

THE SILVER TRUMPET

NO. 366

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 24, 1861,
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 AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

“Come now and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”
Isaiah 1:18.

THE chiefs of sinners are objects of the choicest mercy. Christ is a great Savior to meet the great transgressions of great rebels. The vast machinery of redemption was never undertaken for a mean or little purpose. There must be a great end in so great a plan, carried out at so great an expense, guaranteed with such great promises and intended to bring such great glory to God.

The plan of salvation has in it all the *wisdom* of God. The purchase of salvation has in it the fullness of the *grace* of God. The application of salvation is an exhibition of the exceeding greatness of the *power* of God. And all these three attributes in their greatness could not have conspired together for any but a great and marvelous purpose. At the very outset of our discourse this morning, I think we might draw a safe conclusion that Christ contemplated saving great sinners with a great salvation. To make the whole affair great there must be a great sinner—to be as it were the raw material upon whom the great wisdom, the great grace and the great power may be exerted to make him into a great saint. I think both saints and sinners have a very confined and limited idea of the goodness of God. We measure Him by our own standing. Oh that we knew the meaning of that text, where God says, “I will not execute the fierceness of My anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim. For I am God and not man” (Hosea 11:9.)

He acts in everything, not as a king gives to a king, or as some right royal heart acts towards the needy, but as a God. There is none who can come near to Him. As He is surpassing in His glory so that mortal eyes cannot behold it, so He is excelling in His love and grace, so that mortal comprehension can never grasp, comprehend, or fathom the infinity of His mercy. Keeping mercy with thousands, showing pity to multitudes—who is a God like He, passing by transgression, iniquity and sin?

My text shall at once introduce itself. It is a great text, indeed—specially meant for sinners of the deepest dye. I pray that the energy and power of the Spirit may open now the door of all our hearts that God’s mercy may enter in. Four things we will attempt to do this morning. First, we will remark that the text is addressed to *sinners of the deepest dye*. Secondly, it contains in it *an invitation to reason of the most prevailing power*. Thirdly, *it promises pardons of the fullest force*. And, fourthly, *it presents to us a time of the most solemn significance*.

I. First, then, our text is addressed to SINNERS OF THE DEEPEST DYE. Some of my Brethren are greatly scandalized by the general invitations which I am in the habit of giving to sinners, as sinners. Some of them go the length of asserting that there are no universal invitations in the Word of God. Their assertion, however, its not so forcible an argument as a *fact* and we have one here. Here is most plainly an invitation addressed to sinners who had not even the qualification of sensibility. They did not feel their need of a Savior. They had been scourged and flogged till the whole body was a mass of sores and yet they would not turn to the hand that smote them, but went on sinning still.

A more accurate description of careless, worthless, ungodly, abandoned souls never was given anywhere. We have in the context one of the most graphic descriptions of human nature in its utterly lost and godless estate. There is not a single gleam of light in the midst of the thick darkness. The man is bad—bad—bad from the beginning to the end. No, he is all worst and the worst is come to in worst. There is not a ray of promise in their nature, not a glimmer of anything good in the description of the persons to whom this text is addressed.

I call your attention, again, to the chapter which I have read. In the first verse you will perceive that the text was addressed to *senseless* sinners—so senseless that God Himself would not address them in expostulation but called upon the heavens and the earth to hear no complaint. He spoke to the firmament, to the stars, to the sun and to the moon and He

bade them hear. Men had grown so deaf to God's admonitions, so utterly dead to His appeals that He refuses to address them any more in notes of warning. "Hear, O heavens and give ear O earth!" What a fine poetical setting forth of the thought—that God appealed to dead inanimate creatures, for man had become more brutish than the stones of the field. And yet to such is the invitation given, "Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord."

You will readily see in the next place, that the text is given to *ungrateful* sinners. "I have nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against Me." Oh, how many of us come under this description! God was good to us in our early childhood. We were dandled on the knees of piety. We were laid to sleep on the couch of holiness. God provided for our wants. We were not born slaves, or in a tottering shed, but the dawn of our days was the rising of His merciful care. But how have we sinned in childhood and since we have come to manhood how have we violated all the admonitions of His love, done despite even to the blood of Christ and to the Spirit of God.

We have forgotten His mercies. We have kicked against the pricks. We have made the blessings of His Providence the assistants to our sin and the gifts of His grace the excuses for our iniquities. Oh, we may many of us stand here coldly and plead that we have been ungrateful to a good, a patient and a bountiful God. And yet to such is the text addressed, "Come now, let us reason together."

By reading in the third verse, you will perceive, again, that the text is addressed to men who are *worse than beasts*. We often slander the brute creation. We speak of a man being as drunk as a beast. I do not know that beasts are ever drunk. Sometimes when a man has gone into very low vice, we say he has committed a very beastly sin. I question whether the word is at all accurate. How do beasts sin? Do they not bow their necks and wear the yoke of man, who is as a God to them? Do they quarrel with the Law in which God has said, "I have given you dominion over the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air and the fish of the sea"?

If we were half as obedient to God as the beasts are to man, there were very little sin in us. But men must feel in their consciences that they have been worse than the brutes. They have not served God as an ox has served the master. They have not recognized Him even so much as the stupid ass has recognized its crib. None of us would keep a horse for twenty years if it never worked but only sought to injure us. And yet there are men here whom God has kept these forty and fifty years, put the breath into their nostrils, the bread into their mouths and the clothes upon their backs and they have done nothing but curse Him, speak ill of His service and do despite to His Laws. He is indeed a long-suffering God when He speaks to such as these and says, "Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord."

One may be astonished that there is such a text as this in the Bible, but the astonishment is far greater when you see to whom it is addressed—to men who are beneath the level of the brute creation. Oh, my dear Friends, you who fear God, never think there are any men too bad to be saved! Go to the reprobates, to the harlots, to the drunkards, to the abandoned. If God invites men who are worse than the ox and the ass, you may go and invite them, too, in the hope that the invitation shall be accepted and they may be saved. How many there are who have gone from the dunghills of sin up to the Throne of God and how few, on the other hand, have ever come out of the Pharisee's chair to mount up to the starry skies.

Look again at the chapter before us and the description of those to whom this text is addressed will become yet more full and clear. It appears from the 14th verse that they were a people *laden with iniquity*. When a man is loaded and pressed down, he can make no headway whatever. These people were loaded with such a weight of iniquity that they could not stir. Their sin had become a part of their *nature*. Like ingrained colors the sin could not be got out. If they sought to go to Christ, their sin was like a chain on their feet. If they had some thoughts of goodness, the old habits of vice soon slew those infants in the very birth.

They were laden with iniquity. They could say, "How can I be better? How can I be different? Sin has become a hamper and clog to me and I cannot move. I cannot escape from it." Yet even God says, "Come now, let us reason together." It is a dreadful thing when sin becomes not only nature, but a second nature—when the use of sin breeds the habit of sin and the man gets entangled in the meshes of an iron net from which he has no power to escape. Yet, to him, even to him, bond-slave of many lusts—chained hand and foot and straightly shut up against the power of God—even to him is the Word of the Gospel sent. "Let us reason together, says the Lord."

Furthermore, they were a people not only loaded with sin themselves, but they were teachers in transgressions, "Children that are corrupters." As old Charnock says, "They corrupted one another by their society and example, as rot-

ten apples putrefy the sound ones that lie near them.” Why, I know some men who, wherever they go, carry plagues and death about them. I have noticed that in almost every village and in every knot of society in a large town or city there is some one man who seems to be the incarnate devil of the parish. He is a man who teaches the young to drink, to swear, to commit licentiousness. He is a man whom Satan seems to have looked out to take care of his black flock in that particular district—who is a kind of shepherd with a crook in his hand, to lead the young into dangerous pastures and make them lie down beside the poisonous streams.

Yet, even to such an one and there may be such an one here—a wicked old wretch who has taken his degrees in Satan’s college, has become a Master of Belial, a prince and chief of sinners, a Goliath amongst the Philistines—yet, to such a man is this word sent today. Your hands are bloody with the souls of the young, you have kept a hell-house. You have grit up public entertainments which have debauched and depraved the young. You have gold in your pocket today which you have earned by the blood of souls. You have the fool’s pence and the drunkard’s shillings which have really come into your hands from the hearts of poor women. You have heard the cries of the starving children and you have tempted their husbands to take the drink and ruined their bodies and their souls.

You have kept a place where the entertainment was so low, so groveling, that you awoke the slumbering passions of evil in the minds of either young or old and so you shall sink to Hell with the blood of others on your head as well as your own damnation—not with one millstone about your neck but with many. “Carried away,” as John Bunyan put it, “not by one devil, but by seven devils who shall drag you down amidst the curses of the multitude whom you have deceived.”

Ah, and you, Sir, infidel lecturer, who stand up and defy the Deity, knowing in your own soul that you tremble at Him and are awfully afraid. Even to you, the worst of the worst, the vilest of the vile, twice dead, plucked up by the roots, rotten, putrid, corrupt, even to you does God speak today, “come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

Can I go any further than this? Methinks not. Still we must read the chapter through. The blessed text we have on hand is addressed to men upon whom all manner of gifts had been lost and thrown away. It is a great aggravation of our sin when we sin under the rod. If a child disobeys its parent the moment it has been punished, it is disobedience, indeed. But oh, how some here have been chastised and how little have they been profited by it. Will you, Sir, allow me to remind you of the cholera and how you escaped from the jaws of death? Do you recollect that fever and how you were laid very low and you said then, “Please God in His mercy ever to raise me up, I will be a different man”? And you *were* a different man, for you were worse than you were before and far more hardened.

Oh, there are some of you who have, perhaps, escaped from shipwreck or from fire, plucked from between the very teeth of the dragon. Some of you have met with accidents of the most serious kind one upon another—you have a bone that is scarce set even yet—an old fracture which should jolt your memory and remind you of the goodness and mercy of God—but all this has been lost. Ah, Sir, take heed, take heed. God’s justice is like the axe of the Romans. It is bound up in a bundle of rods and when the rods are worn out, then is the axe to be used. Take care—if the rod does not bring you to repentance the axe shall bring you to damnation.

If you will leap over hedge and ditch to be damned, you will come to the end of this awful steeple-chase—sooner than you think and you will find it a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. But to you, even to you, though years of sorrow have been lost upon you—to you this day is the message of the Gospel sent—“Come now and let us reason together, says the Lord, though your sins are as scarlet they shall be as white as snow, though they are red like crimson they shall be as wool.”

Furthermore, I think that in giving this description, I shall be better preaching the Gospel than during the other parts of the sermon. Let me assure you that the invitation of the text is sent to men who appeared to have been *totally depraved from the sole of the foot even to the head*. There was no soundness in them—there could not be found a single spot where there was not either a bleeding gash, or a blue bruise, or a swelling ulcer deep beneath the skin. They were all “wounds and bruises and putrefying sores.”

Are you such in your own esteem today? Are you a sinner so vile that you wonder how you dared to come where God’s people meet? Do you feel as if your wounds are so corrupt and noisome that you marvel how a godly man can stand by your side, or how your pious mother can mention your name in prayer, as she still does? Have you gone so far in

sin that you cannot go any further? Have you become as damnable as a man can be in this mortal life? Yet to you, vilest, most lost, most depraved, is the word of this salvation today sent, “Come now, let us reason together.”

To crown all, this message was once sent to the very worst of men, for it was sent to some whom God calls “Sodom and Gomorrah.” How awful were the crimes of Sodom—we would not mention it, how dreadful was the lust of Gomorrah! The ear of modesty could not hear, even if the shameless tongue could dare to speak—“Their sin went up to Heaven.” It was corrupt upon the earth. It was a stench to Heaven itself. And yet to such is the invitation of the Gospel this day sent—“Hear, oh you rulers of Sodom and you inhabitants of Gomorrah! Come now and let us reason together.”

They were men whose very religion was hateful to God. Men whose Psalms and songs and burnt offerings were as sins before the Most High. They had made their holy things unholy and their good things vile. Their gold was dross and their wine mixed with water. Their very holiness was unacceptable to God. Yes, and how many there are of this sort to be found in our streets who, when they sing a hymn in chapel or church, may well wonder how God bears with their impudence in daring to sing. Who, when they stand up to pray, might fear that they should drop down dead for their hypocrisy for they never pray at home.

You have multitudes who would go now and then to church, who would keep up superstitious ceremonies and are afraid lest their children should die without being sprinkled and yet not afraid of dying and being lost themselves. Superstitions they will attend to, but the real religion of God they are careless of. Next Good Friday, what a many will go to church who never go on the Sabbath. Good Friday is an ordinance of *man* and man will attend to that. But the Divine Sabbath they will neglect.

There are many too, among the Papists, who would not eat meat on a Friday but they would steal the meat on a Thursday—there are persons who would not venture for a moment to go against the rubrics of their particular prayer book, but they will violate the Laws of God and think nothing of doing everything which God commands them *not* to do and leaving undone everything which He commands them to do.

Yet to such, to such men whose religion is a lie, whose profession is a pretense, whose very seeking after holiness is but a subterfuge to hunt after gain—even to such is the Gospel sent—“Come now and let us reason together.”

I have a big net this morning—O that we might all be caught in its meshes! There is not one of us today who can be exempt from this invitation. Not even that poor soul yonder who shivers in his shoes because he fears that he has committed the unpardonable sin —

*“None are excluded hence, but those
Who do themselves exclude;
Welcome the learned and polite,
The ignorant and rude.”*

“Repent and be baptized every one of you,” said Peter. As John Bunyan put it one man might have stood in the crowd and said, “But I helped to hound Him to the Cross!” “Repent and be baptized every one of you.” “But I drove the nails into His hands!” says one. “Every one of you,” says Peter. “But I pierced His side!” said another. “Every one of you,” said Peter. “And I put my tongue into my cheek and stared at His nakedness and said, ‘If He is the Son of God, let Him come down from the Cross!’” “Every one of you,” said Peter. “Repent and be baptized every one of you.”

I do feel so grieved at many of our Calvinistic brethren—they know nothing about Calvinism I am sorry to say—for never was any man more caricatured by his professed followers than John Calvin. Many of them are afraid to preach from Peter’s text, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you.” When I do it, they say, “He is unsound.” Well, if I am unsound on this point, I have all the Puritans with me—the whole of them almost without a single exception.

John Bunyan first and foremost preaches to Jerusalem sinners and Charnock, you know, has written a book, “The Chief of Sinners, Objects of the Choicest Mercy.” But I do not care for that. I know the Lord has blessed my appeals to all sorts of sinners and none shall stop me in giving free invitations as long as I find them in this Book. And I do cry with Peter this morning to this vast assembly, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus. For the promise is unto you and to your children, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call.”

I have thus directed the letter and tried to find out the persons to whom the invitation is sent.

II. Secondly, the text presents us with REASONING OF THE MOST PREVALENT POWER.

O that God would reason with you this morning! And that you that are unconverted would be willing to reason with Him! My poor lips cannot reason with you as God can. I can but humbly and feebly be the representative of the Lord Je-

sus for a moment to poor trembling souls. “Come now and let us reason together.” You say, “I am too great a sinner to be saved.” I reply to you this—*What passage in God’s Word forbids you to seek for mercy?* Here is the Book, turn it over from beginning to end and see if you can find any passage in it which says, “Such-and-such a man may not knock at the mercy gate and may not seek a Savior.”

You know there are many verses which say in spirit, “Whosoever will, let him come.” Why, this is a *wooing* Book. It is always inviting you. It cries to you. No, it does more. I hope that by God’s grace it will compel you to come. I cannot find any passage that is a door to shut you out, but hundreds that invite you to come. Still you say, “I know I am too vile to be saved.” *Has the Lord ever refused you?* Have you been to Him and sought His grace through Christ and has He said to you, “Get you gone, you are too vile”? Why then, will you limit the Holy One of Israel before you have tried Him?

Or have you prayed, have you? He has not promised to answer you consciously the first time. God always hears a sinner’s prayer but He does not always let the sinner know that He has heard it. Mercy comes quickly but a sense of mercy may be some time delayed. Oh, Soul. I do assure you there was never yet a sinner that sought God and God refused him if he sought *through Christ*. I would ask you yet again—Are there any, you think, *of the damned in Hell who came there because Christ’s blood could not save them?* Ask them.

Why Sirs, if any of them could say in Hell, “It was God’s fault that I came here,” it would take the sting out of their torment. There is not a soul in Hell that ever repented of sin. There is not a soul there that ever sought mercy through Christ and if you could perish seeking a Savior, you would be the first—but that can never be. Well, Soul, since there is no text which denies you—*come!* Since the Lord has never yet refused you—COME! Since none have been lost for want of power in Him to save—COME! COME, I pray you!

But if these reasons do not suffice you because you will put yourself out of the pale of hope and say, “I am not worthy, I am not worthy,” let me suggest a few thoughts to you. Why was it that our Lord and Master, when He came into the world, chose to be born of sinful women? It is remarkable that those women whose names are mentioned as the ancestors of Christ, are perhaps, with one exception, of the vilest character. There is Tamer, who commits incest with her father-in-law. There is Rahab the harlot. There is Bathsheba the adulteress. And yet Christ sprung out of their loins. Why this black stream to mingle in with the current from which Christ should come? Why, Soul, surely it was to show you that He was a Savior for *sinners*. Surely if He had not meant to lay hold on the vilest of the vile this never would have occurred.

But look again—what did Jesus do when He was here on earth? Where was He taken to when a child? Why to Egypt, where they worshipped leeks and garlic and onions and such like trash, that it might be said, “Out of Egypt have I called My Son.” Where did He begin to preach? Why by the coast where the people that sat in darkness saw a great light. What was His general society? He was once in the house of a Pharisee, but how often was He the friend of publicans and sinners? And of those that followed Him, what a strange sort they were. Pick out anyone you please and there is little to be said about his previous character. These are the fishermen from the lake of Galilee, rough and uncouth. There is Peter who denies Him. There is Magdalene, out of whom was cast seven devils. There is that other woman who had been a sinner.

Who was the man whom He converted after He had gone to Heaven? There is only one case in the Bible where a man was converted *personally* by Christ after He had ascended—and that is the bloody *Saul of Tarsus* who was exceedingly mad against God’s people and was going to Damascus that he might hunt after the disciples. The chief of sinners hears the cry—“Saul, Saul, why persecute you Me?” What did Jesus do when He was dying? Did He not save a *thief*—a vile thief—one of the scum and parings of the world? And did He not say, “Today shall you be with Me in Paradise”? Ah, Souls, my Master always went where He was most wanted—among the chief of sinners.

And you know His preaching. It was a preaching that was meant for the worst of men. Look at that parable of the feast, “Go you into the highways and hedges.” Go and catch the hedge birds—the men that are looking after the linen drying on the hedges. Go after those who have not where to lay their heads—those that are filthy, ragged and something worse—go and tell *them* to come in. Not the princes’ sons, nor the great nor the good—but bring here the blind, the halt and the lame and whomsoever you shall meet and bid them to the wedding.

Why? He came to give light to the dark, to give bliss to the miserable, to give life to the dead, to give salvation to the lost. Now what have you to say to this? Methinks such reasoning should bring you to this conclusion—

*“I’ll to the gracious king approach,
Whose scepter mercy gives,
Perhaps He may command my touch,
And then the suppliant lives.
I can but perish if I go,
I am resolved to try,
For if I stay away, I know
I must forever die.
But if I die with mercy sought,
When I the king have tried,
That were to die, delightful thought,
As sinner never died.”*

But I have not done my reasoning yet—for there may still be some desponding soul who says—“Yes, God may do great wonders, but I should be the greatest wonder of all.” Look here, Sinner. One of God’s ends in salvation is to honor Himself—“that it may be unto the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign, which shall not be cut off.” How does a physician get a great name? Not by curing pin-scratches. Or by setting to rights little cuts upon men’s fingers. Any old woman can do that. It is by bad diseases, by things that are reckoned to be incurable and then, as soon as the man has cured what was given up by others, he is sure to advertise in the newspapers his splendid success. “So-and-So was turned out of all the hospitals and had taken all manner of medicine—at last I healed him.”

Why, my dear Friend, if you are such-an-one spiritually, you are the most fitted to be the means, in God’s hand, of honoring His grace. See what great engineers will do! When a man makes a railway across a good, hard, gravelly soil where all is perfect, you say, “Why any person can do that.” But when Stephenson constructed the railway across Chatmoss, a moss which sucked in any quantity of materials that was put there and all was lost, yet, when the railway was at last formed across that bog, everybody said—“What a marvel!”

Then look at the great wonders of Mr. Brunei. He always liked to undertake impossibilities and carry them out. Things which staggered everyone’s conception, he would attempt and perform. We might find fault, perhaps, with the expense, but in this case, we have a God whose bank has no bottom, who has an unlimited treasury and He loves to take hold on those black impossibilities and go to work with them and show both to men and angels what wonders He can do. Ah, poor Sinner! If you are the vilest of the vile, methinks you would show forth God’s grace the better.

I cannot help quoting John Bunyan again. In his “Jerusalem Sinner Saved,” he says—“There are some of us who are God’s people whose love is getting very low and whose zeal is flagging and we are not the men we should be. Oh, but,” he adds, “if the Lord would but convert some of these jail-birds. If he would but call by His grace some of those whoremongers and adulterers and thieves and drunkards, what spirit they would put into the Christian church! What new life would be poured into us, for they are always the most earnest men when converted. And so,” says he, “I pray that some of these big sinners may get saved, that the Church may have a new increase of zeal and love from men who love much because much has been forgiven.”

If I cannot persuade, if I cannot reason with you, for my lips are poor, poor, things as substitute for God’s own voice—yet let me quote His own Words and those Words are a solemn oath. Now when a man takes an oath you do not think of doubting him, I hope. Now God puts His hand upon His own self-existence and He says, “As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, but had rather that he should turn unto Me and live.” He does not wish your damnation. It is not His pleasure that you should be lost. He gets glory, it is true, to His justice, but He gets no satisfaction to His love if you perish.

As a father would sooner kiss his child than use the rod, so would the Lord sooner see you at His feet in prayer than under His feet in destruction. He is a loving God. He is not hard to be dealt with. Since Christ became the substitute for men, God has showed to us that He has a heart of compassion. Come back, Prodigal, come back. My Father sends me to you. Come back, I pray you. He will not reject you. Oh, Spirit of the living God, melt the heart that will not move. For sure the love of God and the riches of His grace might melt the adamant and make the solid granite move.

“Turn you, turn you, why will you die, O house of Israel? Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him turn unto God and He will have mercy upon him and to our God for He will abundantly par-

don.” I leave, then, the reasoning—only adding this, as an old Divine once said and his saying was the means of the conversion of one at least—“He that believes has set to his seal that God is true. He that believes not makes God a liar.” Says he, “Sinner, which will you do today, will you believe and so set to your seal that He is true, or will you disbelieve and go on doubting and so making God a liar?” Oh, do not this evil thing, but believe in Jesus and you shall be saved.

III. I must now briefly turn to my third point. The words of this blessed text contain a PROMISE OF PARDON OF THE FULLEST FORCE.

“Though your sins be as *scarlet* they shall be as white as snow. And though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Now these colors are selected because of their exceeding brilliance. Scarlet and crimson are colors which at once attract the eye. There are some colors which a man might wear and pass unmolested, but when a man is clothed in bright colors, he can be perceived at a far greater distance.

Now some sins are striking, glaring sins. You cannot help seeing them. And the sinner himself is compelled to confess them. But the Hebrew word most of you know conveys the idea of doubly dyed—what we call ingrained colors—when the wool has lain so long in the dye that it cannot be got out, though you wash or wear it as long as you please—you must destroy the fabric before you can destroy the color. Many sins are of this class. Our own natural depravity, in fact, is just like this—it is ingrained. As well might the Ethiopian wash himself white, or the leopard take away his spots—sinners who have learned to do evil, learn to do it well.

Yet here is the promise of full pardon for glaring and for ingrained lusts. And note how the pardon is put—“they shall be as snow”—pure white virgin snow. But snow soon loses its whiteness and therefore it is compared to the whiteness of the wool washed and prepared by the busy housewife for her fair white linen. You shall be so cleansed that not the shadow of a spot, nor the sign of a sin, shall be left upon you! When a man believes in Christ, he is in that moment, in God’s sight, as though he had never sinned in all his life! No, I will go further—he is that day in a better position than though he had never sinned, for if he had never sinned, he would have had the perfect righteousness of *man*—but by believing, he is made the righteousness of *God* in Christ.

We had once a cloak that is taken away—when we believe, Christ gives us a robe. But it is an infinitely better one. We lost but a common garment—but He arrays us royally. Strangely indeed is that man clothed who believes in Jesus. Yon thief who is hanging on the Cross is black as Hell—he believes and he is as white as Heaven’s own purity. Faith takes away all sin through the precious blood of Jesus. When a man has once gone down into that sacred laver which is filled with Jesus’ blood, there “is no spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing,” left upon him. His sin has ceased to be. His iniquity is covered. His transgressions have been carried into the wilderness and are gone.

This is the most wonderful thing about the Gospel. This does not take away part of our sin, but the whole of it. It does not remove it partially, but entirely—not for a little time, but forever. “He that believes on Him is not condemned.” And though today you should have committed every crime in the world, yet the moment you believe in Jesus you are saved—the Spirit of God shall dwell in you to keep you from sin in the future—and the blood of Christ shall plead for you that sin shall never be laid to your charges.

Some years ago there was a man who had committed murder. He had been, indeed, a most dreadful character. But through the teaching of a minister of Christ, he was converted to God. He had one anxiety, namely, that having believed in Jesus, he might be baptized before he suffered the sentence of the Law. It could not be effected according to the law of the country in which he then lived, except he be baptized in chains. And so he was baptized in chains. But what did it matter? He was baptized in *joy*. He knew that He who can save to the uttermost, could save even him and though in chains, he was free—though guilty before man, pardoned in the sight of God—though punished by human law. Saved from the Curse by the precious blood of Jesus. And of course, do not misunderstand me, he was *not* saved by the baptism—he was saved by the blood.

There is no knowing how long God’s arm is, these is no telling how precious Christ’s blood is—until you have felt the power of it yourself. And then you will wonder as long as you live, even through eternity and you will be astonished to think that the blood of Christ could save such a wretch as you are and make you the monument of His mercy.

IV. I now come to notice, in the last place, the TIME which is mentioned in the text, which is of the MOST SOLEMN SIGNIFICANCE.

“Come *now* and let us reason together says the Lord.” “Come *now*.” You have sinned long enough. Why should you harden your hearts by longer delay? Come *now*, no season can be better. If you tarry till you’re better, you will never come at all. Come *now*. You may never have another warning. The heart may never be so tender as it is today. Come *now*. No other eyes may ever weep over you. No other heart may ever agonize for your salvation.

Come *NOW, NOW, NOW*—for tomorrow you may never know in this world—Death may have sealed your fate and the once filthy may remain filthy still. Come *now*. For tomorrow your heart may become harder than stone and God may give you up. Come *now*. It is God’s time. Tomorrow is the devil’s time. “Today if you will hear His voice harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, when your fathers tempted Me and proved Me in the wilderness and saw My works.” Come *now*. Why delay to be happy?

Would you put off your wedding day? Will you postpone the hour when you are pardoned and delivered? Come *now*. The heart of Jehovah yearns for you. The eye of your Father sees you afar off and He runs to meet you. Come *now*. The Church is praying for you. These are revival times—ministers are more in earnest. God’s people are more anxious. Come *now*—

*“Lest sighted once, the season lost
Should never return again.”*

Come *now*. Mortal man, mortal man, so near your end—thus says the Lord, “Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live. And because I will do this, consider your ways.” Come *now*. Oh, that I had power to send home this invitation! But it must be left in the Master’s hands. Yet, if an anxious heart could do it, how would I plead with you! Sinner, is Hell so pleasant that you must endure it? Is Heaven a trifle that you must lose it? What? Is the wrath of God which abides on you no reason why you should labor to escape?

What? Is not a perfect pardon worth the having? Is the precious blood of Christ worthless? Is it nothing to you that the Savior should die? Man, are you a fool? Are you mad? If you must play the fool go and sport with your gold and silver, but not with your soul! Dress yourself like a madman, wear a mask, paint your cheeks, walk in shame and make a mockery of yourself, if you must play the fool—but why cast your soul into Hell for a joke? Why lose your eternal interests for a little ease? Be wise, Man.

Oh, Spirit of God, make this sinner wise! We may preach, but it is Yours to apply. Lord apply it! Come forth great Spirit. Come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live. In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, oh, Spirit of God come forth! By the voice which once bade the winds cease from roaring and the waves lie still, come Spirit of the living God! In the name of Jesus who was crucified, Sinners, believe and live! I preach not now in my own name, or in my own strength, but in the name of Him who gave Himself for sinners on the Cross.

“Repent and be baptized every one of you.” “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved”—

*“But if your ears refuse
The language of His grace
And hearts grow hard like stubborn Jews,
That unbelieving race.
The Lord in vengeance dressed
Shall lift His hand and swear
‘You that despise My promised rest,
Shall have no portion there.’ ”*

Let me dismiss you with the words of blessing. May the grace of our Lord Jesus, the love of the Father and the fellowship of the Spirit, be with all who believe in Christ now and forever. Amen and Amen.

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