

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

NOW.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 4TH, 1864, BY

C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”—2 Corinthians vi. 2.

WE frequently hear the question discussed as to which are the best times. Some are perpetually singing the praises of the “good old times;” though, if one reads the page of history, it does not appear that the old times deserve any very special praise, unless oppression, ignorance, persecution, and abundant suffering deserve to be the theme of song. It is the common habit of the fathers, with tears in their eyes, to say, “The former days were better than these,” but we have the wisdom of Solomon on our side when we tell them they do not enquire wisely concerning this. “Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this.” (Ecclesiastes vii. 10.) Others there be who are always boasting of the present eventful period. There was none like it: this is the era of invention and of progress, the age of liberty and of light, when slavery must cast away her fetters, and superstition must hide herself among her congenial associates, the moles and bats. But I cannot perceive that this century is so much the age of gold as to need any very enthusiastic praises. Its greatest virtues are counterbalanced by greater sins; and the progress which has been made towards liberty, has scarcely kept pace with its advance towards licentiousness: the barriers have been broken down, it is true, but in some places the bulwarks have fallen too. Many there be who with bright eyes are looking forward to the future, and their declaration is, that the “good time is coming,” if we but “wait a little longer;” if we will but look ahead, till this beast shall have been slain, that vial shall have been poured out, and the other seal shall have been broken, then it is that we shall arrive at halcyon times. We agree with these watchful waiters: the age of gold is yet to come; the Advent is the world’s best and brightest hope, insomuch that every lover of his kind, may importunately cry out, “Come quickly; yea, come quickly, Lord Jesus.”

But there is one thought which should not leave us when talking about times and seasons, namely, that now, now, just now, this present flying moment, that second which is being recorded by the ticking of yonder clock, *is the only time which we have to work with*. I can do nothing with the days that are past, I can do nothing with the days future—yet I reach out towards them—but I cannot improve them. The past and present are fields far beyond the reach of my culture. I can neither plough nor sow the future, nor can I prune and correct the past. For practical purposes, the only time I have is that which is just now passing. Did I say I had it? While I said I had it, it is gone, like the meteor which dashes adown the sky, or the eagle which flies afar, or the swift ships which disappear beyond the horizon.

Time present is the only time I may ever have. Ere any future shall have become present, I may be merged in eternity. As far as I know, *this day* may be the end of my life's career, and when yonder sun sinks to his rest, I may sink to my rest also, so far as time is concerned. If there be more time allotted to me, yet it will never come to me in any other guise and form than as time present. I call it future now, but when I get, say, to 1866, or 1880, it will be just like to these moments, it will be to me *present* then; and consequently, for practical purposes, however much we may speculate upon the past or the future, the present moment is the only time we have, may have, or ever can have; and it becomes important that all our thoughts should be centred upon it, if we would make our calling and election sure. Our text directs us to that solemn employment, and it does so by a very telling argument.

You perceive that our text is a quotation. How ought we to value the Old Testament! If inspired men of God, who spoke by the Holy Ghost, yet quoted the Old Testament, how valuable must be its bejewelled sentences! The apostle here quotes from the forty-ninth chapter of Isaiah, the eighth verse. In that passage the Lord God is speaking to the Messiah, speaking to our Lord Jesus Christ, and he says to him, "In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee." The first part, then, of this verse is a quotation from Isaiah; the second part of the verse is Paul's commentary upon the passage, "Behold, *now* is the accepted time." He takes his text from the Old Testament, but he gives us a New-Testament sermon upon it. Let us try if we can catch the apostle's meaning.

When Paul was reading in Isaiah, he perceived that the Lord Jehovah had expressly said to him, "Whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, (and who is this but the Lord Jesus?) "In an acceptable time have I heard thee." Jesus' sighs, and tears, and bloody sweat in the garden of Gethsemane did not fall unheeded; like the blood of Abel, they cried from the ground, and were heard acceptably above; an answer was given: this was plainly proved by the descent of the angel

to strengthen the Saviour; so the prophetic words add, "In a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee." The apostle infers from this, that inasmuch as God hath accepted Christ, the representative of his people, he hath thereby ushered in an era of acceptance. Acceptance given to the Saviour is, in the apostle's view, acceptance given to sinners. Inasmuch as Christ is heard—he prayed not for himself, but for us—there is therefore an accepted time for us begun and commenced from the day when Christ went up to the tree, stretched his hands to the nails, bowed his head to death, and said, "It is finished." Paraphrase the text thus: "I have heard Jesus, the surety, in an acceptable time; in the day of salvation have I succoured him, the mighty Saviour; and therefore to you, my people, to you, poor lost and wandering sinners, to you, now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation." If Christ had not died, there had never been a day of salvation. If Christ had not been heard and accepted, an accepted time there never could have come to us; but since he, man's representative, hath obtained favour in the eyes of God, and through his complete work, hath for ever settled that favour upon himself, there is favour in the heart of God to those whom Christ represented, even to those transgressors for whom he maketh intercession.

We shall now take the text, as God may help us, using it first, to look at *the now of believers*; then, at *the now of sinners*; and after this taking wing from the text, we shall offer a few reflections upon *now in heaven*; and close with a few solemn thoughts upon *now in hell*.

I. First, then, NOW, WITH THE BELIEVER. With him, "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

As a believer, it is well for the Christian to live in the present. I say, as a believer, for, alas! there is a temptation to make our faith a thing of the past. It is nearly sixteen years since I first looked to the crucified Redeemer, and was lightened, and my face was not ashamed. Is there a temptation in me to say the faith which I exercised in Christ in my youthful days *has* saved me, and therefore I am now in a different position from what I was then, and need not feel now as I did at first? If there be such a temptation, let me shake it off as a man would shake off the deadly sleep of frozen climes; let me this morning feel myself to be still *in myself* just what I was, a sinner loathsome, undeserving, ill-deserving, hell-deserving. And what then? Why, let me then this morning, stand where I stood in the first moment of my salvation, at the foot of the Saviour's cross, and look up and view the flowing of his soul-redeeming blood, with divine assurance, knowing he has made my peace with God. At this moment, my dear brother, your proper standing is as a sinner saved by blood, looking up to those dear wounds from which your pardon streamed. Have you had many virtues since then? *Has* the grace of God led you on to add to your faith courage; and to

your courage, experience; and to your experience, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity? Yet, for all this, your safest, happiest, holiest, best position, is at the foot of the cross, with none of these things in your hand as the price of your salvation, but looking to your Redeemer, who alone has found a ransom for you. Since the day of your espousals you have committed many sins: dare you look at them without trembling? How often have we grieved our Lord! Our love to him! Shall we dare to call it love? Our faith in him, how mixed with unbelief! Our zeal, how dashed with selfishness! Our humility, how stained with pride! Our patience, how spoiled with murmuring! Our every good thing marred and rendered worthless! What a crop of weeds the soil of our heart has produced! When we look within we see, "The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy;" and every unclean bird seeks a lodging-place in our hearts as in a grove of vanities: what shall we then do? Why, come just now with all these sins, and wash once more in that fountain which has lost none of its fulness, and feel the power of that precious blood which has not diminished one whit in its efficacy. I know the temptation is to climb to some higher room, but let us be warned by the non-success of the boasting Pharisee, and taught by the justification of the humble publican, still to cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Beware of trying to live before God as a minister. Brother minister, this is poor living: to live officially, to go to the closet or come into God's house merely as holding a certain profession, oh! this is starving work. If your tendency be to live as Church-members, if not altogether as worldly men, rouse yourselves from it, I pray you, and confess with Paul, "And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." The proper place of a Christian is never to get one inch beyond this—a monument of grace, a sinner saved by blood. I live in Jesus, on Jesus, for Jesus, with Jesus, and hope soon to be perfectly conformed to his likeness. Let me recollect that if there could be a moment in which my soul might stand out of Christ, no longer leaning upon him, and no longer covered with his righteousness, that very moment I must be condemned; for there is no condemnation to them that are *in* Christ Jesus, but there is a terrible condemnation against every soul that is *out* of him. Have ye climbed so high that ye have towered above the place of the poor thief? Come back again, brother, for thou hast climbed to a dangerous altitude, and may be thou shalt find it a gallows whereon Haman was hanged, and thou shalt hang with him. Or hast thou dived so deep in a sense of thine own depravity, that thou hast forgotten to rest on Jesus Christ as able still to save thee? My brother, look up from the hole of the pit, for in it there is no water, and thou wilt perish there with a grievous famine. O, then, away with all but Jesus! None but Jesus: this must be our watchword at the gates of death, and we must enter heaven with

it. As we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so must we walk in him: he must be Alpha and Omega, beginning and end, author and finisher, first and last. As believers, let us by God the Holy Spirit's grace keep our trust just where it was at first, in him whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation for our sins.

Take the word "now" again, and look at the Christian *as a professor*. *Now* you are in the house of God, my dear friends, and you recollect that you profess to be followers of Christ. Now, therefore, you sing in holy hymns of praise, and join in solemn prayers to God, as Christians should do in the worship of God. To-morrow morning, some of you, perhaps, will be at Copenhagen Fields' Market, some of you at Newgate Market, others of you will be lighting the fire in your master's house, others seeing to your numerous families, others taking down the shop shutters; will you then recollect, dear friends, that *now*, where you then are, you are a Christian. You are not to say, "I was a Christian *yesterday*," but "now, *now* I am a Christian." A customer will come in; the temptation will be, perhaps, to take more than you ought to do; will you please recollect, "*Now* I am a child of God;" not "*yesterday*, when I was listening to Mr. Spurgeon, at the Tabernacle," but *now*. When you are in the market, there will be much to plague and vex you, and perhaps you will think, "I cannot enjoy the presence of God here." Oh! but, my dear brother, "*now* is the accepted time." Buying sheep, selling bullocks, using the hammer, snipping with the scissors, working at the plough, tending your sheep—now, now, *now* is the day of salvation: you are still a Christian, therefore act as a Christian. But you are much plagued and vexed, somebody teazes you, things go wrong: what could be a better stop to that little rising passion, what could keep under the naughty spirit better than to recollect, "Now, now I am a Christian—even now." A true Christian cannot shake off his character. He is really what he is: he always must be a Christian. I heard the other day of a certain Scotch moderate minister, who being much provoked by a person in his parish, said, "If I were not a minister, I would give you a sound thrashing, sir;" and when he was further irritated, he took off his coat and said, "There is the minister—there he lies"—he was then in his shirt sleeves—"there is the minister, and I am only So-and-so, and will give you your due," and proceeded at once to give the man a sound thrashing. It is just possible the man may have deserved it, that is not to my point; but if a man can say, "There lies the minister," or, when you take off your cloth coat to-night, if you can say, "There lies the member of the Church:" if you, good women, when you get off your gowns, can say, as you hang up your best attire in the wardrobe, "There goes the Christian," then you have no religion at all, you have none whatever worth having; you have the faith of devils that will *damn you*, but not the faith of Christians

that will *save you*. It is not a religious coat, but a renewed heart: I pray you keep this at all times on your mind, "Now I am accepted; now I am saved: how can such a man as I do such a thing? 'How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?'" Mordecai once wore the king's robe, but he soon put it off, because he was not really a king; and thus do many act who wear the garb of religion in the house of God, but cast it off when they go home. When Lord Burleigh, Queen Elizabeth's councillor, reached his home, he was so little pleased with the cares of state, that taking off his robe, he threw it down, saying, "Lay there, Lord Chancellor." Ah! how irksome must some men's religion be to them, and how cheerfully would they lay aside its restraints! but you, who are really the Lord's, will, I trust, feel your faith to be your constant help, and your profession your perpetual honour. You will not, you cannot sin, because you are born of God.

Suppose a brother has his pen in his hand, and is going to write what we sometimes call a nasty letter—now suppose an angel should whisper in his ears as he is writing, "Now, now you are one of God's chosen; you have been washed in the precious blood of Christ, and now you profess to be a member of his body, a king and a priest unto God." Why, methinks he would throw the pen away and tear the paper up. Or, just when you are about to proceed to extremities with some poor soul who asks your mercy, if you could recollect that you are now, even *now* an heir of heaven, methinks you would say, "Lord, give me grace to act according to my profession, and not to stain the character I have assumed." Let "*now*" keep upon your mind with regard to your profession and the duty which it brings.

Dear friends, let me comfort your hearts by the recollection that *now, as a child of God, you are a possessor of present privileges*. I do not know what thy frame of mind may be this morning. Thou mayst have been very much tempted, thou mayst feel, through some sickness of body, anything but cheerful, but if thou believest in Christ, remember *now* thou art a son of God, and though it doth not yet appear what thou shalt be, yet, when he shall appear, thou shalt be like him, for thou shalt see him as he is. At this very moment, I, a believer in Christ, am completely pardoned; no spot of sin remains on me if I believe in Jesus. White as the newly-fallen snow is every soul that has been washed in the precious blood. Think of this delightful truth, desponding Christian, and let your countenance be no more sad. Your eye of faith is dim, your evidences are very slender, your graces are at a low ebb, but you are completely forgiven, absolved and acquitted at this moment, if your soul rests upon the Rock of Ages. You are completely justified at this moment, despite your sins. Wearing your Saviour's righteousness, you stand all beautiful in the eye of God at this very moment: the words of Solomon to the spouse are the words of Christ to you, though you are vexed with a thousand cares, "Thou art all fair my love: there is no spot in thee." Covered with his righteousness and washed in his blood, even the pure and holy eyes of God can find no fault in thee, and, as a consequence of this, thou art this moment accepted. "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel." "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" God doth not look upon thee with any anger. Though thy heart

may be struggling and tormented with sin, yet if thou art resting upon God's Son, the love of God is flowing out to thee in a stream which never can be stayed. Think of this sweet thought, and let thy soul be filled with the perfume of it. Loved of God *now*, the object of the almighty affection of the blessed One art thou *now*. Nay, more than this, thou art not only accepted, but thou art in union with Christ *now*. Beloved believer, canst thou realize it? Thou art a member of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. There is a vital union at this instant between you and the Lord of glory; the life-blood flows from him, the Head, to thee; and at this moment, whether in thy worst state of feeling or thy best, thou art now one with Jesus, by eternal union, one. I would to God we realized our present privileges. We are thinking about the heaven that is to come, and forgetting the heaven below. The first we should *do*; but the second we should *not leave undone*. The men of grace find that the fruits of paradise hang over the wall, and they begin to pluck and eat thereof before they pass the gates of pearl. Come, Christian, "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Since Jesus is accepted, so are you even now. Live upon your present privileges and be glad.

Recollect that wherever there is present privilege there is also a *present duty to be performed*, and so I touch a string which I made to sound just now. Since "now is the accepted time" with sinners, now is the accepted time for thee to work, O Christian. I know what you *intend* to do; you have vast plans and machinery. My brother, I do not care what you mean to do to-morrow, but I do care about what you intend to do *to-day*. Oh! those day-dreams of ours! We are always intending in a year or two's time to be such valorous defenders of the faith, such good soldiers of Christ, such good winners of souls. My dear brother, what art thou doing *now*? There flies that moment; what does it bear upon its wings? Another drop of the stream of time is passed away: what action of thine is reflected on its crystal surface? Art thou doing anything now? "I do not know," says one, "I do not know that I can do anything just *now*. When the service is broken up, I may get home, and then try to do something." I would pray thee remember that "now is the accepted time," and therefore now seek to get thy heart warm; and, when the service is over, think thou hearest the *now*, and begin to speak to those in the pew, or on the way home talk to any person you may meet with; and then, to-morrow, do not say, "Sunday is over, and I cannot do any good on the week-day," but think you hear the clarion-sound of this word *now*. You have a sister unsaved, pray for her *now*; you have a brother unconverted, write to him if you cannot speak to him, and do it *now*. There is a court, a blind alley, which needs visiting; a dying man who needs instruction—do it *now*. Do you feel you have a talent? Use it *now*. You think you will have a better sphere in ten years' time; I pray thee get a sphere *now*, for *now* is the day of salvation. I say again, I do not care what you do with your *to-morrow*. If you will but give God your *now*, your to-morrows will be all right. For duty, then, let the Christian prize the 'now.'

One thought more. The Christian recollects that *now he may die*. What is his prospect now? Let him take courage. If his Lord should

come now, he has his loins girt about, and his lamp well trimmed, and he is ready to enter in to the supper; he will not be overtaken as by a thief, but his Lord, when he cometh, shall find him watching: and should death come before the Advent, then he can say, "Now shall I enter into my rest, now shall I see the face of my Lord Jesus without a veil to hide him, and I shall be with him supremely blest." The glorious Advent or the bliss of heaven is your prospect *now*; not that you will go to heaven if you die in twenty years' time, but if you die *now*, if the hand of death should take you in the street, or you should feel its numbing influence while you are in the pew; *now* the celestial band shall bear you to the sublimities of glory, and introduce you to the presence of him whom you love. *Now*, Christian, rejoice, *now* labour, *now* live at the foot of the Saviour's cross.

II. May the Master give us power on the second point to deal with "NOW" AS IT RESPECTS THE SINNER.

The great mischief of the most of men is that they procrastinate. It is not that they resolve to be damned, but that they resolve to be saved *to-morrow*. It is not that they reject Christ for ever, but that they reject Christ *to-day*; and truly they might as well reject him for ever, as continue perpetually to reject him "*now*." Sinner, let me put thy "*now*" before thee *as a man*. Thou must soon pass away and be forgotten, like the flowers that withered in autumn, and the insects which flitted through the summer hours. *Now*, then, is thy time to think about eternity, and to prepare thyself to meet thy God. "See to your business first, James," said a careful father—"get a good trade, and after that, look to your religion." There spake a fool, who knew not that infinite wisdom has commanded, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Wouldst thou give God the fag-end of thy life? Take care lest thou have no old age at all; for many candles are blown out as soon as lit. Wouldst thou, as a lamb, be Satan's? and when thou art withered and worn out, shall the lean skeleton of tottering weakness be brought and laid upon the altar? Be it not so; let thy flower be plucked in the bud and put into the hand of Jesus. God grant thee grace to seek him in the days of thy youth, for the promise is, "They that seek me early shall find me." As a man, I charge thee, since there is only a "*day of salvation*" before the sun goes down and the black night of eternal ruin shall come upon thee, lay hold upon the hope that is set before thee.

As a sinner, I also address thee concerning this "*now*." "*Now* is the day of *salvation*: thou needest it *now*. God is angry with thee *now*. Thou art condemned already. It is not the torment of hell thou hast to dread only, but if thou hast thy senses, thou wouldst tremble at thy present state. *Now* without God, *now* without hope, *now* an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, *now* dead in trespasses and sins, *now* in danger of the wrath to come, thou wantest a Saviour this morning, young man. Young woman, I do not charge thee to store up medicine against the maladies of twenty years hence, it is the sickness of to-day of which I would fain have thee cured this very morning. It is not to look after a danger which shall press upon thee when thou growest old that I exhort thee, but now thou art on the brink of the precipice. *Now* therefore thou needest to be saved.

But here comes the beauty of my text. As a sinner under the gospel, I pray thee to recollect that "Now is the accepted time." The most of my unconverted hearers do not believe this. I know what you are saying. You say "I have had a great many thoughts about religion;" but why dost thou not believe in Christ *now*? "Well," you say, "I will endeavour to think seriously of it:" but what will be the result of your thinking? After you have thought ever so much, do you imagine you will think yourself into salvation? If the gospel command were "Think, and be saved," I would cheerfully allow you a month's thinking; but the command is, "*Believe* in the Lord Jesus Christ," and "*Now* is the accepted time." "But, sir, I do not think such things should be done in a hurry." A hurry! What does David say? "I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments." A hurry! when a man is on the edge of damnation and on the borders of the grave! Do not talk of hurry, sir; when it is a case of life and death, let us fly swift as a flash of lightning. "Well, but I do not feel prepared." Do you think that disobeying God will make you more prepared? If you have lived a month without believing, you have lived a month in sin; do you think when you have sinned more, you will be better prepared to obey the command which comes to you, "Believe *now* in the Lord Jesus Christ"? "Yes, but my heart feels so hard." Dear friend, dost thou think thou wilt be able to soften it between this and next week, or next month, or next year? Is there anything in the Word of God which leads thee to believe that thou canst in any way soften thine own heart? Is not this a mighty work of grace? and when the text says, "*Now* is the accepted time," does not this suppose that even if you have a hard heart, still it is true that now is the accepted time? "Well, but," saith one, "I do not feel convinced enough." That is to say, dear friend, you do not think that "now is the accepted time:" you think that another time when you get more convicted will be the accepted time. Here is a quarrel between God and you. He says "*Now*;" you say, "No, no, it cannot be true; when I am more convicted, then will be the time." My dear friend, are you not altogether mistaken? The likelihoods are that you never will be more convicted than now, if you are brought now to think upon these things. Your heart will certainly grow harder in course of time; but softer, never. I never heard the case of a man whose heart was made softer by delay. "Yes, but I should like to get home and pray." My text does not say it will be the accepted time when you get home and pray; it says, "*Now*," and as I find you are "*now*" in this pew, "*now* is the accepted time." If you trust Christ *now*, you will be accepted: if now you are enabled to throw yourself simply into the hands of Christ, now is the accepted time between God and you. "Well," says another, "it does seem strange to think that I shall be saved this morning: there must be a little time occupied in it surely?" The text says, "*Now* is the accepted time;" it does not say, "There is *an* accepted time lasting through a period of weeks, and months, in which we pump ourselves up into a state of grace," but "*now*," in a moment, acceptance is given. But do you really mean it" says one, "that I, as I am, trusting Christ this morning, without any previous preparation whatever, shall be accepted?" My dear friend, it is not what *I* mean; it is what the Scripture means.

“Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” The moment a sinner trusts in Christ, he is saved, and if thou trustest him now, it is the day of salvation to thee.

Will you kindly look at that text—just open your Bibles now, and look at it—you, especially, who are unconverted, whether my hearers or readers? It has two fingerposts to point to it: two *beholds*. “Behold, now is the accepted time.” Now, stop and look at that. Do you believe it? Say “Yes,” or “No.” There is another “Behold”—“Behold, now is the day of salvation.” Do you believe that? I have asked you to look at the text, because I want you to look in its face, and, if you dare, say “That is a lie.” No, you do not dare to say that. Then if you do not dare to say so, away must go in a single moment all those excuses which you make about a hard heart, not being convinced enough, praying, reading, preparing, and so on. Now, just as the clock ticks, not as an event to take place during a quarter of an hour, but in a moment the whole thing is done: “Now is the day of salvation.” And what dost thou say to this? Does God the Holy Spirit now lead thy soul to say, “Gracious Lord, I trust my soul with thee now”? Oh! it is all done. Fly up to heaven, angels! bear the tidings, tell the spirits who look down anxiously watching for the spreading kingdom of the Saviour, that another heir of glory is born, another prodigal has returned to his Father’s house. Now! now! now! O God, let conquering grace get the victory! How my soul has longed over this text! and now when I get at it, I cannot handle it as I would; but, if I might, I would fain take some of you by the hand—think that I have your hand now—and I would put this to you, I may never have another opportunity of preaching this text in your ears, for you may be gone before there is another season to hear. “Wilt thou be made whole?” “Canst thou believe?” “If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” Old Nabal said to David, “There be many servants now-a-days that break away every man from his master.” A bad old fellow, but he spake a good sentence there without knowing it. Are there not some here who will break away from their old master? Are there not some who would fain be servants of Christ and no longer servants of the devil? O souls, if God has made you willing to break with Satan, to lay hold on Christ, this is not a day in which Christ will deny you, for he has expressly said, *now* he will accept you, for “*Now* is the accepted time.” “But, sir, I am a harlot steeped up to the throat in vice.” Still “*Now* is the accepted time.” “Ah! but I have grown grey, sir, I am seventy or eighty, and have lived in sin all these years.” Yes, but “*Now* is the accepted time.” Do you believe it or not? “Oh! I have refused the invitation a thousand times over.” Yes, but still, still the abundant grace of God says, “*Now*, is the accepted time.” I would to God some of you would decide this very morning, this very morning in your pew where you are now sitting. Now, O Spirit of the living God, waken those whom thou hast chosen and set apart unto eternal life.

I have not time now to dwell on the other two points; we will merely, therefore, hint at them.

III. NOW IN HEAVEN! Can you think of it? Now in heaven!

“What must it be to be there?”

They *now* delight in the society of Christ; they are *now* blest with communion with all the glorified spirits; they are *now* resting from their labours, their toils, their sufferings; they are *now* full of joys, while to their golden harps they sing; they are just *now* satisfied with the favour and full of the goodness of the Lord; they are *now* knowing what they knew not here, knowing even as they are known; they are *now* more than conquerors, waving their palm branches; they are *now* safely shut in from all fear of danger; they are *now* perfect, without taint of sin or remnant of corruption; they are *now* supremely blest. I merely point the finger where my wing cannot carry me, and where my eye cannot see. Such are your friends who have departed. Your wife is there *now*, your little infant children are there, your brother is there, your grandsire is there, and we, if we should now die, blessed be the name of God, many of us, should know what they know, and taste what they enjoy in an instant.

IV. That is a dreary thought—NOW IN HELL!

Some of my hearers who listened to me last year, and in the years that are past, are now—*now*—in hell! *Now*, where no hope can come; *now*, where no gospel shall ever be preached; *now*, where they bitterly regret their wasted Sabbaths and despised opportunities; *now*, where memory holds a dreadful reign, reminding them of all their sins; *now*, “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched;” where they gnaw their fire-tormented tongues in vain; *now*, where God’s fury is manifested to the full in Tophet’s hideous fire; *now*, where devils, once their tempters, become their tormentors; *now*, where sinners, who kept jovial company, help to increase the doleful *miserere* of sighs, and groans, and weeping, and gnashing of teeth; *now*, accursed of God, accursed for ever and ever! And within a moment, that may be the lot of every sinner here. Within the twinkling of an eye, there is not a man or woman among us out of Christ who may not know this. One drop of blood goes wrong—a thousand chances, as we say, may cause it, and hell is your portion. Every anatomist knows that hundreds of times in an hour, through the internal economy of the human frame, our life is in danger; nay, there is not a second in which it is not so. “Great God! on what a feeble thread hang everlasting things!”

“Our life contains a thousand springs,
And dies if one be gone;
Strange! that a harp of thousand strings
Should keep in tune so long.”

While we are in this danger, we are passing on to our doom—

“We nightly pitch our moving tent
A day’s march nearer home.”

But where is that home to be with you, unconverted ones? When the express trains first began to run to Scotland, there was seen at the station, one evening, a gentleman tall and thin, whose cheek had the consumptive mark upon it. The porters asked him several questions about his luggage, of which there was a good deal, and when he had been asked several times by different persons, another came up and said, “Where are you going, sir?” Being of short temper, and in great

haste, he said, "To hell!" A servant of Christ passed by that moment, and heard the answer. He sought to get in the same carriage, and did so, but at the other end of it; and this gentleman was talking very freely to different persons upon common topics, and the man thought, "I will get a word in if I can." So he joined in the general tenour of the conversation till they alighted at a refreshment station, when, taking the opportunity, he said to the gentleman, "When do you expect to get to the end of your journey?" "Oh," said he, "I am going to cross at such-and-such a town by the boat to-night, and hope to get to my journey's end about twelve o'clock to-morrow morning." The man said, "I think you misunderstand my question. You said when the porter asked you just now where you were going to, that you were going to a very different place." "Ah! yes, I recollect I did," said the gentleman, "but I am sometimes very hasty." The other said to him, "Was it true? Are you going to hell? If so, when do you expect to get there?" And he began to talk to him about that sickness which he could see so certainly in his cheek, and warned him that unless he sought another road, and fled to Christ, the only refuge, he would certainly reach that dreadful end. There are some in this place, who if they were labelled this morning as to where they are going, would have to be directed "*to hell.*" You know that this is the case. And when will you get to your journey's end? Some here may live another fifty years. I pray God that that question of mine may haunt you, and if it be never blessed to you before, may it be then, "*When will you get to your journey's end?*" *When will you arrive in hell?* This morning may some of you in your hearts say, "I am journeying thither, but, by the grace of God, I have come to a dead halt, and not another inch will I go. Lord, make me ready to go to heaven, give me now to trust the Saviour that I may live." May God bless these feeble words of mine to his glory and your profit. Amen.
