

HASTENING LOT

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A SERMON
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“When the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot.”
Genesis 19:15.

I WILL not spend even a minute in considering whether these were divine persons veiled in angelic form, or whether they were actually angels. In either case, I would make the same remark, and lead to the same practical result. Let us learn from these angels how to do our work. “Unto the angels has He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak?” As a rule, they are not sent to be the means of saving men. They are not called to be teachers, or preachers, or pastors; but, on this occasion, they were sent to bring Lot out of Sodom; and we may take them as exemplars in our endeavors to win souls for Christ.

How did these angels do their work? Well, first, they went to Lot's house; they got at Lot himself; and if we want to be the means of saving men, we must, somehow or other, get at them. I have seen the fishermen, in the Scottish rivers, stand right down in the water while they are fishing, and I believe that is the best way to fish; and if we stand right down among you, and come to you in your homes, we shall likely be the means of blessing to your souls.

These angels told Lot very distinctly what was going to happen in Sodom. They did not mince the matter, but revealed what its doom was to be. The city was to be destroyed, and he must get out of it, or else he also would be destroyed. In like manner, we too must warn men of their danger; and we must not at all flinch even if we have to utter words that have a very harsh sound about them, for love does not manifest itself by lying, smooth utterances, but by speaking the truth—speaking even most threatening words, yet mixing sobs with them, predicting most sorrowful judgments in a most sorrowful tone.

After these angels had told Lot the truth about his peril, they were not content with doing that, but began pressing and urging him to flee out of the doomed city: “The angels hastened Lot;” and when that hastening did not seem to be sufficient to convince him, they laid hands upon him, and upon his wife, and upon his daughters. And if, my brother, you and I, saved ourselves, wish to be the means of saving others, we must not merely tell them the old, old story, however simply, and earnestly, and often we tell it; but we must come to wrestling with them. We must plead with them, we must weep over them, and we must make up our minds that if we cannot break their hearts, we will break our own; and if we cannot get them to flee out of Sodom, at any rate it shall not be because we did not labor with all our might to bring them out. Oh, that we might be as clear of the blood of all men as these angels were clear concerning the fate of Lot's wife! We shall not be able to rescue them all; even the angels did not do that. Lot's wife was a signal example of a person perishing after the best possible instruction, and Lot's sons-in-law were examples of how, with some men, the most earnest pleading may only end in mockery. Yes, dear friend, we cannot wonder if some reject our message when so many rejected the teaching of the Master Himself; but we must so deliver it that, at any rate, if they do refuse it, the blame shall lie entirely at their own door.

The special point in the angelic ministry, to which I desire to call your attention on this occasion, is the fact that they hastened Lot; and I am going to use that fact in two ways. First, I will try to show you that *the righteous need to be hastened*, for Lot was a righteous man, notwithstanding his imperfections; and, secondly, that sinners—of whom, being in Sodom, Lot had become a type—*sinners especially need earnest hastening*. We must try not only to preach about these two things, but to do them, as the Holy Spirit shall help us.

I. So my first remark is, that **EVEN THE RIGHTEOUS NEED TO BE HASTENED.**

In what? Well, in almost everything good, for Dr. Watts well said—

*“Look how we grovel here below,
Fond of these trifling toys;*

*Our souls can neither fly nor go
To reach eternal joys;”—*

And old Francis Quarles, in one of his emblems, writes—

*“When our dull souls direct our thoughts to Thee,
As slow as snails are we:
But at the earth we dart our winged desire;
We burn, we burn like fire.”*

Some Christians need quickening even concerning common matters of Christian duty. I used to know a man—he is dead now—who professed to have been converted for forty years, yet he had never made a profession of his faith, in baptism, though he believed it to be his duty to do so. When I stirred him up a little concerning his neglect, he said to me, “He that believes shall not make haste;” but I replied, “That is a shameful perversion of Scripture; you profess to have been converted for forty years, yet you have not obeyed your Savior’s command.” I explained to him the meaning of the text which he had so wickedly perverted, and then I said to him, “David said, ‘I made haste, and delayed not to keep Your commandments.’ That is a more suitable text for you.” Why, if that good brother had been baptized that very day, on the next morning before breakfast, I do not think he could have been considered guilty of any haste, after the long time that he had waited. Some people, when they are young, know that they ought to unite themselves with the Church of God, but they put it off; and when they grow older, they seem confirmed in continuing in a condition which is not a right one for a Christian.

I do not lay undue stress upon baptism, as though it were the main thing in a Christian’s life; still, it is an important matter, in which some Christians need hastening, as they take such a long time over it. It seems to me that half the beauty of obedience consists in obeying the command at once. Suppose you have a boy, and you say to him, “John, I want you to go on an errand,” and he says, “Very well, father, I will go next week;” what sort of a lad is he? Suppose he says, “Yes, father, I really mean to go, but not until tomorrow;” is not that virtually disobedience? Call it what you may, delaying to obey is disobedience. Has it ever struck you, dear friends, that, when you postpone attendance to a duty, you sin in the postponement? How many times do you sin? I cannot calculate. If it is a duty you ought to do at this hour, yet you put it off hour after hour, do you not sin as many times as there are hours in which you delay? Perhaps it would be even more correct to say that for every moment that a duty is neglected, there is a sin every time the clock ticks; certainly, you are keeping on in one long-continued act of sin, and thereby provoking God to anger.

Neglect of duty is continuous sin. Let that little sentence abide in your memory, and let it get down into your heart, and irritate you into prompt obedience, for there are some of you, who seem to fancy that when you have made up your minds to do a certain thing, and have good intentions concerning it, you have practically done the thing, and need not trouble yourself any further about it. But it is not so, for “to him that knows to do good, and does it not, to him”—particularly, and above other men—“it is sin.” There was a certain prince of Monaco, who left instructions that this inscription should be put on his grave, “Here lies So-and-So, prince of Monaco, *a man of good intentions.*” That was all he could say about himself. He had not done anything, but he had intended to do something; and this is the epitaph that will have to be put over some of you unless you turn intention into action. But what is this but a confession that you have the responsibility of knowing what you ought to do, but you lack either the manliness, or the grace, or something else to impel you to do what you ought long ago to have done? As the angels hastened Lot, so, my Christian brother, who are slow to move in the path of duty, would I hasten you. Lie not down tonight with any duty undischarged if you can attend to it tonight; rest not while there are any arrears of obedience due to your God. Even when you have done all your duty, you will be but an unprofitable servant to your God; but what shall be said of you if precept after precept shall be left neglected? At any rate, be not so foolish as to imagine that intending to obey it is the same thing as having really obeyed the commandment of your God.

Some Christians also need hastening concerning coming out from the world, and taking up the place of separation. Lot was in sinful Sodom, and the great concern of the angels was to get him out of it. There are many righteous men still in Sodom; they have never thoroughly taken their place with Christ, “without the camp, bearing His reproach.” Many a Christian knows that there is a higher spiritual life than he has ever yet reached. He feels that his standard is too low, and that his household is too much conformed to

the world in its manners and customs. He knows that his business is not conducted as his Lord and Master would wish it to be, and he intends that these things shall all be set right some time or other. Possibly there is one person in the household of whom he is afraid. If that person should, in the order of God's providence, be removed, then the way would be cleared for him to make the necessary alteration; or it may be that there is one engagement which has been made, which he thinks must be fulfilled, and after that is over things will take quite a different complexion. My dear brother, wherever you may be just now, I do charge you, before the living God, never trifle with your convictions, and never postpone the coming away from sin and the world until it shall be more convenient for you. Do you not see what it is that you thus say to the Lord? "I will follow Jesus when it pleases me; I will follow Him when it will not cost me anything; I will follow Him when everybody will clap hands at my doing it; but when the task is difficult, I must decline it." That is very like the talk of a rebel, not like the talk of a true disciple of our blessed Lord. Oh, that you might have the grace to say—

*“Through floods and flames, if Jesus leads,
I'll follow where He goes;”—*

“fashionable or unfashionable, condemned or applauded, loved or hated, I will take up the cross for Christ, and be as He would have me to be in the midst of an ungodly world.” The angels are hastening you to this decision, dear brother, as once they hastened the lingering Lot to escape from sinful Sodom.

Again, many good men need hastening with regard to their attempts to be of service to others. Lot went to his sons-in-law, to try to persuade them to leave Sodom; but, though the morning light was beginning to break, and Sodom's doom was imminent, he did not hurry to conduct his wife and daughters out of the doomed place. It is a wonder how long Christians linger over the work of seeking the conversion of their own children. I know, dear friend, that you have resolved in your heart to pray with your boy; you say that you mean to do it, yet you never seem to screw yourself up to the decisive point. I know, dear mother, that you do not intend that your daughter Jane shall go away from home until you have talked with her about her soul, and set forth Christ to her. You have that new Bible ready to give to her as a kind of help to you—a thin end of the wedge—that you may have some reason for getting her alone, and talking to her. But why do you keep putting it off so? Should it ever be hard work for a mother to talk with her own child about her soul? Yet, to some parents, this is a very difficult task. Should it ever be hard, good woman, for a wife to put her arms about her unconverted husband's neck, and plead with him to see to his soul's affairs, and lay hold on eternal life? Yet, perhaps, you feel as if you cannot do it; you know that you ought, but you cannot. Should it ever be hard, dear sister, for you to talk to that brother of yours, who scoffs so much at sacred things, that he often hurts your feelings? I know it does seem hard, but ought it to be so? You love him, and if you knew that he was in any bodily danger, you would not hesitate to warn him; and now that you know that he is in spiritual and eternal peril, do not, I pray you, delay to give the warning word. “I mean to do so;” says one. Yes, you mean to, but I want you to do it tonight. “But perhaps I may not have a suitable opportunity tonight?” Well, if there should be no opportunity tonight, you may be excused; but do not make a pretext, let it be a genuine lack of opportunity that alone will excuse you; and, for common humanity's sake, far more for Christ's sake, for His dear wounds sake, do seek immediately the salvation of all that are round about you. The angels hastened Lot, so what can I do to hasten you? You will probably find your task a great deal easier than you think, and you may receive a response that you little expect. I believe that in nine cases out of ten, when a Christian begins to speak thus to his unsaved friend, the friend gratefully says, “I have been long expecting you to speak to me about my soul; how is it that you have not done it before?”

I will tell you what happened in a case with which I was personally connected. There was a young man, whose minister used to come to his father's house very frequently, and this young man was in great distress of soul. Every time the minister came in, the young man used to say to himself, “I hope Mr. So-and-So will speak to me about my soul today.” He put himself in the minister's way, but the minister never spoke to him as he wished and hoped. After a time, that young man went to another place of worship, and there found the Lord. He told his father, and the father told the minister, and then the minister came to see him, and said, “My dear brother, I am glad to hear that you have been converted; I have always felt anxious about you.” “Have you?” asked the young man. “Yes, I have,” replied the minister. “But, sir, you never said a word to me to show that you were anxious.” There the interview ended, and I am afraid that they

have had little esteem for one another ever since, and I know that the young man said, "When I was converted, the minister wanted to get me into his church; but as long as I was unconverted, he never made the slightest effort to win me to Christ." I should not like to have that said of any minister here present, and I should not like to hear that you are always looking after other people's sheep. There is a certain denomination which is constantly engaged in stealing the sheep that are in other flocks; it would be much better if such people would ask the Lord, by His almighty grace to turn lions into lambs and sheep, so that they might gather their own flocks. That is the proper spirit in which all Christians should act; so, dear brethren and sisters in Christ, let us without delay set about the task of endeavoring, in the name and in the strength of God, to bring our relatives and neighbors to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Putting a great many things under this general head, I may say that Christians need hastening all around. Occasionally, I hear or read remarks about the great excitement caused by our brethren Moody and Sankey in their evangelistic services, but I must confess that I have failed to see the excitement, although I have been to several of their meetings. We Londoners do not know anything about real religious excitement; we have not begun to be excited yet, though I pray God that we soon may. I would like to see such a stir, all over the metropolis, that the press would rave and rage about our fanaticism, and I shall not believe that God has done very much among us until we are accused of something like that. We are enjoying a spiritual spring time; we have heard the cuckoo, and have seen one swallow, but we must not yet say that the summer has come. Our friends from America have done something, but little compared with what we ought to desire, and pray for, and expect; little indeed compared with what we shall see if we are but true to God. We still need the angels to come and hasten lingering Lots; may we be hastened ourselves!

Why is it that Christians need so much hastening? The best answer I can make is, that their spirit is willing, but their flesh is weak. Another reason is, that it is easier to run fast at first than to keep on at a rapid pace; and perhaps they have found their breath failing them. If so, may they drink in fresh air from the upper realm! Some Christians, too, are passing through the Enchanted Ground; the air of which Bunyan says made the pilgrims sleepy. Some Christian brethren appear to have taken up their residence in that perilous place. In the case of others, the prevailing languor in the hearts of so many professing Christians tends to make them idle, just as in a chilly atmosphere, we are colder than we would be if our surroundings were warmer. I fear that some Christians need quickening for God's service because they have so much to do for themselves. The shop shutters are down so long that there is little time for anything but business, and the ledger is such a big book that it quite hides the Bible. Some, on the other hand, need to be hastened because they have not anything to do. Of the two things, it is better to have too much to do than to have nothing to do; and those people, who do not know how to occupy their time, are often the most difficult to move to anything like earnestness in spiritual things.

Whatever may be the cause of the lingering, ministers are bound to be continually hastening God's people onward in the spiritual life and warfare. Under what great obligations we are, brethren! We are not our own, we are bought with a price. How much Christ has done for us, brethren! What manner of persons ought we to be! What a destiny awaits us! Ought we not to walk worthily of that which is to be our heritage? See how fast time is flying. We cannot make up for that which we have already lost, but let us lose no more. See how rapidly our cemeteries are being crowded; and dare even to look down, and see how hell is being thronged with souls that have perished through ignorance. See how Christ's name is being constantly blasphemed, and how little power the ministry of the gospel seems to have, and what great power we find attending erroneous teaching. Oh, may God quicken us, dear friends! Sometimes, when I look at myself, and look at my fellow Christians, I can scarcely believe that we can be the result of such a great work as God has been carrying on. In Amsterdam, I went into workshops where great wheels and much machinery were at work cutting diamonds. They were very small things to have all that machinery operating upon them; still, they were diamonds; and when I look at some Christians, I suppose they must be diamonds, but they appear to be very insignificant in comparison with the work which is being worked upon them. Here is Jesus Christ plowing that field with His agonies, watering it with His bloody sweat, casting Himself like a seed into it; and what comes up as the result? Only that poor shriveled thing! O God, must eternal election, and immutable love, and a bleeding Savior's heart, and the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit all be set to work to produce such a result as that? God forbid that I should ever slight any of His work, but the question naturally arises, "Can it be His if it only comes to that?" Here is

a man, who goes to a prayer meeting, perhaps, once in seven years, gives a four-penny piece to the collection if he has not a three-penny piece in his wallet, takes a sitting in the place of worship, and then considers that all his work is done. He never opens his mouth for the Lord Jesus Christ from the first of January to the last of December; He is, at home, about as worldly as other people, yet he says that he is—

*“A monument of grace,
A sinner saved by blood.”*

We have heard of mountains bringing forth mice, but we can scarcely think that Mount Zion can bring forth such creatures as these. We ought to be something better than this, brethren, and we must be. In the name of the dying Savior, now exalted in heaven, whose disciples we profess to be, let us awaken ourselves, and let us seek, with heart and soul and strength, to glorify Christ throughout the rest of life that may be allotted to us, lest we go back, dishonored, to the dust from which we sprang, after having had grand opportunities, and noble possibilities, and a divine calling, and yet having lived beneath the dignity of any one of them.

II. Now I must turn to the second part of my subject, which is, that SINNERS NEED TO BE HASTENED AS MUCH AS SAINTS DO, for sinners also are very slow.

I thought, this afternoon, when my head was almost splitting with pain, and I could not fix my thoughts upon my theme for this evening, “Oh, dear, dear, dear, if these sinners were only sensible, preaching would be very easy work, for all I would have to do would be just to set before them the way of salvation, and they would at once walk in it!” But we have to rack our brains, and to pour out our very heart in order to get you to attend to your chief business, and to give heed to that which is for your lasting good. Sometimes, our hearers say, “The preachers always tell us that same story, and their sermons are not as polished as we would like them to be.” Ah, but! If you would only believe in Jesus, and so be saved, we would polish our sermons up for you. If you would only seek and find Jesus Christ as your Savior, then we would try to give you some eloquence then; but, as long as you will not have Christ, and resolve to remain as you are, the only thing we can do is to keep on persuading, entreating, and even compelling you to come in to the great gospel feast. We are obliged to put the old truth in very much the same old way. It is not poetical work to be a Royal Humane Society’s officer, seeking to pull drowning people out of the river; and there is not much poetry about our work in trying to be the means of saving your souls.

But what makes you men and women so slow to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the only way of salvation? Are you so fond of your sins that you are not willing to give them up, or are you really so self-righteous that you do not believe that you need to be saved? I think the most of you do believe, in a way, that there is a hell, and that you will go there unless you are converted, but you do not really believe it, you do not realize what it means. You are very earnestly listening to me just now, but if somebody, over there by the door, were to cry out because a piece of plaster had dropped off the ceiling, how wide awake you would become compared with what you are now when I am talking about your going to hell, and being lost forever. Somehow or other, there is a lack of reality about you when spiritual matters are being discussed. I fear that the same spirit is getting into some good people’s prayers. We do not pray real prayers; at least, not as real as they ought to be. I do try to preach to you as if I meant it, and I would willingly lay down my life if, by doing so, I could save you; yet you listen to me as if it were merely a very proper thing for me to preach, and for you to hear, on Sunday, but as if you had nothing to do with the gospel on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. You hear that the city in which you are dwelling is to be destroyed. You do not tell the angel that the prophecy is a lie; but you sit down so comfortably that it is clear that you do not believe it, or if you do, you need to be pressed again, and again, and again, to act as if it were true. Just now, as you took your seat, you missed a diamond ring off your finger, and you will not be at all comfortable until you get home, and see if it is there. You are concerned about the loss of a ring, yet your souls are lost, and you are quite unconcerned about them. This terrible truth does not fret and worry you; I wish it would, so that you would say, “I will never rest again till I know that I am saved through Jesus Christ the Savior.” Surely, madness is bound up in the heart of sinners, or else they would not need to be hastened to escape.

“Well,” say some of you, “we intend to think about this matter.” I know you do, and that thought of yours is Satan’s biggest net. He has a number of nets of different sorts and sizes; some of them are only meant for eagles, and he does not often use them, for there are not many eagles about, but he has a big net

which he uses for catching small birds. I picture the great enemy of souls going out with his big net, and I fancy I can hear him whistling with unholy glee at the thought of the many birds he will take in it. This is the style of his temptation—you are not to quibble at the truth, you are not to be an avowed infidel, you are not to despise the Savior, you are not to say that the salvation of your soul is an unimportant matter; but you are to say to the minister, “Yes, sir, what you preach is all very true, and I am glad you put it in the way that you do. I like earnest preaching; I like to be told personally about my need of salvation, and I will attend to the matter very soon; tomorrow, if possible. Oh, I just remembered there is something on that day which will be rather in the way; but, as soon as that is over, I will give heed to what you say.” That is just what has happened a long while with some of you, but you are no nearer the deciding point. A gentleman in this neighborhood told me that he could not come to hear me preach again. I asked him, “Why is that?” “Well,” he answered, “I only came once, and then you pointed me out, and said, ‘There sits a grey-headed old fool.’ At least, you said that a grey-headed old sinner is a grey-headed old fool.” “Well,” I said, “I do not remember seeing you before; but are you a grey-headed old sinner? Because, if you are, then you are the other thing as well.” He just looked at me, and said nothing, and I have not seen him since that time. I am afraid there are others here to whom I might say just the same, and it would be true. They must be foolish, for they have not done what they have admitted it would be wise for them to do. Again and again, a man has said, “I will do it.” Now, sir, you are a fool to say, “I will do it,” if it was a foolish thing; but if it was a wise thing, and you said, “I will do it,” yet you have not done it, what are you?

Some of you are good arithmeticians; will you take your pencils, and work out a sum for me? Here is a man of fifty years of age, and I want you to calculate the probabilities of his ever being saved. He had an excellent early training from a very godly father and mother, whose many prayers for him he cannot forget, though he remained unsaved in spite of them all. He went to a Sunday school, and had a very gracious teacher, who set him a good example, and was very earnest in pleading with him; but he would not yield. As he grew up, he had many Christian friends, who wrote letters to him, and used every possible opportunity to impress him. He resisted all that, and for twenty years attended the ministry of a very earnest preacher. There was a great revival, and many were saved, but he was not one of them. Since then, he has been sitting under another very faithful minister of God’s Word, and he has been impressed again and again. Put that down, and figure it out if you can. He has been impressed fifty times, or a hundred, perhaps a couple of hundred times, and he has got over all that; what are the probabilities that he will ever be saved? To tell you the truth, I greatly fear that the probability is that the man will be lost, that he never will be converted, but will continue as he has been already despite every instrumentality that has been employed on his behalf.

O you sinners, with such terrible probabilities against you, you do indeed need to be hastened, and gladly would we put our hands upon you, and urge you to escape for your lives, and to do it now, for it is now or never with some of you who are present here tonight! I have no doubt, that if we could read the past history of some who are here, we would see abundant reasons for urging them to immediate decision. I have already shown you where these reasons would be found, and the probabilities against their conversion. But, as to the future, happily that is hidden from all of us. I am no prophet, nor the son of a prophet; and, therefore, I shall not attempt to utter a prediction; but you all must know that out of some six thousand persons assembled here, there is a great probability that we shall not all be alive next Lord’s Day. It is a certainty that we shall never all of us meet here again, and the probability that some of us will have gone from this earth before next Sabbath is very great. In the membership of this church, I notice, as regularly as the year rolls around, that our death-list comes to between fifty and seventy. There is usually one death a week; or, if there should happen to be one week in which a member of the church does not die, there will be two or three in the week following. The average is one a week; so that, if not out of this present assembly, yet out of the usual congregations at this Tabernacle, it is a certainty that two will die in a week. Two, in a week!

I wonder where the two victims for this week are; perhaps at home, dying by degrees, with a good hope in Jesus Christ. Blessed be God if that is the case; we will shout the harvest home as they are gathered in. Possibly, they are lying at home sick, yet without hope. Let us pray for them if that is their condition. Lord, help them to believe in Jesus Christ this very night; before they tread death’s awful road, O Lord, save them! But perhaps one out of the two may be here, in good health, and unconverted. I am not saying

what is at all improbable, am I? It may be so, and if I knew that someone here would die before next Sabbath day, I would beg him to stay after the service, that I might give him a squeeze of the hand, and say to him, "My dear friend, do not let this day go by without your looking to Christ, and committing your soul into His hands." Now, as I do not know who it is to be, give me your hands, all of you, all around the building. I should like to look you dear men and women in the face, and say to each one of you, "Now, dear soul, do not live and die without the Savior. Do lay this matter to heart. I am not an angel, but I am one who would gladly do you good. If it is right to believe in Jesus Christ, the sooner you do it, the better; and if it is right to love and serve God, the sooner you do it, the better. And if to trust in Christ's precious blood is the only safe course, the sooner you do that, the better. May the eternal Spirit come and lead you, even now, to lay hold on Jesus Christ, and find eternal life in Him this very hour!"

Now, look me in the face, and say whether it shall be so or not. I will not ask you to speak; there will be too much noise if you all do so. But, in your heart, I ask you to say, will you, or will you not? This may be the turning point in your life's history. There is a spot, under the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral, where there is a mark made by the chisel of a man, who fell from the top, and was killed. There is also a mark, which angel eyes can see, in that pew, or in that aisle, or up in that gallery, where you have sat, and said, "Not tonight; I will decide tomorrow;" or where you have said, "No, I will not have anything to do with Christ." I wish that instead of such a mark as that, there could be a star let into the floor, which would mean, "Here, a poor soul believed in Jesus." I know a little Primitive Methodist chapel in Colchester. I went to see it some time ago, and I went into the very pew where I sat, as a boy fifteen years of age, and heard a sermon from the text, "Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth." I should have liked to buy the seat, and take it home, for I love the spot where Jesus met with me and saved me; and there are some of you who feel like that concerning these pews. They are very sacred to you, and always will be, for there you were born for God. Oh, that some of you might be born here this very night! Some of you are in no need of instruction; you need hastening. You do not need to be impressed concerning the guilt of your sins so much as to be urged to give them up, and to put your trust in Jesus Christ. You do not need to be brought to the water so much as to be made to drink of it. There it is. Oh, that you would open your mouths, and let the blessed stream flow in, for that is all that is needed. Receive Christ; receive Christ now, by a simple act of faith, and He will give you grace and strength to battle with your sins, and to make you holy. Oh, that now, *now*, NOW, the great work may be done! I do not suppose you can hear this clock tick; but when you get home, listen to your old clock on the stairs, or in your room, and it will say to you, "Now, now, now, now." I have sometimes thought that in the night, I have heard the clock say, "Now or never! Now or never! Now or never! Now or never! Now or never!" You need not listen to me any longer, but listen to that message from the clock. May the Holy Spirit speak to you through it, and may you answer, "Now, even now, I will believe in Jesus Christ, and be saved." May God bless you! May Christ save you! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *LUKE 17:11-32.*

Verses 11, 12. *And it came to pass, as He went to Jerusalem, that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as He entered into a certain village, there met Him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:*

Leprosy was very common in Palestine in Christ's day. How thankful we ought to be that in this country, at any rate, it has almost entirely died out! There used to be, in almost every town, a leper-house provided for lepers, so common was leprosy in this country. Certain diseases seem to die out by degrees, and we should be very grateful that some of the worst forms of disease, by which men have been afflicted, have passed away. In this case there was no less than ten in one village. They "stood afar off," as was most proper, lest they should communicate the contagion to others. They had to cry out, and warn men not to come too near them, saying, with covered lips, "Unclean! Unclean! Unclean!" The muffled sound that they made, if the word could not be distinguished, helped to warn the passersby to give them a wide berth.

13, 14. *And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when He saw them, He said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests.*

For no man could be pronounced clean even if he were healed, until he had undergone the ceremony prescribed in the Mosaic Law. These lepers were to go to the priests just as they were, so their going was an act of faith.

14. *And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.*

What a wonderful thing that must have been!

15, 16. *And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.*

One of those off-casts and out-casts that the Jews would not own—one of the men that they said were of a mongrel breed—only half Israelite and half idolater—

***“O grace, it is your custom
Into unlikeliest hearts to come!”***

17-25. *And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God save this stranger? And He said unto him, Arise, go your way: your faith has made you whole. And when He was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God comes not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. And He said unto the disciples, The days will come, when you shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and you shall not see it. And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them. For as the lightning, that lights out of one part under heaven, shines unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in His day. But first must He suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.*

Though our Lord purposely left much with regard to His coming indefinite, He gave His disciples two instances, from the early history of the world, of the condition in which many would be found at His appearing.

26-32. *And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife.*

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

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