

“EVEN SO, FATHER!”**NO. 394****A SERMON****DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 26, 1861****BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON****AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON**

“At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.”

Matthew 11:25-26

THAT is a singular way with which to commence a verse, “At that time Jesus answered.” If you will look at the context you will not perceive that anybody had asked Him a question or that He was indeed in conversation with any human being. Yet it says, “Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father.”

Now when a man answers, he answers a person who has been speaking to him. Who, then, had been speaking to Jesus? Why, His Father. Yet there is no record of it, which should just teach us that Christ had constant fellowship with His Father, and often did His Father silently speak into His ear.

As we are in this world even as Christ was, let us catch this lesson. May we likewise have silent fellowship with the Father, so that often we may answer Him. And when the world knows not to whom we speak, may we speak to God and respond to that secret voice which no other ear has heard, while our own ear, opened by the Spirit of God, has attended to it with joy.

I like the Christian to sometimes find himself obliged to speak out, or if not to speak out to feel an almost irrepressible desire to say something though no one be near, because a thought has been brought to him by the Holy Spirit, a suggestion has been just cast into the midst of his soul by the Holy Ghost and he answers to it.

God has spoken to him, and he longs to speak to God—either to set to his seal that God is true in some matter of revelation, or to confess some sin of which the Spirit of God has convinced him, or to acknowledge some mercy which God’s providence has given, or to express assent to some great truth which God the Holy Ghost has then opened to his understanding.

Keep your hearts, my brethren, in such a state that when God speaks to you, you may be ready to answer, whatever troubles may ruffle you or whatever trials may disturb you. Jesus Christ had just had a time of weeping and it was succeeded by a season of grateful communion. Like Him do you maintain a ready ear to listen to the voice of God, and at that time do you answer thankfully, and bless the Lord your God.

Now it seems to me, in looking through these two verses, that the Savior would teach us three things. When we have learned these three things, I shall endeavor to turn them to practical account. He will have us first of all *seek after an enlightened apprehension of the character of God as Father, and yet Lord of heaven and earth.* He would have us next observe carefully, *the manifest discrimination of His grace,* “Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” He would have us, thirdly, *cultivate a spirit entirely in harmony with the divine will,* thanking Him that He has done all things according to His own purpose, “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.”

I. First of all, then, THE SAVIOR WOULD HAVE US ATTAIN TO AN ENLIGHTENED APPREHENSION OF THE CHARACTER OF GOD.

Concerning the character of God, what gross mistakes men make! I believe it is a mistake about God Himself which has been the root and foundation of all the mistakes in theology. Our conviction is, that Arminian theology, to a great extent, makes God to be less than He is. The professors of that system have come to receive its doctrines, because they have not a clear understanding either of the

omnipotence, the immutability, or the sovereignty of God. They seem always to put the question, “What ought God to do to man who is His creature?” We hold that that is a question that is never to be put, for it infringes the sovereignty of God, who has absolute right to do just as He wills.

They ask the question, “What will God do with His promises, if man change his habit or his life?” We consider that to be a question not to be put. Whatever man does, God remains the same and abides faithful, though even we should not believe Him. They put the question, “What will be done for men who resist God’s grace, if in the struggle man’s will should be triumphant over the mercy of God?” We never ask that question. We think it blasphemous.

We believe God to be omnipotent and when He comes to strive with the soul of man, none can stay His hand. He breaks the iron sinew, and dashes the adamant heart to shivers, and rules in the heart of man as surely as in the army of the skies. A right clear apprehension of the character of God we believe would put an end to the Arminian mistake.

We think, too, that ultra-Calvinism, which goes vastly beyond what the authoritative teaching of Christ, or the enlightened ministry of Calvin could warrant, gets some of its support from a wrong view of God. To the ultra-Calvinist, His absolute sovereignty is delightfully conspicuous. He is awe-stricken with the great and glorious attributes of the Most High. His omnipotence appalls him, and His sovereignty astonishes him, and he at once submits as if by a stern necessity to the will of God.

He, however, too much forgets that God is love. He does not make prominent enough the benevolent character of the Divine Being. He annuls to some extent the fact, that while God is not amenable to anything external from Himself, yet His own attributes are so blessedly in harmony, that His sovereignty never inflicted a punishment which was not just nor did it ever bestow a mercy until justice had first been satisfied.

To see the holiness, the love, the justice, the faithfulness, the immutability, the omnipotence, and the sovereignty of God, all shining like a bright corona of eternal and ineffable light, this has never been given perfectly to any human being. And inasmuch as we have not seen all these, and as we hope yet to see them, our faulty vision has been the ground of divers mistakes. Hence has arisen many of the heresies which vex the church of Christ.

Now, my brethren, I would have you this morning look at the way in which our Lord Jesus Christ regards God, “Father, Lord of heaven and earth.” If you and I cannot know the Almighty to perfection, because of *His* greatness and of *our* shallowness, nevertheless let us try to apprehend these two claims upon our adoration, in which we owe to God the reverence of children and the homage of subjects.

Father!—Oh, what a precious word is that! Here is authority! “If I be a Father, where is mine honour?” If you be sons, where is your obedience? But here is affection mingled with authority, an authority which does not provoke rebellion, an obedience demanded which is most cheerfully rendered—which would not be withheld even if it might.

Father!—here is a kingly attribute so sweetly veiled in love that the King’s crown is forgotten in the King’s face, and His sceptre becomes not a rod of iron, but a silver sceptre of mercy—the sceptre indeed seems to be forgotten in the tender hand of Him that wields it.

Father!—here is honor and affectionateness. What is a father’s heart to his children? That which friendship cannot do, and mere benevolence will not attempt to do, a father’s heart and hand must do. They are his offspring, he must bless them. They are his children, they spring from his own loins—he must show himself strong in their defense.

Oh, get that thought of God, that while you obey Him as Father, yet you love Him as Father! Do not go about the service of God as slaves about the taskmaster’s toil, but run in the way of His commands because it is your Father’s way. Yield yourselves up to be the instruments of righteousness, because righteousness is your Father’s will, and His will is the will of His child.

In a father, then, you will observe there is mingled authority with affection, and there is also mingled origination with relationship. The man is not father to everything he produces. He may make the vessel, he may spend much skill upon it as he turns it upon the wheel, but he is not its father. Even so God made

the stars, but He is not their Father. He made the very angels, but I know not that He said unto them at any time, “Ye are my sons.”

It is true in the sense of origination we are all His offspring, for He made us all. But oh! again let me repeat the sweet word—Father! Father! There is relationship here as well as origination. We are like Him that made us—we, His chosen, are the next of kin to the King of kings, His children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus—a relationship which never can be dissolved.

A child can never be anything but the son of his own father—a relationship which no sin can ever break and no pains can ever loosen. The father is a father still, though his child be dragged in the mire, although he spit in his very father’s face. The relationship is not to be removed by any act, either of father or of son.

So stands it with the people of God. They are not only His creatures, but doubly His creatures, for He has created them anew in Christ Jesus. They have a relationship, for they are partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust. They are so near to Him that none can stand between the sons of God and God their Father, save Jesus Christ the only begotten Son, who is the link of union between the twain.

Father! He that can lisp that word upon his knees has uttered more eloquence than Demosthenes or Cicero ever knew. Abba, Father! He who can say that has uttered better music than cherubim or seraphim can reach. Abba, Father! There is heaven in the depth of that word! Father! There is all I need, all I can ask, all my necessities can demand, all my wishes can contrive. I have all in all to all eternity when I can say, “Father.”

Oh! do not, I pray you, look upon God as a great King, unless you can also regard Him as your Father. Do not dare to come into the intense brightness of His sovereignty, or it will be to you thick darkness unless you can call Him Father. While you stand amazed at Him, dare not to look at the sun till you have the eagle eye of the spirit of adoption, lest it blind you.

Launch not upon the sea of sovereignty till you have Fatherhood at the helm, but then your little vessel may go from the shallows to the great deeps, and the deeper the sea shall be, the farther shall you be from the rocks, and the higher shall you be lifted above the quicksand. You may go as far as you like in believing Him to be Lord of heaven and earth, if you can first recognize Him as being Father to your soul.

Permit me here, however, to remark that many Christians are effeminate in their theology. They are weak in their faith, because while they can say, “Father,” they do not acknowledge God as being Lord of heaven and earth. I take it that Jesus meant by this expression that the Father was by power and by right Lord of heaven and earth.

We all concede that He is Lord of heaven and earth by power. From the dazzling wing of the angel down to the painted wing of the fly, all flights of beings are controlled by Him. From the roar of earth’s direst convulsions down to the gentle falling of a rain drop, all sounds that break on mortal ears are modulated by Him. From the flash of lightning down to the glimmer of the glow-worm’s lamp, there is no light or spark that His power does not kindle. He does as He wills.

Fools see men doing, wise men discern God doing all. In the loftiest emperor, we see JEHOVAH’S tool and nothing more. In the mightiest patriot, we see but an instrument in the hand of God. In all that man has done, whether it be perverse or excellent, we have learned to look beyond the material agents, and while we award to one execration and to another honor, yet we see God working all things after the counsels of His will.

I am verily persuaded that the wildest fury of the storm is ordered in the eye of God, that He has a bit in the mouth of the tempest to rein in the winds. And so it is when battle is let loose, and war rages abroad, and nations are broken as with a rod of iron, as though they were but potters’ vessels. In every catastrophe and calamity there is the reigning God, stalking victoriously over the battlefield to whichever side triumph may turn. Walking among cabinets, and making their folly serve His wisdom,

entering the heart of man, and making its very stubbornness the pliant slave of His superior might. He rules everywhere by power.

There are some Christians who, not knowingly perhaps, but unwittingly, discountenance the fact that JEHOVAH is Lord of heaven and earth by right. Brethren, I pray you learn this. You have not the key of a solid theology till you know this. Great God, You have absolute right to do whatever You will with Your own creatures, and especially since man has fallen You have a right to utterly destroy him or to save him as seems good in Your sight. No man has any right to anything from God. Whatever right he had as a creature, he forfeited when he sinned.

Now God declares, and we acknowledge it to be a declaration of unimpeachable right, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” “So, then, it is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. What if God, willing to show his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory.” Who shall find fault or who shall dispute His will?

I would that the Christian church did not cavil at God’s sovereignty. I grant you it is a wondrous doctrine. All great truths must produce awe upon little minds like ours. I grant you it is a doctrine which the boasted freedom of man’s thoughts will not readily receive. Be it so, it is the more true to me, for what is this freedom of men’s thoughts in modern times, but licentiousness? What is it but a sort of mental dissoluteness by which they say, “We will cast off the yoke of God, we will break His bands in sunder, and cast away His words from us”?

Oh! be wise. Kiss the Son for He is your King, bow down before your God, for dispute it as you may, He is your Lord. Yield to His sovereignty, for He will be sovereign, even if you will not meekly yield. Confess that He has a right to do as He wills, for He will do as He wills whether you confess it or no.

Do not seek to deny His right to reign, but rather say, “The LORD — reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitudes of the isles be glad thereat.” Where could power be better placed—who better could be trusted with all strength than the infinitely wise, the boundlessly good? Great God! It were a calamity indeed if You had not an absolute right to do Your own will, when that will is always good, and always right, and always kind, and always best for the sons of men.

II. Well now, brethren, if you have got a clear and enlightened apprehension of God’s relationship as Father, and yet as Sovereign Lord, I am not afraid to trust you with the study of doctrine—you will not go far wrong. But next, Christ would have us carefully observe THE DISCRIMINATING CHARACTER OF GOD’S GRACE. “Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.”

Is it not, my dear friends, a notorious fact that the things of God are hidden from the wise and prudent? Cast your eyes around now upon the great men in the literature of today—how very few of them are willing to receive the things of God! And though in the past we can number among reasoners such men as Locke and Bacon, and among poetic minds such men as Cowper and Milton—though we can go back and find some men of wisdom, and some men of great mental caliber, who hast received the truth as it is in Jesus—yet still it is to be confessed that they make but a very small part of the great whole. They are but the exception which proves the rule.

It is true of ancient and modern, the past and the present, “These things are hidden from the wise and prudent.” See what the wise and prudent do. A large number of them will disdain to listen to the things of God. “Pooh!” say they, “religion for the mob. It suits very well the poor, we dare say, but we are intelligent, we are instructed. We do not need to go and hear such mere simplicities and elementary teaching as that.” So they turn upon their heel, and go and speak against the thing which they have never heard, or which, if they have heard, they have not understood.

Then those who will hear—do you not perceive how they cavil? Where the poor simple-minded man walks right straight into heaven’s gate, these men have raised objections to the manner in which the nails

are put in the gate, or to certain stones that pave the way, and they cannot go in until they know the precise pattern of everything in the heavenly place. They raise objections where we should see none.

While we take the provisions of truth, and sit down, and feed at the table, they are objecting to the way in which the flesh is carved or the wine poured out. And then there are others of them who not only raise objections, but set themselves willfully to oppose.

Mark you this, I do not believe there is a single honest man living who, having once heard the Gospel simply preached, does not in his conscience believe it to be true. I am persuaded that light will penetrate. There is such force, such energy in Christ—the power of God, and the wisdom of God—it must and will pierce through some crevice, and convince at least a natural conscience.

But this is the very reason why men oppose it, they do not want it to be true. It would be unpleasant for them if it were true. They would be compelled to live more strictly than they do. They feel it would cut against their previous notions and pull down their old prejudice. They love darkness. What they do not want to be true, they try to prove not to be true, and that is the easiest thing in the world. I could prove by syllogism any lie which I wanted to believe and so could you.

You can either bid the truth be quiet, because its shrill note awakens you out of a sleep which you love, or else you can set up a counter-noise which shall drown the unwelcome sound, so that you cannot hear the celestial voice. I know why men brag, we well-understand why they speak loud words of blasphemy. As sure as ever a man is too bold, there is an unquiet conscience to prompt him.

Do not set down the blasphemies of Voltaire to any real doubts, that man was as firm a believer as you and I, but he was not honest. Do not put down, I pray you, the blatant blasphemy of Tom Paine to a conviction that Christianity was not true. He knew it was true and he, perhaps, of all men was the grossest of liars to his own soul, for he fought against a truth which his own conscience acknowledged to be taught of God.

Oh! let us see to it that while these wise and prudent men are discussing, and disputing, and objecting, and dividing, let us see to it that we do not imitate them, lest haply these things should be hidden from us and not revealed to us though we are babes.

But while these wise and prudent ones are passed by, how graciously God has revealed His truth to babes, to men of simple minds! In the eye of the wise, they might be credulous—in the judgment of the prudent, they might be superstitious, but they heard the Gospel. It fitted their case, it was just the thing they wanted. They were guilty, it offered them pardon. They were lost, it provided them a Savior. They were cast away, it found them a Shepherd who had come to seek and to save that which was lost. They took it, they laid hold of it. They found it gave them joy and comfort, peace and rest.

They went on, they found their experience tallied with what they had learned. They examined more and more. They never found a flaw or discrepancy between the feelings within and the teaching without. And they, though they were but babes, and could not argue, though they were but children, and could not discuss, though they were fools and did not pretend to be wise—they entered into the kingdom of God, and attained to the enjoyment of the peace which Jesus gives to them that trust Him.

Do you ask why is it God has not been pleased to call by His grace the wise and prudent? Albert Barnes says, as a reason why the wise and prudent do not come, “Because they have peculiar mental temptations, because they think the Gospel to be beneath their consideration, because it does not flatter their pride, and because again, they are so occupied with their wisdom that they have no time for the things of God.”

Now these are very good reasons why they do not accept the Gospel, but not the reason why God does not call them. God’s reason for calling or not calling a man is not in man, but in Himself. So we are told in the text, “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” Why, then, did He not call them? You may ask Gabriel before the throne, but he cannot tell you. You may ask all the people of God everywhere, but they cannot tell you either. For the reason is that God willed it and there we must let it rest.

“Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” He could have converted emperors upon their thrones. He could have made the philosopher a preacher. He could, if He would, have subdued the loftiest mind to His service. If He rather then chose the fishermen and the unenlightened peasants of the Lake of Galilee, He did so because He would. There we must leave it. Ask no account of His affairs, but tremble and be still.

III. Yet when we come to our last point, which we shall now do, I think we shall see some reason why we can in our very hearts most truly acquiesce, and admire the wisdom and graciousness of the divine choice. I come, then, to this third point, THE SAVIOR WOULD HAVE HIS PEOPLES’ HEARTS IN PERFECT AGREEMENT WITH THE WILL AND ACTION OF GOD. “Father,” said he, “I thank you that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.”

Brothers and sisters, can you say, “I thank You, Father,” too? Many of you can for personal reasons, for you were babes. Ah, we were each of us but babes. He who stands before you, if he be chosen of God, as he trusts he is, certainly never belonged to the wise and prudent. When I have sometimes had it flung in my teeth, “This man was never educated at college. This man came into the ministry in literary attainments totally unprepared for it. He is only fit to address the poor. His ministry is not polite and polished. He has but little classical instruction. He cannot read forty languages.”

I say to them, “Precisely so, every word of it is true, and a great deal more. I would not stay you, if you will go on, if you will just show me more my folly, if you will just discover to me yet more of my want of prudence.” If the wise man would say, “This man takes a daring project in hand and does not consult any man, does not ask anybody about it, but goes and does it like a madman”—just so, precisely so. I will agree to the whole of it. But when I have said this, I will remind you, “God has chosen the base things of this world to confound the mighty, and the things that are not to bring to nought the things that are.”

On this wise I will put it, in this thing I will become a fool in glorying—What have your college men done that is comparable to this work? What have the wisest and most instructed of modern ministers done in the conversion of souls compared with the work of the unlettered boy? It was God’s work, and God chose the most unfitting instrument so that He might have the more glory.

And He shall have the glory—I will not take any of it myself by pretending to an education I have not received, or an attainment I do not possess, or an eloquence which I never coveted. I speak God’s words, and God, I know, speaks through me, and works through me, and unto Him be the glory of it. I can join with many of you personally for thanking Him, that He has “revealed these things to babes, which have been hidden from the wise and prudent.”

But perceive you not, my brethren, that if the Lord in His sovereignty had taken another course, it would have been our duty still to be thankful? Yet we should have lacked one reason for joy which we have today. It is this—God, in the choice of the base things of this world, has manifestly cast a slight upon all human glorying.

Ah! you that boast your pedigrees! He has dashed them. You that flaunt your golden eagles—you lack the splendor of His smile. You who are clothed in purple, and you who fare sumptuously every day—what cares He for your greatness? Let the crowd stand and gape at you, let the fool bow down in admiration, but the King of kings, the Lord of lords, regards you no more then menials that serve His will, but are not of His council, and know not His secret. He has put a stain upon proud distinctions.

See, too, how He spits upon the boastfulness of human learning! And you who have the key of heaven, and will not enter yourselves, neither suffer the poor and ignorant to enter—how has He laughed at your pretensions! “The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat, and they say, ‘We are the men, and wisdom will die with us.’” They come forth flaunting their degrees, and boasting their high and lofty erudition, but He casts dust into your faces, and leaves you all to your blind confusion.

Then, stooping down from His mightiness, He takes up the babe. Though it is a learned babe, if it be a babe, He takes it. I mean, though it has riches, though it has skill, though it has erudition, He does not

cast it away from Him for that reason, but He does not choose it for that reason either. He takes it, it is a babe. It is willing to be nothing, it is willing to be a fool.

The prince may be as willing to be saved as the pauper is. The great man may be willing to stoop and to lie at the feet of Jesus as though he were nobody. He takes these, these are the men who God has chosen—humble and contrite—they that tremble at His Word. Oh! because He has thus stained the pride of all glory, let His people rejoice. Let all His saints be glad thereat!

I wish, my dear friends, that those who are so afraid of the doctrine of election would remember that it is the only lasting source of joy to a Christian. You say, “How is that? Surely we ought to rejoice most in our usefulness.” No, no. The twelve apostles went out to preach, and they were so successful that Christ said, “I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven,” but He said to them, “Nevertheless, rejoice not in this, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”

Our election is a perennial spring. When other streams are dry, the fact that our names are written in heaven shall yield us comfort still. And you will remark, as I have before observed, Christ had just been exceedingly sorrowful because Capernaum and Bethsaida had rejected His Word, but He finds comfort and begins to thank His God because there was a remnant after all, according to the election of grace.

People of God! Do not stand afraid of this precious truth, but love it, feed upon it, rejoice in it, and it shall be as oil to your bones, it shall supply them with marrow, and give strength to your very being.

IV. Having thus explained the text as best I could, I want your earnest attention while I try to make some practical use of it. Three or four things to three or four characters.

A word to those Christians who are downcast, trodden, afflicted. You have lost a friend, you have had losses in your business, you have been tried in body, you have been afflicted by the calumnies of your enemies. Very well, but you have still something to rejoice about. Come, dry those eyes, take that harp from the willow. Come now, sit no longer on the dunghill, take off that sackcloth, remove those ashes, take the oil of joy, and put on the garment of praise, and say this morning, “Father, I thank you that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.”

At least you have this to thank God for—although you were a simpleton, a very fool in your own estimation, yet you hast received the truth as it is in Jesus, and you have been saved thereby. Let all the chosen seed be glad, and take heart and rejoice in God.

The next piece of practical instruction is this, let us learn, my brethren, the wicked folly of those professed Christians who despise the poor. There is growing up, even in our Dissenting churches, an evil which I greatly deplore—a despising of the poor. I frequently hear in conversation such remarks as this, “Oh, it is no use trying in such a place as this, you could never raise a self-supporting cause. There are none but poor living in the neighborhood.” If there is a site to be chosen for a chapel, it is said, “Well, there is such a lot of poor people round about, you would never be able to keep a minister. It is no use trying, they are all poor.”

You know that in the City of London itself, there is now scarce a Dissenting place of worship. The reason for giving most of them up and moving them into the suburbs is that all the respectable people live out of town, and of course, they are the people to look after. They will not stop in London, they will go out and take villas, and live in the suburbs. And therefore, the best thing is to take the endowment which belonged to the old chapel, and go and build a new chapel somewhere in the suburbs where it may be maintained.

“No doubt,” it is said, “the poor ought to be looked after, but we had better leave them to another order, an inferior order—the City Missionaries will do for them—send them a few street preachers.” But as to the idea of raising a cause where they are all poor people, why there is hardly a minister that would attempt it. Now my experience of poor people convinces me that all this talk is folly. If there are any people who love the cause of God better than others, I believe it is the poor, when the grace of God takes real possession of their heart.

In this place, as an instance, I believe we have but very few who could be put down among the rich. There have been some who have cast in their lot amongst us just now, but still the mass who did the

work of building this house, and who have stood side by side with me in the battle of the last seven years, must be reckoned among the poor of this world. They have been a peaceable people, a happy people, a working people, a plain people, and I say, “God bless the poor!”

I would fear no difficulties whatever in commencing a cause of Christ, even though the mass were poor, for I am persuaded that the rich who are truly the people of God, love to come and assist where there are poor. If you were to cast out the poor, you would cast out the church’s strength, you give up that which is after all, the backbone of the church of Christ.

I think we have been doing wrong in neglecting the City of London itself. It is true, I do not believe some ministers could get congregations in London—it is a pity they have them anywhere—men who cannot call a spade a spade, or a loaf of bread a loaf of bread. They are so refined, and speak such fine and polished language that you would think they were not natives of England and had never heard the people speak their own homely brogue.

The Lord raise up among us men that speak market language, that have sympathy with the people, and that speak the people’s tongue, and we shall prove that it is an infamous falsehood, that the causes cannot be maintained in poor neighborhoods. They can be and they *shall* be.

Why, brethren, are we to say that we will give up the poor merely to the missionary? We complain that the artisan will not come to hear, that the fustian jacket will not listen. It is not true. The fustian jacket is as ready to listen as is the broadcloth, if he had something to listen to. If it be the Gospel, they that walk are as ready to come as they that ride, if they could but understand.

I think that those who are gifted with this world’s goods, or with this world’s wisdom, will do right well, if instead of looking out for respectable positions, they will look out for the poorest positions, for there they will find the most of those whom God has chosen—the poor in this world, rich in faith, heirs of the kingdom.

I would not say a word to set class against class, for I suppose that the soul of a rich man is of no less worth than the soul of the poorest, all stand alike in the sight of God. But I do enter my solemn protest against men who say that the religion of Christ is not fit for the poor neighborhoods, and only meant for our respectable suburbs.

It is not true, brethren. It is a great and gross heresy against the goodness of God, and against the adaptation of the Gospel of Christ to the needs of the poor. They can sustain churches. Look at the ragged churches in Glasgow and Edinburgh. They call them ragged, but you see as clean faces and as intellectual countenances there as you would anywhere. If they find a man who can preach that they can hear, they will maintain and support him. The Gospel of Christ will find as ready and faithful adherents among the poorest of the poor, as amongst the richest of the rich, and far more so in proportion.

Another homily, which you will think rather strange, is this—How wrong the church of Christ is when it neglects the rich. “Well,” you say, “that is not in the text. It says these things were hidden from the wise and prudent.” Yes, I know they were, but Christ thanked God they were. “I thank thee,” He said, “that thou hast hid these things.” What then? If I preach to the rich, to the wise, to the prudent, and they reject it, have I lost my toil? No, no, there is cause for thankfulness even then. We are to preach the Gospel to every creature without any distinction whatever high or low, great or small.

“Well, but the wise and prudent will not hear it.” We know that. But if they reject it still, there is matter for thankfulness that they heard it. “Why?” say you. Why because we are unto God a sweet smelling savor both in them that are saved and in them that perish. To the one we are a savor of life unto life, and to the other a savor of death unto death, but to God still a sweet smelling savor. What! is God glorified in the damnation of the wise and prudent? Yes, tremendous fact!

At the winding up of this world’s drama, God will be glorified in the men who shut their eyes against His grace, as well as in the men whose eyes are opened to receive it. The yells of hell shall be but the deep bass of the everlasting music of which the songs in heaven are the *melody*. God, the terrible one, shall have praise from the wise and prudent when their folly shall be discovered, when their wisdom shall be dashed in pieces or torn to shreds.

God, the terrible avenger of His own Gospel, shall be glorified when those are cast out, who having heard the Gospel, were too wise to believe it, and having listened to it were too prudent to give their praise to it. In either case God is glorified, and in either case Christ gives thanks, and devoutly gives thanks.

To the rich, then, as well as to the poor, to the hopeless case as well as to the hopeful, to the wise as well as to the babe, we should preach Christ, because even if they are not saved, yet still God is glorified. He got honor even upon Pharaoh His enemy, when he perished in the midst of the sea.

And now, last of all, you who are babes, you who perhaps, “Know, and know no more than the Bible true,” you who never read a word of Greek or Latin, and sometimes cannot spell the hard words of English, you say, “I do not go to a place of worship, I am so ignorant.” Do you not perceive your own wickedness in staying away? God has revealed these things unto babes, and if there are any men that ought to come, certainly it is you.

When the poor man says, “Oh, a place of worship is not for me,” he is without excuse, because the Scripture expressly says, “God has chosen the base things, and the things that are not, to bring to nought the things that are.” I invite any man and every man to listen to the Gospel, and if you do not come, you certainly do despite to a very precious promise. You think the Gospel is not meant for hard-working men, but it is meant for you—for you above all others.

You say, “Christ is a gentleman’s Christ.” No, He is the people’s Christ. “I have exalted one chosen out of the people.” Do you think our religion is meant for the learned? Not so, it is meant for the most foolish and most ignorant. We rejoice to know that the poor have the Gospel preached to them. But if they will not come and hear it, their guilt shall be sevenfold, seeing there were special words of comfort for them, there were choice sentences of invitation for them. If they do not come and listen, they must perish miserably, without the pretense of a shadow of a dream of an excuse.

Ah, you who are so poor that you scarce know where to lay your heads, you who are so ignorant that a ragged school might perhaps be your best academy, “Come ye, come buy wine and milk, without money and without price.” Come you as you are to the great teacher of your souls.

Trust Him as you are. Trust His precious blood, His glorious cross, His intercession before the Eternal throne, and you shall hast reason to say in the words of the Master, “Father, I thank thee that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.”

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.