

THE SECOND TIME

NO. 3096

A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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“And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren.”
Acts 7:13

[Two other sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon this incident, based upon Genesis 45:1-5, are as follows—
#449, Joseph and His Brethren, and #2516, Jesus and His Brethren.]

THIS did not happen on the first occasion when they went down into Egypt. Joseph knew them then, but they did not recognize him. He filled their sacks with corn, put the purchase money into their sacks, gave them provision for the way, and sent them home, but he gave them no token by which they were able to recognize him as their long lost brother, and I want to show you that as it was with Joseph so it is with Jesus.

There are times when sinners do not know Him even when they are speaking to Him, and on the first occasion He does not manifest Himself to them, but it is a very delightful thought that, full often, at the second time, Jesus is made known unto His brethren even as Joseph was.

I will tell you the gist of my discourse at once. It is this—if you have sought the Savior, and have not yet found Him, seek Him again. If your first seeking has been a failure, let my text be a message of encouragement to you, “At the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren,” let it encourage you to seek the Savior again in the hope that, at the second time, Jesus may make Himself known to you.

We are constantly preaching the same Gospel, in the simplest terms we can find, and the Gospel that we preach is this, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” Believing on Christ is simply trusting to Him, trusting in His great atoning sacrifice, in which He stood in the room and place and stead of sinners, and suffered as their Substitute, so bearing, that they might never have to bear, the righteous wrath of God on account of their sin.

We might have supposed that every person who attended our ministry did at least fully understand the plan of salvation, but it is not so. There are seekers here who are still in the dark. The light shines upon their eyeballs, but those eyeballs are blind, even in broad daylight they grope as in the night, because there is a night within their spirit which it is not in our power to change into spiritual day.

There are some seekers after Christ who, notwithstanding the simplicity of the Gospel, remain seekers by the space of weeks, and months, and even years. Yet it seems to me that no man, who is out of Christ, ought to remain in that condition for another hour. During that hour he may die and be damned, and it ill becomes him to run so solemn and terrible a risk.

If I had any doubt of my being saved in Christ, I would give no sleep to my eyes nor slumber to my eyelids until I had found Him. I would say to myself, “I must have Him, I cannot live without Him.” Yet there are some who seem to be awakened to a sense of their danger, and who are apparently concerned about their soul’s eternal interests, yet they remain in that state of semi-concern and semi-awakening not merely for an hour, or for a day or two, but from month to month, and even from year to year, continually crying with Job, “Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!” yet they never get any nearer to the Savior—turning their faces towards Zion, yet never truly starting upon the heavenly pilgrimage—desiring, hoping, fearing, resolving, debating, yet never actually trusting in Christ, and so not saved.

Our fear concerning these seekers, who are not finders, is that one of two things will happen to them, either they will fall into utter despair, or else into complete infidelity—perhaps into both, for despair is often the mother of infidelity.

They will first, perhaps, fall into gloom, depression, despondency, and at last they will say, “It is no use for us to keep on seeking the Savior, for if we do seek Him, we shall not find Him. If we pray, we shall not be heard. If we listen to the Gospel, it will not bless us. If we make an appeal to Christ, He will not grant our request,” and so they will settle down into deeper and deeper and yet deeper gloom, and declare that there is no salvation for them. Out of this despair may ultimately come an utter infidelity like that of those of old who said, “There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will, every one do the imagination of his evil heart.”

We have known some who have said that as there was no hope for them in the next life, they would have their swing in this life. They were going to be lost, they said, and therefore they might just as well enjoy themselves here while they could. If they could not be pardoned, they might as well be hung for a sheep as for a lamb, they would lay the reins upon the necks of their lusts, give full sway to all their passions, and plunge into sin till they were covered with its pollution!

Dear seeking friend, I tremble lest that should ever be the case with you. I fear lest you should wipe away those tears, and that they should be succeeded by the infidel’s jest. I dread lest those tremblings should cease, and be succeeded by a conscience seared as with a hot iron. Such experiences have happened to others, and I am afraid lest they should happen to you.

The sun has been shining upon you, and it seemed as if it was going to melt you into penitence. It will certainly do one of two things, it will either soften you or harden you, and if the melting time should pass over, and you are not melted, there may then come a hardening time, and you will become Gospel-hardened, and remain forever without hope concerning the world to come.

May the God of infinite love and mercy graciously grant that it may not be so with you, and that it may not be so, I shall try now to speak to you some words of encouragement, and may God the Holy Spirit move all who are the Lord’s people to pray that those words of encouragement may be the means of bringing you, this very hour, to full acceptance with God through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior!

I. I want to remind you, first, that **THERE IS A SOMETHING WHICH YOU DO NOT KNOW.**

Those who went down into Egypt did not know their brother Joseph in his exalted position, but “at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren.” Sinner, *you need above everything to know Christ.* When Joseph’s brethren went down into Egypt, they thought that if they could buy corn there, it would be enough to supply all their needs, but the grand thing that God had in store for them there was not merely corn, but that they might find Joseph, who would secure to them all the corn and everything else that they could possibly need. So, sinner, I remind you again that your great need is to know Jesus Christ, and if you do come to know Him, you will have all that you can require.

You need to know Christ as Lord of All. The keys of all the granaries of Egypt were under the power of Joseph, he could open or close them when he pleased, and when he gave his orders, none could countermand them. So, only in a much higher sense, it has pleased the Father that in Christ all fullness should dwell, “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.” Infinite ability to save is treasured up in Christ because He is Lord of all.

Oh, how I wish that you all knew this! You tell me, friend, that you do know this. Yes, you know that it is a fact, but you do not realize that all that is needed for your salvation is laid up in Christ Jesus, the Son of God, and that nothing is needed from you, and that you have not to procure anything from any other source. If you did but know Jesus Christ, the Nazarene, to be the appointed and anointed Savior, able to save you to the uttermost, it would make a grand change in your whole life.

But you also need to know not only that Christ is Savior and Lord, but that *He is your Brother, one with you in nature, relationship, and love.* The sons of poor old Jacob did not know that the man who was lord over Egypt was their own brother. They had never even dreamed of such a thing, yet all the

while his heart was palpitating with love to them. The passion of his soul could scarcely be restrained. He saw the well-remembered image of his father in every one of their faces, and he longed to weep upon their necks, and to tell them how much he loved them, he restrained himself for a while, but “the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren,” and then, oh, how glad they were to know him as their brother.

And dear friend, if you ever found out that Jesus Christ is your Brother, and that He loved you before the foundation of the world—if ever you should make this blessed discovery that for love of you, He took your nature upon Himself, and was born at Bethlehem—that for love of you He sweat great drops of blood in Gethsemane—and that for love of you He died upon the cross of Calvary—oh, what joy will fill your spirit then!

This is what you want to know—Christ in His eternal love for sinners, Christ in His brotherhood with all who trust Him, Christ in His everlasting union with all His redeemed people, and if you ever know this, you will know more than Solomon himself could have taught you, and you will be able to speak upon a theme which will far exceed any upon which Demosthenes or Cicero was ever able to speak.

O soul, we want you to know that Jesus is ready to forgive you, ready to befriend you, ready to help you, ready to enrich you, ready to clothe you with His own spotless robe of righteousness in place of your own filthy rags, ready to be all in all to you between here and heaven! I pray that the Holy Spirit may impart this knowledge to you this very hour, so that you may go out of this place saying, “Christ has now been made known to me. I never knew Him before. I have ridiculed His religion, I have despised His Gospel, but now that I know that He loved me and gave Himself for me, that makes all the difference.

Knowing that I am one of His chosen people, one of His redeemed ones, one for whom His precious blood was shed, I can never speak against Him again, but I will praise Him as long as I live, and after I die I shall live again to extol Him forever and ever for having made Himself known to me as my Lord, and Savior, and Brother.” That is what you all need to know if you have not yet learned it.

II. Now, secondly, **THERE IS A REASON WHY, AT YOUR FIRST GOING, YOU DID NOT LEARN THIS.**

Joseph was not made known to his brethren at their first visit, nor have you yet found Jesus so as to know His love. You have sought Him in some fashion or other, but He has not yet made Himself known to you. Shall I try to tell you why?

I cannot be sure, but I think that one reason is that *you have not really looked for Christ to be made known to you.* These sons of Jacob went down into Egypt, not to hunt for Joseph, but to buy corn. In like manner, you prayed, but for what did you pray? You say that you asked that your sins might be pardoned, that you might be saved from hell. That is quite right as far as it goes, for you want that, even as Joseph’s brethren wanted corn, but you want more than that, as they did. Your prayers were not answered because you did not really ask for what you most needed. Your previous searches ended in failure because you were not seeking what you most needed. If you had truthfully said—

*“Thou, O Christ, art all I want;
More than all in Thee I find;”*

and then had presented to God this petition—

*“Gracious Lord, incline Thine ear,
My requests vouchsafe to hear;
Hear my never-ceasing cry;
Give me Christ, or else I die.*

*Wealth and honor I disdain,
Earthly comforts all are vain;
These can never satisfy,
Give me Christ, or else I die,”—*

you would soon have received an answer to your supplication. But if you have been praying in the wrong fashion, it may be that is the reason why the first time you went to Christ, He was not made known to you.

In the next place, *you did not go to Him with a confession of your guilt.* Joseph’s brethren went down into Egypt, the first time, simply to buy corn, they did not go there to search for their brother Joseph, feeling that they had done a great wrong to him, but he took means to bring home to them a sense of their guilt, so that they said one to another, “We are verily guilty concerning our brother.” Though his life had not actually been taken, it was no credit to them that he had been spared. They had practically aimed at his murder, and they confessed their guilt, and you, sinner, have been guilty of the death of Jesus.

Have you ever realized that it was your sins that fastened Him to the cross of Calvary? Have you ever thought how greatly you have sinned against Jesus, the ever-blessed Son of God? No, you have thought of your sin as committed against yourself, or against your neighbor, but not as against Jesus, yet this has been the greatest of all your sins, that you have been the cause of His death. And when He convinces you that He loved you before He made the world, this will cause you to condemn yourself because you have not loved Him in return.

I know that when I found out that Christ had bought me with His precious blood, I felt grieved at heart to think that I had so long been an enemy to Him. This is what you all need to know, and what some of you do not yet know. As you have not come to Him with a broken heart and contrite spirit, you should not wonder that Jesus has not yet revealed Himself to you!

You remember that when Joseph’s brethren went down into Egypt the first time, *they did not all go.* They left Benjamin at home, so Joseph would not reveal himself to them until Benjamin was with them. And sometimes, when sinners go to Christ, they do not go whole-heartedly. They leave some faculty or capacity dormant, just as these brothers left Benjamin at home.

You prayed, you say, but what sort of a prayer was it? It was a cold, languid prayer, scarcely worthy of the name, you did not put your heart into it, and you know that our Lord Jesus Christ said, “The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force,” implying that intense earnestness is required if we would prevail with God. Or if lukewarmness was not the hindrance in your case, possibly there was a Benjamin-sin that you had not given up, or a Benjamin-self-confidence that you wanted to keep, but all these must be abandoned if Christ is to make Himself known to us. We shall never learn to know the Lord until we go to Him, and pray from our very soul—

*“Thou dost freely save the lost!
Only in Thy grace I trust:
With my earnest suit comply;
Give me Christ, or else I die.*

*All unholy, all unclean,
I am nothing else but sin;
On Thy mercy I rely,
Give me Christ, or else I die.*

*Lord, deny me what Thou wilt,
Only ease me of my guilt;
Suppliant at Thy feet I lie,
Give me Christ, or else I die.”*

If you will to be lost, you will be lost, but if you resolve that, by God's grace, you will not be lost, but will cry to Him for mercy as long as there is in you any power to cry, I venture to believe that you will not be lost. That very importunity which the Holy Spirit has implanted in your spirit is a token for good. You may well expect that the Lord means to save you when He makes you resolve that you will not let Him go except He shall bless you. Perhaps the reason why you have failed until now to find Christ is that you have not been in real earnest in seeking Him.

I may tell you one thing, *you have kept the Lord waiting so long that if He were to make you wait still longer, you ought not to wonder.* In some of our London squares which are still private property, you may drive through almost any day in the year, and nobody tries to stop you. But occasionally, the owner has the gate shut just for a minute or two, and you have to ask permission to go through. The gate is only shut in order to preserve the rights of the proprietor over the roadway, and in a similar fashion, a sinner will sometimes find the gate of mercy shut for a while, to make him realize that God has the sovereign right to do as He wills, and that it sometimes pleases Him to withhold for a season the light of His countenance.

But sinner, if God were to make you pray to Him for fifty years, if He heard you at the last, it would be well worth your while to keep on praying. If He were to let you seek Him for twenty years, and give you the light of His countenance only at the last, you might be satisfied to have it so. He is not likely to do anything of the kind, but if He did, you might be more than content as long as He did but bless you.

III. Now we will turn to the third point. I have reminded you that your great need is to know Christ, and I mentioned some reasons why you have not yet known Him. Now I want to assure you that **THERE IS GREAT HOPE IN YOUR GOING TO HIM AGAIN.**

I will read the text once more, "At the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren." They went again to their brother, and you had better go again to Christ, for remember that *you must go or perish.* You sang just now—

*“Perhaps He will admit my plea,
Perhaps will hear my prayer;
But if I perish, I will pray,
And perish only there.*

*I can but perish if I go;
I am resolved to try;
For if I stay away, I know
I must forever die.”*

That is most true. There is only one door to salvation, and that door is Christ, so you had better keep on knocking if the door remains closed. There is only one road to heaven, and if that road seems to be blocked, you had better try again and again to pass along it, for there is no other way. You must either know Christ or else everlasting perdition must be your portion. Joseph's brethren knew that they must either go down into Egypt for corn or else starve, so they went there, and poor sinner, go to Christ because you *must* go, and there is nowhere else for you to go.

Another reason why you should go to Christ again is *because others have gone to Him, and done well by going.* I wish I could speak personally to every seeker here who has thus far sought Christ in vain, and encourage him by my own case. I sought the Lord when I was a child, not only for days and weeks, but for months and even for years before I found Him. I can scarcely tell how it was that my brain was so muddled, and my heart so distracted that I could not find Him, but I know that I wanted Christ, and yet could not get Him.

I remember how I made up my mind that I would go to every place of worship in the town where I lived, and I did go to every dissenting place of worship that I knew of. Sometimes I heard a man preach up election and then I said to myself, "That doctrine will do very well for the saints, but it is not for me." I went to hear another man, who was preaching the precept of the Gospel, that was just like teaching

people to dance who had no legs, and was no good to me. Then I went to another place where the minister was preaching some intellectual doctrine of which I could make neither heads nor tails. So I went in vain from one place to another, and often I went down on my knees, and my little bedroom was the scene of sorrowful groans and falling tears.

But in God's good time, I found the Lord, and at this moment I know that I am saved, so why should not you also come to know Christ even though, until now, He has not made Himself known to you? And not only I, but hundreds of those who are sitting here had a hard time in coming to Christ, but they did come to Him at last, so why should not you?

You are like poor Mercy in John Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." When Christiana and her children went in at the gate, Mercy was left outside, and while Christiana pleaded for her admission, she knocked so loudly that she startled her friend inside. When the Keeper of the gate looked out, poor Mercy had fallen down in a swoon through fear that she would not get in, but he took her by the hand and led her gently in, and bade those that stood by bring something to stop her fainting.

Thus you see that Mercy got in, and so will you if you only keep on knocking. Knock as if you would break the gate down, feel that you must get in, put your whole soul into your prayers, and keep on seeking for Jesus with all your might, feeling that you must be saved, and that you cannot rest content until Christ reveals Himself to you. As others have found mercy, why should not you?

Go again, because, as I have already reminded you, *since you went the last time, you have lingered far too long*. You were very earnest in seeking the Savior a few months ago, but as you did not succeed in finding Him, your earnestness passed away. But remember that before this time, your soul might have been lost. Thank God that you are still alive, for if your body had been this night in your grave, your soul would have been in hell. As you are not there, take heart, and resolve to seek the Savior once more, for it may be that you will soon find Him.

I will tell you a secret, I believe that you are a man or a woman in whom God has put His Spirit, who has already begun to work within your heart. I think you are one of those to whom Jesus will reveal Himself, I believe He has long wanted to do so. When Joseph's brethren went down to Egypt the first time, though he did not tell them who he was, he knew well enough who they were. He was rough in his manner towards them, but when they went away, I am certain that he wished they would come back the next morning, and I expect he said to his servants, "Send word to the guards at the frontier of Egypt that when those men come back from Canaan, they are to let me know at once that they have come back."

They probably made their corn hold out longer than Joseph thought it would, but even when he was busy about the affairs of the kingdom of Egypt, I have no doubt that he often sat down, and said to himself, "I wonder when those brothers of mine will be here again. I should like to hear about my father, I should like to see my brother Benjamin."

He was wanting them badly, yet they did not know it, and Jesus Christ is wanting you, for those to whom He reveals Himself are those whom He loved long before they were born, and long before the world was made. For love of them He came down from heaven to earth, and lived in poverty, and died in shame, that He might save them. He is married to them, and they are as dear to Him as the spouse is to her husband.

Jesus wants you, sinner, and if you do but know this, I feel sure that it will be sufficient to make you say, "Then I will go to Him yet again trusting that He will reveal Himself to me."

*"I'll go to Jesus, though my sin
Hath like a mountain rose;
I know His courts, I'll enter in,
Whatever may oppose."*

IV. What will happen if you do go to Christ again? This story of Joseph and his brethren gives us A FORECAST OF WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU DO GO TO CHRIST AGAIN.

Suppose that the Spirit of God should now work upon your soul, and show you that all that is needed for your salvation is already done, that you have nothing to do because Christ has done it all. Suppose that the Holy Spirit should then enable you simply to put your trust in Jesus? You will be saved, saved now, and saved forever.

Yet it is possible that your experience will be like that of Joseph's brethren. *At first, when you know who Jesus is, you will tremble in His presence.* You will say to yourself, "After these many years of hearing the Gospel, and slighting it, will Jesus receive me now?" You will fall on your knees, and even while you are in prayer, possibly you will feel, "It cannot be any use for me to seek Him, I am growing old now, and I have wasted a long life, and spurned the grace of God, which has been pressed upon me all these years, I fear it is no use for me to seek the Lord now."

Then I will tell you what will happen next. *Christ will bid you draw near to Him,* as Joseph said to his brethren, "Come near to me, I pray you." The Holy Spirit will incline you to think about Christ, and you will think about who He was, and what He was, and what He did, and what He is, and you will hear a voice which will say to you, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth," and you will look to Jesus, and so you will be drawn near to Him.

What will happen then? Why, what happened to Joseph's brethren. *He will fall upon your neck and kiss you.* By that act you will realize that all your offenses are forgiven, and your transgressions are all blotted out, that kiss will be to you the token of forgiveness and acceptance. And then Christ will say to His servants, "Take off my brother's filthy rags, make him clean, give him a change of raiment, and let him sit at my table, and feast with me." Then He will tell you that He will provide for you all your days, and by and by, will take you to dwell with Himself in heaven forever and ever.

Does someone ask, "Can all that happen to me tonight?" I answer—Yes, if you will dispense with every other confidence, and come and rest in Jesus only, it will happen to you tonight! "But sir," says another, "I have been so long seeking." There is really no need for anyone to be seeking Christ for a long while.

Remember what Paul wrote, "Say not in thine 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 saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."

"But," says one, "I cannot understand how the simple act of trusting Christ can change the heart, and save the soul." Even if you cannot comprehend it, it is true that as soon as a man has trusted Christ, he knows that he is saved, then he loves Christ for saving him, the impulse of love and gratitude changes his whole attitude towards God, and towards God's will, so that he desires to do the very things which once he loved not to do, whilst sin, which was formerly his delight, has become a misery to him, and he longs with all his heart to escape from it.

There is salvation for each one here who trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ, but there is no salvation in any other way. As my eye ranges around this audience, I see that many of you are strangers to me, but I know the characters of some who are now present. I know that there are some here who were once members of a Christian church, but who fell through drunkenness.

There are others here who once made a profession of faith in Christ, but who were turned aside by one sin or another, and so disgraced their profession, yet the Lord says to them, "Return, ye backsliding children; come back to your God." I charge you to come back without further delay. Some of you have been inclined to return unto the Lord, yet I fear that you are again relapsing into indifference. May the Lord bring you a second time, and make sure work of it, even as the second time Joseph was made known unto his brethren!

As for you strangers, who are with us at this service, if you are unconverted, it may be that you have been hitherto satisfied with your state, even though you have never possessed real vital godliness. Well, if it is so, I pray that you may speedily learn to know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior and your Brother. Never be satisfied with anything short of that. Some people think they are all right because they have learned the catechism and are familiar with the prayer book, others feel perfectly content because they know the creed of the place they usually attend.

Ah, sirs, all that is of no avail, nothing and no one save Jesus Christ and Him crucified can save a single soul, and it is no use merely to know Him by report, you must know Him personally and spiritually, your heart being humbled before Him because your sins slew Him, your heart rejoicing before Him because God allowed Him to be put to death in order to save your soul alive.

Dear hearers, if I should never be able to speak to you again, let this one truth ring in your ears, and abide in your hearts, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," so that if you are not built upon Christ, the Rock of Ages, you are off the only foundation that will endure the test of time, and death, and judgment, and you are building on the sand, and down your building will come just when you most need a shelter, and great will be the fall thereof.

You must have Jesus made known to you, and only Jesus can make Himself known to you by His ever-blessed Spirit. The sun alone can show you the sunlight, and Jesus must visit you in a supernatural way, and reveal Himself to you by His own Spirit. You must be born again by the power of the Holy Ghost, and if it is not so with you, and if you are not resting in Him alone, where He is you can never come.

But if you know Him, if you are in Him, go your way in peace, for "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Knowing Him, you have saving knowledge, and you shall by and by be with Him where He is, to behold His glory, and to dwell with Him forever. May God grant to all of you this privilege, for Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

[From The Gospel of the Kingdom, a Popular Exposition of the Gospel according to Matthew. By C. H. Spurgeon. (Passmore and Alabaster, 3s. 6d.)]

MATTHEW 7:1-8

Verses 1-2. *Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*

Use your judgment, of course, the verse implies that you will *judge* in a right sense. But do not indulge the criticizing faculty upon others in a censorious manner, or as if you were set in authority, and had a right to dispense judgment among your fellows. If you impute motives, and pretend to read hearts, others will do the same towards you. A hard and censorious behavior is sure to provoke reprisals. Those around you will pick up the peck measure you have been using, and measure your corn with it.

You do not object to men forming a fair opinion of your character, neither are you forbidden to do the same towards them, but as you would object to their sitting in judgment upon you, do not sit in judgment upon them. This is not the day of judgment, neither are we his Majesty's judges, and therefore we may not anticipate the time appointed for the final assize, nor usurp the prerogatives of the Judge of all the earth!

Surely, if I know myself aright, I need not send my judgment upon circuit to try other men, for I can give it full occupation in my own Court of Conscience to try the traitors within my own bosom.

3-5. *And why beholdest thou the mote that is in your brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*

The judging faculty is best employed at home. Our tendency is to spy out splinters in other men's eyes, and not to see the beam in our own. Instead of *beholding*, with gratified gaze, the small fault of another, we should act reasonably if we penitently *considered* the greater fault of ourselves. It is *the beam in our own eye* which blinds us to our own wrong doing, but such blindness does not suffice to excuse us, since it evidently does not shut our eyes to the little error of our brother.

Officiousness pretends to play the oculist, but in very truth it plays the fool. Fancy a man with a beam in his eye pretending to deal with so tender a part as the eye of another, and attempting to remove so tiny a thing as a *mote* or splinter! Is he not a *hypocrite* to pretend to be so concerned about other men's eyes, and yet he never attends to his own? Jesus is gentle, but He calls that man a "*hypocrite*" who fusses about small things in others, and pays no attention to great matters at home in his own person.

Our reformations must begin with ourselves, or they are not true, and do not spring from a right motive. Sin we may rebuke, but not if we indulge it. We may protest against evil, but not if we willfully practice it. The Pharisees were great at censuring, but slow at amending. Our Lord will not have His kingdom made up of hypocritical theorists, He calls for practical obedience to the rules of holiness.

After we are ourselves sanctified, we are bound to be eyes to the blind, and correctors of unholy living, but not till then. Till we have personal piety, our preaching of godliness is sheer hypocrisy. May none of us provoke the Lord to say to us, "*Thou hypocrite*"!

6. *Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.*

When men are evidently unable to perceive the purity of a great truth, do not set it before them. They are like mere *dogs*, and if you set holy things before them they will be provoked to "*turn again and rend you,*" holy things are not for the profane. "Without are dogs," they must not be allowed to enter the holy place. When you are in the midst of the vicious, who are like "*swine,*" do not bring forth the precious mysteries of the faith, for they will despise them, and "*trample them under their feet*" in the mire.

You are not needlessly to provoke attack upon yourself, or upon the higher truths of the Gospel. You are not to judge, but you are not to act without judgment. Count not men to be dogs or swine, but when they avow themselves to be such, or by their conduct act as if they were such, do not put occasions in their way for displaying their evil character. Saints are not to be simpletons, they are not to be judges, but also, they are not to be fools.

Great King, how much wisdom Thy precepts require! I need Thee, not only to open my mouth, but also at times to keep it shut.

7-8. *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*

To men you may not always speak of heavenly things, but to God you may. "*Ask, seek, knock,*" let your prayer be adapted to the case, let it increase in intensity, let it advance in the largeness of its objective. To receive a gift is simple, to find a treasure is more enriching, to enter into a palace is best of all. Each form of prayer is prescribed, accepted, and rewarded in a manner suitable to its character. The promise is universal to all who obey the precept.

The commands are in opposition to the methods of carking care which have been denounced in the former chapter, and they are encouragements to the precepts of giving and non-resistance set forth previously, since he that can have of God for the asking may well give to men who ask, and even yield to those who unjustly demand. With such boundless stores at command, we should not be either niggardly or litigious. Lord, help me to have done with fretting, and to abound in asking, seeking, knocking, so shall I soon overflow with thanksgiving.

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