

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

A PRINCE AND A SAVIOUR.

A Sermon

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“Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.”—Acts v. 31.

THE same fact appears very differently to different people. Our Lord Jesus, having risen from the dead, was exalted with the right hand of God. To the Jewish priests and rulers this was a dreadful announcement. They could not endure to hear that Jesus, whom they slew and hanged on a tree, was yet alive. As the murderer is startled at the apparition of the ghost of the man he has slain, so were these rulers altogether dismayed at the idea that Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had nailed to the cross, was risen from the grave; and they were astounded at the very thought that he whom they had put to death with all the shame that they could devise was with the full might and majesty of God exalted to the highest heavens. They were cut to the heart by the announcement as though a sword had cut them in twain, dividing their very bones. Full of indignation, they consulted how they could compass the death of those who had brought such evil tidings to their ears.

The fact had a very different effect upon the apostles. They were the friends of Jesus, and witnesses to his majesty; and when they were certified that, though they had seen him laid in the grave, he had risen and had ascended, and was now sitting at the right hand of God, even the Father, filled them with the greatest boldness and consolation. They might well speak in such a name, for it was assuredly divine. He who had conquered death, and opened the gates of heaven, must be able to take care of his own followers, and therefore with delight and courage they bearded his enemies in their dens. There was no need of trembling; who could harm them? They blushed not; there was nothing to blush at, for it was a triumphant cause. They feared not; there was nothing to fear, for the name high over all in heaven, and earth, and hell, would surely protect them from all peril. What was to the rulers a source of dismay was to the apostles a cause of courage.

Let me now enquire of you all how this fact of the exaltation of Christ impresses you? What think ye of Christ? As time would fail me to press this enquiry upon all classes in this assembly, I shall confine myself to those who have not yet found peace with God, and shall set the Ascended One before them, that in him they may find salvation. That is to be my subject: I want this morning to find out seekers, and by the help of God's Holy Spirit to encourage them, to direct them, so that if possible this may be the last morning in which they shall be called seekers, and the first day in which they shall be finders, and know how sweet Christ is to those who find him, and how inestimably precious his salvation is to those who receive it by faith in him.

I should be very glad this morning if we could get to business; for a great deal of hearing is not earnest hearing, but mere playing at hearing. Too many of you have ears to hear and yet do not truly hear. The word reaches the outward ear and goes no further, because you do not hear heartily and with earnest heed. Thousands of hearers are like spectators at a banquet who come into the gallery and look down upon the guests who are feasting below, but never taste a morsel themselves. For them there are no dainties for actual tasting: they look at the oxen and the fatlings, they see the enjoyment of the feasters, sometimes they feel their own mouths watering for the good things, and they almost envy those who are banqueting; but they do not seek a place at the loaded tables for themselves, they remain lookers-on. I pray this morning, and may God hear the desire of my soul, that you may all become partakers of the exceeding grace of God in Christ Jesus at this moment. May you who have fed feed again as you see the feast prepared in Christ, and may you who have never ventured to "taste and see that the Lord is good" approach the provisions of love this morning, and be fed with bread to the full. I want to see an end of mere wishes and desires, and to rejoice over the commencement of actual faith, and realized salvation. Come to business, and let us have no more talk or delay. I long to see you saved and saved at once, or perhaps you may never be saved at all.

Seeker, you know right well that if you are ever to be saved your salvation lies in Jesus Christ. "There is none other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved," and you know that it is so. The point is to obtain the salvation which is in that name, and so to lay hold of Christ, that what is stored in him may become your own. May the Spirit of God bless you now, so that while we speak to our text you may be led by it to actual salvation in Christ Jesus.

I. First, then, let me invite you to NOTE HIS TITLES and learn their meaning. He is called "*a Prince and a Saviour.*" You must know the Saviour, or you cannot be saved. It is important to you to understand the nature and character of him whom the Lord has set forth to be the only salvation of guilty men. The Lord Jesus is here described to you under two instructive names which comprehend within themselves the most of his offices and relationships; consider him now with deep attention.

He is called *a Prince* first. This tells you that he is receiving *honour* at this time as the reward of his sufferings on earth. While he was here below he was treated by his rebellious subjects as if he had been a felon.

What a mass of presents the Prince of Wales has brought home from his foreign travel ; but when the Prince of Glory visited his dominions here below what did he take home with him except his wounds ? “ He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” The shame and the rejection are now ended, and in the glory yonder our Lord Jesus is manifestly a Prince, revered, obeyed, and honoured. Every angel in heaven delights to sing, “ Thou art the King of glory, O Christ ! ” The highest powers and potentates of the spiritual kingdom bow before him, and hail him, joyfully hail him, as Lord over all, blessed for ever. His dominion extends over all creation ; all things are put under his feet ; he is the Prince of the kings of the earth, yea, he is Lord of all. Think of him, then, O seeking sinner, in this honourable estate. Let your mind conceive of Christ as worthy of all the homage and reverence that you can ever pay to him. Do not approach him without serious thought and careful reverence, for though he be condescending and gentle, yet is he a Prince to whom honour and obeisance must be paid.

The title of “ prince ” in our Lord’s case signifies not only honour, but actual *power*. His is no nominal principedom—he has both glory and strength. Unto him is given the mediatorial kingdom, which includes all power in heaven and in earth, so that he is well styled “ the blessed and only Potentate.”

“ His hands the wheels of nature guide
With an unerring skill,
And countless worlds, extended wide,
Obey his sovereign will.”

Was it not said of old, “ The government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” He is the Prince of the house of David, he openeth and no man shutteth ; he shutteth and no man openeth. There is no bound to the power of Christ. If you seek his salvation think of him as Almighty, and remember that his power is now employed for the salvation of those who trust in him. He is exalted on high to be a Prince that he may give repentance and forgiveness of sins, so that the power which you see in him is all available for your salvation. Is not this encouraging ? Does not this remove those fears which are suggested by your own feebleness ? I desire that you may be led by the power of the Holy Spirit to conceive of our glorified Lord with the reverence which his honour deserves, and with the confidence which his power should command.

Remember, too, that a Prince signifies one who has *dominion*, and if Christ is to be yours to-day you must let him have dominion over you. “ He must reign.” He claims to be Master and Lord to those who ask salvation at his hands ; and is not the claim a just one ? Whom should we serve but the Lord who became a servant for our sakes ? It must be so, or salvation is impossible ; those who serve sin are not saved, nor can they be except by being brought to serve the Christ of God.

“ This know, nor of the terms complain,
Where Jesus comes he comes to reign ;
To reign, and with no partial sway ;
Lusts must be slain that disobey.”

You must accept Jesus to be a leader and a commander to you, or you cannot win the battle of life. You must yield him loving obedience, or he will not be married to your souls. His dominion is sweetly tempered by love; so that, as the prophet writes, "Thou shalt call me no more Baali," that is, "My Lord," with a hardness of rulership, but *Ishi*, "My Lord," because thou art my man, my husband; even so Jesus is our head and Lord, but his rule is that of supreme affection. There must be obedience to Jesus if there be faith in him, for true faith worketh by love. Will you render it?

Thus, then, Christ Jesus our Prince is crowned with honour and clothed with power, and he rightly claims and exercises dominion. I pray, dear hearer, that you may pay homage before him at once as your Prince.

The other title of the text is "*A Saviour*," and this name, it seems to me, should be very delightful to every seeking soul. Struggling into light, and prizing every ray of hope, it must be sweet to you to know that the Son of God is still a Saviour, though manifestly a Prince. Observe here *the perseverance of the Lord's love*. He was a Saviour here below; he is a Saviour now that he has reached his throne. We read of him while on earth, "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost," and now that he has gone we still hear concerning him, "He is able, therefore, to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." He has not paused in his blessed work of love. "He is the Saviour of the body." Saviour he was when he wore the garment without seam, and traversed the weary leagues of Palestine; Saviour he is now that he is girt about the paps with a golden girdle, and sits upon the throne; and Saviour he shall be in his second advent, for which we look, even the glorious appearing of our God and Saviour. Saviour he was when he wept over Jerusalem, Saviour he is still, though his eyes are like a flame of fire, and Saviour shall he be to his own redeemed when before his glance this earth shall flee away. Look up to him under that aspect.

O ye who seek him, remember that our exalted Lord is a Saviour in virtue of *the prevalence of the work which he achieved while here below*. When he dwelt here among men he was able to save, but his salvation was not complete, for he had not yet said, "It is finished." Now his redeeming work is done, and saving is a simple matter to him. Never did he so well deserve the name of Saviour as when he climbed to his throne. The ransom price has all been paid, and now, O Jesus, thou art Saviour indeed. The head of the serpent has been broken beneath thy heel: Saviour indeed thou art. The gates of the grave have been burst, the sepulchre is bereaven of its prey, and the resurrection is brought to light; thou art henceforth a Saviour to the uttermost, O Jesus. "By thine agony and bloody sweat, by thy cross and passion, by thy precious death and burial," thou hast finished salvation, and now our spirits shall rejoice in God our Saviour. I pray that you who seek him may have grace this morning to see him in the light of a Saviour, as pursuing still the work of saving souls, but yet pursuing it only to apply the atonement which his death completed. Look at him, O ye ends of the earth, as the Saviour, for such he is, and there is none else.

If he be a Saviour too, remember, this shows to trembling hearts *how*

approachable he is. You might be abashed at coming to a prince, but you may be encouraged in coming to a Saviour. O thou that wouldst be rid of thy sin, dost thou fear the Prince? Well mayest thou, for he can punish thee. But fear not, for the Saviour will forgive thee. Diseased with sin, dost thou think thyself unworthy of his princely presence? Yet he is Physician as well as Prince: therefore come thou where the glance of his eye, or the touch of his hand, will make thee perfectly whole. I wish I knew how to put my Lord before you in the best of words, and describe him so sweetly that you would all fall in love with him: but, indeed, I believe him to be so beautiful that if I can only convey to you the faintest idea of him you must be enamoured of him, if you love that which is good and fair. While I am describing him I feel I do but put a mist about him; but, then, he is the sun, and he can break through my cloudy language, and cause your hearts to see him in all his glory.

“A Prince and a Saviour.” Suppose I put the words together and say, a Prince-saviour: one who is lordly and kingly in the salvation which he brings, and deals out no stinted grace, but makes us to receive of his fulness grace for grace. Turn the titles the other way, and reverse the order, and truly he is a Saviour-prince whose glory it is to save, whose kingdom and power and dominion are all turned in full force to achieve the work of rescuing his people from destruction. “A Prince and a Saviour.” This is the Christ to whom you must come, O ye who would be delivered from your sins. Look to him and live.

II. APPROACH HIM, THEN, UNDER THESE TWO CHARACTERS. I would come to very close quarters with you who are seeking the Lord, while I urge you to approach Jesus Christ as a *Prince*. “And how shall we do that?” say you. I answer, come to him at once, with the *sorrowful confession* of your past rebellion. You have lived I do not know how many years, you unconverted ones, without paying due homage to Jesus; you have known about him, but you have not obeyed him. Up to this moment you have resisted his love, and said, “Let us break his bands asunder and cast his cords from us.” Confess this, and be ashamed, for it is a great disgrace not to be swayed by such love as that of Christ; it is a great sin not to be in love with such an inimitable character as that which shines in the person of the Son of God; it shows great moral hardness of heart, and bluntness of perception, and prejudice of soul, and ignorance of mind not to be at once the willing subject of Christ. These many years you have said, “I will not have this man to reign over me.” Oh, may the gentle Spirit cause you now to see the folly and the sin of this conduct, and may you confess it with tearful eyes while you obey the bidding of the old Psalm, and “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry.”

When you have confessed the past before this Prince, then I charge you *accept his great purpose, and submit to his rule*. He is a Prince, therefore yield yourself to be his subject. Do you know what the object of his rule is? It is to make you love God, and to be like God. You are created, and therefore launched upon the sea of existence; you cannot help this fact or alter it; your existence has been given you and you cannot lose it. How can this creation of yours be an eternal blessing, and the danger be removed of its becoming a never-ending

curse? The answer is simple; if you are right with your Creator you are right with everything; if you are reconciled to him you will be happy in time and in eternity. But you cannot be right with your Creator until past guilt is forgiven and sin is given up, and the love of wrongdoing, the love of everything that is contrary to his pure and holy mind is destroyed in you. Now, Jesus comes in order that he may kill in you everything that is contrary to the mind of God; he comes to make you holy, ay, to make you perfect. Will you yield yourself to his gentle purpose? Are you ready to obey his precepts by means of which his Spirit will sanctify you wholly—spirit, soul, and body? He is able to save from sin; his name is Jesus, “for he shall save his people from their sins.” Do you really wish to be saved from sin? Jesus once asked a sick man, “Wilt thou be made whole?” It is the question which he asks of you to-day, dear friend. You would be glad to be saved from going to hell; ay, that is not it; do you desire to be saved from that which created hell, from that which is the fuel of the unquenchable fire and the tooth of the undying worm—namely, the love of iniquity, the love of sin? Christ can save from sin as a Saviour, and lead you into the kingdom of righteousness, of which he is the Prince. Are you willing that he should do so?

If it be taken for granted that you have approached the Lord Jesus in this way, I would next say, as he is a Prince, *surrender everything to him*. Christ claims of you that if you are saved, since it is through his redemption, you should henceforth be his. If he has redeemed you then you belong to him; henceforth you are not your own, you are bought with a price. It is an inevitable consequence of being redeemed from death and hell by Jesus' blood that you should be Christ's for ever. Oh, can you lift your eye to heaven and say, “If he will have me, I will cheerfully be his”? Can you make over now, this morning, by the help of God's Spirit, your body and your soul as a living sacrifice? Can you give to him now all that you owe, and all that you have? Could you stand at the foot of the cross and say—

“And if I might make some reverse,
 And duty did not call,
 I love my God with zeal so great,
 That I would give him all”?

He asks it of you: will you do it, O seeking soul, will you do it? For if that be done surely then Christ is to you a Prince and a Saviour?

And if this be accomplished, and he be Lord, then *pay your loving, loyal homage to your Prince*. Behold him in his glory, where all the angels cast their crowns before him, while the elders adore him with vials full of sweet odours. If Christ is to be your Saviour he must be your prince, and you must have a loyal attachment to him, deep and true. Is this a hard thing to ask of you? Methinks it is the joy of my life to be the subject and the servant of King Jesus. The name of the Queen stirs the British soldier's heart, and oftentimes in the hour of battle he has thought of his sovereign and his country, and has been willing to lay down his life; but the love of Jesus is a more intense passion by far, and the loyalty of a good soldier to Jesus Christ is a stronger force than any loyalty to earthly princes. You must have

this. Do you see how right it is that you should have it? Towards such an one as Jesus we are proud to cherish a love which many waters cannot quench, a love stronger than death. Approach him, then, with loving hearts, or at least bring your hearts, and ask to have them made loving.

You must also approach the Lord Jesus as *Saviour*. Do not proudly murmur at this. I have known some who have been willing to take Christ for their example, and as their teacher; and so far they have owned him as a Prince, but they cannot brook it that they should confess their need of a Saviour: but you must have Jesus as a Saviour as well as a Prince, or you will be lost for ever. I do now affectionately urge the sinner who is seeking mercy to come to Christ Jesus, *confessing that he needs a Saviour*. Look at your sin, and consider your past life with all its transgressions. Are you not ashamed of it? Are you not afraid to stand before that judgment-seat where you must give an account for every idle word that you have spoken? Does not conscience fill you with trembling? Well, come and tell the Saviour; tell him all. Pour out your heart before him; acknowledge that you are undone, and condemned, unless he can in his pity obtain a pardon for you. Are you actually doing so now? Come to business, as I have said before; make the confession now from your heart while we are yet speaking.

That done, since Christ is a Saviour, *believe that he is able to save you*. Seeing he died the bitter death of the cross, suffering from divine justice in a most terrible manner upon Calvary, there must be in those five wounds power enough to be the death of every sin. O crimson blood, thou must have merit enough in thee to wash out crimson sin. It must be so. He who died upon the cross is God as well as perfect man, and a sacrifice offered by him must have infinite power and efficacy to remove sin. Believe thou this also, and when thou hast believed it then understand that thou must *submit thyself entirely to his processes of salvation*. He is able to save thee, but he has a way of his own, and he will not save thee in thy way but in his way; and his way of saving thee is to make thee feel the smart and bitterness of sin, to make thee hate that sin and loathe it, and so to turn thee from it for ever. Thus he saves thee: art thou willing to have it so? Canst thou say "Farewell" this morning to the sins thou hast so long loved? Is there any attraction to thee yet in the harlots and the riotous livers with whom thou hast spent thy Father's substance? Hast thou still a lingering love to the far country, or canst thou bid its citizens a long farewell? Do the swine attract thee? Hast thou a hankering after the husks which they do eat, so that thou canst refuse to go to Christ when he would take thee away from these filthy pleasures and degrading delights? Canst thou say, "I cannot linger longer here; it is Sodom, and the fire will soon descend from heaven; I must flee for my life, and look not behind me; I must and will do so, for Jesus takes me by the hand and leads me on"? If thou hast sincerely done this and thou art willing to have a divorce from thy sins, *mensa et thoro*, from table and bed, and hearth, and in all ways, so that sin and thee shall no more be on loving terms, then, I say, if thou art willing for this, all thou hast now to do is to *trust thy Saviour*. Lean all thy weight on him; repose thy whole self on him. Thou seest thy need of

him, thou seest his power to save thee, and thou knowest what is meant by being saved, namely, delivered from the power of sin: wilt thou now trust him to make thee pure? If thou dost, thou hast come to him as a Prince and a Saviour, and he has said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," and he will not, cannot cast thee out.

This approach to the Lord Jesus should be made at this moment, where you now are. There is no need to go elsewhere, or tarry for an hour. While yet you are here God's Holy Spirit can enable you to come to Christ as your Prince and your Saviour.

I am putting the truth very plainly. I have scarcely used one figure of speech or a single ornament of language, but I have tried to tell you the way of salvation very plainly, and having told you it I can do no more but earnestly ask you, will you have this Prince and Saviour or not? May the Spirit of God persuade you to give the right reply.

III. In the third place, NOTE THE GIFTS OF THE LORD JESUS. He is "exalted with God's right hand to give repentance and forgiveness of sins." Now if, dear hearer, thou art distressed this morning beneath the burden of sin, I pray thee to catch at this blessed sentence, for there is honey here which shall take away the bitterness of thy soul. I think I heard thee say, "Fain would I have Christ as Prince and Saviour; I am willing enough; but this hard heart, this rebellious will, what can I do with them?" Listen: "He is exalted to give *repentance*." This does not mean, as some have said, to give space for repentance. We must not add words to Scripture. Nor does it mean to make repentance acceptable. Look at the text, and no trace of such a meaning is there. But "to give repentance," and repentance itself is intended, which is as much the gift of the ascended Saviour as the forgiveness which follows upon it. What is repentance? If we keep to its literal meaning it is a change of mind, but then it is a very wonderful change of mind. He can give thee to change thy mind about all the past, so that the things which pleased thee shall grieve thee, that which charmed thee shall disgust thee, that which thou dost love thou shalt hate, and that which thou dost desire thou shalt abhor. This is his gift to his chosen: "I will take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and I will give them a heart of flesh; a new heart also will I give them, and a right spirit will I put within them." What a marvellous thing this change of mind as to the past is. He can also change thy mind as to the present and the future, so that instead of looking for present pleasure thou wilt find thy delight in future glory realized by faith. Dost thou understand me? It shall be pleasure enough to thee to think of the pleasures at God's right hand for evermore. Jesus can save thee from living like the beast which looks not an hour ahead, but is content with the pasturage around it, and will even walk into the slaughter-house to be slain, so little does it know what is reserved for it. Jesus can save thee from being so brutish, and make thee look into the eternal future with the eye of a wise man. He can give thee a good hope, and inspire thee with a good object worthy of the eternity which lies before thee. Christ can give such a change of mind as shall make the whole world seem new, and thyself most changed of all.

Repentance includes a most needful sense of sin, and the Saviour can give thee this by his Spirit. He can fill thy soul with the barbed

arrows of conviction till thy heart bleeds with inward grief on account of sin, or he can work more gently and make thee repent by melting thee beneath the smiles of love. He can make thee sing—

“Thy mercy is more than a match for my heart,
Which wonders to feel its own hardness depart;
Dissolved by thy goodness, I fall to the ground,
And weep to the praise of the mercy I've found.”

He can work in thee desires after holiness and hatred of every false way; he can take the guile out of thy soul as well as the guilt out of thy life; he can give thee to be true and upright before him, and cleansed in the inward parts.

Everything that is included in “repentance” Jesus Christ is exalted to give. Now, if no one obtains repentance, then Christ is exalted in vain; but somebody must have it, for Christ is not exalted in vain; why then shouldst not thou have it? Thou needest it: thy heart seems hard as granite and cold as a block of ice. Well, if thou needest it, why shouldst thou not have it? To whom does a man give his alms but to the needy? Do not the wise distribute their gifts to those who want them? If thou wantest them come and freely take of them. Repentance will not spring out of thy unrenewed heart, but the Prince and Saviour can create it in thee; come thou to him for it.

“True belief and true repentance,
Every grace that brings you nigh,
Without money,
Come to Jesus Christ and buy.”

Here I preach Christ not merely to penitent sinners, but to impenitent sinners. O rock, be smitten with this rod! The cross can fetch the waters of repentance out of stony hearts! O hard heart be melted with this sacred fire! The fire of Jesus' love can dissolve the northern iron and steel of obdurate impenitence. He is exalted on high to give repentance, therefore, O sinners, look to him for repentance.

It is added as his second gift, “to give *forgiveness* ;” and the forgiveness which Jesus gives is very blessed. I pray thee, seeking soul, catch at each word I now say on this point. He can pass an act of amnesty and oblivion for all thy sin. If he forgive thee, all thy transgressions shall be as though they had never been. He will make clean work of it, blotting out every record of thy sin, so that in God's book there shall be no grieving memory of thy having been a sinner at all. So powerful is the atoning blood that all manner of sin and transgression shall be forgiven unto men for its sake. Sins against a holy God, sins against Christ's love and blood, sins against conscience, sins against the law, sins against the gospel, sins which have lain in your bones from your youth up, sins of your middle age, sins of your old age, aggravated sins, black sins, damnable sins, all are gone when he saith, “I have blotted out thy sins like a cloud, and as a thick cloud thy transgressions.” Jesus has gone to heaven on purpose to give this complete forgiveness.

Now mark, when full forgiveness comes it brings with it the eternal removal of the penalty. The forgiven man cannot be punished; for

him there is no hell, no worm that dieth not, nor fire that never can be quenched. God cannot forgive and then punish. If he remove thy transgressions from thee as far as the east is from the west, then who is he that shall lay anything to thy charge? Who is he that can condemn? And who is he that can punish thee?

With the pardon of sin there shall come also a restoration of every privilege. All that Adam had in the garden you shall have to be yours—not all of it to enjoy just now, but all and more than all shall really be restored to you, for the man who wears the righteousness of Christ and is accepted in the Beloved may not have a paradise on earth, but he has a paradise above; for him there may be no golden apples of Eden, but there shall be the fruit of the tree of life, of which he shall eat for ever and ever.

“What Adam had, and forfeited for all,
Christ hath who cannot fail nor fall.”

He that believeth on Christ Jesus shall dwell in bliss and be satisfied with the goodness of the Lord.

And mark thee once again, thou shalt, when forgiven, have *quiet in thy soul*, for when thou art pardoned all the hurly-burly of thy spirit shall turn into a deep calm; thou shalt have the “peace of God which passeth all understanding” to “keep thy heart and mind by Christ Jesus.” “Oh,” saith one, “I would give my eyes for it.” You shall have it without giving your eyes. Give your heart: nay, and not even give your heart as a price for it, but take the blessing freely, for freely it is given. Jesus is exalted on high that he may grant free pardons to great offenders. I come back to that statement: if Jesus is exalted on purpose to give pardon, then if he does not give forgiveness to some one he is exalted in vain. He must therefore give it to some: why should he not bestow it upon you?

The text says, “to give repentance to Israel.” Who and what was Israel? The people of Israel in our Lord’s time were surely the very worst of sinners, for it was by them that the Lord was nailed to the cross. It was the Jews who cried “Crucify him, crucify him.” It means, then, that Jesus is exalted to give repentance and pardon to the chief of sinners, and if I be one, if instead of blaming Jews or the Romans I blame myself, if I take the death of Christ on my own shoulders and say,

“’Twas you my sins, my cruel sins,
His chief tormentors were;
Each of my crimes became a nail,
And unbelief the spear.”

Then is he exalted to give me repentance and remission for my great sins.

Do I need to ask you, will you have these two gifts? Ah, friends, it shows how deep is the depravity of the human heart that we should have need to press our Master’s mercies on you. If sin were not a madness, it would only need the preacher to come and tell out this blessed gospel, and you would begin to sing, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth as a Prince and a

Saviour in heaven." Instead, however, of offering my Lord a joyful reception, some of you will count it a weariness to be entreated and pleaded with. I feel in my own soul that though my Master enables me to put these things before you, you will not receive them unless his love constrains you. We can bring the horse to the water, but we cannot make it drink; and we can bring Christ before you, but we cannot make you accept him. I pray that there may be some soft relentings, some gentle meltings of your spirit this very morning, for "unto you is the word of this salvation sent."

My dear hearer, I may never have addressed you before; happy shall I be if at the very first assault I win your soul for my Master. Or perhaps I have spoken with you many, many times, and my voice is getting rather stale and flat to you. Well, I am sorry if I mar the message, but still it is so good that, though I stammered it, you ought still to catch at it and say, "Yes, if he is exalted to give repentance and pardon, here is my bosom, Lord, pour them both into my soul at this good hour."

IV. As I said to you about the titles, approach the Lord Jesus as such, so now I say about his gifts—ASK HIM FOR THEM. Ask now, at this moment. Again I say, I want you to come to business, and be doing as well as listening; while I am speaking may the Holy Ghost incline your hearts to practical obedience. At this moment ask the Lord Jesus *humbly* for repentance and pardon. You do not deserve these gifts; if he leaves you to perish he will be just. He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and he will have compassion on whom he will have compassion. You have no claim to his love, and must not set up any. Your heart is hard, and he can leave you in your unbelief: you are guilty, and he can justly leave you to bear your punishment. Ask *humbly*, therefore, not daring to claim anything, but appealing to his sovereign grace. Sing—

"O save a guilty sinner, Lord,
Whose hope still hovering round thy word;
Would light on some sweet promise there,
Some sure support against despair."

Ask *importunately*. Do not come to mercy's gate this morning with a cold heart and a trifling spirit. Come with this resolve, "I will not leave the cross till my sins have left me. I will plead for the grace of God until I obtain it. With importunity will I wrestle saying—

'Lord, I cannot let thee go
Till a blessing thou bestow.'

The angel is near this morning; seize him; grasp him; and if he seem to fling thee off yet hold him still, and say, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me, and bless me now?" You will get the blessing if you can pray like that: with deep humility because you are unworthy, but with violent importunity because you are in such fearful peril, and you cannot endure to be lost.

But I ask you to pray *believingly*, and this is indeed the pith of the matter. Ask for remission and repentance this morning, believing that Christ can give it, and believing that he is as willing as he is able. If you can look up and see those dear eyes which wept over sinners;

if you can see those wounds, still open for sinners, like so many gates of heaven, you will perceive that Jesus still calls to you, and bids you trust him. Do not think him unwilling to forgive. That would be too cruel a suspicion after he has died. Trust him wholly, only, sincerely, solely. Have done with those works, and prayers, and tears which you have been wont to rely upon. All that you ever did to save yourself must be undone. Nature's spinning must all be unravelled, her figleaves will wither; sin's nakedness requires a better covering. Your only hope lies in him who is Prince and Saviour. Cry at once to him—

“A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On thy kind arms I fall;
Thou art my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus, and my all.”

And—and this is the last word—*ask now*. Do not put me off this morning. I am in earnest if you are not. But oh, it is *your* soul, not mine, that is now at stake. I pray thee be in earnest, O man, and be so now. Perhaps thou wilt never hear another pleading; it may be this is the last Sabbath thou wilt spend on earth; and where wilt thou be if thou reject the Saviour? Where the Sabbath bell shall never ring out its happy summons, where the silver voice of mercy shall never again salute thee. There is another world; you will not die like a dog; there is a judgment to come, and you will have to stand before your Maker to give an account of all your life. There is an everlasting punishment as surely as there is an eternal reward. Now I ask thee, and I charge thee, to go not further till thou hast answered this question—is it worth while to lose thy soul whatever thou canst gain by it? The Romans when they meant to bring things to an issue with an Oriental tyrant, sent their ambassador, and the ambassador was to bring his answer back—yes or no, war or peace. What think you the messenger did? When he saw the king he stooped down, and with his wand he drew a ring upon the ground round the monarch; and then said, “Step outside that ring, and it means war with Rome; before you leave that circle you must accept our terms of peace, or know that Rome will use her utmost force to fight with you.” I draw a ring round you while you are sitting in that pew, or standing in that aisle, and I demand an answer. Sinner, wilt thou now be saved or not? To-day is the accepted time, to-day is the day of salvation. O Holy Spirit, lead the sinner now to ask and he shall receive, to believe, and he shall be saved. Amen and Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Acts v. 17—42.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—304, 569, 332.