

WHAT ARE THE CLOUDS?

NO. 36

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 19, 1855,
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 AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

“That clouds are the dust of His feet.”
Nahum 1:3.

IT is possible for a man to read too many books. We will not despise learning, we will not undervalue erudition—such acquisitions are very desirable. When his talents are sanctified to God, the man of learning frequently becomes, in the hands of the Spirit, far more useful than the ignorant and the unlearned. But at the same time, if a man acquires his knowledge entirely from books, he will not find himself to be a very wise man. There is such a thing as heaping so many books on your brains that they cannot work—pouring such piles of type and letters and manuscripts and papers and prints and pamphlets and volumes and tomes and folios upon your weary head—that your brain is absolutely buried and cannot move at all. I believe that many of us, while we have sought to learn by books, have neglected those great volumes which God has given us. We have neglected to study this great book—the Bible! Moreover, we have not been careful enough students of the great volume of nature and we have forgotten that other great book, the human heart. For my own part, I desire to be somewhat a student of the heart. And I think I have learned far more from conversation with my fellowmen than I ever did from reading. And the examination of my own experience and the workings of my own heart, have taught me far more of humanity than all the metaphysical books I have ever perused. I like to read the book of my fellow creatures—nothing delights me so much as when I see a multitude of them gathered together or when I have the opportunity of having their hearts poured into mine and mine into theirs. He will not be a wise man who does not study the human heart and does not seek to know something of his fellows and of himself. But if there is one book I love to read above all others, next to the book of God, it is the volume of Nature. I care not what letters they are that I read, whether they are the golden spellings of the name of God up yonder in the stars, or whether I read, in rougher lines, His name printed on the rolling floods, or see it hieroglyphic in the huge mountain, the dashing waterfall, or the waving forest.

Wherever I look abroad in Nature, I love to discern my Father’s name spelled out in living characters. And if we had any fields a little greener than Moorfields, Smithfield and Spafields, I would do as Isaac did—go into the fields at eventide and muse and meditate upon the God of Nature. I thought in the cool of last evening I would muse with my God, by His Holy Spirit, and see what message He would give me. There I sat and watched the clouds and learned a lesson in the great hall of Nature’s college. The first thought that struck me was this—as I saw the white clouds rolling in the sky, I thought I shall soon see my Savior mounted on the Great White Throne, riding on the clouds of Heaven to call men to judgment! My imagination could easily picture the scene when the quick and the dead would stand before His Great White Throne and hear His voice pronounce their changeless destiny. I remembered, moreover, that text in the Proverbs, “he that observes the wind shall not sow and he that regards the clouds shall not reap.” I thought how many a time myself and my brother ministers have regarded the clouds. We have listened to the voice of prudence and of caution. We have regarded the clouds. We have stopped when we ought to have been sowing because we were afraid of the multitude—or we refused to reap and take in the people into our churches because some good Brother thought we were too hasty about the matter.

I rose up and thought to myself—I will regard neither the clouds nor the winds, but when the wind blows a hurricane I will throw the seed with my hands, if perhaps the tempest may waft it still further! And when the clouds are thick, I will still reap and rest assured that God will preserve His own wheat, whether I gather it under clouds or in the sunshine. And then, when I sat there musing upon God, thoughts struck me as the clouds careered along the skies—thoughts which I must give to you this morning! I trust they were somewhat for my own instruction and possibly they may be for yours. “The clouds are the dust of His feet.”

I. Well, the first remark I make upon this shall be—*the way of God is generally a hidden one*. This we gather from the text, by regarding the connection, “the Lord has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm and the clouds are the dust of His feet.” When God works His wonders He always conceals Himself. Even the motion of His feet causes clouds to arise. And if these clouds are but “the dust of His feet,” how deep must be that dense darkness which veils the brow of the Eternal. If the small dust which He causes is of equal magnitude with our clouds—if we can find no other figure to image “the dust of His feet” than the clouds of Heaven—then how obscure must be the motions of the Eternal One, how hidden and how shrouded in darkness! This great Truth suggested by the text is well borne out by facts. The ways of God are hidden ones. Cowper did not say amiss when he sang—

*“He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.”*

His footsteps cannot be seen, for, planted on the sea, the next wave washes them out. And placed in the storm, rioting as the air then is, every impression of His chariot wheels is soon erased. Look at God and at whatever He has deigned to do and you will always see Him to have been a hidden God. He has concealed Himself and all His ways have been veiled in the strictest mystery. Consider His works of salvation. How did He hide Himself when He determined to save mankind? He did not manifestly reveal Himself to our forefathers. He gave them simply one dim lamp of Prophecy which shone in words like these, “The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.” And for 4,000 years God concealed His Son in mystery and no one understood what the Son of God was to be. The smoking incense clouded their eyes and while it showed something of Jesus, it did hide far more. The burning victim sent its smoke up towards the sky and it was only through the dim mists of the sacrifice that the pious Jew could see the Savior.

Angels, themselves, we are told, desired to look into the mysteries of Redemption, yet though they stood with their eyes intently fixed upon it until the hour when Redemption developed itself on Cavalry, not a single angel could understand it. The most profound sage might have sought to find out how God could be just and yet the Justifier of the ungodly, but he would have failed in his investigations. The most intensely pious man might meditate, with the help of that portion of God’s Spirit which was then given to the Prophets, on this mighty subject and he could not have discovered what the mystery of godliness was—“God manifest in the flesh.” God marched in clouds, “He walked in the whirlwinds.” He did not deign to tell the world what He was about to do—for it is His plan to gird Himself in darkness and “the clouds are the dust of His feet.” Ah, and so it always has been in Providence as well as Grace. God never condescends to make things very plain to His creatures. He always does rightly. And therefore He wants His people always to believe that He does rightly. But if He showed them that He did so, there would be no room for their faith!

Turn your eyes along the pages of history and see how mysterious God’s dealings have been! Who would conceive that a Joseph sold into Egypt would be the means of redeeming a whole people from famine? Who would suppose that when an enemy came upon the land, it would be, after all, but the means of bringing Glory to God? Who could imagine that a harlot’s blood should mingle with the genealogy from which came the great Messiah, the Shiloh of Israel? Who could have guessed, much less could have compassed the mighty scheme of God? Providence has always been a hidden thing—

*“Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs
And works His Sovereign will.”*

And yet, Beloved, you and I are always wanting to know what God is about. There is a war in the Crimea. We have had some great disasters at Sebastopol and we are turning over the papers and saying, “Whatever is God doing here?” What did He do in the last war? What was the benefit of it? We see that even Napoleon was the means of doing good, for he broke down the aristocracy and made all monarchs respect the future, the power and the rights of the people. We see what was the result even of that dread hurricane, that it swept away a pestilence which would have devoured full many more. But we ask, “What is God doing with this world?” We want to know what will be the consequences. Suppose we should humble Russia, where would it end? Can Turkey be maintained as a separate kingdom? And ten thousand other questions arise! Beloved, I always think, “Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth,” and—as a good old friend of mine says—“Let them crack themselves, too, if they like. We will not interfere.” If the potsherd will go smashing one another, why, then, they must! We pray that old England may come off the safest of them all. But we are not

much concerned to know the result. We believe that this war, as well as everything else, will have a beneficial tendency. We cannot see in history that this world ever went a step backwards. God is always moving it in its orbit. And it has always progressed even when it seemed retrograding.

Or, perhaps you are not agitated about Providence in a nation. You believe that, there, God does hide Himself. But then there are matters concerning yourself which you long to see explained. When I was in Glasgow I went over an immense foundry, one of the largest in Scotland—and there I saw a very powerful steam engine which worked all the machinery in the entire building. I saw in that foundry such numberless wheels running round, some one way and some another, I could not make out what on earth they were all about! But, I daresay if my head had been a little wiser and I had been taught a little more of mechanics I might have understood what every wheel was doing, though really they seemed only a mass of wheels very busy running round and doing nothing! They were all, however, working at something. And if I had stopped and asked, “What is that wheel doing?” A mechanic may have said, “It turns another wheel.” “Well, and what is that wheel doing?” “There is another wheel dependent upon that and that, again, is dependent on another.” Then, at last, he would have taken me and said, “This is what the whole machinery is doing.” Some ponderous bar of iron, perhaps, being grooved and cut, shaped and polished—“this is what all the wheels are effecting—but I cannot tell separately what each wheel is doing.” All things are working together for good. But what the things separately are doing, it would be impossible to explain.

Yet you, child of Adam, with your finite intellect, are continually stopping to ask, “Why is this?” The child lies dead in the cradle. Why was infancy snatched away? Oh, ruthless Death, could you not reap ripe corn—why snatch the rosebud? Would not a chaplet of withered leaves become you better than these tender blossoms? Or you are demanding of Providence, why have you taken away my property? Was I not left, by a parent, well-to-do, but some ravenous leech has swept all my substance away? It is all gone. Why this, O God? Why not punish the unjust? Why should the innocent be allowed to suffer thus? Why am I to be bereft of my all? Says another, “I launched into a business that was fair and honorable. I intended, if God had prospered me, to devote my wealth to Him. I am poor, my business never prospers. Lord, why is this?” And another says, “Here I am toiling from morning till night. And all I do, I cannot extricate myself from my business which takes me off so much from religion. I would rather live on less if I had more time to serve my God.” Ah, finite one! Do you ask God to explain these things to you? I tell you, God will not do it and God cannot do it—for this reason—you are not capable of understanding it! Should the ant ask the eagle where it dashes aloft in the skies? Shall leviathan be questioned by a minnow? These creatures might explain their motions to creatures. But the Omnipotent Creator, the uncreated Eternal cannot well explain Himself to mortals whom He has created! We cannot understand Him. It is enough for us to know that His way always must be in darkness and that we must never expect to see much in this world.

II. This second thought is GREAT THINGS WITH US ARE LITTLE THINGS WITH GOD. What great things clouds are to us! There we see them sweeping along the skies! Then they rapidly increase till the whole firmament gathers blackness and a dark shadow is cast upon the world. We foresee the coming storm and we tremble at the mountains of cloud, for they are great. Great things are they? No, they are only the dust of God’s feet! The greatest cloud that ever swept the face of the firmament was but one single particle of dust starting from the feet of the Almighty Jehovah. When clouds roll over clouds and the storm is very terrible, it is but the chariot of God, as it speeds along the heavens, raising a little dust around Him! “The clouds are the dust of His feet.” Oh, could you grasp this idea, my Friends, or had I words in which to put it into your souls, I am sure you would sit down in solemn awe of that great God who is our Father, or who will be our Judge. Consider that the greatest things with man are little things with God. We call the mountains great but what are they? They are but “the small dust of the balance.” We call the nations great and we speak of mighty empires, but the nations before Him are but as “a drop in the bucket.” We call the islands great and talk of ours boastingly—“He takes up the isles as a very little thing.” We speak of great men and of mighty—“The inhabitants of the earth in His sight are but as grasshoppers.”

We talk of ponderous orbs moving millions of miles from us—in God’s sight they are but little atoms dancing up and down in the sunbeam of existence! Compared with God there is nothing great! True, there are some things which are little with man that are great with God. Such are our sins which we call little but which are great with Him. And His mercies which we sometimes think are little, He knows are very great mercies towards such great sinners as we are.

Things which we reckon great are very little with God. If you knew what God sometimes thought of our talk, you would be surprised at yourselves. We have some great trouble—we go burdened with it, saying, “O Lord God! What a great trouble I am burdened with.” Why, I think, God might smile at us, as we do sometimes at a little child who takes up a load too heavy for it (but which you could hold between your fingers) and staggers and says, “Father, what a weight I am carrying.” So there are people who stagger under the great trouble which they think they are bearing. *Great, Beloved?* There are no great troubles at all—“The clouds are the dust of His feet.” If you would but so consider them, the greatest things with you are but little things with God. Suppose, now, that you had all the troubles of all the people in the world, that they all came pouring on your devoted head—what are waterfalls of trouble to God?—“Drops in the bucket.” What are whole mountains of grief to Him? Why, “He takes up the mountains as the dust of the balance.” And He can easily remove your trials. Sit not down, then, you son of weariness and want and say, “My troubles are too great.” Hear the voice of mercy—“Cast your burden on the Lord and He will sustain you, He will never suffer the righteous to be moved.”

You shall hear two Christians talk. One of them will say, “O my troubles and trials and sorrows, they are so great I can hardly sustain them. I do not know how to support my afflictions from day to day.” The other says, “Ah, my troubles and trials are not less severe, but, nevertheless, they have been less than nothing. I could laugh at impossibilities and say they shall be done.” What is the reason of the difference between these men? The secret is that one of them carried his troubles and the other did not. It does not matter to a porter how heavy a load may be if he can find another to carry it for him. But if he is to carry it all himself, of course he does not like a heavy load! So one man bears his troubles, himself, and gets his back nearly broken. But the other cast his troubles on the Lord. Ah, it does not matter how heavy troubles are if you can cast them on the Lord! The heavier they are, so much the better, for the more you have got rid of and the more there is laid upon the Rock! Never be afraid of troubles. However heavy they are, God’s eternal shoulders can bear them. He, whose Omnipotence is testified by revolving planets and systems of enormous worlds can well sustain you. Is His arm shortened, that He cannot save, or is He weary that He cannot hold you fast? Your troubles are nothing to God, for the very “clouds are the dust of His feet.”

And this cheers me, I assure you, in the work of the ministry. For any man who has his eyes open to the world at large will acknowledge that there are many clouds brooding over England and over the world. I received lately a letter from a gentleman at Hull in which he tells me that he sympathizes with my views concerning the condition of the Church at large. I do not know whether Christendom was ever worse off than it is now. At any rate, I pray God it never may be. Read the account of the condition of the Suffolk churches where the Gospel is somewhat flourishing and you will be surprised to find that they have had scarcely any increase at all in the year. So you may go from Church to Church and find scarcely any that are growing. Here and there a Chapel is filled with people. Here and there you find an earnest minister. Here and there an increasing church—here and there a good Prayer Meeting. But these are only like green spots. Wherever I have gone through England, I have been always grieved to see how the glory of Zion is under a cloud—how the precious saints of Zion, comparable to fine gold, have become like earthen pitchers—the work of the hands of the potter. It is not for me to set myself up as universal censor of the Church but I must be honest and say that spiritual life and fire and zeal and piety seem to be absent in ten thousand instances! We have abundance of agencies, we have good mechanism, but the Church nowadays is very much like a large steam engine without any fire—without any hot water in the boiler—without any *steam!* There is everything *but* steam, everything but life! England is veiled in clouds. Not clouds of infidelity. I care not one fig for all the infidels in England and I do not think it worth Mr. Grant’s trouble to go after them. Nor am I afraid of Popery for old England. I do not think she will go back to that—I am sure she never will. But, I *am* afraid of this deadness, this sloth, this indifference that has come over our Churches.

The Church needs shaking, like the man on the mountaintop does when the cold numbs him into a deadly slumber. The Churches are gone to sleep for lack of zeal, for lack of fire. Even those who hold sound Doctrine are beginning to slumber. Oh may God stir the Church up! One great black cloud only broken here and there by a few rays of sunlight seems to be hanging over the entire of this, our happy island! But, Beloved, there is comfort, “for the clouds are the dust of His feet.” He can scatter them in a moment. He can raise up His chosen servants who have only to put their mouth to the trumpet and one blast shall awaken the sleeping sentinels and startle the sleeping camp. God has only to send out, again, some Evangelist, some flying angel and the Churches shall start up once more and she who has been clothed in

sackcloth shall doff her garments of mourning and put on a garment of praise, instead of the spirit of heaviness. The day is coming, I hope, when Zion shall sit, not without her diadem, crownless, but with her crown on her head she shall grasp her banner, take her shield and, like that heroic maiden of old who roused a whole nation, shall go forth conquering and to conquer! We hope this much, because “the clouds are the dust of His feet.”

Yes, and what clouds rest on the world at large! What black clouds of Catholic superstition, Mohammedanism and idolatry. But what are all these things? We do not care about them at all, Brothers and Sisters. Some say that I am getting very enthusiastic about the latter-day Glory and the coming of our Savior Jesus Christ. Well, I don't know. I get all the happier the more enthusiastic I am, so I hope I shall keep on at it, for I believe nothing so comforts a servant of God as to believe that his Master is coming! I hope to see Him. I should not be surprised to see Jesus Christ tomorrow morning. He *may* come then. “In such an hour as you think not, the Son of Man comes.” He who learns to watch for Christ will never be surprised when He comes. Blessed shall that servant be, whom, when his Lord comes, He shall find busy about his duty. But some say He cannot come yet. There are so many clouds and so much darkness in the sky it cannot be expected that the sun will yet rise. Is that a fair reason? Do the clouds ever impede the sun? The sun moves on despite all the mists—and Jesus Christ can come, clouds or no clouds. We do not need light before He appears. He will come and give us light, afterwards—scattering the darkness with the glory of His own eyes. But you say, “How are these idolatrous systems to be cast down?” God could do it in a minute if He pleased! Religion never moves by years and weeks. Even false religions grow like mushrooms—much more, true ones. False religions attained colossal proportion in a very few years. Take the case of Mohammedanism—the new-born faith of Islam became the religion of millions in an incredible short period and if a false religion could spread so quickly, shall not a true one run along like fire amidst the stubble, when God shall speak the word? Clouds are but “dust of His feet.”

A little while ago some of us were fretting about this Mormonism and we said, “It will never be broken up.” Some stupid fellows in America began to kill the poor Mormons and so carve them into saints, which was the very way to establish them! Christians trembled and said, “What can this be? We shall have Sodom over again.” But did you read the *Times* newspaper of Thursday last? You will there see a wonderful instance of how God can scatter the clouds and make them dust of His feet. He has caused to come out of the ground, near Salt Lake, at Utah, thousands of crickets and all kinds of noxious insects that devour the crops. Creatures that have not been seen in Utah before, with swarms of locusts, have made their appearance. And the people, being so far from civilized nations cannot, of course, carry much corn across the desert, so that they will be condemned to starve or else separate and break up. It seems to all appearance that the whole settlement of the Mormons must be entirely broken up and *that* by an army of caterpillars, crickets and locusts!

III. Now, one more remark. “The clouds are the dust of His feet.” Then we learn from that, that THE MOST TERRIBLE THINGS IN NATURE HAVE NO TERROR TO A CHILD OF GOD. Sometimes clouds are very fearful things to mariners. They expect a storm when they see the clouds and darkness gathering. A cloud, to many of us, when it forebodes a tempest, is a very unpleasant thing. But let me read my text and you will see what I mean by my remark that the most terrible things in Nature are not terrible to the saints. “The clouds are the dust of HIS feet”—of God's feet. Do you not see what I mean? There is nothing terrible, now, because it is only the dust of my Father's feet. Did you ever know a child who was afraid of the dust of his father's feet? No. If the child sees the dust of his father's feet in the distance, what does he do? He rejoices because it is his father and runs to meet him! So the most awful things in Nature, even the clouds, have lost all their terror to a child of God because he knows they are but the dust of his Father's feet. If we stand in the midst of the lightning storm, a flash tears apart yon cedar, or splits the oak of the forest. Another flash follows, and then another, till the whole firmament becomes a sea of flame. We fear not, for they are only the flashes of our Father's sword as He waves it in the sky. Listen to the thunder as it shakes the earth, causes the hinds to calve and discovers the forests. We shake not at the sound—

*“The God that rules on high,
And thunders when He please,
That rides upon the stormy sky,
And manages the seas.
This awful God is ours,
Our Father and our Love.”*

We are not afraid, for we hear our Father's voice. And what favored child ever quaked at his Father's speech? We love to hear that voice. Although it is deep, bass, sonorous, yet we love its matchless melody for it issues from the depths of affection. Put me to sea and let the ship be driven along—that wind is my Father's breath—let the clouds gather, they are the dust of my Father's feet! Let the waterspout appear from Heaven, it is my Father dipping His hand in the laver of His earthly temple! The child of God fears nothing. All things are his Father's. And now divested of everything that is terrible, he can look upon them with complacency, for he says, "The clouds are the dust of His feet"—

*"He drives His chariot through the sky,
Beneath His feet His thunders roar!
He shakes the earth, He veils the sky,
My Soul, my Soul, this God adore—
He is your Father and your Love."*

Fall down before His feet and worship Him, for He has loved you by His Grace. You know there are many fearful events which may befall us. But we are never afraid of them if we are saints, because they are the dust of *His* feet. Pestilence may ravage this fair city once again. The thousands may fall and the funeral march be constantly seen in our streets. Do we fear it? No. The pestilence is but one of our Father's servants and we are not afraid of it, although it walks in darkness. There may be no wheat, the flocks may be cut off from the herd and the stall—nevertheless famine and distress are our Father's doings and what our Father does we will not view with alarm. There is a man there with a sword in his hand—he is an enemy and I fear Him. My father has a sword and I fear Him not. I rather love to see Him have a sword, because I know He will only use it for my protection.

But there is to come a sight more grand, more terrific, more sublime and more disastrous than anything Earth has yet witnessed! There is to come a fire before which Sodom's fire shall pale to nothingness. And the conflagration of continents shall sink into less than nothing and vanity. In a few more years, my Friends, Scripture assures us, this earth and all that is therein, is to be burned up. That deep molten mass which now lies in the bosom of our mother Earth is to burst up—the solid matter is to be melted down into one vast globe of fire. The wicked—shrieking, wailing and cursing, shall become a prey to these flames that shall blaze upward from the breast of Earth. Comets shall shoot their fires from Heaven. All the lightning shall launch their bolts upon this poor earth and it shall become a mass of fire. But does the Christian fear it? No. Scripture tell us we shall be caught up together with the Lord in the air and shall be forever with Him!

IV. To conclude. The fourth observation is ALL THINGS IN NATURE ARE CALCULATED TO TERRIFY THE UNGODLY MAN. Ungodly men and women now present in this place of worship, it is a very solemn fact that you are at enmity with God. Having sinned against God, God is angry with you—not angry with you today, but angry with you every day, angry with you every hour and every moment! It is, moreover, a most sad and solemn fact that there is a day coming, ungodly Man, when this anger of God will burst out and when God will utterly destroy and devour you! Now listen to me for a moment while I try to make all Nature preach to you a solemn warning—and the wide world, itself, a great high priest—holding up its finger and calling you to flee for mercy to Jesus Christ, the King of kings! Sinner, have you ever seen the clouds as they roll along the sky? Those clouds are the dust of the feet of Jehovah! If these clouds are but the dust, what is He, Himself? And then, I ask you, O Man, are you not foolish in the extreme to be at war with such a God as this? If "the clouds are the dust of His feet," how foolish are you to be His enemy! Do you think to stand before His majesty? I tell you, He will snap your spear as if it were but a reed. Will you hide yourself in the mountains? They shall be melted at His Presence and though you cry to the rocks to hide you, they would fail to give you anything of concealment before His burning eyes.

O do but consider, my dear fellow Creatures, you are at enmity with *God!* Would it not be folly if you were to oppose yourself to an angel? Would it not be the utmost stupidity if you were to commence a war even with Her Majesty, the Queen? I know it would, because you have no power to stand against them—but consider how much more mighty is the Eternal God. Why, Man, He could put His finger upon you at this moment and crush you as I could an insect. Yet this God is your enemy! You are hating Him, you are at war with Him! Consider, moreover, O Man, that you have grievously rebelled against Him. You have incensed His soul and He is angry and jealous and furious against every sinner.

Consider what you will do in that Great Day when God shall fall upon you! Some of you believe in a god that has no anger and no hatred towards the wicked. Such a god is not the God of Scripture! He is a God who punishes the ungodly. Let me ask the question of Inspiration—Can you stand before His indignation? Can you abide the fierceness of His an-

ger? When His fury is poured out like fire and the rocks are thrown down by Him, do you think, Sinner, it will be a good thing to be in the hands of the Almighty who will tear you in sunder? Will you think it easy to lie down in Hell with the breath of the Eternal fanning the flames? Will you delight yourself to think that God will invent torments for you, Sinner, to make your doom most cursed if you do not repent and turn to Him? What? Man! Are the terrors of Jehovah nothing to you? Do you not tremble and shake before the fierceness of His fury? Ah, you may laugh now. You may go away, my Hearer, and smile at what I have said—but the day shall declare it—the hour is coming—and it may be soon—when the iron hand of the Almighty shall be upon you! When all your senses shall be the gates of misery, your body the house of lamentation and your soul the epitome of woe. Then you will not laugh and despise Him!

But now to finish up, let me just give you one word more, for, Beloved, when we use these threats—why do we speak of them? It is but the word of the angel, who, pressing Lot upon the shoulder, said, “Look not behind you. Stay not in all the plain,” and then pointing to the fire behind, said, “On! On, lest the fiery sleet overtake you and the hail of the Eternal shall overwhelm you!” We only mentioned that fire behind that the Spirit might make you flee to the mountain lest you should be consumed. Do you ask where that mountain is? We tell you there is a cleft in the Rock of Ages where the chief of sinners may yet hide himself—“Jesus Christ for us men and for our salvation, came down from Heaven.” And whoever here, this morning, is a sinner, we now invite to come to Christ. You Pharisees who do not acknowledge the title—I have no Gospel to preach to you! You self-righteous, self-sufficient ones, I have nothing whatever to say to you except what I have said—the voice of threat. But, whoever will confess himself a sinner has the warrant this morning to come to Jesus Christ. Sinnership is the only title to salvation! If you acknowledge yourselves to be sinners, Christ died for you. And if you put your trust in Him and believe that He died for you, you may rely upon Him and say, “Lord, I will be saved by Your Grace.” Your merits are good for nothing! You can get no benefit by them. Your own work is useless. You err like the man in the prison working the treadmill—you never get anything by it—grinding oyster shells without any benefit to yourself. Come to Jesus Christ! Believe in Him. And after you have believed in Him, He will set you to working—working a new work! He will give you works, if you will have but faith—even faith is His Gift.

O may He give it to you now, my Hearers, for “He gives liberally and upbraids not.” “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptized—and you shall be saved”—by His Grace!

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