

THE YOUNG MAN'S PRAYER

NO. 513

A SERMON
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 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“O satisfy us early with Your mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.”
Psalm 90:14.

ISRAEL had suffered a long night of affliction. Dense was the darkness while they abode in Egypt, and cheerless was the glimmering twilight of that wilderness which was covered with their graves. Amidst a thousand miracles of His mercy, what must have been the sorrows of a camp in which every stop was marked with many burials—until the whole trail was a long cemetery? I suppose that the deaths in the camp of Israel were never less than 50 each day—if not three times that number—so that they learned experientially that verse of the Psalm, “For we are consumed by Your anger, and by Your wrath are we troubled.” Theirs was the weary march of men who wander about in search of tombs; they traveled towards a land which they could never reach, weary with a work the result of which only their children would receive. You may easily understand how these troubled ones longed for the time when the true day of Israel should dawn, when the black midnight of Egypt, and the dark twilight of the wilderness, both should give way to the rising sun of the settled rest in Canaan! Most fitly was the prayer offered by Moses—the representative man of all that host—“O satisfy us early with Your mercy.” Hasten the time when we shall come to our promised rest. Bring on speedily the season when we shall sit under our own vine and our own fig tree, “and shall rejoice and be glad all our days.”

This prayer falls from the lips of yonder brother, whose rough pathway for many a mile has descended into the Valley of Death-shade. Loss after loss has he experienced, till, as in Job's case, the messengers of evil have trod upon one another's heels! His griefs are new every morning, and his trials fresh every evening. Friends forsake him, and prove to be deceitful brooks; God breaks him with a tempest; he finds no pause in the ceaseless shower of his troubles. Nevertheless, his hope is not extinguished, and his constant faith lays hold upon the promise, that “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.” He understands that God will not always chide, neither does He keep His anger forever; therefore, he watches for deliverance even as they who watch for the morning, and his most appropriate cry is, “O satisfy us early with Your mercy; lift up the light of Your countenance upon us, show Your marvelous loving-kindness in this present hour of need. O my God, make haste to help me, be a very present help in time of trouble; fly to my relief lest I perish from the land; awake, for my rescue, that I may rejoice and be glad all my days.”

See yonder sick bed! Tread lightly, lest perchance you disturb the brief slumbers of that daughter of affliction. She has tossed to and fro days and nights without number, counting her minutes by her pains, and numbering her hours with the attacks of her agony. From that couch of suffering, where many diseases have conspired to torment the frail body of this child of woe, where the soul itself has grown weary of life, and longs for the wings of a dove, I think this prayer may well arise, “O satisfy us early with Your mercy.” “When will the eternal day break upon my long night? When will the shadows flee away? Sweet Sun of glory! When will You rise with healing beneath Your wings? I shall be satisfied when I wake up in Your likeness, O Lord; hasten that joyful hour! Give me a speedy deliverance from my bed of weakness that I may rejoice and be glad throughout eternal days.”

I think the prayer would be equally appropriate from many a distressed conscience, where conviction of sin has rolled heavily over the soul till the bones are sorely vexed, and the spirit is overwhelmed. That poor heart indulges the hope that Jesus Christ will one day comfort it, and become its salvation—it has a humble hope that these wounds will not last forever but shall all be healed by mercy's hand; that He who looses the bands of Orion will one day deliver the prisoner out of his captivity! Oh, conscience-stricken sinner, you may, on your knees, now cry out—“O satisfy me early with Your mercy! Keep me

not always in this house of bondage; let me not plunge forever in this slough of despair; set my feet upon a rock, wash me from my iniquities; clothe me with garments of salvation, and put the new song into my mouth, that I may rejoice and be glad all my days!"

Still it appears to me that, without straining so much as one word even in the slightest degree, I may take my text this morning as the prayer of a *young heart*, expressing its desire for present salvation. To you, young men and maidens, shall I address myself, and may the good Spirit cause you in the days of your youth to remember your Creator, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw near when you shall say, we have no pleasure in them. I hope the angel of the Lord has said unto me, "Run, speak to that young man," and that, like the good housewife in the Proverbs, I shall have a portion also for the maidens!

I shall use the text in two ways; first, *as the ground of my address to the young*; and then, secondly, *as a model for your address to God*.

I. WE WILL MAKE OUR TEXT THE GROUND WORK OF A SOLEMN PLEADING WITH YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN TO GIVE THEIR HEARTS TO CHRIST THIS DAY.

The voice of wisdom reminds you in this, our text, that you are not pure in God's sight, but NEED HIS MERCY. Early as it is with you, you must come before God on the same footing as those who seek Him at the 11th hour. Here is nothing said about *merit*, nothing concerning the natural innocence of youth, or the beauty of the juvenile character. You are not thus flattered and deceived; but Holy Scripture guides you aright, by dictating to you an evangelical prayer, such as God will deign to accept—"O satisfy us early *with Your mercy*." Young men, though as yet no outward crimes have stained your character, yet your salvation must be the work of reigning grace, and that for several reasons. *Your nature is at the present moment full of sin, and saturated with iniquity*, and therefore, you are the object of God's most righteous anger! How can He meet an heir of wrath on terms of justice? His holiness cannot endure you! What if you are made an heir of glory? Will not this be divine grace and divine grace alone? If ever you are made meet to be a partaker with the saints in light, this must surely be love's own work—inasmuch as your nature, altogether apart from your actions—deserves God's reprobation! It is mercy which spares you, and if the Lord is pleased to renew your heart, it will be to the praise of the glory of His grace. Be not proud, repel not this certain truth of God—that you are an alien, a stranger, an enemy—born in sin and shaped in iniquity! By nature, you are an heir of wrath, even as others; yield to its force, and seek that mercy which is as really needed by you as by the hoary-headed villain who rots into his grave, festering with debauchery and lust—

*"True you are young, but there's a stone
Within the youngest breast!
One-half the crimes which you have done
Would rob you of your rest."*

Besides, your conscience reminds you that your outward lives *have not been what they should be*. How soon did we begin to sin! While we were yet little children, we went astray from the womb, speaking lies. How rebellious we were! How we chose our own will and way, and would by no means submit ourselves to our parents! How in our riper youth we thought it sport to scatter fire-brands, and carry the hot coals of sin in our bosom! We played with the serpent, charmed with its azure scales, but forgetful of its poisoned fangs. Far be it from us to boast with the Pharisee—"Lord, I thank You that I am not as others." But rather, let the youngest pray with the publican—"God be merciful to me a sinner." A little child, but seven years of age, cried when under conviction of sin—"Can the Lord have mercy upon such a great sinner as I am, who has lived seven years without fearing and loving Him?" Ah, my friends, if this babe could thus lament, what should be the repentance of those who are 15, or 16, or 17, or 18, or 20, or who have passed the year of manhood? What shall you say, since you have lived so long, wasting your precious days—more priceless than pearls, neglecting those golden years, despising divine things and continuing in rebellion against God? Lord, You know that young though we are, we have multitudes of sins to confess, and therefore, it is mercy, mercy, *mercy*, which we crave at Your hands! Remember, beloved young friends, that if you are saved in the morning of life, *you will be wonderful instances of preventing mercy!* It is great mercy which blots out sin, but who shall say that it is not equally great mercy which prevents it? To bring home yonder sheep which has long gone astray, with its wool all

torn, its flesh bleeding, and its bones broken, manifests the tender care of the good Shepherd. But, oh, to reclaim the lamb at the commencement of its straying—to put it into the fold, and to keep it there and nurture it—what a million mercies are here compressed into one!

The young saint may sweetly sing—

*“I still had wandered but for You;
Lord, it was Your own all-powerful word,
Sin's fetters broke and set me free,
Henceforth to acknowledge You as my Lord.”*

There are depths of mercy to pluck the withered brand from out of the fire when it is black and scorched with the flame; but are there not heights of love when the young wood is planted in the courts of the Lord, and made to flourish as a cedar? However soon we are saved, the glory of perfection has departed from us, but how happy is he who tarries but a few years in a state of nature; as if the fall and the rising again walked hand in hand! No soul is without spot or wrinkle, but some stains are spots the young Believer is happily delivered from. Habits of vice and continuance in crime he has not known; he never knew the drunkard's raging thirst; the black oaths of the sailor never dirtied his mouth. This younger son has not been long in the far country; he comes back before he has long fed the swine. He has been black with sin in the sight of God, but in the eyes of men, and in the open vision of onlookers, the young Believer seems as if he had never gone astray! Here is great mercy—mercy for which heaven is to be praised forever and ever. This, I think I may call *distinguishing* grace with an emphasis! All election distinguishes, and all divine grace is discriminating, but that grace which adopts the young child so early is *distinguishing* in the highest degree! As Jenubath, the young son of Hadad, was brought up in the court of Pharaoh, and weaned in the king's palace, so are some saints sanctified from the womb. Happy is it for any young man—an elect one out of the elect is he—if he is weaned upon the knees of piety, and coddled upon the lap of holiness; if he is lighted to his bed with the lamps of the sanctuary, and lulled to his sleep with the name of Jesus! If I may breathe a prayer in public for my children, let them be clothed with a little ephod, like young Samuel, and nourished in the chambers of the temple, like the young prince Joash. O my dear young friends, it is mercy, mercy in a distinguishing and peculiar degree, to be saved early, because of your fallen nature, because of sins committed, and yet more—because of sins prevented, and distinguishing favor bestowed by the grace of God!

2. But, I have another reason for endeavoring to plead with the young this morning, hoping that the Spirit of God will plead with them. I remark that salvation, if it comes to you, must not only be mercy, *but it must be mercy through the cross!* I infer that from the text, because the text desires it to be a satisfying mercy, and there is no mercy which ever can satisfy a sinner, but mercy through the cross of Christ. There is no mercy apart from the cross! Many say that God is merciful, and therefore, surely, He will not condemn them; but in the pangs of death, and in the terrors of conscience, the uncovenanted mercy of God is no solace to the soul! Some proclaim a mercy which is dependent upon human effort—human goodness or merit—but no soul ever yet did or could find any lasting satisfaction in this delusion! Mercy by mere ceremonies or mercy by outward ordinances is but a mockery of human thirst. Like Tantalus, who is mocked by the receding waters, so is the ceremonialist who tries to drink where he finds all comfort fleeing from him. Young man, the cross of Christ has that in it which can give you solid, satisfying comfort—if you put your trust in it. It can satisfy *your judgment*. What is more logical than the great doctrine of substitution?—God is so terribly just that He will by no means spare the guilty, and that Justice is wholly met by Him who stood in the place of His people! Here is that which will satisfy *your conscience*. Your conscience knows that God must punish you; it is one of those truths which God stamped upon it when He first made you what you are. But when your soul sees Christ punished instead of you, it pillows its head right softly. There is no resting place for conscience but at the cross! Priests may preach what they will, and philosophers may imagine what they please, but there is in the conscience of man, in its restlessness, an indication that the cross of Christ must have come from God, because that conscience never ceases from its disquiet till it hides in the wounds of the Crucified! Never again shall conscience alarm you with dreadful thoughts of the wrath to come, if you lay hold of that mercy which is revealed in Jesus Christ! Here, too, is satisfaction *for all your fears*. Do they pursue you today like a pack of hungry dogs in full pursuit of the stag? Flee to Christ and your fears have vanished!

What has that man to fear for whom Jesus died? Need he alarm himself when Christ stands in his place before the eternal throne and pleads there for him? Here, too, is satisfaction *for your hopes*. He who gets Christ gets all the future wrapped up in Him. While—

*“There’s pardon for transgressions past;
It matters not how black their cast.”*

There are also peace, and joy, and safety for all the years and for all the eternity to come in the same Christ Jesus who has put away your sin! Oh, I wish, young man, I wish young Woman, that you would put your trust in Jesus *now*, for in Him there is an answer to this prayer—“O satisfy us early with Your mercy.”

3. Furthermore, anxiously would I press this matter of a youthful faith upon you, *because you have dissatisfaction even now*. Do I not speak the truth? When looking into the bright eyes of the happiest among you, I venture to say that you are not perfectly satisfied. You feel that something is lacking. My lad, your boyish games cannot quite satisfy you; there is a something in you nobler than toys and games can gratify. Young man, your pursuits of business furnish you with some considerable interest and amusement, but still there is an aching void—you know there is—and although pleasure promises to fill it, you have begun already to discover that you have a thirst which is not to be quenched with water, and a hunger which is not to be satisfied with bread. You know it is so! The other evening when you were quite alone, when you were quietly thinking matters over, you felt that this present world was not enough for you. The majesty of a mysterious longing, which God had put in you, lifted up itself and claimed to be heard! Did it not? The other day, after the party was over at which you had so enjoyed yourself, when it was all done, and everybody was gone—and you were quite quiet, did you not feel that even if you had these things every day of your life—yet, you could not be content? You need, you know not what, but you do need something to fill your heart. We look back upon our younger days and think that they were far happier than our present state, and we sometimes fancy that we used to be satisfied then, but I believe that our thoughts imagine a great lie. I do, from my soul, confess that I never was satisfied till I came to Christ; when I was yet a child I had far more wretchedness than I have now; I will even add more weariness, more care, more heartache, than I know at this day. I may be singular in this confession, but I make it, and know it to be the truth. Since that dear hour when my soul cast itself on Jesus, I have found solid joy and peace! But before that, all those supposed gaieties of early youth, all the imagined ease and joy of boyhood were but vanity and vexation of spirit to me. You do feel, if I know anything about you, that you are not quite satisfied now. Well, then, let me say to you again, that I would have you come to Jesus! Depend upon it, there is that in Him which can thoroughly satisfy you! What can you need more to satisfy *your heart* than love to Him? Our hearts all crave for an object upon which they may be set; we often surrender ourselves to an unworthy object which betrays us, or proves too narrow to accommodate our heart’s desire; but if you love Jesus, you will love one who deserves your warmest affection, who will amply repay your fullest confidence, and will never betray it. You say that not only does your heart need something, but your *head*. My witness is that there is in the gospel of Christ the richest food for the brain! Before you know Christ, you read, you search, you study, and you put what you learn into a wild chaos of useless confusion; but after you have found Christ, everything else that you learn is put in its proper place.

You get Christ as the central sun, and then, every science and fact begins to revolve round about Him just as the planets travel in their perpetual circle around the central orb. Without Christ, we are ignorant, but with Him, we understand the most excellent of sciences, and all others shall fall into their proper place. This is an age when, without a true faith in Christ, the young mind has a dreary pilgrimage before it. False guides are standing, arrayed in all sorts of garbs, ready to lead you first to doubt this book of Scripture, then to distrust the whole, then to mistrust God and Christ—and then, to doubt your own *existence*, and to come into the dreary dream land where nothing is certain—where everything is myth and fiction! Give your heart to Christ, young man, and He will furnish you with anchors and a good anchor-hold to your mind, so that when stormy winds of skepticism sweep across the sea, and other boats are wrecked, you shall outride the storm, and shall always be safe. It is a strange thing that people should be so long before they are satisfied. Look at some of my hearers today. They mean to be satisfied with money, and when they were apprentices, they thought they would be so satisfied when they

earned journeymen's wages, but they came to be journeymen, and then, they were not satisfied till they were foremen! And then, they felt they never would be satisfied till they had a concern of their own. They got a concern of their own, and took a house in the city—but then, they felt they could not be content till they had taken the adjoining premises; then, they had more advertising and more work to do, and now they begin to feel that they never shall be quite easy till they have purchased a snug little villa in the country! Yes, there are some here who have the villa, and handsome grounds, and so on, but they will not be satisfied till they see all their children married; and when they have seen all their children married, they will not be at rest even then! They think they will, but they will not; there is always a something yet beyond. "Man never is, but always to be blessed," as Young puts it. There are Fortunate Isles for the mariner to reach, and failing these, there is no haven for him even in the safest port. We know some, too, who, instead of pursuing wealth, are looking after fame. They have been honored for that clever piece of writing, but they are desirous of more honor; they must write better, still, and when they have achieved some degree of notoriety through a second attempt, they will feel that now they have a name to keep up, and so they must have that name widened, and the circle of their influence must extend. The fact is, that neither wealth, nor honor, nor *anything that is of mortal birth*, can ever fill the insatiable, immortal soul of man! The heart of man has an everlasting hunger given to it, and if you could put worlds into its mouth, it would still crave for more. It is so thirsty that if all the rivers drained themselves into it, still, like the deep sea which is never full, the heart would yet cry out for more. Man is truly like the horseleech—he forever says, "Give! Give! Give!" But until the cross is given to the insatiable heart; till Jesus Christ—who is the fullness of Him who fills all in all—is bestowed, the heart of man never can be full! Where shall we find a satisfied man but in the Church of Christ? And in the Church of Christ I find him, not merely in the pulpit, where success and position might satisfy, but I find him in the *pew* humbly receiving the truth of God. I find him in the pew, not among the rich, where earthly comforts might tend to make him satisfied, but among the poor, where cold and nakedness might cause him to complain. I could point you today to the workman who earns every bit of bread he eats with more sweat of his brow than you would dream of, but he is content. I could point you to the poor work-girl who scarcely earns enough to hold body and soul together—and yet, in this house of God her heart often leaps for joy—for she is wholly resigned. I could show you the bedridden woman whose bones come through the skin through long lying upon a bed which friendship would gladly make soft, but which is all too hard for her weakness—and yet, she is content—though a parish pittance is all that is given her to feed upon. I say, we have no need to exaggerate, or strain, or use hyperboles; we do find in the Church of Christ those who have been, and are satisfied with the mercy of God. Now, would it not be a fine thing to *begin* life with being satisfied? There are some who do not end it with this attainment. They hunt after satisfaction till they come to their dying beds, and then still do not find it! But oh, to *begin* life with being satisfied! Not to say at some future date I will be satisfied, but to be content *now*; not when I have climbed to such-and-such a pinnacle I shall have enough, but to have enough *now*; to begin with satisfaction before you launch upon a world of troubles! You may do so, my brother; you may do so, my young sister, if now, with a true heart, you look to Him who hangs upon yonder cross, and commit your soul into His keeping, praying this prayer—"O satisfy us *early* with Your mercy."

The reason which our text gives I must comment upon for a moment. Our text says—"O satisfy us early with Your mercy; *that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.*" We never rejoice in the true sense of the term; we never possess solid gladness till we are satisfied with God's mercy. It is all a mockery and a pretense; the reality never comes to us till God's mercy visits our heart; but after that, what joy we know! Tell me that the Christian is miserable! O sir, you do not know what the Christian is! We need not appear before you with laughing faces, for our joy is deeper than yours, and needs not express itself out in immodest signs. The *poor* trader puts all his goods in the window, but the rich man has rich stores even in the dark cellar—his warehouses are full and he makes no show. Still waters run deep, and we are sometimes still in our joy because of the depth of our delight. Say we are not happy, sirs! We would not change one moment of our joy for a hundred years of yours! We hear your joy, and we understand that it is like the crackling of thorns under a pot—which crackle all the louder because they burn so furiously, and will so soon be gone. But ours is a steady fire. We do mourn sometimes; we mourn more often than we ought to do; we are free to confess this; but it is not our *religion* which makes us

mourn; it is because we do not live up to it, for when we live up to it, and have the company of Jesus, we tell you—

*“We would not change our blessed estate
For all that earth calls good or great!
And while our faith can keep her hold,
We envy not the sinner's gold.”*

Our sickbeds are often as the doorstep of heaven; even when we are cast down, there is a sweet solace in our sorrow, and a profound joy about our apparent grief which we would not give away. God gave it to us, and the world cannot destroy it. They who love Jesus Christ early have the best hope of enjoying the happiest days as Christians. *They will have the most service*, and the service of God is perfect delight! Their youthful vigor will enable them to do more than those who enlist when they are old and decrepit. The joy of the Lord is our strength; and on the other hand, to use our strength for God is a fountain of joy. Young man, if you give 50 years of service unto God, surely you shall rejoice all your days! The earlier we are converted, having the longer time to study in Christ's college, *the more profound shall be our knowledge of Him!* We shall have more time for communion, more years for fellowship. We shall have more seasons to prove the power of prayer, and more opportunities to test the fidelity of God than we would if we came late. Those who come late are blessed by being helped to learn so much, but those who come in early shall surely outstrip them. Let me be young, like John, that I may have years of loving service, and like he, may have much intimate acquaintance with my Lord! Surely those who are converted early may reckon upon more joy, because *they never will have to contend with and to mourn over what later converts must know*. Your bones are not broken, you can run without weariness—you have not fallen as some have done—you can walk without fainting. Often the gray-headed man, who is converted at 60 or 70, finds the remembrance of his youthful sins clinging to him; when he would praise, an old lascivious song revives upon his memory; when he would mount up to heaven, he suddenly remembers some scene in a haunt of vice which he would be glad to forget! But you, saved by divine grace before you thus fall into the jaw of the lion, or under the paw of the bear, will certainly have cause for rejoicing all your life. If I may have heavenly music upon earth, let me begin it now, Lord; put not away the viol and the harp for my fingers when they tremble with age; let me use them while yet I am young. Now, Lord, if there is a banquet, do not bring me in at the end of the feast, but let me begin to feast today! If I am to be married to Jesus, let it not be when my hair is gray, but marry me to Jesus now! What better time for joy than today? Now shall my joys swell and grow like a river, which rolls on to a mightier breadth and depth as its course is prolonged! I shall rejoice and be glad in You all my days, good Lord, if You will now begin with me, in this the morning of my days.

I cannot put my thoughts together this morning as I desire, but I still feel an earnest longing to shoot the arrow to its mark, and therefore, one or two stray thoughts before I turn to the prayer itself, and these shall be very brief. My dear young friends, you who are of my own age, or younger still, I beseech you, ask to be satisfied with God's mercy early, *for you may die early*. It has been our grief this week to stand by the open grave of one who was, alas, too soon, as we thought, snatched away to heaven. You may never number the full ripe years of manhood. We say that our years are threescore and ten, but to you they may not even be a score; your sun may go down while it is yet noon. God often reaps His corn green—long before the autumn comes, He cuts down His sheaves. “Because I will do this, prepare to meet your God.” Then, on the other hand, if you should live—*in whose service could you spend your days better than in the service of God?* What more happy employment, what more blessed position than to be found, like Samuel, a waiting servant upon God while yet you need a mother's care? *Remember how early temptations beset you*. Would you not wish to secure your early days? And how can you cleanse your ways except by taking heed unto them according to God's Word? Do you not know, too, *that the Church needs you?* Your young blood shall keep her veins full of vigor, and make her sinews strong. *Should not the love of Jesus Christ win you?* If He died and shed His blood for men, does He not deserve their best service? Would you desire to give to God an offering of the end of your days? What would you have thought of the Jew who brought an old bull—who, after having used an ox in his own fields till it was worn out, should then consecrate it to God? Let the *lambs* be offered! Let the firstlings of the herd be brought! Let God have the first sheaves of the harvest! Surely, He deserves something

better than to have the devil's leavings put upon His holy altar! "Oh, but," you say, "would He accept me if I came to Him early?" Why, you have more promises than the old man has! It is written that God will be found of them who seek Him, but it is specially written, "They who seek Me early shall find Me." You have a peculiar promise given to you. If there were any who could be rejected, it could not by any possibility be the young; if there were one whom Jesus Christ could leave, it would not be you, for He gathers the lambs in His bosom! "Suffer the little children to come unto Me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." May not that cheer you, however young you are? Jesus Christ loves to see young men and maidens join in His praise! We find that the best of saints in the Old and New Testament were those who came to Jesus young; certain it is that the pick and cream of the Church in modern times will be found among those who are early converts. Look at those who are church officials and ministers, and in most cases—and the exception only proves the rule—in most cases, the leaders in our Israel are those who, as young Hannibal was devoted by his parents to the great cause of his country, were devoted by their parents to the great cause of Zion and to the interests of Jerusalem. If you would be strong for God, eminent in His service, and joyful in His ways, if you would understand the heights and depths of the love of Christ which passes knowledge, if you would give yourselves before your bones are broken, and before your spirit has become tinctured through and through with habits of iniquity—then offer this prayer—"O satisfy us early with Your mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days."

II. And now, very briefly, we shall take the text as YOUR ADDRESS TO GOD.

Every word here is significant. "O." This teaches us *that the prayer is to be earnest*. I will suppose that I have led some of you young people here now to breathe this prayer to God. Am I so unhappy as to suppose that none of you will do it? Are there not some who now say, "I will, with my whole heart, God the Holy Spirit helping me, now in my pew offer this supplication to heaven." It begins with an "O." Dull prayers will never reach God's throne. What comes from our heart coldly can never get to God's heart. Dull, dead prayers, ask God to deny them! We must pray out of our very souls. The soul of our prayer must be the prayer of our soul. "O satisfy us." Young man, the Lord is willing to open the door to those who knock, but you must knock hard! He is fully prepared to give to those who ask, but you must ask earnestly! The kingdom of heaven suffers violence. It is not a gentle grasp which will avail; you must *wrestle* with the angel. Give no sleep to your eyes nor slumber to your eyelids till you have found the Savior! Remember, if you do but find Him, it will well repay you though you shed drops of blood in the pursuit. If instead of tears you had given your heart's blood, and if instead of sighs you were to give the shrieks of a martyr, it would well recompense you if you did but find Jesus—therefore, be earnest. If you find Him not, remember, you perish, and perish with a great destruction; the wrath of God abides on you, and hell must be your portion; therefore, as one who pleads for his life, so plead for *mercy*! Throw your whole spirit into it, and let that spirit be heated to a glowing heat. Be not satisfied to stand at the foot of the throne and say, "Let God save me if He will." No, but put it thus, "Lord, I cannot take a denial! O satisfy me! O save me!" Such a prayer is sure to be accepted.

Again, *make it a generous prayer*, when you are at it. "O satisfy *us* early!" I am glad to see among our young sisters in the catechumen class such a spirit of love for one another, so that when one is converted, she is sure to look round for another, the scores in that class who have found the Lord are always searching out some stray young woman in the street, or some hopeful ones attending the congregation whom they try to bring in, that Jesus may be glorified! The very first duty of a convert is to labor for the conversion of others, and surely it will not spoil your prayer, young man, if when you are praying for yourself, you will put it in the plural—"O satisfy *US*." Pray for your brothers and sisters. I am sure we are verily guilty in this thing. Those who sprang from the same loins as ourselves—would to God that they were all saved with the same salvation! You may, some of you, be happy enough to be members of a family in which all are converted. Oh, that we could all say the same! May the remembrance of this text provoke you and me to pray for unconverted brothers and sisters more than we have ever done. "O satisfy *us*." If you have brought in the eldest, Lord, stop not till the youngest is converted; if my brother preaches the Word, if my sister rejoices in Your fear, then, let other sisters know and taste of Your love! You young people in shops, in warehouses, in factories—pray this prayer and do not exclude even those

who have begun to blaspheme—but even in their early youth, pray for them—“O satisfy *us* with Your mercy.”

See to it, dear friends, in the next place *that your prayer be thoroughly evangelical*. “O satisfy us early *with Your mercy*.” The prayer of the publican is the model for us all. No matter how amiable or how excellent we may be, we must all come together and say, “God, be merciful to me a sinner.” Do not come with any hereditary godliness; do not approach the Lord with the fact of your infant sprinkling; do not come before Him to plead your mother's covenant. Come as a *sinner*, as a black, foul, filthy sinner, having nothing to rely on or to trust to but the merit of God in Christ Jesus! And let the prayer be just such as a thief might offer, or a prostitute might present—“O satisfy us early with Your mercy.”

Let the prayer be put up now *at once*. The text says, “O satisfy us *early*.” Why not today? Oh, that it had been done years ago! But there was time enough, you thought. There is time enough, but there is none to spare. Acquaint yourself *now* with God, and be at peace! “Today is the accepted time; today is the day of salvation.” I would to God we would not pray our prayers meaning to have them heard so late; let it be—“O satisfy us *early*.” The man who truly repents always wants to have pardon on the spot; he feels as if he could not rise from his knees till God has been favorable to him—and mark you—when a man has really come to that point that he must be saved now, or else he feels that it will be too late, then has come the solemn juncture when God will say, “Be it unto you even as you will.”

I must leave this poor sermon of mine with the people of God to pray over it. Sometimes, when most I long to plead with men's souls, I find the brain distracted, although the heart is warm. God knows, that could I plead with the young, I would do it even unto tears. I do feel it such a solemn thing for our country. Happy shall she be if her sons and daughters give their young days to God! It will be such a blessed thing for London, if our young men in business, and our young women in families, become missionaries for Christ. But what a happy thing it will be for *them*! What joy shall they know! What transports shall they feel! What a blessing will they be to their households! What happy families they will be! Unconverted fathers shall be made to feel the power of godliness through their daughters, and mothers who despise religion shall not dare to neglect it any longer because they see it exemplified and illustrated in their sons! We need missionaries everywhere! This great city never can, by any possibility, become the Lord's except by *individual* action. We must have all Christians at work, and since we cannot get the old ones to work as we would—since preach as we may, they will settle on their lees—we long for new recruits whose ardor shall rekindle the dying enthusiasm of the seniors! We need to see fresh minds come in all aglow with holy fervor to keep the fire still blazing on the altar! For Jesus Christ's sake, I do implore you, you who number but few years—offer this supplication in your pew. Do it now. It is a brother's heart that begs the favor. It is for your own soul's sake, that you may be blessed on earth, and that you may have the joys of heaven! There is a prayer-hearing God. The mercy seat is still open. Christ still waits. May the Spirit of God compel you now to come before Him in supplication. Now may He compel you to come in, with this as your cry—“O satisfy us early with Your mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.”

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