

HOME QUESTION

NO. 294

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AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.**

*“But are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?”
2 Chronicles 28:10.*

THIS was a home stroke. When the children of Israel had bloodthirsty thoughts towards their Brethren of Judah, the Prophet very earnestly dissuaded them. “Why deal you so sternly with your Brethren who are in your power, simply because they have sinned. Smite them not too furiously, for are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?” How remarkably pertinent is such a question to different nations, to different sects, to different classes among men. We are too apt to look upon the sins of other nations and forget our own. Placed, as we imagine ourselves to be, in a pre-eminence in the midst of the peoples of the earth—we are continually criticizing the acts of other tribes and nations.

We look across the flood and we see that grand Republic, with the black stain of slavery upon its fair hand and we cry out against it with all our might. We look across the channel and we see a nation that we are continually charging with being volatile and frivolous. We cast our eyes to other peoples of the earth and we see crimes in them, all which we very readily condemn with iron tongue. It will always be well for the pride of Great Britain if she will question herself thus. Is there not with you, oh mistress of the seas—is there not with you a sin against the Lord our God?

Are we immaculate? Is our nation spotless? We have no slaves at home or abroad, but have we none who are oppressed and downtrodden? Are there none concerning whom it may be said that the hire of the laborer which is kept back cries out against them? Have we not drunkenness in our midst? Are we not, in fact, among the very chief of sinners, because as a nation we have received more Scripture light and more Divine favor than any other people among the race of men? God has dealt so well with us that our crimes assume a monstrous shape and vivid color when they are viewed in the light of His countenance.

Oh Britain, weep for your sons and daughters and bemoan their iniquity before the Lord, lest like Capernaum they sink to Hell amid the full flood of privileges disregarded. Instead of lifting up your hand to point at the faults of others, point at your own. Let us be content to sweep our own streets, to cleanse our own cities and make our own streams pure. Let our reformation begin at home, for we cannot hope that our remonstrance against the sin of other nations can be powerful unless we have cleansed ourselves.

How applicable, too, is this question to the different sects, especially among Christians. How apt we all are to be plucking the mote from the eye of others. How very earnestly does the Dissenter exclaim against the sins of the Church of England and certainly they are neither few nor small. How anxiously does the man in the Church of England, who happens to have an uncharitable bias, observe the strifes and divisions that exist among the Dissenting bodice. And as for all the different denominations, how continually will they be pointing to unscriptural traits in the order of other Churches and how constantly do they forget their own infirmities. I hold that every Christian man is bound to give his honest testimony to every Truth of God he believes. We must not shun to declare the whole counsel of God, because we may be charged with sectarianism. Every great man has been called a Sectarian in his time and every true man who stands up for the whole that God teaches, will necessarily incur that censure.

But let every Christian remember that our business is to deal first with ourselves. Let each denomination acknowledge its own faults and confess its own iniquities. I am not ashamed of the denomination to which I belong, sprung, as we are, direct from the loins of Christ, having never passed through the turbid stream of Romanism and having an origin apart from all dissent or Protestantism, because we have existed before all other sects. But I am equally clear as to our innumerable faults. Indeed, the sins and faults of our denomination may well go up against us to Heaven and withhold the dew of God’s grace that we prosper not. I believe it to be the same with every other class of Christians and I would

that whenever we are prone to rebuke our fellows too severely, we would pause and ask ourselves this question—“Are there not with us, even with us, sins against the Lord our God?”

The like question may be continually reiterated in the ears of the different classes into which our commonwealth is divided. You see continually plastered on the walls—“Sermons to the Working Classes.” The working classes might return the compliment by papering the walls with “Sermons to the Wealthy Classes,” for if there are any that need preaching to, it is the rich. If there are any men, or any class of men, among whom the Gospel has its stronghold, it is just that order and class of persons who may be fairly ranked among the working classes. I do not believe in the intense need of the working classes for evangelization any more than any other class among men.

All class-preaching is, I take it, fundamentally wrong. We preach the Gospel to every creature and the Christian minister knows nothing of rich or poor, of young man or old man. The Gospel is to be preached every day to everybody. No doubt the intent is good, but I think the shape which it takes is calculated to raise up party prejudices and to arouse class feelings. We stand up and we say to all the classes, “Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?” What if the poor man has his tavern and his house of drunkenness—what are the drinking parties of the rich? What? Is there no covered and concealed drunkenness hidden under the shadows of night?

What if the poor have a place where they meet for licentiousness? Is there no such licentiousness among the aristocracy? Do they not cast off those whom they have debauched and help to feed the stream of harlotry with the refuse of their lusts? Ah, my Brethren, it is not for the Christian minister to set one rank of men against another. We are alike guilty from the highest to the lowest. We have sins to confess and acknowledge and the Prophet of God must go through streets of this modern Nineveh and he must demand that king as well as commoner should repent. We have the same Gospel for all. “Except you be converted and become as little children, you shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of Heaven.” “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” “Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?”

But if the question is pertinent to nations, to sects, to classes, depend upon it, it is equally so to individuals. It is the nature of the Truth of God, like the crystal, that subdivide it as you may—every minute atom of it shall assume the same shape. Break up the Truth of God from nations to sects, or from nations to classes and it still holds true. Subdivide it, dash it into atoms of individuality and the same question is pertinent to each—“Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?”

I propose this morning, God helping me, to preach a very plain, faithful and honest sermon. I pray that it may come home to some of your hearts. You will find no smoothness about my speech but the very reverse. My sword may have a very mean hilt, but I do trust it shall have a very keen edge and that it shall cut sharp, piercing to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow. I shall first of all put a home question. Secondly, I shall make a common sense enquiry and before I have done, I shall give you a little good advice.

I. First, then, I put A HOME QUESTION. Let me single out the persons and put the questions to them.

Doubtless I have here this morning, the moralist—the man who hates the very name of drunkenness. As for profanity, if he saw the seat of the scorners, he would pass by it at the remotest distance possible. He is a man whose hands are clean of all dishonesty. As far as he knows himself, he can say that he is upright in his business, that he is kind to his neighbors, that in everything he endeavors to keep the moral law. My friend has no *religion*, perhaps, but still he has the outward form of morality. Bring anywhere between the wind and his nobility the harlot, and oh, how disgusted he is! Let him but see one evening the drunkard rolling in the streets and no language can be too severe. As for the thief, he condemns him and condemns him rightly, too.

But one part of his condemnation arises from the fact that he feels himself without any guilt or accusation in this matter. He is innocent and therefore he feels that he may throw the first stone. My dear Friend, I am glad to see you here this morning. I wish that all men were as moral as you are. I wish that all hated sin as much as you do. But still I have a question to ask of you, which perhaps you may not like, for you good moral people are very fond of your own righteousness. Let me ask you the question, “Is there not with you, even with you, some sin against the Lord your God?” Can you not remember any overt deed of wrong? Do you dare to tell me that you have never, never once broken a command of God?

Well, let it stand so, but have you never said an idle word and have you never read that for every idle word that man shall speak, the Lord shall bring him into judgment? Has your tongue always been as clean of every evil thing as God's Law requires it should be? What? Have you the matchless effrontery to say that? Do you think so well of yourself that you will declare that nothing has ever come out of your mouth but that which is good? Come then a little deeper, how about your thoughts? Remember, the thought of evil is sin. Have you never thought an evil thought, never desired an evil thing? Oh, Man, I will not compliment you thus—take down the Ten Commandments—read through the twentieth chapter of Exodus and read it through prayerfully and I think you will be compelled to say as you read each commandment through, “Lord have mercy upon me, for though I thought my life was good, I now discover that with me even with me, there is sin against God.”

I do not condemn you for finding fault with the drunkard or the harlot, but I condemn you for this—that unless you are without fault yourself, you ought not to take up the first stone. You, too, live in a glass house, why throw stones at others? I wish you would turn your attention to yourself. Physician heal yourself, builder build your own wall, husbandman plow your own field and trim your own vines. What significance is it to you if other men are worse than yourself, will that save you? Look to yourself, I pray you, or else your morality shall be but the white winding sheet of your dead soul. Men may be as truly damned in morality as in immorality. Morality is good enough for what it is, but for the salvation of souls it is not sufficient. There must be a living faith in a dying Savior, there must be the Spirit of God indwelling in the soul or else you can never mount to Heaven. Oh remember, one sin will sink your soul lower than the lowest Hell. Repent therefore, O Moralist, and no longer rebuke others, but rebuke yourself.

I now turn to another individual, a very common personage, the accuser of the Brethren. I fear I have not a few here of that sort. I know I have some, but I fear they may be more than I think. Do you not know the man who, whenever he can, say a nasty thing of a Christian, will do it? He, who whatever a Christian man may do, will make mischief of it? He who is inclined at all times to be turning that which is good into evil—a man described by Spenser in his picture of Envy in the “Faerie Queene”? Envy, who always did chew between his dripping lips a toad, but “inwardly he chewed his own mouth”? Eating his own heart, spitting on everyone's good thing, imagining that every creature was as foul and as loathsome as himself? I have seen the dirty, mangy wretch, himself abominable as Hell and daring to insinuate that all others were as deceitful and vile and filthy as himself.

This is when the evil has come to its full grown state. Such persons then become the most loathsome creatures in all society and the most despicable. Who is there that respects the wretch who has no respect for others—whose only life is to pull other men's characters to pieces and whose death would be sure to follow the universal reign of truth and goodness? I have seen, however, this disease before it has broken out and assumed its basest shape. I have seen men and women, too—let me lay a stress on that second word, for there is a stress sometimes needed there, though I would not be too severe—men and women who seem to have a propensity rather to observe that which is evil in another than that which is good.

Now, I will put this home question. My friend, it is all very well for you to have those eyes so sharp and to wear those magnifying glasses for other people, but “are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?” What about your own life? I will tell you something about it. Whatever you think of other people is true of yourself—that is an invariable rule. We always measure other people's corn with our own bushel and if you think you find other people's corn very gritty, the dirt was originally in your own. Depend upon it, that your judgment of others will be God's judgment of you, for with what measure you mete the same shall be measured to you again. Now, what good have you ever got in your life by finding fault with other people? I will tell you all the good you have got.

You have often been found fault with by others, you have been hated, you have been distrusted, you have lost many loves you might have received. You have sundered yourself from kind associations. And if you continue in your present course, you will be like the dreary iceberg that floats in the sea—always to be dreaded and avoided—chilling the atmosphere for miles around. A threat of destruction to the unwary mariner who happens to come into its neighborhood. No, more, if your calumnies have been directed against a servant of God, you have brought upon your head the most awful doom that can ever fall on man. “He that touches My people touches the apple of My eye,” says God. You have thrust your finger into the eye of God and what shall be the doom which you shall receive?

Tremble, Sinner, there is nothing that brings a man's wrath into his face like finding fault with his children. He will stand many an insult, but once touch his children and his spirit boils with indignation. And so touch the children of God, find fault with them and verily, verily, I say unto you, it were better for you that a millstone were about your neck and that you were cast into the depths of the sea, "Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?" I am afraid none will take this second passage home and the person who applies it to himself will be very angry. My dear Friend, excuse me for saying that is a matter which I shall not at all regret, for if you will but be angry with yourself, you may be as angry as you please with me.

And now for the third class. I have here the man who says, "Well, I have not been touched in either of those things. I hope I am something more than moral. I am religious also. You never see me absent from my place of worship. I am as punctual as a chronometer whenever the doors are open. I add to my morality that which is better still. I attend to ceremonies. There is not one which I have not observed. I have endeavored as far as I can to carry out every precept of the Christian ritual. I feel indignant with men who break the Sabbath. I feel angry with those who have no reverent regard for God's House."

My dear Friend, I do not condemn you for those feelings, but permit me to put to you a question. "Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?" The preacher stands here this morning to make a personal confession. It not infrequently happens that in condemning others he condemns himself. And while that is a painful thing to him as a man, it is always a hopeful sign to him as a minister. Surely that which compels contrition and repentance in your pastor may possibly be profitable to you—to bring you, also, to repentance. There are, however, some outwardly religious people, who, when this question is put to them, imagine that certainly they have no sins whatever.

Ah, my dear Hearers, "if you say that you have no sin, you deceive yourselves and the truth is not in you." But if you answer this question sorrowfully, saying, "Alas, alas, I am not what I would be. I pray God to sanctify me wholly, spirit, soul and body," then I think there is a sign of life within. But if on the contrary, you reply, "No, I have no sin, I am perfect, I am complete through my ceremonial righteousness." Ah, my dear Hearer, you know not what spirit you are of. Though you have attended to the outward form—what is that unless you have received the spiritual grace? Though you have been constant at the place of worship, let me ask you—what is that unless you have brought your heart with you? Have you always heard as you would desire to hear if the sermon should be your last? Have you always prayed as you would desire to pray if you knew that rising from your knees you would have to lie down in your grave? Oh no, my Brothers and Sisters, we are too cold, too lukewarm, too chilled in our affections. We must mourn before God that with us, even with us, there are sins against the Lord our God.

But again, I have to speak to a character of a very common kind. There is a man here who says, "Well, Sir, I make no profession of religion—do not think of doing such a thing. I hate hypocrisy of all things in the world. It is true, Sir, I commit a great many faults and am often very loose, but then you know everybody knows me. They can see my character at once. I never cheat anybody. I would not be a cant, to go up to a place of worship and then go on as some people do afterwards. I would not be taking the sacrament one day and then be grinding the poor on the morrow. No, for, I am as honest as possible and I have no doubt that when I stand before Almighty God I shall have as good a time of it as some of these professing Christians."

Well, my friend, I like honesty. There is something an Englishman always likes in an honest speech. But do you know I am inclined to think that there is a little hypocrisy about you? I think you are not quite as honest as you seem to be. For if I were to put some home and very pointed questions to you, I should not be surprised if you were to get very angry. Have you not heard of the monk who said what a miserable sinner he was and someone said, "Yes, that you are, there is no mistake about it." Then the monk grew wrath and demanded in a passion, "What do you know against me? I will not be insulted by you." And probably if I were to take you at your word and say to you, "Yes, that is just the fact, you are so bad a fellow as you can be," you would say, "I will not be insulted, even by a minister. Go along with you, Sir, what do you know about me?"

Your honesty is merely worn as a mask. Your conscience is uneasy and this is a pat on the back for it, a sort of lullaby to send it to sleep. But suppose you are honest, let me ask you what there is to boast of in your honesty? A man bounces into the prisoner's box before the Court and says, "My Lord Mayor, here I am as honest a man as can be. I am no hypocrite. I do not plead 'Not guilty,' for I am in the habit of stealing and committing larceny, felony, highway robbery and

burglary.” Now, is he not an honest man? Yes, with this little exception, that by his own confession he is a rogue. So is it with you, Sir. You say you are honest and yet on your own confession that very honesty which you plead is but a confession of your own abominable wickedness. And you imagine that when you stand before God, if you tell Him, “Lord, I never professed to love You, I never pretended to serve You,” God will accept your impudence as *honesty*—that He will look upon your presumption as *sincerity*?

Why, Sir, you cannot mean what you say! You must have deceived yourself most terribly if you do. Your honesty in avowing yourself to be a slave of Satan! Your effrontery in declaring that you are steeped up to the very throat in sin—is this to be an apology for your sin? I now put this question to you. You say that you are no hypocrite and that you hate hypocrisy. Then I ask you, “Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?” What if you are no hypocrite—yet you are profane and you curse God to His face. What if you are not a deceiver, yet are you not a drunkard and a companion of adulterers? Ah, Sir, there are sins in your heart and loathsome ones, too. Your hardened acknowledgment that you are a sinner is of no value. That drunken braggadocio honesty of which you talk is of no value whatever. Get rid, I beseech you, of any hope or confidence that you may place in it.

And now if I have omitted one class, if there is one into whose heart the question has not penetrated, let me go round personally. I cannot do so literally. But let this finger range you all and let this eye look into every face. “Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?” Answer it not for others, but for yourself, my Hearer. Give a reply from the depth of your own consciousness. And sitting in this hall, remember your own sin and make the silent confession of sin before God. And O may He fulfill that promise—“He that confesses his sin and forsakes it shall find mercy.”

II. Now I come to the second point, A COMMON SENSE QUESTION. They say that common sense is worth all the other senses put together. And methinks if men could but use common sense aright, it might be a fine thing for them in matters of religion. You know what Young says—“All men think all men mortal but themselves.” We believe that all men will die, but somehow or other, we fancy we shall live. Now the question I shall put reminds me of that sentence. It is this, “Who are you that you think you shall escape the punishment of sin?” When the first question was put, you were compelled to confess that you had some guilt. Who are you that God should let you off and not punish you? Who are you that you should stand clear of the sins that you have committed?

All men think all men guilty but themselves. They think all men deserve to be punished. But every man has such a good excuse of his own iniquity, that he thinks surely, at the Last Day, he may hope to creep away without the curse. Now I put this common sense question—what is there about you that your sins should not be punished as well as the sins of any other man? Who has given you an exemption? What is there about you that you should walk about this earth and fancy your sins are nothing at all and that other persons sins are so tremendous? What fine gentleman are you that you fancy your pedigree to be so distinguished, that because the blood of counts and dukes and earls and princes and kings may happen to stain your veins, therefore you shall stand clear?

Of course the sins of the lower classes are dreadful—oh, so dreadful—but what is there about yours, my lord, that yours are so trivial? Surely if the poor man is to be punished, the equal law which stands for all and which Heaven will carry out, will not exempt you. Let me remind you, that so far from exempting, it may perhaps give you a double penalty, because your sin has led others into sin. And the prominence of your position, has been the means of spreading the pestilence of crime among others. I say to you, Sir, however great you may be—what can there be in that roll of honor that you receive among men that can in the least degree move the Lord your God? How He laughs at this princely blood. He knows that you were all made of earth as Adam was and that you all sprung from that gardener, that dishonest gardener, who of old lost his situation, because he would steal his Master’s fruit. A pretty pedigree if you trace it up to its root! Oh, Sir, there is nothing in it whatever. I beseech you, remember your sins must be punished as well as those of the vagrant, pauper, criminal.

But make way for yonder gentleman. He imagines he is not to be punished because of his respectability. He has been such an honest tradesman. Has he not been at the corner of the street since eighteen hundred and two? Has anyone heard that he failed and ran through the courts? Is he not respected by everybody? Well, Sir, and what do you think your respectability has to do with it? You have sinned, Sir, and you will be punished as surely as anybody else. Every iniquity

shall have its just recompense of reward. It will be in vain for you to plead your paltry respectability when you come up before the Throne of God.

You may wear all the stars and all the garters that man was ever befooled with. You may come before God and think that you can wear all the coronets, or all the glittering marks of respectability that ever man dreamt of. But these are nothing. The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is and if your works are found evil, those works must be punished, unless you happily have found a Substitute through whom your sin can be put away.

What excuses men make on earth. I wish they would always make their excuses believing themselves standing before the judgment seat. My very honest Friend, over there, who said he got drunk and he did not mind saying that he was not a cant and a hypocrite. Ah, my Friend, you will not be likely to say that when the world is in a blaze, when the pillars of earth are reeling and the stars are falling like untimely figs. Then you will find that excuse shriveled up like a scroll. Will you not be afraid to come before God, you mere Moralists and tell him you have kept His Law? You, even now, know you have not and you shall know it better then, when your conscience has been quickened.

And you, Formalist, you may condemn others because you attend to every outward ceremony, but the day of judgment will make you feel that ceremonies are less than nothing. You will be compelled, then, to cry, "Rocks hide me. Mountains on me fall, to hide me from the face of that Lamb whom I despised while I trusted in the outward form and the empty ceremony." Oh, my Hearer, whoever you may be, if you have not been born again—if your faith is not fixed on Christ alone, you have no excuse whatever for your sin. You not only are guilty, be you who you may, but you are so guilty that you shall surely be punished for your trespasses. God will not give any exemption to you.

Ah, Mr. Accuser, you turn king's evidence on earth and so hope to escape the bar of man, but there are no king's evidences at the bar of God. You may accuse the Church then. You shall but the more swiftly be condemned. You may rail against your fellow men at the Last Great Day. Your words of railing shall but be a witness against you. Oh, my dear Hearer, if you are not in Christ, I would that I could so preach that you would begin to tremble. If Christ is not in you, your state is such that nothing but the Lord's mercy keeps you out of Hell a single moment. The wrath of God has gone out against you. You are condemned already because you have not believed in Christ. I want if I can, to draw this bow, not at a venture, but in such a way that the arrow will go home directly to the heart. "Repent and be converted, every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." You have sins, repent of them, I beseech you. Bewail yourselves before God.

May His Spirit give you a mind for repentance and make you humble on account of Him. And then remember there is mercy for the contrite. There is pardon for the penitent. But to the man who hugs his sin, or seeks to cloak it, there is no pardon, no mercy, but the wrath of God abides on him and the sword of Divine justice shall soon be plunged into his heart.

III. I come now, in conclusion, to give A LITTLE ADVICE. It shall be threefold. My first advice is, leave other people alone with regard to finding fault. My dear Sir, if you have been busying yourself with the faults of others, be so good as to cease from that occupation. I know a loathsome fly that can only live on the foulest food. I will not compare you to it, but if you ever want a resemblance, there is yourself to the life. You remind me, when I hear you talk against others, of those poor creatures dressed in rags with a bag on their backs. They who go through the streets picking up every stale bone and every piece of offal they can find. But their calling is honorable and they may possibly live by it, but yours is dishonorable, it is of no service to you or to anyone else.

There never perhaps was an age when men's characters were less safe than now. The best man that breathes beneath the sun may live to find some putrid wretch standing up to accuse him of crimes of which he never dreamed. I beseech you all, if you hear anything against any man, do not believe it till you see it. Liars nowadays are rife as wasps in summer. Hold off those black hands, you devilish Liar! O slanderer, have done with your filthy work. Rake no more in the kennel, lest you be sent to rake in the blazing kennel of Hell, there to find out the faults of others which like serpents shall be set to bite your own bosom and suck your soul's blood throughout eternity. Take heed, Slanderer, for there are hot coals of juniper and fiery irons awaiting the false tongue that lifts up itself against God and His people.

After that first piece of advice let me give another. Treat yourselves, my dear friends, as you have been accustomed to treat others. We get another man's character and tie it up to the halberds and out with our great whip and begin to lay it on with all our force—and after the flogging we wash the poor creature with a kind of briny pretense at excusing his

sins. After that again we throw him back upon the bed of spikes of our own supposition that he is a great deal worse than we have made him out to be. Ah, just serve yourself so. Tie yourself up to the halberds, Man, and lay on the whip—do not spare him. When you have got yourself tied up, hit hard, Sir—it is a great rascal you are whipping. Never mind his flesh creeping, he deserves it all. Never mind though the white bones start from the raw red bleeding back—lay it on. Now then, a heavy blow! Kill him if you can—the sooner he is dead the better. For when he is once killed as to an idea of righteousness in himself, then he will begin to lead a new life and be a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Do not be afraid of whipping him, but when the cat-o'-nine-tails is heavy with clots of gore, rub the brine into his back, make it tingle. Tell him that his sins deserve the wrath of Hell. Make him feel that it is an awful thing to fall into the hands of our God, for He is a consuming fire. Then throw him down on the bed of spikes and make him sleep there if he can. Roll him on the spikes and tell him that bad as he is, he is worse by nature than by practice. Make him feel that the leprosy lies deep within. Give him no rest. Treat him as cruelly as he could treat another. It would be only his deserts.

But who is this that I am telling you to treat so? Yourself, my Hearer, *yourself*. Be as severe as you can, but let the culprit be yourself. Put on the wig and sit upon the judgment seat. Read the king's commission. There is such a commission for you to be a judge. It says—Judge yourself—though it says judge not others. Put on, I say, your robes. Sit up there lord chief justice of the isle of man and then bring up the culprit. Make him stand at the bar. Accuse him. Plead against him. Condemn him. Say—“Take him away, jailer.” Find out the hardest punishment you can discover in the statute book and believe that he deserves it all. Be as severe as ever you can on yourself, even to the putting on the black cap and reading the sentence of death. When you have done this, you will be in a hopeful way for life, for he that condemns himself God absolves. He that stands self-convicted may look to Christ hanging on the Cross and see himself hanging there and see his sins forever put away by the sacrifice of Jesus on the tree.

The third piece of counsel, with which I am about to close, is this—my dear Hearer, with you there are sins and God must in justice punish you as well as others. I do beseech you look to the eternal interests of your own souls. I have hard work to plead this last point. May God the Holy Spirit take it in hand and it will be done to purpose. But if He does not do it, all I can say will fall with lifeless dullness upon your ear. As well preach to the dead in the grave as to the unawakened sinner—but yet I am commanded to preach to the dead—and therefore I do preach to the dead this morning.

My dear Hearer, look to your own soul's salvation. These are happy times. We are living just now in a period when the grace of God is manifesting itself in a singular manner. There is more prayer in London now than there has been in the last ten years. And I believe more outpouring of the Holy Spirit than some of us have ever known. Oh, I beseech you, look well for this auspicious gale. Now the wind is blowing, up with your sail! When the tide is coming in full, launch your boat and, oh, may God the Spirit bear you on towards life and happiness!

But, I beseech you, make your first object in life your own salvation. What is your shop compared with your soul? No, what is your body, your eyes, your senses, your reason, compared with your immortal soul? Let this word ring in your ears, Eternity! Eternity! Eternity! And, oh, I beseech you, look well to yourself lest eternity should become to you a sea without a shore, where fiery billows shall forever toss your wretched soul. Eternity! Eternity! And must I climb Your topless steeps and never find a summit? Must I plow Your pathless waters and never find a haven? 'Tis even so. Then grant me, God, that I may climb in eternity the mount of bliss and not the hill of woe. And may I sail across the sea of happiness and joy and not across the lake that burns with fire and brimstone!

Look to yourself, Sir. This is a day of good tidings for many, may it be a day of good tidings for you! I beseech you, give up thinking about men at large, about the world and nations. What have you to do with politics? Let your politics be the politics of your own soul. Attend those other things by-and-by, but now give yourself the favor of your own thoughts. Begin at home. I do fear there are more lost through this than almost through any other cause, next to procrastination—thinking about others and forgetting about self. I wish I could put you today, in some respects, like those who are in the Chapel of the penitentiary, where every man sees the minister during service, but no man sees another.

My dear Hearer, remember that what I have said I mean for you, not for other people. Take it home. And today, I beseech you, go to your chamber and may God compel you by His grace to make a confession of your own sins. Seek a Savior for yourself. And oh may you find Him for yourself and then begin to seek Him for others. If this were a day of famine, would you be content to hear me say, “There is bread in abundance stored away in the Tower—there is a great quantity of food there”? No, you would say, “Let me go and get some of this bread for myself.” You would go home and

the cries of your wife and children would compel you to action. You would say, “I hear there is bread, I must get it, for I cannot bear to see my wife and children starving.”

Oh, Sinner, hear the cry of your poor starving soul! Hear, I beseech you, the cry of your poor body. Your body does not wish to be cast into fire and your soul shrinks from the thought of everlasting torment. Hear, then, your own flesh and blood when it cries to you. Let your own nature speak. The voice of nature that dreads pain and torment and wrath to come—when it speaks, listen to it and come. Come I pray you, to penitence and to faith—

*“Come, guilty souls and flee away
To Christ and heal your wounds.
This is the glorious Gospel-day,
Wherein free grace abounds.”*

May God the Holy Spirit draw you, or drive you, whichever He pleases, so that you may be brought to life and peace and happiness and salvation through the precious blood of my Master, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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