

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

A PERSONAL APPLICATION.

A Sermon

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“But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”—Hebrews ix. 26.

In those good old times, when preachers did not grow weary, though they discoursed for three hours at a stretch, and when congregations were not given to slumber, even under such long discourses, the preacher had ample time not only to dilate upon the doctrine of his text, but to expatiate also upon what was then called “the improvement of the subject,” namely, the practical and experimental application of the truths taught to the cases of his hearers. Nowadays when we are stinted to three-quarters of an hour—not altogether to our loss or yours—there are occasions on which we feel our course so wide, and our time so narrow, that having found a good sea to sail upon, and objects of surpassing interest to attract our attention in the morning, we venture to resume the current of thought and follow up with the application in the evening.

Those of you who were present this morning* will not have forgotten the fulness of the text. It seemed as though every word were on fire, for we were warmed and comforted by each word as it broke on our ears and appealed to our hearts. I am sure that God the Holy Ghost spoke to some of us. If we never heard him before, we certainly did then feel the power of his presence in our souls. “Did not our hearts burn within us” whilst we meditated upon the precious truth contained in this passage of Holy Scripture?

We saw very clearly God's way of putting away sin. We knew that sin was the great obstacle which kept us away from God, and we perceived how Jesus Christ, by making himself a sacrifice, had completely cast down and cleared off the separating wall, so that now we have access with boldness to this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of

* See No. 911, “Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.”

the glory of God. By his offering of himself upon the tree he put away sin once for all on the behalf of those who trust in him.

The application, then, which I proceed to take in hand is twofold—first, *to some of you who are not converted, a few earnest, faithful, affectionate words*; and, secondly, *to you who have received Christ, and have also obtained power to become sons of God, a little tender counsel.*

I. First, A FEW WORDS TO THE UNCONVERTED.

You perceive it is stated in the text that the Lord Jesus Christ appeared in human form, and put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Now, it will strike your reason, *that God would not have come upon earth, would not have left the royalties of heaven, if there had been some other way of putting away sin.* Surely the eternal Father would never have put his only-begotten and well-beloved Son to such terrible pains and griefs, if there had been any other door of salvation for the lost sons of men. When Jesus said, “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me,” you may depend upon it that it would have passed if it had been possible for us to be saved by any other method. But, inasmuch as Jesus Christ bowed his head to the stroke of his Father’s sword, and poured out his soul unto death for us, we may rest assured that there is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved.

Clearly then, my dear hearers, *it is your wisdom to give up every other confidence.* What are you resting in at the present moment? Have you been saying in your soul, “I am the child of gracious parents; I have never gone into profanity, or open sin; it must be all right with me”? Or, have you said in your heart, “I was christened in my infancy; I have been confirmed; I have paid due attention to the ceremonies of my church, and therefore I am saved”? Or, have you said, “I have kept the commandments from my youth up; I have neither wronged man nor blasphemed God”? I tell you solemnly, that these grounds of confidence are utterly worthless. If you could have been saved by your baptism, do you think Christ would have died? If your good works could have opened the gates of heaven for you, do you think that the Christ of God himself would have bled for sinners? If it had been possible for your godly ancestry to have lifted you to the skies, do you suppose that Jesus Christ would have been obedient unto death, even the death of the cross? All other confidence which begins, proceeds, and ends with anything else save the person and the work of Jesus, will deceive you in the hour of death, and at the day of judgment, and therefore I say unto you do not for a moment entertain it; away with it, away with it, confide in it no longer! If I saw you trusting yourself upon a bridge which I knew would snap in the centre, when your weight came fairly upon it, I should not be unkind, I should but follow the instincts of humanity in warning you not to trust to it. And I do so warn you now, that other refuge there is none save in Jesus Christ; and

if you seek another refuge you insult God, you do despite to Jesus Christ, you cast yourself into a tenfold jeopardy, for he that believeth not in Jesus Christ must be lost. Though he may have a zeal towards God, and go about industriously to establish his own righteousness, yet must he be a castaway, because he has not submitted himself to the righteousness which is of God by faith. I beseech you, then, dear hearer, whoever you may be, whether you be a stranger amongst us or one who constantly frequents this assembly, shake off your false confidences, as Paul shook the viper from his hand into the fire, or else they will poison you; they will destroy you for ever and for ever; but come ye, O come, sinners as ye are, to the fountain filled with blood, and rest ye, all helpless as ye are, rest on the foundation which God has laid in Zion, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, and he that buildeth upon it shall never be ashamed.

That seems to flow naturally as an inference from the doctrine of the atonement. But then, secondly—*if Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in order to put away sin, must die a death so ignominious and painful, then depend upon it, sin is not so easy a thing to get rid of, nor is the penalty so easy to endure, as some would have us imagine.* Sinner, when God laid our sins upon Christ, he did not spare him. “He spared not his own Son.” There was no point of the shame, the desertion, the darkness, the terror of dire foreboding, or the weight of full punishment for sin which was withheld from the sufferings of Christ. Rather it seems as if the Father, in vindication of un pitying justice, heaped on our blessed Saviour the full tale of all our transgressions, and exacted of him the utmost chastisement and the uttermost retribution. Ponder this and meet the question, Did God smite his Son, and shall he spare you? Did the curse fall on Christ, though he was holy in his nature, perfect in his character, guileless in his heart, and innocent in his life—upon him who had no sin but our sin upon him—and shall God allow you, depraved, impenitent, wilful, and graceless as you are, to go unpunished? God has shown his hatred of sin in the cross of Jesus. Not Sodom on a blaze, nor the old world drowned with the flood, nor Pharaoh lost in the Red Sea, nor any one of the judgments of heaven, which appal us in their history, displays so much his horror against sin as the death of the Only Begotten. There you see how though sin entrenched itself in the blessed and beloved body of Jesus Christ, yet the sword of vengeance would find it out and smite it down; and shall your crimes evade notice or pass away like shadows that leave no trace behind? What! can the avenging angel detect no spots on your hands, no blood on your skirts, no chain of evidence to convict you? Knowing, as you all do from observation, if not from experience, that the levity with which men defy the laws of nature does not mitigate the pain that surely follows, that every vice reaps its own retribution, and that the end of a dissolute life is most commonly a

desperate death, I marvel that any of you should despise your own mercies and court your own miseries. But if any sin could be lightly passed over, how should your sin escape, when you add to it this sin of sins, by way of aggravation, that you make God a liar by not believing on his Son? Ah! my hearer, let whow ill deceive you, God's word is true, that every transgression shall receive its just recompense of reward. He will by no means spare the guilty. Do not hope to die with the words upon your lips, "God is merciful." I know he is, but he is also just, and to those who reject his Son there is no mercy.

"How they deserve the deepest hell,
That leave the joys above!
What claims of vengeance must they feel
Who slight the bands of love!"

You shall find it so. Either Christ must bear your sins for you, and you must see your sin punished in the wounds of Immanuel, or you must feel them punished in yourself for ever. O soul, which shall it be? May God make the election for you, and may you be saved in Jesus Christ our Lord.

I wish I could speak so as to get to your heart, but the Lord alone can do that; I can only reach the ear. Will you, however, please to notice the particular object for which Christ appeared. Peradventure that may touch your conscience. It was *to put away sin*. Can you so think of this as to apprehend the breadth of purpose it involves? Is not such an undertaking beyond the grasp of your minds? But try to spell it out. Does it not occur to you that there must have been a gathering together of all kinds of sin, and a concentration of all the forces of sin at that tremendous crisis? I think you have only to look at the pictures as they are drawn by the four evangelists to perceive the dark shadows of every species of human guilt. Were not the vices that defile the heart of man, and the atrocities that distract society—those vile prejudices and bad passions which issue in the foulest crimes—all represented in the conspiracy to crucify Jesus of Nazareth? Tell me, if pride and infamy, jealousy and covetousness, treason and treachery, ribald mockery, and brutal cruelty, with a legion of other wicked spirits, did not make common cause against the Lord's Anointed? The mask of religion was worn by some, and the guise of patriotism was assumed by others. To what intent was this? Why, it is told in one short sentence. When he came to put away sin, then sin was up in arms directly, and counsel and clamour from all grades of society made their voices heard, and their influence felt, to put him away. Ah! say you, that only happened once. True, so far as the work of redemption is concerned. But how often is it repeated in the experience of men who reject the Saviour? The like concurrence of all sorts and

forms of sin is found in the case of every one of you who deliberately or wantonly hardens his heart against that great Sin-bearer, that great Sin-destroyer, our most glorious Christ. Every evil disposition you harbour, every evil habit you indulge, every wicked practice you follow, leads, nay, irresistibly drives you on to this goal. "Away with him, away with him; crucify him, crucify him," is the cry to which your heart consents, to which your life gives sanction. I do but interpret the meaning of your unbelief. *It must be so*; for you are bent on upholding sin while Christ is bent on putting away sin; thus you set yourselves in opposition to him. And *it is so*; for it is the ordinary testimony of every converted man. Those of us who have the best opportunity of judging can bear witness that in the repentance which accompanies faith, the sense of guilt is felt much as though all sins were rolled into one in the aggravated sin of unbelief. And *it ought to be so*; for our Lord himself said, "When he (the Spirit of God) is come, he will reprove the world of sin, because they believe not on me." Give heed then to this, my hearer, whosoever you may be that now declines to yield to my Master. If ever you are born of the Spirit, you will plead guilty to this charge. Or if, haply, you die in your sins, the indictment framed against you, the verdict given, and the sentence passed, will be according to this judgment. You will be condemned because you believed not on the Son of God. The reason why at this moment you love darkness rather than light is because your deeds are evil.

Let me remind every unconverted person here of the responsibility which presses upon him with regard to the great fact, that Christ is preached to him according to the manner in which he has been revealed to put away sin. That fact must affect you for woe if not for weal. Whatever may be its relation to those Hottentots and barbarians who have never heard the gospel, it must affect *you*, because you have heard it, and the rule is that the ministry of the cross of Christ, when addressed to your understanding, must either prove a savour of life unto life or of death unto death. Make no mistake about this. You never pass under the heart-searching ordeal of listening to a gospel sermon without some moral consequence. There is *some* result produced. You are either blessed by it or hardened by it. Possibly you may think it is a most proper thing to come to a place of worship, and you feel relieved by having attended. Yes, but if your conscience were awake you would understand the word of the apostle, "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh"—"Turn not away from him that speaketh from heaven"—"He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God?" "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" If I live and die knowing the gospel, and

yet rejecting it, what can I say at God's bar? What excuse can I make for myself? I cannot plead ignorance. I must confess wilful hardness of heart, which went so far that I preferred to risk damnation rather than accept salvation on God's terms. I had rather perish as God's enemy, so my unbelief says, than I would submit myself and become God's friend. Oh, this is iniquity reaching to its highest altitude! I beseech thee, ungodly man, look such iniquity in the face, and bethink thee of its terrible issues!

Our text tells us that Christ has appeared once to put away sin, but recollect *he is to come a second time!* Unconverted man, have you thought of that? You would not look at Christ when he came the first time, despised and rejected of men, but you shall look at him when at his second advent—

“The Lord shall come! a dreadful form,
With rainbow wreath, and robes of storm;
On cherub wings, and wings of wind,
Appointed Judge of all mankind.”

You said it was nothing to you, the first time, and you passed by, but you will find it something to you the second time. When the trumpet sounds exceeding loud and long, when the cerements of the grave are rent asunder; when the dead shall rise from land and sea; when the white throne shall be set, and all nations shall be gathered before it, and the Shepherd-king shall divide them as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats—you will find then that from that throne you cannot escape. The throne of mercy you may despise, but the throne of judgment you will not be able to set at nought. Suppose the destined hour should transpire now—and it is but a little while ere it shall overtake this giddy, thoughtless world. Overleap that brief interval for a moment. Let your imaginations transport you to—

“That tremendous day
Whose coming none can tell,”

although with silent, sure, and rapid steps it is approaching us apace. Think that you are standing in the crowd, and the books are opened, and the eyes of fire have flashed upon you, and that your life unveiled, with all your actions and their hidden springs, is being published to angels and to men, and your sentence is about to be pronounced. No; escape is impossible, the rocks cannot hide you; the mountains cannot cover you! The eyes of him who once wept will flash with lightning, and the tongue that said, “Come unto me, ye weary,” shall say, “Depart, ye cursed,” and the face that was once so full of pity, shall suddenly be red with holy anger as he shall say, “I know you not; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity!” And shall that be my portion?—

“Prevent, prevent it by thy grace;
Be thou, O God, my hiding-place,
In this the accepted hour!”

My hearer, shall this be your portion? Shall it be the portion of any man or woman now sitting in this house of prayer? May God avert it by his eternal mercy; but I see not how it is to be avoided except you be led to fly to Christ, and the only opportunity you may ever have is this present opportunity, for "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." May you be led by the Spirit at this moment to come to Jesus, so shall you find eternal salvation in him.

II. Turning now to another part of the congregation, let me spend a little time in ADDRESSING MYSELF TO THE MANY OF YOU who have believed that Jesus is the Christ to the saving of your souls.

Beloved in the Lord, our sins are pardoned; we are accepted in the Beloved; we have passed from the realm of fear into the kingdom of safety; we are no longer in the wilderness; we are come to Canaan, to Mount Zion, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn; we hear no rumblings of Sinai's thunders, but the soft voice which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.

What shall we say as we see evidently set before us this great and unspeakable sacrifice, by which our Lord Jesus Christ put away sin? I think our first exclamation should be, "*Begone, accursed sin, that could have needed such a sacrifice, that could have made it necessary for the Saviour thus to suffer.*" Repentance is always the companion of faith. They go hand in hand. Let no man speak evil of repentance. I have been grieved within my heart when I have heard some revivalists, by innuendo at the least, speak against repentance. You will never enter heaven without repentance; and if your faith do not lead you to hate sin, and do a great deal more than merely change your mind, as these modern fanatics say, you will find it is a faith which will never estrange you from the corruptions of the flesh, enamour you of the holiness of the Spirit, and conduct you to the heaven of God's presence. You must hate sin; you must perceive the evil of it, and you must turn from it and live, according to the instincts of the divine life communicated, as well as according to the ordinances of the divine rule made known unto you, or else you are no child of God. But where is true repentance to be had? It is never experienced by a man, except as he proves the cleansing, sanctifying power of the Saviour's precious blood. To repent of sin because I know it has ruined me, or it will ruin me, is legal repentance, and needeth to be repented of. But to be able to sing, as one of our hymn writers expresses it—

"My sins, my sins, my Saviour!
 Their guilt I never knew,
 Till with thee in the desert,
 I near thy passion drew.

I know they are forgiven,
 But still their pain to me,
 Is all the grief and anguish
 They laid, my Lord, on thee."

That is repentance. To hate sin because it caused the brow of Christ to be girt with the thorn-crown, and the face of Christ to be dishonoured with the spittle, and the hands of Christ to be pierced with the nail—this is repentance—not because I am afraid of hell, not because sin brings pains and penalties with it, but because it made Jesus Christ to suffer for me such pangs unutterable. My brethren and sisters, standing here by faith at the cross's foot, do we not feel more than ever we did the evil of sin? If we do not, let this be our prayer, "Lord, help me this night as I come to thy table, to feel the bitterness of my sin, which was so bitter to thee; let me see its deadly character in thy death; let me see its shame in thy shame; let me perceive the nakedness which it brought upon me in thy nakedness; let me discern the misery which it would have caused me for ever in thy misery; and let me now declare revenge against my sin; and however dear any one sin may have been to me, let this be my solemn resolve, in the strength of the Holy Ghost—

‘The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
At once I'll tear it from its throne,
And worship only thee.’”

Deep repentance will be a sweet help in coming to the supper. The bitter herbs always made the Paschal lamb the sweeter, and the pensive sadness of repentance will give zest and stimulant to the faith with which we feed upon the crucified Redeemer.

Still further, beloved, *what emotions of gratitude should this truth inspire in your breasts!* Ought it not to fill your entire life with the fragrant incense of praise? "Thy testimonies," we might well say with the psalmist, "have I taken as a heritage for ever; for they are the rejoicing of my heart." O that the flame of gratitude might kindle and glow in all your musings! O that it might find constant expression in the deep humility and the sweet gentleness of all your works and ways! Say, "What homage can I offer thee, my Lord, at this good hour? Little can I render unto thee for all thy benefits, but much do I owe thee for thy love that passes knowledge. Thy word shall be my lamp. Thy precepts shall be my choice. Thy statutes shall be my songs. I will delight myself in thy commandments. All who trespass against me, I will forgive for thy sake. Thy saints I will love. Thy lambs I will feed. I will bear the infirmities of the weak, and not please myself. I will pray without ceasing. I will give thanks for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 'So will I'—did I say; let me rather say, 'So would I.' Though the vows of God are upon me, I have not strength of myself to perform one vow. Yet methou knowest, for thou searchest all hearts, and this thou knowest, for thou knowest all things—I sincerely desire and earnestly covet the Spirit of holiness to consecrate myself unreservedly unto thee."

There is yet another point to which I wish to have your particular attention, O ye that believe in Jesus. We are told in the text that once in the end of the world Christ appeared to put away sin. Now what is your conviction upon the subject? Did he put away sin or not? I anticipate the answer of every believer here—"Of course he did; by his one offering he put away sin for ever." Beloved, *why is it that some of you to-night are troubled about your sin?* Now look back during the past week; has there not been a great deal in your life that you have to mourn over? Do you live a single day in which you go to your rest contented with the review of your character or your conduct? I must acknowledge I never spent such a day, and I am afraid I never shall till I get home to heaven. Sins and sorrows multiplied pollute the day to my shame and my horror. But when I come to look to Jesus Christ my Lord, and trust in him, shall I feel dismayed on account of my sins? No, they are all forgiven; they are all forgiven! Yes, that particular sin—you know what it is—which has caused you so much trouble this week, is forgiven. There is no sin that you have fallen into, as a believer in Jesus, which can be laid to your charge. That bold speech of the apostle makes a wide sweep: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Observe, he does not say, "Any great things," but "anything"—any little things, anything, anything of any kind. Dost thou not know that though thou hast erred and strayed many times, and made thyself to be ashamed, yet still, when thou comest to the—

"Fountain fill'd with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,"

this truth is sure—that "the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from *all* sin." Then every believer here to-night is as clean in the sight of God as the snow which falls from heaven. Come, then, let us shake off these fears. He who knows that his debt is paid would be foolish to be troubled about the debt, and he who knows his sin is forgiven, may have, should have, ought to have, peace with God through Jesus Christ his Lord. My dear brethren, God will help me, I hope, to live more and more in the atmosphere of peace with God. I do believe the devil often worries us when there is no cause whatever for our being troubled. Sin is always to be hateful to us; we are always to loathe it; but when washed in the precious blood of Jesus we are to endeavour to realise that through his blood we are clean, and that, with his spotless vesture on, we are holy as the Holy One. Notwithstanding the depravity of our old nature, and the workings of the flesh against which we strive, yet we are accepted in the Beloved; we are justified by faith which is in Christ Jesus. Come, then, children of God, take your harps down from the willows, and tune them to a rapturous strain. Magnify the Lord your Righteousness. This is the name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness—Jehovah Tsidkenu. His name

shall be rapturous on our lips, and glorious in our ears, from this time forth even for ever and ever. He hath appeared to put away sin, and it *is* put away; let us, then, enjoy our rest.

I want the further attention of every believer here to another particular. Beloved, we read in this text that *Jesus Christ, in order to put away sin, has made a sacrifice of himself*. When that word "sacrifice" is used with such grand significance in reference to Christ, it looks almost like a disparagement of its high import to apply it in any reference to ourselves. Yet we have the mind of the Spirit in the words of the apostle Paul, who has said, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." *Ought we not, if Christ has made a sacrifice of himself for us, to make a sacrifice of ourselves for him?* He sacrificed *himself*. I told you this morning that it was more than his wealth, more than his honour which he offered. It was HIMSELF. Every Christian should offer himself a sacrifice to Christ. They did so in the martyr age. They did so in the first young hour of the church's enthusiasm, when apostolic zeal was fervent. But do we do so now? Talk ye of giving to the cause of God—why, very few of us give enough to sensibly impoverish ourselves thereby. We should be afraid of making a sacrifice of ourselves. In the service of God we generally take care not to injure ourselves by excessive exertions. Indeed, our friends are always very careful to warn us against any risk of this kind. Men in business may work as many hours as they like, and as hard as they will, to get money, and very seldom does any sagacious, prudent Mentor, shake his head and tell the young merchant that he is laying out his strength too recklessly, and devoting his energies too vigorously, in getting gain or acquiring a fortune. Oh, no! they would rather tell him to spread all his canvas and ply every sinew, especially when wind and tide are in his favour. But the minister of God, the servant of Christ, often has that judicious advice tendered to him, "Do thyself no harm; be sure and not work too hard." "It was never intended," they say, "that anyone should risk his health, consume his spirits, or deny himself innocent recreation, with an enthusiasm that far exceeds the line of duty," as if there were such a line or it were possible to define it. Ah! well, if the love of his Master be in him, as a constraining power, then kindling with the noble passion, and labouring with a fiery zeal, he will resent such expostulations as Christ did that of Peter, when, replying to his pitiful rebuke, "Pity thyself, Lord"—he said, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." We are bound to sacrifice ourselves, yielding up the members of our bodies as instruments of righteousness unto God, and devoting the faculties of our

renewed minds, that we may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. O my brethren and sisters, I have already said that I scarcely like this word sacrifice, because it involves nothing more than a reasonable service. If we gave up all that we had, and became beggars for Christ, it would display no such chivalrous spirit or magnanimous conduct after all. We should be gainers by the surrender. With Christ in our hearts, the light of life and the hope of glory, we should be rich to all the intents of bliss. We cannot stoop as he stooped. We cannot be poor with such poverty as he knew, neither can we renounce such riches as he once possessed. But, at any rate, let us not be niggards in our consecration. Let us yield ourselves wholly and heartily to Jesus Christ's work, and feel it to be our pleasure, our principle, our point of honour, not to shrink from labour nor to shun sacrifice, but to court labour and to invite opportunities of suffering and occasions for the giving of ourselves and of our substance to his cause. He was sacrificed for us, let us be a living sacrifice unto him.

Did you notice that word "once"? The text says he once offered himself a sacrifice—only once—once for all. Ah! well, brethren, we may take that word and apply it to ourselves. We can only be sacrificed for Christ *once*. In this world alone shall we have the opportunity of washing the saints' feet, of feeding the poor, of looking after the helpless and the ignorant. There is one thing for which heaven itself might envy the poor sons of earth—that there are works *to* be done here which—

"Perfect saints above,
And holy angels cannot do."

We might almost wish ourselves back from heaven if we could go there with any of our life's work undone. No; no; we would not seek untimely rest. If there is another soul to win; if there is another dram of bitter shame for us to drink; if there is another part of the sufferings of Christ for us to fulfil, we would wait until it is all done, and we can say, "I have fought the good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith." It is only once! It is only once! If you could only serve a friend once, you would like to do it well that time. You have only one life on earth, and oh, how short that may be! Waste not an hour. Spend none of its moments in wantonness or in selfishness, but let the whole of your strength, during the few years of your pilgrimage, be given up to your Lord. Once was he a sacrifice—only once, but that once thoroughly. Let us imitate him.

This morning I also dwelt upon that word "*appeared*." Christ was not ashamed to appear as a sacrifice for us in public, albeit deep dishonour was heaped upon his holy name; and, therefore, I say to believers here, let them not be ashamed to be publicly made sacrifices for Christ, though some should wag their heads in rude contempt, and others shoot out the tongue with bitter jibes at them. Do I speak to

any timid believer here, any Nicodemus who has slunk away, and will not dare to come with an open profession to the table of the Lord to-night? O my dear friend, Christ did not treat you so badly, and at the last, you hope, he will own your name amongst his followers. Do you own his name now? "Oh!" you say, "God's church is so imperfect." And what are you? Are you better than they? But you are afraid that you would not live up to your profession. Know ye not there is one who says, "My strength is sufficient for thee"? The path of duty is the path of safety. Be not ashamed to own your Lord, I pray you. Oh! it will come to pass one day that the highest honour will be given to that man who never blushed to stand at the pillory side by side with Christ, when he who was once crucified shall be crowned with glory and honour, and they shall be crowned with him who were willing to bear the shame with him. "These are they," saith he, "who were with me in my humiliation in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. Stand back, angels! Make way, seraphs! Ye have never been spit upon and scoffed at for me as these have been. They shall be honoured as princes of the blood; they shall sit upon my throne, even as I have overcome, and am sitting down upon my Father's throne." O Knights of the Cross, let shame never trouble you; or if the crimson blush should rise to your face, be ashamed that you are ashamed. Be jealous of yourselves that you are not more bold to confess your Master's name. Christ once appeared and put away sin by making a sacrifice of himself: let us take care, then, constantly to emulate the example of him whom we cannot too worthily admire.

I shall not detain you longer. I have said too little unless God has blessed it; I have said enough if he shall apply it. I beseech you, brethren and sisters, when you come to the table, do not be satisfied with these outward signs. Think it nothing to eat the bread or to drink the wine. In fact, it is less than nothing and vanity, unless there be something more. The great thing is for that bread to help you to think of the broken body of your Lord, and for that cup to show you the agonies of his soul when he was exceeding sorrowful even unto death. Come hither with the subject of this morning's sermon fresh upon your hearts; come with the thoughts which it suggests this evening, burning for fuller expressions in your lives; and as you sit before the Lord in the fellowship of his people, be this your desire, "Lord, as thou hast given thyself to me, let me know experimentally all the blessings which thy blood has purchased. Bring me unto communion with thyself. Permit me to put my fingers into the prints of the nails, and thrust my hand into thy side to-night. Give me the cleansing, the purification, the sanctification which thy blood can bestow, and help me from this day to be thine, and thine alone, till death shall take me to dwell with thee where thou art, and till thy second coming shall make me to be like thee, when I shall see thee as thou art.

May God bless these words to us for Jesus' sake. Amen.