days, even though you should live to hate them. I thank God that you have this privilege, that it cannot be said of you that you lack in morality.

Nor was this young man’s lack *that of outward religion*. We are told—I think it is by Luke or Matthew—that he was a ruler, that is to say, as we read it, a ruler in the synagogue. He was one who had taken office among his co-religionists, and had even presided in their religious assemblies. He was a young man, recollect, and it is not often that young men attain to such a position, so that he must have been not only scrupulously excellent in his conduct, but he must have been regarded by all who knew him as remarkably religious at heart, indeed, when he knelt down before the Savior, when he addressed Him as, “Good Master,” he showed that his outward habits were of a religious cast.

And so I congratulate some of you that you love the place where Christians meet, that in their sacred songs you take an interest, that their Holy Book is a book not altogether unread by you, that you would be grieved if you could not go up to the assembly of God's people. I am glad that, as touching these things in your outward regularity, some of you might even put others to shame who are further advanced than you in spiritual things. You do not lack for morality, you do not lack for the outward part of religion.

Nor can I suppose that this young man lacked a *becoming respect for whatsoever was pure and lovely and of good report*. His addressing our Lord by that remarkable title, which was not used by Jews even to their Rabbis, showed how he looked upon the Holy Christ with a profound awe. He did not perceive His deity, but what he did perceive of His matchless goodness he deferred to.

And it is so with you, my friend. You never utter an opprobrious word against God's people. You would be very grieved to hear them evil spoken of. You love the ministers of Christ. There is no company that pleases you better than the company of the people of God. You have religion, you have a respect for that part of religion which as yet you do not possess. You wish you had it. You envy those who have it and would wish to be the meanest of them all if you might but have a part among them. I congratulate you upon this. I thank God concerning you. Looking upon you, I feel as Jesus did, that my heart loves you, and I fain would that you had the needful supply of that thing which you still lack.

This young man did not lack *orthodoxy*. He was no doubter, skeptic, or professed infidel. He said, "What must I do that I may inherit eternal life?" He believed in eternal life. He was not one of those Sadducees who say that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit. He venerated the grand old truths of his father's religion, he was a firm believer in the orthodox faith. And so with you.

You have never yet dared to doubt the Word of God, and as far as you have learned its meaning, you hold that meaning in the most solemn respect. You would not for the world be found a heretic. You would not willfully call in the existence of God, the deity of Christ, the atonement by blood, or any other of the essentials of our most holy faith. As far as your head is concerned, you are clear enough about these things. I thank God for this, for it is a grand escape from a pestilent evil.

It is hard to get a man's conscience sound who has gone through the great dismal swamps of infidelity. After once listening to the vile suggestions of ungodliness, or reading such infamies as come from the pen of a Tom Paine, the soul seems as if it never could get clean of the corruption. It is such pitch, it sticks to one's hands, and though one take to himself nitre and much soap, yet shall he scarcely cleanse himself from the defilement. You have not acquired that taint of your moral constitution. Thank God for it. I bless God that in His abundant mercy, you do not lack for a knowledge of the faith and a degree of belief in it.

Nor yet, my dear friends, did this young man lack *sincerity*. I have noticed some expositors speaking of him as a hypocrite, but he was as far away from being a hypocrite as the North Pole is from the South. He was transparent in all he said. Even that little bit that looks like boasting—"All these have I kept from my youth up," shows how ingenuous the man was. A man who was not sincere would have minced a little, and kept back an expression so complimentary to himself. He was the very mirror of candor, and so are some of you.

You have not learned the ways of craft. You do not assume to be what you are not. Though you mix with God's people, yet you have not ventured to proceed to baptism without faith, nor do you dare to come to the communion table because you fear you have not fellowship with Christ. You prove your sincerity in many ways, and upon this again I congratulate you, and thank the God of mercy.

This young ruler, moreover, did not lack *for zeal*. The way in which he came to Christ showed his ardor. He came to Him running, and fell down before Him, saying, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" You too, have a zeal for God, though not according to knowledge. If the Holy Spirit shall but teach you what the one thing is that you are lacking, I believe you will seek after it. I trust you will. At any rate, up to the measure of your light you have been up till now quick, and zealous, and desirous to do what you could.

This young man also *was exceedingly thoughtful*. Half the battle with many men is to make them think, even if they think wrongly. It is almost better for them to think in the most crooked manner than not to think at all. The men least likely to be saved are they who go about their business or their pleasures, and will not imagine that they have time for thought. But here was a thoughtful man. He had studied the law, and had tried to keep it. He was now something more than thoughtful, he was anxious. “What lack I yet?” as if he felt there was something he did not know, and he would fain know what it was.

He was not so self-righteous as some have fancied he was. He had a self-righteous head, but he had a seeking heart. His head made him think that he had kept the law, but his heart told him that he had not, for he said, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” which he would not have said if he had believed that he had religion enough to inherit it. He said, “What lack I yet?” which I think he would not have said if he had not known that he did lack something, though he knew not what.

I am thankful—I am again thankful to God, and I congratulate you, my dear hearers, if you are something in the same position, if you can honestly say, “I have tried to do what I can, I have sought to do as far as my light guides me, I do not believe I am saved, but I wish I were, what is it—what is that secret something which can fill the aching void within my heart? What is that which can give me rest, for rest as yet I do not possess.”

Once more, this young man did not lack *for willingness*, at least *he thought he did not*. He believed himself willing to do anything, to give anything, to suffer anything, if he might but be saved. So also do some of you. You would stand up in the congregation tonight and say, “The Lord knows there is nothing within my reach that I would not do, there is nothing under heaven that I would not bear, if I might but inherit eternal life.”

But perhaps like this young man, you do not know your own heart, and if Christ were to try you with some searching precept, you might, like him, go away sorrowing. But at any rate, as far as you know, you are willing, and I am glad of this, and thankful that all these points are in you. Though you do lack, yet you do not lack any of these, but lack something else.

The fact is, this young man *lacked knowledge*. He did not know the spirituality of the law. He had never been taught that the law concerns our glances, our thoughts, and our imaginations. He supposed he had kept the law because he had not committed any act of adultery, or of theft, nor had he spoken the thing that was not true. He did not know that an unchaste glance, or a causeless hatred, or a covetous desire, breaks the law of God and betrays the sin that lurks in the breast.

He did not know that, and perhaps some of you do not know it. Oh, that you may be led to know it. May God not only make you know it as a matter of knowledge, but understand it as a matter of conviction deeply written in the conscience. And he did not know the plan of salvation. The question, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” showed that he did not know that salvation is not by doing, but by believing, not by our works, but by a simple trust in Jesus.

This was a great deficiency, though he was a model of uprightness in a hundred interesting points, which we cannot now stay to discuss, he was lacking in a matter of vital interest to his immortal welfare. In that he was just like many of you. With looks of love and pity, with feelings of tender regard, but deep anxiety, we turn to you therefore with this reflection, “One thing thou lackest.”

II. And now we shall change the note. THIS TEXT HAS A WORD OF WARNING.

“One thing thou lackest.” What was the one thing that this young man lacked? *It was the full surrender of his heart to God in Christ*. He had not done that. Our Savior gave him, therefore, a command which tested him. He bade him go, sell all that he had, and distribute it to the poor. This is not a command which He gives to all men, but He gave that particular command to that particular young man, according to his particular circumstances, because He saw that he was not the man that could endure to be poor.

He saw too, that he had made his riches his idol. He was a gentleman, he was a man of great possessions. He does not seem to have been a miser. He could hardly have been a ruler of a synagogue,

one would think, if he had been. But still, he had a great liking for position. He was a gentleman, and there are a great many people who would sooner be gentlemen than they would be saints, and sooner be thought to belong to the upper and respectable circles of society, than they would be thought to be devout and holy.

This young man would have liked to have been both, but the Savior, seeing that his wealth was in his heart, and that he had loved it better than he did his God, said to him, “Part with your wealth, for if you are decided for God, and your heart is wholly His, you will prove it by the readiness of your obedience.” Here then, was the thing he lacked—he lacked the full surrender of his heart to God’s will, and so he went away sorrowing, for he had great possessions.

This lack of the full surrender of his heart to God’s will made him shun the reproach of being a follower of Christ. Hence, though he would call Christ, “Good Master,” he would not turn and follow Him and learn of Him. So the Master said, after He had bidden him sell his goods, “Take up thy cross,” that is to say, “Come out and confess Me, having done as I bid thee, then come and say, ‘I am a disciple of that man who is despised and rejected, I will follow Him to prison and to death, and I will preach His Word though I be put to death for it, I will take up my cross.’”

Christ knew that the one thing he lacked was the full giving up of his heart to God, and therefore He said, “Follow me,” for if you really do love God, you will follow His Son, if your heart is fully given to God, you will be willing to be obedient to Christ, to take Him for your Leader, Master, Savior, Guide, Friend and Counselor.”

Now, in this the young man failed. He could not so give himself up wholly to God, he could not, at that time at any rate, so give himself up as to be completely Christ’s servant. Now, no man who fails in this respect can enter heaven. Christ will save you, but a part of the agreement on your part must be this, “Ye are not your own, but are bought with a price.” If you would have Christ’s blood to redeem you, you must give up to Christ your self—your body, your soul, your spirit, your substance, your talents, your time, your all.

You must from this day be Christ’s servant come what may. If persecution should arise, you must be willing to part with all that you possess, with your liberty, with your life itself, for Christ, or you cannot be His disciple. He may never call you literally to sell your goods and distribute all, but He does call you to own that your goods are not your own, but His, that you are only a steward, and must be willing therefore to give to the poor and to dedicate to the honor of His kingdom, such part as shall be meet and right of all that you have, not as though you were bestowing anything of your own, but only as yielding up to God what belongs to Him.

He claims that you now turn over, if you would be saved, yourself and everything you have by an indefeasible title deed to the great Lord of all whose you must be. If you would be saved by the blood of Jesus, you are not from this day to choose your own pleasures, nor your own ways, nor your own thoughts, nor to serve yourselves, nor live for yourselves or your own aggrandizement. If you would be saved, you must believe what He tells you, do what He bids you, and live only to serve and honor Him.

I am ashamed to have to say that a great many Christian professors seem to be false to this their agreement, but as my Lord will take no less, I dare ask no less of you. It seems to me all too little. He has bought us, not with silver and gold, but with His own precious blood. Surely then, we should be quite willing to say—

*“Tis done, the great transaction’s done,
I am my Lord’s, and He is mine.”*

What you keep to yourselves you shall lose, but what you give to Him you save and gain. Your treasure on earth the moth shall eat, and the rust corrupt, but your treasure in His keeping no moth shall ever fret, nor canker ever devour. All is safe which is given up to Christ, that which is kept back from Him, whatever it may be, shall prove a curse to you. Say, then, my dear young friend, with all your excellences, do you lack the giving up of your heart, the full giving up of yourself to Christ?

Oh, I am grieved that you should lack it, I am indeed grieved that you should lack it! I would like my Lord to have such a bright gem as you to glitter in His crown. I would like the Good Shepherd to have so dear a lamb to carry in His bosom. What, shall so fair a flower shed its fragrance for His enemies? Let the Savior take it and wear it in His bosom, He is willing, may His grace take it tonight. One cannot bear that you, that you, having so much, should lack but one thing. If you lacked all, that were grievous, but lacking but one thing, oh, why should not that lack be made up? God grant it at once.

To miss of heaven! I cannot bear to think that you should, when you really are so sincerely anxious about it. To have such desires, and to be so fervent too, and yet not to give your whole heart to my Lord? Poor things are desires if they get no farther. Desire will not quench thirst, neither will it stay hunger. You must take Christ and live on Him, or you shall die. To think, dear friends, that some of you should miss heaven through your wealth! Why need it be? And yet it is often so.

The rich will not go to hear the Gospel as the poor will, and when they hear it, there is often so much care about their extensive business, or on the other hand, there is so much attraction in that circle of gay and thoughtless friends, that it is hard for them to be saved. Oh, what a pity that the mercies of God should lead you to hell, and that riches here should all but involve you, or altogether involve you, in eternal poverty hereafter! God of His mercy prevent it, that you may yet be saved.

The sad thing to remember is that *you who lack one thing, in lacking that one thing lack all*, for though I congratulated you that you had morality, that is poor stuff when it has no foundation in love to God. Your sincerity, I think I must suspect that it is exhausted, if after having been told the way, which is simply to believe in Christ and give yourselves up to Him, you now refuse. Yes, and all the good things which I have strung together with words of congratulation are but as the colors of a bubble that shall pass away, except you have this one thing.

The one thing is like the unit set before many ciphers which will make them into a great amount, but without the one figure first, all those ciphers will stand for nothing, many as they are. If by the grace of God in your heart, and the exercise of a living faith in the dying Savior, you give yourself wholly up to God, then every good thing, and lovely thing, and thing of good repute, shall be embalmed and preserved, but without this, they shall be like faded flowers, fit only to be cast behind the wall or to perish on the dunghill.

III. Lastly, we shall give you A WORD OF DIRECTION.

If you would inherit eternal life, Christ's direction is, "Sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor." Now, what did He mean by that? We shall read it three ways, and very quickly. First, He meant in the young man's case, "*Give up thine idol.*" His was wealth. He means the same kind of trial for you. Give up your idol. What is it? I pause. You may look, but I am sure that if you are not loving God you are loving something else, and whatever it is that you love better than God is your idol, and you are an idolater, and that your idol must fall to the ground if Jesus is to be all in all. You cannot serve two masters, and whatever your present master is he must turn out, that Christ may come in.

"Sell all that thou hast." Well, that means another thing as I read it, that is, consecrate your *all to God*. How can you expect, if you withhold and keep back part of the price from God, that He should accept you, and save you by Jesus Christ. Nay, come, poor guilty sinner, and wash in the purple stream that flows from Jesus' heart, and then say in return, "My Lord, since Thou hast thus redeemed me—

*"All that I am, and all I have
Shall be for ever Thine,
Whate'er my duty bids me give,
My cheerful hands resign;*

*And if I could make some reserve,
And duty did not call,
I'd love my God with zeal so great
That I must give Him all."*

The third reading of this passage will be—*give up your hindrances*. This young man's hindrance was his possessions, and it was better that he should relinquish his possessions, and be saved, than be hindered by his wealth. What, my dear friend, is your hindrance? Give it up, give it up, give it up! Oh, I know some of you that are hindered by bad company. You are often impressed, but it is all blown away by those merry men whose merriment is tinged with lasciviousness. Give them up. Will you give them up, or give up Christ? Which shall it be?

You remember in John Bunyan's *Life* he says that one Sunday, when he was playing on the village green at a game of cat, he was just about to strike the cat when a voice came to him from heaven, and said, "Wilt thou have thy sins and go to hell, or leave thy sins and go to heaven?" And he stood there in the midst of his companions and paused, and they could not think what ailed the tinker while he was disputing in his mind which it should be, Christ and heaven, or his sins and hell.

Now, whatever your hindrance is—if it be money, if it be anything—whatever it is, give it up. If it be your right hand, you had better cut it off, and cast it from you, than having it enter into hell. If it be your right eye, 'twere better for you to pluck it out, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire. That is the cry of the text tonight—down with your idols, give up your all, cast away your hindrances, and come to Christ and trust Him. That is the first word of instruction.

But the second instructive word is—"*Take up thy cross*." That means, *profess Christ*. You have a notion, perhaps, some of you, that you will sneak into heaven as secret Christians. Take care that if you try that you do not find yourselves at another gate than the gate of pearl. Christ came not to save those cowardly souls who will not own Him. His own words are, "He that denieth me before men, him will I deny before my Father who is in heaven."

Ashamed of Jesus! Ah, then, remember those words, "The fearful and unbelieving"—the fearful—that is those who are afraid to own Christ as their Master—"shall have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." I pray you then, if you are Christ's, confess Him, own Him. Confess that you are His, take up your cross, *take up the cross*—that is, *endure His reproach*. You would not like to be called a canting Methodist, or Presbyterian, or some other ugly name.

Ah, but my dear friend, if you would have Christ's crown, you must have Christ's cross, and he that is not willing to be sneered at with Christ, cannot reign with Christ. And what if they do sneer at you? If that be your cross, take it up. What higher honor can a man want on this side of heaven than to be called a fool for Christ? I wot the day shall come when angels shall envy the men that were permitted to have the privilege of suffering for Christ. You know the old story of Henry the Fifth, when, in view of a battle, it was said he wanted more men, but he replied that he did not wish for more men, for—

"The fewer men the greater share of honour;"

and he pictured the day when

*"Gentlemen in England, now a-bed
Shall think themselves accurs'd they were not here."*

Truly, if you could escape rebuke and persecution, you might well be grieved to think that you went to heaven by so mean a way. Be willing then, like a brave spirit, to take up the cross and carry it, counting the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. Take up your cross—that is, *trust in the cross*—grasp it as your only hope, let the atonement which Jesus made by His death, be the delight of your soul, and ever from this day boast therein.

The last word of direction was—"*Follow me*." Christ said, "Follow me." He meant, did He not, confide in Me? as a confiding sheep follows its shepherd, so follow Me. He meant "*Obey me*, as the servant follows where the Master leads, so track My footsteps, and let My example be your rule." So

Jesus says to you also, “Persevere in following Me, never cease so doing, follow Me right up to My throne, and there rest with Me.”

Listen then, each of you here present, who have only one thing that you lack. Will you now—may His Holy Spirit make you—give up the world and all it offers you, give up sin and all its fascinations, and close in with God in Christ, and give your whole heart to Him? Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision. There is a valley of decision to us all, when we are either left to our own wills to decide for evil, or the grace of God makes us decide for Christ.

The cry is heard in this house tonight, “Divide, divide.” Those who shall say “aye” within their hearts take their place with Christ, but those who are of the no’s—those who give the negative to the command of Christ—let them at least know what they are doing, and if they will go the downward road, let it be with their eyes open that they may know where they go.

But oh, say not “No!” Oh, Spirit of God, let them not say “No!” Yield thee, man, yield thee now to the gentle impulse which now bids you say, “I will take His yoke upon me, for it is easy, I will follow Him.” Yield to His love who round you now the bands of a man would cast—the cords of His love who was given for you, to His altar binding you fast. Pray this prayer, “Lord, bind the sacrifice with cords, even with cords to the horns of the altar, let me be Thine now, and Thine hereafter when Thou comest in Thy glory!”

There is a question that has often been asked, with feelings of curiosity, which I cannot answer. It is this—did the young man inherit eternal life after all? I think he did, I think he did because Jesus loved him. I like his character throughout, as the Savior evidently did, and He did not love because of outward appearances, He looked at the heart.

I am not altogether displeased at his going away. It was a deal better than stopping, if he did not follow honestly the Good Master, who had eternal life at His disposal. I even look hopefully at his pausing awhile before complying, if such was the issue, for the man that flings all away in a moment, may want it back again tomorrow. It was a great deal he had to part from, and he went away, but he did not go away careless.

I know I would be glad if my hearers went away sorrowing when they are not converted, I should think it was a hopeful sign. He went away sorrowing, and though the Savior drew from that the moral that it was hard for a rich man to be saved, yet He said it was possible with God, and why, then, was it not possible with that young man? I do not know. There are some things to be said on either side, but where Scripture is silent, we must not decide.

But there is another question that I think is vastly more important, and to me more interesting, and to each one of you a deal more so, and that is—will that young man, that I have been talking to tonight, be saved? And the young woman that I tried to describe just now—will she ultimately inherit eternal life? Oh, may God grant that the answer may be in each case, “Yea, Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I trust Thee, that I love Thee, and whatever Thou callest me to give up, or to be, or to do, for Thy name’s sake, even all things, I will do it.” Then the Lord bless you, for you are saved, and you shall be His in the day of His appearing.

God give His blessing for Jesu’s sake.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

MARK 9:2-21

Verses 2-7. *And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them. And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them. And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses,*

and one for Elias. For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid. And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

You and I have sometimes wished that we could see Christ in His earthly glory. We need not however wish it, for if such a sight were permitted to us, in all probability we should be more full of fear than of joy. These three men, the elect out of the elect, the very choicest of the apostles, yet had little delight in what they saw at the time, for the glory was too bright for their overwhelmed natures.

*“At the too transporting sight,
Darkness rushes o’er my sight.”*

We had better wait awhile until these eyes shall have been cleansed, and our whole fabric shall be fit for such a weight of glory as the sight of our exalted Lord will be.

8. And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

Unhappy, indeed, would they have been if they had looked about and seen none but Moses, for poor comfort could Moses bring. Or if, looking around, they had seen none but Elias, for the stern prophet of fire would have been but a poor consolation to them in their life struggles. But Moses may go, and Elijah may go. Lawgiver and prophet may vanish. As long as Jesus Christ remains it is enough. Jesus only is enough for all our wants—for all our desires.

9-10. And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead. And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.

For they did not understand the Master’s words—not even these apostles, for the Spirit of God was not yet fully given. Happy indeed is he upon whom the spirit of God rests, and in whom He dwells, for as John says, “Ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and know all things,” and these men without that measure of anointing did not know at that time, even such a simple word as this—that the Son of man should rise again from the dead.

Brethren, we must be taught of the Holy Spirit, or we shall never know anything profoundly. We might go to school to Christ Himself—now, mark this word—we might go to school to Christ Himself, and yet learn nothing until the Holy Ghost should come upon us to write the truth upon our heart which Christ has spoken to the ear. Oh, if you lack wisdom, ask of God, and He will give you of His Spirit.

11-13. And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come? And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought. But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come,—

John the Baptist was he.

13. And they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

It is rather singular that the disciples should begin to ask about the scribes, for this was, as it were, a sort of warning note for a battle into which they were about to plunge. They talked about the scribes, but the scribes were down below in conflict with the rest of the apostolic brotherhood, and now, while they are talking about them, they find themselves immediately in their presence.

14-15. And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them. And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him.

The probability is that the face of Jesus Christ was shining like the face of Moses when he came down from the mount, and the people were amazed, though not with that same amazement which seized upon Israel when they saw the face of Moses, for Moses had to cover his face with a veil. But they ran to Him and saluted Him. The glory of Christ attracts, whereas the glory of Moses repels. The glory of the law is terrible, but the glory of the Gospel is cheering and attractive.

16. And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them?

Like some great commander stepping into the field when his under officers are being beaten, he comes right to the front and charges the foe boldly. Christ said, “What question ye with them?”—as much as to say, “Why did ye not wait a bit and ask Me? I could have answered you if they can not.”

17-18. *And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; and wheresoever he taketh him: he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away:*

A case of dreadful epilepsy accompanied with satanic possession.

18-19. *And I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.*

That is a grand piece of advice, and a blessed word of permit—“Bring him unto me.” There is no case so bad but if you bring it to Jesus, He can meet it. “Bring him unto me.” Now, good woman, bring your daughter’s case to Christ tonight in prayer while you are sitting in the pew. Now, come, brother, bring the case of your son who seems utterly to be abandoned to vice. Bring the case before Christ tonight. “Bring him unto me.” Oh, who would not bring his friend—his wife? Who would not bring her husband or her child unto Jesus Christ? “Bring him unto me.”

20. *And they brought him unto him:*

Some came to help the father, probably the bringing of the young man was too much an effort for one alone. “They brought him unto him.” Two or three of you with united prayer can do what, peradventure, one man’s prayer would not. Come, help one another. “Bear ye one another’s burdens” in prayer.

I would suggest that if one of you should have an ungodly son who causes you trouble, you should communicate with some few of your brethren and sisters in Christ, and say, “Let us conjointly make this case a matter of prayer till God hears us.” And then you must take up a case of theirs, you know, turn and turn about, and see whether God does not in answer to prayer bless one after another that you thus bring to Christ. I know what the result will be, if it be honestly tried in simple confidence in the power of Jesus.

20-21. *And when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child.*

A terrible case.

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.

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