

OUR LORD'S VOLUNTARY POVERTY

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*“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich,
 yet for your sakes he became poor; that ye, through his poverty, might be rich.”*
2 Corinthians 8:9

THE apostle was anxious to stir up the Corinthian church to liberality. They were a church of very great talents. They were an unusually gifted church, so that they were able to maintain in their midst a form of worship which is not often maintained, and could not conveniently become the general form in the Christian church, namely, that a large proportion of the members spoke to edification, whereas in most other churches there was no such abundance of spiritual gifts.

They were in the midst of a city of polished inhabitants and it had pleased God to call in that city some of the ablest men. But they seem to have been far from taking the front rank in some respects. They needed to be exhorted to purge themselves from a sin which no church had ever tolerated that had a ministry, and which only that church would allow, because it was nobody's business to look after it, and so it was not looked after.

This sin *was a great lack of liberality in giving*. Now, in order to excite the church at Corinth, the apostle uses as an argument, first of all, the great generosity of the far poorer church in Macedonia. He says that in the midst of their poverty, they gave, not only up to their power, but generously beyond it. It is right for us to stimulate the zeal of one Christian by the example of another Christian—and it is the bounden duty of all Believers so to walk that they may be worthy to be examples to the rest of the flock.

But even this argument is a poor one, compared with that which the apostle was more constantly using, namely, the example of Christ, the church's great Head and Exemplar. He deals, indeed, an efficient blow at all selfishness when leaving the churches of Macedonia out of the question, he says, “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Oh! that blessed Master of ours! Surely He is useful to us in ten thousand ways! There is not a single part of Him—there is no position He takes, no action He performs, no word that drops from His lips, no thought of His heart, no aspect of His matchless character that is not serviceable to us, His people. Even in His poverty He becomes our instructor, just as in His death He becomes our Savior.

Without keeping longer in the text, we shall, first of all, ask you to consider *the example presented to us*, contemplating it in its various phases. And then, secondly, let me, in few but earnest words, *urge you to follow His example* in acts of gratitude.

I. THE EXAMPLE PRESENTED TO US.

It is that of our Lord, of whom Paul said, “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.” It seems, then, that Christ's coming from heaven to earth to suffer for us is here called “grace.” It was an act of grace on His part—an act purely gratuitous. He was not bound to have done it. We did not deserve it at His hands. It was no merit of ours foreseen, or of any other kind, which could have been potent to attract Him from the skies and drag Him to the manger and the tomb.

But He came as an act of free mercy to undeserving sinners. It was grace which was the source and fountain of His coming. That eternal love of God, by which we were first chosen, was the same love which sent the Savior to redeem the chosen. It was that grace from which all covenant mercies spring—the ancient wellhead of distinguishing grace—which brought the Savior here.

It was because He, being God, was love. Because He, being God, was full of grace and truth, that He therefore left the realms above that He might lift us up to them by His coming down from them into the depths of our misery. "Ye know *the grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ."

We ought to gaze upon the cross perpetually, I think, in that light of its being altogether an act of grace on Christ's part and the result of grace towards us on the part of the divine Father. Oh! you see nothing there, sinners, towards you but grace.

***"Tis mercy fills the throne.
While wrath stands silent by."***

The wrath falls upon the Savior, but all that you have to see in Christ now today is grace, pure grace—grace to take away the sin which made Him bleed—grace to accept the sinner, who was guilty of His death. The cross reveals to us grace on the throne, grace at its culminating point, grace triumphant and resplendent in the uttermost degree. Who would see grace, let him behold a bleeding Savior, bearing the griefs of men upon Himself and suffering in their stead. "You know the *grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ," the kindness, the bounty, the benevolence, the generosity, the compassion, the condescension, the tenderness, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

And when Paul had thus named the deed which the Savior did and labeled it with the title of "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," he follows it up by mentioning the heights from which the Savior descended—"who though he was rich." It has been well observed that this little sentence is a clear proof that our Savior had an existence before He was born into this world—that, in fact, He was divine—for it is said that, "He was rich, and that he became poor." Now, He never was rich in this life—never.

If it should be said that He was rich at one time with the Holy Spirit, as Unitarians have said, in order to get rid of the force of this verse, then He never did become poor in that sense. There was no period of the Savior's life on earth in which it could be said that He was rich, but He became poor. It must, therefore, have been in a previous state of being that our Lord was rich—and I shall now ask your thoughts to go back to the time when Jesus Christ *was* rich.

Poor are our words! They are but an accommodation of mortal speech to an immortal theme! "He was rich." When we read the word "rich," it seems, somehow or other, to pall the description of what Jesus Christ was, for He was so infinitely more rich than anything the world knows by that description. His riches were vastly more wealthy than any of the gaudy wealth which the world can bring—which is but transient and corruptible wealth. He was rich. Yes, but He was something more than that. However, we will make such use of the term as we can.

Jesus was rich *in possession*. As God over all, having made all things, all things were His. He could have said, "The cattle on a thousand hills are Mine. Mine, the mines of gold and the secret treasuries of silver. Mine, the places where the diamonds sparkle and where the pearl emits its gentle ray. All things are Mine. A thousand stars glisten as My lamps and all the width of space, so full of the wonders of creation—all this is Mine!"

He was rich *in service*. A thousand angels waited at His gates. He had but to will it and the strong-winged messengers flew upon His errands. They adored Him ceaselessly. Day without night they circled His throne, rejoicing. Even when on earth, He said He could pray to His Father and He would send Him twelve legions of angels. How much more was this the case when He sat in the state of heaven—and all these were the courtiers that waited before His throne?

He was rich *in honor*. No pompous courts of Solomon could ever compare with the courts of the Son of God. All glory centered in Him. He was "God over all blessed for ever," co-equal and co-eternal with the Father. To Him the perpetual song. To Him the never ceasing incense. To Him the golden harps, to Him the swell of heaven's highest symphonies, for He was adored of all, and exalted high above principalities and powers, and every name that is named.

And He was rich *in love*, which is the best of all wealth. His Father loved Him. "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Eternally was that the truth, and besides that, there were pure spirits of His own creating, who loved Him with all the force of their being. He wanted not our love to make Him rich. There was love enough in God for Him, and if He had willed it, He could have made a thousand races of nobler creatures than ourselves, all of whom would have loved Him with the deepest love.

He was rich, too, *in happiness*. We cannot conceive of the Savior knowing any sorrow, or grief, or want in heaven. He had all that even He could wish for, if such language can be used towards the infinite God. He was essentially and ineffably happiness, itself. Just as we believe, concerning the Most High God, that He is unruffled by a care and His soul undisturbed by a pang, so was it with the glorious One, who afterwards condescended to be crowned with thorns and to be pierced with the spear for our sakes.

"He was rich!" Oh! the word, as I have said before, is a poor miserable word. It is the best that Paul could find, but there is such a grandeur about Christ that if we say He was rich in all respects, rich in all conception, and rich beyond imagination's utmost stretch, rich beyond everything you and I will ever be able to conceive of—even when we got into the celestial state—so rich, so infinite, so glorious, so divine—this is what He was! "He was rich."

And yet He considered us! And yet He stooped to us! Oh! my brethren, what an example for us to get the same grace and generosity, so that if in any respect we, too, are made rich here, we, too, may be as willing to stoop as He was. But alas! while our stoop is all so little, His stoop is all so great!

Then the apostle goes on to say, "Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor." Not that He was *made* poor. It was not an act of providence that made Him so. He did not become bankrupt. He was not a King expelled from His dominions. He was not a fallen sovereign, to whom we give shelter and pity, but He "*became* poor."

That is, it was His own voluntary act. It was His own cheerful will to become poor. And now I cannot help saying that that word "*poor*" does not seem to me to be strong enough. It is the best, I suppose, our language can afford, but still there never was poverty like His poverty. It is a word which does but skim the surface of the Savior's condescension. He was poor.

Well, He was poor *in the ordinary sense*. He was born of humble parents. He was not the son of a prince or a mighty one. He was reputed to be the carpenter's son. When His mother swaddled Him, she laid Him in the manger. He was not like those who are born in marble halls and are wrapped in scarlet—He was a plebeian and He took a lowly place even in His birth.

He is sent to Egypt—He becomes an early exile. Scarce any poverty in the world is like the poverty of the poor emigrant who leaves his country either from lack of bread or from fear of life—and Jesus Christ and His mother going down to Egypt are the very picture of poverty. We are thankful if we have only a little cottage in our own land where we may dwell, but in Egypt the Son of God must tabernacle for awhile.

And when He came back, He sought not His acquaintance amongst even the tradesmen or the middle classes, much less among the lofty and the proud in spirit, but He put upon Himself the smock frock of the country—"a garment without seam, woven from the top throughout"—and His intimate acquaintances were the fishermen of Galilee.

Was it not said of Him by David, "He hath exalted one chosen out of the people"? And Christ was emphatically chosen out of the people. He was with them in all their toils and all their woes—so with them that none of them were more poor than He. "Foxes have holes," said He, "and the birds of the air have nests, but I, the Son of Man have not where to lay my head."

He was so poor that I never read He left a will about His worldly goods and chattels. All that He had of personal estate was just the garments He wore, and those the soldiers parted among them—and there He was, naked, dead, and indebted to charity. For a tomb, He had not even a sepulcher of His own—not a sorry six feet of earth in which His sleeping body might have rested in its own freehold, but it was a borrowed tomb that gave the Savior a refuge!

He thus became poor outwardly, but what was His poverty inwardly? He was poor *as to His friends*. Judas betrayed Him. Peter denied Him. All the disciples forsook Him and fled! He was poor *in servants*, for although he washed His disciples' feet, yet they washed not His! And when He came to the hour when human sympathy might have somewhat comforted Him, He had to say with melancholy pathos, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?"

Oh! so poor has He become that there is not an eye to watch with Him in His lonely grief! So poor was He that the comforts which are left to the most abject were taken away from Him. No promise beamed to shed its light upon His soul. At one time, at any rate, no presence of God made Him glad. He was forsaken of His Father and His God. "Eloi, Eloi lama sabachthani," indicated a poverty of soul quite as deep as that naked and mangled body indicated of poverty outwardly.

He had lost all, or rather had given up all, laid aside everything—His crown of glory exchanged for the thorns of shame. The imperial mantle of dominion cast aside that He might wear His own blood! No more adored, but spit upon! No longer revered, but despised and made the offscouring of men! No throne, but a cross! No golden cup, but a draught of wormwood and of gall! No light and brightness of excessive glory, but the blackness of mid-day—midnight! No life and immortality, but "It is finished," and the giving up of the Ghost! "Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor."

I wish it were in my power to go farther into this depth tonight, but neither my ability nor my time will serve me just now. Let your own meditations assist you to peer into the poverty of the Savior—such poverty, indeed, as you and I can never know, and prompted by His example, let us not be ashamed to be poor.

Nay, let us not, at the thought of being poor, feel any kind of fear about it. Let us rather rejoice that in this we shall have fellowship with our Lord and if we serve Him we must be poor. If we be obedient to His will, we must make a sacrifice of worldly goods and prosperity. Let us take joyfully the spoiling of our goods. Let us, like the Master, count it all joy when we are thus stripped, for so shall we have fellowship with Him "who, though he was rich, yet for your sakes became poor."

The apostle next calls our attention to the *objects* of this wonderful condescending stoop of our Lord, namely, *ourselves*. "*For your sakes* he became poor." For the sake of the Corinthians. For the sake of us.

And oh! where could there be found more unworthy objects of this amazing love than we have been? In contemplating the love which I personally received from my Savior, although I wonder at it in itself, I have often thought that I could far better understand it if it had been given to someone else, than when it is shed abroad in my own soul. I do not know how it is, but somehow the salvation of the vilest sinner that lives does not one half as much surprise me as my own—and I find it far more easy to believe in the genuine salvation of any man, than at times to believe in my own.

Why should He love us? Oh! there is an amount of unworthiness about each one of us which we cannot see in our fellows that makes it wonderful that we should have been chosen. Well said the apostle, "His great love wherewith he loved us when we were dead in trespasses and sins!" It is by His great love He loves us now we are alive, but it is still more wondrous love that He should spend His life-blood to buy our humanity when it was in its former state!

None shall praise God more for His grace than I will if I get the privilege to see Him face to face, for none will be more indebted to His distinguishing mercy. I suppose you will feel the same, and will each one resolve in the contest of humility that none of you will yield to his fellow, but will each one lie the lowest and sing the loudest to the praise of the matchless Lover, this Heavenly Bridegroom of our souls.

"*For your sakes* became poor." Not a thorn in that crown for Himself, but for your sakes. No spittle on those cheeks, no hair plucked from them, for Himself—but all for you! For you, the cruel lash, as it pitilessly furrowed those holy shoulders! For you, those drops of crimson sweat as they stained the cold earth! For you, each of those cruel nails. For you, for you, the spear that pierced His side!

Oh! let each Christian here really seek to lay a claim to have a personal interest in the griefs and groans of Jesus. Sweet possessions! Oh! to treasure them! Richer than all jewels! Those drops of

blood—more priceless far than rubies, and those falling tears more sparkling than diamonds! Treasure up the love of Jesus! Put it into your souls. Make a heart in your heart in which to treasure it. Count it to be the richest and most precious thing you can have or can desire to have—the love of Jesus with all its sweetness and everlasting delight! *“For your sakes he became poor.”*

Well, now, if He did all this for the sake of us who are so unworthy, what ought you and I to do for His sake, who is so worthy? And if He emptied His great self for us, who are as nothing, shall not we be ready to empty our little selves for Him, who is so great?

If He gave all to us, what less than all can we give to Him? And even when we have given all, we shall think it all too little for such a Lord and such a friend. Does Jesus give Jesus, and shall not we give all of ourselves?

The apostle tells us, however—to conclude the exposition of the verse and our contemplation of this great example—that *Christ had an object in doing this*, and the object was this—“That ye, through his poverty, might be made rich.” I like the very phraseology here, and think we should read it again, “That ye, through his poverty, might be made rich.”

A person joined this church not long ago who had been a member of quite another denomination, in which the doctrine of the Second Advent, which we also hold, takes an infinitely more prominent place than we are ever likely to give to it, for it is the Gospel of their salvation. This woman, however, professed herself to have been converted to God here, and she said, “I was always taught to trust in Christ glorified, but now I come to see that my confidence must be in Christ crucified.”

This was what Paul preached and it is what we preach. I believe it is an error which is growing, that we are to be made rich through Christ glorified. I grant you that we shall be, for we are made rich by Christ in any capacity, but the text says it is through His poverty that we shall be made rich.

The brightest treasure that can come to the Christian comes to Him through Christ crucified, and we must take care in all our ideas of the Second Advent that we do not get Judaizing so as to imagine the coming of a temporal kingdom and a temporal glory, and go back to the beggarly elements of the old covenant—for if we do so we shall miss the true jewel, the spiritual treasure—the love of which is half dying out in the Christian church. Christ in His poverty should be most commonly the object of our contemplation, for it is through that poverty that we shall be made rich.

Now, I want to ask you whether you are rich tonight? If Jesus Christ died for you, I am sure He has not missed His intention in so dying and therefore you are rich. But you say you are poor, and you were grumbling only an hour ago to think that you were so poor. Come, now! Come now! Jesus Christ, though he was rich, became poor—shall He miss the design of that great renunciation? Shall His object fail?

It is not for a moment to be supposed. Well, then, He has made you rich. You cannot count your treasures, Christian! A catalog of them would be too long for you ever to get through it. You have no estate. You have no barn in which to store away your harvest. Perhaps there may be some of you with little more belonging to you than the garments in which you have come into this sanctuary. But yet—yet—you are rich. For think you—

*“All things are yours, the gift of God,
The purchase of a Savior's blood:
This world is yours, and worlds to come:
Earth is your lodge, and heaven your home.”*

You have angels to be your protectors. You have Christ to be your intercessor and your friend. You have the Holy Ghost Himself to be your Comforter. The everlasting arms are underneath you. The divine wings are above you. The divine glory is within you. Oh! what more could you desire? You shall have all the provisions that you want, for you shall dwell in the land and verily you shall be fed.

Yes, Christ has made us rich in the highest possible sense of richness. He does not please to make many of His people rich in the common sense. As Luther says, He gives the husks to the hogs—the proper place for them—they can relish them—they can make the best use of them. I doubt not that he was also right in what he said of the whole Turkish Empire, which God had given to the grand Turk, who was the leading monarch of his day. He said, “It is only a sop for a dog.” So it is.

All the kingdoms of this world are but so many bones, which the householder throws out to the dogs and lets them devour them as they may. Perhaps all the time the child is kept waiting—and may be kept waiting a little while for his food, because the hour is not yet come. The dog can eat when it wills, but the child must eat at the set time which the Father has appointed.

Let us be thankful if God does not give us our portion here. It is one of the things to be dreaded—the having your portion in this life. It is said of some that they have their portion in this life—and our Lord said of the Pharisees—“Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.” Oh! let us pray God not to give us our reward here.

If we have helped the poor and have only received ingratitude, let us be very thankful that it proves that our reward is not here. If we labor for Christ and are misrepresented, let us be thankful, for again it proves that our reward is not of men and in time, but is of God and for all eternity. To have our reward, here, and our portion from men, is a thing to be deprecated with tears, and cries, and groans. God grant us to know our riches to be of a better sort than that which the worldling covets.

Well, if it be so, that Christ has made us rich, I hope it is not fiction or fancy to any of you! You are rich in your soul—you know you are. You are wealthy and the argument from this is that you should be devoted to your Master. If He has made you rich, serve Him. If He has enabled you to be contented, at ease, and happy—if you have blessed enjoyment in your soul, if you are at peace with God through Jesus Christ—why, who should serve God as you should? Highly favored as you are, the very stones would cry out against you if you were not liberal in your Master's service and praise.

And this brings me to the last matter, which is, in a few words—

II. TO EXHORT YOU TO PRACTICALLY CARRY OUT THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST.

There have been some advanced Christians—I say not this of all—but there have been some advanced Christians who have been made able literally to carry out the example of the Savior. How should we honor the memory of such men as John Wesley, for instance? He might have been a fellow—as he was, indeed—of the University and have had excellent emolument. “The church,” so called, was open to him and no doubt a bishopric would soon have rewarded his exertions and his eloquence.

But he lived through life purely to serve his Master according to his knowledge and conviction, and when an inventory was to be made of his plate, he had but two spoons, one at Bristol and one in London, and when he died, what had he to leave? His treasure had all gone before him into heaven and he died in poverty, having served his God with all he had, and making that the aim of his life—to live with all he had wholly to his Master's service.

And such have been the lives of some of our missionaries. They have cut themselves away from all the claims of kindred and have given themselves, like the old Roman heroes in battle, who stood upon the sword and consecrated themselves to God. They have given themselves up to live and to die, with never a thought of gain in this world, nay, never dreaming of possessing anything as long as they lived.

Such was apostolic life and such, I believe, would be more common in the Christian church if a high degree of grace were vouchsafed. I do not think it is the duty of most of you, nor that it will ever fall to the lot of ninety-nine out of a hundred of you, but there are some of you—and there ought to be more—who, being called of God to some special work, should feel that if they be rich, if they possess rank, if they possess standing in society, they will give up the most brilliant, earthly prospect for that yet more brilliant prospect of bearing the cross and inheriting the crown.

I look forward, if God should ever send a revival of religion in England, not only to the time when the poor and the middle-classes shall find in their midst consecrated ministers, but when, from the very highest spheres of society, there will come to us men who might have worn the coronet, but who would

rather proclaim the Gospel. Men who might have piled up their wealth until it became like Babel's tower, but who will rather become poor, that in their poverty they may make many rich. It is not given unto all thus to do, but this is the dictate of Christianity—and where it can be done absolutely and be carried out to the fullest extent, it brings much glory to God.

Well, but the principle seems to me to be binding upon us all. I will venture to say—and I should not wonder that some of you will not like it to be said, that *I believe it is anti-Christian and unholy for any Christian to live with the object of accumulating wealth*. You will say, “Are we not to strive all we can and to get all the money we can?” You may do so. You should do so. I cannot doubt but what, in so doing, you may do good service to the cause of God.

But what I said was this, that to live *with the object* of accumulating wealth is anti-Christian. There are thousands of men with whom that is the only thing they are living for—to save, save, save—and make a fortune. And when they die, what then? Well, then it will be in the newspapers that So-and-so died worth so much, and some will say, “Guess what he died worth? It will be talked of all over the city, “Why, they paid probate duty on so much!”

Yes! Well, now, if you had a steward—I will ask you a question—if you had a steward and that steward were to die, and you should hear that he died worth £100,000, what would you say? You would say, “Ah! I know whose money that was! He was only a steward and yet he died worth £100,000. I know where that money came from.” You would not want to ask the question, but you would say, “Ah! he was a thief, an old rogue!”

I am not certain whether every man is not who does that—at least, unless he happens to occupy a very high and prominent position. A man says he is a steward. That is what he says himself. We do not tell him so, but he says he is. He stands up and thanks God that he is a steward, but the old fellow has got some uncommonly heavy bags about him, more than a steward would have if he had handled his master's money properly.

To say that the most of you ought to spend all you earn would be simply ridiculous. To come into the pulpit and say to those of you who are in business and so on, that you ought to give to the cause of God every year all that you have would be, I think, most intolerable stupidity on my part. I do not say that at all.

Let your children, by all manner of means, have that which they can lawfully claim of you. Make a fair provision if you are able to make it. Let your children be liberally educated. Let there be no stint in the house so that there should be complaints of want there. God has put you into a position and you may spend according to your station.

What I mean to say is this—if you make it your object in this world to live simply to get together a certain amount of money, and die and leave it—you are living with an anti-Christian object and your spirit is apart from the spirit of your Lord Jesus Christ.

My Master did not make a fortune. There is none of you who will leave less than He left. We read some time ago of a bishop whose will was sworn to be under £150,000, and someone said, “He was a true successor of the apostles, for he would be bound to say that if the apostle Paul's will could have been sworn to, it too would have been under £150,000.” And I think it is very likely that it would!

Ah, but such an occurrence as that always provokes a sneer in the world. They say, “Oh! yes, yes, yes—this is a picture of making the best of both worlds!” But it is not the picture of the Savior, living wholly for the cause of God and the cause of truth, but quite the reverse. I would like to see you, my dear friends who are poor, feeling that out of your poverty it is your privilege to give continually to Him who loved you and gave Himself for you, not casting the burden of God's work upon the few rich that may be among us, but every man honestly taking his share in the church's burden, which, indeed, is not her burden, but her privilege and her delight.

I would like to see you bring in your gifts to God's treasury, not because you are asked to do so, or prompted, or driven to it, but because you love to do it out of love to Him. Well, then, those of you who

are prospered in business—and may there be more of you!—will always find that it will sweeten what is left to yourselves if the full and fair proportion is given to your Master.

I am afraid you will not be likely to imperil yourselves, or bring yourselves to poverty by what you do for the cause of Christ. Sorry should I be if, by any extravagance or imprudence of that kind, such a thing should occur—but on the whole it is not a very likely thing—so that I need not guard you particularly much against it. But if you give to God, you shall find that, if you give by spadefuls, God will give it back to you by cartloads. And if you give cartloads, His wagons shall be driven to your door, and He will bless you in proportion as you give to Him.

I have thus applied the principle to wealth, but it should also be applied to everything the Christian has. I hope some of you have a good reputation. There was a time when I had one, but preaching the Gospel very frequently brings upon you all sorts of misrepresentations. I remember pretty well the first stinging article I read in a newspaper concerning myself—as full of lies as an egg is full of meat—and I could not help wincing somewhat under it, but I soon learned the lesson that I could not afford to keep a reputation if I were a Christian minister—that I must be prepared to serve God with all my heart, and soul, and strength—and let man or devils say whatever they liked, to take no notice whatever of them, but go on serving God, and I count it a sweet thing to sing—

*“If on my face for Thy dear name,
Shame and reproach shall be,
I'll hail reproach and welcome shame
If Thou'lt remember me.”*

Now, there is a young man over yonder who thinks he is a Christian, but he has been laughed at by the other young fellows in the shop and he has half a mind to give up. What? What? When Jesus Christ, who was rich, yet for your sakes became poor, are you ashamed to be laughed at by a few simpletons?

And there is a young woman here who was placed just now in a family where they are very godless. She hardly likes to show her colors for Christ. Oh! my sister, think of the Master, and of the shame and the spitting that He endured for you—and let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus.

Stoop, stoop, my brother! Stoop, my sister! The way to heaven is downhill in a certain sense. The way to rise is to fall in your own esteem—and when you shall think yourself to be less than nothing, and your own repute, and your own wealth, and everything you have to be all Christ's property, and you freely give it up to Him, then will you realize what it really is to be a Christian, and not till then.

Would to God some here were wholly devoted to the Master! I have been looking to see whether God would raise up among us some unusual spirits, some fiery souls, some consecrated men and women, who have got the old heroic blood of ancient Christendom within their veins! May such yet arise and may each seek to follow where the Master leads the way, to the praise and glory of His grace!

Now, there are some of you who have heard all this, but I have not addressed myself to you—and yet I meant you all the while—I mean even you who are unconverted. Think of the love of Jesus in coming in the flesh and may that sweet love be a sort of latchkey to your hearts with which Christ shall open them and let Himself in. If He has knocked and you have not opened, I trust He will open the door Himself by His own love—and may you be His tonight.

If you so become His, be really His. You have served the devil—now serve Him. If you must serve Christ, do not serve Him with half your hearts—serve Him and no mistake. Give Him your whole soul. If He is worth having, He is worth having altogether and worth giving your whole soul. So may you do—and the Master shall have the praise evermore. Amen.

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.