

SELF-HUMBLING AND SELF-SEARCHING NO. 990

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JANUARY 15, 1871,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun has looked upon me: my mother’s children were angry with me, they made me the keeper of the vineyards. But my own vineyard have I not kept.”
Song of Solomon 1:6.*

FROM where do I draw my text but from the very fountain of love? And to whom shall I address my discourse but to the friends of the bridegroom? You must have warm hearts, quick sensibilities, and lively emotions, to interpret the sayings, and sympathize with the tender notes of this most sacred song.

I suppose that the history of the statues in St. Paul’s Cathedral, from year to year, would not be remarkably interesting. They are placed upon their pedestals; they stand there quietly: and unless some terrible convulsion should occur, probably that will be the whole of their history for many years to come, as it has been for many years past. During the time in which any one of those statues has stood there, however, the history of any one human person has been checkered with all sorts of incidents, happy and sorrowful. Aches and pains, joys and rejoicing, depressions and exultations have alternated in the living; but in the cold marble there has been no such change. Many of you in this house know little of what are the experiences of God’s people. If you hear of their anxieties and encouragements, their temptations and deliverances, their inward conflicts and spiritual triumphs, their gloomy depressions and cheerful exultations—all those things seem to you as an idle tale. The living, the living, shall know the secret; but unto the mere *professor* this thing is not revealed.

My subject, which will be mainly addressed to God’s working people—to such as are really serving Him—will appear to have very little bearing upon any here present who do not understand the spiritual life, and they will probably think that the evening to them is wasted. Just this word on the outset, however, I would drop in your ears; if you do not know anything of spiritual life, what will you do in the end of your natural life? If there is no work of God’s Spirit upon your soul, and you are a stranger to the living experience of God’s children, what will be your portion forever? It must be proportioned to you with the unbelievers; are you prepared to receive it? Are you willing that this should be your eternal destiny? Are you not, rather, alarmed? Are you not made anxious and desirous if by any means you may pass into that better, truer, state of life? Considering its boundless interests; notwithstanding all the present struggles and sorrows it may entail on you, do you not wish to know and prove what spiritual life means? I pray God you may! Let me remind you that the gospel preached to you is still available for your quickening—and whoever believes in Christ Jesus *is born of God*, and *is* possessor of that spiritual life!

Now, in conducting the people of God to a special survey of our text, “Look not upon me, because I am black,” our first remark shall be this—*the fairest Christians are the most shamefaced with regard to themselves*; the person who says, “Look not upon me, because I am black,” is described by someone else in the 8th verse as the “fairest among women”; others, who thought her the fairest of the fair, spoke no less than the truth when they affirmed it, but in her own esteem she felt herself to be so little fair, and so much uncomely, that she besought them not even to look upon her! Why is it that the best Christians depreciate themselves the most?

Is it not because they are most accustomed to look *within*? They keep their books in a better condition than those unsafe tradesmen, the counterpart of mere professors who think themselves “rich and increased in goods,” when they are on the very verge of bankruptcy! The Christian in his right state tests himself to see whether he is in the faith; he values too much his own soul to go on blindly; he knows that

Heedless and *Too-Bold* are always bad pilots, so he sets *Caution* and *Self-Examination* at the helm; he cries to God, "Search me, and know my heart." He is accustomed to examine his actions and his motives, to pass his words and his thoughts in review; he does not live the life of one who goes recklessly on; he stops and considers his ways, and looks well to the state of everything within him "to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men." Solomon says, "The wise man looks to the state of his flocks and his herds," and it is no marvel if anyone suffers loss who neglects the counsel. But he also says, "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life," and it is quite certain that he who fails in this exercise is liable to every kind of moral disorder. In his anxiety to be pure from evil, the godly man will be eager to notice, and quick to detect the least particle of defilement; and for this reason he discovers more of his blackness than any other man is likely to see; he is no blacker, but he looks more narrowly, and therefore he sees more distinctly the spots on his own character.

The genuine Christian also tries himself by a higher standard; the professor, if he is as good as another professor, is well content; he estimates himself by a comparison with his neighbors; he has no standard but that of ordinary commonplace Christianity. Far otherwise is it with the believer who walks near to God; he asks himself, "What manner of person ought I to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" He knows the law to be *spiritual*, and therefore he judges many things to be sinful which others wink at, and he counts some things to be important duties which others regard as trifles. The genuine Christian sets up no lower standard than perfection! He does not judge himself by others, but by the exact measure of the divine requirements, by the law of God, and especially by the example of his Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. And when he thus sets the brightness of the Savior's character side by side with his own, then it is that he cries out, "Look not upon me, for I am black!" The mere professor never does this—he neither scrutinizes himself nor observes his Master with close heed and strained attention, desiring to ascertain the truth of God; he flatters himself in his own eyes, and goes on presumptuously. Not so the genuine Christian! He hides his face, sighs in secret, and cries before God because he is not what he wants to be; not what his Lord was; not fully conformed to Christ in all things; and just because these shortcomings grieve and vex his righteous soul, he cries, "Look not upon me, for I am black!" All the while he may be of the highest type of Christian, yet he is not so in his own esteem; he may be a star to others, but he is a blot, as he thinks, to himself. In God's esteem he is "accepted in the Beloved," but in his own esteem he seems to himself to be full of all manner of evil, and he cries out against it before his Lord.

Another reason why the fairest Christians are generally those who think themselves the blackest is that they have more of the light of God. A person may seem to be very fair in the dark, very fair in the twilight, but when the light gets strong, and the eye is strengthened to perceive, then it is that spots that were not noticed before are soon discovered. You have, perhaps, a handkerchief that has looked to you extremely white—so it has been in comparison with other linen; but one day, when there has been a snowfall, you have laid your handkerchief side by side with the snow, and you have seen that it was very far from the whiteness which you imagined! When the light of God comes into the soul, and we see what purity *really* is, what holiness *really* is, then it is that the contrast strikes us; though we might have thought we were somewhat clean before, when we see God in His light, we see light, and we abhor ourselves in dust and ashes! Our defects so appall our own heart that we marvel they do not exhaust His patience.

The better Christian a man is, the more abashed he always feels—because to him sin is so exceedingly hateful that what sin he sees in himself, he loathes himself far more than others do. The ungodly man would condone very great sin in himself—though he might know it to be there, it would not disturb him; but the Christian, being another sort, having a love for holiness, and a hatred for sin, cannot bear to see the smallest speck of sin upon himself, for he *knows* what *sin* is. There are persons living before the public eye, and jealous of popularity, who appear quite indifferent to the good opinion of the sovereign in whose kingdom they dwell. There are other persons, favorites at court, who would lie awake at night, tossing to and fro in fear if they thought that something had been reported to the sovereign's ear that was

disloyal! A man who does not fear God will break all His laws with an easy conscience; but one who is the favorite of heaven, who has been indulged to sit at royal banquets, who knows the eternal love of God to him, cannot bear that there should be any evil way in him that might grieve the Spirit, and bring dishonor to the name of Christ. A very little sin, as the world calls it, is a very great sin to a truly awakened Christian. I will ask you now, dear hearers (most of you are members of this, or of other churches), do you know what it is to fret because you have spoken an unadvised word? Do you know what it is to smite upon your breast because you were angry? You may have been justly provoked, perhaps, but still, being angry, you spoke unadvisedly. Have you ever gone to a sleepless couch because in business you have let fall a word, or have done an action which, upon mature deliberation, you could not justify? Does the tear ever come from your eyes because you are not like your Lord, and have failed where you hoped to succeed? I would give little for your godliness if you know nothing of this! Repentance is as much a mark of a Christian as faith itself; do not think we have done with repenting when we come to Christ and receive the remission of our sins by the blood that did once atone. No—we shall repent as long as we sin, and as long as we need the precious blood for cleansing! While there is sin, or a proneness to any kind of sin lurking in us, the grace of God will make us loathe the sin, and humble ourselves before the Most High on account of it.

Now I think our text seems to say just this—there were some who admired the church; they said she was fair. She seemed to say, “Don’t say it; you don’t know what I am, or you would not praise me.” Oh, there is nothing that brings a blush to a genuine Christian’s face like praising him, for he feels—“Praise such a heap of dirt as I am? Give any credit to such a worthless worm as I am? No! Do not cast admiring glances at me! Do not say, ‘That man has many virtues, and many excellent qualities!’ Look not upon me, for I am black.” Are there not some who will imitate any Christian, and be very right in so doing—any Christian who is eminently godly and holy? There will be many who will follow in his footsteps. I think I see such a man turn round to his followers, and say—“Do not look at me; do not copy me; I am black. Copy a better model—even Jesus! If I follow in His footsteps, follow me; but inasmuch as I have gone astray like a lost sheep, follow the Shepherd—do not follow my example.” Every Christian, in proportion as he lives near to God, will feel this self-abasement, this lowliness of heart; and if others talk of admiring or of imitating him, he will say, “Look not upon me, for I am black.” And as he thus, in deep humility, begs that he not be exalted, he will often desire of others that they would not despise him. It will come into his mind, “Such-and-such a man of God is a Christian, indeed; as he sees my weakness, he will condemn me; such-and-such a disciple of Christ is strong; he will never be able to bear with my weakness. Such-and-such a Christian woman does, indeed, adore the doctrine of God, her Savior; but as for me, alas, I am not what I ought to be, nor what I would be! I will not say that you have motes in your eyes—I have a beam in mine! Look not upon me too severely; judge me not harshly; if you do look at me, look to Christ for me, and pray that I may be helped, ‘for I am black, because the sun has looked upon me.’” Christ of God, do not look upon me with scorn! Still I would have you beware of affecting anything that you do not feel. Humility itself may be counterfeited with much ostentation; wherever there is anything like cant, as it is practiced by some people who depreciate themselves, but do not mean it, it is loathsome to the last degree. I remember a very proud man, certainly twice as proud as he was high, who used to pray for himself as “God’s poor dust.” There was nothing, I am sure, about his conduct and conversation that entitled him to use any such expression! I have heard of a monk who said he was full of sin—he was as bad as Judas; and when somebody said, “That is true,” he turned round, and said, “What did I ever do that you should say so?” The effrontery of the arrogant is not more odious than the servility of the self-seeker; there is a great deal of self-abnegation which is not genuine; it is the offspring of self-conceit, and not of self-knowledge. Much that we say of ourselves would mightily offend our vainglory if anybody else said the same of us. Oh, let us beware of mock humility! At the same time, the more of the genuine article we have, the better, and the more truthfully we can cry out to God’s people, “Look not upon me, because I am black,” the clearer will it be that we are, after all, among the fairest.

But I pass on. The most diligent Christian; let this stand for the second observation—*the most diligent Christian will be the man or woman most afraid of the evils connected with his work.* “Evils connected with his work!” says one. “Does work for God have evils contingent upon it?” Yes. But for every evil connected with the work of God, there are ten evils connected with idleness! No, all you professors who are doing nothing are wearing yourselves out faster by rust than you could have done by honest wear; but, you see, in the case of our text, there was evil connected with work. She had been made a keeper of the vineyards, and having to trim the vines, the sun had shone upon her; and she says, “Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun has looked upon me.” The blackness that she confessed was a blackness occasioned by her having to bear the burden and heat of the day.

And now I speak to such as live in active service, doing the work of God. Dear brothers and sisters, there are certain evils connected with our lifework coming of the sun that looks upon us which we should confess before our heavenly Father. I speak now only to the workers; I have known some whom the sun has looked upon in this respect—their zeal has grown cold through non-success. You went out, first of all, as a Christian full of fire and life; you intended to push the church before you, and drag the world after you; perhaps you thought that you were going to work a Reformation almost as great as that of Luther! Well, much of that was of the flesh, though beneath the surface there was an earnest zeal for God which was eating you up; but you have been mixed up with Christians for some years of a very cool sort. Use the thermometer tonight; has not the spiritual temperature gone down in your own soul? Perhaps you have not seen many conversions under your ministry; or in the class which you conduct you have not seen many children brought to Jesus. Do you feel you are getting cool? Then wrap your face in your mantle tonight and say—“Look not upon me, for in losing my zeal, I am black, for the sun has looked upon me.” Perhaps it has affected you in another way, for the sun does not bring freckles out on all faces in the same place. Perhaps it is your temper that is grown sour; when you joined the church you felt all love, and you expected, as you had a right to do, that everybody would reciprocate the same feeling. It may be that since then you have had to do battle against contentions; you have been in a part of the church where there has been a strife, not altogether for the faith once delivered to the saints, but something of a party feeling was mixed with it, and you have had to take some share in it. And perhaps you have gradually acquired a carping, critical habit, so that where you used to enjoy the word, you are now all for judging the preacher; you are not so much a feeder upon the word, as a mere taster of the dishes, to see if you cannot find some fault with their flavor! I beseech you, wrap your face again in your mantle; again bow before God and say—“Look not upon me, because I am black, the sun has looked upon me; in my service for God I have been impaired.”

Perhaps, dear friend, you have suffered in another way. I sometimes suffer in this respect very materially. The Christian’s walk ought to be calm, peaceful, quiet, unruffled. Leaving everything with the Lord, and waiting on His will, our peace should be like a river; but you know that when there is much to be done in God’s service, there is a very strong temptation to want to push this and that thing forward with undue haste. Or if it does not move quickly at the rate you would wish, there is a temptation to be sad, careful, and anxious; to be, in fact, like Martha, cumbered with much service. When you get into that condition it is an injury to yourself, and really prejudicial to your own work, for they serve Christ best who commune with Him most, and broken fellowship means broken strength; yet this is often our trouble. Our energies are exhausted by worry more than by work; part of our duty is neglected through unexpected cares that have distracted our thoughts. Pardon me if I transfer the thing to myself in a figure. Say that this Tabernacle needs all my vigilance concentrated upon its welfare; then there is another matter that needs instant attention at the same time; here is a soul seeking Christ; here is another backsliding; here is a brother falling out with another brother! Innumerable things crowd upon one’s view, and clamor for immediate investigation till one gets disturbed and troubled! “Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun has looked upon me. The work I have engaged in for You has brought me into the sun, and burnt my face.” It ought to be bright and fair with fellowship, but it is soiled and begrimed with service.

Sometimes this evil of sun-burning will come in the shape of joy taken away from the heart by weariness. I do not think, dear brothers; any of us are weary of God's work; if so, we never were called to it. But we may get weary *in* it; some of you here remember—I speak to such as often preach the gospel, how happy you were when first you were permitted to open your mouth for Christ! Oh, what a joy it was! What a pleasure! How you threw your whole soul into it! There was no sleepiness and dullness in your sermons, then; but now, year after year, year after year, your brain gets weary, and though the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak; the *joy* you once had in the service was your strength, and it has somewhat gone from you; the toil is more irksome when the spirits are less buoyant. Well, I would advise you to confess this before God, and ask for a medicine to heal you; you need to get your joy back, but first you must acknowledge that you have lost it! Say, "I am black, because the sun has looked upon me."

On the other hand, it is a bad result of a good work when our humility is injured. Place a Christian man in a position where he has to do much for Christ, and is much thought of and set by—let him have great success, and the tendency will be for him to compliment himself as though he were some great one! You cannot reap great sheaves for the Master without this temptation coming over your soul: what a glorious workman you are, and what great reward will your soul have for having done so well! It is the sun looking upon you—taking away the fairness of your humility, freckling and blackening your face with a pride that is obnoxious to God! This ought to be confessed at once and heartily repented of.

I do not think I shall attempt to go through the list of all the matters that might come out of Christian service. It will suffice me to say that I am afraid that in many cases our motives get mixed. Pure and simple at first in our service, we may get at last to serve Christ only because it is our office to do so. Woe to the man who preaches only because he is a minister, and does not preach because he loves Christ! We may also get to be self-reliant. It is a great mercy for God's ministers when they tremble on going into the pulpit, even though they have been accustomed to preach for 20 years. Martin Luther declares that he never feared the face of man, and all who knew him could bear witness that it was even so; yet he said he never went up the stairs of the pulpit at Wittenburg but he felt his knees knock together with fear lest he should not be faithful to God and His truth. When we begin to rely upon ourselves, and think we can do it, and our experience and our practice will suffice to bear us safely through the next discourse without help from on high, then the sun has looked upon us and blackened our face, indeed, and the time of our usefulness draws to a close! Come, Christians, brothers and sisters, thankful though I am that I can address so large a number who are engaged in the Master's work, I beseech you, let us go together to the footstool of the heavenly grace, and there confess our blackness—and acknowledge that much of it has come upon us even while we were engaged in the service of God!

In the third place, *the most watchful Christian is conscious of the danger of self-neglect*. That is the next part of our text. "They made me the keeper of the vineyards. But mine own vineyard have I not kept."

Solemnly, let me speak again to my brothers who are seeking to glorify Christ by their lives. I met some time ago with a sermon by that famous preacher, Mr. Henry Melville, which consists all through of one solitary thought, and one only image well worked out. I will give you the essence of what took some eight pages to get through. He supposes a man to be a guide in Switzerland; it is his duty to conduct travelers in that country through the sublime passes, and to point out to them the glories of the scenery, and the beauties of the lakes, and streams, and glaciers, and hills. This man, as he continues in his office, almost inevitably gets to repeat his descriptions as a matter of course, and everybody knows how a guide at last comes to "talk book," and just repeat words which do not awaken any corresponding feeling in his own mind. Yet when he began, perhaps it was a sincere love of the sublime and the beautiful that led him to take up the avocation of a guide; and at first it really was to him a luxury to impart to others what he had felt amidst the glories of nature. But as year after year, to hundreds of different parties he had to repeat much the same descriptions, call attention to the same sublimities, and indicate the same beauties—it was almost impossible but that he should get to be at last a mere machine! Through the hardening tendency of custom, and the debasing influence of gain, his most apt descriptions and

most exquisite eulogies come to be of no greater account than the mere language of a hireling. This thought I will not work out *in extenso* as that famous preacher has done, but I give it to you as a cutting which may germinate if planted in the garden of your heart. Every worker for Christ is deeply concerned in the application of this parable because the peril of self-complacency increases in precisely the same ratio as the zeal of proselytizing! When counseling others, you think yourself wise; when warning others, you feel yourself safe; when judging others, you suppose yourself above suspicion. You began the work with a flush of ardor; it may be with a fever of enthusiasm, a sacred instinct prompted, a glowing passion moved you; how will you continue it? Here is the danger—the fearful danger, lest you do it mechanically, fall into a monotony, continue in the same train, and use holy words to others with no corresponding feeling in your own soul! May we not stir others up to devout emotions, and yet our own hearts fail to burn with the sacred fire? Oh, may it not be easy for one to stand as a signpost on the road to heaven, and never stir himself? Every preacher who judges himself aright knows that this is the risk he incurs, and I believe the same danger in a measure threatens Christians in every form of work in which they occupy themselves for Christ!

Dear friends, beware of reading the Bible for other people! Get your own text; your own morsel of marrow and fatness out of Scripture; and do not be satisfied to be sermon-making or lesson-making for your class in the Sunday school. Feed on the word yourselves, or else your own vineyard will not be kept; when you are on your knees in prayer, pray for others, by all means—but, oh, let *private* prayer be kept up with a view to your own edification, and your own growth in grace as well! Preach not the Savior's blood, and yet be without the blood mark on yourselves! Tell not of the fountain, and yet go unwashed; do not point to heaven, and then turn your back to it, and go down to hell! Fellow workers, look to yourselves lest after having preached to others you, yourselves, should be cast away; your neighbors certainly, but yourselves, also; the children in your class certainly, your own children at home certainly, but look to yourselves, also—you who are workers in God's house, lest you keep the vineyards of others, and your own vineyards be not kept! It is very possible for a man to get to dislike the very religion which he feels bound by force of custom to go on teaching to others. "Is that possible?" asks one. Alas, that it is! Have you never heard of the flower girl in the streets? What is her occupation? I dare say some girls like her have passed by and seen her with a great basket full of violets, and said—"What a delightful occupation, to have that fragrant smell forever near to you!" Yes, but there was one girl who sold them, and said she hated the smell of violets; she had got to loathe them, and to think that there was no smell in the world so offensive, because they were always under her nostrils all day, and taken home to her little scanty room at night, and having nothing but violets around her, she hated them altogether. And I do believe that there are persons without the grace of Christ in their hearts who keep on talking about divine grace, and mercy, and practicing prayer, and yet in their heart of hearts they hate the very fragrance of the name of Jesus, and need that there should come upon them an awakening out of their sleep of presumption and hypocrisy to make them know that though they thought they were the friends of God, they were, after all, His enemies! They were mere keepers of other men's vineyards, but their own vineyards had gone to ruin.

Our last reflection is of the deepest importance. *The most conscientious Christian will be the first to inquire for the antidote, and to use the cure.*

What is the cure? The cure is found in the verse next to my text. "Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun has looked upon me. They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard have I not kept." And next? "Tell me, O You whom my soul loves, where You feed, where You make Your flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turns aside by the flocks of Your companions?" See, then, you workers, if you want to keep up your freshness, and not to get blackened by the sun under which you labor, go to your Lord again; go and talk to Him; address Him again by that dear name, "You whom my soul loves." Ask to have your first love rekindled; strive after the love of your espousals. There are men in married life who seem to have forgotten that they ever loved their wives, but there are others concerning whom the hymn is true—

*“And as year rolls after year,
Each to other still more dear.”*

So there are some Christians who seem to forget that they ever loved the Savior! But I know there are others in whom that love deepens, and becomes more fervent as each year passes over their heads; if any of you are at fault in this, do not go to sleep tonight till you have renewed your espousal love. Your Lord remembers it, if you do not, for He says—“I remember you, the kindness of your youth, the love of your espousals, when you went after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.” You did some wild things in those early days; you were a great deal more zealous than wise! But though *you* look back upon that with censure, Christ regards it with delight! He wishes you were now as you were then! Perhaps today you are not quite cold to Him; do not flatter yourself on that account, for He has said, “I would you were cold or hot.” It is just lukewarmness that He loathes most of all, and He has threatened to spew the lukewarm out of His mouth. Oh, to be always full of love to Him; you will never be hurt by working for Him, then; your work will do you good; the sweat of labor will even make your face the fairer! The more you do for souls, the purer, and the holier, and the more Christ-like will you be—if you do it *with* Him. Keep up the habit of sitting at His feet, like Mary, as well as serving Him with Martha; you can keep the two together—they will balance each other, and you shall not be barren or unfruitful, neither will you fall into the blackness which the sun is apt to breed. O for more nearness to Christ, more love to Christ, and closer communion with Him!

Did you notice what the spouse said—“Tell me, O You whom my soul loves, where You feed”? I suppose her objective was to go and feed with Him. Look to the feeding of your own soul, Christian; when a man says, “I have a hard day’s work to do; I shall have no time to eat,” you know full well that he is losing time where he thinks he gains it, for if he does not keep himself in good health, he will sicken by-and-by, and in the long run he will do less than if he gave himself due rest. So is it with your soul; you cannot give out a vital energy which you have not in you unless you are healthy and vigorous; and if you have not power from God in your own soul, power cannot come out of you, for it is not there! Therefore, feed upon Christ! Or do you feel yourself like that guide of whom we spoke just now? Has the routine of service blunted your sensibilities till you gaze unmoved on those objects of beauty, and marvels that should awaken every passion, and thrill every nerve of your being? Do you ask, then, in what way he might keep up his interest in the lakes and the mountains? Would it not be well for him, occasionally, at any rate, to take a lonely journey to find out new features in the gorgeous scenery, or to stand in solitude, and see the hills in a fresh light, or mark the trees in different states of the weather so that he might again renew his own sensations of admiration, and of gratitude to God for having created such sublimities? Then I can readily believe his enthusiasm would increase rather than abate by an increasing familiarity with the landscape. And you, worker for God, you must go to God alone; feed on the precious truths of God for yourself; dig into the deep things of God, and enrich your own spirit. Thus you may serve God as much as you ever will—you will get no hurt from those exercises! Did you notice that she also asked—“Tell me where You make Your flock to rest at noon”? *Rest* is what the worker needs. Where is the rest of Christ’s flock, but in His own dear bosom? Where is there repose, but in His own fidelity, in the two immutable things wherein it is impossible for God to lie—the oath, and the promise? Oh, never turn away from that rest! Turn into it again, tonight, beloved! As for me, I feel I need my Savior more than ever I did; though I have preached His gospel now these 25 years and more, I need still to come and cling to His cross as a guilty sinner, and find “life for a look at the crucified One,” just as I did at first. O that God’s grace may always keep the most ardent among us always faithful with our own soul, abiding in the Lord, and rejoicing in Him!

I have done. This is my word to workers. Let me only say to you for whom there has seemed nothing in the sermon: If you are not workers *for* Christ, you are workers *against* Him! “He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who gathers not with Me scatters abroad.” O souls, why should you stand out against the Savior? Why should you resist Him? Bleeding out His life for His enemies—the mirror of disinterested love—what is there in Him that can make you fight against Him? Drop your weapons!

Drop them tonight, I charge you by the living God! And come, now, ask pardon through the precious blood, and it shall be given you; seek a new heart, and a right spirit; the Holy Spirit will work it. From this night be a worker for Christ! The church needs you; the armies of Christ need recruits. Take the proffered blessing, and become a soldier of the cross; and may the Lord build up His Zion by many of you who were not His people before, but of whom it is said—“They were not My people, but they shall be the people of the living God.” Amen.

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