

CONSULTING WITH JESUS

NO. 2778

A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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“And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to prove him with hard questions. . . And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not anything hid from the king, which he told her not.”
1 Kings 10:1-3.

THOSE of you who were here, last Thursday evening, will recollect that I spoke to you upon our Savior's words, “The queen of the south shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here,” [Sermon No. 2776, Volume 48—THE QUEEN OF SHEBA, A SIGN]. I tried then to prove that the queen of Sheba is a condemning sign to those in this generation who take no interest in Christ—to those who do not believe our report concerning Him, or who do not act upon it so as to seek His face, and learn the true heavenly wisdom at His feet. Tonight, we will follow the queen of the south a little further.

As our Lord has given her for a sign, it would be unbecoming if we did not try to learn all that we can from that sign. She came “to hear the wisdom of Solomon;” but Christ is “greater than Solomon” in every respect. He is greater in wisdom; for, though Solomon was wise, he was not Wisdom itself, and that Jesus is. In the Book of Proverbs He is referred to under the name of Wisdom, and the apostle Paul tells us that He is made of God unto us wisdom. They who really know Him know something of how wise He is, and how truly He may be called Wisdom. Because He is with the Father, and knows the Father, He has such wisdom as no one else can have. “No man knows the Son, but the Father; neither knows any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.” He knows the deep things of God, for He came down from heaven bringing His Father's greatest secrets in His heart. To Him, therefore, men ought to come if they wish to be wise, and ought we not to wish for wisdom? To whom else can we go if we go not to Him “in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”?

In speaking of the queen of Sheba coming to Solomon as a type of our coming to Christ, I will, first, call upon you to *admire the queen's mode of procedure*; then, secondly, *we will try to imitate it in reference to Christ*; and, then, thirdly, we will close by *ourselves answering certain questions of a truly practical character*.

I. First, then, I call upon you to ADMIRE THIS QUEEN'S MODE OF PROCEDURE WHEN SHE CAME TO SOLOMON. We are told, in the text, that “she came to prove him with hard questions.”

She wanted to prove whether he was as wise as she had been led to believe, and her mode of proving it was *by endeavoring to learn from him*. She put difficult questions to him in order that she might be instructed by his wisdom; and if you want to ascertain what the wisdom of Christ is, the way to know it is to come and sit at His feet, and learn of Him. I know of no other method; it is a very sure one, and it will be a very profitable and blessed one if you adopt it. He has Himself said, “Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls.”

Jesus came forth from God to be “the faithful Witness” to the truth, and therefore we are bound to believe what He says; and, certainly, we shall never fully appreciate His wisdom unless we are willing to receive His testimony. The psalmist says, “O taste and see that the Lord is good;” but, in this case, we must test and prove that the Lord is wise. There are some who despise the wisdom of Christ; and if you

probe them, you will discover that they were never willing to learn of Him. His own words are, “Except you are converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” The wisdom of Christ cannot be known by those who refuse to be disciples, that is, learners. We must learn of Him before we are competent to judge whether Christ is wise, or not; and never did a disciple sit humbly at His feet, never did one, in the spirit of a little child, sit with Mary at the feet of the great Teacher, without saying, as he listened to the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth, “The half was not told me. Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge that are to be found in Him!”

The queen of Sheba is also to be admired in that, wishing to learn from Solomon, *she asked him many questions*—not simply one or two, but many. Some people say, though I do not know how true it is, that curiosity is largely developed in women. I think I have known some men who have had a tolerably large share of it also. In this case, however, the woman’s curiosity was wise and right; it was a wise thing, on her part, when she was in the presence of such a man of wisdom, to try to learn all that she could from him; and therefore she questioned him about all sorts of things. Very likely she brought before him the difficulties connected with her government, various schemes relating to trade, the modes of war, or the arts of peace; possibly she talked to him concerning the beasts of the field, and the fish of the sea, and the fowls of the air; but I am persuaded that she also talked about higher things—the things of God; and I am led to that conclusion by the expression in the first verse of my text, “When the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon *concerning the name of the Lord*, she came to prove him with hard questions.” The report that came to her had to do with Jehovah, the God of Israel, as well as with Solomon; so we may rest assured that she put to him many difficult questions concerning the state of her heart, her character, her present position before God, and her future relationship to Israel’s God. Questions on those points are not easy to answer, but she took care to ask them so that, when she reached her home, she might not have to say, “I wish I had asked Solomon about that matter; then I should no longer be in doubt.”

Now, beloved, if you want to know the wisdom of Christ, you must ask Him many questions. Come and inquire of Him about anything you please. There is nothing which He does not know of earth, of heaven, and of hell. He knows the past, the present, the future; the things of every day, and the things of that last great day of days. He knows the things of God as nobody else knows them, for He is one with the Father, and with the Spirit, and He can tell us all that we need to know. Come to Him, then, with every question that has ever puzzled you, and with every doubt that has ever staggered you. Resort not so much to your own thoughts or to the counsels and arguments of your fellow creatures; but consult with Him who spoke as never man spoke, and whose wisdom, like Alexander’s sword, can cut each Gordian knot, and end in a moment all the difficulties that trouble your spirit.

But the main point, for which I admire the queen of Sheba, is that *she proved Solomon “with hard questions.”* Was she not wise? If she had asked Solomon questions which a schoolboy could reply to, it would have been almost an insult to him. No, if Solomon’s wisdom is to be tested, let him be proved with “hard questions.” If a man is really wise, he likes to have inquiries put to him which a man with less wisdom could not answer. If the queen’s questions had been such as she could herself answer, why need she have gone all that long way to ask Solomon to reply to them? Or if she had somebody at her home, wherever it was, who could have replied to her questions, why need she have gone to Jerusalem? It was because she had no one else to help her that she brought her questions to the one who, because of his superlative wisdom, would be able to answer them. This would relieve her mind, and send her home satisfied upon many points that had previously troubled her; so she did well to bring her “hard questions” to Solomon.

But I have known some—I think I know some still—who seem as if they could not ask Christ a hard question. For instance, they feel that they are great sinners; and they think that, if they had not sinned so much, He might be better able to forgive them, so they do not like to bring their hard questions to King Jesus. Others have a hard struggle to conquer some fierce passion, or some reigning lust, and they think they must overcome that evil themselves. Then do you think that my Master is only a little Savior? He is the great Physician; will you only bring to Him a cut finger or an aching tooth to cure? Oh, He is such a Savior that you may bring to Him the worst, the most abject and depraved of men, for they are those who can best prove His power to save! When you feel yourselves most lost, then come to Him; when you are

at your worst state, when you think you are almost damned, and wonder that you are not altogether so, then come to Him. If yours is a hard case, bring it to the almighty Savior. Do you think He only came into the world to save those who are decent and good? You know what He Himself said, “They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

And, beloved, listen yet again. Are you in some very sharp trial? Is your spirit terribly depressed, and have you, because of that, kept away from Christ? Have you felt that you could go to Him with your everyday burdens, but not with that special load? But why not also take that to Him? Prove Him with hard questions; the harder, the better. Do you not remember the Indian nurse, who said to the invalid lady who seemed as if she did not like to lean too heavily upon her, “If you love me, lean hard”? That is what your Lord says to you, “If you love Me, lean hard upon Me.” The more of your weight you rest upon Him, the better pleased He will be. The more you trust Him—the more you prove your confidence in Him—the closer will be the union between you. Do not save up your little pennyworths of trouble, and your half pennyworths of grief, for Him to carry away; come to Him with your thousand talents of sorrow, when you are pressed down under it like a cart that groans beneath the load of sheaves in the time of harvest. Christ is the Bearer of a world’s iniquities; so He may readily enough be the Bearer of your most extraordinary griefs. When the night is darkest, ask Him for His light. When the way is roughest, lean more than ever upon His arm. When the storm is fiercest, trust the Pilot of the Galilean lake. When all around you rocks and reels to and fro, like a drunken man, find a sure shelter and hiding place in the Rock of ages. Prove the Lord Jesus in every possible way, for He loves to be proved. You blackest sinners, who are here, come and put my Lord to the test—

“The poorer the wretch, the more welcome here.”

The more hungry men are, the more fit are they for the gospel feast. The more needy the outcast, the louder does the gospel trumpet blow that they, who are ready to perish, may come and be saved.

So, first of all, we admire the procedure of this queen of the south in coming to Solomon, and proving him with hard questions.

II. Now, secondly, LET US IMITATE HER EXAMPLE IN REFERENCE TO CHRIST, WHO IS “GREATER THAN SOLOMON.” Let us prove Him with hard questions. Let us bring to Him some nuts to be cracked, some diamonds to be cut, some difficulties to be solved. I do not know what hard question may be resting upon the mind of any of you, but I will briefly mention ten hard questions which Jesus answers. They are only ten out of ten thousand that might be put to Him, for there is no hard question which He cannot answer. He is far wiser than Solomon, of whom we read that he “told her all her questions: there was not anything hid from the king, which he told her not.”

Here is the first hard question. *How can a man be just with God?* It stands in the Book of Job, and it seems to stand there unanswered: “How should man be just with God?” There is nobody, on the face of the earth, who could have answered that question if it had not been made possible by our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no way of being just in the sight of God except through Him. But if we come to Him, He will tell us that we ourselves must stand in the place of condemnation, and confess that, for our sin, we deserve the wrath of God. We must always admit that no merits of ours can ever win His favor—that, in fact, we have no merits of our own, but are undeserving, ill-deserving, hell-deserving sinners; and when we occupy that position, then, of His own abounding grace and mercy, God will reckon us as just through Christ Jesus.

Our Lord Jesus also tells us how a man can be just with God as He reminds us that He is the covenant Head of His believing people—that, as in Adam, the first head, all men fell, so those who are in Him who is the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, all rise again. “As by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.” Righteousness in the sight of God comes, through the headship of Christ, to all who are in Him. Christ has honored the law of God, He has obeyed every jot and tittle of it; and His obedience is reckoned as the obedience of all who are in Him. “Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity;” and blessed is that man to whom there comes a righteousness which is not of the law and which comes not because of circumcision, but which comes to those who believe, as it is written, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for

righteousness.” The question, “How can a man be just with God?” is, therefore, answered thus. Jesus says, “I have stood in the place of the guilty, and have rendered to God’s law a perfect obedience. This is imputed to all who believe, and God regards them as just through My righteousness.” Oh, glorious doctrine of imputation! Happy are all they who believe it, and rejoice in it.

Here is another hard question. *How can God be just and yet the Justifier of the ungodly?* If He is just, surely He must condemn the ungodly; yet we know, of a certainty, many that have been ungodly, whom God has been pleased to meet with, and to justify so completely that they have been heard to say, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies.” How can this be? Only Jesus can answer the question, and He answers it thus. “I have borne the penalty that was due to sin; I have stood in the sinner’s place, and suffered that which has fully satisfied the claims of divine justice on his behalf; I have paid the sinner’s debt, so the law may well let him go free.” “He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” Therefore, by the knowledge of Him shall God’s righteous Servant justify many, for He has borne their iniquities. The great Sin-bearer has suffered in the sinner’s stead; the sword of divine justice smote Him, for He stood in the sinner’s place, willingly bearing the sinner’s penalty; and, now that sin has been punished upon Him, God can be just, and yet be the Justifier of all who believe in His dear Son.

The next question is one which has puzzled many. *How can a man be saved by faith alone without works, and yet no man can be saved by a faith that is without works?* Some have thought that there is a contradiction between the teaching of Paul and that of James, and have even gone so far as to say that the apostle James was not inspired when he wrote, “Faith, if it has not works, is dead, being alone.” This they had no right to say, for James was as much inspired as Paul was; the truth which James teaches is as certain and as valuable as the truth which Paul taught; neither did James teach other than Paul, or Paul other than James. Whenever they met, I have no doubt that they had blessed communion with one another, for they both meant the same thing, even though they expressed it differently. If you are puzzled by this question, our Lord Jesus Christ will tell you, in this Book, through which He still speaks to us, that we are to believe in Him for salvation, and not to bring any works of our own as the ground of our trust; not even our own faith, so far as it is a work, for a man is saved by grace, that is, by God’s free favor, not by works of righteousness which he has himself done. “For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.” That truth is as clearly taught in Scripture as it can possibly be; but then it is equally true that no man may claim that he is saved unless the faith, which he professes to have, is an active, living faith, which makes him love God, and, consequently, do that which is well pleasing in His sight. If I say that I believe in God, yet continue to live in sin willfully and knowingly, then I have not as good a faith as the devils have, for they “believe and tremble.” There are some men, who profess to believe in God, yet who do not tremble before Him, but are impudent and presumptuous. That is not the kind of faith that saves the soul; saving faith is that which produces good works, which leads to repentance, or is accompanied by it, and leads to love of God, and to holiness, and to a desire to be made like unto the Savior. Good works are not the root of faith, but they are its fruit. If you want fruit, you must plant the root; you need not put any fruit into the ground along with the root; but if that root is a living one, it will grow, and bring forth fruit. A house does not rest upon the tiles on its roof, yet it would not be fit to live in if it had not a roof; and, in like manner, our faith does not rest upon our good works, yet it would be a poor and useless faith if it had not some of the fruit of the Spirit to prove that it had come from God. Jesus Christ can tell us how a man can aim at being as holy as God is holy, and yet never talk about his holiness, or dream of trusting in it. We should live as if we were to be saved by our own works, yet place no reliance whatever upon them, but count them as dross and dung, that we may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having our own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is God by faith.

Here is another hard question, which once greatly puzzled a ruler of the Jews. You know his name, Nicodemus: “The same came to Jesus by night.” This was his hard question: “*How can a man be born when he is old?*” At first sight, it seems as if that were unanswerable; but Jesus Christ has said, “Behold,

I make all things new.” Even under the old dispensation, God’s promise to His people was, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.” All this is impossible with man, but it is possible with God. The Holy Spirit regenerates a man, causes him to be born-again, so that, though his bodily frame remains the same, yet his inner spirit becomes like that of a little child, and as a newborn babe, he desires the unadulterated milk of the Word that he may grow thereby. Yes, dear hearers, there is a total change worked in men when they believe in Jesus Christ. He said to Nicodemus, “Except a man be born-again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God;” but men, who are old, can be born-again, “by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever.” Greybeard, you can be born-again; leaning on your staff for very age, though you have outnumbered three score years and ten, you can be born-again; and if you were a hundred years of age, yet if you would believe in Jesus, by the power of the Eternal Spirit, you would at once be made a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Here is another hard question. *How can God, who sees all things, no longer see any sin in believers?* That is a puzzle which many cannot understand. God is everywhere, and everything is present to His all-seeing eye, yet He says, through the prophet Jeremiah, “In those days, and in that time, says the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none.” I venture to say that even God Himself cannot see that which no longer exists; even His eye rests not on a thing that is not; and thus is it with the sin of those who have believed in Jesus; it has ceased to be. God Himself has declared, “I will remember their sin no more.” But can God forget? Of course, He can, as He says that He will. The work of the Messiah was described to Daniel in these remarkable words, “to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.” To make an end of sins? Well, then, there is an end of them, according to that other gracious, divine declaration, “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions, and, as a cloud, your sins.” Oh, what blessed words! Therefore they are gone, they have ceased to be, Christ has obliterated them; and, therefore, God no longer sees them. Oh, the splendor of the pardon which God has bestowed upon all believers, making a clean sweep of all their sins forever! His own words are, “I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”

Here is another hard question. *How can a man see the invisible God?* Yet Christ said, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God;” and the angel said to John: “His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face.” This hard question is putting in another form the difficulty which Philip brought to Jesus: “Lord, show us the Father, and it suffices us.” Jesus answered Him, “Have I been so long time with you, and yet have you not known Me, Philip? He that has seen Me has seen the Father.” In the person of His dear Son, God the Father has displayed Himself before the eyes of men, as John says, “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.” Jesus Himself said, “I and My Father are one;” so that we can see the invisible Father in the person of Jesus Christ His Son.

Moving upward in Christian experience, here is another hard question. *How can it be true that “who-soever is born of God sins not,” yet men who are born of God do sin?* Ah! That is a question which has puzzled many; but we must remember that every man of God is two men in one. That new part of him, which is born of God—that new nature which was implanted in regeneration cannot sin because it is born of God. It is the incorruptible seed, which lives and abides forever; but, as far as the man is still in the flesh, it is true that “the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” The old nature sins through the force of nature; but the new nature sins not, because it is born of God.

This helps also to answer another hard question. *How can a man be a new man and yet be constantly sighing because he finds in himself so much of the old man?* The Holy Spirit guided the apostle Paul to instruct us upon this matter. There is the new man within us, which leaps for joy because of the heavenly life; but, alas! There is also the old man. Paul calls it “the body of this death.” There it is, and you know that it is the older of the two, and that it will not go out if it can help it. It says to the new nature, “What right have you here?” “I have the right of grace,” answers the new nature; “God put me here, and here I mean to stay.” “Not if I can prevent it,” cries the old nature; “I will stamp you out, or I will smother you

with doubts, or puff you up with pride, or kill you with the poison of unbelief; but out you shall go somehow.” “No,” replies the new nature; “out I never will go, for I have come to stay here. I came in the name and under the authority of Jesus; and where Jesus comes, He comes to reign, and I mean to reign over you.” He deals some heavy blows at the old nature, and smites him to the dust; but it is not easy to keep him under. That old nature is such a horrible companion for the new nature, that it often makes him cry, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” But even while he is thus crying out, he is not afraid of the ultimate issue; he feels sure of victory. The new nature sits and sings—even, as it were, within the ribs of death, with the stench of corruption in its nostrils—it still sits and sings, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord,” and triumphs still in Him. We are not going to be overcome, beloved. “Sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under grace.” But, my brethren, it is a tremendous struggle; and if our Lord had not instructed His servant Paul to tell us about his own experience, some of us would have been obliged to cry, “If it is so, why am I thus?” Believers are like the Shulamite in the Song of Solomon: “What will you see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies;” and these two armies keep on fighting and wrestling from day to day. Christ knows all about the inner life of His people, and His Word explains what may appear mysterious to you; so, when next you feel this conflict raging within your spirit, you will understand it, and say, “It is not because I am dead in sin; for, if I were dead, I should not have this fighting. It is because I have been quickened that this battle is going on.”

Here is one more of these hard questions. *How can a man be sorrowful, yet always rejoicing?* That is one of the apostle Paul’s riddles of which he gives us a great number, such as these. How can a man be poor, yet make many rich? How can a man be cast down, yet not destroyed; persecuted, yet not forsaken? How can a man be less than nothing, and yet possess all things? The explanation is that, while we are in this body, we must suffer, and smart, and pine; but thanks be to God! He has taught us to glory in tribulation also, and to expect the great reward that awaits us by and by; so that if we are full of sorrow, we accept the sorrow joyfully; if we are made to smart, we bow beneath the rod, and look for the later blessed results from it. So we can sigh, yet at the same time sing; and, just as, when it rains, and the sun is shining, the bow of promise spans the heavens, so we rejoice, yes, and will rejoice, even in our most trying experience.

I have one more hard question. *How can a man’s life be in heaven while he still lives on earth?* May you all understand this riddle by learning what Paul means when he says, “For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God;” who “has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus!” Even now the heavenly life may be enjoyed by us, although we still live upon earth; and, sometimes, we are half inclined to say, with the apostle, “Whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knows.” Yet we soon discover that we are in the body, for we have physical wants, temptations, and trials; and then we cry, “Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!” Yet, perhaps, the next moment, we say, “My treasure is all packed up, and gone on before me; and I stand on tiptoe, waiting to be called away; for, where my treasure is, there my heart is also, and they are both above the skies with my dear Lord and Savior.”

There are ten hard questions; I might have asked a great many more, and He, who is “greater than Solomon,” could have answered them all.

III. Now in closing, let us ANSWER CERTAIN QUESTIONS OF A PRACTICAL CHARACTER.

Answer, first, this question—*How can we come to Christ?* He is in heaven, so we cannot climb up to Him there. Yes, but He has graciously said, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” And though we see Him not, and hear Him not, yet in spirit He is among us at this moment. You need not stir even a step in order to get to Him. If Jesus were again upon earth, He could not, in His bodily presence, be in all places at once. Suppose He were in London, what would they do who live in Australia, and wanted to get to Him? They might die on the voyage. Or if He were at Jerusalem, how many poor people would never be able to get to Palestine! It is much better that He is not on earth; it is more expedient for us, because His Spirit is everywhere; and, desiring to think about Him, wishing to know Him, seeking Him, and, above all, trusting Him, we have come to Him.

“Well,” says one, “supposing that is done, *how can we ask Christ hard questions?*” You may ask anything of Him just the same as if you could see Him. You need not even speak the question; if you think it, He hears it. Pray to Him, for He hears prayer. Wherever there are the praying lips of a sinner, there is the hearing ear of the Savior. In your little room, in the workshop, in a hay loft, walking along Cheapside, in this Tabernacle, in these rooms underneath—there Jesus is, so ask of Him all you need, for He will hear you, and bless you.

“But,” you say, “*if I ask of Him, how will He answer me?*” Do not expect that He will answer you in a dream, or by any vocal sound. He has spoken all you need to know in this Book. Read it, study it, that you may learn what He has revealed. We who preach are not worth hearing unless what we say is taken out of the Bible. Listen to us when we do so preach, because, oftentimes, the words of the Book may seem cold to you; but, if we translate them into warm lip-language, they will go home to your heart. You will understand them better, and feel them better, as coming from one who loves you, and who is a man of flesh and blood like yourselves. If you have any hard question that troubles you, pray about it, and then read about it in the Word, and hear all you can about it from Christ’s servants, and so you will find that He will answer you in a very wonderful way.

I have known, many a time in this house—and I speak not of this house above others, but because I happen to know about this more than I do about others—often times, I have been told that the preacher has described the inmost thoughts of his hearers—sometimes the very words they have used, in casual conversation, on their way to this house of prayer, have been quoted by the preacher, and the hearers have been startled and astonished. Some have even come to me under the suspicion that somebody in their house had acted as a spy upon them; this has happened to me, not merely once, or twice, but many times. The reason is that, He who sees you in your bed chamber can tell His servant what to say about you; and if the wife of Jeroboam should come to the door, after having tried to disguise herself in some strange fashion, the Lord’s prophet will be able to say to her, “Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam; why feign you yourself to be another, for I am sent to you with heavy tidings.” Unwittingly, the preacher has often said something that has come close home to the heart and conscience of his hearers. If you never find it so, in any place where you attend, do not go there any more; that is not a place where you will be likely to get a blessing. You remember how Nebuchadnezzar required the magicians, and the astrologers, and the soothsayers, to tell him the dream that he had forgotten, and also to interpret it to him; but they said, “No; you tell us the dream, and we will interpret it.” But when God sent Daniel to him, he told the king both the dream and its interpretation; and if God sends his servant to you, he will tell you your experience, and he will explain it as well, because his Master has sent him with a message to your soul.

I cannot understand it,” says one; “it seems so strange.” My dear friend, is that the first strange thing you have ever heard of that has turned out to be true after all? There are scores, there are hundreds, there are thousands in this house of prayer, who can bear me witness that, sometimes, in reading the Bible, it has seemed to them that a text must have been written after they have been placed in certain circumstances, so exactly did every word suit their case. And when the gospel has been preached from the pulpit, they have been astonished to find how precisely, even to jots and tittles, their case has been described as the Lord has spoken to their souls. O beloved, go to Jesus with your hard questions, for He has many ways of sending you an answer to them!

You recollect, perhaps, how Mr. Hone, the author of the *Every-day Book*, was brought to know the Savior. Hone had been an infidel; and, one day, he was in Wales, and he saw a little girl sitting in the porch of a cottage reading a Bible. He said to the child, “Well, my dear, you are getting through your task.” “What, sir?” she asked. “I see that your mother has set you to learn a portion out of the Bible, and you are doing it like an obedient girl.” “No, sir,” she said, “I am not.” “But you are reading that Book because your mother told you, are you not?” She looked at him in surprise, and she said, “No, sir, I am not; I am reading it because I love it.” “But it is a task, is it not?” Mr. Hone asked. She said, “No, sir; I never heard of such a thing in all my life. Do you think it is a task to me to read my Bible? Why! It is my joy and delight; I wish I could read it all day long; there is no book like it;” and the dear girl’s eyes flashed with their Welsh fire, and something better, a fire of intense delight in the Sacred Volume; and Hone

began to see that there was in the Word of God that which could make him wise unto salvation, and the Holy Spirit blessed the child's simple talk to his conversion.

"Yes," says one, "I would gladly come to Christ with my doubts and difficulties, and here is one question that I want Him to answer now. *How is it that I read, in the Word of God, that He has limited a day, and yet you bid me come to Him now?*" Yes, I do bid you come to Him now; and what is more, I tell you that His own word is, "Him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out." "But is it not also true that He limits a day?" Yes, He does; but shall I tell you how He limits it? "Again, He limits a certain day, saying in David, Today, after so long a time, as it is said, Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." Blessed be His holy name, if He has limited you, He has limited you to today; and if I live to see your face tomorrow, I will still say the same to you. The limit is a very gracious one; it is "today." If ever a soul does come to Christ, when he does come, it is today; and if you come this day, you will be within the limit, for he has said, "Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." Today then, dear soul, is within the boundary; this night, before you go to your home, you are just within the limit. "Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." Accept Him now; trust Him now; come to Him with your hard questions now; come to Him with your hard doubts, come with your hard infidelity, come with your hard obstinacy; come just as you are, and cast yourself at those dear pierced feet of His, for there is not a question that He will not answer, not a difficulty that He will not overcome, nor a sin that He will not pardon, and send you away rejoicing.

I think I hear someone say, "What is all this about? Are there really any people in the world who want God in this fashion?" Yes, there are; and we are grieved if you are not one of them; for, believe me, friend, all who are living as if there were no God are missing everything that truly makes up life. I heard a young man say, "I should like to see a little life." Yes, I hope you will, and a great deal of life, too; but there is no life in the outskirts of vice; that is death, rottenness, stench, corruption, like the valley of Hinnom and the burning of Tophet. Flee from it. But life is to be found by coming to God; and by trusting Jesus you get to God, and so become the possessor of eternal life. Then, getting to know God, you help to make the world all alive. The very times and seasons seem to have changed to you, for things are not what they once were. The wilderness and the solitary places rejoice, and the desert blooms as the rose. If I could live ten thousand years on earth without my God, and perpetually swim in a sea of sensual delights, I would beg to be annihilated sooner than have to undergo such a doom. But let God send or withhold whatever He pleases of temporal favors, if He will but give me to know that He is mine, and that I am His, it shall be all I will ask of Him. I mean what I say, and I believe that every child of God, who has once enjoyed the full light of His countenance, will say the same.

The Lord bless you all, beloved, for Christ's sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—426, 45 (VERSION 4), "ART THOU WEARY?"

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