

A CHRISTMAS QUESTION

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AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.**

*“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.”
Isaiah 9:6.*

UPON other occasions I have explained the main part of this verse—“the government shall be upon His shoulders, His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God.” If God shall spare me, on some future occasion I hope to take the other titles, “The Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” But now this morning the portion which will engage our attention is this, “Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.” The sentence is a double one, but it has in it no tautology. The careful reader will soon discover a distinction. And it is not a distinction without a difference. “Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.”

As Jesus Christ is a Child in His human nature, He is born, begotten of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary. He is as truly-born, as certainly a Child, as any other man that ever lived upon the face of the earth. He is thus in His humanity a Child born. But as Jesus Christ is God’s Son, He is not born. But given, begotten of His Father from before all worlds, begotten—not made, being of the same substance with the Father. The doctrine of the eternal affiliation of Christ is to be received as an undoubted truth of our holy religion. But as to any explanation of it, no man should venture thereon, for it remains among the deep things of God—one of those solemn mysteries, indeed, into which the angels dare not look, nor do they desire to pry into it—a mystery which we must not attempt to fathom, for it is utterly beyond the grasp of any finite being.

As well might a gnat seek to drink in the ocean, as a finite creature to comprehend the Eternal God. A God whom we could understand would be no God. If we could grasp Him He could not be infinite. If we could understand Him, then were He not Divine. Jesus Christ then, I say, as a Son, is not born to us, but given. He is a blessing bestowed on us, “For God so loved the world, that He sent His only begotten Son into the world.” He was not born in this world as God’s Son, but He was sent, or was given, so that you clearly perceive that the distinction is a suggestive one and conveys much good truth to us. “Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.”

This morning, however, the principal object of my discourse and, indeed, the sole one, is to bring out the force of those two little words, “unto us.” For you will perceive that here the full force of the passage lies. “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.” The divisions of my discourse are very simple ones. First, is it so? Secondly, if it is so, what then? Thirdly, if it is not so, what then?

I. In the first place, Is it so? Is it true that unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given? It is a fact that a Child is born. Upon that I use no argument. We receive it as a fact, more fully established than any other fact in history, that the Son of God became man, was born at Bethlehem, wrapped in swaddling cloths and laid in a manger. It is a fact, too, that a Son is given. About that we have no question. The infidel may dispute, but we, professing to be believers in Scripture, receive it as an undeniable Truth of God—that God has given His only begotten Son to be the Savior of men. But the matter of question is this—Is this Child born to *us*? Is He given to *us*? This is the matter of anxious enquiry. Have we a personal interest in the Child that was born at Bethlehem? Do we know that He is our Savior?—that He has brought glad tidings to us?—that to us He belongs? That we belong to Him? I say this is matter of very grave and solemn investigation.

It is a very observable fact, that the very best of men are sometimes troubled with questions with regard to their own interest in Christ. But men who never are troubled at all about the matter are very frequently presumptuous deceivers, who have no part in this matter. I have often observed that some of the people about whom I felt most sure were the very persons who were the least sure of themselves. It reminds me of the history of a godly man named Simon Brown, a minister in the olden times in the City of

London. He became so extremely sad in heart, so depressed in spirit, that at last he conceived the idea that his soul was annihilated.

It was all in vain to talk to the good man, you could not persuade him that he had a soul. But all the time he was preaching and praying and working, like a man that had two souls than none. When he preached, his eyes poured forth plenteous floods of tears and when he prayed, there was a Divine fervor and heavenly prevalence in every petition. Now so it is with many Christians. They seem to be the very picture of godliness—their life is admirable and their conversation heavenly, but yet they are always crying—

*“Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought,
Do I love the Lord or no?
Am I His or am I not?”*

So does it happen, that the best of men will question while the worst of men will presume.

Yes, I have seen the men about whose eternal destiny I had serious questioning, whose inconsistencies in life were palpable and glaring. They have prated concerning their sure portion in Israel and their infallible hope, as though they believed others to be as easily duped as themselves. Now, what reason shall we give for this foolhardiness? Learn it from this illustration—You see a number of men riding along a narrow road upon the edge of the sea. It is a very perilous path, for the way is rugged and a tremendous precipice bounds the pathway on the left. Let but the horse’s foot slip once and they dash downwards to destruction. See how cautiously the riders journey, how carefully the horses place their feet. But do you observe yon rider, at what a rate he dashes along, as if he were riding a steeplechase with Satan?

You hold up your hands in an agony of fear, trembling lest any moment his horse’s foot should slip and he should be dashed down. And you ask, why so careless a rider? The man is a blind rider on a blind horse. They cannot see where they are. He thinks he is on a sure road and therefore it is that he rides so fast. Or to vary the picture—sometimes when persons are asleep, they take to walking and they will climb where others will not think of venturing. Giddy heights that would turn our brain seem safe enough to them.

So there are many spiritual sleep-walkers in our midst, who think that they are awake. But they are not. Their very presumption in venturing to the high places of self-confidence proves that they are sleep walkers. Not awake, but men who walk and talk in their sleep. It is, then, I say, really a matter of serious questioning with all men who would be right at last, as to whether this Child is born to us and this Son given to us—I shall now help you to answer the question.

1. If this Child who now lies before the eyes of your faith, wrapped in swaddling clothes in Bethlehem’s manger, is born to you, my Hearer, then *you* are born again! For this Child is not born to you unless you are born to this Child. All who have an interest in Christ are, in the fullness of time, by Grace converted, quickened and renewed. All the redeemed are not yet converted, but they will be. Before the hour of death arrives their nature shall be changed, their sins shall be washed away, they shall pass from death unto life. If any man tells me that Christ is his Redeemer, although he has never experienced regeneration, that man utters what he does not know. His religion is vain and his hope is a delusion.

Only men who are born again can claim the babe in Bethlehem as being theirs. “But” says one, “how am I to know whether I am born again or not?” Answer this question also by another—has there been a change effected by Divine Grace within you? Are your loves the very opposite of what they were? Do you now hate the vain things you once admired and do you seek after that precious pearl which you at one time despised? Is your heart thoroughly renewed in its object? Can you say that the bent of your desire is changed? That your face is Zion-ward and your feet set upon the path of Grace? That whereas your heart once longed for deep draughts of sin, it now longs to be holy? And whereas you once loved the pleasures of the world, they have now become as chaff and dross to you, for you only love the pleasures of heavenly things and are longing to enjoy more of them on earth, that you may be prepared to enjoy a fullness of them hereafter?

Are you renewed within? For mark, my Hearer, the new birth does not consist in washing the outside of the cup and platter, but in cleansing the inner man. It is all in vain to put up the stone upon the sepulcher, wash it extremely white and garnish it with the flowers of the season. The sepulcher itself must be cleansed. The dead man’s bones that lie in that morgue of the human heart must be cleansed away. No, they must be made to *live*. The heart must no longer be a tomb of death, but a temple of life. Is it so with you, my Hearer? For remember, you may be very different in the outward, but if you are not changed in the inward, this Child is not born to you.

But I put another question. Although the main matter of regeneration lies within, yet it *manifests itself without*. Say, then, has there been a change in you in the exterior? Do you think that others who look at you would be compelled to say, This man is not what he used to be? Do not your companions observe a change? Have they not laughed at you for what they think to be your hypocrisy, your Puritanism, your sternness? Do you think now that if an angel should follow you into your secret life, should track you to your closet and see you on your knees, that he would detect something in you which he could never have seen before? For, mark, my dear Hearer, there *must* be a change in the outward life, or else there is no change within. In vain you bring me to the tree and say that the tree's nature is changed. If I still see it bringing forth wild grapes, it is a wild vine still. And if I mark upon you the apples of Sodom and the grapes of Gomorrah you are still a tree accursed and doomed, notwithstanding all your fancied experience.

The proof of the Christian is in the *living*. To other men, the proof of our conversion is not what you feel, but what you do. To yourself your feelings may be good enough evidence, but to the minister and others who judge you, the outward walk is the main guide. At the same time, let me observe that a man's outward life may be very much like that of a Christian and yet there may be no religion in him at all. Have you ever seen two jugglers in the street with swords, pretending to fight with one another? See how they cut and slash and hack at one another, till you are half afraid there will soon be murder done. They seem to be so very much in earnest that you are half in the mind to call in the police to part them. See with what violence that one has aimed a terrific blow at the other one's head, which his comrade dexterously warded off by keeping a well-timed guard.

Just watch them a minute and you will see that all these cuts and thrusts come in a prearranged order. There is no heart in the fighting after all. They do not fight so roughly as they would if they were real enemies. So, sometimes I have seen a man pretending to be very angry against sin. But watch him a little while and you will see it is only a fencer's trick. He does not give his cuts out of order, there is no earnestness in his blows. It is all pretense, it is only mimic stage play. The fencers, after they have ended their performance, shake hands with one another and divide the coppers which the gaping throng have given them. And so does this man do—he shakes hands with the devil in private and the two deceivers share the spoil.

The hypocrite and the devil are very good friends after all and they mutually rejoice over their profits. The devil leers because he has won the soul of the professor and the hypocrite laughing because he has won his wealth. Take care, then, that your outward life is not a mere stage play, but that your antagonism to sin is real and intense—and that you strike right and left, as though you meant to slay the monster and cast its limbs to the winds of Heaven.

I will put another question. If you have been born again, there is another matter by which to try you. Not only is your inward self altered and your outward self, too, but the very root and principle of your life must become totally new. When we are in sin we live to self, but when we are renewed we live to God. While we are unregenerate, our principle is to seek our own pleasure, our own advancement. But that man is not truly born again who does not live with a far different aim from this. Change a man's principles and you change his feelings, you change his actions. Now Grace changes the principles of man. It lays the axe at the root of the tree. It does not saw away at some big limb. It does not try to alter the sap. But it gives a new root and plants us in fresh sod.

The man's inmost self, the deep rocks of his principles upon which the topsoil of his actions rest—the soul of his manhood is thoroughly changed and he is a new creature in Christ. "But," says one, "I see no reason why I should be born again." Ah, poor creature, it is because you have never seen yourself. Did you ever see a man in the looking glass of the Word of God—what a strange monster he is. Do you know a man by nature has his heart where his feet ought to be—that is to say, his heart is set upon the earth, whereas he ought to be treading it beneath his feet. And stranger mystery still, his heels are where his heart should be—that is to say, he is kicking against the God of Heaven when he ought to be setting his affections on things above. Man by nature when he sees clearest only looks down—can only see that which is beneath him—he cannot see the things which are above.

And strange to say, the sunlight of Heaven blinds him. Light from Heaven he looks not for. He asks for his light in darkness. The earth is to him his Heaven and he sees suns in its muddy pools and stars in its filth. He is, in fact, a man turned upside down. The Fall has so ruined our nature, that the most monstrous thing on the face of the earth is a fallen man. The ancients used to paint griffins, dragons, chimeras and all kinds of hideous things. But if a skillful hand could paint man accurately none of us would look at the picture, for it is a sight that none ever saw except the lost in Hell. And

that is one part of their intolerable pain, that they are compelled always to look upon themselves. Now, then, if you cannot see that you must be born again this Chile is not born to you.

2. But I go forward. If this Child is born to you, you are a Chile and the question arises, are you so? Man grows from childhood up to manhood naturally. In Grace men grow from manhood down to childhood. And the nearer we come to true childhood, the nearer we come to the image of Christ. For was not Christ called “a Chile,” even after He had ascended up to Heaven? “Your holy Chile Jesus.” Brothers and Sisters, can you say that you have been made into children? Do you take God’s Word just as it stands, simply because your heavenly Father says so? Are you content to believe mysteries without demanding to have them explained? Are you ready to sit in the infant class and be a little one?

Are you willing to hang upon the breast of the Church and suck in the unadulterated milk of the Word—never questioning for a moment what your Divine Lord reveals? Believing it on His own authority, whether it seemed to be above reason, or beneath reason, or even contrary to reason? Now, “except you be converted and become as little children,” this Chile is not born to you. Except like a Chile you are humble, teachable, obedient, pleased with your Father’s will and willing to assign all to Him, there is grave matter of question whether this Child is born to you.

But what a pleasing sight it is to see a man converted and made into a little Chile. Many times has my heart leaped for joy, when I have seen a giant infidel who used to reason against Christ—who had not a word in his dictionary bad enough for Christ’s people—come by Divine Grace to believe the Gospel. That man sits down and weeps, feels the full power of salvation and from that time drops all his questioning. He becomes the very reverse of what he was. He thinks himself meaner than the meanest Believer. He is content to do the meanest work for the Church of Christ and takes his station—not with Locke or Newton, as a mighty Christian philosopher—but with Mary as a simple learner, sitting at Jesus’ feet, to hear and learn of Him. If you are not children, then this Chile is not born to you.

3. And now let us take the second sentence and put a question or two upon that. Is this Son given to us? I pause a minute to beg your personal attention. I am trying, if I may, so to preach that I may make you all question yourselves. I pray let not one of you exempt himself from the ordeal but let each one ask himself, is it true that unto me a Son is given? Now, if this Son is given to you, you are a son yourself. “For unto as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God.” “Christ became a Son that in all things He might be made like unto His brethren.” The Son of God is not mine to enjoy, to love, to delight in, unless I am a son of God, too.

Now, my Hearer, have you a fear of God before your eyes—a filial fear, a fear which a Chile has lest it should grieve its parent? Say, have you a Chile’s love to God? Do you trust to Him as your Father, your Provider and your Friend? Have you in your breast, “The spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father”? Are there times with you when on your knees you can say, “My Father and my God”? Does the Spirit bear witness with your spirit that you are born of God? And while this witness is born, does your heart fly up to your Father and to your God, in ecstasy of delight to clasp Him who long ago has clasped you in the covenant of His love, in the arms of His effectual Grace? Now, mark my Hearer, if you do not sometimes enjoy the spirit of adoption, if you are not a son or daughter of Zion, then deceive not yourself, this Son is not given to you.

4. And, then, to put it in another shape. If unto us a Son is given, then we are given to the Son. Now, what do you say to this question, also? Are you given up to Christ? Do you feel that you have nothing on earth to live for but to glorify Him? Can you say in your heart, “Great God, if I am not deceived I am wholly Yours?” Are you ready today to write over again your consecration vow? Can you say, “Take me! All that I am and all I have, shall be forever Yours. I would give up all my goods, all my powers, all my time and all my hours and Yours I would be—wholly Yours.” “You are not your own—you are bought with a price.” And if this Son of God is given to you, you will have consecrated yourself wholly to Him. And you will feel that His honor is your life’s object, that His glory is the one great desire of your panting spirit.

Now is it so, my Hearer? Ask yourself the question, I pray, and do not deceive yourself in the answer. I will just repeat the four different proofs again. If unto me a Child is born then I have been born again. And, moreover, I am now in consequence of that new birth, a Chile. If, again, a Son has been given to me, then I am a son. And again I am given to that Son who is given to me. I have tried to put these tests in the way that the text would suggest them. I pray you carry them home with you. If you do not remember the words, yet remember to search yourselves and see, my Hearers, whether you can say, “Unto me this Son is given.” For, indeed, if Christ is not my Christ, He is of little worth to me. If I cannot

say He loved me and gave Himself for me, of what avail is all the merit of His righteousness, or all the plenitude of His atonement?

Bread in the shop is well enough, but if I am hungry and cannot get it, I starve although granaries be full. Water in the river is well enough but if I am in a desert and cannot reach the stream, if I can hear it in the distance and am yet lying down to die of thirst—the murmuring of the rill, or the flowing of the river only helps to tantalize me while I die in dark despair. Better for you, my Hearers to have perished as Hottentots, to have gone down to your graves as dwellers in some benighted land, than to live where the name of Christ is continually hymned and where His glory is extolled and yet to go down to your tombs without an interest in Him, unblessed by His Gospel, unwashed in His blood, unclothed of His robe of righteousness. God help you, that you may be blessed in Him and may sing sweetly, “Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.”

II. This brings me to my second head, upon which I shall be brief. Is it so? IF IT IS SO, WHAT THEN? If it is so, why am I doubtful today? Why is my spirit questioning? Why do I not realize the fact? My hearer, if the Son is given to you, how is it that you are this day asking whether you are Christ’s, or not? Why do you not labor to make your calling and election sure? Why tarry in the plains of doubt? Get up, get up to the high mountains of confidence. Never rest till you can say without a fear, “I know that my Redeemer lives. I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him.”

I may have a large number of persons here to whom it is a matter of uncertainty as to whether Christ is theirs or not. Oh, my dear Hearers, rest not content unless you know assuredly that Christ is yours and that you are Christ’s. Suppose you should see in tomorrow’s newspaper—(although, by the way, if you believed anything you saw there you would probably be mistaken)—but suppose you should see a notification that some rich man had left you an immense estate. Suppose, as you read it, you were well aware that the person mentioned was a relative of yours and that it was likely to be true. It may be you have prepared tomorrow for a family meeting and you are expecting brother John and sister Mary and their little ones to dine with you.

But I very much question whether you would not be away from the head of the table to go and ascertain whether the fact were really so. “Oh,” you could say, “I am sure I should enjoy my Christmas dinner all the better if I were quite sure about this matter.” And all day, if you did not go, you would be on the tiptoe of expectation. You would be, as it were, sitting upon pins and needles until you knew whether it were a fact or not.

Now there is a proclamation gone forth today and it is a true one, too, that Jesus Christ has come into the world to save sinners. The question with you is whether He has saved you and whether you have an interest in Him. I beseech you, give no sleep to your eyes and no slumber to your eyelids, till you have read your “title clear to mansions in the skies.” What, man? Shall your eternal destiny be a matter of uncertainty to you? What! is Heaven or Hell involved in this matter and will you rest until you know which of these shall be your everlasting portion? Are you content while it is a question whether God loves you, or whether He is angry with you? Can you be easy while you remain in doubt as to whether you are condemned in sin, or justified by faith which is in Christ Jesus?

Get up, Man. I beseech you by the living God and by yours own soul’s safety, get up and read the records. Search and look and try and test yourself to see whether it is so or not. For if it is so, why should not we know it? If the Son is given to me, why should not I be sure of it? If the Child is born to me, why should I not know it for a certainty, that I may even now live in the enjoyment of my privilege—a privilege, the value of which I shall never know to the full, till I arrive in Glory?

Again—if it is so, another question. Why are we sad? I am looking upon faces just now that appear the very reverse of gloomy, but maybe the smile covers an aching heart. Brothers and Sisters, why are we sad this morning, if unto us a Child is born, if unto us a Son is given? Hark, hark to the cry! It is “Harvest home! Harvest home!” See the maidens as they dance and the young men as they make merry! And why is this mirth? Because they are storing the precious fruits of the earth, they are gathering together unto their barns wheat which will soon be consumed. And what, Brothers and Sisters, have we the bread which endures to eternal life and are we unhappy?

Does the worldling rejoice when his corn is increased and do we not rejoice when, “Unto us a Child is born and unto us a Son is given”? Hark, yonder! What means the firing of the Tower guns? Why all this ringing of bells in the Church steeples, as if all London were mad with joy? There is a Prince born. Therefore there is this salute and therefore are the

bells ringing. Ah, Christians, ring the bells of your hearts, fire the salute of your most joyous songs, “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.” Dance, O my Heart, and ring out peals of gladness! You drops of blood within my veins dance every one of you! Oh, all my nerves become harp strings and let gratitude touch you with angelic fingers! And you, my tongue, shout—shout to His praise who has said to you—“Unto you a Child is born, unto you a Son is given.”

Wipe that tear away! Come, stop that sighing! Hush yon murmuring. What matters your poverty? “Unto you a Child is born.” What matters your sickness? “Unto you a Son is given.” What matters your sin? For this Child shall take the sin away and this Son shall wash and make you fit for Heaven. I say, if it is so—

*“Lift up the heart, lift up the voice,
Rejoice aloud! You saints rejoice!”*

But, once more, if it is so, what then? Why are our hearts so cold? And why is it that we do so little for Him who has done so much for us? Jesus, are You mine? Am I saved? How is it that I love You so little? Why is it that when I preach I am not more in earnest and when I pray I am not more intensely fervent? How is it that we give so little to Christ who gave Himself for us? How is it that we serve Him so sadly who served us so perfectly?

He consecrated Himself wholly—how is it that our consecration is marred and partial? Why are we continually sacrificing to self and not to Him? O Beloved, yield yourselves up this morning. What have you got in the world? “Oh,” says one, “I have nothing. I am poor and penniless and all but homeless.” Give yourself to Christ. You have heard the story of the pupils to a Greek philosopher. On a certain day it was the custom to give to the philosopher a present. One came and gave him gold. Another could not bring him gold but brought him silver. One brought him a robe and another some delicacy for food. But one of them came up and said, “Oh, Solon, I am poor, I have nothing to give to you, but yet I will give you something better than all these have given. I give you myself.”

Now, if you have gold and silver, if you have anything of this world’s goods, give in your measure to Christ. But take care, above all, that you give yourself to Him and let your cry be from this day forth—

*“Do not I love You dearest Lord?
Oh search my heart and see,
And turn each cursed idol out
That dares to rival You.
Do not I love You from my soul?
Then let me love nothing.
Dead be my heart to every joy,
When Jesus cannot move.”*

III. Well, now I have all but done, but give your solemn, very solemn attention, while I come to my last head— IF IT IS NOT SO, WHAT THEN? Dear hearer, I cannot tell where you are—but wherever you may be in this hall, the eyes of my heart are looking for you, that when they have seen you, they may weep over you. Ah, miserable Wretch, without a hope, without Christ, without God. Unto you there is no Christmas mirth, for to you no Child is born. To you no Son is given. Sad is the story of the poor men and women, who during the week before last fell down dead in our streets through cruel hunger and bitter cold. But far more pitiable is *your* lot—far more terrible shall be your condition in the day when you shall cry for a drop of water to cool your burning tongue and it shall be denied you. When you shall seek for death, for grim cold death—seek for Him as for a Friend and yet you shall not find Him.

For the fire of Hell shall not consume you, nor its terrors devour you. You shall long to die, yet shall you linger in eternal death—dying every hour, yet never receiving the much coveted blessing of death. What shall I say to you this morning? Oh, Master, help me to speak a word in season, now. I beseech you, my Hearer, if Christ is not yours this morning, may God the Spirit help you to do what I now command you to do. First of all, confess your sins. Not into my ear, nor into the ear of any living man. Go to your chamber and confess that you are vile. Tell Him you are a wretch undone without His Sovereign Grace.

But do not think there is any merit in confession. There is none. All your confession cannot merit forgiveness, though God has promised to pardon the man who confesses his sin and forsakes it. Imagine that some creditor had a debtor who owed him a thousand pounds. He calls upon him and says, “I demand my money.” But, says the other, “I owe you nothing.” That man will be arrested and thrown into prison. However, his creditor says, “I wish to deal mercifully

with you, make a frank confession and I will forgive you all the debt.” “Well,” says the man, “I do acknowledge that I owe you two hundred pounds.” “No,” says he, “that will not do.” “Well, Sir, I confess I owe you five hundred pounds,” and by degrees he comes to confess that he owes the thousand. Is there any merit in that confession? No.

But yet you could see that no creditor would think of forgiving a debt which was not acknowledged. It is the least that you can do, to acknowledge your sin. And though there are no merit in the confession, yet true to His promise, God will give you pardon through Christ. That is one piece of advice. I pray you take it. Do not throw it to the winds. Do not leave it as soon as you get out of Exeter Hall. Take it with you and may this day become a confession day with many of you.

But next, when you have made a confession, I beseech you renounce yourself. You have been resting perhaps in some hope that you would make yourself better and so save yourself. Give up that delusive fancy. You have seen the silkworm—it will spin and spin and spin and then it will die where it has spun itself a shroud. And your good works are but a spinning for yourself a robe for your dead soul. You can do nothing by your best prayers, your best tears, or your best works, to merit eternal life. The Christian who is converted to God will tell you that he cannot live a holy life by himself.

If the ship in the sea cannot steer itself aright, do you think the wood that lies in the carpenter’s yard can put itself together and make itself into a ship and then go out to sea and sail to America? Yet, this is just what you imagine. The Christian who is God’s workmanship can do nothing and yet you think you can do something. Now, give up self. God help you to strike a black mark through every idea of what you can do.

Then, lastly and I pray God help you here my dear hearers—when you have confessed your sin and given up all hope of self-salvation—go to the place where Jesus died in agony. Go then in meditation to Calvary. There He hangs. It is the middle Cross of these three. Methinks I see Him now. I see His poor face emaciated and His visage more marred than that of any man. I see the beady drops of blood still standing round His pierced temples—marks of that rugged crown of thorns. Ah, I see His naked body—naked to his shame. We may count all his bones. See there! His hands rent with the rough iron and His feet torn with the nails. The nails have rent through His flesh!

There is now not only the hole through which the nail was driven, but the weight of His body has sunken upon His feet and, look, the iron is tearing through His flesh! And now the weight of His body hangs upon His arms and the nails there are rending through the tender nerves. Hark! Earth is startled! He cries, “Eli, Eli, lama Sabacthani?” Oh, Sinner, was ever a shriek like that? God has forsaken Him! His God has ceased to be gracious to Him!

His soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death. But hark, again, He cries, “I thirst!” Give Him water! Give him water! You holy women let Him drink. But no, His murderers torture Him. They thrust into His mouth the vinegar mingled with gall—the bitter with the sharp, the vinegar and the gall. At last, hear Him, Sinner, for here is your Hope. I see Him bow His awful head. The King of Heaven dies. The God who made the earth has become a Man and the Man is about to die. Hear Him! He cries, “It is finished!” and He gives up the ghost.

The atonement is finished, the price is paid, the bloody ransom counted down, the sacrifice is accepted. “It is finished!” Sinner, believe in Christ. Cast yourself on Him. Sink or swim, take Him to be your All in All. Throw now your trembling arms around that bleeding Body. Sit now at the feet of that Cross and feel the dropping of the precious blood. And as you go out, each one of you say in your hearts—

*“A guilty, weak and helpless worm,
On Christ’s kind arms I fall,
He is my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus and my All.”*

God grant you Grace to do so for Jesus Christ’s sake. May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, forever and ever. Amen and Amen.

Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307