

A TRIUMPHAL ENTRANCE

NO. 750

A SERMON

DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 13, 1866

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

*“Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors;
and the King of glory shall come in.”*

Psalm 24:9

ON Monday evening we expounded this Psalm [See *The Sword and the Trowel*, Vol. 3, page 27, January Number]. We then enlarged upon the glorious ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, and His triumphal entrance within the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem, to which we believe this verse is to be referred.

Having on that occasion endeavored to set forth the literal and proper meaning of the words, amplifying them at some length thereon, we trust we may be permitted to use them tonight rather by way of accommodation, while we speak on quite another subject, and give a different turn to the flow of our thoughts.

Not that we wish to supersede the natural sense of the prophetic song, although we think that without violence, and even with profit, we may borrow a sentence from it to point out a moral of practical godliness. It is worthy of observation, that the Scotch commentator, Dixon, gives what I am about to suggest to you as *the* true meaning of the text, as do also some one or two other authors, to say nothing of our hymn writers, who claim poetical license for the boldness of their paraphrases.

I should myself very strongly demur to tamper with the literal sense. The allusion of the psalmist, no doubt, is primarily to the ascension of the ark of the covenant into Mount Zion, where it was permanently to be lodged. And that historical fact was a type of the ascension of Christ into the Jerusalem which is above, where He sits as the representative of His people. Let *the* meaning be fully understood and admitted, then we shall feel at liberty to use the words we here find for certain practical purposes.

Give ear then, dear friends, to the doctrine which I am anxious to set before you. The Lord Jesus Christ, in order to our salvation, must not only enter into heaven, but He must enter into our hearts. He must not only sprinkle the blood within the veil, but He must sprinkle the blood within our conscience. All that Christ has done *for* us will be of no avail unless there shall be a great work done *in* us.

It is not only Christ on the cross who is our hope, but “Christ in you,” says the apostle, “the hope of glory.” At the time of conversion, Jesus Christ enters into the soul, and it is by such a triumphant entrance, when His Word comes into our hearts, that we get the personal knowledge of salvation.

I. First, then, THE GREAT THING TO BE DESIRED BY EACH OF US IS THE ENTRANCE OF THE KING OF GLORY INTO OUR SOULS.

Brethren, what if I should say that heaven would not be heaven without this? Certainly there would be no happiness here on earth, no heaven below to any one of us unless we had Christ in our hearts. There is nothing but mischief in man’s heart when Christ is not there and another lord usurps dominion over Him.

In vain is the Gospel preached to any one of the sons of men as long as they, like the strong man armed, keep the gates of the castle of their heart. The eyes of the understanding are blind to the way of peace. Until Christ shall come and take that castle by storm, there is no doing anything for that man. The spirit that works in him is the “spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience”—he is deceived by Satan and made a willing slave to that tyrant of evil.

What you want, sinner, for your salvation, is that Christ should come unto you. For if He should come unto you, then that dead soul of yours would live. His presence is life. He quickens whom He will. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. When He comes into a soul, spiritual life is there. The sinner wakes up to consciousness and rises from the grave over the mouth of which his reckless indifference, like a great stone, has been rolled, and he cries, "What must I do to be saved?"

When Christ comes into the heart, sin is seen to be sinful. In the light of the cross, man begins to repent. He sees that his sin has slain the Savior and he loathes it. He now seeks to be delivered both from its guilt and from its power.

The coming of Christ does that. It takes away the guilt of man. Christ in the heart, revealed to the soul, speaks peace to the troubled conscience. We look to Him and are lightened, and our faces are not ashamed. We see the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness in Christ. Here we wash and are made clean—as for the reigning power of sin, nothing can ever conquer that but the incoming of Christ.

If a man serves an evil master, the only way of getting rid of that hated despot is to bring in the rival sovereign. "No man can serve two masters." The introduction of the King of Glory, Christ Jesus, is the sure way of casting out that old master, Satan, the prince of the power of the air. When the Lord Jesus comes, bringing life, and light, and pardon, He puts down the power of sin, and every blessing comes in His train.

Oh! when Christ rides through the streets of our souls, they are strewn with flowers of hope and joy! Then we hang out the streamers of our sacred bliss. We sing of His praise, we are ready to dance before Him for holy mirth. Then straightway we love purity and seek for perfection. Then we adore the living God whom we had before forgotten, but of whom we can now say, "Our Father who art in heaven." We receive the spirit of adoption to which we had been strangers before.

Then, as soon as Christ has entered our heart, our course is heavenward. Our way is towards our Father's face, whereas aforesaid, with our backs to the Sun of Righteousness, we wandered into denser gloom, and would have found our way into outer darkness, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

O sinner! if you could but get Christ into your heart, you would say, "I have all things, and abound. I am full," but until then you will be naked, and poor, and miserable. Or if you be indeed a living soul you will be uneasy and dissatisfied until Christ has entered into you with all His glorious train, His Spirit and His Word.

You will be like a house without a tenant, cold, cheerless, dilapidated, desolate. Your heart will be as a nest without a bird—a poor, sad thing! You will be like a body without the soul that quickens it. But if Jesus comes, He will make a man of you after another sort than that frail image which your father Adam bequeathed you.

He will new-make you in the image of Him who created you. "Behold, I make all things new," says He. Oh! you cannot tell the influences of His sceptre when He sits upon the throne of the heart! You cannot tell what showers of mercy, what streams of benediction, what mountains of joy, and hills of happiness, shall be yours when Jesus comes and reigns in your soul.

This, then, is the great business that we ought to see to, that Jesus Christ should come unto us, not merely that we should hear of Him with the ear, or talk of Him with the tongue, but that we should have Him as a Priest before the altar, as a King upon the throne of our heart, the chief and highest in the reverence and the affection of our inmost soul.

II. Secondly, THERE ARE IMPEDIMENTS TO CHRIST THUS COMING INTO OUR HEARTS.

The text speaks, you notice, about "doors" and "gates." Surely, if there were doors and gates that needed to be lifted up before Christ could enter into heaven, much more are there doors and gates that must be opened to receive Him into our hearts. Remember that when Jesus Christ went up into heaven, the doors were lifted up, and the gates were opened, and they have never been shut since.

There is no passage that says, "Down with your heads, ye gates, and be ye fast-closed, ye everlasting doors!" Not a word of that sort. Heaven's gates are open wide. What then is shut? Why, the gate of the

human soul, the door of the human heart. There are many gates and doors, bars of iron, and bolts of triple steel that stand in the way of Christ.

Sometimes it is our *wicked prejudice*. We do not want to know the Gospel. We are confirmed in our own self-righteousness, or we hold the traditions of our fathers, who trusted in some outward forms and ceremonies. We do not want to know Christ. Perhaps the very name of the preacher of the Gospel is hateful to us, and the name of the place where Christ is lifted up is detestable to us. What a blessing it is to us, when these gates of prejudice are taken away, and the hearing ear is given, and the soul pants to know what this Gospel is!

Alas! though it too often happens, that when prejudice is removed, there then remains the gate of depravity—*our love of sin* is a strong barrier. We would soon have hailed Christ were it not that we had harbored an old foe of His. We do not care to give up our former love to lay hold of the true Bridegroom of men's souls.

The great difficulty in the way of sinners getting to heaven is, that they love sin better than they love their souls. A little drink, a little merriment, a favorite lust, a Sunday holiday—any of these trifling joys, these groveling husks that are only fit for swine, will keep souls from Christ, and prevent their laying hold of eternal life.

Man loves his own ruin. The cup is so sweet, that though he knows it will poison him, yet he must drink it. And the harlot is so fair, that though he understands that her ways lead down to hell, yet like a bullock he follows to the slaughter, till the dart goes through his liver! Man is fascinated and bewitched by sin.

He will *not* give up the insidious pleasures which are but for a season, but to gain them he will run the risk of the everlasting ruin of his undying soul. Oh! when God takes away the love of sin, then the gates are lifted up, and the doors are opened. What is there that could prevent our welcoming Christ if we did but hate our sins?

Another great door is *our love of self-righteousness*. Though I have spoken of the love of sin as the strongest door, ought I not to correct myself, and to say, that perhaps the love of our own righteousness is a stronger door still? Men may give up their grosser sins, while they will hold fast to their fair, but carnal righteousnesses.

Yet your own righteousness will as certainly destroy you as your iniquities. If you rest upon what you have done, however good in your own eyes, or however praiseworthy in the esteem of your fellow men that doing may be, you rest on a foundation that will certainly fail you. Your merits or your demerits are alike unavailing for salvation. God grant that we may no longer boast of ourselves. Put away the Pharisee's pride and never utter the Pharisee's prayer. The doors must be lifted up.

Then, again, there is that door which I may call the iron gate that enters into the city, the innermost door of all, the key of which it is indeed hard to turn—the door of unbelief. Oh! that unbelief! It is the ruin of souls, and ah! what trouble, and labor, and anxiety it gives to us who are ministers of the Gospel.

When talking with anxious enquirers, we are often amazed at the ingenuity with which they resist the entrance of light and truth into their hearts. I do not think I have ever been so much astonished at the invention of locomotive engines, electric telegraphs, or any other feats of human mechanism, as I have been at the marvelous ingenuity of simple people in finding out reasons why they should not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

After we have proved to them to a demonstration that it is both the most reasonable and the fittest thing in the world to trust themselves with Christ, they ask, "How this?" or "How that?" Or they argue, "But one thing, and but another." We may patiently go through the whole process again, and even when that is done, there comes another, "but."

I have hunted these people till they have got to their holes, and I have tried to dig them out, and unearth them, but I find that they can always burrow faster than I can follow them. It is only the grace of God that can deliver us from this ruinous thing, unbelief.

You would count it a strange thing, if, when a man condemned to be hanged had a pardon presented to him, he were so ingenious as to find out reasons why he should not escape the gallows. And when these reasons were all refuted, their fallacy exposed, and the good tidings confirmed, he should keep on finding out more reasons why the sentence of execution should be carried into effect.

You would say, “Why, foolish man, let these sophistries alone. Put your wits to better use. Get your liberty first, and then inquire into the manner it was procured afterwards.” Men will not take God at His word and trust Christ at His call. That great doctrine of, “Believe and live,” they will reject. Still, still they will demur. O that these gates and doors were all removed!

Do not, I beseech you, my dear hearers, do not let me talk about this matter as though I were speaking to people in the moon. It is into your own hearts that admission is sought, and remember, that there are doors which keep Christ out. There are gates and doors which some of you willfully close against Him.

Though in His stead I have stood these many Sundays knocking as best I could at the door—nay, not I, but Christ knocking there through me—you have resisted every appeal. You know that His head is wet with dew, and His locks with the drops of the night, yet you have kept these doors fastened still. They have shaken sometimes a good deal. They have almost seemed to me as if they jarred a bit. I have hastened to see if I could not put my finger in at the hole of the door, but could not do so. I wish my Master would!

How is it that with such a Friend outside, standing there in such a lovely attitude, laden with blessings, and ready to enter that He may bless you, how is it that still you will invent further bars and make fresh locks to keep Him out?

III. Our third point is this—IN ORDER TO CHRIST’S ENTRANCE WE MUST BE WILLING TO REMOVE THESE BOLTS.

You will notice that the text says, “Lift up *your* heads, O ye gates,” as if the gates were to lift their own heads. It is addressed to them, as though they were to get out of the way. Continually, dear friends, I have to tell you that salvation is by grace, emphatically I shall have to impress this upon you presently. Yet, at the same time, we never did say, and we hope we never shall say, that we see no necessity to make any appeals to your will. We never said that God would save you against your will. We never thought so.

We never believed that a man was plunged into the blood of Jesus Christ if he was unwilling to be washed in it. We never believed that a man had the robe of righteousness put on him by main force, he meanwhile resisting with all his might. We never believed that there were pilgrims on the road to heaven who went there driven like convicts in the chain-gang, instead of marching willingly and cheerfully towards their desired rest.

We never meant to say that you were mere machines whom God had deprived of free agency, or that in order to make you saints, He made you blocks of wood or pieces of marble. No, we have been in the habit of addressing you as reasonable beings, and of talking to you as those who had a will to choose or to refuse.

We have tried, with the motives of the Gospel, to influence that will. Let us remind you that the gates are bidden to lift up their heads. Therefore, in God’s name, sinner, be willing! Be willing that Christ should enter into your heart. For, recollect, He never does enter against our will. He makes us willing in the day of His power, but willing we must be. True, willingness is His gift, but we are made willing. In the case of every soul that comes to Christ there is first given to him the willing mind.

“Oh!” says one, “I am willing enough!” Thank God for that, dear hearer, for the most of men will not come unto Him that they may have life. “Oh!” says another, “I am sure my will is good to come to Christ.” I am glad to hear that, for there is a question we have often to ask, “*Wilt* thou be made whole?” But there are some men who do not want to be made whole, and would rather hobble still on their crutches, cripples as they are—they would rather indulge their inclination as sinners than be purified and brought into the obedience of faith.

Among those I address tonight, there may be individuals, perhaps, who would not like to have their conscience touched. Here is one man who is making money in a bad trade. "Oh!" he says, "I do not want that preacher to make me uneasy." There is another man here who has been getting so inured to his sinful pleasures that it would now be inconvenient for him to give them up. He has even made an appointment that he feels he must keep, and if he were apprehensive that the grace of God might come and overtake him tonight, he feels as if he would rather not.

Do not be frightened. It will not occur to you, for the Lord will first give you this premonition of His intending to bless you. He will make you long to be blessed. Or ever He puts that cup of cooling water to your mouth, He will make you athirst. Or ever He enriches you with His treasure, He will make you feel that you are naked, and poor, and miserable.

Before Christ goes through the gate, the inhabitants of the city shall be willing to receive Him. Nay, with outstretched hands they shall look over the battlements and say, "Come in, Thou King of Glory! I long to see You! Come, and welcome! I will throw the gates of my soul wide open to receive You. Do but come! I long for You! I watch for Your coming as they that watch for Your appearing. Yea, more than they that watch for the morning light."

IV. Fourthly, while you must thus be made willing, IT IS GRACE THAT MUST ENABLE YOU TO BE SO.

Notice, "*Be ye lift up*, ye everlasting doors." "Lift up your heads"—"Be ye lift up." We speak to a man as a man, and so we must speak to him. Next to this we speak of what God can do, blessed be His name, as a God, when He comes to deal with us, making us willing. And then coming in, with that great arm of His power, entirely to remove those gates which creature-strength could not push an inch out of the way.

I think I see the inhabitants of that city when the cry is heard, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates!" trying to lift them up. Trying with all their might, but they cannot do it. The gates are too heavy. The bars seem to be rusted. The bolts are fast in their places. The people cry, "How shall we ever open the gates of this city, and how can we let in the King?"—when an invisible Spirit stands by the side of the wall, amidst all the struggling, and as He puts out His power, the gates go up, and the doors wide open fly.

This is how it is with the sinner. God the Holy Ghost comes in and helps our infirmities, and what we could not do because we are weak through the flesh, He helps us to do. The love of sin is given up to begin with, and then the Holy Ghost enables us to give up the sin which we no longer love. Unbelief becomes to us a burden, and we cry, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief!" and He does help that unbelief, and we do believe.

That which we could not do, we do. He who made us willing, makes us able. Where the will is present, the power is not withheld. When God has subdued the obstinacy of your heart, He will speedily overcome the infirmity of your hands. If you are thirsty, you shall drink. If you are hungry, you shall eat. If you would have Christ, you shall have Christ, for if you can not open the gates, He can.

The difficulty with these gates is that they are everlasting. Though I cannot say that the gates which shut Christ out of our hearts are everlasting in one sense, yet they certainly are as old as our own nature, for the old inbred corruption of that ever stood out against Christ. And they are such perpetual gates that they never would have been removed if it were not for the grace which came to remove them.

And they are everlasting in such a sense that they will be there in time and there in eternity. The man who will not have Christ now, will not have Him when he comes to die, and will not have Him in eternity. For even then the gates will still shut out the Savior. The Savior will be forever a stranger and an alien to that man's heart! May God give to you who have been shutting Him out the will to open the door, and then may He come and say, "*Be ye lift up*, ye everlasting doors," and may Jesus Christ come in!

V. Not to linger, however, on any one point, let us proceed to notice the willingness of Christ to enter. We have shown you that it should be our great desire that Christ should come in, that there are

obstacles, that we must be willing to remove them, and that grace will come to our assistance. What next?—JESUS WILL ENTER.

There is no difficulty put here after once the gates are lifted up. There is no suspicion nor surmise that He will not enter. It seems to follow as a matter of course. “And the King of glory shall come in.” Oh, yes! When the gates are opened, He *shall* come in! He was willing to come in before. He had sent His servants, and said to them, “Open the gates.”

He had finished the work which He came to do. He was waiting to be gracious. There was never any unwillingness in Him. The unwillingness was all in us. And as soon as ever that unwillingness is taken away, and the gates are opened, the King of Glory *shall* come in.

May the Lord bless me in speaking for a moment to some here who are willing to have the Savior, but who think that He will never come into their hearts. O beloved, do not suffer this infernal suggestion to depress your spirits! Are you poor? Believe me, it does not matter what dress you wear, nor in what humble cottage you live, nor how your face may be begrimed with your toil, if you are willing, the King of Glory *shall* come in. He loves to live in those men’s hearts whose bodies, like His own, suffer fatigue, and wear the garments of the workman.

Perhaps you say, “But my body has been defiled with sin.” But where He comes He cleanses the house by His presence. You never hear it said, “The world is not fit for the sun, because it is so dark. For where the sun comes he makes light,” and if after a long winter the world has grown cold and frostbitten, it is not said of the spring, “You must not come, for the world is not fit for you.”

No, but the genial influences of spring loosen the rivers, and clothe the earth with verdure, and bid the bonds of frost be removed, and so spring makes a palace fit for herself, and strews it with flowers from her own hands. My Master will come into your house and live, though you are not worthy that He should come under your roof.

He was born in a manger, where the horned oxen fed. He will be born in your heart, where devils once dwelt. My Lord, when He does stoop, may well stoop as low as He can, for it is the greatest wonder that He should stoop at all—not that He stoops in any one particular direction. For, after all, though some of you may have been gross offenders, while others of us, from our youth up, have never uttered an oath, nor entered upon a lascivious action, yet there is not so much difference between you and us as that it should seem strange that He should come to you.

For if you are black in one sense, we are black in another. And if you have been a drunkard, well, I have been an unbeliever. And if you have been a thief, well, I have played false to God. And if there be one sin into which I have not plunged, I have plunged into another. We are very much alike, after all, and it is not so amazing a thing, if we once get our hearts filled with the true wonder that Christ should have saved sinners at all, that He should condescend to display that wonderful grace by saving those who, in the recklessness and daring of their crimes, are ostensibly such great sinners! Jesus Christ *will* come in.

“Well, but suppose He should not?” says one. Ah! never suppose what cannot be! “Him that cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out.” Why, the very angels must sometimes be astonished as they say, “Lord, here is such a one coming—shall we shut the gate?” “No,” says He, “for I have said that him that comes, I will in nowise cast out.”

Surely, when the angel of mercy saw Saul of Tarsus coming, he said, “Lord, here is a man who has had his garments splattered with the blood of Stephen. Here is that fierce wolf who has whetted his fangs in the blood of many of the saints. Here comes this blasphemer, this persecutor—must not he be excluded?”

No, the gate stood open, and he found admittance. And as he entered he turned round, and said to the others who were timidly standing outside, “I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe.” O soul, if you desire to have Christ, there is no reason why you should not have Him. Nay, you shall have Him.

If you have got so far, by His grace, as to have said, “Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be you lift up, ye everlasting doors,” then “the King of glory *shall* come in,” and you shall find a Savior in your heart if you are but willing to receive Him there.

VI. And now, lastly, observe that our text says, “THE KING OF GLORY SHALL COME IN.

This title belongs to the Savior. It proclaims Him in His highest authority. How shall I interpret this to you? The weight, the exceeding eternal weight of glory which belongs to the King of Glory, I cannot explain. O that your thoughts may excel my words!

Methinks I hear a cry, “Behold, your King comes! The King! The King! Stand back, make way. The King comes.” There is a moment’s bustle, and it is succeeded by a breathless pause. Everyone forgets the business in which he was engaged and loses the thread of thought in which he was absorbed. All eyes turn, as if by instinct, to look from what direction that cry has broken on their ears, “THE KING OF GLORY!!”

A thrill passes through your nerves, a shock goes to your heart, as you listen to the note which tells of His high prerogative. “Who is this King of Glory?” What peerless Prince is this, with a name above every name, and a royalty higher than the kings of the earth? “THE LORD OF HOSTS, HE IS THE KING OF GLORY.”

And while you look, He is near. You look, you gaze, you behold the pageantry of His high estate, and forthwith awe stifles your breath, admiration chains your senses. “Could I have one wish,” said that eloquent preacher at the Hague, Mr. James Saurin, “Could I have one wish to answer my proposed end of preaching today with efficacy, it would be to show you God in this assembly.”

And I say to you, brethren, could I present at the door of your hearts the King of Glory, and compel you to see Him, you would not hesitate, but open wide the gates to admit Him. Behold the King! resplendent with all the glory which He had with the Father before the foundation of the world. Invested with all the offices of dignity which JEHOVAH has put upon Him. Wearing all the brilliant trophies of His victorious achievements.

Hark! Hark! the trumpeters proclaim Him. Patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, in loud and swelling notes announce His advent—the acclamations of the redeemed, a vast throng, greet Him. And He rides in triumph straight up to your heart. One glance at Him, sinner, shows you plainly that He challenges your submission by all the grandeur of His title, by all the illustrious insignia of His solemn functions, by all the renown of His mighty acts.

As the King of Glory, He must come in.

*“But know, nor of the terms complain,
Where Jesus comes, He comes to reign;
To reign, but not with partial sway,
Thoughts must be slain that disobey.”*

As liege subjects, then, you must yield Him all your homage. Oh! are you willing that the Priest should come in? “Ay,” you say, “that is what I want. I want Christ to come in with His precious blood, like a priest, and sprinkle me with hyssop, and take away my sins.” He will come as a Priest, but not if you refuse him as a King.

“Yes,” says another, “I am quite willing to receive Christ as a Prophet. I want to understand the doctrines. They have puzzled me a great deal and I want to understand them.” Well, Christ will come as a Prophet, but He will not come as a Prophet unless you are willing to receive Him also as a King. O sinner, Jesus Christ must have the mastery in your heart, or you shall not have Him at all.

Come, now, you have followed your own will—that must be given up. Do you not like that yoke? Do you say, “No, I never did wear one”? You must wear it or you will be lost. Look at it, now—see how softly it lies! It will never gall your shoulders. “My yoke is easy: my burden is light.”

Now, you know you have been your own master and what incessant mutiny there has been in your members. Your own will has been too impotent a ruler to hold the reins of government or maintain peace. You know very well that your own passions have made a great slave of you. Why, the man who gives way to drunkenness—where is there a worse slave in the world than he?

Or, take the man who has a passionate temper—why, he does and says a thousand things that he is disgusted with afterwards. But he seems to be driven by his caprice without the slightest self-control. A worse slavery than that of any galley-slave that was ever chained to the oar, is that slavery of a bad temper.

Now, would it not be better to be a servant of Christ than to be the slave of your own hateful lusts or your own capricious whims? I know what you will say—you cannot serve King Jesus, for your companions would laugh at you and hold you up to ridicule. Oh! what a mean-spirited creature, then, you must be.

And so will you let any peering fool be your chieftain, and become the vassal of any man bolder in wickedness than you are? Why, sir, do you call yourself an Englishman? Are you a man at all, that you can yield yourself up to be laughed at after this fashion? What! would you let the gibes or taunts of a workmate restrain you from following what you believe to be good?

Why, I am ashamed of you. Putting aside Christianity altogether, I blush for you as a coward. Surely, you might say to them, “What do I care for your laugh, I can always give you as good as you send, only I take care it shall not be in your spirit. I can hold my own, and if you choose to serve the devil, surely it is a free country. I have as much right to serve the King of Glory as you have to serve the prince of darkness. If you choose to go to hell, let me go to heaven. Surely, you will not pass a law against that!”

There are workmen, I believe, and men of business, and gentlemen, as they are called, of the upper circles, who are the most abominable tyrants in their dealings with one another. If you choose to be a Christian, you are sure to get the cold shoulder among the upper classes.

Nay, but the very working men, who prate their democracy, will not let you be a Christian without meeting you at the shop door and saying, “Ah! here is a Presbyterian,” or “a Methodist,” or something of the sort. What is this but trampling upon liberty of conscience with arrogant tyranny? How can we boast of our love of freedom while such a state of things prevails? Surely, a man has a right to his religion, and you have no right to interfere with him about it.

But now, my dear friend, you are afraid of being laughed at. But let me ask you, which is better, to be a servant of man or a servant of Christ? Whichever way you may judge, you can never enter heaven’s door, to wear Christ’s crown, unless you are here willing to be Christ’s servant and to bear Christ’s cross.

“Well, but I do not like this. I do not like that.” Refer to the Bible—that is the Master’s Book. As it is written there, so let your life and actions be ruled. You remember what the mother of Jesus said to the servants at the wedding in Cana of Galilee! “Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.” I do not see how you can serve Christ if there be anything in that Book which you see to be there, and yet willfully neglect.

Perhaps there are some of you whom that sentence will hit very hard. I know persons who say they are Baptists in principle, but they have never been baptized. Baptists without any principle at all, I call them—persons who know their Master’s will, but who will not obey it.

I can make great excuses for brethren who do not see it. I think they might see it if they liked—but if they do not discern the precept, I can understand their not obeying it. But when people know their Lord’s will, and do it not—though I am sure I would not wish to speak hastily on such a matter—I am not certain whether willful disobedience to a known command of Christ may not be a token of their rejecting Christ altogether.

I should not like to run the risk for myself at any rate. I should feel it unsafe to say that I believed I was saved, while there was some command of my Lord which I could obey, which I clearly saw to be my duty, and yet to which I solemnly declared I would withhold my obedience. Surely, in such a case, I have not let Christ come into my heart.

If you would have Christ, He will be absolute Lord and Master—every humor and stubbornness of yours must be set aside, for where He comes He comes to reign. As He makes His entrance, He comes as the “King of *glory*”—that is to say, He must be a glorious King, glorious to you—one whom you seek to glorify.

You must not receive Him as though He were some paltry potentate that you did not care for, but He must be full of glory to you—the “Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace”—you must receive Him into your heart. Not as men receive a common guest, but as men receive their dearest and most honored friend, one whom they love and reverence with all the powers of their nature.

He must be the King of Glory to you and henceforth it must be your desire to glorify Him. This is not a hard thing to ask. For oh! it is the pleasure, it is the antepast of heaven! It is unspeakable bliss to live to the glory of Christ. Even when one is suffering, suffering is sweet if it brings Him honor! If one is despised for Christ, it is delightful to be reproached if it does but make Him more glorious.

*“If on my face for Thy dear name,
Shame and reproaches be,
I’ll hail reproach, and welcome shame,
If Thou remember me.”*

Oh, to glorify Christ! Methinks heaven would lose half its charms for me if I could not glorify Christ there. And the vast howling wilderness were heaven on earth to me if I might but glorify His name here below. To glorify Christ is far more to the Christian’s mind than harps of gold, streets of crystal, or gates of pearl.

This is the true music of the soul. The true paeon of triumph. The true chorus of eternity—that He ever lives—that the crown is on His head—that God also has highly exalted Him. Oh! this is our exultation, this is our joy, our triumph, our blessedness. If we can but promote His glory, the place where we can best promote it shall be our heaven. The sick bed, the hospital, or the poor-house shall be our heaven, if we can there best serve the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the King of Glory.

The year is fast drawing to a close. We call it “The year of grace, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-six.” Oh! that it may indeed be “the year of grace” to some unconverted persons here. It may be that I am not casting my net tonight where there are many such to be found. Most of you, my hearers, are members of the church of Christ—you are saved, I trust. Still there are sure to be here and there, like weeds growing in a garden of flowers, some who are still strangers to the Lord Jesus Christ.

I would to God that the Holy Spirit would move them to say, “Come in, Savior! Let the King of Glory come in!” Oh! let this true saying of the faithful and true witness be your encouragement: “If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” What a blessed thing!

You breakfasted with the devil, and dined with the world—what a mercy if you should sup with Christ and what a blessed supper you would have! Why, when you woke tomorrow it would be to breakfast with Christ. It would be to hear Him say, “Come and dine,” and then to sup with Him again, and so on until you come to eat bread at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

May the Lord bless you, and if He grants me my heart’s desire, you will each of you say to your souls, “Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.”

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—MATTHEW 11

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.