

QUIET MUSING! NO. 576

**A SERMON DELIVERED
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“While I was musing, the fire burned.”
Psalm 39:3.*

OUR subject this evening will not stand in need of much preface. The Psalm may teach us that there are times when solitude is better than society, and silence is wiser than speech. The company of sinners was a grief to David’s soul, and because their converse was profane, he chose rather to fly away from their midst—or if they must still continue in his presence, he determined that he would resolutely seal his lips. Touchingly he says, “I was dumb with silence (that is, utterly dumb), I held my peace, even from good.” This painful necessity soon proved to him a pleasing occasion. While he yielded himself up to the thoughts, the reveries, and the pensive workings of his own heart, a sacred fire of devotion was kindled in his breast. And, brethren, whatever the circumstances of the Psalmist, you will all see that the exercise was profitable; and however peculiar the advantages of meditation at particular seasons, it may not be amiss for us to make it a common habit. There is much that is light and frothy in our ordinary conversation; and our communications, one with another, soon grow frothy and insipid when we have no definite matter in hand. Whether, therefore, to free ourselves from the stress of business, or to escape from the temptations of idleness, let it be thought worthy of note that “musing” has sweet charms, and calm reflection is capable of kindling a bright fire.

Our remarks will now run in two directions. First, we shall say *something in praise of musing*; and then, secondly, we shall *supply you with some fuel to burn on the altar of your hearts*.

I. First, then, LET US SAY SOMETHING IN PRAISE OF MUSING.

We do not muse much in these days of ours. We are too busy. We are hurrying here and there, doing much and talking much, but thinking very little, and spending but very little time, indeed, in the modesty of retirement—

“The calm retreat, the silent shade,”

are things which we know very little about. We would be better men if we were more alone; and I suppose that we would do more good, after all, if with even less of active effort we spent more time in waiting upon God, and gathering spiritual strength for labor in His service. Where lives there upon earth, in these days, a man who spends hour after hour of the day in meditation upon God? There may be such, and if there is, I wish that I had their acquaintance; but where will you find giants such as those who lived in the Puritan times, whose lips dropped pearls because they themselves had dived down deep in the fathomless ocean of mercy by the sweet aid of meditation? There may be such, and I wish that it were our lot to sit under their ministry; but I fear that the most of us are so little in retirement—so seldom in communion with God in private, and even when there, the communion is for so short a time—that we are but tiny dwarfs, and can never, while we live thus, attain to the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus! The world has put a little letter before the word “musing,” and these are the days, not for musing, but for *a*-musing! People will go anywhere for amusement; but to muse is a strange thing to them, and they think it dull and wearisome. Our good sires loved the quiet hour, and loved it so well that they cherished those times which they could spend in musing as the most happy because they were the most peaceful seasons of their life. We drag such time off to execution in a moment, and only ask men to tell us how we may kill it.

Now there is much virtue in musing, especially if we muse upon the best, the highest, and the noblest of subjects. If we muse upon the things of which we hear and read in sacred Scripture, we shall do wisely. *It is well to muse upon the things of God because we thus get the real food out of them.* A man who hears many sermons is not necessarily well-instructed in the faith. We may read so many religious

books, that we overload our brains, and they may be unable to work under the weight of the great mass of paper and of printer's ink. The man who reads but one book, and that book his Bible, and then muses much upon it, will be a better scholar in Christ's school than he who merely reads hundreds of books, and muses not at all. And he, too, who gets but one sermon in a day, though it is a very bad habit to stay away from half our Sunday services, and only go out once, yet, he who hears but one sermon in a day, if he meditates much upon it, will get far more out of it than he who hears two or three but meditates not! The truth of God is something like the cluster of the vine—if you would have wine from it, you must bruise it—you must press and squeeze it many times. The bruisers' feet must come down joyfully upon the bunches, or else the juice will not flow; and they must leap, and leap, and leap again, and well tread the grapes, or else much of the precious liquid will be wasted. You must, by the feet of meditation, tread the clusters of the truth of God if you would get the wine of consolation from them! Our bodies are not supported by merely taking food into the mouth—the process which really supplies the muscle, and the nerve, and the sinew, and the bone is the process of digestion. It is by digestion that the outward food becomes assimilated with inner life.

And so is it with our souls; they are not nourished merely by what we hear by going here, and there, and listening awhile to this, and then to that, and then to the other. Hearing, leading, marking, and learning, all require inward digesting; and the inward digesting of the truth of God lies in the meditating upon it! Ruminating creatures chew the cud, and these have always been considered clean animals; and so it is a mark of a true child of God that he understands how to chew the cud of meditation. Why is it that some people are always in a place of worship, and yet they are not holy, though they make some slight advances in the divine life? It is because they neglect their closets! They love the wheat, but they do not grind it; they would have the corn, but they will not go forth into the fields to gather it; the fruit hangs upon the tree, but they will not pluck it; the water flows at their feet, but they will not stoop to drink it. They are either too idle or too busy—I will not say which—but often to be busy is to be idle! And when some men think us idle, we are then best at work. You who know anything of the divine life know very well what I mean by that. Meditation is not idleness, and retirement is not forsaking the good of the world. I suppose that Moses did as much for Israel on the mountain's summit with uplifted hands, as ever Joshua did in the valley with his drawn sword; and Elijah upon the top of Carmel, yes, even by the Brook Cherith, or in the house of the widow of Zarephath, was as much serving Israel as when he smote the priests of Baal, and hewed them in pieces before the Lord. I commend meditation to you, then, for fetching the nourishment out of the truth of God.

Another note in the praise of this most blessed, but much-neglected duty, *is that it fixes the truth upon the memory*. You complain of short memories—you say that what you have heard you can scarcely remember the next day. If your paint is thin, and you cannot make your picture stand out in glowing colors, lay on many coats of your paint, and so will you do what you want. If your memory will not retain the truth the first time, then think it over, and over, and over again, and so, by having these several coats of paint, as it were, the whole matter shall abide! When the fly fisherman goes out to fish, it may be that in mid-stream he sees a great fish, and having cast his fly, the hook is soon fairly in the fish's jaws; but what now? Why, he must let him run out the line, and then he must drag him back again! And after all that, he never thinks his fish safely his own till he gets him into the net. Well, now, hearing sermons is, as it were, getting the hook into the fish's mouth, but *meditation* is the landing-net—it is this which gets the thing to shore! And what if I say that after that, the same meditation becomes a fire of coals upon which the fish is broiled and prepared for our spiritual food? If you cannot hold a thing well, try and get many hooks to hold it with, and meditation will supply you, as it were, with a hundred hands—every one of which you may grasp the truth of God! I am sure, dear friends that we do not give earnest heed enough to these things, or else we would not let them slip. There are many photographers who can take a street view more rapidly than I can speak of it; they have but just to lift up the cover, and put it down again, and the whole thing is done; but the same photographer, if he wishes for many things which are to endure and last, he likes, if he has time, to have the object a long time before the camera, and there it stands, and fairly fixes itself upon the plate.

And surely, there may be some few men who can just hear a sermon, and retain the impression of it all their days; there are some who are quick of understanding in the things of God, and as with a flash they get the truth, and never lose it; but the most of us need more than this. If we would have the truth photographed upon our hearts, we must keep it long before the spiritual lens, or else it never will fix itself there. Complain not, then, of your memory! Complain of yourself if you are not given to meditation! If your memory is frail, let your closet rebuke you because you have not been there more often. Whereas another man may do with less meditation, if you say your memory is weak, the more reason why you should be a longer time, and more often with your God in secret. All need this, but you need it more than others! See to it, then, that you neglect not this duty. For getting the nourishment out of the truth of God, and moreover, for preserving, for salting down the truth for future use, employ much meditation. Meditation clips the wings of thoughts which otherwise would fly away at the first clapping of the world's hands. You shall thus keep your prey, as it were, surrounded and entangled in a net, or else it might escape; your meditation shall hold it fast until you need it.

Yet further, *meditation is of great value in opening up the truth of God and leading us into its secrets*. There is some gold to be found on the surface of this land of Ophir, the Book of God. There are some precious jewels which may be discovered even by the wayfaring man—but the mass of the gold is hidden in the heart of the earth; and he who would be rich in these treasures, must dig into Scripture as one who seeks for choice pearls! You must go down into its depths, and you must rummage there until you at last get at the treasure. Truth is sometimes like a flint, which, when it is struck the first time yields not, and you may even strike it yet again, and still it yields not; but at last one happy blow of the hammer shall make it fly to shivers. Meditation may be compared for its potency to the great battering ram which Sir Christopher Wren used when he built the present St. Paul's Cathedral. Old St. Paul's, you remember, had been destroyed by fire, but its walls were so extremely thick, that it was found very difficult to take the old walls away; and they were so lofty, that there was also great danger to the workmen. Sir Christopher therefore invented a ram, composed of a large piece of timber, and intended to be used in the same way as the Romans used their rams of old. A number of men were set to work with this ram, and of course, being a new instrument to them, they did not like it, and they did not believe in it, either. After hammering away some five or six hours, and the wall showing no sign, whatever, of anything like an impression, they complained to Sir Christopher that he had given them a useless work to do. He set them at it again, and the ram fell heavily but not a stone seemed to stir. One whole day they kept on thus, battering away at the walls. The architect knew full well, that although it might not be tangible to the laborers, there must have been a degree of weakening given to the whole structure. And so it proved, for the next morning, when they began the work again, all of a sudden down tumbled the whole mass! Thus at last the men were convinced that the work of the day before had not been lost—but it really had been disappointing when at first they could not chalk down any progress.

You will find it the same with gospel doctrine that you want to understand but cannot. There is some difficulty you cannot surmount. Meditation comes and gives one stroke after another with all the weight of prayer and of thoughtfulness, but it stirs not; till at last our diligence is rewarded, and we see the whole mass of masonry which reason had piled together of fabulous traditions comes tumbling down; the foundation is discovered, and the truth of God made clear to our apprehension in a moment! What? Do you think that the great thoughts of masterminds come in a minute? People say, "Oh, what a genius!" Nonsense! The man had been hard at work over that for years and years, and years—though perhaps the thing came at last to him suddenly, it was not a whit less a result of *study*—the success which crowns the patient brainwork of a meditative mind. Never despair, dear friends, of understanding the truth. If you will, in the name of Jesus, give your souls to the study, and come resolved to sit at Christ's feet as Mary did—to believe just what He tells you, as He tells it to you though He may reveal dark things, and speak of them to you in parables—you shall be able to comprehend with all saints what are the heights and depths, and you shall yet know the love of Christ which passes knowledge. Be not weary of well-thinking, use much diligence in musing, yield up your heart to sacred meditation. Turn the matter over, and over, and over again in your minds. You remember the story of the great philosopher who had been attempting to discover how much alloy there was in the king's crown, but who could find no way of do-

ing it. By day and by night he pondered it; no, at night when he slept, his daydreams did but come to him again! But all of a sudden, when he was in the bath, he sprang up and wrapped his garments about him, and ran through the street, crying out, "*Inveni, Inveni,*" I have found it! I have found it!" And one of these days, Christian, when you are puzzling over some doctrine which you feel must be true, but which you cannot grasp, you will spring upon your feet when God the Holy Spirit has revealed the truth to you, and you will cry, "I have found it! I have found it!" And great will be your joy at the discovery. Cultivate much, then, the habit of retirement and meditation, because of the way in which it opens up the truth of God.

Here, almost unwittingly, I have touched upon another suggestion. This musing is a charmed exercise for, mark you, *the joy which it brings*. There is a text in Scripture which speaks of the sinner as rolling sin under his tongue as a sweet morsel, an allusion to the habit of the man who, when he gets a dainty thing, swallows it not at once, but rolls it under his tongue, trying to draw out more and more of its sweetness. Well, now, this is what the Christian should do with doctrinal truth—he should roll it under his tongue! You will have far more enjoyment while it is in your mouth than you will afterwards, so keep it there! Meditate much upon it—roll it under your tongue again, and again, and again—until you get more to find its savor. Scripture is often like a bone, but meditation is the hammer which cracks it, and then the soul gets the marrow and the fatness. The beauties of Christ are not to be seen by the passerby who merely glances at Him; there is something to arrest attention at a glance, it is true, but he who would see the beauties of Jesus must look, and look, and look again, until his whole soul is enamored of the Savior; and as he looks, and is transformed into the Savior's image, he shall have such enjoyment that this side of heaven there is none other like it! Communion comes after musing. "My meditation of Him shall be sweet," said the Psalmist, and so truly it is. When I can walk with Him, as the old philosophers walked with Plato in the groves of the Academe, then am I indeed made wise unto salvation; and then, too, is my heart made glad. There is no riding in the chariots of Amminadib except by being much with Christ. The spouse does not say, "I *stood* under His shadow," no, but, "I *sat* under His shadow with great delight." Sitting down is the posture of waiting in which we ungird the loins of the mind, and indulge the repose of meditation. Let us sit down, then, beneath His shadow, and we shall have great delight in musing upon Christ!

But perhaps, after all, the best reason—at least the best to clench all the other reasons I have given, why we should spend much time in musing—is *because musing, then, becomes easier for us*. I never did light an oven fire in my life, but I have heard that sometimes when a baker goes to light a coal oven, if his fuel is a little damp, he gets no blaze; but when the fire is once up, then he may throw in what he will, and everything is speedily consumed by the vehement heat. So sometimes you and I feel our hearts to be like cold ovens, and when we try to put some fresh truth in it, it will not burn. But, ah, when the heart gets hot, and the fire is roaring, then even such damp material as I am able to give you on Sundays will burn right well, and the feeble words of a poor servant of God will make your hearts hot within you! We can meditate better after we have addicted ourselves to a meditative frame. When we have mused a little, then the fire begins to burn; and you will perceive that as the fire burns, meditation gets easier, and then the heart gets warm; and oh, what holy affections, what blessed excitements those have who are much alone with Christ! Such a man never has a cold heart or a slack hand who is much in meditation with his Lord Jesus; his heart comes to be like a mass of molten lard, and before long he verifies the experience of the Psalmist, and can make my text his own! "Then spoke I with my tongue." He cannot help it, for this lava will soon be running over in burning hot words; and if this man should be a preacher, he will preach with holy power! His heart being hot, his words will burn their way into his hearers' hearts. Nor will it end there—this hot heart will soon make a hot hand, and the man who once has his soul full of Christ, will not have his hand empty for Christ. Now he will work! Now he will preach for Christ! Now he will pray! Now he will plead with sinners! Now he will be in earnest! Now he will weep! Now he will agonize! Now he will wrestle with the Angel, and now he will prevail! As the fire burns, his whole being gets into a glow; and the man, like a pillar of fire, warms those who are round about him—burns his way to the glory of success, and gives his Master fresh renown!

Commend me, then, for all these reasons which we have given, this blessed art of holy musing.

II. And now, we have to spend the few minutes which remain in **PUTTING SOME FUEL ON THE FIRE OF MEDITATION.**

The man who says that he has nothing to think about surely has no brains; and that professing Christian who says he has nothing to muse upon must be a laughingstock for devils! A Christian without a subject for contemplation? Impossible! Only give us the time and the opportunity, and there are a thousand topics which at once present themselves for our consideration.

Let me suggest just a few of these *to the Christian.*

Your heart will surely burn like an oven, my Christian brethren, if you think, first, upon *eternal love!* What a topic to muse upon!—

*“Sing we, then, eternal love,
Such as did the Father move,
When He saw the world undone,
Loved the world, and gave His SON.”*

Think of that love without beginning, and which, blessed be God, shall never, never cease! Give the wings of your imagination full play, and go back to the time before all time—when there was no day but the Ancient of Days—when ages had not begun to be, but God dwelt alone! Remember, if you are one of His people, the Father loved you even then, and He continues to love you, and will love you when, like a bubble, this earth has melted, and like a gypsy’s tent the universe has been rolled up and put away! Why, as you think of this, surely you will say with our songster—

*“Loved of my God, for Him again
With love intense I’d burn—
Chosen of God before time began,
I’d choose Him in return.”*

If you want meditation, dear friends, here is an ocean to swim in! That one doctrine of election, that precious truth of predestinating love, and all the consequences which flow from it—why, here is a well—an overflowing well which you can never drink dry. Take deep draughts of it, then, and while you are musing, you shall find that your heart is warmed.

Then, next, *there is dying love to think of.* Oh, think of the Savior descending from the starry heights of glory, and coming down to the Virgin’s womb, and then descending from that lowly manger of Bethlehem, even to the cross and to the grave for you! He counted it not robbery to be equal with God, and yet for your sake, He took upon Himself the form of a servant and made Himself of no reputation, but became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross! Many of the ancient saints were accustomed to spend hours in meditating upon the wounds of Christ, and many of the martyrs were for days engaged in solemn meditation upon those wounded hands and feet, and that pierced side. Oh, of all the volumes which were ever written, this volume, printed in crimson upon the pure, lily-like flesh of Christ, is the best to read! Do you talk of pictures? Was there ever such a picture as that which God drew with the pencil of eternal love, dipped into the color of almighty wrath on Calvary’s summit? Angels desired to see it, but there was a veil before the picture until Jesus came and drew it up—then the spectacle was revealed—to be gazed upon throughout eternity by adoring spirits, with fresh wonder and admiration forevermore! You cannot exhaust this subject, but, O, let me beseech you to give it the first and chief place in your meditation! “I have set the Lord always before me,” would be a good motto for the believer, and well would it be for him to have the cross painted upon his very eyeballs, so that everywhere he should be reminded of Christ Crucified, and so should be led to always say, “For me to live is Christ.”

That topic never can be exhausted and *there are kindred ones connected with it—your justification, the work of the Spirit—and so on.* Let me now hint at one or two other matters which I wish you should solemnly brood over. You will do well, Christian, *to meditate much upon death.* What? Man, did I see you turn away? A Christian afraid of death? No, verily, for death is our Lord’s doorkeeper. Life keeps the key, and says to us, “You shall not enter into your Father’s mansions.” But death comes, and with his bony hand snatches the key out of the grasp of the tyrant, life, and puts it into the lock, and opens the gate, and lets us in! Why, we say sometimes, “The last enemy which shall be destroyed is death,” but if he is “the last enemy,” he is not altogether the less a friend, for he is a friend, too, now that Christ has transformed him! It is to be greatly wise, Christian, to think sometimes of the grave, the shovel, and the

shroud. The catacomb is no ill place for musing, and a little cemetery, with its green knolls, and its white memorial stones, will be a good place in which to study for the man who wishes to muse upon life and immortality in the midst of death. The old naturalists, who tell us a good many things which are not true, as well as some which are, say that the birds of Norway always fly more swiftly than any others, because the summer days are so short, and therefore they have so much to do in such a little time. I do not know anything about the birds of Norway, but this I do know, that Christ's birds would surely fly more swiftly if they would only meditate upon the fact that the day is so short, and that the night is so near at hand. Surely they would fly more swiftly, and work more earnestly if they only thought more of the nearness of eternity!

And then, Christian, if that does not make your heart burn, *let me persuade you to think of heaven!* O, carry your thoughts from this poor dunghill world up to the golden streets, and to the music-begetting harps! Up yonder, I say, let your souls soar and dwell where your treasure is—with Christ upon His throne. Tonight listen how they sing the eternal hallelujah louder than the voice of many waters, and yet sweet as harpers harping with their harps! Listen how the music swells in a sea of glory round about the throne of the eternal God! And you and I shall soon be there—leaving behind the sweat of toil, the rags of poverty, the shame of persecution, the pangs of sickness, and the groans of death—of the death of sin. We shall soon be immortal, celestial, immaculate, glorified with the glory which Christ had with His Father before the world was! Oh, your hearts will surely glow if you can muse thus upon heaven, if you can sing with me tonight—

*“My soul amid this stormy world
Is like some fluttered dove,
And gladly would be as swift of wing
To flee to Him I love!
My heart is with Him on His throne,
And ill can brook delay,
Each moment listening for the voice,
‘Rise up and come away!’
I would, my Lord and Savior, know
That which no measure knows,
Would search the mystery of Your love,
The depth of all Your woes.
I gladly would strike my harp divine
Before the Father's throne,
There cast my crown of righteousness,
And sing what grace has done!
Ah, leave me not in this base world,
A stranger still to roam,
Come, Lord, and take me to Yourself,
Come, Jesus, quickly come!”*

Why is His chariot so long in coming? Why does He tarry? Come quickly, come, Lord Jesus, come! Lash the white horse, and bid him come as soon as may be, that death may meet me, and that I may meet my God!

And if that stirs you not, Christians, there is one other subject necessary for you to muse upon. Sometimes, Christians *think of hell*. No, start not, I pray you, for you will never have to feel it, and therefore you need not shrink from thinking of it. Think of that hell from which you have escaped, and it will surely fire you with gratitude; think of that place of doom into which multitudes are going every day, and if this brings not the tears to your eyes, and makes not your heart palpitate with zeal, I know not what will! Consider that now, while I have been speaking, a soul has passed into eternity, and oh, since we have been here how many spirits have taken the last dreadful plunge into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone—lost, lost—lost beyond my call, and beyond your prayers! No sermons can save them now! No tears can bring them to repentance now! They are gone, gone! Yes, and there are others who are going—who walk the streets of this great London! What multitudes do we meet who will forever have to magnify the awful justice of that God whom they have slighted, and of that Savior whom they

have rejected! And will not this make you bestir yourselves? O my brethren, if we can think of hell, and yet be idle, if we can meditate upon the wrath to come and yet be prayerless, then surely feeling has been given to beasts, and we are turned to stone. What? Believe in judgment and in eternal wrath, and yet not weep for sinners? Believe in hell, and yet not weep for sinners? Surely, we may expect to be turned, like Lot's wife, into pillars of salt, if we thus show signs of looking back with careless and wicked eyes on burning Sodom, instead of fleeing from it, and urging others to escape from the wrath to come!

Christians, I have given you enough topics to meditate upon; may I fondly hope that some of you will try during the next week to scrape up some fragments of time to be alone? I would not have a cold-hearted congregation—I would not have need to stir you up to generosity in giving, or in earnestness, or in service, if you would but muse much—for well am I persuaded that while you are musing the fire will burn.

But I address myself now—stealing a minute of your time which might, perhaps, be worse spent than here—though I go beyond the allotted hour, I address myself to those who are not yet converted to God. I could have hope for you, my dear hearers, I could have good hope for you if I knew that you were given to musing; and if you are so given, may I suggest a few topics which are most likely to be useful to you?

Muse, I pray you, unregenerate man and woman, *upon your present state*. “Dead in trespasses and sins,” as you now are, the wrath of God abides on you! Heirs of wrath even as others, afar off, without God, without hope, and without Christ in the world, I pray you remind yourselves of the hole of the pit where you now are, and out of which you have never yet been dug. Perhaps I have thought more about your soul than *you* have ever thought about it in your life! I pray you now let your own thoughtfulness begin to exercise itself—examine yourself—see what your state is.

And when you have thought that over, I pray you *consider what your end must be if you continue what you are*. If you are resolved to perish, at least look your doom in the face! If you mean to make your bed in hell, I pray you look at it, and see the dreadful coverlet of flame in which you shall be wrapped forever! If you have made a league with hell, I pray you see where that league will take you! Count the cost, I beseech you, for every wise man should do it. Can you dwell with the devouring flames? Can you? Can you dwell with everlasting burnings? I know you cannot—for while I do but even use the word—my bones seem to tremble, and rottenness takes hold upon my heart; and how will you endure it, when God comes forth to tear you in pieces, and there shall be none to deliver you? Oh, what will you do in that day of your visitation? What will you do when the sharp and furbished sword is drawn from its scabbard—when God comes forth dressed as a man of war—to take vengeance upon your iniquities? I pray you, then, muse upon these things, and perhaps the fire may burn, perhaps the heart may melt, perhaps tears of penitence may come streaming down from both your eyes in rivers.

But, if you will not think of this, at least, let me give you a better and a sweeter topic to muse upon. *Think of my Lord and Master Jesus Christ—*

*“Is it nothing to you, all you that pass by,
Is it nothing to you that Jesus should die?”*

I pray you sit down at the foot of His cross, and answer these questions. Did He die for you, or not? Remember, my hearers, Christ did not die for everyone! Some of you will have no lot and no part in His blood; if you die without faith in Him, that blood will never cleanse you—that precious blood is not an atonement for your sins. Do not suppose that Christ came into the world to save damned souls. No, those whom He came to save, He will save, and every vessel of mercy bought with His blood shall glitter upon the tables of heaven—not one of His precious sheep shall be cast out. The question is—is that blood shed for you? And you may know whether it is or not by this—are you willing to trust Him? If you trust Him, this is the mark of redemption; this is the blood mark upon the purchased sheep. Can you, as you sit there, think upon this—that He died for sinners, the just for the unjust, that He might bring them to God, and that He died for those who hated Him? I think I see Him now; there on the cross He hangs and suffers for those who cursed Him; He bleeds for those who hounded Him through the streets; He bows His head upon His bosom in an extremity of anguish for the very men who put the vinegar and the gall

into His mouth! “Of whom I am chief,” says Paul, when he spoke of sinners for whom Jesus died. Sinner, you can not have sinned as foully as Paul did, but if you rest on the blood of Christ you shall be saved! Some men tell me that they do not know how to get faith. Faith is the gift of God, but then faith usually comes by meditating much upon Christ. “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” As it comes in this way, hearing begets meditation, and while we are meditating upon the great and marvelous story of the condescension, and the suffering of Jesus, something seems to say within us, “Yes, it is true, I will believe it,” and faith is thus worked in us before we are aware of it, and we cast ourselves upon Jesus Christ.

And then, sinner, if this topic will not suit you, let me remind you *that there shall come a day when you will have to muse without any hope*. Abraham said to Dives, “Son, remember.” Son, remember, you may forget today; you have, perhaps, forgotten until now, and you will forget when you leave this Tabernacle what I have said to you, or what God has said—but you will never be able to forget when once you have come into the fires of hell. Then it will be, “Son, remember,” and you will remember your mother’s tears and your father’s prayers; you will remember your privileges. The invitations and the wooings of love which you had will all rise up before you anew, and you will see how guilty you have been. “Son, remember,” and then all your sins will rise again before you—the nights, the days, the words, the thoughts, the deeds—will all start up, and people hell with multitudes of worse than fiends to plague and torment you forever! “Son, remember,” and then you will remember the Christ who was preached to you, the stirrings of conscience which you once had, and how you sinned against it all, and choked the good seed. “Son, remember,” and then you will be made to remember all that is yet to come! You will remember God’s threats concerning the wrath which never can be appeased, the fire which never shall be quenched, and the worm which shall never die! O I pray you, instead of remembering *then*, remember *now*! O that I could plead with you! I stand here so far away from you—would that I could come and take you by the hand, and say, “Why will you perish? Men and women, why, will you die?” O you who are strangers to my Lord and Master, do you find any pleasure in your sins? Are the ways of the world, after all, so fair and so pleasant as you once thought them to be? Is there not an emptiness? Do you not find “an aching void” in all your pleasures? Tell me now; will you be able to die quietly, as you now are? Can you put your head down upon your death pillow softly and in peace? Can you think of meeting God, and hearing the thunders of the last tremendous day, and beholding the wonders of the resurrection—can you think of these things with anything like composure? You cannot! I know you cannot! O, then—

*“Come, trembling souls and flee away
To Christ, and heal your wounds!
This is the glorious Gospel Day
In which free grace abounds!”*

May the Spirit of God now sweetly bring you to the Savior. Poor dove, poor dove, the hawk is after you, and you cannot fight him, nor can you escape from him. Listen to one who loves you! There is a cleft in yonder rock to hide yourself in, and then the hawk would lose his prey. Soul, the wounds of Jesus are the clefts in the rock! Flee there, and the fowler, Satan, shall seek, but shall never be able to reach you, for there is salvation in Him who died that we might live!

Save us now, Father, for His name’s sake. Amen.

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

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