

HOPE IN HOPELESS CASES

NO. 821

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JULY 19, 1868,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Bring him hither to me.”
Matthew 17:17.*

OUR real text will be the entire narrative, but as it seems necessary to select some one sentence, we have chosen that before us as the true hinge of the story.

The kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, while on earth, was so extensive as to touch the confines both of heaven and hell. We see Him at one moment discoursing with Moses and Elijah in His glory, as though at heaven's gates, and lo, in a few hours we see Him confronting a foul spirit, as though defying the infernal pit. There is a long journey from patriarchs to demons, from prophets to dumb devils, yet mercy prompts Him and power supports Him, so that He is equally glorious in either place. What a glorious Lord He was even while in His humiliation! How glorious is He now! How far His goodness reaches! Truly He has dominion from sea to sea, to the extremes of human condition His empire reaches. Our Lord and Master hears with joy the shout of a believer, who has vanquished his foe, and at the same hour, He bows His ear to the despairing wail of a sinner, who has given up all confidence in self, and is desirous to be saved by Him.

At one moment He is accepting the crown which the warrior brings Him from the well-fought fight, at another moment He is healing the broken in heart and binding up their wounds. There is a notable difference between the dying scene of the triumphant believer as he enters into rest, and the first weeping repentance of a Saul of Tarsus as he seeks mercy of the Savior whom he has persecuted, and yet the Lord's heart and eye are with both. Our Lord's transfiguration did not disqualify Him for casting out devils, nor did it make Him feel too sublime and spiritual to grapple with human ills, and so at this hour the glories of heaven do not take Him off from the miseries of earth, nor do they make Him forget the cries and tears of the feeble ones who are seeking Him in this valley of tears.

The case of the deaf and dumb demoniac, which we read in your hearing, and to which I call your particular attention this morning, is a very remarkable one. All sin is the evidence that the soul is under the dominion of Satan. All unconverted persons are really possessed of the devil in a certain sense, he has established his throne within their hearts, and there he reigns, and rules from hence the members of their body. “The spirit which now works in the children of disobedience” is the name which Paul gives to the prince of darkness. But these possessions are not alike in every case, and the casting out of Satan, though always effected by the same Lord, is not always wrought after the same fashion.

We bless God, many of us, that when we lived in sin, yet we were not given over to a furious delirium of it—there was method in our madness. We claim no credit for this, but we do thank God for it, that we were not whirled along like rolling things before the tempest, but were restrained and kept within the bounds of outward propriety. We are also grateful that when, being aroused and alarmed, we fell under the iron rod of Satan, we were not all brought into that utter despair, that horror of great darkness, that inward torment and agony, which some are made to endure, and when Jesus came to save us, although we were much hindered by Satan, yet there was none of the foaming of pride, and wallowing of obstinate lust, and tearing of raging desperation, of which we have read in memorable instances, but the Lord opened our hearts gently with His golden key, entered into the chamber of our spirits, and took possession.

For the most part, the conquests which Jesus achieves in the souls of His people, though wrought by the same power, are more quietly accomplished than in the case before us. For this let thanks be rendered to the God of grace. Yet every now and then there are these strange, out-of-the-way cases, persons in whom Satan seems to run riot and to exert the utmost force of his malice, and in whom the Lord Jesus displays the exceeding greatness of His power, when in almighty love He dethrones the tyrant and casts him out never to return again.

If there should be only one such person here this morning, I shall be justified in looking after him, for what man is there among you, who, having a hundred sheep, if one of them should go astray, does not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is gone astray? I ask the prayers of such as have, in years gone by, been brought to Jesus, and are now rejoicing in Him, that we may this morning find out the far-off wanderers, and may, by the Holy Ghost's anointing, liberate those who are bound with fetters of iron, that they may become today the Lord's freed ones, for if the Son shall make them free, they shall be free indeed.

I shall, by my Lord's help, first enlarge upon the *deplorable case*, then we shall meditate upon the *one resource*, and then conclude by admiring the *sure result*.

I. First, let us look, as far as time permits, into the details of the DEPLORABLE CASE before us.

We understand the physical miracles of Christ to be types of His spiritual works. The wonders which He wrought in the natural world have their analogies in the spiritual world, the outward and natural is the symbol of the inward and spiritual. Now the demoniac who was brought by his father for healing is not so distinctly representative of a case of gross sin, though the spirit is called a foul one, and Satan is everywhere defiling, but it is an instance of the great horror, disturbance of mind, and raving despair, caused by the evil one in some minds to their torment and jeopardy.

You will observe concerning it, that *the disease appeared even now and then in overwhelming attacks of mania, in which the man was utterly beyond his own control*. The epileptic fit threw the poor victim in all directions. So have we seen melancholy persons in whom despondency, mistrust, numbing despair, have raged at times with unconquerable fury, they have not so much entertained these evil guests as been victims to them. As Mark puts it, "The spirit takes him." So have such forlorn ones been captured and carried off by Giant Despair. The fairies have scourged them onward over dry places, seeking rest and finding none, they refused to be comforted, and like sick men their souls abhorred all manner of meat, they evinced no power to struggle with their melancholy—resistance did not suggest itself to them, they were taken off their feet and carried clean out of themselves in a rapture of woe. Such cases are not at all uncommon. Satan, knowing that his time is short, and perceiving that Jesus is hastening to the rescue, lashes his poor slave with excess of malice, as if by any means he may utterly destroy his victim before the deliverer arrives.

The poor patient before us was filled at times with *a terrible anguish*, an anguish which he expressed by foaming at the mouth, by wallowing upon the ground, and by crying out. At such times in his dreadful falls he bruised himself, and his delirium led him to dash himself against anything which stood before him, so causing to himself new injuries. None can tell but those who have felt the same, what are the pains of conviction of sin when aggravated by the suggestions of the enemy. Some of us have passed through this in our measure and can declare that it is hell upon earth. We have felt the weight of the hand of an angry God. We know what it is to read the Bible, and not find a single promise in it that would suit our case, but rather to see every page of it glowing with threatenings, as though curses like lightning blazed from it. Even the choicest passages have appeared to rise up against us as though they said, "Intrude not here. These comforts are not for you, you have nothing to do with such things as these."

We have bruised ourselves against doctrines, and precepts, and promises, and even the cross itself. We have prayed, and our very prayer has increased our misery, even against the mercy seat we have fallen, judging our prayers to be but babbling sounds obnoxious to the Lord. We have gone up with the assembly of God's people, and the preacher seemed to frown upon us, and to rub salt into our wounds,

and aggravate our case, even the chapter, and the hymns, and the prayers, appeared to be in league against us, and we went home to our retirement more desponding than before.

I hope none of you are passing through such a state of mind as this, for it is of all things, next to hell itself, one of the most dreadful, and in such a plight men have cried out with Job, "Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. Am I a sea, or a whale, that you set a watch over me? When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint; then you scare me with dreams and terrify me through visions: so that my soul chooses strangling, and death rather than life. I loathe it; I would not live always: let me alone; for my days are vanity." Thanks be unto God, the issues out of this slavery are often such as make angels sing for joy, but while the black night endures it is a horror of darkness indeed.

Put a martyr upon the rack, or even fasten him with an iron chain to the stake, and let the flames kindle about him, and if his Lord shall smile upon him, his anguish will be just nothing compared with the torture of a spirit scorched and burned with an inward sense of the wrath of God. Such a man can join in the lament of Jeremiah, and cry, "He has set me in dark places, as they that be dead of old. He has hedged me about, that I cannot get out: he has made my chain heavy. Also when I cry and shout, he shuts out my prayer . . . He has bent his bow and set me as a mark for the arrow. He has caused the arrows of his quiver to enter into my reins . . . He has filled me with bitterness, he has made me drunken with wormwood." The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear? To groan over unforgiven sin, to dread its well-deserved punishment, to fear the everlasting burnings, these are things which make men suffer with an emphasis and make them think life is a burden.

We learn from the narrative that the evil spirit at the times when it took full possession of the man, *sought his destruction* by hurling him in different directions. "Sometimes it casts him into the fire, and sometimes into the water." So is it with deeply distressed souls. One day they seem to be all on fire with earnestness and zeal, with impatience and anxiety, but the next day they sink into a horrible coldness and apathy of soul, from which it appears to be utterly impossible to arouse them. All sensitive yesterday, all insensible today. They are uncertain, you know not where to find them. If you deal with them as for a spirit that is in danger from the fire of petulance, you have lost your pains, for in the next few minutes they will be in danger from the water of indifference. They fly to extremes. They are like the souls fabled to be in purgatory, of whom legends say that they suffer by turns in an oven and in cells of ice.

You would suppose from the way in which they speak today that they felt themselves to be the blackest of sinners, but in a short time they deny that they feel any sort of repentance for sin. You would imagine, to hear them talk at one time, that they would never cease to pray till they found the Savior, but by and by they tell you that they cannot pray at all, and that it is but a mockery for them to bend the knee. They ring all the changes, they are more fickle than the weather, their color comes and goes like that of the chameleon; they are all fits and starts, convulsions and contortions. He were more than human who could reckon upon them for a month, for they vary oftener than the moon. Their malady laughs us to scorn, their trouble baffles all our consoling efforts, only Jesus Christ Himself can deal with them. It is well that we can add that He has a peculiar art in dealing with desperate diseases and finds His delight in healing those whom all others have left for lost.

To add to the difficulties of this deplorable case, this child was *deaf*, so our Lord tells us in Mark, "Come out of him, you deaf and dumb spirit." There was therefore no way of reasoning with him at all, not a sound could pass through that sealed ear. With other men you might speak, and a soft word might calm the perturbations of their mind, but no word, however gentle, could reach this poor tormented spirit, to sound and sense alike impervious. And are there not such still, to whom words are wasted breath? You may quote promises, you may supply encouragements, you may explain doctrines, but it is all nothing, they end where they began, like squirrels in revolving cages, they are never the forwarder. Oh, the twistings and turnings, the convolutions and the windings, of poor tormented minds!

It is easy enough certainly to tell them to believe in Jesus, but if they understand you, it is in such a dark manner that you had need to explain again, and that explanation you will have to explain still further. To cast themselves simply upon the blood of sprinkling, and to rest upon the finished work of Jesus, is of all things most plain, the very child's A B C cannot be plainer, and yet for all that it is not plain to them, they will appear to comprehend you, and then start aside at a tangent, they will appear to be convinced, and for a time to give up their doubts and fears, but meet them half-an-hour afterwards, and you will find you have been speaking to a wall, addressing yourself to the deaf. Oh, lamentable case! The Lord of mercy look on such, for hopeless is man's help. Glory be to God, He has laid help upon one that is mighty, who can make the deaf to hear, causing His voice to ring with sweet encouragements in the deathlike stillness of the dungeons of despair.

Next to this it appears that the afflicted one was *dumb*, that is to say, incapable of articulate speech by reason of the demoniacal possession, since he cried out when the devil left him, it would seem to have been a case in which all the instruments of speech were present, but articulation had not been learned. There was utterance of an incoherent sort, the noise-making apparatus was there, but nothing intelligible came forth except the most heartrending cries of pain. Such dumb ones abound, they cannot explain their own condition, if they talk to you it is incoherent talk, they contradict themselves every five sentences—you know that they are speaking what they believe to be true, but if you did not know that, you might think that they were telling you falsehoods which confound each other.

Their experience is a string of contradictions, and their utterance is even more complicated than their experience. It is very hard and difficult long to talk with them, it wears out one's patience, and if it wears out the patience of the hearer, how burdensome must it be to the unhappy speaker! They pray, but they dare not call it prayer, it is rather the chattering of a crane or a swallow. They talk with God what is in their poor silly hearts, but ah! it is such a confusion and mixture that when it is done they wonder whether they have prayed or no. It is the cry, the bitter anguishing cry of pain, but it is untranslatable into words, it is an awful groan, an unutterable yearning and longing of the spirit, but they scarcely know themselves what it means.

You are weary with the details of this dolorous case, but I have not yet concluded the tale of woe. If any of you have never experienced the like, thank God for it, but at the same time pity and pray for those who are passing through this state of mind, and invoke now silently the hope of the great Healer, that He would come and deal with them, for their plight is past the art of man.

The father told Jesus that his son was *pinning away*. How could it be otherwise, with one borne down by such a mass of disorders, so perpetually tormented that the natural rest of sleep was constantly broken? It was not likely that the strength would long be maintained in a system so racked and torn, and, mark you, despair of mind is an exceedingly weakening thing to the soul. I have known it even weaken the body, till the worn out sufferer has said with David, "My moisture is turned into the drought of summer." To feel the guilt of sin, to fear the coming punishment, to have a dreadful cry in one's ears of the "wrath to come," to fear death and to expect it every moment, above all to disbelieve God, and write bitter things against Him, this is a thing to make the bones rot, and the heart wither.

Read John Bunyan's "Grace Abounding," and behold a picture there, drawn to the life, of a soul that was left as a heath in the desert, so that it could not see when good came to it, you see a mind tossed up and down on ten thousand waves of unbelief, never resting at any time, but perpetually disturbed and distracted with surmises, suspicions, and forebodings. If these attacks continued always, and were not sometimes intermitted, if there were not little pauses, as it were, between the fits of unbelief, surely man would utterly fail and go to his long home, a prey to his own cruel unbelief.

The worst point in the case was, *all this had continued for years*. Jesus asked how long he had been in this case, and his parent replied, "From a child." Sometimes God permits, for purposes which we do not understand, the deep distress of a tempted soul to last for years, I cannot tell for how many years, but certainly some have had to battle with unbelief on the very confines of the grave, and only at eventide

has it been light to them. When they thought they must die in the dark, the Holy Spirit has appeared to them, and they have been cheered and comforted.

The Puritans were accustomed to quote the remarkable experience of Mrs. Honeywood as an instance of the singular way in which the Lord delivers His chosen. She, for year after year was in bondage to melancholy and despair, but she was set at liberty by the gracious providence of God in an almost miraculous way. She took up a slender Venice glass, and saying, "I am as surely damned as that glass is dashed to pieces," she hurled it down upon the floor, when, to her surprise, and the surprise of all, I know not by what means, the glass was not so much as chipped or cracked. That circumstance first gave her a ray of light, and she afterwards cast herself upon the Lord Jesus. Sometimes extraordinary light has been given to extraordinary darkness, God has brought up the prisoner out of the innermost ward where his feet had been fast in the stocks, and after years of bondage, He has at last given perfect and delightful liberty.

One more thing about this case. *The disciples had failed* to cast the devil out. On other occasions they had been successful—they said to their Master, "Even the devils are subject unto us." But this time they were utterly foiled. They did their best, they appear to have had some faith, or they would not have attempted the task, but their faith was not at all equal to the emergency. Scribes and Pharisees gathered around them, and began to mock them, and if there had been power in all the company of the apostles to have wrought the deed, they would gladly have done it, but there they stood, defeated and dismayed—the poor patient before them racked and tormented, and they unable to give him the slightest ease.

Ah! it becomes a painful case when an anxious soul has gone to the house of God for years, and yet has found no consolation, when the troubled spirit has sought help from ministers, from Christian men and women, when prayers have been offered and not answered, tears have been shed and have been unavailing, when books which have been consolatory to others have been studied without result, when teachings which have converted thousands fail to create a good impression, and yet there are such instances, in which all human agency is put to the rout, and when it seems as impossible to comfort the poor troubled one as to calm the waves of the sea, or hush the voice of the thunder cloud. Hearts are to be met with still in which the evil spirit and the Holy Spirit are brought into distinct conflict, in which the evil spirit displays all his malignity, and brings the soul to the uttermost pitch of distress, in which I trust yet the Holy Spirit will yet display His saving power and lead the soul out of its prison to praise the name of the Lord.

I thought I heard from some ungodly person a kind of whisper to himself, "I thank God I know nothing about these things." Pause before you thank God for this, for evil as this is and to be deplored, it were better that you had all this than remain altogether without spiritual sensibility. It were better to go to heaven burnt and branded, scourged and scarred every step of the road, than to slide gently down to hell as many of you are doing—sleeping sweetly while devils carry you along the road to perdition. It is little after all to be for a season tormented and troubled by disturbance within if it shall ultimately, by God's interposition, end in joy and peace in believing, but it is beyond measure a dreadful thing to have, "Peace, peace," sung in one's ears where there is no peace, and then forever to discover one's self a castaway in the pit from which there shall be no escape.

Instead of being thankful, I would rather ask you to tremble. Yours is that terribly prophetic calm which the traveler frequently perceives upon the Alpine summit. Everything is still. The birds suspend their notes, fly low, and cower down with fear. The hum of bees among the flowers is hushed. A horrible stillness rules the hour, as if death had silenced all things by stretching over them his awful scepter. Perceive you not what is surely at hand? The thunder is preparing, the lightning will soon cast abroad its mighty fires. Earth will rock, granite peaks will be dissolved, all nature will shake beneath the fury of the storm. Yours is that solemn calm today, O sinner. Rejoice not in it, for the tempest is coming, the whirlwind and the tribulation is near which shall sweep you away and utterly destroy you. Better to be molested of the devil now than be tormented by him forever.

II. I have thus brought before you a very dolorous subject, but now, secondly, and may the Holy Spirit help us while I remind you of THE ONE RESOURCE.

The disciples were baffled. The Master, however, remained undefeated, and cried, "Bring him hither to me." We ought to use the means so far as the means will go. We are bound, further, to make the means more effectual than they ordinarily are. Prayer and fasting are prescribed by our Lord as the means of stringing up ourselves to greater power than we should otherwise possess. There are conversions which will never be wrought by the agency of ordinary Christians. We have need to pray more, and by self-denial to keep our bodies more completely under, and so to enjoy closer communion with God before we shall be able to handle the more distressing cases. The church of God would be far stronger to wrestle with this ungodly age if she were more given to prayer and fasting.

There is a mighty efficacy in these two Gospel ordinances. The first links us to heaven, the second separates us from earth. Prayer takes us into the banqueting house of God, fasting overturns the surfeiting tables of earth. Prayer gives us to feed on the bread of heaven and fasting delivers the soul from being encumbered with the fullness of bread which perishes. When Christians shall bring themselves up to the uttermost possibilities of spiritual vigor, then they will be able, by God's Spirit working in them, to cast out devils which today, without the prayer and fasting, laugh them to scorn. But for all that, to the most advanced Christian, there will still remain those mountainous difficulties which must be directly brought to the Master's personal agency for help. Still He tenderly commands us, "Bring them unto Me."

To make the text appear practical, let me beg you to remember that *Jesus Christ is still alive*. Simple as that truth is, you need to be reminded of it. We very often estimate the power of the church by looking to her ministers, her ordinances and her members, but the power of the church does not lie here, it lies in the Holy Ghost, and in an ever living Savior. Jesus Christ died, it is true, but He lives, and we may as truly come to Him today as did that anxious father in the days of our Lord's earthly sojourn. Miracles have ceased it is said, so natural miracles have, but spiritual miracles have not. We have not the power to work either the one or the other. Christ has the power to work any kind of wonder, and He is still willing and able at this present hour to work spiritual miracles in the midst of His church. I do delight to think of my Lord as a Living Christ, to whom I can speak and tell Him of every case that occurs in my ministry, a living Helper to whom I may bring every difficulty that occurs in my own soul, and in the souls of others. O think not that He is dead and buried! Seek Him not among the dead! Jesus lives, and living, is as able to meet with these cases of distress and sorrow as when He was here below.

Remember, too, that *Jesus lives in the place of authority*. When He was here He had power over devils, but up yonder He has greater power still, for here on earth He veiled the splendor of His Godhead, but yonder His glory beams resplendent, and all hell confesses the majesty of His power. There is no demon, however forceful, who will not tremble if Jesus does but speak, or even so much as look at him. Today Jesus is the Master of hearts and consciences, He by His secret power, can work upon every one of our minds, He can depress us or He can exalt, He can cast down or He can lift up. There cannot be a case which shall be hard to Him. We have but to bring it to Him. He lives—and He lives in the place of power, and He can achieve the desire of our hearts.

Moreover, *Jesus lives in the place of observation, and He graciously interposes still*. I know we are tempted to think of Him as of one far away, who does not behold the sorrows of His church, but I tell you, brethren, Christ's honor is as much concerned at this moment in the defeat or victory of His servants as it was when He came down from the mountain top. From the battlements of heaven Jesus looks today upon the work of His ministers, and if He sees them foiled He is jealous for the honor of His Gospel and is as ready to interpose and win the victory now as He was then. We have but to look up to our Lord. He sleeps not as Baal did of old. He is not callous to our woes, nor indifferent to our griefs. Blessed Master, You are able to succor, and strong to deliver! We have but to bring the matter which distresses us before You, and You will deal with it now according to Your compassion.

We should also recollect, for our warning, *Jesus Christ expects us to treat Him as a living, powerful, interposing one, and to confide in Him as such.* We do not know what we miss through want of faith, we conceive that certain persons are in a hopeless condition, and thus we dishonor Christ and injure them. We leave some cases, and give them up instead of presenting them constantly to Him, we limit the Holy One of Israel, we grieve His Spirit and vex His holy mind, but if, as children trust their father, we would trust in Jesus unstaggeringly with an Abrahamic faith, believing that what He has promised He is able also to perform, then should we see even cases as that before us soon brought into the light of day, the oil of joy given instead of mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

Now, I earnestly urge parents and relatives, and any who have children or friends in distress of mind, to make a point of taking their dear ones to Jesus. Do not doubt Him—you vex Him if you do, do not hesitate to come and tell Him this morning the position of your beloved one. Hasten to Him, lay the sick one before Him, and even if while in prayer the case should become worse instead of better, still hesitate not, you are dealing with the infinite Son of God, and you need not fear, you must not doubt. God grant us grace in all things in our daily troubles, and especially in soul affairs, to bring all matters to the Lord Jesus.

III. Lastly, and with brevity, THE SURE RESULT.

When the child, or the man, or whichever he may have been, was brought before our Lord, the case looked thoroughly hopeless. He was deaf and dumb, how could the Master deal with him? Beside that, he was foaming and wallowing, what opening did there seem for the divine power? I cannot wonder that his father said, “If you can do anything, have compassion upon us.” In most other instances the voice of Jesus calmed the spirit, but that voice could not reach the mind, for the ear was sealed. Never was there before the Savior a more thoroughly far-gone case, to all appearance hopeless, and yet the cure was divinely certain, for Jesus, without hesitating for a moment, said to the unclean spirit, “You foul spirit, you deaf and dumb spirit, I charge you come out of him.”

Christ has power to charge devils with authority. They dare not disobey. “And return no more unto him,” said the Savior. Where Jesus heals He heals forever. Once bring the soul out of prison, it shall not go back again. If He says, “I forgive,” the sin is forgiven, if He speaks peace, the peace shall be like a river that never ceases, running until it melts away into the ocean of eternal love. The cure was hopeless in itself, yet absolutely certain when Jesus put forth His healing hand. O you who are broken down and desponding this morning, there is nothing that *you* can do or that *I* can do, but there is nothing which He cannot do. Only go yourself this morning to Him, and with a word He will give you peace, a peace that shall never be broken again, but shall last till you enter into eternal rest.

Nevertheless the word of Christ, though sure to win its way, was stoutly opposed. The devil had great wrath, for he knew that his time was short. He began to rend and tear and put out all his devilish force upon the poor child, and the poor creature, foaming and wallowing, fell down as if he were dead, under a terrible excitement. So often will it happen that at first the voice of Christ will make the spirit more troubled than before, not because Jesus troubles us, but because Satan revolts against Him. A poor tempted creature may even lie down in despair as dead, and those around may cry, “He is dead,” but even then shall come the healing hand of tenderness and love, at whose touch the spirit shall survive.

Ah, soul! if you should judge yourself to be as one dead, if your last hope should expire, if there should seem now to be nothing before you but a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation, it is then that Jesus will interpose. Learn the lesson that you cannot have gone too far from Christ. Believe that your extremities are only extremities to you and not to Him. The highest sin and the deepest despair together cannot baffle the power of Jesus. If you were between the very jaws of hell, Christ could snatch you forth. If your sins had brought you even to the gates of hell, so that the flames flashed into your face, if then you looked to Jesus He could save you. If you are brought to Him when you are at death’s door, yet still eternal mercy will receive you.

How is it that Satan has the impudence to make men despair? Surely it is a piece of his infernal impertinence that he dares to do it. Despair! when you have an omnipotent God to deal with you?

Despair! when the precious blood of the Son of God is given for sinners? Despair! when God delights in mercy? Despair! when the silver bell rings, “Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”? Despair! while life lasts, while mercy’s gate stands wide open, while the heralds of mercy beckon you to come even though your sins be as scarlet, for they shall be as wool; though they be like crimson they shall be white as snow?

I say again, it is infernal impertinence that has dared to suggest the idea of despair to a sinner. Christ unable to save? Never can it be. Christ outdone by Satan and by sin? Impossible. A sinner with diseases too many for the great Physician to heal? I tell you that if all the diseases of men were met in you, and if all the sins of men were heaped on you, and if blasphemy and murder, and fornication and adultery, and every sin that is possible or imaginable had all been committed by you, yet the precious blood of Jesus Christ, God’s dear Son, cleanses us from all sin. If you will but trust my Master, and He is worthy to be trusted and deserves your confidence—if you will but trust Him, He will save you even now.

Ah! why delay, why raise questions, why debate, why deliberate, mistrust, and suspect? Fall into His arms—He cannot reject you, for He has Himself said, “He that comes to me I will in no wise cast out.” Yet, poor wretch, I do despair of converting you unless the Master do it. It is mine to tell you this, but I know you will not hear it, or, hearing it, you will reject it unless Christ shall come with power by His Spirit. O may He come today, and say to the evil spirit within you, “Come out of him, you foul spirit, and go no more into him. Let such a one be free, for I have redeemed him with My most precious blood.” O pray, dear friends, that weak as my words have been this morning, disconnected as my thoughts have been, yet, nevertheless, God the blessed Spirit may bless them to the unfastening of bars of iron, and that gates of brass may be opened, and captive ones brought forth to liberty. The Lord bless such for His name’s sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—MARK 9:1-29

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