

WHO IS THIS?**NO. 1673**

**A SERMON
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*“For who is this that engaged His heart to approach unto Me? says the Lord.”
Jeremiah 30:21.*

I MENTIONED in the reading that there is a very remarkable change of tone in the Book of Jeremiah, at the thirtieth chapter. You read on through the twenty-nine chapters, and you hear nothing but “a weeping and wailing,” while the prophet stands before you, girt with sackcloth, bidding Israel “lament and howl: for the fierce anger of the Lord is not turned back from us.” When you come to the middle of the thirtieth chapter all is changed, you have left the dungeon for the pleasant meads, and you hear “thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry.” Here flowers of promise glorify the fields, and birds of praise sweeten the air with music. The people are first made to tremble and fear on account of sin, and all faces are turned into paleness, and then the Lord declares His immeasurable grace, saying, “I am with you to save you: though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, yet will I not make a full end of you.” The condition of the sinful people is brought home to them, and the nation is solemnly told—“Your bruise is incurable, and your wound is grievous. There is none to plead your cause that you may be bound up: you have no healing medicines. Why do you cry for your affliction? Your sorrow is incurable, for the multitude of your iniquity; because your sins were increased, I have done these things unto you.” And then man’s extremity of misery becomes God’s opportunity of mercy. When and where sin abounds, grace does much more abound, and the Lord displays His wonders of love. He graciously declares—“I will restore health unto you, and I will heal you of your wounds.” The reason for the change is not difficult to find. The prophet is led to speak of covenant promises, such as that in the twenty-second verse, “You shall be My people, and I will be your God.” No wonder that Jeremiah’s strain grew more cheerful and jubilant. Was there ever such a box of perfume as the covenant? Was there ever such a harp of golden strings, all tuned to the music of consolation, as the covenant? Inspired by this subject, he exclaims in the next chapter—“For thus says the Lord; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish you, praise you, and say, O Lord, save Your people, the remnant of Israel.”

Moreover, he introduces to us that glorious Messenger of the covenant whom we delight in. He speaks of the Messiah, who is the glorious One, who has engaged His heart to approach unto God, and as when the sun rises darkness flees, so when the Savior appears his sorrows vanish, and Jeremiah becomes as eloquent with joy as Isaiah himself. Think no more of Jeremiah as exclusively the weeping prophet, for the flashes of his delight make the night of his sorrow brilliant with an aurora of heavenly brilliance

The answer to the question of our text is the reason why Jeremiah put away his dust and ashes and girt himself with beauteous array. God had, for a while, on account of their great sin, put away His people and wounded them with the chastisement of a cruel one for the multitude of their iniquities. They could not walk with Him, for they were not agreed with Him. He could not accept their sacrifices, for they were polluted. He could not listen to their prayers, for they were hypocritical. He could not dwell with them, for they were proud-hearted and rebellious. So Zion came to be called an outcast whom no man seeks after. God Himself seemed to have given her a bill of divorce, and to have put her away, but it only seemed that way. In Jehovah’s heart of hearts He was still bound to His people, whom He loved with an everlasting love. He could not cast away the seed of Abraham, His friend, and His heart yearned towards the people whom He had loved of old, and borne with in great long-suffering. He had put them under a cloud necessarily, because of their sin, yet He did earnestly remember them still, for He bears witness, saying, “I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is My first-born.” The Lord loved the distance which sundered His people from Him and He longed to see them approach Him that He might comfort them and satiate their souls with His goodness.

How was this to be done? This was the problem of that age, as it is the problem of all ages. How can guilty man return unto the Holy God? How can there be peace and amity, love and concord between the Judge of all the earth and His revolting and polluted creature man? It was necessary that one should arise who would approach God on the behalf of the people, so that God might be well pleased with them for his righteousness' sake. But where was he to be found? Someone must come to God, and by his coming make a way through which those whom he represented might have access. But where was this representative to be found? Paradise was lost, who was he by whom it could be regained? The question was asked, and in man's ears it seemed to be asked in vain, for it is written, "There is none to plead your cause; all your lovers have forsaken you."

"Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto Me? says the Lord." One was needed to bridge the chasm which divided man from God. Who could do it? God Himself asked the question because He had Himself found the person, and would have us see Him and understand His glorious character. My text comes from Jehovah's own lip, "Who is this that engaged His heart to approach unto Me? says the Lord." He sets the Mediator before us and asks, "Who is this?" We are sure that the Lord does not need to ask questions of us that He may gain information from us. "Known unto God are all His works," and much more must He be known by whom His most grand work is accomplished. Speaking in the name of wisdom our glorious Mediator says of the Lord, "I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." So the Lord only asks the question for our good to set us thinking. This inquiry is fitly the sinner's question, when, trembling and convinced of sin, and led to seek his God, he needs an interposer, one of a thousand, who can put His hand upon the offender and the offended, and reconcile the rebel to his Lord. Therefore, in love the Lord takes up the sinner's question and answers it by another. Behold a Daysman of Jehovah's own providing, who can lay His hand upon both—look at Him and answer, "Who is He?"

The inquiry is made, I think, with three great designs, upon which I shall speak as I am enabled of the Spirit of God. First, *to direct attention to this glorious person*—"Who is this?" Secondly, *to excite admiration of His wondrous work* "that engaged His heart to approach unto Me, says the Lord." And then, thirdly, *to awaken our interest in the result of this marvelous approach unto God*, for by it we are permitted and enabled to approach unto the Lord ourselves, and we become His people, and He confesses Himself to be our God. O, for the Holy Spirit's own teaching, that I may speak aright to you upon this transcendent subject!

I. The question of our text is asked TO DIRECT ATTENTION TO THIS GLORIOUS PERSON. "Who is this that engaged His heart to approach unto Me? says the Lord." We read the chapter, and if you have read it attentively, or will do so, you will learn that the person who must draw near to God *must be one of ourselves*. "Their nobles," or their glorious one, "shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause Him to draw near, and He shall approach unto Me." It is clear that a fit representative for men must be himself a man. It would not have been seemly that Adam, the representative of our race, should have been an angel, it was natural that he should be a man. In the same way, as man blocked up the road of communion with God, it was fitting that a man should make a new road, and reestablish divine communion. In Adam we transgressed and died to God, in another Adam must we be restored. If an angel were capable in all other respects of drawing near to God, yet it is clear that he could not do it on man's behalf, for an angel can only represent angels. Each order of beings must be represented by its own kind. Our Lord, as man, took not up angels, for He was not made in their nature, but He took up the seed of Abraham because He had assumed their nature. It needed a man perfect in his manhood to head us up, and stand as our federal head and representative, or otherwise we could not be restored by him.

Now, then, brethren, where is this man to be found? "Who is this?" If he is to come of ourselves, where is he? Not among this assemblage, nor if all the myriads that dwell on the face of the earth could be gathered together would there be found one who could undertake this enterprise—"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." We have none of us, that perfection which is required for such a work. How shall a sinner atone for sinners? He cannot make atonement for his own sin, he cannot render unto God for himself and on his own account the righteousness which justice demands of him, and how, then, can he have anything to spare for his fellow men? The best of men are each one in the condition of the wise virgins who, when the foolish virgins said, "Give us of your oil, for our lamps have gone out," replied, "Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you; but go you rather to them that sell

and buy for yourselves.” If the whole roll of history is searched, from Adam’s fall to this moment, there is not one mere man to be found who could represent the race and make an approach for them to God on the ground of personal perfection, for this is God’s own verdict—“All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” The Lord looked from heaven to see if there were any among the children of men that had not transgressed, but He found none, for, “they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable. There is none that does good, no, not one.”

Nor is it merit alone that is needed, for he that would approach unto the Lord as mediator must be prepared with strength to suffer. Who can sustain the load of human sin? Who can endure the indignation of the Lord against iniquity? Assuredly none of us could do it; the fire would consume us as stubble. O for an interposer, but where can he be found? Who is this who can as man appear for men and by his personal righteousness and sacrifice render man acceptable with God? There was a Man of matchless birth, at whose coming angels sang, for they were told that He would bring glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace. Find Him in Bethlehem’s manger, there He lies, the son of Mary, truly man, one of ourselves, partaker of our flesh and blood, subject to human needs, weaknesses, and woes, and able therefore to sympathize with us and have compassion upon us, that Man grew up in this world without taint or spot, free from sin whether natural or acquired, and yet He was in the truest sense one of ourselves, so that He is not ashamed to call us brethren. When the malicious eyes of Satan searched Him through and through, he found nothing of evil in Him. He was without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, and He it is—glory be to His name—He it is that has engaged His heart to approach unto God on our behalf. He is the Son of man, most truly, anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows, but still truly fellow with men. Though He counted it no robbery to be equal with God, yet He took upon Himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men that He might redeem us from our sin.

Now look at the context, and you will see that the person who must approach God for us *must be a prince-priest*, for He is called “their glorious One” and “their governor,” and yet it is said of Him, “I will cause Him to draw near,” which work of drawing near is in other places ascribed to priests, for these God had set apart for the service of His sanctuary. The Hebrew word “to draw near” signifies that peculiar action of a priest when he stands dealing with God on the behalf of men. The person, then, must be a priest and yet a prince. Who is he and where is he? It is not David, for if David would approach unto God in the office of a priest he must not, he must resort to the priest who has the Urim and the Thummim, and the priest of the house of Aaron must inquire of God for David. This was one distinction between David and Saul; that David knew the limits of his office and never thought to over step it. David and Solomon never attempted to intrude into the holy office, they knew that they were not priests, but only kings, and when Uzzah stood to sacrifice like a priest you know how the leprosy fell upon him. And they drove him out of the house of God which he was desecrating by intruding himself into the priestly office, and he had to be shut up in a separate house all the rest of his life. Where shall we find one that even as a priest can really draw near to God for mankind? For remember, brethren, that the priests of old only drew near to God in figure and in metaphor, they could not actually and in very deed do so, for God is a consuming fire. Even when Moses went up unto the mount with God, and did draw near in a certain sense, yet he never saw the face of God, for the Lord said, “You cannot see My face and live.” The brightest vision that Moses ever had was that he saw the skirts of Jehovah’s robe, or what Scripture styles His back parts, for the face of God could not be seen. Mercy draws us near to God in Christ Jesus, but apart from the Mediator an approach to absolute Deity means destruction. Neither among kings nor among priests could the one man be found who could open the way to the Father, and certainly no king-priest could be found—the combination of the two offices falls not to the house of Aaron. A reverend personage had passed before the camera of history, and left a shadowy trace of himself. But where now is he who was named Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, to whom Abraham gave tithes of all? He was raised up for a special purpose, and no one has inherited his peculiar call. That vision taught us what to look for, but it did not supply the object of our search. It has prophesied the coming of the true Melchisedec, the man without beginning of days or end of years, the man without predecessor or successor, who is greater than Abraham, and abides as both priest and king forever, having once and for all drawn near to God on our behalf. You know Him—the true priest of God, not of the order of Aaron, and the king eternal, immortal, invisible, King of kings, and Lord of lords. It is He that engaged His heart to draw near to God on our behalf.

The question, however, may be answered in another way, so as to bring out more clearly the matchless person whom our hearts adore at this moment. It was necessary that *he who should draw near to God should be chosen to that office by God Himself, and should be qualified for it by divine power.* “I will cause Him to draw near, and He shall approach to me.” Now, is there anyone among us all that God has ever chosen to represent our fellow men as their mediator, acting as the head of the race, and as such entering into the immediate presence of God on his own merits? We have not, I hope, the presumption to imagine such a thing. “There is one Mediator between God and man, the man, Christ Jesus.” He it is that takes upon Himself our nature and our sin, and then goes in onto God and stands there amidst the blaze of the ineffable light to represent manhood, but there is none else. On Him rested the Spirit of God without measure. The Dove descended on Him in the waters of His baptism, and the Father said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” This was the great One elect of heaven, ordained of the Father before the foundation of the world, and the Spirit of glory and of might did rest upon Him, that He might be equipped for His mighty service, and might engage His heart to approach unto God. This is He who said, “I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore My own arm brought salvation unto Me.”

Moreover, to close this description, He was not only appointed of God and qualified, but He was *one who was willing to undertake the task and ready to pledge Himself to it.* He voluntarily covenanted to do it, as it is written, “Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, to do Your will, O God: yes, Your law is My delight.” He engaged His heart to this gracious office, resolving to carry out to a happy issue the work of reconciliation. Moved by inconceivable, immeasurable love, and counting all the cost, He devoted Himself to the supreme effort. “Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it.” Of His own free will He placed Himself before offended justice to meet its claims, and so He removed every barrier which stood between us and the throne of God. He is that Breaker who has gone up before us, that King who is at the head of all His chosen ones.

Now, where is such a One to be found unless it is the Lord Jesus? I trust many of us have given ourselves up to God and to His fear, drawn by almighty love. But it was never in our hearts to imagine that by giving up ourselves to holy service we could stand before God, and open a way to Him for our fellow men. We are well aware of our incompetence for so grand a task. None of us have struck hands and covenanted with God to mediate, for we could not do it. I dread the thought of seeming to intrude into so divine a work. We are priests unto God, but not mediators for men. When I hear of men pretending to hear the confessions of their fellow men and absolving them of their sins, I wonder that they sleep nights after professing so tremendous an act. I wonder what the power of Satan over them must be that they can rest after having assumed to act as vicars of Jehovah, He having given them no warrant and no authority for such a mediatorial position. Brethren, this hugest of blasphemies may well become the Mother of Harlots, but the Bride of Christ abhors it. But oh, when my eyes rest upon Jesus, the only-begotten Son of God, in human flesh, then I cry, “This is He! Glory be to His name!” Soon, lost in wonder, my soul exclaims, “Who is this? Who is this? What manner of man is this? Who is a God like unto You?” All this in wonder, but not in doubt, for the Lord Jesus can do this great work, and He wills to do it. He resolves and He will not fail nor be discouraged. Glory be to His name, *He has done it.* He has approached with engaged heart unto God on our behalf, and by His sacrifice has made a way by which each one of us who is willing to do so may now approach unto God, even the Father, without fear. “Who is this?” Our soul is filled with amazement, but not with ignorance, for we answer this question in a word—He is God Himself, light of lights, very God of very God, veiled in human flesh, who has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. “Who is this?” I answer, it is the Lawgiver Himself who has put Himself under the law, and who has borne the penalties of the law that the law may be glorified, while sin is pardoned, and law-breakers are justified. “Who is this?” It is infinite holiness which has burdened itself with human sin, “For He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” Oh, had I words to speak with I would try to extol Him who, being infinitely pure, nevertheless was numbered with the transgressors, who, being incapable of spot, yet did bear upon Himself the enormous and horrible load of human guilt. In His own body on the tree, in flesh and soul, He suffered, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. Mark that word, for it shows His end and objective, “to bring us to God.” This is the way by which He brought us near, even by His own most precious blood. Yes, it is the heavenly One who is blessed forevermore who was made a curse for us. On whom, being everlastingly the object of Jehovah’s love, there fell Jehovah’s wrath on our account. Mys-

tery of mystery! Miracle of miracles! This has astonished heaven and earth and hell. Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews and Son of the Highest, engaged His heart that He might wait upon the Judge of all the earth, and answer for rebellious man with His own life, and so complete a way of access by which we may rise from our abyss of woes to the bosom of the Eternal.

Though I have thus spoken to the best of my knowledge, I know that I cannot set out before you the full glory of the person of our covenant head. I shall go home saying to myself, "Who is this? Who is this?" and I shall have succeeded in my endeavor if you will each one say, "He could not tell us who He was, he could not reach the height of that great argument, but we shall all through time and in eternity go on wondering and saying, Who is this?" The more we wonder the more shall we love and praise the Lord Jesus with our heart of hearts and say, "He has done all things well. We are made near by Him, never more to be separated from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Thus much upon the Person, how I freely could weep because I speak in words so poor and ill-chosen. I do but hold a candle to show the sun!

II. I come now, TO EXCITE ADMIRATION OF HIS MATCHLESS WORK. If Jesus Christ is to approach God for us it is clear that He must come down into our condition, for He must first descend or He cannot ascend. Naturally there is such a oneness between the blessed Persons of the Trinity that there can be no approaching in their case to one another, but Jesus, though He was forever in the highest sense with God, left His place of glory and took the position of our shame. "Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses." There He stands, even where we stood by nature. Where we lay in our blood, there He came and engaged His heart to deliver us. He stood at the judgment bar because we had brought ourselves there, He was rejected of the people because we were rejected as reprobate silver, He was condemned because we were condemned, and He was put to death because such was the sentence upon us. He descended into our depths to engineer a way from the lowest to the highest, to come back from Bashan, and from the depths of the sea, leading the van of the armies of His chosen as they return unto God with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads.

This lowly place being taken, behold our Lord actually approaching unto the offended Majesty on high. Though found in fashion as a man, and by reason of His becoming a curse for us, denied the presence of the Father, so that He cried in anguish, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Yet He did approach unto God, He did come near, no, He remains near, able to save them, to the uttermost, that come unto God by Him. He has passed under the cloud, and the darkness, and through the consuming fire, and now He is the Lamb in the midst of the throne. He has gone into the Holy of Holies and revealed the mercy seat. He has bridged the great gulf which sin had made. "It is finished," He said, before He bowed His head and gave up the ghost. The pathway is open, every gulf is filled, every valley is exalted, and every mountain and hill laid low. It is finished—the way from man to God has been already trod by myriads of cleansed feet, for our glorious One has cast up the king's highway and made straight paths for our feet. Come, let us tread the road. With holy confidence let us draw near unto God.

Our Lord with all His heart desired to do this. He "engaged His heart" to perform it. Before all worlds His master purpose was to approach unto God as man's representative. He is styled, "the Lamb slain from before the foundations of the world," because this was the firm resolve and bent of His entire being, before ever the earth was. He had vowed in His soul that He would restore the banishment of the fall, and bridge the distance between man and God. When God would not have sacrifice and offering at man's hand, then Jesus said, "Lo, I come." He says of Himself, "The Lord God will help Me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set My face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." His heart was determined and resolved, for so the expression means, when the text says, "He engaged His heart."

But why this readiness, why this eagerness? Love is the one reply. His heart was occupied with love to God and love to man, and He could not rest till He had restored the broken concord between these divided ones. With all the forcefulness of His divine nature, and with all the energy of His perfect humanity, He was resolved to bring men back to God. While He was yet a boy He felt bound to be about His Father's business. When He first appeared among the multitude it was by submission to the Father's ordinance to fulfill all righteousness. He could not hold His peace or take rest, because His mission was urgent and His heart was in it. Many a time He set aside a crown to bear a cross. All the kingdoms of this world could not bribe Him from His sacred purpose, though displayed before Him by the arch-tempter in a sudden blaze of brightness. If any endeavored to dissuade Him from His purpose, even

though they did it out of love, He saw the evil spirit who was using them as his instruments, and with indignation He broke the snare. Even though it was the beloved Peter, He looked on him as the devil's advocate, and said, "Get you behind Me, Satan." How full of meaning is that sigh, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it is accomplished!" He was shut up like a man in a narrow prison, and His only enlargement was to be by anguish and death. He was straitened till He could give Himself up as a sacrifice, and so open a door for us to our God. The insatiable desire of our Lord's vehement spirit was the finishing of the work which the Father had given Him to do. It was His meat and His drink to accomplish the purpose of love. "Who is this?" "Who is this?" The more I turn it over and think of it the more I am astonished that so condescending, gracious, and glorious a work should engage the heart of the Lord of all. We had not loved Him, but He loved us. We were His enemies, but what a friend was He! Our hearts were set on wandering, but His heart was engaged to bring us near to God. Let us each pause here and admire as we say, "He loved me and gave Himself for me." Who is this that thus has spent His love upon so poor a being!

Having thus determined that He would approach unto God on our behalf He took all the consequences. A correct reading of the passage would be, "Who is this that has pledged His heart or His life to approach unto Me, says the Lord?" If you take the meaning of the word "heart" to be "life," since the heart is the source of life, then we read that our Lord pledged His life, put His life in surety that He would approach unto God, the Judge of all, and bring us near to Him. When He came as the representative of sinful men—then vengeance with its sword must smite Him, and He was willing to be smitten. Voluntarily He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. He did not hide His face from shame and spitting. He must die, if He draws near to God, for sinful men, for such is the penalty due, but He willingly laid down His life of Himself, and bowing His head He gave up the ghost. He must be deserted of God, and He even submits to that, till He cries, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" He might have drawn back from His undertaking if He would, but He never thought of drawing back. With desire He desired to eat that passover. In order to die He broke off in the middle of a discourse, saying, "Arise, let us go therefore." His motto was, "The cup which My Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?" He saved others, but Himself He could not save, because love held Him bound in her chains. How intensely ought we to love Jesus, since He thus reckoned nothing too hard or heavy, that He might appear in the presence of God for us and make a way to God for poor sinners such as we are. He even delighted in suffering and dishonor for this end. "For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame." He made pledge, not merely of hand or eye, but of His heart and life. He came with His life in His hands before Jehovah's face, and gave up that life that He might remove from us the death penalty due to justice, and so reconcile us to the Lord of all. Tune your harps, you angels! Make this Sabbath on which we think of this sublime mystery a special festival of song. Oh, sing unto the Lord, you redeemed ones who see His face! You are before the throne of glory because He stood before the throne of vengeance, and made it possible for your robes to be washed white as snow. As for you, you redeemed with blood that are still below, bring forth your loudest notes, and praise Him who has once and for all cleared the way and opened an avenue of grace for you. Who is this wonderful Savior? Who shall declare the generation of Him who pledged His life that He might draw near to God for us, and endured all the consequences to the bitter end?

And now today, beloved, Jesus Christ rejoices to think that He has approached unto God on our behalf, and made eternal amity between God and man. Let us rejoice with Him. Let us become happy in fellowship with our God—

*"'Tis finished all; the veil is rent,
The welcome sure, the access free;
Now then, we leave our banishment,
O Father, to return to Thee!"*

This is the joy of Christ's heart forever. He welcomes our return to God. He is glad when our communion is hearty and continuous. By His Holy Spirit He draws us near. Blessed be His name.

III. Let me try, and may the Spirit of God help me, TO AWAKEN YOUR INTEREST IN THE SWEET RESULTS OF JESUS CHRIST'S HAVING APPROACHED GOD FOR US.

The first result is found in the chapter. Read that 22nd verse. Read it with your own eyes, and wonder that it should be put there. "Who is this that engaged His heart to approach unto Me? says the Lord. And you shall be My people, and I will be your God." That is, because our royal High Priest approached unto

God for us, therefore we who were called outcasts; we whose wound was incurable and grievous; we that were utterly ruined and undone, we, believing in this Jesus, shall in Him become the people of God. Let me speak plainly with you, beloved brethren, how many of you have realized this? It is all idle for me to talk about Christ making the way unless you run in the way. Are you the Lord's people? Many of you humbly rejoice in this high honor, but there may be a few here who are of another mind, you care nothing for having the Lord to be your God. Possibly you sneer, and call it *hypocritical*. Yes, but if you knew the truth you would not do so. When we hear you speaking contemptuously of being God's people, all we can say is, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Will you mind thinking just for half a minute? Will you try to think justly and rightly? Must it not be good and right that the creature should love the Creator? Must it not be a wise thing that the children whom God has formed should love their heavenly Father and be on good terms with Him? Is it not likely that it would be a happy thing for you if you were one of God's people? You can never rest till you are. But you ask, "How can I be?" Why, it all follows upon what I have been talking of. Jesus Christ went to the Father for us, that we might approach unto the Father in Him and through Him, that we might become the Lord's own people, and that the Lord might become our God. I tell you I would sooner say, "This God is my God," than anything else that I can imagine. To say, "This kingdom is my kingdom," or "This whole world is mine," were a miserable business compared with saying, "My Beloved is mine and I am His." You would not think I exaggerated if you tried it. I invite you to an honest, practical test. See if there is not joy in the salvation of God. Religion is with some people a sort of dreamy thing on Sundays; you sit in your pews and bear with us long-winded talkers about things which you do not care for. Oh, but if you did value and enjoy them! If you could but taste and handle them you would say, "Go on, preacher, go on! You are a poor hand at it, for your themes are so great and wondrous that you cannot reach to them, but, still, go on. Ring that bell again. Open more doors, and let us peep in upon the secret treasures. Bring us more clusters of the grapes of Eshcol, and let us at least pluck a berry here and there if we cannot carry away a whole cluster, and so fill our mouths with the inexpressible delight of being God's people, and having Jehovah to be our God." This bliss comes to those of us who rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh, because Jesus said, "I will wait upon the Lord that hides His face from the house of Jacob." The face of the Lord is no longer hidden from us, but we have access with confidence into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

I seem to see in my spirit that old legend of Rome worked out in very deed. So says the story, in the Roman Forum there gaped a vast chasm which threatened the destruction of the Forum, if not of Rome. The wise men declared that the gulf would never close unless the most precious thing in Rome was cast into it. See how it yawns and cracks every moment more horribly. Hasten to bring this noblest thing! For love of Rome sacrifice your best! But what, or who is this? Where is a treasure meet for sacrifice? Then Curtius, a belted knight, mounted his charger, and rightly judging that valor and love of country were the noblest treasures of Rome, he leaped into the gulf. The yawning earth closed upon a great-hearted Roman, for her hunger was appeased. Perhaps it is but an idle tale, but what I have declared is truth. There gaped between God and man a dread abyss, deep as hell, wide as eternity, and only the best thing that heaven contained could fill it. That best thing was He, the peerless Son of God, the matchless, perfect man and He came, laying aside His glory, making Himself of no reputation, and He sprang into the gulf, which then and there closed, once and for all—

*"Down from the shining seats above
With joyful haste He fled,
Entered the grave in mortal flesh,
And dwelt among the dead.
Oh, for this love let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break,
And all harmonious human tongues
The Savior's praises speak."*

One great result of Christ's having died, is to leave us a way of access, which is freely opened to every poor, penitent sinner. Come. Are you using that way of access? Do you use it every day? Having used it, and thus having drawn near to God, do you dwell near to God? Do you abide in God? Is God the main thought of your life, the chief delight and object of your being? If it is not so, I earnestly invite you by the Spirit's help to make it so. You must engage your heart to come to God in Christ. There is no coming to God without sincere resolve and eager desire. Are you engaged to such an end? Alas, it may

be you are drawn elsewhere. Are you engaged? Alas, some are engaged to Madame Bubble, some are engaged to Belial, some are engaged to self, some are engaged to Mammon, some seem engaged to the very devil of the pit. Be wise, and break these unlawful engagements. Let your covenant with death be broken, and your league with hell be annulled. Though you are weary of my words, yet I would stir you up to interest in this all-important matter. Break these deadly bands asunder. God help you, by a sudden energy which He shall give you, to snap your fetters once and for all, and then at once firmly engage your hearts to Christ. Never such loveliness, never such love will you find elsewhere. Come, say now—whatever else I do or do not do, I will do this. I will approach to God by the way that Christ has opened for me. I will arise and go to my Father. I will throw myself at my Father's feet. I must be reconciled. I cannot live an enemy to Him. I must be made a friend—

*“I will approach You—
I will force
My way through obstacles to You.”*

Jesus goes before me, and I gladly follow. I will not leave the throne till You, O Lord, have said, “I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you.” I shall be greatly happy, I shall be exceedingly glad, if I may induce one spirit to come to God by Jesus Christ. But if the whole of you will come at once, if God's spirit shall now prompt all believers to come, and all unbelievers to become believers, and so to come, what a splendid company of us will enter into the golden gates, and what joy there will be in heaven over all of us as we approach unto the Most High.

I think I note a seraph, as he takes down his harp, stand in the center of the heavenly choir and suggest to his fellow choristers that their theme should be, “Who is this that has engaged His heart to approach unto the living God?” Hark how ten thousand voices say—“Who is this?” Let us in humble notes lift up our praises. Here is a verse which may serve our turn—

*“Who is this that enters glory,
Clearing for His saints a way?
Who shall tell the wondrous story
Who His glorious work display?
Jesus makes our access clear,
To the Father brings us near.”*

Thus the question, “Who is this?” admits of a second answer, for now in Christ Jesus all believers with engaged hearts are approaching unto God. Who is this? At first it is Jesus, Son of man and Son of God. And next it is His church with all her heart engaged approaching unto God by Jesus Christ. My hearers, can you join in the song of praise which is now rising from heaven and earth? Angels are waiting till you approach their God. Come, hurry up, and hasten to be blest. At once approach your God by Christ Jesus, and as angels see you coming, their song shall grow yet louder, till it shall excel the noise of many waters, and out-voice the last great thundering. They come! They come! Sinners are coming to God! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—JEREMIAH 30.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—912, 285, 296.**

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