

OUR MISERIES, MESSENGERS OF MERCY

NO. 400

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JULY 14, 1861,
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 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Come and let us return unto the Lord: for He has torn, and He will heal us. He has smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight.”
Hosea 6:1, 2.

TENDER fathers seek first to train their children by gentle means. The Lord, in His long-suffering dealt very kindly with His erring Israel, sending them favor after favor, and blessing after blessing, saying by His acts, “I have given them their corn and their wine, and their oil, they will surely turn unto Me and say, ‘Our Father, You shall be the guide of our youth.’” But the more He multiplied His bounties, the more they multiplied their iniquities as they burned sacrifice unto the gods of Edom and of Moab—even to those that were no gods, saying, “These are your gods, O Israel, which have given unto you your corn, and your wine, and your oil.” So they spent the mercies of God in sacrifice upon their idols, and committed transgressions with the false gods of the heathen, consuming with their lusts the very mercies which God had sent to bring them to repentance! When at last God saw that this measure did not move them, because their sin was written as with an iron pen, and engraved upon the very horns of their altars, then He tried harsher means; He hewed them by the Prophets; they rose early, and they prophesied until the going down of the sun, giving line upon line, precept upon precept, threatening them with the anger, and vengeance of God. At last that vengeance came; He carried them away captive, and they went into a land that they knew not, among a cruel people, whose speech they could not understand. Again He delivered them out of the hand of their enemy; and yet, again, because of their sin, He sold them to Assyria, and afterwards to Babylon, that at last, after they had been rent and torn, they might say within themselves, “Come, and let us return unto the Lord.”

Now, my Brothers and Sisters, the people of Israel are but a picture of ourselves; especially are they representatives of a certain class, some of whom are now present. God has tried you with mercy upon mercy; kept you long in health till you scarcely ever had a day’s sickness; given you all that you could wish, till your cup was brimming and flowing over; but you used His mercies for your own self-indulgence, and the bodily strength which was given you to be a blessing, you have made a curse. God has granted to you streams of mercy never ceasing, but your return has been streams of sin, broad, and black, and deep! And now today He has been changing His ways with you. I am speaking to some whom God has of late heavily afflicted; seeing gentler means would not do, He has turned your wine into wormwood, and your honey into gall; he has made you sick in body, and dispirited in mind. Your earthly goods are melting like snow before the summer’s sun; your children die before your very eyes, and the desire of your heart is taken away with a stroke. God has made all His waves and His billows go over you; the Law has sounded its trumpet in your ears and brought your sin to remembrance; conscience has started up in alarm from its long sleep, and cries like a mighty man who wakes up from his slumber and finds the camp besieged. You are troubled and sorely broken; your heart is melted like wax, so that while you are sitting in the house of God today, you are complaining, “I am the man who has seen affliction.” And perhaps worse than that, you are groaning, “His wrath lies hard upon me, I cannot look up.” It is to you I am about to speak this morning. I single you out from the crowd, and I trust while I address you, there also may be some words of comfort or of instruction for the rest of the congregation. Oh, may you, my Hearer, you upon whom I fix my eyes this morning, you whose case is the case of Israel in Hosea, may you say, “Come, and let us return unto the Lord, for He has torn, and He will heal us. He has smitten, and He will bind us up.” I desire to come straight up to you who are in this condition, and put my hand inside yours, holding you fast while I strive in God’s name to reason with you, beseeching God the Holy Spirit to reason better than I can! I pray He sweetly moves your soul, till you say, “I will arise and go unto my Father.”

Three things I must do this morning. First, I must *deal a blow at the old Tempter, who has got the first hand at you*. Secondly, I will come to *reason comfortably with you*. And then, thirdly, I must *lovingly persuade you*, saying—“Come, let us return unto the Lord.”

I. First then, I must DEAL A BLOW AT THE OLD TEMPTER WHO HAS GONE BEFORE ME, AND HAS BEGUN TO DECEIVE YOU.

I cannot tell what is the precise temptation that Satan has been using with you, but I think it is very likely to be one of four.

The first one has been this—“Oh,” he says, “see how troubled you are; nothing prospers with you; what pains of body you suffer, and how depressed you are in spirit! God is a tyrant to you, He treats you cruelly—*hate* Him—set your teeth together and curse Him. Say, ‘If He treats me thus, He is *not* a God that I can love; I will abhor Him from my very soul.’” I have uttered that temptation in startling language because such dark insinuations as this have been very common with much tried and troubled men. I remember many who, in telling their experience of how they were brought to Christ, have confessed that when the first hammer of God’s Law fell upon their hearts, it hardened them. When God smote, they were like the bullock which kicks against the pricks of the ox-goad; they felt like a high blooded, unbroken horse—the bit was in their mouths, but they pulled and tugged at it—and the more it cut and wounded them, the more resolved they were that they would not turn. In fact, hatred was stirred up against God by what was intended to bring them to His feet! Soul, does Satan tempt you thus? Then indeed it is a sad proof that *sin is madness*. I can only compare your case to yon poor maniac who has labored hard to destroy himself by throwing himself into the fire, or into the water. Some kind person, willing to bear all the inconveniences of such an office, has volunteered to be his keeper. Look, the man is dashing to the water’s brink, and means to throw himself into the stream! His keeper holds him back, and with stern words and sterner acts throws him down upon the ground, and binds him so that he cannot take the fatal leap. But look again! He longs to burn himself, he makes a tremendous effort to thrust his body into the flame, but his keeper shuts him up in a room where he cannot get at the devouring flame. All the while this madman hates him, curses him, spits upon him, and would do anything if he could but kill his keeper and tear him to pieces in his fury! Mark you, when the maniac shall get back his reason, he will kiss the feet of that man whom now he hates, he will say—“I bless you for the loving violence which has restrained me from my own destruction; I thank you for denying me my own will; that you stood in my path, and thwarted my mad desires, and that you would not let me ruin myself.” Now, poor Sinner, God is doing this with you! Oh, do not hate Him. He does not hate *you*. He is not dealing with you in wrath, but in mercy! There is still shining behind the black cloud, the sun of His mercy. Oh, that Satan may be cast out of you, that you may not be tempted to hate God because of His sore smiting of you!

Or, perhaps, the temptations of Satan have taken another shape—not so much hatred as *sullenness*. You have lost all you care for now, and you think that your state does not matter much to you; you would as soon die as live, and as for your soul, you think you cannot be more wretched in Hell itself than you are, and you say, “So let it be; it is so bad that it cannot be mended.” You do not bestir yourself, but you sit down with a stony heart waiting to be crushed. You are like some poor man benighted on the frozen Alps, who feels sleep creeping upon him, and is content to lie down there and die, as he certainly must unless some friendly hand shall shake him out of his desperate sleep. There is a kind of numbness which pain brings to the body, which has its equivalent in the spirit, a numbness because the grief has been so acute, that nature could bear no more. Then death itself loses its horror in the nearer terrors of the soul. “My soul chooses strangling rather than life.” Soul, Satan desires to have you that he may utterly destroy you, and this is one of his ways—he seeks to make you torpid that he may find you dead; for when you are sullen he knows that the warnings of the ministry, and the earnest exhortations of the Gospel, will have but little force with you. Wake, Man, wake! Your danger is awful! Multitudes have perished here. Wake, I pray you, wake! Oh, if you have any sensibility left, wake up! Depend on it, that bad as your case is, it will be worse in the world to come unless the badness of it is now blessed to your soul. Oh, Man, the pains you have had as yet are but as a hurt finger—they are but mere trifles compared with the miseries of eternity! Instead of opiates to make you sleep, let them be goads to stir your sluggish flesh, and make you start from the deadly couch of presumption. I would be but too glad if I might thrust lancets into you again, and again, anything sooner than you should sleep that sleep of death and be utterly destroyed.

Possibly, however, the temptation of Satan has taken the form of *despair*. “Oh,” he says, “there is no hope for you; you can clearly perceive that you are the subject of Divine hatred; God has not dealt with others as He has with you; these trials are but the first drops of the long shower of His eternal wrath. Depend upon it,” says Satan, “now that your conscience is in this state, your convictions will deepen into a settled remorse! And then that remorse will end in final despair, and everlasting destruction from the Presence of the Lord; your sins are too many, and too great! There is hope for any man—but there is no hope for you—you are beyond the lines of mercy. The arm of Divine Grace is not long enough or strong enough to reach such a wretch as you are! You are not dammed in Hell yet, but you are the same as if you were; you are reprobate; the decree shuts you out of Heaven while the greatness of your sin confirms it! You are bound up in fetters that cannot be broken, and will be cast into that horrible pit of Hell out of which you never can be drawn.” Satan, you are a LIAR! Oh, that this poor heart did know it—I tell you this to your face, Satan, for you did once bewitch *me* with your lies! You did bring me into this state of despair, too—till I was ready to put an end to myself, because I thought nothing awaited me but the wrath of God. Oh, you lying Hell-hound, how you did slander my Lord and Master! He was willing to receive me, but you made me think He would reject me! He stood waiting at the door of my heart, saying, “Open to Me,” but you said that He had gone, that He had shut up the heart of His compassion, and doomed me forever to destruction! I will get even with you, you great destroyer of souls, for your cruel treachery with me—as long as I live, I will raise the hue and cry against you! Soul, do not believe him—he is a murderer of souls—and a liar from the beginning. There *is* hope for *you*! There is hope for you *now*! There is still the Gospel preached to you; still is it freely presented in your hearing. May you say today, “Come, let us return unto the Lord,” and He *will* heal you. He *will* bind you up; He will receive you to His heart; He will in no wise cast you out!

But it may occur, that yet a fourth temptation has been tried with some of you. Satan has said, “Well, now, you can see it is of no use; give it up altogether, and if you cannot be happy one way, try another! You clearly perceive that you are shut out of Heaven, well, make the best of this world. Now,” says the devil, “Christ will not have you, what is the use of your going to a place of worship? Do not go! Stay away; it is hopeless. The Gospel will never be of any use to you; you have heard it these three or four years, and you only are more hardened; don’t go again! Besides, why make yourself miserable for nothing? Drink your fill of the world’s delight; if you cannot get the best good, get the other. Eat, drink and be merry; live a fast life, and satisfy yourself. You may as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb; you may as well perish for a great sin as perish for a little one! God evidently has cast you off—follow your own way—and choose your own delight.” Oh, Soul! Oh, soul! How sad it is that these afflictions and warnings of conscience which are meant to bring you *to* Christ should be used by Satan as the reason why you should go *from* Christ! Oh, Soul, the Lord has designs of mercy for you now He has begun to try you in your circumstances and afflict you in your soul! And the devil knows it, and is afraid of losing you, and so he wants you to get out of the way of mercy just when mercy is coming. What? Suppose you have as yet gained no good by attending the means of Grace—does that prove that you will not soon be blessed? You are traveling in the wilderness; you had a torch, and the wind blew it out; you lit it again, and it blew it out again; do not say that therefore you will never see! The sun is rising, the sun is rising, and the fact that torches have been blown out does not prove that the night will last forever. If your false hopes have left you, and your self-righteous trusts have all been taken away, I am glad! I am glad it is dark with you—for the darkest part of the night is that which heralds the dawning of the day?! I am glad the Lord has laid you low, for it is now He means to lift you up! Do not, I pray you, be tricked out of this Divine Mercy by the temptations of the fiend of Hell. Rouse yourself, Man! Cry, “Though He slays me, yet will I trust in Him! If I am at Bethesda’s pool, and the water is not stirred, yet will I die there,” (that you will never do—mark that)! Though I pray, and He hears me not, yet my cries even to my dying hour shall go up to Him.” And mark you, He will surely hear you! Only do not be led astray by the Evil One to turn what is the mercy of God into an excuse for excess of riot! Instead listen now to the voice of wisdom and mercy, while I seek in the second place to reason with you comfortably that I may bring you to say, “Come, let us return unto the Lord.”

II. Now forget your troubles for a little while if you can, or only think of them as a background for the brightness of THE COMFORT which I would give you as God’s messenger.

1. So, you say you have had so many trials in life, and so many strivings of conscience, that therefore you feel you must be too guilty to be saved? Do you think that you have been punished for your sins? Permit me to remind you that this is not the place where the Judge of all the earth usually punishes sin; His wrath He reserves for the Day of Judgment,

and the world to come. All sorrow is the result of sin, but still it does not come to any particular man except in some remarkable instances. Now there was Job—will you equal him among the saints? Was he not one of the chief of them? Yet he was more tried than any other man; that evidently was not because he was a greater sinner than others. Do you not know the fact that often the most wicked men are the most prosperous, while the most holy are the most afflicted? Therefore this is not the place where God dispenses Providence according to the sole and absolute rule of *justice*—that is to be in the world to come. How would you account for such an instance as this, which occurred not long ago in a certain railway accident? There were two men who entered the train; one of them a Christian, the other a worldlyling. The Christian took his seat; so did the other. At a station the worldly one said, “I should like a game of cards; will you get out and go with me?—there is So-and-So in such a carriage; come with me, and we will play together.” “No,” said the other, “I would much rather be out of your company, if that is what you are going to do.” “Well then,” said he, “good morning, I am going there.” An accident of the most frightful character occurred. The Christian saw those on each side of him killed—his two companions crushed, and he himself such a mass of bruises and broken bones as you scarcely ever saw; his leg was broken in seven different places and he was, as it seemed, at death’s door. His companion who went to play cards was perfectly safe, and the carriage in which he rode was untouched! Now, this plainly shows that *this* is not the world in which God deals with men according to the rules of justice! Ships sink whether men are at prayer, or whether they are cursing God! Providence here is not ordered according to the rule by which God shall dispense His favors or His fury in the world to come! This is the land of long-suffering rather than of execution. This is the land where God in His wise Providence rather brings us to repentance than to punishment!

Now I can see the hand of God in all. The man who escaped as a card player, I fear, was hardened by the Providence by which he escaped. Yet, mark you, God was glorified, because His Providence will become a savor of death unto death to that man should he live and die impenitent, while in the Christian who was thus injured God is honored, for if you could see him as I saw him—with his smiling face relating the fact that he has never murmured once, though he had laid upon his bed for many weeks—you would only admire the favor and goodness of God which gave the sinner space for repentance, and gave the Believer room to display the Grace of patience. It was good for the one who he was afflicted, it was good for the other that he escaped. But this is not the hand of punishment, and your having more afflictions than others may be because God loves you! Certainly it is not because He hates you. I have seen the wicked in great power—spreading themselves like green bay trees; and I have seen them in their death, too, and they are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men. They are at ease; they are settled on their lees; they are not emptied from vessel to vessel. As for God’s people—they are chastened every morning, and vexed every evening—and the Lord’s hand lies heavy on them! Yet there is God’s goodness in that heavy hand, and infinite loving kindness in their tribulations! God only gives the wicked prosperity as we give husks to swine; He gives them this world’s transient things because He loves them not. I pray you then, do not misconstrue your sufferings of body and mind—they may be tokens of mercy! They certainly are not indicators of any special wrath.

Secondly, you will say that you have great distress of mind, and trials of soul, and therefore there is no hope for you. I say, therefore, *there is hope!* Perhaps some of those troubles of mind come from Satan. Now observe this, Satan very seldom troubles those men who are all his own. A poor Negro who had been tempted by Satan was once laughed at by his master about it. He said, “The devil never tempts me; I do not even know that there is such a being in existence!” They went out sometime later, to hunt wild ducks, and as the master shot at a covey of them, and some of them were wounded, he was exceedingly earnest with clubs and stones to secure those that were wounded—while he left those that were evidently dead to float on the stream till he had time to pick them up. This gave the Negro a fine opportunity of explaining his master’s experience. “Massa, while you was a splashin’ in de water after dem wounded ducks, and lettin’ de dead ones float on, it jist come into my mind why it is dat de debil troubles me so much, while he lets you alone. You are like de dead ducks—he’s sure he’s got you safe. I’m like de wounded ones—trying to git away from him—and he’s afraid I’ll do it, so he makes all de fuss after me, and jist lets you float on down de stream. He knows he can get you any time, but he knows it now or never wid me. If you were to begin to flutter a little, and show signs like you were a goin’ to get away from him, he would make jist as big a splashin’ after you as he does after me.”

But again, you will remember that it is not God’s way to send convictions of sin to reprobates. Do men plow the sand? Do they send their oxen upon the rock? Do they attempt to use materials that are utterly rotten? No, they give

them up, and leave them alone. Now, why is the All-Wise Jehovah at work with you unless He has gracious designs for you? I hope it is because He is about to bring you to Himself.

Let me show you in the *third* place that this is according to the analogy of Nature. Did you ever hear this parable? There was a certain shepherd who had a sheep which he desired to lead into another and better field. He called it but it would not come; he led it but it would not follow; he drove it but it would only follow its own devices. At last he thought within himself, "I will do this." The sheep had a little lamb by its side, and the shepherd took the lamb up in his arms, and carried it away and then the ewe came, too! And so with you—God has been calling to *you*, mother, and you did not come. Christ said "Come," and you would not. He sent affliction, but you would not come; then He took your child away, and you came then; you followed the Savior then. You see it was loving work on the shepherd's part—he did but take the lamb to save the sheep! The Savior took your child to Heaven that He might bring *you* to Heaven. We had before the Church the other night a Sister who is here now. I dare say there were four in the family, and the Lord took one child away. But that was not enough, He took another and another—and the fourth lay sick and ready to die, and then the mother's heart was broken—and mother and father both came to Jesus! Oh, blessed afflictions, blessed losses, blessed deaths that end in spiritual life! Now this, I trust, is how God is dealing with you. You know, if a man has a field, and desires to gather a harvest from it, what does he do? First of all he plows it. The field might say, "Why these scars across my face? Why thus upturn my sods?" Because there can be no sowing till there has been plowing! Sharp plowshares make furrows for good seed. Or take yet another picture from Nature. A man desires to make of a rusty piece of iron, a bright sword which shall be serviceable to a great warrior. What does he do? He puts it into the fire and melts it; he takes away all its dross and removes all its impurities; then he fashions it with his hammer; he beats it full sore upon the anvil; he anneals it in one fire after another till at last it comes out a good blade that will not snap in the day of warfare. This is what God does with you—I pray you do not misread the book of God's Providence; for if you read it aright it runs thus—"I will have mercy on this man and therefore have I smitten him and wounded him. Come, therefore, let us return unto the Lord, for He has wounded and He will heal; He has smitten and He will bind us up."

I have other arguments to use, and you must bear with me somewhat patiently. You are wounded in spirit this morning, poor Mourner, will you remember that it is God's delight to bind up broken hearts? "He counts the number of the stars." What is the next verse—do you remember it?—"He binds up the broken in heart." What a mighty stoop this is! From counting the stars and leading them forth, mighty worlds though they are, He bows to become a surgeon to the poor wounded heart! You know what Christ's occupation is in Heaven?—"He shall wipe away tears from off all faces." What a blessed occupation—wiping away tears! Soul, Christ will be glad to wipe away your tears now! He delights to do it—Christ is never more happy than when He is showing His heart to sinners; He is so glad when He can find His poor lost sheep, and put it on His shoulders and carry it home. It will make you glad to be saved; but He will be infinitely glad to save you, and delighted to receive you, for He delights in mercy.

Please remember, yet once again, that the wounds which you now feel *He* made Himself, and if He is willing to heal any wounds, how much more those that He has Himself made? There are some diseases in which the surgeon is compelled to wound; the proud flesh has gotten in; the cure has been a bad one, and in order that it may be thoroughly sound, he perhaps makes a cross cut—a deep cross cut that goes into the very core of the matter. Well, his lances have made a bad wound—do you think the doctor will not do his best to heal it? I will go to him and say, "Surgeon, you did yourself make the wound; you made it in order to my healing; heal the wound, I pray you, heal me." Occasionally when a man has broken his leg, it has been badly set by some bungler, and when he has consulted a skillful surgeon, he says, "I can do nothing for you till I break your leg again." And so often is it with men's minds; they get peace, peace, when there is no peace, and there is no doing anything with them until God breaks their heart again! Suppose a surgeon should break a man's leg again; do you think he would go away and leave the poor man without setting it? No, he broke it that he might heal it, that he might make the cure a sound one. And so is it, perhaps, with your broken heart. Go to Him, then, go to Him; say, "Lord, You did break my heart. I was a hard blasphemer once, but You have brought me to my knees. I once said, 'I would never enter a place of worship.' Lord, you know I go there now, though I get no comfort, but I pray You give me comfort. It was such-and-such a sermon that brought me to despair; Lord, guide Your servant to preach another that will bring me into liberty! Lord, if You have not broken my heart, break it now! But if you have broken it, Lord, I appeal to You to heal it. You *have* begun the work by killing me, finish the work by making me alive. You have begun by

stripping me, Lord, clothe me.” That is a good argument; He will surely do it; He will not fail to carry on and complete that which He has begun to perform!

Once more only—and perhaps this will be the best argument of all—remember you have got His promise for it. The text I read is a promise. It looks at first sight as if it were spoken by man, and so it is; but then inasmuch as it is put in God’s Book as the utterance of God’s Inspired Prophet, it is a part of God’s Word, and it is warranted to be most true. “He has torn, and He will heal.” Go and put your finger on this text and say, “Lord, You have torn me, and it is written in Your Word, ‘He will heal us.’”—

*“Lord, I know You cannot lie,
Heal my soul or else I die.”*

Put your finger on the next—“He will bind us up.” Say, “Lord, I do not deserve it; I deserve only to perish, but then *You have said* You will do it; be as good as Your Word. Lord, here is a poor sinner near despair, he comes to You; bind up his broken heart; give him peace.” And Soul, the everlasting hills shall bow, the hoary deep shall itself be burned up, and earth’s foundation shall be removed, but God’s Word shall never pass away, nor shall His promise fail in one single case! Only believe the promise! Receive the promise, and this very day, poor broken Heart, He will heal your wounds, and you shall have joy and peace in believing through Jesus Christ our Lord!

III. I shall not detain you much longer, but I have now the third point to *earnestly* dwell upon. O Spirit of the living God, bless these words! Jesus, woo hearts to Yourself while we seek to win them to Your love!

And now I would come LOVINGLY TO PERSUADE YOU, and the persuasion I would use is this—“Come, let *us* return unto the Lord.” Do you see it? The Prophet does not say, “Go,” but “*Come*.” He does not say, “Go you,” but “Come, let *us*.” Poor Soul, you say there is none like yourself; behold I take my place side-by-side with you! Are you a sinner? So am I. Do you deserve God’s wrath? So do I. Have you gone very far astray? So have I. Come, let *us* return; let *us* go together. Or if that does not comfort you enough, let me tell you I have gone as you now are; as despairing, perhaps more so; as cast down, perhaps worse; but I have found Him to be a loving Savior, a blessed Savior, willing and able to save to the uttermost! Soul, come and try Him! Come and try Him! My Brothers and Sisters in Christ—did Christ reject you when you came to Him? You were as bad as others, some of you were worse—did He reject you? I am sure that if I should ask it, there would be not 1,000 here, but a vast company who would rise and say, “I sought the Lord, and He heard me! This poor man cried, and the Lord heard me and delivered me from all my fears.” Soul, come, let *us* return! He saved me; He will save you!

*“Tell it unto sinners tell—
I am, I am saved from Hell.”*

If he could and would save one, why not another? And if the thousands of Israel, why not poor sinful *you*!

Then, that I may persuade you further, let me remind you that to return to God is not a cruel request. He does not ask you to perform a pilgrimage and blister your weary feet, or to thrust an iron in your back, and swing yourself aloft as does the Hindu. He asks you not to lie on a bed of spikes, or starve yourself till you can count your bones. He asks no suffering of you—for Christ has suffered for you! All He asks is that you would return to Him and what is that? That you would be unfeignedly sorry for your past sins; that you would ask His Grace to keep you from sin in the future; that you would now believe in Christ who is set forth to be the Propitiation for sin; that through faith in His blood you may see your sin forever put away, and all your iniquity cancelled. That is neither a hard nor a cruel demand! It is for your good as well as for His Glory. O Spirit of God, make the sinner now willing to repent and to believe in Christ!

But yet again, remember the comfortable fruits which will surely follow if you return. What would you think if I could show you yourself within a week? There he stands; he is singing —

*“A debtor to mercy alone,
Of Covenant mercy I sing!
Nor fear with Your righteousness on,
My person and offering to bring.
The terrors of Law and of God,
With me can have nothing to do;
My Savior’s obedience and blood,
Hide all my transgressions from view!”*

What man is that? Why that is the man who came in here last Sunday morning, and said he was utterly lost! He heard the minister exhort him to trust Christ, and he did it, by the Grace of God, and that is where he is standing now. He has been brought up out of a horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, and his feet are set upon the Rock! “If I thought that would be the case,” says one, “I would try it.” My dear Sir, you need not *think*—it *will* be the case! God promises—and He cannot lie—“He who believes and is baptized”—He does not say, “*may* be,” but “*shall* be saved.” And God’s “shalls” and “wills” do not play with men; but He speaks them in real earnestness. “Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.” Dare you say that this is not true? “No,” you say, “it is undoubtedly true.” Well, then, if you call upon the name of the Lord, you shall be saved, or else the promise is false! Again, “though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as wool; though they are red like crimson, they will be whiter than snow.” Do you believe that? Is it not a promise made to the penitent who casts himself at the feet of Jesus? Very well, try it personally, and if you cast yourself there—either this Book must be withdrawn, God must change, Christ’s blood must lose its power—or else He must and will save you! Oh, that there were such a heart in you, and such a mind towards God, that you would now say, “I do believe; I will believe; I trust my Savior with my soul.” This done, you are saved!

Once more, may I not plead with you to return to God because of the precious love of Christ? Love, I know, has great power to move. You will remember how in that wonderful book, “Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” there is a singular instance of the power of love. Miss Ophelia had been laboring to train up that wicked girl, Topsy, but she would not learn anything. Miss Ophelia tried to make her say the Assembly’s Catechism in order that she might know all about it. But one day, Eva, the little Eva, (the very Gospel Incarnate, just as Miss Ophelia was the picture of the Law), sits down by her side, and says to her, “Topsy, why will you be so naughty? What is it makes you so wicked?” “Miss Eva,” says Topsy, “it aren’t no use my being good, nobody loves me.” The little girl puts her arm round her neck, and kisses her, saying, “Why I love you, Topsy, and it grieves me very much to see you so naughty.” “Oh,” said Topsy, “I will try to be good if you will but love me.” Love had won the poor child, and had subdued her. Well, now, perhaps you are saying, “If Christ would but say He would love me, I think I could repent that I ever sinned against Him. I think I would be willing to give Him my heart.” Soul, if that is what you say, He does love you! He loved you and gave Himself for you. Behold His Cross—is there better proof of love than that? See His flowing wounds; hear how He groans; behold Him dying! “It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” and He saves them because He loves them. Oh, if that love will woo you, it is indeed in plenteous abundance flowing down to you now! “Ah, well,” you say, “I cannot do enough for Him.” If that is true, I am glad you have got as far as that, and I have finished when I have told you an anecdote which I trust will do us all good.

A missionary was preaching to the Maori tribe of the New Zealanders. He had been telling them of the suffering love of Christ, how He had poured forth His soul unto death for them; and as he concluded, the hills rung to the thrilling question—“Is it nothing to all who pass by? Behold and see if there is any sorrow like unto His sorrow?” Then stood forth a plumed and painted chief, the scarred warrior of a thousand fights, and as his lips quivered with suppressed emotion, he spoke, “And did the Son of the Highest suffer all this for us men? Then this Indian chief would like to offer Him some poor return for His great love. Would the Son of God deign to accept this Indian’s hunting dog? Swift of foot and keen of scent, the tribe has not such another, and he has been to the Indian as a friend.” But the missionary told him that the Son of God had need of no such gifts as these. Thinking he had mistaken the gift, the chief resumed—“Yet maybe He would accept this Indian’s rifle? Unerring of aim, the chief cannot replace it.” Again the missionary shook his head. For a moment the chief paused; then as a new thought struck him, suddenly despoiling himself of his striped blanket, he cried with childlike earnestness, “Perhaps *He who had not where to lay His head* will yet accept the chieftain’s blanket. This poor Indian will be cold without it, yet it is offered joyfully.” Touched by love’s persistency, the missionary tried to explain to him the real Nature of the Son of God; that it was not men’s *gifts* but men’s *hearts* that He yearned for. For a moment a cloud of grief darkened the granite features of the old chief; then as the true Nature of the Son of God, by His Grace, slowly dawned upon him, casting aside his blanket and rifle he clasped his hands—and looking right up into the blue sky, his face beaming with joy, he exclaimed—“Perhaps the Son of the Blessed One will deign to accept this poor Indian himself!”

Is that what you say this morning? You would give Christ this, and that, and the other? Soul, give Him your *heart*. Say to Him now,

*“Jesus, I love Your charming name,
'Tis music to my ear!
I wish I could sound it out so loud,
That earth and Heaven might hear.”*

And then it is done! The compact is concluded; the work is over; you are in the arms of Christ. You love Him, and He loves you. He wounded but He has healed; He killed you but He has made you alive. Go in peace; you are loved much; your sins which are many, by God's Grace, are all forgiven you! Amen.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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