

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

UNREASONABLE REASONS.

A Sermon

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“O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?”—Matthew xiv. 31.*

OUR Saviour did not ask Peter that question for his own information. He could have told Peter much more about his unbelieving heart than Peter knew. The Saviour was well acquainted with those springs from which the unbelief of Peter arose. He asked it, therefore, rather, that Peter might make the enquiry of himself,—that he might look into the matter, and see how groundless his unbelief was, so that on the next occasion he might not fall into the same error. I believe it is sometimes a very great cure for unbelief to look it in the face even while we are under it; and after we have escaped from it, it is still a preventive for the future if we look back upon it, and reason concerning it. Remember how David, in the forty-second Psalm, twice asked himself, “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?” He was persuaded that the questioning of his unbelief would convict him of its folly. It only needs to be looked at closely to lose all its terror, to be robbed of its seeming foundation, and to be overcome.

I am afraid that most of us have, some time or other in our lives, been like sinking Peter, and have cried, “Lord, save me,” not in tones of faith, but in the language of unbelief; and if so, it

* Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon, upon the same text, are *The New Park Street Pulpit*, No. 246, “Mr. Fearing Comforted;” and *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 1,856, “The History of Little-faith,” and No. 2,925, “Reasons for Doubting Christ.”

will be as good a thing for us as for Peter to hear the Master say to us to-night, "Wherefore didst thou doubt? Wherefore didst thou doubt? Was there any good reason for it? Was there any excuse for it? Did any good come of it? Wherefore didst thou doubt?" And I hope, too, that after I have spoken to believers in that way, I may have a word for sinners; only for them I shall have to take liberties with the text, and alter it into the present tense, saying to anyone who is desirous of peace in Christ, but who trembles and is afraid, "Wherefore dost thou doubt? Wherefore dost thou doubt? Why dost thou continue in this state of hesitancy and unbelief?"

I. First, then, I have to say to THE CHILD OF GOD, "*Wherefore didst thou doubt?*"

Some Christians appear to go from one form of doubt to another. Fears are with them perennial. They are plants that affect the shade; they seldom open their golden cups to drink in the blessed light of the divine sun. Even the strongest believers are, I fear, at times overcome with this disease. As King David, that matchless warrior, once waxed faint, the bravest servants of God sometimes faint even in the day of battle. I will ask them, each one, to look back upon any seasons of doubtings or faintings, whether they be numerous or few, and I will then say to each one, "Wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Did you doubt the promise thinking it was not firm enough? It was a promise to meet your trial; did you distrust it? It was the promise of God; did you think that peradventure it was fallible, and might be broken? It was a promise sent to you by inspired apostles or prophets as the case might be; did you still think it was no better than the word of a man, and might fall to the ground? You have often placed great reliance upon the promises of those you love; could you not rely upon the promise of God? You have found man's promise sometimes true when you have trusted it; were you afraid that God's promise would not be true; or was it that you had met with so many disappointments trusting in an arm of flesh that you thought the Lord to be altogether such as man is? Did you think that he was a man that he would lie, or the son of man that he would repent? Did you forget that Jesus Christ made the promises Yea and Amen in himself to the glory of God? Was that the reason? If so, how wicked it was to doubt the promise of God! How could you do it?

Did your unbelief assail the promise in itself? Did you think your deliverance a matter of such difficulty that omnipotence could not accomplish it? Were you in such want that you supposed the stores of heaven could not supply you? Were you of their mind who said, "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" Or of his who exclaimed, "If the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be?" Did you conceive that anything was too hard for the Lord; that his arm was shortened, that he could not save; that his granaries were empty, that he could not feed you; that the river of God, which is full of water, was dried up? Did

you conceive that the munitions wherein you dwelt were no longer munitions of rock, but of crumbling sand, that your bread would not be given you, and that your water would not be sure, because God had failed? Beloved, if that thought lay at the bottom of your unbelief, was it not a baseless thing indeed? What a slander upon God, and upon God's almightiness, to think that he had promised what he could not perform! Whether it was his truthfulness or his power which your unbelief attacked, it was equally a wanton and an unpardonable thing. God will pardon it, I know; but I mean that it was unpardonable to yourself, for surely you must now feel as if you could not forgive yourself for having doubted either the power or the truthfulness of your God.

Where else did the unbelief lie? *Had you something in your own experience which troubled you?* Was there something which you remembered in the past of failure on God's part? I will ask you,—though I do not want you to answer to anyone but just to whisper the answer to yourself,—Had there been a cause in some dark hour? Had he forsaken you? Had he proved an Ahithophel? Though you had eaten with him, did he lift up his heel against you? Did he turn a deaf ear to you when you sought him in the hour of peril? Had he then been false after all? Was there something dark and mysterious to others, which to yourself was made plain by the belief that the Lord had deceived you, that he had utterly failed and changed? Was it so? You repudiate with horror the thought. Then, beloved, "Wherefore didst thou doubt?" Since already you deny that the promise made you doubt, or that the Promiser was one whom you had cause to doubt, since also you must now confess that there was nothing in your experience that could have caused you to doubt, because the past had all been a proof of the faithfulness of God, then "Wherefore didst thou doubt?"

The child that has always been fed by its father, to whom the father has always been kind, loving, and tender, who then doubts without any sort of reason, is surely to be blamed. Dear child, what art thou at? Here is a beloved wife, we will say, and for many years she has been the joy of her husband; he has done all for her comfort that she could desire; yes, and often, before she has expressed her desire, he has anticipated her wants, and made her life very happy in her confidence in him. And now is she going to doubt him? "No," she says, "I would not do him that injustice; in all my life with him I have had no reason to distrust him, therefore I cannot wantonly throw away my confidence." Well, child of God, there was never husband so tender to his spouse as thy God has been to thee. There was never one on earth, in any relationship, that has proved his faithfulness to another as thy Lord, thy Bridegroom, has proved his faithfulness to thee. If thou wilt never doubt till thou hast cause to doubt him, doubting will never trouble thy spirit. But thou hast doubted him, and the question comes cuttingly to thee, under such an aspect, "Wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Was there something about the experience of others that led you into doubt and fear? We will imagine that you met with some hoar-head, someone who had long been a pilgrim on the road to heaven, who took you on one side, and holding you as the ancient mariner detained the wedding guest, said to you, "It is a fiction that God is true, and you are a dupe if you trust him, for I have gone on a pilgrimage, and though it was fair at setting out, I found it foul along the road; and the promises I relied upon failed me. I came to them as wells in the desert, and found them dry. I looked up to them feeling that they were as sure as the sunshine, but they did not warm me. God had forgotten to be gracious, and in his anger he had shut up the bowels of his compassion." Have you met with such a being? I have seen many of God's people, my experience and observation have been rather wide; but I have never met with one who has come to me to make an *exposé* of his God, and say, "I have been deceived by him."

We have seen some of them on their dying beds, and dying men let out tales sometimes, and tell truths unthought of before. They are not able to keep secrets then. I think I have known some of them, honest men, who at such times, close upon the borders of eternity, could not have lied; they were not accustomed to do so at other times, but then I am sure the truth would have been imperative upon them had it not been so before, and they have declared that not one good thing had failed of all that the Lord God had promised. Their declaration was, that they had found him faithful and true. In six troubles he had been with them, and in seven he had not forsaken them. Well, then, "Wherefore didst thou doubt?" If there has been no story told thee by another, and no information from those who have gone further on the road than thou hast, which should lead thee to distrust thy God, wherefore, oh! wherefore, without any reason or cause whatever, "Wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Did you doubt because you thought the covenant was an unworthy thing? You know it is "ordered in all things, and sure." You have learnt from God's Word that it stands fast like the great mountains, and abides like the eternal hills. You are not of those who think that God has entered into covenant with his dear Son, and yet will run back from it. You do not suspect that a covenant, which has been ratified as the covenant of grace has been, will ever come to an end. I am sure you do not. Wherefore then didst thou doubt, when there is a covenant, a divine covenant, ever standing?

Have you forgotten that the covenant was sealed with an oath? God swore, and because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself. Will you look the fact in the face, that to doubt one promise in the covenant amounts to an accusation of perjury against the Most High? I tremble to think that such guilt may have lain upon my own soul, and desire to be cleansed from this high crime and misdemeanour of doubting my God. For who can imagine that God can lie when he swears, that after having lifted his hand

to heaven, and sworn by himself, he can possibly draw back from a single word which that oath confirms?

Then, to make assurance doubly sure, there comes in, over and above the oath, the blood. The blood of victims always ratified the covenant, and the blood of Jesus Christ has ratified the covenant of grace. What! canst thou not trust the bleeding Son of God? His blood is on the promise, and can that promise be a slighted thing never to be redeemed by a God of grace? Has he given it, and will he make it to become a dead letter, and suffer his enemies to throw it in his teeth, and say, "He spake, but he did not fulfil; he promised, but he did not perform?" Rather let us say,—

"The gospel bears my spirit up,
A faithful and unchanging God
Lays the foundation for my hope
In oaths, in promises, and blood."

"Wherefore didst thou doubt?" In the sight of the eternal covenant, "Wherefore didst thou doubt?" In the presence of the incarnate Son of God bleeding on the tree to make every promise sure, "Wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Let me ask thee another question. Dost thou remember that dear hour when Jesus first revealed himself to thee? He led thee into the wilderness, and there he spoke to thy heart, and in a moment, blotted out thy sins like a cloud. Then thy love to him was very warm; thou wentest after him into the wilderness, forsaking all for his dear sake. In the memory of that early love when he was near to thee, how canst thou doubt him? Since that time, he has helped thee in all difficulties, and borne thee up in all dangers, and has carried thee all the days of old, so wherefore didst thou doubt him? Thou hast laid thy head upon his bosom, and thou hast broken bread with him, and dipped in the same dish with him, and thou hast been as dear to him as the ewe lamb in Nathan's parable was to its owner; thou hast been his darling. Thou hast had chaste fellowship with him; thou hast been admitted into the secret place of the Most High. There were times when thou couldst tell to others what a dear Saviour and a blessed Lord he has been to thee. Yea, there were "high days and holidays" to thee, when thy heart did dance at the sound of his name. Wherefore didst thou doubt him? What hast thou found out about him that has led thee into this state of heart? What has he done, or what hast thou heard of him that could have brought thee into such a condition, that thou shouldst doubt the Lord thy God?

Now I will suppose some of the answers that might be given to this question of Christ. I hear one say, "*I doubted because I was in peculiar circumstances.*" I hardly think anybody ever was in a condition similar to mine. I felt as if I was made peculiarly the target for the arrows of the Most High. I felt that I was the man that above all others had seen affliction." Well, but dost thou think that these things were peculiar to God? Mark, he had

promised that he would deliver thee, and bring thee through; he had said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Did that promise say, "except in a peculiar case"? Is there a caveat put at the end of such gracious words? "There may, however, arise some conditions in which this promise will not stand," thou sayest. Thou knowest it is not so. That promise, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," has five negatives in it in the original text, sweeping away altogether all supposition that he could fail thee. How couldst thou say, "Mine was a peculiar case"? Peculiar as it is, Christ has suffered it;—

"In every pang that rends the heart,
The Man of sorrows had a part."

Thou hast not gone where Jesus has not gone; nay, the way in which thou hast gone was first trodden by him. In all your afflictions he was afflicted, and therefore we say to you, "Wherefore do you doubt?" Your trial was peculiar to you, but not to him.

"Oh! but," says another, "*I doubted because the difficulty was a new one.* It was so strong. I never before felt such perplexity; I never before experienced such a sensation of dismay!" But then your difficulty was not new to God. Had something happened to thee which God had not foreseen? Didst thou suppose thou wert in a condition in which God never intended thee to be, and did not foreknow that thou wouldst be? Hadst thou then outstripped his providence and outrun his love? Hast thou forgotten how the psalmist puts it? "If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." Why, the Lord knew all about your case of old, and provided for it; then, "Wherefore didst thou doubt?"

"Oh! but," says one, "*my case was so terribly trying; it consisted of a series of troubles; it involved such dire calamities and dangers.*" Still, what reason was there for doubt about that? Hast thou not heard that God's way is in the whirlwind, that his path is in the sea, and that the clouds are the dust of his feet? If thy way is through the desert, did not he lead his people through a great wilderness, wherein there were fiery serpents and terrible drought? Did he not guard them in their desert march? Wert thou in such a perplexing condition that thou wert worse off than the children of Israel in the Red Sea or by the brooks of Arnon? Yet the Lord helped them, so why should he not help thee? Surely thy circumstances must have been a small matter with him who speaks and it is done, who wills and it is finished.

"Ah! but *I labour under such a sense of personal weakness.*" Just so, dear brother; but is that a novelty? Didst thou not know at the beginning that thou wert weakness itself, but that the Eternal God fainteth not, neither is weary? If thou hadst cause to suspect him of weakness, then there would be a reason for doubting him; but to find out that thou wast weak was stale news indeed, for thou

art weak as water, and wast always so. Did the covenant run thus,—that thou wast to fight the battle alone at thine own charges, and carry thyself to heaven? Was it not stated in another place that God, Jehovah-Jireh, would preserve his people to the end? "Wherefore didst thou doubt?" For a man to say, "I doubted because I was weak," is simply to give an unreasonable reason for perpetually doubting. If I doubt you, my brother, because of something in myself, that is an absurd thing to do. I can only reasonably doubt you because of some failure in you; if I doubt because of some weakness in myself, I put the saddle on the wrong horse. I may be led to doubt and despair about myself; that is right enough, it is clear and logical; but to doubt God because I am weak, is fantastic and ridiculous. Oh! be rid of that, I pray you.

"But my doubt," says one, "arose from another reason. *I lost so many friends one after another.* They died or they deserted me." Well, was thy faith dependent upon thy friends? If so, it is little marvel that thy faith failed thee. Hast thou learnt that wonderful sixty-second Psalm, which we call the "only" Psalm, because it has the word "only" ever so many times, beginning with it indeed, though our translation has it, "*Truly* my soul waiteth upon God"? You know how David there says, "My soul, wait thou *only* upon God; for my expectation is from him." If you built your hope on God alone, and he was the one pillar of your confidence, what if God's providence knocked away all those useless buttresses of your own, it could make no difference to the real strength of your faith. If a man trusts in God *and* his friends, he hath no secure trust; he is like one that has one foot upon the rock and another on the quicksand. Betwixt two stools, we know what comes, even though the two stools be good ones. To trust in God and to trust in friends is poor trusting. O beloved, if our faith was what it should be, it would lean upon the Lord alone, so that if we had none left to comfort us, we should still be able to say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." There is no reason to doubt God because friends fail us.

"Still I must say," adds another, "that *I was so tossed to and fro that I could not see my way.*" Oh! that was the reason, was it? I heard it said, the other day, when I wanted to know a man's character, and asked whether I could trust him, "Yes, you can trust him as far as you can see him," and I knew what was meant by that; but is that what you mean about your God, that you can trust him only as far as you can see him? Oh, shame! Shame! Shame! And yet I am afraid that the rebuke might come home to many of us. We want to see how he will deliver us before we rely upon God. Now, of all the questions that ought to be banished from the lips of a reasonable man, that should be silenced soonest, when we have to deal with an almighty God. What have I to do with *how* God will deliver? He will do it somehow, and that is enough for me. He will do it in the best manner; he will do it in the wisest manner; he will do it in the manner that will

bring the most glory to his name, and, in the end, most profit to his people. Therefore, let us be content to know that it will be so, and not ask, "How?" and begin to doubt the Eternal God, "Wherefore didst thou doubt?"

I will put it in this way, beloved. *Did any of you ever get any good through doubting?* Did you ever prosper because of it? Did doubt ever calm a sorrow? Did it ever allay a fear? Did that handkerchief ever wipe tears from your eyes? Did you ever find your distrust a staff to lean upon? Did your doubts improve your circumstances? When you have had suspicions of your God, have they ever filled your purse or put bread upon your table? If the rain was about to spoil your crops, did your doubts and fears bring fine weather? If the skies were unpropitious, and you needed rain, did your distrust ever make the clouds burst with showers? Oh! you cannot say that it was ever so.

I will put it on the other hand, *Did your doubts ever glorify God?* Did you ever influence a sinner in the right way by distrusting God? Did you ever bring to Jesus Christ the slightest honour by pouring suspicion on his love? Has it not been all the other way? Do you not think that you often grieve the Holy Spirit by doubting? Do you not think it very likely that Christ has taken it hard that his beloved should doubt him? I do not know anything that would cut me to the quick more than to be suspected and not believed by those I love. We may go outside into the market, and make a statement; and if strangers are suspicious, we are not surprised; but within the boundary of our own house, if our child or our wife should not be able to trust us, there would be an end to all the joys of the family.

Oh! how Christ's heart must be pierced when those he died for doubt him; when those he has helped and succoured, blessed and carcassed, made to sit under his shadow, and eat of his fruit, yet, in the day of trial, look somewhere else for help, run to broken cisterns that hold no water, and will not come to him the fountain of living waters! This is what in the Old Testament he calls playing the harlot; and though the term be harsh, yet, since it is so constantly used in Scripture, I cannot help referring to it. He calls this sin a want of spiritual chastity to himself. It is a departure into a mental adultery, when the soul goes gadding abroad to this and that person or thing for comfort, instead of keeping to her Lord. Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and let thy soul be always ravished with his love; let him be as the loving hind and as the pleasant roe to thee; but go not abroad after other lovers, for if thou do so, they will be a mockery to thee, and drive thee back one day with bitter taunts. Thou wilt be compelled at length to say, "I will go and return unto my first Husband, for then it was better with me than now." Beloved, Jesus deserves our trust, let us give it to him.

Our doubts and fears have often prevented him showing us more of himself. He has said, "I have told you of these earthly things that are in my kingdom, and you believe me not; how shall you

believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" Our dear Lord has many things to say unto us, but we cannot bear them yet because we are so unbelieving. But if we had more faith, and rested like little children upon him, he would tell us more, and show us more. We might have been a long way further on the road if we had not been hindered by unbelief. Of how many places might it not be said, "He could not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief"? Unbelief seems to hamper omnipotence, to tie the hands of the Almighty. We do not know what losers we have been by our unbelief. God grant, then, that as we turn this question over, it may breed repentance in our spirits; and as we find how impossible it is to answer it, we may go and say, "Lord, we have no excuse to make; only give us more of thy Spirit; we believe; help thou our unbelief."

II. Now a few minutes may be spent in speaking, secondly, TO THOSE WHO DESIRE TO BELIEVE IN JESUS, BUT FEEL THAT THEY CANNOT. To such, as I have already said, the question must be slightly altered. I will ask each one of them, "Wherefore dost thou doubt?"

There once came into this place a young man, who is now a minister of the gospel, and he has told us how he became converted to God. He sat over in the gallery yonder, in great distress of mind, because he could not feel his sins enough. On that particular occasion I said, "There is over in the gallery yonder a young man who feels that he is too great a sinner to be saved, therefore he does not believe in Jesus." "Ah!" my friend said, "I thought to myself, 'I wish I was like that young man, I should like to feel the greatness of my sin.'" But then in my sermon I went on to say, "There is another young man in that gallery who would give his eyes to feel as the other one feels. They are a pair of fools," I said; "the one for believing that he is too great a sinner for an omnipotent Saviour to forgive, and the other for imagining that Christ wants his strength of feeling to fit him for salvation, as if Jesus could not save him just as he is."

If one is saying, "*I cannot be saved because of the greatness of my sins,*" thou givest God the lie in the same manner, for Jesus said, "All manner of sin and of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men;" and there is that grand text, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him," and he is able to save them now. There is no reason for your doubting, for every sin that it is possible for you to commit it is possible for Christ to forgive.

But the other says, "My trouble is, not that I feel I am a great sinner, but that *I do not feel that I am a great sinner.*" The notion has been entertained by some that there is a certain amount of feeling required before we are fit for Christ, and a good deal of preaching has gone to show that the sinner is to fit himself for Christ. I have read descriptions of the sinner's fitness that really were true enough about those who were saved, but were most discouraging and un-gospel-like if they had reference to those who

were not saved. Jesus Christ has come to seek and to save that which was lost. If you are lost, he has come to save you. It is not merely those who feel that they are lost, there are special promises for them; but those who are so lost that they do not even feel it. He even comes to give a sense of being lost to those who have no sense of it; and mark you, if Jesus waited till sinners of themselves felt their need of him, he would never save one. It is as much his work to make us feel our need as it is to supply our need, and Hart has well put it,—

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

If you cannot come *with* a broken heart, come *for* a broken heart. If you are all bad, and there is no good about you, not even a good feeling, yet still the gospel says to you, and to every creature under heaven, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” “Still I must feel,” says one. Yes, you will feel, and feel as you never felt before, if you listen to this message. “Incline your ear, and come unto me. Hear, and your soul shall live.” Believe in the crucified Saviour. Trust yourself with him, for there is no salvation in any other. Salvation is not in your feelings, but in his work; not in looking at the bites of the serpent, but in looking at the brazen serpent on the pole; not in studying thy leprosy, but in looking to the great High Priest, who puts his hand on thee, and says, “I will, be thou clean;” not in poring over thy blindness, but in lifting up thy face to him who puts his finger on thy sightless eyeballs, and says, “See, for I have given thee sight;” not in trying to untwist the grave-clothes, but in obeying that glorious voice that says, “Lazarus, come forth,” even to one who has lain three days in his grave already. It is not thou that art to do the saving, it is Christ that is the Saviour.

If you have any reason for doubting Christ, then doubt him. But how can you doubt him? Is he not able to save? He is the Son of God. Believest thou this? Did he not die, “the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God”? Dost thou doubt the efficacy of his death? Canst thou stand at the foot of the cross, and hear him cry, “It is finished,” and then say, “There is not enough for me”? Dost thou think that to be incomplete which he says is finished? And when he hath entered into his Father’s glory, and sat down because he hath for ever completed the work of atonement, wouldst thou rouse him up? Wouldst thou take him away from his rest, and say, “Thou hast not finished the work, it is still incomplete”? Oh! say not so; if thou shouldst entertain such a thought, thy unbelief would be reckless indeed.

To me, (I speak it as in the Lord’s sight,) it seems this day as if I *must* trust Jesus, and as if, racking my invention and troubling my brain, I *cannot think of a reason for*

doubting the Son of God. Yet was I once as plentiful in doubts and fears as thou art, poor sinner. I quibbled with him about this and I quibbled with him about that, and all the answer he gave me, was, to show me himself, and to say, "Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth." I wanted some ceremony, or some dream, or some strange feeling, or some revelation;—I know not what I wanted; but this I know, that I stood quibbling and quibbling still, till I doubt not I should have quibbled myself into hell if at last I had not felt too wretched to continue in such a miserable business, and I just allowed myself to faint away into the arms of the Saviour, and to wake up saved. I gave up my quibbles, I gave up my good works, such as they were, (wretched things!) I gave up reliance upon feelings and reliance on prayer, and came to rely only upon him. And now, at this day, if he cannot save a poor sinner who trusts in him alone, I shall be damned; and if there is anything wanted to save a soul except the precious blood and perfect righteousness of Jesus, I must be lost. Sinner, you have as much to trust in as I have, for I have not anything. I have not the weight of a grain of dust of merit of my own; I have not a rag, I have not a thread left of anything I can rely upon, except that dear Lord whom God has set forth to be "the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Wherefore then dost thou doubt?

Are God's words after all false? Does he say, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price;" and does he mean to shut the door in your face when you do come? Does he say, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely," and when you come, will he say to you, "I refuse you; I did not mean you"? Dost thou think that God's invitations are, after all, a hideous mockery at the woes of men? It cannot be! When he says, by the mouth of his servants, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," is it true or not? When he says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," is it true or not? When he says, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon," is it true or not? If it be true, wherefore dost thou doubt? Wilt thou make God a liar? Thou wilt do so if thou dost not trust his promise.

Once more, O sinner, *to what end and purpose did Jesus come into the world* to bleed and die, if after all there is no forgiveness for sinners, and if those that seek his face will be rejected? When men make a mock of others, they do not often do it at vast expense. Dost thou think God has hung his Son upon the tree for mockery? That he has pierced Him with death-smarts, and all to laugh at sinners? "Ah! but I am such a great sinner." And dost thou think that Christ came into the world to be a little Saviour to little sinners? Is he a physician that can only heal

finger-cuts? Dost thou think that? He is the Son of God, and sin seems to vanish in his august presence. When I look at the needs of this city of London, and see how many people there are, I am ready to ask, "How shall they all be fed? Where shall there be flocks and herds to supply them?" But if I go to the great markets in the early morning, and see the meat and other food there, I change my mind, and enquire, "Wherever can there be people enough to eat all this provision?" So, when I look at a sinner's sin, I say, "How can this ever be washed away?" But when I look at the Saviour's blood, I seem to say, "Sin is readily enough put away in such a fountain as this!" I change my tone; and whereas I thought sin too great to be atoned for, I come to think the atonement almost too great for human sin, if such might be. I cannot conceive it possible that God will find any difficulty in forgiving sin after such an atonement has been made. "Wherefore dost thou doubt?"

Now I will give you two great reasons for doubting, and then I have done.

The first time I can recommend any sinner to doubt the Saviour is when he finds a fellow-sinner who has been to Jesus, and has rested in him, and yet has perished. Now, set you out upon this journey. Ask all God's people one by one, and see if God has rejected them. Look at those you knew, who were like yourself, perhaps they were drunkards, perhaps they were swearers. Now that they have sought the Lord, see whether he has refused them. When you find that he has rejected one, then you will have reason to think that he will reject you. Then you may reasonably doubt.

The other reason is this. Try him yourself, and if he rejects you, then you shall have cause for doubting. Go and throw yourself at his door of mercy with this upon your heart, "I will perish here if I must perish." Go to his cross, and look up, and say, "Saviour, Redeemer, Son of God, bleeding and dying, a guilty soul here comes and trusts itself with thee." See if he will spurn you! See if you are not saved! I challenge the whole earth, I challenge all hell to find a single soul of woman born that ever came and humbly rested on the blood and righteousness of Christ, and yet was lost. Such a thing has never been, and never shall be while the earth abideth.

O poor soul, then come away,—come away to the Saviour! I will go with you, for I love to go again and again and again, and be a beggar again at my Lord's door. Come, let us say together, "Jesus, we have guilt; we have no merit; we have no claim upon thee; we deserve to be cast into the lowest hell; but, by thy blood, by thy righteousness, have mercy upon us, and save us *now*. We desire to give up all our sins, to leave them behind us, and to be obedient to all thy bidding. Save us, dear Saviour, save us. Purge us with hyssop, and we shall be clean; wash us, and we shall be whiter than snow." If that prayer comes from any heart here, the Lord will answer it indeed. May he bless you! Amen.