

LESSONS FROM A DOVECOT

NO. 3051

A SERMON
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*“Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?”
 Isaiah 60:8.*

THE chapter from which our text is taken predicts very glorious times for the true Church of God. The promises recorded in this chapter were, in a measure, fulfilled when Jews and Gentiles were gathered into the fold of Christ in great numbers in the days of the apostles. But God's promises are not like man's. When a man has kept his promise once, it does not stand good any longer—but God's promises may be fulfilled a hundred times over and yet remain just as valid as when He first gave them. So what God did for His Church at Pentecost, He is prepared to do today—and He will do it on a yet larger scale in those happy times that are yet to come—the latter days for which we look and long with joyful expectation!

I do not intend, however, to explain the text in its strict connection, but shall try to turn it to profitable account with regard to ourselves. You will notice that the question indicates a measure of surprise and that surprise reveals some dark fear which must have been lurking in the background. The Church sees an innumerable company of converts coming to join her ranks and she cries out in amazement, “Who are these that fly as a cloud?” She could not, therefore, have been expecting them. Her faith must have been weak and, in consequence, a great gloom had settled upon her mind. And a similar kind of gloom comes over our minds when our faith is weak and our expectations are slender. I think that all of us who love the work of God and who especially love that work in connection with our own branch of Christ's Church are apt, at times, to feel a deep anxiety of soul and to fear lest God should forsake His work among us because of our sins. God may leave a Church that He has formerly greatly honored if it grows lukewarm, as did the Church at Laodicea, or has left its first love, as did the Church at Ephesus. There will always be a Church of God in the world, but there may not always be a Church in any particular place. There will always be a people whom He has chosen to show forth His praise and to proclaim His gospel—but they may not be found in this place, or in any other where the Lord has been known to meet with them.

The idolatrous church of Rome calls itself the only true church, outside which none can find salvation, but although the church in Rome was once a bright and glorious church, God forsook it and for many a day it has been the very center of apostasy and abomination! It is like Shiloh where the Ark abode for a time, but concerning which God said, “Go you now unto My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of My people Israel.” And it may be so with any professed Church of Christ today—and my fear often is lest, in any measure, it may be so with us. Have we not, even in this Church, sins enough to provoke the Lord to leave us? Have we not, at any rate, sufficient sins of omission in our lack of earnestness, our lack of prayerfulness and our lack of Christ-likeness, to cause Him to say, as He is reported to have been heard to say during the siege of Jerusalem, “Arise, let Us go from here”? Then would “Ichabod” be written on these walls and we might make this building like the Jews' place of wailing, for if the Lord should forsake us, we might well say, “The glory is departed. The Church has lost her strength, her honor and, indeed, her very life!” We fear, then, lest the Lord should leave us. But, brothers and sisters in Christ, if you turn your fears into *prayers* there may be no longer any need for your fears!

My other fear has been lest converts should not continue to come into this Church and that appears to also have been the fear of the Church in Isaiah's day, or else she would not have been so surprised to see them come. I watch, each month, and each week, with prayerful anxiety and ask—Will there be more believers putting on Christ in baptism? Will there be more sinners crying out, “What must we do to be saved?” Will there be more of our hearers boldly but truthfully declaring—

*“We are on the Lord's side.
 We will serve the King!”?*

I would rather suffer any personal affliction or calamity than that God's work of grace should be stopped among us. It is a terrible thing when a professing Church continues to exist, in a fashion, yet is unfruitful—a vine whereon hang no ripe clusters—a field that yields no harvest. There may be some ministers who can be content when their churches do not grow, but I am thankful to say that I am not one of them! My heart is troubled, and I trust, my brothers and sisters in Christ, that your heart is also troubled unless converts continue to come to us “as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows.”

There is another fear that often passes across my mind like a dark threatening cloud—and that is lest some of those already brought into the Church should grow cold and others should apostatize altogether because they never had “the root of the matter” in them—and lest the rest should stand still in mere dead formality and not live in the light of God. We need to have churches and church members that are full of life! And if there really is true spiritual life within us, we need to “have it more abundantly.” Cold or lukewarm religiousness is to be found on all sides, but where can we find such holy fervor as blazed in England in the days of Whitefield and Wesley? Even on the old Methodist altar, it burns but very feebly. Oh, that everywhere it could be fanned into a vehement flame! We have some of this fervor here, but we pray that it may come with still greater force. Some of you, dear friends, have had it and have been very zealous for the Lord of hosts—are you growing cold? If so, may the Master revive you! Are you curtailing your efforts? Are you shortening your prayers? Are your offerings less generous than they used to be? Is your consecration to Christ less complete than it once was? Oh, for a great revival to begin with us at home—for if the Lord is not with us, warming our hearts, fanning our zeal and inflaming our love—we cannot expect that our efforts on behalf of others will be attended by any great measure of success! Paul truly wrote to Timothy, “The husbandman that labors must be first partaker of the fruits.” The water must gush up at the fountainhead otherwise it cannot flow down the hills to make fertile the meadows and make glad the vales. May God grant that inasmuch as these fears of ours have good reason for existing, we may not put them away, but may turn them into earnest prayers such as these—“O Lord, do not forsake us! O Lord, do not leave us without continual additions to our membership! O Lord, do not let us, as a Church, be without many true conversions! O Lord, do not allow Your people to grow cold—to become dead—but ‘visit us with Your salvation!’”

Now I can advance a step further. Our text, though it came to persons possessed by gloomy fears, contains in itself a very bright picture. You will understand the metaphor that is used in it if I just tell you that a traveler in the East saw, near Ispahan, many large round towers crowned by conical spiracles through which the pigeons descended. Inside they were like a vast honeycomb, pierced with a thousand holes, in each one of which pigeons could build. And he said that when he saw them fly back to their homes at night, they were so numerous and so compact that they might well be compared to a cloud—and the swiftness with which they flew back to their dovecot forcibly reminded him of this passage, “Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?” We have here, then, a beautiful picture of souls coming to Christ and to Christ's Church in great numbers and with great speed! And we will ask and try to answer three questions concerning them. First, *why should they come?* Secondly, *how should they come?* And thirdly, *why should so many of them come?*

I. First, WHY SHOULD THEY COME?

There is a very complete answer to that question with regard to the doves. It is natural that doves should come to their dovecots and there is an equally complete answer to the question, Why should souls come to Christ? There are four reasons why they should come.

First, *because Christ is the true food of souls.* No doubt the doves or pigeons were often fed at the dovecot. Therefore they knew where it was and they gladly flew to it. Hungry Soul, Christ is the only food that can ever appease your hunger—are you as eager to get to Him as the hungry doves are to get to the dovecot? Do you long for peace, happiness, forgiveness, salvation? All these are to be found in Christ! Yes, all that your empty soul can require to fill it to the brim is stored up in Christ Jesus! Therefore you should come to Him—and our prayer is that you may come to Him even now.

Next, *the doves came to the dovecot because it was a place of security for them*—and for the same reason sinners should come to the Savior. They are unsafe as long as they are out of Christ. Go where you may, O Soul—until you come to the Lord Jesus Christ, you are in jeopardy! Whether you live in sin or in self-righteousness, you are equally liable to be destroyed until you come to Christ! The whole world is the City of Destruction and Christ is the only Gate of Salvation, as Paul says in writing to the Galatians, “Scripture has concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them

that believe.” [Sermon #1145, Volume 19—THE GREAT JAIL—AND HOW TO GET OUT OF IT—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

But next, *the doves came to their dovecot because it was their home*. And the only true home of any human heart is in the wounds of Jesus. He who really finds Christ finds rest, enjoyment, peace, tranquility—in fact, all that the word, “home,” really means. The man who truly believes in Jesus is forgiven. He is reconciled to God. For him there is no gloom with regard to the world to come—no hell to dread and only a heaven of bliss to enjoy! Moses wrote, “Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.” And God is still the dwelling place of His people—they find rest and peace in Him. Therefore should souls go to Christ, even as the doves go to the dovecot. The fourth reason why the doves came to the dovecot was *because it was a fit place in which to lay their young*. Some of you may remember a sermon I preached on Psalm 84:3, [Sermon #3041, Volume 53—THE SPARROW AND THE SWALLOW—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] “Yes, the sparrow has found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even Your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.” A saved man has at least a greater probability than any unsaved man has of seeing his children saved. On the day of Pentecost, in answer to the question, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Peter said, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For *the promise is unto you, and to your children*, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” So, for your children’s sake as well as for your own sake—

*“Come, guilty souls and flee away,
Like doves, to Jesus’ wounds!
This is the welcome gospel-day
Wherein free grace abounds!”*

II. Secondly, the text answers the question, HOW SHOULD THEY COME? They should come “as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows.”

That is, *they should come very swiftly*. A dove’s flight is very rapid and when a cloud of doves is driven by the wind, they fly very swiftly through the air. That is the way for sinners to come to Christ—come at once without delay. The very best time to trust the Savior is NOW, for, “behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” I cannot give you a promise of salvation tomorrow, but I find many promises in the Word of God concerning the present time. Oh, that God would, by His grace, incline some soul to break away from the bands of procrastination and say, “Since it may be ‘now or never’ with me, it shall be NOW! I will fly to Christ at once.”

There are many reasons why you should fly to Christ at once. First, *because you are in present danger*. Should not the dove fly at once to its windows when the hawk is after it? And Sinner, sin is after you and wrath is after you if you are out of Christ. “He that believes not”—and mark, this is God’s Word—“he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” “*Condemned already*.” Then you are in a condition of present danger and I say to you as the angel said to Lot, “Escape for your life! Look not behind you, neither stay you in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest you be consumed.” Already the venom of the fiery serpent’s poison is boiling in your veins! Look then, at once to Him who is lifted up before you as the bronze serpent was lifted up before the bitten Israelites, for there is healing in a single glance at Christ Crucified! Though you are at the very ends of the earth, the message can reach you, for the Lord says, “Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” So come to Christ at once because you are in present danger. [See Sermon #60, Volume 2—SOVEREIGNTY AND SALVATION. This Sermons was preached by Mr. Spurgeon on January 6th, 1856, the sixth anniversary of his own conversion under an uneducated local preacher’s pointed and personal discourse upon this passage, Isaiah 45:22—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

Besides that, there is great reason why you should fly at once to Christ *because time is flying faster than you can fly*. And with the flight of time, the approach of the night of death is certain. The dove seeks its dovecot before nightfall, for it knows the dangers to which it would be exposed in the darkness. The night is fast approaching with some of you. In the nature of things, you cannot live much longer, yet how strange it is that men often think that they will continue to live though they expect that others will die! I heard, only this week, of a man of 86 who expects some property to come to him, but there is another man’s life that delays his possession of it—and he is eighty-four. Yet the older man told a friend of mine

that he expected very soon to inherit the property as the person who held it was a very old man and could not live much longer, though he himself was two years older—an admirable commentary on the words of the poet, “All men think all men mortal but themselves.” Yet if we use our wits, we shall know that we are also mortal. Possibly old age is already creeping over us or, if not, there is an unseen hand that may be, even at this moment, tugging at our heartstrings—some fatal disease or sudden stroke from God may swiftly come upon us and we shall be gone from earth as so many others have gone. Fly, O you doves, for death’s arrows are flying! Fly, for the fowler’s nets are spread all around you! Fly, for true life is only to be found through those blessed windows which Christ has opened for guilty souls!

I am praying for conversions tonight. Brothers and sisters, you who know how to pray, join with me in praying for conversions tonight that before the unsaved sleep, they may come to Jesus and be saved!

III. Now, having spoken of why they should come and how they should come, I have to answer the third question, WHY SHOULD SO MANY COME? They are to fly in such a vast flock that they shall be like a cloud! My heart rejoices at the very thought of great numbers of sinners coming to Christ, but why should so many come?

Well, first, *because there is room for them.* There is room in the dovecot for every dove that comes and there is room in the heart of Christ for every soul that ever will come to Him. There never was a true penitent whom Christ repelled, saying, “I did not shed My blood for you.” There never was a believer whom Christ refused, saying, “You had no right to believe in Me.” No, His gracious message still stands—
“Engraved as in eternal brass,”—

“Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” [See sermon #3000, Volume 52, COME AND WELCOME—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] Write that truly golden text in starry letters across the sky, or, better still, ask the Holy Spirit to write it in your memory so that you will never forget it—“Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” Though he may have been a drunk, a swearer, or a thief—though he may have been unchaste or unjust—though he may even now be black or red with crime—if he does but come and trust in Jesus Christ, he cannot be cast out! There is room in Christ’s heart for all who come to Him, so let many come now.

Besides, *’tis sweet for many to go together.* How glad I am when I can receive husband and wife into the Church at the same time! And I am still happier when there is a little train of their sons and daughters behind them, all coming together to confess their faith in Christ! You know that if only one member of a family is brought to Christ, that one will be like a speckled bird in the home-nest, but when the Lord draws the whole family to Himself, how blessed it is for them all to walk hand in hand to heaven! I think that, if necessary, I should have been glad to go on pilgrimage alone, as Christian went, but I should have liked much better to have gone with Christiana, Mercy and the children, and with Mr. Great-heart, and old Father Honest and all that noble party of pilgrims who went together to the Celestial City.

Further, *the same reason that should make one go to Christ should make others go to Him.* When I used to preach at Waterbeach, the chapel was crowded, but when I first came to London, I was very much discouraged by the sight of so many empty seats. But somebody said, “You may depend upon it that the gospel that will draw 600 in a country village will draw 6,000 in London.” And I have found it so all these years. If Christ can draw one soul to Himself, why can He not draw twenty? And if He can draw twenty, why not twenty thousand, and why not thousands of millions? Why should not we live to see many millions of souls converted to God? Let us pray to the Holy Spirit to present the irresistible attractions of Christ to the hundreds of millions in the whole human race!

And then, beloved, *when sinners come to Christ in great numbers, think what honor it brings to Him.* A soul saved here, and another saved there may go unremarked—but what a joy it is to us, and what glory it brings to God—when hundreds, or thousands, as on the day of Pentecost, are converted at once! Then the Church is refreshed, revived and encouraged! And the world hears of it and other churches hear of it and ask for the same blessing. I do, therefore, beg you, my brothers and sisters in Christ, to join with me in prayer that we may have a cloud of converts flying to Christ—multitudes of precious souls coming to Him as the doves fly to their windows!

IV. My time fails me, so I must close by again reminding you that OUR TEXT SETS BEFORE US A BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL PICTURE—“Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?”

Shall I tell you who they are? I am not going to speak of them as being God’s elect, though that is true. And Christ’s redeemed, though that is also true. And the Holy Spirit’s effectually called ones, though that, too, is true! But I am going rather to dwell upon another phase of the subject and that is this. *Some of those*

that will fly as a cloud, if our prayers are heard, and they do really come to Christ, *will be our own sons and daughters*. It has been one of the greatest joys of every revival season which we have ever had, that among the converts there has always been a considerable proportion of the sons and daughters of the members of the Church. Does not the very mention of that fact make your mouths water? Do not your prayers now go up, “O Lord, bring my boy in! Lord, save my girls! Let our children live in Your sight”? Perhaps you have other young people living with you who are not literally your sons and daughters, but who stand to you in almost the same relationship. They are your nephews and nieces, or some orphan children for whom you are caring, or it may be your pupils. Well, may the Lord grant that when you ask the question, “Who are these that fly as a cloud?” the answer may come, “Why, they are the very ones who dwell with you! God has blessed those who are nearest and dearest to you!” Dear young people, we cannot wish for you a greater blessing than that you may be brought to Christ early and be united to His Church!

Yet again, how delighted would many of you be if, in answer to this question, “Who are these that fly as a cloud?” it would be said, “Why, *some of them are from the Sunday school*—and you would be even more gratified if the reply would be, “Some are from your own class, the very scholars for whom you have been especially praying—the boy to whom you spoke so seriously—the girl whom you so affectionately sought to come to Jesus.” Teachers, would you not clap your hands for joy if that could be truly said to you? Why should it not be the case? God has often blessed such instrumentality and His arm is not shortened that it cannot save, nor is His ear heavy, that He cannot hear. Go in faith and ask for the blessing—and then work in real earnest, believing that it will come—and it will assuredly be bestowed upon you and upon those whose salvation you are seeking!

It would be peculiarly gladdening to my heart if the answer to the question of our text should be, “Some of those that are flying to Christ, as the doves fly to their windows, are *your old hearers, old seat-holders who have long been unconverted*.” I thank God that there are not very many such hearers, for the Lord has brought in one after another until there are not many of those who have long heard the Word who still remain unsaved. The axe of grace has cut down these trees of sin, one after another, and built them into the temple of God! Our unconverted seat-holders are getting to be fewer and fewer—and my prayer is, “O Lord, bring Your sharp axe and cut every one of them down!” I am sorry that there are any of my old hearers who are still unsaved—how I would praise the Lord if, after ten, twelve and some of you 18 years of hearing the same voice preach the same gospel, you should be saved at last!

Probably, however, there will be another answer to the question of our text. “*Some strangers, some of your casual hearers, have been brought to Christ*.” Dear friends, I repeat the request that I have often made—Please look after those who come here only occasionally to hear the Word. Do all you can to make them comfortable and then, if there is any sign of attention to the preacher’s message, or of impression produced by it, do not let anyone be able to say, “I went to the Tabernacle half-a-dozen times, yet nobody ever spoke to me.” Be sure that no one shall be able to truthfully say, “Why, I am still quite a stranger there, though I have been attending for years! But nobody has spoken to me.” We used to have—I wish we had more of the same sort now—some very gracious people who were always on the watch for anxious souls. I remember one young man who joined the Church in this way—he came up from the country—we were then worshipping at the Surrey Gardens Music Hall. And the first time he was at our service, one of our brethren took him into the hall and gave him a seat. On another Sunday, when he saw him again, he asked him home to dinner and he talked to him about the things of God in such a way that, in a very short time, that young man became a Christian and joined the Church, though before he had lived without the fear of God. Would it not be something for which to praise the Lord for many a day if, among those that fly to Christ, as the doves fly to their windows, there should be one to whom *you* had spoken—a casual hearer, smitten by the Word preached, but brought into peace and liberty through a few sentences which you spoke privately to him?

I pray that among those who are brought to Christ, there may be many rank outsiders. I do not know when I ever more enjoyed speaking, or hearing anybody else speak, than I did while speaking or listening to my brother Varley last Wednesday when we had the area of this Tabernacle full of butchers. They appeared to be thoroughly in earnest and they drank in the gospel—and I do trust that some of them retained it in their hearts and will bring forth fruit in their lives. We must constantly try to lay hold of men who are outside all ordinary religious worship. You who go with tracts all round this district, you who

visit the people in their homes, you who stand at the corners of the streets and preach, you who are spiritual Uhlans, riding ahead of the main army of God, you who are breaking up fresh ground and trying to increase the area of ground that is being cultivated for Christ—may you all have a present reward as you see the converts coming to Christ as the doves fly to their windows! May our Bible classes for men and women be richly blessed in bringing many to Christ and His Church! May our College be richly blessed and every man become abundantly useful in the Master's cause! And may every one of us seek to have a share in the great additions to our numbers which we trust God will soon send to us!

I have only to ask one more question and then I will close. Among these that are to fly as a cloud, and as doves to the dovecot, will *you* be one, my Hearer? “Do you want me to join this Church?” I did not say that! I did not say anything about your joining any church. You must be joined to *Christ* before you can join His Church. That was the apostolic way—“They first gave their own selves to the Lord and unto us by the will of God.” I do not first ask if you are willing to be baptized. I do not want you to be baptized before you believe in Christ. That is useless—no, it is worse than that—it is wicked! There is no Scriptural warrant for the baptism of an unbeliever. To sprinkle a baby, or to immerse an adult who does not believe in Jesus is a transgression of Christ's law! He has laid down the order, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Do you ask, “What do you want me to do?” I want you to be one of those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ! Is the Spirit of God working in your heart and saying to you, “Turn you, turn you, for why will you die?” Is He saying to you, “Trust yourself to Christ”? Then, yield to that gracious influence now, and say—

*“Now to be Yours, yes, Yours alone,
O Lamb of God, I come!”*

If that is your sincere utterance, you are a saved soul! Now be baptized, now join the Church! But first see to it that you believe in Jesus, for that is the first business. May God bring you to Christ and may the blessing of the Triune Jehovah be with you forevermore! Amen and amen!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *ROMANS 10.*

This chapter is a gospel in itself—it very clearly points out the plan of salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 1. *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved.* Paul had a tender heart towards all unconverted men and women and he longed and pleaded with God that they might be saved. Have all of us this unselfish compassionate feeling? I am afraid that there are some Christians who are very deficient in it, yet in the dread of an immortality to be spent in unutterable woe by all unbelievers, our hearts' desire and perpetual prayer should be as Paul's prayer for Israel was, “that they might be saved.” And if there is one class among the ungodly which should touch our hearts more than all the rest, it is those who are earnestly seeking salvation but who are seeking it where they will never find it, namely, by the works of the law.

2. *For I bear them record that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.* It is not sufficient for a man to be sincere in his zeal for God—sincerity must be according to knowledge if it is to be of any value. If a man travels North, his sincere belief that he is on the right road will not bring him to his destination in the South! If a man, in all sincerity, drinks poison under the belief that it is a cheering cordial, it will kill him, notwithstanding his sincerity. And if a man sincerely believes a lie, it will turn out to be a lie notwithstanding his sincerity. So that it is not enough to be sincerely zealous for God, or sincerely anxious to be saved—but you must seek salvation in God's *revealed way* if your search is to be a successful one.

3. *For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.* This is not an error on the part of only the Jews—it is to be found also among many Gentiles. Such people must have a righteousness of their own and Paul says they are continually “going about” to establish it. To do this they will undertake any labor, endure any suffering, or perform any self-denial, but all the while they despise God's righteousness—despise it by the very act of preferring their own, or seeking another way of salvation instead of walking in the one which God has provided! How sad it is that so many, in all sincerity of blind zeal, should be dishonoring God and virtually dethroning Him by the attempt to set up a righteousness of their own when He has already provided a perfect one which they will not accept.

4. *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes.* Even the law itself has this for its main drift and purpose—that it may introduce Christ. Its end, its intent, is to show to us our need of Christ, to point us to Christ and to make us willing to have Christ as our Savior. And as even the law aims at this objective, much more clearly does the gospel. Oh, that none of us might miss the aim and objective of this blessed design of God—that we might find righteousness through believing in Christ!

5. *For Moses describes the righteousness which is of the law.* And he does it in very brief, concise and satisfactory terms.

5. *That the man which does those things shall live by them.* That is the beginning and end of the law, “Do and live.”

6-8. *But the righteousness which is of faith speaks on this wise, Say not in your heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (That is, to bring Christ down from above), or, Who shall descend into the deep? (That is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what says it? The word is near you.* The saving, life-giving word is not to be sought above, nor below, nor afar off—it is “near you.”

8. *Even in your mouth, and in your heart.* It is not a matter of doing with the hands but of believing with the heart and of confession with the mouth!

8, 9. *That is the word of faith which we preach; that if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.* The gospel’s command, “Believe and live,” is quite as clear and plain and positive as the law’s command, “Do and live.”

10, 11. *For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, whoever believes on Him shall not be ashamed.* He shall never be ashamed of having believed on the Lord Jesus Christ! If he really believes on Him, he shall never be ashamed of the result of so believing, for that result will be eternal salvation to him—there is no doubt about that!

12. *For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him.* If there are great numbers to be saved at one time, Christ will not have to do as we do when we have too many guests at a feast, namely, cut the portion of each one smaller. Oh, no! For “the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him,” whether they are Jews or Gentiles.

13. *For whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.* Let us read that blessed verse again.

13, 14. *For whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?* When I hear anyone say, “I cannot believe in Christ, but I will pray to Him for faith.” I say, surely the prayer is more difficult than the believing—“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?”

14, 15. *And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they are sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!* We, dear friends, have had this whole process carried out in our midst. The gospel has been preached—preached, I trust, by one who can prove, by the many seals to his ministry that he has been “sent” by God who has given him these confirmations of his commission in the constant conversion of those to whom he has preached. Then many of you have heard the preaching and have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, you are “saved” to all eternity. But, alas, there are some of you who have not believed in Jesus! Yet you must be saved by this process, or you can never be saved at all, for God will never try any other plan! His way of saving men is to send the preacher whom He has called and qualified to preach. The preacher preaches. The people hear. By hearing they believe and by believing they are saved! This is God’s way of saving sinners and He will not depart from it! So let us walk in it. May His gracious Spirit take away from us all our proud, foolish and wicked objections to His simple plan and may we all believe and live!

16. *But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed our report? So you see that even the prophet Isaiah had the idea that salvation comes to sinners by believing. He mourned and cried to his God because men did not believe the “report” which he had been sent to deliver to them concerning that man who was “despised and rejected of men,” that man of whom the prophet truly said, “Surely He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows...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.”

17. *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.* With what solemnity this invests our hearing! I often hear people say, “We go to such-and-such a place of worship, to hear so-and-so preach.” That is well if the preacher is, like John the Baptist, “a man sent from God,” for, “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” Only let us all so hear the Word of God that hearing it we believe on Jesus Christ whom God has sent—believing on Him, we confess our faith in the divinely appointed way, devoutly worship and adore the ever-blessed God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—and do all we can to make the Savior known to others.

18, 19. *But I say, Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know?* These Jews for whom Paul prayed—these people who were so zealous in seeking to establish their own righteousness—did not they know God’s way of salvation? Did not they know Jesus of Nazareth, the divinely appointed Savior? Yes, they did, but they refused to believe on Him—they would not walk in God’s way of salvation.

19-21. *First Moses says, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Isaiah is very bold, and says, I was found of them that sought Me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after Me. But to Israel he says, All day long I have stretched out My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.* Oh, that God would soon bring these “disobedient and gainsaying people”—whether Jews or Gentiles—to submit themselves unto His righteousness and so to be saved! May He graciously grant it, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

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