

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

HIGH DOCTRINE AND BROAD DOCTRINE.

A Sermon,

DELIVERED BY

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AT EXETER-HALL.

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."—John vi. 37.

THESE two sentences have been looked upon as representing two sides of Christian doctrine. They enable us to see it from two stand-points—the Godward and the manward. The first sentence contains what some call high doctrine. If by "high" they mean "glorious towards God," I fully agree with them; for it is a grand, God-honouring truth which our Lord Jesus declares in these words,—"*All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.*" Some have styled this side of truth Calvinistic; but while it is true that Calvin taught it, so also did Augustine, and Paul, and our Lord himself, whose words these are. However, I will not quarrel with those who see in this sentence a statement of the great truth of predestinating grace. The second sentence sets forth blessed, encouraging, evangelical doctrine, and is in effect a promise and an invitation,—"*Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*" This is a statement without limitation of any kind: it has been thought to leave the free grace of God open to the free will of man, so that whosoever pleases may come and may be sure that he will not be refused. We have no permission to pare down either sentence, nor is there the slightest need to do so. The first sentence appears to me to say that God has chosen a people, and has given these people to Christ, and these people must and shall come to Christ, and so shall be saved. The second truth declares that every man who comes to Christ shall be saved, since he shall not be cast out, and that implies that he shall be received and accepted. These are two great truths; let us carry them both with us, and they will balance each other.

I was once asked to reconcile these two statements, and I answered, "No, I never reconcile friends." These two passages never fell out: they are perfectly agreed. It is folly to imagine a difference, and then set about removing it. It is like making a man of straw, and then going out to fight with it. The grand declaration of the purpose of God that he will save his own is quite consistent with the widest declaration that whosoever will come to Christ shall be saved. The pity is that

it ever should be thought difficult to hold both truths; or that, supposing there is a difficulty, we should have thought it our duty to remove it. Believe me, my dear hearers, the business of removing religious difficulties is the least remunerative labour under heaven. The truest way is to accept the difficulty wherever you find it in God's word, and to exercise your faith upon it. It is unreasonable to suppose that faith is to be exempted from trials: all the other graces are exercised, and why should not faith be put to the test? I often feel a joy within my spirit in having to believe what I cannot understand; and sometimes when I have to say to myself, "How can it be?" I find a joy in replying that it is so written, and therefore it must be so. Instead of all reasoning stands the utterance of God. Our Father speaks, and doubts are silenced: his Spirit writes, and we believe. I feel great pleasure in gliding down the river of revelation, upon a voyage of discovery, and hour by hour obtaining fresh knowledge of divine truth; but where I come to an end of progress, and see my way blocked up by a sublimely awful difficulty, I find equal pleasure in casting anchor under the lee of the obstacle, and waiting till the pilot tells me what next to do. When we cannot go through a truth, we may be led over it, or round it; and what matters? Our highest benefit comes not of answering riddles, but of obeying commands by the power of love. Suppose we can see no further into the subject—what then? Shall we trouble about that? Must there not be an end of human knowledge somewhere? May we not be perfectly satisfied for God to appoint the boundary of understanding? Let us not therefore run our heads against difficulties of our own invention, and certainly not against those which God has seen fit to leave for us.

Take, then, these two truths, and know that they are equally precious portions of one harmonious whole. Let us not quibble over them, or indulge a foolish favouritism for one and a prejudice against the other; but let us receive both with a candid, large-hearted love of truth, such as children of God should exhibit. We are not called upon to explain, but to accept. Let us believe if we cannot reconcile. Here are two jewels, let us wear them both. As surely as this Book is true, God has a people whom he has chosen, and whom Christ has redeemed from among men; and these must and shall by sovereign grace be brought in due time to repentance and faith, for not one of them shall ever perish. But yet is it equally true, that whosoever among the sons of men shall come and put his trust in Christ shall receive eternal life. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

"None are excluded hence but those
Who do themselves exclude.
Welcome the learned and polite,
The ignorant and rude."

The two truths of my text are by no means inconsistent the one with the other: they are perfectly agreed. Happy is the man who can believe them both, whether he sees their agreement or does not see it.

I was cruising one day in the western Highlands. It had been a splendid day, and the glorious scenery had made our journey like an excursion to Fairy Land; but it came to an end, for darkness and night

asserted their primeval sovereignty. Right ahead was a vast headland of the isle of Arran. How it frowned against the evening sky! The mighty rock seemed to overhang the sea. Just at its base was a little bay, and into this we steamed, and there we lay at anchorage all night, safe from every wind that might happen to be seeking out its prey. In that calm loch we seemed to lie in the mountain's lap while its broad shoulders screened us from the wind. Now, the first part of my text, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me," rises like a huge headland high into the heavens. Who shall scale its height? Upon some it seems to frown darkly. But here at the bottom lies the placid, glassy lake of infinite love and mercy: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Steam into it, and be safe under the shadow of the great rock. You will be the better for the mountain-truth as your barque snugly reposes within the glittering waters at its foot; while you may thank God that the text is not all mountain to repel you, you will be grateful that there is enough of it to secure you.

First, I shall bid you view that goodly mountain, and then we shall sail into that pleasant loch.

I. Consider, then, with reverential joy THE ETERNAL PURPOSE. Our Lord Jesus Christ, when he found that the mass of the people rejected him, turned round upon them, and said, "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep." He knew in his own heart, however, that if *they* refused him all would not do so: a number would assuredly believe on him. Therefore he boldly said, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." He threw this grand fact in the teeth of his fierce revilers. It was his own comfort, and their rebuke. Now, I do not want to throw it at anybody to-night; on the contrary, I desire to use it as a beckoning finger to any troubled heart that longs to come to Jesus and be saved.

I saw the other day, round a gentleman's park, a very strong and lofty palisade, and to complete the exclusive apparatus a superabundant number of tenter-hooks were nailed upon the top of the fence, and a liberal quantity half-way up. I somewhat jocosely observed upon the kindness of the proprietor, in placing so many nails for the boys to climb up by, and so many more for them to hold on by when once they were up. "Why," said my companion, "those tenter-hooks would tear fingers and clothes to pieces; they are no help to climbers." "No," I replied, "no more help to climbers than the remarks which your minister made upon the sovereignty of God could be considered to be a help to seekers of the Lord Jesus." The good man set forth the truth in the most awkward and pernicious manner possible; not making thereof steps for earnest climbers, but tenter-hooks for unwelcome intruders. I never yet saw such a crowd desirous of salvation that there was the slightest call for fences and tenter-hooks to keep them out: but I do see so many tremblers needing encouragement, and so many doubters needing instruction, that I delight to turn every word, and promise, and doctrine of the Lord into sweet invitations to all around me to come and welcome to the great heart of the Crucified. I am not afraid that too many will come; my fears are all in the opposite direction. Oh, that I could hope that all my present hearers would come to Jesus at once!

First notice, carefully, that if all that the Father giveth to Christ shall

come to him, *then some people shall most surely come to Christ*; and why should not you be among them? This seems to me to be a sweet suggestion for the help of despondency when she is at her worst: some must come to Christ, why should not I come? When the devil says to you, "You cannot come to Christ," and you yourself feel as if you could not come; when sin hampers you, when doubt drags you down, when you cannot do what you want to do—still it is decreed and determined that some people must come, then why not you? By divine decree they shall come; why should not you be among them? Does not that help you? If God blesses it, you will not longer sit on the borders of despair. Suppose there is a plague in the city, but there are some people predestinated to be healed. I should be glad to know of that fact. I should be almost glad of it if I was sure that I was not one of the favoured ones, for I rejoice in the good of others: but I should be still more glad to press to the physician with this assurance upon my mind—Some must be healed: why should not I? There is a famine in the land. I hear that it is revealed by a sure prophet that a certain number never shall die of famine. Then why should not I outlive the dreadful days and be among them? Why not? I hear one say, "Suppose I am not one of God's elect." To him I answer, "Suppose you are." Better still, suppose that you leave off supposing altogether, and just go to Jesus Christ and see. To go to him is your wisdom; your immediate business, as laid down in his Word, therefore, delay not. Instead of shutting myself *out*, as some do, because it is written, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me": I shut myself *in*, and say, "Then I will be among them." Why should I not? Oh, Lord, if thou hast ordained that some shall come, then I see that to them no difficulties can be insuperable, and I will therefore come to thee myself, and in thy name enter in where every coming one is welcome.

In the next place I find that *those that come to Christ, according to this text, come because of the Father and the Son*. Read it. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." That is, they come to Jesus. Why is it that they are made to come? Because the Father has given them to Christ. Why is it that they shall come? Is it because there is some good thing in them? No, there is nothing said upon that point either one way or the other. Is it because they have strong wills and firm determinations, and therefore come? The Scripture is equally silent upon that point, except that it says elsewhere that the New Birth is not of the will of man. The reason that is given why they shall come to Jesus is because something was done for them by the Father and by the Son. Why, then, should not I come? Suppose I am weak: suppose I am sinful: suppose I am seven times more sinful than anybody else; yet since this "shall come" depends not on the character of those to whom the promise is made, but upon a certain something done for them by the Father and the Son, why should not I be among those for whom the Father and the Son have done this certain thing, and why should not I therefore be made to come to Jesus? There never was a soul that really wanted to come to Jesus but what it could come and did come. There never was a pining, longing sinner that was long kept away from Christ. When he wanted Christ, Christ wanted him a hundred times as much. If thou hast the least desire or the faintest longing after the

Lord Jesus Christ, then the cords of love are about thee, and his mighty hands are drawing home those cords. Yield to the sweet pressure and thou shalt come, not because of what thou art, or what thou ever hast been, but because of what the Father is doing, and because of what the Son is doing. It is written, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him;" but when he is drawing thou canst come. The Father is drawing you, since you are longing to come, and are anxious to find a Saviour. Now, do not turn this truth about so as to set it edgeways, and make a *chevaux de frise* of it to keep yourself from getting to Christ. The doctrine of the divine purpose is not a thorn-hedge to keep you off from the tree of life: on the contrary, you are bound to regard it as an open door. "Some must come. Why not I? Those that come do so because of something done for them of the Father and of the Son; and why should not that have been done for me? Why should not I also draw near to God?"

Notice, thirdly, that *these people are all of them saved because they come to Christ*. Observe the words—"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." They are not saved otherwise than by coming to Christ. Here are certain people that are different from others, for the Father has given them to Christ. Yes, but it does not matter how different they are from others: they have to be saved in the same way as other people. There is no way of salvation specially prepared for these peculiar people; they must follow the King's highway. The one common way of salvation is by coming to Christ, and all that the Father has given to Christ must come in by this gate. This is the one door that God has opened: there is no other; there never shall be any other. Come: pluck up heart, my dear friend,—thou that art bowing thy head like a bulrush,—the best saint in heaven found his way thither by a simple trust in Jesus Christ. Why canst not thou get there in the same way? Many sinners of the deepest dye have been saved through Jesus Christ, and why should not you be saved in the same way? Ask Peter, and James, and John, and Paul, and all the rest of them, whether they entered into heaven by a private bridge thrown across for them alone; and they will tell you that they were saved by the one Redeemer. As no Scripture is of private interpretation, so be sure that there is no private and secret Saviour for a few favoured persons. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. God's elect can only be saved by coming to Christ. Jesus says, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me;" for they cannot be saved else. Coming to Christ is the one essential thing. "Oh," says one, "I sometimes wish that I knew whether I was one of God's elect." Why should you wish to know anything out of its turn, when you can learn every truth that you need by studying other truths which lead up to it? You come to Christ, and you shall know that you were given to Christ; for none come to him but those who are his, and by their coming to him they give the best evidence of their election. You know what the brother in Cornwall said to Malachi, who was rather a stout Calvinist. He said, "Now, Malachi, I owe you £2. Before I discharge the debt I want you to tell me whether I am predestinated to pay you." Malachi opened wide his hand, and said, "Put the £2 there, and I will tell you directly." Like most sensible folk, he preferred to prophesy after the

event; and there are many advantages in keeping to that method. It is evidently the natural order of things for uninspired folk. Whether the Father gave me to Christ or not, I cannot discover till I know whether I have come to Christ. When I know that I have truly come to Christ with all my heart, then I am certain that I was given to Christ, and I find no difficulty in so believing; yea, my heart is glad to think that I am saved in the same way as others are saved.

Yet, once again, *from this text it is most clear that, if I come to Christ, the Father gave me to Christ.* If I, whoever I may be, do but simply trust Jesus—for that is the coming here meant—then I am one whom the Father gave to his Son. If, just as I am, I cast myself upon his blood and righteousness, and become his disciple, sworn to follow him, hoping by his help to tread in his footsteps: then I may know that, long before the day-star knew its place, or planets ran their round, the Eternal Father had looked upon me with eyes of everlasting love, and that he still accepts me, and will never cast me away. Is it not so? “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me;” and if I have come, then the Father hath given me to Christ: the great question is answered, the eternal mystery is unveiled, and my spirit may rejoice in God my Saviour, and in all the precious things of that everlasting covenant which is ordered in all things and sure.

So much about that huge, overhanging mass of rock. Of that I am going to say no more; only under its lee I have anchored long ago, and at that anchorage I mean still to remain. Since I have come to Jesus I know that I belong to him by the Great Father’s gift, and I am right well assured that the purpose of God shall be fulfilled in me, and that he will assuredly bring me, with all the rest of his elect, to his kingdom and glory, where we shall see his face for ever. This may be called old-fashioned doctrine: I care not what it is called, it is my life, and I dare rest my soul’s weight upon it for time and for eternity.

II. Now we enter into smooth water: the mystery is opened, let us partake of the joy of it. We have, in the second place, to speak to you for a little time on THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL—“Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” You may forget my first head if you like, especially if you are troubled by it, but I earnestly beseech you to recollect the second.

“Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” This is one of the most generous gospel texts that I do remember to have met with between the covers of this book. Generous, first, as to *the character to whom the promise is made.* “Him that cometh to me:” that is the character. The man may have been guilty of an atrocious sin, too black for mention; but if he comes to Christ he shall not be cast out. To that atrocious sin he may have added many others, till the condemning list is full and long; but if he comes to Christ he shall not be cast out. He may have hardened his neck against the remonstrances of prudence, and the entreaties of mercy; he may have sinned deeply and wilfully; but if he comes to Christ he shall not be cast out. He may have made himself as black as night—as black as hell; yet, if he shall come to Christ, the Lord will not cast him out. I cannot tell what kind of persons may have come into this Hall to-night; but if burglars, murderers, and dynamite-men were here, I would still bid them come to

Christ, for he will not cast them out. I suppose that the most of you are tolerably decent as to moral character; and to you I say, if you come to Christ he will not cast you out. Children of godly parents, hearers of the word, he will not cast you out. You who lack only one thing, but that the one thing needful, he will not cast you out. Backsliders! Are there some such here, who have almost forgotten the way to God's sanctuary, for whom the Sabbath-bell proclaims no Sabbath now? Come you to Jesus, and he will not cast you out. Oh, you Londoners, you have grown weary of God's house, and of God's day—millions of you; but if with all your irreligion you are here to-night, the truth holds good of you also,—if you trust in Jesus, he will not cast you out.

If, amidst this company, there should be some whose characters we had better not describe, and who already shrink into themselves at the very idea of being picked out, and mentioned by name; yet if such persons come to Jesus, he will gladly receive them. Be your character what it may, you who are wrapped in mystery, you shall not be cast out. I wish that I could put this to those who are troubled about a life of grievous sin; for to the life-long transgressor the text is still true. My Lord proclaims an act of oblivion concerning all the past. It shall be as though it had never been. Through Jesus Christ, if you will but believe in him, the whole past shall be rolled up, and put away, as though it had never known an existence, and you yourself shall be born again. When Naaman came up from washing in the Jordan we read that "his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean;" and so it shall be with you. The old man took the fair-haired child upon his knee, and threaded his fingers through its locks, and said, "Young child, God keep you from the sin into which I have plunged. My old life is full of evil. It is now almost over, and I am past hope. Would God I were a child again!" Lo, the angel of mercy whispers to any one in that condition, "You may be a child again!" The man a hundred years of age may yet be made a child; and he that is a grey-beard in infamy may yet become a babe in innocence through the cleansing power of the water and the blood which flowed from the riven side of Jesus. Go ye, and write it athwart the brow of night; write it in new stars if you can—"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Then hang it up over the mid-day heavens, and let the sun cast all his beams upon it, till it seems writ in the splendour of God—"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." The character who will be received is not mentioned, lest in mentioning one sinner another should seem to be excluded. No limit is set to the extent of sin: any "him" in all the world—any blaspheming, devilish "him" that comes to Christ shall be welcomed. I use strong words that I may open wide the gate of mercy. Any "him" that comes to Christ—though he come from slum or tap-room, betting-ring or gambling-hell, prison or brothel—Jesus will in no wise cast out.

Further, this text is a very generous one because *it gives no limit to the coming*. The only limit to the way of coming is that they do come to Christ. I have known some come to Christ running to him—a willing, speedy, earnest pace. You read of that in the gospels. They were so glad to hear of a Saviour that they flew to him at once. Many young children and young people do this, and they are blessed in the

deed. Come along with you, ye lively and tender spirits; he will not cast you out if you leap and rush to him. If you run all on a sudden to him to-night—if you make a dash for Christ—he will not cast you out.

Alas! a great many, when they come to Christ, advance very limpingly. They are burdened with a huge load of sin and fettered with doubts and fears, and so they make slow progress. They do not look to Jesus and live, all at once. They keep looking here and looking there, instead of looking *to him*. They are a long while in coming, for they are afraid, and ignorant and dull. Never mind, brother. The snail got into the Ark; and if you come to Christ he will not cast you out though your pace be sadly sluggish. Some look to Christ as soon as they hear of him, with clear, bright eyes like those of Rachel. Oh, such a look! They seem to drink in Christ and his salvation all at once with those bright eyes. But I have met with many whose look is like that of Leah, who had tender eyes: they look through the mists of their doubt, and the showers of their tears, and they do not half see Christ as they should. Ay, but that half-clouded look will save them. Any looking will save you if it is looking *to Christ*; and any coming if it is coming *to Christ*, will save you. Coming to sacraments may condemn you; coming to priests will ruin you; but coming to Christ will save you. If your simple faith takes hold of Christ's salvation there is life in that grip. If your thoughts think of him, if your heart embraces him, if your soul trusts him, however weakly and imperfectly you do it, he will not cast you out. Oh, this is glorious truth to my mind; is it not so to yours? So long as we do but come to him, our Saviour will not cast us away: I feel glad to be preaching this gospel in Exeter-hall; are you not glad to hear it? If you are not you are a sorry set.

Thirdly, *there is no limit here as to time*. “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” is a glorious, free utterance, compassing every age. There may be some little children here; indeed, I am glad to see boys and girls mingling with the congregation. Listen to me, my children! I am always glad to see you, and we preachers make a great mistake if we do not preach to you. Oh, dear John and Jane, Mary and Thomas, I wish you would come to Christ while you are yet young, and put your trust in him, and become young Christians. There is no reason why you should not. You are old enough to die, and you are old enough to sin, and you are old enough to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Why should you not do so at once? When I was just about fifteen years of age I was helped by God's Spirit to cast myself upon Christ; and did I ever repent that I came to Jesus so soon? No; I wish that I could have come fifteen years before, and that I had known Christ as soon as ever I learned to know my mother. Some of you have heard about Jesus from your infancy; his name was part of the music with which your mother sang you to sleep. Oh, that you may know Jesus by faith as well as by hearing! Do not think that you have to wait till you are grown up before you may come to Jesus. We have baptized quite a number of boys and girls of ten, eleven, and twelve. I spoke the other day with a little boy nine years of age; and I tell you that he knew more about Christ than ever so many grey-headed

men do ; and he loved Jesus most heartily. As the sweet child talked to me about what Christ had done for him, he brought tears into my eyes, to see how happily and brightly he could speak of what he had felt in his own soul of the Saviour's power to bless. You young children are like rosebuds ; and you know everybody likes a rosebud better than a full-blown rose. My Lord Jesus will gladly receive you as rosebuds. Offer yourselves to him, for he will not cast you away. I am sure he never will.

If any here are in the opposite extremity of life, I would remind them that "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" applies to the aged as well as to the young. I heard it said by a minister—a very earnest man—that if persons were not converted before they were five and forty, he hardly believed that they would ever be converted afterwards ; and he gave it as a note of his observation that he had not seen any persons converted after five and forty. I wished that I had been in his pulpit. I should not have questioned his statements, but I would have overlaid them with others of another character. Surely this brother had been living in some minute hamlet or other ; or else he had not preached the gospel in its fulness to every creature. Perhaps he did not believe in the conversion of the aged, and consequently no aged persons were converted by his means. I have seen as many people converted of one age as another : that is to say, in proportion to the number of them, for there are not so many people in the world over fifty as there are under fifty ; and consequently a large proportion of those persons who make up our congregations are young. We have in our regular gatherings a fair number of all ages, and as to the additions to the church, I have noticed that there is about the same proportion of very young children as of very old men and women. We have baptized, upon profession of faith, men and women over eighty years of age, about whose conversion we had as firm a conviction as we had about the conversions of the little ones ; neither more nor less. Who shall dare to say that there is an age after which God's grace does not work ? I challenge any one to bring a text which looks that way ; furthermore, I challenge the truth of any observations which arrive at such a result. My own preaching has been such that young and old in equal proportions have attended it, and in equal proportions they have been saved. However old you may be, my Master bids me say to you, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Come along, come along, dear old friend, though you cannot come without your stick. Come along, though your eyes are failing : come in your spectacles. Though *you* cannot do much for my Master, he can do everything for you. Though you have only a little time to live on earth, you will have all eternity in heaven through which you can praise him. I am sure you will be one of the most eager at that work. I think you will be like an old woman of my acquaintance. When I spoke to her about her conversion at an advanced age, she said, "Sir, if the Lord Jesus Christ ever does save such a poor old sinner as I am, he shall never hear the last of it." That is just why I want him to save you ; for then he never will hear the last of it. You will praise him for ever and for ever for what he has done for you. Will you not ?

Oh, my dear hearers, come to Jesus ! Come in the morning when

the dew is on your branch, for he will not cast you out. Come in the heat of noon, when the drought of care parches you, and he will not cast you out. Come when the shadows have grown long, and the darkness of the night is gathering about you, for he will not cast you out. The door is not shut; for the gate of mercy closes not so long as the gate of life is open. Oh, fly to Christ, and find mercy now!

Once again, dear friends, I want you to notice in my text *the blessed certainty of this salvation*. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Two or three negatives in the Greek language make a negation stronger, though they would have no such effect in the English tongue. It is a very strong negative here. "Him that cometh to me I will not *not* cast out;" or, "I will never never cast out." As much as to say,—On no account, or for no reason, or on no pretence, or from no motive whatever, will I ever in time or in eternity cast out the soul that comes to me. That is how it stands—a declaration of absolute certainty from which there can be no escaping. What a blessed thing it is to get your foot on certainties! Certain preachers, who are much cried up nowadays, are very uncertain preachers, for they do not themselves know what they will be propounding to-morrow. They make their creed as they go along, and a very poor one it is when they make it. I believe in something sure and certain; namely, in infallible Scripture, and that which the Lord has written therein, never to be altered while the world stands. My text is certain as the truth of Christ Jesus; and if we had ever seen that beautiful face of his we could not distrust him. Can your imagination picture for a minute the ever-blessed face of the Son of God? Could you look into that face, and suspect him of a lie? And when he says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth in me hath everlasting life," the saying must be true. If you believe in him, you have everlasting life. When he says, "Him that cometh to me I will never never cast out," the declaration must be true. He never, never, can cast you out, whoever you may be, however long you may live, or whatever else may happen, if you do but come to him. There are plenty of reasons, apparently, why he should cast you out, but he has knocked them all on the head by saying, "I will in no wise cast out:" that is, "In no way, and under no pretext, will I ever cast out a soul that comes to me." Now, if Christ does not cast us out, then he receives us; and if he receives us, we are received into the heart of God; we are received into eternal life; and by-and-by we shall be received into everlasting blessedness. Oh, the joy of my text, in that it is so certain!

So I shall close here, dear friends, with just a word or two of further encouragement by noticing *the personality of my text*; for in this a part of the liberality consists. Do you observe that the first part of the text began with, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." Ay, but when Christ began to deal with sinners with broken hearts, he dropped the "all" and every form of general statement, and he came to the personal pronoun singular:—"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Now, herein he meant to say to every one in this Hall, "If *thou* dost come to me, I will not cast *thee* out." It is not, "If *thou* and another come;" for, if so, it would be put in the plural: "If *you* come." But it is, "Him that cometh." You alone; your servant

alone ; your child alone ; but specially yourself alone : if you come to the Lord Jesus he will not cast you out. You cannot doubt this. Come, then, my dear hearers, believe your Saviour. I am not talking to-night to persons who doubt the veracity of the Son of God, I am not talking to persons who think Christ a liar. *You* know that he would receive *you* if you would come. Then, why do you not come ? But you mean to come, do you, by-and-by ? Then why not now ? What is it that holds you back ? How dare you delay ? Will you be alive next week ? How can you be sure of a day, or an hour ? When money is to be given away, I do not find that persons generally delay to receive it, and say, "I would rather have it next year." No, they say, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." Oh, to have a Christ in the hand, and to get him now ! And why not *now* ? Is it because you really do not understand what it is to receive him, or to believe in him ? It is indeed the simplest thing in the world, and that is the only reason why it is so difficult ; it is so exceedingly simple, that men cannot believe that it can be as we put it. Indeed, it is so. Faith is simply to trust Christ ; and trusting Christ brings with it the new life, and salvation from sin. I sometimes put it in Watts's way—

"A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On Christ's kind arms I fall."

But after I had once been preaching, a young man said to me, "Sir, I cannot *fall*." "Oh dear," I said, "then I do not know how to talk ; for I meant not a thing you could do, but the cessation of all your efforts, just falling, or if you will see it better, just tumbling down—because you cannot stand upright ; and that is it." Because I cannot save myself, I fall into Christ's arms. Ceasing to hold to anything of my own, I just drop upon him. "Still," you say, "there must be something more than that." There is nothing more than that. If thou believest that Jesus is the Christ, thou art born of God. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned." "He that with his heart believeth, and with his mouth maketh confession of him, shall be saved." "Oh, but I must—I must—I must do something mysterious, or feel something which at present is far beyond me." Thus you give God the lie, and put away from you the life eternal.

Have you never read the story of the good ship that had been a long time at sea, and the captain had lost his reckoning ; he drifted up the mouth of the great river Amazon, and, after he had been sailing for a long time up the river without knowing that he was in a river at all, they ran short of water. When another vessel was seen, they signalled her, and when they got near enough for speaking they cried, "Water ! We are dying for water !" They were greatly surprised when the answer came back, "Dip it up ! Dip it up ! You are in a river. It is all around you." They had nothing to do but to fling the bucket overboard, and have as much water as ever they liked. And here are poor souls crying out, "Lord, what must I do to be saved ?" when the great work is done, and all that remains to them is to receive the free gift of eternal life. What must *you* do ? You have done enough for one life-time, for you have undone yourself by your doing. That is not the question. It is, "Lord, what hast thou done ?" And the answer is, "It is finished. I have done it all. Only come and trust me." Sinner, you are in a river

of grace and mercy. Over with the bucket, man, and drink to the full; for you will never exhaust the stream of grace.

A river is free to every dog that runs along the bank: every cow that stands by the river may drink to the full. So is the mercy of God free to every sinner, be he who he may, that does but come to Jesus. That river runs near to you to-night. Stoop down, you thirsty one, and drink and live. But you say, "I must feel different from what I do now." But you need not: come with your bad feelings. "Oh, I have not yet a broken heart," says one. Come to Christ, and he will break your heart. "But I do not feel my need as I ought." Come to Christ and he will help you to feel your need. "Oh, but I am nobody!" You are the very person that Christ delights in, for to you he will be everybody.

Do you see that beautiful tree in the orchard loaded with fruit? It is a pear-tree. From top to bottom it is covered with fruit. I think I never saw such a sight: every branch is bowing down. Some boughs are ready to break with the luscious burden. As I listen to the creaking boughs, I can hear the tree speak. What does it say? It says, "Baskets, baskets, baskets! Bring baskets!" Now, then, who has a basket? "I have got one," cries yonder friend, "but it is of no use, for there is nothing in it." Bring it here, man: that is the very kind of basket the tree wants. A person over there says, "Oh, I have a basket—a splendid basket. It is just the thing. It is full from top to bottom." You may keep your basket to yourself. It is of no use to my loaded tree. Where is there an empty basket? Who has an empty basket? Come along with you: come and pick from the tree as long as you like. Bring all your baskets. Bring thousands and thousands of baskets, all empty, and fill them all! Do you notice as we fill the baskets that the fruit begins to multiply? There is more when we have filled the baskets than there was at first, for this inexhaustible tree produces more and more fruit, as fast as we pluck from it. What is wanted by the Lord Jesus is an empty soul to receive out of the fulness which God has treasured up in him.

God bless every one of you, for his name's sake. Amen.

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON.

DEAR FRIENDS,—It is with very sincere regret that I find myself obliged to prolong my absence. I have been exceedingly full of pain, and have been very much a prisoner to my room, or I should have returned upon the appointed day. The deacons judged it better for me to remain till I could recover, and certainly there is a far better hope for a man here in the sunshine than in a London fog. I rejoice to say that I already feel much better, and though I cannot quite maintain the erect figure which is becoming an upright man, yet the pains of lumbago are less acute than they were. I am full of confidence that I shall soon be well, in answer to your prayers.

My heart is at home. I long to be preaching Christ and winning souls. May *your* work be blessed while I am silenced. Innumerable are the forms of your holy activity, may the Holy Spirit fill them all with his power.

I send my love to all who are in Christ Jesus, and for those who are not in him—what shall I say? No blessing can come to the soul which refuses the Lord Jesus. May there be none such among us.

Wishing you a glorious Sabbath,

I am, your willing but suffering Pastor,
Menton, Jan. 17.

C. H. SPURGEON.