

## THE CENTURION'S FAITH AND HUMILITY

### NO. 800

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*“Then Jesus went with them. And when He was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying unto Him, Lord, trouble not Yourself: for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof. Why neither thought I myself worthy to come unto You: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my servant, Do this, and he does it.”*  
*Luke 7:6-8.*

THE greatest light may enter into the darkest places. We may find the choicest flowers blooming where we least expected them. Here was a Gentile, a Roman *soldier*—a soldier clothed with absolute power—and yet a tender master, a considerate citizen, a lover of God! Let no man, therefore, be despised because of his calling, and let not the proverb, “Can any good come out of Nazareth?” be ever heard from the wise man’s lips. The best of pearls have been found in the darkest caves of the ocean. Why should it not be so, still, that God should have even in Sardis a few that have not defiled their garments—who shall walk with Christ in white—for they are worthy.

Let no man think that because of his position in society he cannot excel in virtue. It is not the *place* which is to blame, but the *man*. If your heart is right, the situation may be difficult but the difficulty is to be overcome! Yes, and out of that difficulty shall arise an excellence which you had not otherwise known. Say not in your heart, “I am a soldier, and the barracks cannot minister to piety—therefore I may live as I wish because I cannot live as I should.” Say not, “I am a working man in the midst of those who blaspheme, and therefore it were vain for me to talk of holiness and piety.” No, rather remember that in such a case it is your *duty* specially not only to talk of these precious things, but to wear them about you as your daily ornament! Where should the lamp be placed but in the room which else were dark? Rest assured your calling and your position shall be no excuse for your sin if you continue in it. Neither shall your condition be any apology for the absence of integrity and virtue if these are not found in you.

Concerning the centurion, we may remark that perhaps we had never heard of him though he loved his servant. Perhaps we had never read his name, though he tenderly nursed his slave. Perhaps he had found no place in the record of Inspiration, though he loved the Jewish nation and built them a synagogue—nor had we read the story of his life, though he had become a proselyte to the Jewish faith. The one thing which gives him a place in these sacred pages is this—he was a believer in the Messiah—he was such a believer in the Son of God that Jesus said concerning him, “I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.”

There is the vital point. *There*, my Hearer, is the notable matter which shall enroll you among the blessed! If you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, your name is in the Lamb’s Book of Life! But if you believe not in Him, your outward excellencies, however admirable, shall avail you little. The faith of the centurion is described both in the eighth chapter of Matthew, and in the chapter before us as being of the highest kind. But the remarkable point in it is that it was coupled with the very deepest *humility*. The same man who said, “Say in a word, and my servant shall be healed,” also said, “I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof.”

In bringing before you this noble soldier’s example, these are two pivots upon which the discourse shall turn. I shall direct you to this double star shining with so mild a radiance in the sky of Scripture. This man’s deep humility was not injurious to the strength of his faith, and his gigantic faith was by no means hostile to his deep humiliation.

**I.** To begin, then, THE HUMILITY OF THE CENTURION WAS NOT AT ALL INJURIOUS TO THE STRENGTH OF HIS FAITH. Observe his humble expressions—he avowed that he was not worthy to come to Jesus. “Neither,” said he, “thought I myself worthy to come unto You.” And then he further felt that he was not worthy that

Jesus should come to *him*. "I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof." Was this self-abasement occasioned by the remembrance that he was a Gentile? That may have contributed to it. Was it because he was penitent on account of sundry rough and boisterous deeds which had stained his soldier life? It may be so.

Was it not far rather because he had had a deep insight into his own *heart* and had learned to see sin in its true colors? And therefore he who was worthy, according to the statement of the Jews, was most unworthy in his own apprehension. You may have noticed in the biography of some eminent men how badly they speak of themselves. Southey, in his "Life of Bunyan," seems at a difficulty to understand how Bunyan could have used such depreciating language concerning his own character. For it is true, according to all we know of his biography, that he was not, except in the case of profane swearing, at all so bad as the most of the villagers. Indeed, there were some virtues in the man which were worthy of all commendation.

Southey attributes it to a morbid state of mind, but we rather ascribe it to a return of spiritual health! Had the excellent poet seen himself in the same heavenly light as that in which Bunyan saw himself, he would have discovered that Bunyan did not exaggerate but was simply stating, as far as he could, a truth which utterly surpassed his powers of utterance. The great light which shone around Saul of Tarsus was the outward type of that inner light above the brightness of the sun which flashes into a regenerate soul and reveals the horrible character of the sin which dwells within. Believe me, when you hear Christians making abject confessions, it is not that they are worse than others, but that they see themselves in a clearer light than others.

And this centurion's unworthiness was not because he had been more vicious than other men—on the contrary, he had evidently been much more virtuous than the common run of mankind—but it was because he saw what others did *not* see, and felt what others had not felt. Deep as was this man's contrition, overwhelming as was his sense of utter worthlessness, he did not doubt for a moment either the power or the willingness of Christ. As for the question of willingness, it does not come under remark at all! The leper had said, "If You will," but the centurion was so clear about Christ's willingness to relieve suffering humanity that it does not occur to him to mention it. He has long ago settled *that* matter—and now takes it for granted as a very axiom in the knowledge of Jesus—for such a One as He *must* be willing to do all the good which is asked of Him.

Nor is he at all dubious about our Lord's power. The palsy which afflicted the servant was a remarkably grievous one—but it did not at all stagger the centurion. He felt not only that Jesus could heal it—could heal it at once, could heal it completely—but that He could heal it without moving a step from the place where He stood. Let but the *word* be uttered and in an instant his servant shall be healed! O glorious Humiliation, how low you stoop! O noble Faith, how high you soar! Brothers and Sisters, if we can imitate this noble character in *both* respects—in the depth of his foundation and in the height of his pinnacle—how near to the model of the temple of God shall we be built up!

Empty, indeed, he was, having nothing of his own. Not worthy to receive, much less indulging a thought of giving anything to Christ, and yet confident that all things are possible with the Master and that He both can and *will* do according to our faith—and that in a manner gloriously unveiling His kingly power. My dear Friends, especially you who are under concern of soul, you feel unworthy—that is *not* a mistaken feeling—you are so! You are much distressed by reason of this unworthiness, but if you knew more of it you might be more distressed still, for the apprehension which you already have of your sinfulness, although it is very painful, does not at all reach to the full extent of it. You are much more sinful than you think you are. You are much more unworthy than you yet know yourself to be.

Instead of attempting a foolish and wicked soothing of your dark thoughts, and saying, "you have morbid ideas of yourself, you ought not so to speak," I rather pray you to believe that yours is an utterly *hopeless* case *apart from Christ*—that in your spiritual nature the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. I want you not to film the horrible ulcer of your depravity with specious hopes and professions. I desire you not to look upon this disease as though it were but skin deep—it lies in the *source* and fountain of your life—and poisons your heart! The flames of Hell must assuredly wrap themselves about you unless Christ interposes to save you. You have no merit of any kind or sort—nor will you ever have any.

And more, you have no power to escape from your lost condition unaided by the Savior's hand. Without Christ you can do *nothing*, for you are abjectly poor, hopelessly bankrupt and you cannot by the utmost diligence make yourself any other than you are! No words that I can utter can exaggerate your deplorable condition, and no feelings which you can

ever experience can represent your real state in colors too alarming. You are not worthy that Christ should come to you! You are not worthy to draw *near* to Christ! But, and here is a glorious contrast—never let this for a single moment interfere with your full belief that He who is God but who took our nature—that He who suffered in our stead upon the Cross—that He who now rules in the highest heavens is able to do for you, and *willing* to do for you, exceeding abundantly above what you ask or even think!

Your inability does not prevent the working of His power! Your unworthiness cannot put fetters to His bounty or limits to His Grace. You may be an ill-deserving sinner but that is no reason why He should not pardon you! You may be, in your own apprehension, and truthfully so, the most unworthy that He ever stooped to bless! Yet that is no reason why He should not condescend to press you to His bosom—to accept and to save you! I wish that as the first Truth of God has impressed itself deeply upon you, the second Truth may with equal force take up the possession of your heart, that Jesus Christ is “able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him”—and He is as *willing* as He is able!

Your emptiness does not affect His fullness! Your weakness does not alter His power! Your inability does not diminish His Omnipotence! Your vileness does not restrain the heart of His love which freely moves towards the very vilest of the vile! By some means Satan almost always manages it this way—that when we get a little hope it is generally a self-grounded hope—a vain idea that we are getting better in ourselves. It is a mischievous conceit—proud flesh which hinders the cure and which the Surgeon must cut out—it is no sign of healing, it *prevents* healing. On the other hand, if we obtain a deep sense of *sin*, the Evil One manages to put his hoof in there and to insinuate that Jesus is not able to save such as we are.

That is a great falsehood, for who shall say what the limit of Christ's power is? But if these two things could but meet together—a thorough sense of sin and an immovable belief in the power of Christ to grapple with sin and to overcome it—surely the kingdom of Heaven would then have come near unto us in power and in truth! And then it would be again said, “I have not found such great faith, no, not in Israel.” Now, you troubled hearts, I have this word for you, and then I shall pass on to another point. Your sense of your unworthiness, if it is properly used, should drive you *to* Christ. You are unworthy, but Jesus died for the unworthy! Jesus did *not* die for those who profess to be by nature good and deserving, for the whole have no need of a physician.

It is written, “In due time Christ died for the ungodly.” “Who gave Himself for our”—what? “Excellencies and virtues?” No—“who gave Himself for our *sins*, according to the Scriptures.” We read that He “suffered, the Just for the”—for the “just?” By no means, “the Just for the *unjust*, to bring us to God.” Gospel pharmacy is for the sick! Gospel bread is for the hungry! Gospel fountains are open to the unclean! Gospel water is given to the thirsty! You who need not shall not have—but you who need it may freely come. Let your huge and painful needs impel you to fly to Jesus! Let the vast cravings of your insatiable spirit compel you to come to Him in whom all fullness dwells! Your unworthiness should act as a wing to bear you to Christ, the sinner's Savior.

It should also have this effect upon you—it should prevent your raising those scruples and making those demands which are such a hindrance to some persons finding peace. The proud spirit says, “I must have signs and wonders, or I will not believe. I must feel deep convictions and horrible tremors—or I must quake because of dreams or threatening texts applied to me with awful power.” Ah, but, unworthy one, if you are truly humbled, you will not dare to ask for these! You will have done with *demands* and *stipulations*! You will cry, “Lord, give me but a word! Speak but a word of promise, and it shall be enough for me. Do but say to me, ‘Your sins are forgiven you.’ Give me but *half* a text! Give me *one* kind assuring word to sink my fears against, and I will believe it and rest upon it.”

Thus your sense of unworthiness should lead you to a simple faith in Jesus and prevent your demanding those manifestations which the foolish so eagerly and impudently require. Beloved, it has come to this—you are so unworthy that you are shut out of every hope but Christ! All other doors are fast nailed against you. If there is anything to be done for salvation, *you* cannot do it. If there is any fitness needed, you have it not. Christ comes to you and tells you that there is no fitness needed for coming to Him, but that if you will but *trust* Him He will save you! I think I hear you say, “Then, my Lord, since it has come to this—

*I can but perish if I go;  
I am resolved to try*

*For if I stay away,  
I know I must forever die.'*

And so, sink or swim, upon Your precious Atonement, I cast my guilty soul persuaded that You are able to save even such a one as I am. And I am so thoroughly persuaded of the goodness of Your heart that I know You will not cast away a poor trembler who comes to You and takes You to be his only ground of trust."

II. I shall want you, for a moment, to attend while we shift the text to the other quarter. THE CENTURION'S GREAT FAITH WAS NOT AT ALL HOSTILE TO HIS HUMILITY. His faith was extraordinary. It ought not to be extraordinary. We ought all of us to believe as well in Christ as this soldier did. Observe the form it took—he said to himself, "I am a subordinate officer, under authority. I am not the Commander-in-Chief, I am merely the commander of a troop of a hundred men, and yet over those hundred men I exert unlimited control. I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes. I say to the other, 'Come,' and he comes.

"And my servant, my poor sick servant (his tender heart comes back to him, and he puts him into the illustration), I say to him, 'Do this,' and he does it at once. I am simply a petty officer, under authority myself; but yet such is the influence of discipline that there are no questions raised, no deliberations tolerated. No soldier turns round and tells me that I have set him too difficult a task. No one, out of all the troops, ever dares to say to me, 'I shall not do it.' " The power of discipline among the legions of Rome was exceedingly great. The commander had but to say, "Do it," and it was done, though thousands bled and died.

"Now," argued the centurion, "This glorious man is the Son of God. He is *not* a subordinate—He *is* the Commander-in-Chief. If He gives the word, His will most surely must be done. Fevers and paralysis, good influences and bad, they must all be under His control—He can, therefore, heal my servant in a moment. Who can resist the great Caesar of Heaven and earth?" That was, I believe, the centurion's idea. Jesus has therefore but to will it, and to the utmost bounds of the earth those influences which are under His control will at once set to work to perform His will. The centurion pictured himself as sitting down in the house and effecting his desires without rising, by merely issuing an order. And his faith placed the Lord Jesus in the same position.

"You need not come to my dwelling. You can stand here and if You will but say it, the cure will be worked at once." He did in his heart enthrone the Lord Jesus as a Captain over all the forces of the world, as the general issue of Heaven and earth—as, in fact, the Caesar—the imperial Governor of all the forces of the universe. It was graciously thought. It was poetically embodied. It was nobly spoken. It was gloriously believed—but it was the truth and nothing more than the truth—for universal dominion is really, today, in the power of Jesus. If He were a true Caesar before He died, while He was despised and rejected of men, much more *now* that He has trod through the winepress and stained His vesture with the blood of His vanquished enemies!

Much more now that He has led captivity captive and sits enthroned by filial right at the right hand of God, even the Father! Much more now that God has sworn that He will put all things under His feet, and that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow of things in Heaven, and things on earth and things that are under the earth! Much more, I say, can He now work according to His good pleasure. He has today but to speak and it is done—to command, and it shall stand fast. Beloved, see whether this truth bears us as on eagle's wings. Caesar has but to say, "Absolute," and his guilty subject is acquitted. Caesar has but to speak, and a province is conquered, an army routed. Stormy seas are navigated at Caesar's bidding—mountains are tunneled, the whole world shall be girded with military roads—Caesar is absolute and his will is law.

So on earth, but so much more in Heaven. Let the imperial Caesar of Heaven but say, "I forgive," and the devils of Hell cannot accuse you. Let Him say, "I will help you," and who shall oppose? If Emmanuel is for you, who shall be against you? Let Him speak and the bonds of sinful habit must fall off, and the darkness in which your soul has long been immersed must give place to instantaneous light. He reigns as King, Lord over all! Let His name be blessed forever! Let each one of us, by our faith, give Him the honor that is due unto His name. All hail! great Emperor, once slain, but now forever Lord of Heaven and earth!

Here is one point to which I remind you—this man's faith did not for a moment interfere with his thorough personal humiliation. Interfere with it? My Brethren, it was the *source* of it! It was the very foundation on which it rested. Don't you see, the higher his thoughts of Christ, the more unworthy he felt himself to be of the kind attentions of so good and

great a Personage? If he had thought *less* of Jesus, he would not have said, "I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof." There was, of course, a sight of himself to humble him, but the far more wondrous vision of the glory of the Lord Jesus was the true root and parent of his self-abasement. Because Christ was so great he felt himself to be unworthy either to meet Him or entertain Him.

Observe, my Brothers and Sisters, his faith acted upon his humility by making him content with a word from Christ. His faith said, "A word is enough—it will work the cure." And then his humility said, "Ah, how unworthy I am even of so little a thing as a word. If a word will work a miracle, it is so great and powerful a thing that it is more than I deserve. Therefore," said he, "I will not ask for more. I will not ask for footsteps when a *sound* will suffice. I will not clamor for His Presence when His *wish* can restore my servant to health." His believing that a word was enough made him humbly decline to pray for more—so that his confidence in Christ, instead of interfering with his sense of unworthiness—aided its manifestation.

Brothers and Sisters, never think for a moment, as many foolish persons do, that strong faith in the Lord is necessarily pride—it is the reverse. It is one of the worst forms of pride to question the promise of God. When a man says, "Christ has promised to save those who trust Him. I have trusted Him, therefore I am saved. I know I am. I am sure of it, because God says so and I do not need any better evidence," that assurance is *humility* in action. But if a man says, "God has said that those who trust Him shall be saved. I *do* trust Him, but still I do not *know* that I am saved," why, you do as much as say you do not know whether God is a *liar* or not! And what more impertinent, what more proudly insulting thing than that?

I know it is a most common thing to say, "It seems so presumptuous to say I know I am saved." I think it far more presumptuous to *doubt*, when God speaks positively, and to mistrust where the promise is plain! God says, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." If you believe and are baptized, if God is true, you shall be saved—you *are* saved! There is no hoping about it—it is so. Let God be true and every man a liar—and far off from these lips the insinuation of a doubt that perhaps God can be false to His promise and may break His word. If you question anything, question whether you trust Christ! But that settled, the question is ended. If you believe that Jesus is the Christ, you are born of God. If you rest alone on Him, your sins, which are many, are all forgiven you. Take God at His word as your child takes you at *your* word. It is not too much for God to ask—you ask it of your child.

Though you are a poor fallible creature, you would not have your child mistrust you. Shall you be believed, and not your *God*? Shall your little one be expected to confide in you, though you are evil, and will not you believe the voice of your heavenly Parent to be the very Truth of God, and rest upon it? Ah, do so, I beseech you, and the more you do it, the more you will feel your unworthiness to do so! It astounds me to think that I shall be saved! It amazes me to think I shall be washed from my every sin in the precious blood of Christ—that I shall be set upon a rock and a new song shall be put into my mouth. It astounds me, and as I think of it, I say, "How unworthy I am of such favors! I am less than the least of all the benefits which You have bestowed upon me."

Your faith will not murder your humility. Your humility will not stab at your faith—the two will go hand in hand to Heaven like a brave brother and a fair sister—the one bold as a lion—the other meek as a dove. The one rejoicing in Jesus—the other blushing at self. Blessed pair, gladly would I entertain you in my heart all the days of my pilgrimage on earth!

I have thus, as best I could, brought before you the example of the centurion with a few incidental lessons. Now for the APPLICATION, with as much earnestness and brevity as we can summon. The application shall be to three sorts of people. First, we speak to distressed minds deeply conscious of their unworthiness. Jesus Christ is able and willing to save you this very morning! What is the form of your distress? Is it that your sins are great? Believe, I charge you, and may God the Holy Spirit help you—believe that all your sins Christ can pardon now! Do you see Him upon yonder Cross? He is Divine, but how He bleeds! He is Divine, but how He groans! He smarts! He dies!

Do you believe that any sin is too great for those sufferings to put away? Do you think the Son of God offered an inadequate Atonement? An Atonement of which you can say there is a limit to its efficacy beyond which it cannot operate for the salvation of Believers, so that after all, sin is greater than the sacrifice, and the filth is more full of defilement than the blood is of purification? O crucify not Christ afresh by doubting the power of the eternal God! My Brothers and Sisters, when in the stillness of the starry night we look up to the orbs of Heaven and remember the marvelous truths

which astronomy has revealed to us of the magnificence, the inconceivable majesty of creation—if we then reflect that the infinite God who made all these became *Man* for us, and that as *Man* He was fastened to the transverse wood and bled to death for us—why, it will appear to us that if all the stars were crowded with inhabitants and all those inhabitants had, everyone, been rebellious against God and had steeped themselves up to the very throat in scarlet crimes, there must be efficacy enough in the blood of such a One as God Himself Incarnate to take all their sins away!

For this great miracle of miracles—God Himself paying honor to His own justice by suffering a substitutionary death—is an exhibition of infinite severity and love which far down eternity must appear so glorious as utterly to swallow up the remembrance of creature sin and to put it altogether out of sight! Yes, Sinner, believe that this *moment* the sins of 50 years can drop from off you, yes, of 70 or 80 years—that in an instant, you who are as black as Hell can be pure as Heaven if Jesus says the word! If you believe in Him it is done—for to trust Him is to be clean.

Perhaps, however, your difficulty is to get rid of a hardness of heart. You feel that you cannot repent—but cannot Jesus make you repent by His Spirit? Do you hesitate about that question? See the world a few months ago hard bound with frost, but how daffodil and crocus, and snowdrop have come up above that once frozen soil. See how snow and ice have gone and the genial sun shines! God does it readily with the soft breath of the south wind and the kind sunbeams, and He can do the same in the *spiritual* world for you. *Believe* He can, and ask Him now to do it, and you shall find that the rock of ice shall thaw—that huge horrible devilish iceberg of a heart of yours shall begin to drip with showers of crystal penitence which God shall accept through His dear Son.

But, perhaps, it is some bad habit which gives you trouble. You have been long in it and can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? You cannot get rid of it! I *know* you cannot! It is a desperate evil. It drags you downward like the hands of demons pulling you from the surface of life's stream down into its black and horrid depths of death and defilement. Ah, I know your dreads and despairs, but *Man*, I ask you, cannot Jesus deliver? He has the key of your heart and He can turn it so that all its wheels shall revolve otherwise than now. He who shakes the earth with earthquakes, who sweeps the seas with tornados, can send a heart-quake and a storm of strong repentance, and tear up your old habits by the roots! He whose every act is wonderful can surely do what He will within this, the little world of your soul, since in the great world outside He rules as He pleases. Believe in His power and ask Him to prove it. He has but to say, in a word, and this matter of present distress shall be taken away.

Still I hear you say, "I cannot." A horrible inability hangs over you. But it is not what *you* can do or cannot do—these have nothing to do with it—it is what *Jesus* can do! Can there be anything too hard for the Lord? Can the Eternal Spirit ever be defeated when He wills to conquer in a man? Can He who "bears the earth's huge pillars up, and spreads the heavens abroad," who once was crucified, but who now ever lives—can He fail? Put your care into His hands, poor unable wretch, and ask Him to do for you what you cannot do for yourself—and according to your faith so shall it be unto you.

A second application of our subject shall be made to the patient workers who are ready to faint. I know that in this house there are many who incessantly plead with God for their unconverted relatives and neighbors that they may be saved. You have pleaded long for your husband, or your son, or your daughter—but they have gone yet further into sin. Instead of answers to prayer, it seems as though Heaven laughed at your importunity. Take heed of one thing—do not suffer *unbelief* to make you think that the object of your care cannot be saved! While there is *life* there is *hope*. Yes, though they add drunkenness to lust, and blasphemy to drunkenness, and hardness of heart and impenitence to blasphemy, Jesus has but to say the word and they shall be turned, every one, from his evil way.

Under the use of the means of Divine Grace it may be done, or even *without* the means it may be done. There have been men at work, or at their amusements—all in their wickedness—who have had impressions which have made them new men when it was least expected such a thing would occur! And those who have been the ringleaders in Satan's rebellious crew have frequently become the boldest captains in the army of Christ! There is no room for doubt as to the possibility of the salvation of *anybody* when Jesus gives the word of command. You are unchristian when you shut out the harlot from hope—when you exclude the thief from repentance or when you even despair of the murderer—for the big heart of God is greater than all your hearts put together! And the great thoughts of the loving Father are not as your thoughts when they climb the highest, neither are His ways your ways when they are at their utmost liberality.

Oh, if your friend, your child, your wife, your husband, is a very devil incarnate—or if there are seven devils, or a legion of devils within him, while Christ lives never mutter the word, “despair”—for He can cast out the legion of evil spirits and impart His Holy Spirit instead! Therefore have faith. You are unworthy to receive the blessing, but have faith in Him who is so able to bestow it. Many of you are going to your classes this afternoon. Others of you will be engaged this evening in preaching the Gospel, and you are getting very faint-hearted because you do not see the success you so much desire. Well, perhaps it is *good* for you to feel how little you can do apart from Divine ministrations. May this humiliation of soul continue—but do not let it degenerate into a distrust of Him.

If Christ were dead and buried, and had never risen, it were a horrible case for us poor preachers! But while Christ lives endowed with the residue of the eternal Spirit which He freely gives, we ought not so much as fear, much less despair. May the Church of God pluck up heart and feel that with a living Christ in the midst of her armies, victory shall before long wait upon her banners.

The last application I shall make is the same as the second, only on a wider scale. There are many who are like watchers who have grown weary. We have heard that Christ comes—the great coming Man—and the Lord knows right well that there is pressing need for someone to come, for this poor old machine of a world creaks dreadfully and seems as though it were so laden with the sheaves of human sin that its axles would snap. God's infinite longsuffering has kept a crazy world from utter dissolution by a thousand helps and stays, but it is poor work, and seems to get worse and worse. Our state is rotten at the very core, both in business and politics. No man seems to succeed so well as he who has dispensed with his conscience and laughs at principles. All things are come to that point that there is need for some deliverer to come or else I do not know where we shall all go.

And He will come, so the promise stands, and to those who wait for Him, His coming shall be as the beams of the day-star proclaiming the dawn. He is coming and at His coming there shall be a glorious time, a millennium, a period of light, and truth, and joy, and holiness, and peace! We are watching and waiting for it. But we say, “Ah, it is hopeless to think of converting the world! How is the Truth to be preached? Where are the tongues to speak it? How few proclaim it boldly! Where are the men to carry Christ's Cross to the utmost bounds of the globe and conquer nations for Him?” Ah, say not in your heart, “the former days were better than now.” Write not a book of lamentation and say, “The Prophets, where are they? And the Apostles have gone and all the mighty confessors who lived and died for Christ have disappeared.”

At the lifting of His finger the Lord can raise up a thousand Jonahs for every city throughout the land! A thousand bold Isaiahs to declare His glory. He has but to bid it and companies of Apostles and armies of martyrs shall start up from the quiet nooks of old England's villages, or shall pour forth from the workshops of her cities. He can do wonders when He wills it! The worst plight of the Church is but the time when her flood has ebbed in order that it may return in the fullness of its strength! Have confidence, for even should the instruments fail and the ministry become a dead and effete thing, yet His coming shall accomplish His purposes. And when He appears, the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.

Jesus is not under authority. He has soldiers under Him and He has but to say to this spirit or to that, “Go,” or “Come,” and His will shall be done. He has but to quicken His Church by His Holy Spirit, and say, “Do this,” and the impossible task shall be accomplished. What seems beyond all human skill or mortal hope shall be worked, and worked at once! When He says, “Do,” it shall be done, and His name shall be praised! O for more faith and more self-abasement—twin angels to abide in this assembly evermore! Go forth with us to battle and return with us from the victory! O Lord, the lover of humility, and the Author of faith, give us to be steeped in both for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.