

THE QUESTION OF QUESTIONS

NO. 2141

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY, MAY 4, 1890,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

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*“Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him,
He said unto him, Do you believe on the Son of God?”
John 9:35.*

THE eyes of the Lord Jesus are always on His chosen and He knows every circumstance which occurs to them. “Jesus heard that they had cast him out.” Our Lord had done too much for this man to forget him. Where Divine Grace has worked a great work its memory lingers. As it is written, “You will have a desire to the work of your hands.” In this let us take comfort—if anything has happened to grieve us—Jesus has heard of it and will act accordingly. Our Lord sought for the outcast one. Unasked, He had opened his eyes. Unsought, He looks after him in his hour of trouble. He was not easy to find but our Lord is great at searching out His lost sheep and He persevered until He found him. If we, at any time, should seem cast off from Christ as well as cast out by proud religionists, He will find us when we cannot find Him. Blessed be His name!

Our Lord's objective was to do this man real service—he had been cast out of the synagogue and he, therefore, needed comfort—and it would be a grand thing so to comfort him as to lead him onward and upward in the Divine life! Our Lord's way of comforting was to ask a question which would lead to heart-searching and suggest spiritual advance. It is not the way that you and I might take, but His ways are not our ways, neither are His thoughts our thoughts. Wisdom is justified of her methods. It is the best thing, when a man is in soul trouble, to make him look to his own condition before God and specially to his faith—for when he finds that he is right on the main point—this assurance will be to him a wellspring of comfort.

We are sure that our Lord took the very best means to bring this man to well-grounded confidence when He said to him, “Do you believe on the Son of God?” He helped him, by this question, to make a considerable advance in faith, for although the poor man had believed in Jesus up to the measure of his knowledge, his knowledge had been slender. But now he was to learn that the opener of his eyes was the Son of God! This is such faith as the Person of our Lord deserves, but such as many have never rendered to Him and for lack of this they miss the great power of His Grace.

The man was excommunicated and was then placed under the ban of the Jewish Church—but trust in the Son of God would quickly remove from him any alarm which he might feel on that account. He that enjoys the favor of the Son of God will not tremble at the frown of the Sanhedrim! Oh, that the Lord would comfort many this morning while I press upon each one of you this one personal question, “Do you believe on the Son of God?” To young and old, to rich and poor I shall direct this solemn enquiry.

It is not a perplexing question upon an abstruse point, but a simple and urgent enquiry relating to everybody here present. It is not a problem profound and intricate—a question of free will or predestination, of postmillennial or premillennial advents—it is a practical question—pressing and present and one that concerns every man in his everyday life at this very moment. I wish each one of you to think that I now put my hand on your shoulder and look you in the face and say earnestly, “Do you believe on the Son of God?” This is not a question out of which angry controversy can possibly arise, for it has to do with yourself and yourself only!

Whatever discussion there may be will be confined within your own bosom. It concerns yourself, only, and it is put in the singular, “Do *you* believe on the Son of God?” It was put by Jesus Himself to this man—consider, then, that Jesus puts it to you, also this morning, even to you, apart even from your spouse or friend.

I. I shall begin pressing home the question, by the help of the Holy Spirit, by making the remark that THE QUESTION NEEDS TO BE RAISED. It must not be taken for granted that you believe on the Son of God. “Oh, yes, I am a Christian,” says one. “I was born in a Christian country. I was taken to Church while a babe and was duly christened and I now repeat the creed. Surely this is sufficient proof of my faith!” Or possibly you say, “My mother took me to the Meeting House before I could walk and ever since I have never quit the ways of old-fashioned Nonconformity.”

All this may be so, but it is not to the point. “Do you believe on the Son of God?” This is a *spiritual* and vital question which cannot be thus set aside. You reply, “My moral character has always been correct. In business I have always discharged my liabilities and I have always been ready to help every charitable institution.” I am glad to hear all this. Still, it does not touch the matter now in hand—this query goes deeper than outward *conduct*. Hear it again—“Do you believe on the Son of God?”

Numbers of moral, amiable, generous and even religious people have not believed on the Son of God. Excuse me, I cannot let you slip through in the crowd. I must lay hold upon you with a holy vehemence that even forgets courtesy for the moment and I must say to the best of you, “Do you believe on the Son of God?” Though this man had been scrupulously obedient, yet our Lord asked the question! It may be I speak to some who say, “I have been at all times obedient to the duties of religion. Whatever I have found to be commanded of God in His Word I have carefully carried out.”

Was it not so, also, with this man born blind? The Savior put clay upon his eyes and told him to go to the pool of Siloam and wash off the clay—the man did exactly as he was told. He did not go to another pool, but to the pool of Siloam. And he did not attempt to get the clay from his eyes by any other process than that of washing. He was very obedient to Christ, yet the Lord said to him, “Do you believe on the Son of God?” No outward observances, however carefully carried out, will obviate the need of the enquiry, “Do you believe on the Son of God?”

I am afraid some of you have not been very careful in fulfilling outward ordinances and for this you are blameworthy—but if you had been scrupulously exact—no outward observances, however carefully followed out, can exempt you from the question, “Do you believe on the Son of God?” This man, in addition, *had passed through a very remarkable experience.* He could say, “One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.” He could never forget those long nights while a child, a youth and a man. All those years no ray of light had ever gladdened him—to him night and day were much the same. He had sat in deep poverty all through that dreary darkness and learned no art but that of begging.

As the cooling water touched his eyes and washed away the clay, the sunlight streamed in upon the midnight and he saw! He had undergone all that change and yet the Savior said to him, “Do you believe on the Son of God?” So, my dear Hearer, you may be a very altered man and yet you may not be a believer on the Son of God! You, my dear Sister, may be a very different woman from what you used to be—and when you tell your experience it may be very remarkable and well worthy of being recorded in a book—and yet this question must be pressed upon you!

Whatever your experience may be, do not forget self-examination. Say not, “I never need question myself—such experience as I have had settles my position. I am not so childish as to look within or have a doubt about my faith. So remarkable a case as mine may not be suspected.” Talk not so—for if our Lord, who knew the change this man had undergone, yet said to him, “Do you believe on the Son of God?” I also must take liberty to press home, upon the most remarkable person here, the same personal enquiry—“Do you believe on the Son of God?”

This man, in addition to his reception of bodily sight, *had exercised a degree of faith in the Lord Jesus.* If you follow the chapter through you will see that he had some sort of faith in Christ while he was blind, or he would not have gone to Siloam to wash away the clay. And when he saw, he did not doubt that Jesus had really made him whole—and he avowed the fact. He also said, “He is a Prophet.” He went further still, for he said, “If this Man were not of God, He could do nothing.” He had believed as far as his light helped him to believe so that the germs of faith were in him. Yet our Lord Jesus Christ pressed him with the enquiry, “Do you believe on the Son of God?”

Beloved Friends, you, too, may never have been troubled with skepticism. It may be you have not even examined the grounds of your faith because you have never been tempted to suspect them. You have taken in the Gospel from your youth as clearly true and so you have believed it without being much perplexed. I am thankful that you have done so. Still, do you believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God? Is Jesus *God* to you? Do you trust Him as able to do *anything* and

everything for you? Is He to you “able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him”? If not, may the Lord help you to take this higher step, for short of this you have not received the true Christ of God!

It is of very small use to say, “Oh, yes, I believe in Christ, the noblest of examples. I believe in Christ, the most instructive of Prophets.” Do you believe in Him also *as the Sacrifice*, as the Priest, the Savior, the Salvation? And gathering all up in one, do you believe in Him *as the Son of God*? Do you believe in the Son of God, as revealed in Holy Scripture? Furthermore, this man *had spoken out bravely for Christ*, as you saw in the chapter which we read just now. “He spoke out like a Trojan,” said one. Say, rather, “like a Spartan.” He was cute, shrewd, sharp, and unanswerable.

The learned doctors were nowhere in comparison with the blind beggar whose eyes had been opened! He stood up for the Man who had given him sight and allowed no charge to lie against Him. His statements were short but full and his answers were, themselves, unanswerable. Who would have thought that a blind beggar could have fashioned such a logical argument as he did? Yet to this bold confessor the Savior had to say, “Do you believe on the Son of God?”

Ah, my Friend! As a preacher you may be able to declare the Gospel very clearly to others and you may enforce it with powerful arguments—but, “Do you believe on the Son of God?” Even in your case the question must be plied. Some of you may remember that story which is told in one of Krummacher’s books. I half forget it myself, but it was somewhat on this wise. The preacher had delivered himself of a solemn discourse and was waited upon, on the following Monday, by one of his hearers, who said, “Sir, if what you said last Sunday was true, what will become of *us*?”

Now, if he had said, “What will become of *me*?” the preacher would have explained still further to him the Gospel in the usual way. As it was, he parried the word, “*us*.” But his visitor almost unconsciously, said, “Alas, dear Sir! If these things are so, what shall we do?” The Lord used that plural pronoun to the awakening of the preacher who had not been converted though he thought he had been! Oh, that we who speak for God may also hear the Lord speak to us! I know the good preacher and love him right well, who, when he was himself preaching, as he had done for years, was saved through the personal application of his own sermon.

He is a minister of the Church of England but he did not know the Lord. While he was preaching the Lord applied to his heart with power a Gospel Truth which so affected him that he spoke with the accent of conviction which is natural to the renewed man. At last a Methodist, who was in the church, shouted out, “The parson’s converted! Hallelujah!” and all the people broke out with cries of praise. The preacher himself joined in the universal joy and they sang together, “Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!”

Oh, what a mercy it is when the waiter at the Lord’s feast is himself fed! Should not those who are to bear the healing balm to the sick be themselves healed? I have not been ashamed to speak in my Lord’s name, nor have I blushed to defend His cause before His enemies. Yet I would remember that I may have done all this and yet I may not know the King to whom I have been a herald. O Friends, how terrible it would be to have cast out devils in His name and yet to be unknown of Him! Therefore, we press the question, “Do you believe on the Son of God?”

This man had gone further, still, for *he had suffered for Christ*. He had been put out of the synagogue for bearing witness to the power of Jesus—but none the less for this he had to hear the question—“Do you believe?” Yes, you, dear Friend, may have been laughed at by your relatives for your religiousness. You may have had to quit a good situation because of your determination to be honest, temperate and pure. You may at the present moment stand under the ban of some cold-hearted Church because you have been more earnest than was desired. But as much as I appreciate your fidelity, you must excuse me if I buttonhole you in the Lord’s name and say, as Christ did to this man, “Do you believe on the Son of God?”

It is one thing to play the hero before our fellowmen and another to be true in the secret chamber of our own soul. You are bold in your confession but do you really believe in the Lord Jesus? Can that bold confession be supported by your *life*? I hope you are not a Defender of the Faith after the manner of Henry the Eighth who wore the title but was by no means worthy of it! Come, my eloquent Friend, do you live as you talk? Do you feel, yourself, as you would make me feel? “Do you believe on the Son of God?” You will see, dear Friends, from the run of my talk, that I am not for letting *anybody here* escape the personal question.

My venerable Friend who has been an officer of this Church longer than anybody else will not refuse to ask himself this question. My beloved Sister in Christ who has conducted a Bible class for years and that other who has been so useful in the schools—neither of these will refuse to answer this searching word, “Do you believe on the Son of God?” I must

dare to make enquiry of yonder minister. My father in Christ whose shoe lace I am not worthy to unloose—I must even ask of you, as I do ask of myself, “Do you, for yourself, in very deed, believe on the Son of God?” This question must thus be raised and raised for everybody because many people nowadays do *not* believe on the Son of God.

There are many about who would be mightily offended if we denied their right to the name of Christian, who, nevertheless, know not “the Son of God.” These folks admire a man who will concoct a sermon to show that they may be Christians and not believe on Jesus as God. I shall preach no such sermon until I lose my reason—but I shall press upon this unbelieving age this vital question—“Do you believe on the Son of God?” Man, if you do not so believe, your faith falls short of that which Christ would have you possess and you had need take heed lest it fall short of landing you in Heaven.

With a Savior less than Divine you have a religion less than saving. How is it with you? Will you believe on the Son of God, alone, or run with the vain multitude who see nothing in Him but a man? I think every man here will say, “You need not apologize, dear Sir, for asking the question, for it is one we have to ask ourselves.” Indeed, I know it is so. Who is there that lives after so pure a sort that he never has to try this issue? We have heard persons cry out against the hymn—

*“Tis a point I long to know
Oft it causes anxious thought:
Do I love the Lord or no?
Am I His, or am I not?”*

But if a man never has an anxious thought about his state, *I* should have a great many anxious thoughts about him! One of our poets has well said—

*“He that never doubted of his state
He may, perhaps, he may too late.”*

There are so many things about us all which we need to mourn over and these set us asking the questions, “Is my faith the faith which works by love and purifies the soul? Do I truly believe on the Son of God?” At times we rejoice in an absolute certainty as to our faith in Christ and the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. But at other seasons we are exercised with great searchings of heart and no question causes us greater anguish than this—“Do I believe on the Son of God?” It will be woe to us if, after all our profession, experience and effort we should, after all, have no more than the name of faith and the notion of faith—but be found devoid of the life of it in our souls. Yes, the enquiry of our text is a question which ought to be raised.

II. But, secondly, THE QUESTION CAN BE ANSWERED. I am sure it can be answered, or our Lord would not have asked it, for He was never so unpractical as to go about the world asking men questions about themselves which it was not possible to answer. “Do you believe on the Son of God?” is an inquiry to which you can give the answer if you will—“Yes,” or, “No.” I beg to press you to practical action upon it.

It were, indeed, a most unhappy thing if this question could not be answered. Suppose we were condemned to live in a state of perpetual doubt as to our being believers in the Lord Jesus? This would involve an awakened man in a condition of constant anxiety. If I am not sure whether I am in the favor of God or not, I am in a condition of decided sorrow. I remember hearing a Christian minister say one day in company that no man could be sure that he was saved. Then I wondered what he had to preach that was worth preaching—for if we cannot know that we are saved, then we cannot be sure that we are at peace with God—and this is to be in jeopardy every hour!

There can be no peace to the mind of the awakened man if he does not know that he is saved. It is like one at sea who is half afraid that his ship is out of the track and may soon strike upon rock or quicksand, but is not quite sure whether it is so or not. The captain should take no rest till he has taken his bearings and found out his position in reference to the dangers of the sea and the hope of reaching the desired haven. To leave his position a moot point would be to continue in fear and to court danger. To leave your faith in question is to imperil a vital point. He must be sadly seared in conscience who can leave this hinge of the soul’s condition unexamined.

There is a possibility of knowing to a certainty that you believe on the Son of God. Did I say there is a *possibility* of it? *Thousands have attained to this certainty.* You can know that you believe on the Son of God as surely as you know that there is a Queen of England or as surely as you know that you, yourself, exist—and this without falling into fanaticism or presumption! Many among us are so habituated to faith in the Lord Jesus that we could no more question the existence

of faith in our own hearts than we could dispute the fact that our hearts beat! Such assured persons shirk no examination—for them the more examination the better—for their hope has firm and deep foundations. They can give a reason for the hope that is in them.

As sure as mathematical certainty is the confidence of the Believer in the Lord Jesus—for we know whom we have believed—and we are persuaded that He is able to keep that which we have committed to Him. There are Believers in our Lord Jesus who have gone on for the space of 30 years without a doubt of their faith in Him because that faith has been in daily, happy exercise upon Him. You can answer the question, “Do you believe?” because you are at this moment believing—distinctly and intensely believing. Those who abide in the Light of God’s Countenance and feel the Holy Spirit within them, bearing witness with their spirits, are in no doubt as to their possession of faith!

If we feel a burning love to God, a growing hatred of sin, a struggle against the evil which is in the world and somewhat of the likeness to Christ, we may safely infer that these *fruits* of faith come from the *root* of faith. By the work of the Holy Spirit upon life and heart we know and are sure that we have believed in Jesus as the Son of God. I hope I speak to many this morning who are enjoying assurance and know that they have passed from death unto life. *It is with some a matter of consciousness.* How do I know that I live, breathe, stand, walk? I cannot explain to you the mode by which I arrive at certainty on this matter, but I am quite sure that I do live and breathe, and so on. Indeed, the power to question the fact implies it!

So a Believer may be sure that he believes that Jesus is the Son of God—and while he may not be able to give logical proof—yet he may be, none the less, conscious in his own soul that it is so. And he is correct in his assurance, for even the very power to be anxious after Divine Grace is an evidence of Divine Grace. If there is any question about whether you have been a Believer or not for the last 20 years, do not fight that question—begin at once to believe, the Lord helping you! Turn your eyes to the Cross and trust yourself wholly with Christ from this good hour, and then you will believe, and the act will shine out its own proof! Say from your heart—

*“Just as I am—without one plea
But that Your blood was shed for me
And that You bid me come to You—
O Lamb of God, I come!”*

Thus coming you will know that you *have* come and by continuing to come you will grow *assured* that you have come! Let not the past be the main enquiry, but settle the immediate present. May the Holy Spirit cause the sacred fire to burn and then you will feel the flame before long. To say, “I do now believe on the Son of God,” is the best way of answering the question about your condition. If you want further help to solve the question, *there are marks and evidences of true faith* by which you can readily test yourself. Do you enquire, “Do I believe on the Son of God?” Then answer this—Is Christ precious to you? “For unto you who believe He is precious.” If you love and prize Him as the most precious thing on earth or in Heaven, you could not have this appreciation of Him if you were not a true Believer.

Tell me again, have you undergone the change called the new birth? Have you passed through a process which could be described as being brought out of darkness into marvelous light? If so, your new birth is a sure evidence of faith, for these things go together. Faith is a proof of regeneration and regeneration is also a proof that you have faith in the Son of God. Again, are you obedient to Christ? For faith works by love and purifies the soul. Is it so with you? Has sin become bitter? Do you loathe it? Has holiness become sweet? Do you follow after it? I do not ask whether you are *perfect*—but is the whole current of your soul towards *being* perfect?

Can you say that if you could live entirely without sin it would be the greatest delight you could have? That absolute perfection would be Heaven to you? Ah, then it shows which way your mind goes! It shows that there is a change of Nature for no unrenewed heart pines after perfect holiness! Your heart is bending towards Christ’s perfect rule and sovereignty and I am sure that you have believed that He is the Son of God. You are resting upon Him with a true and living faith if you take up His Cross heartily and follow Him.

Again, do you love God? Do you love His people? “We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the Brethren.” Do you love His Word? Do you delight in His worship? Do you bow in patience before His rod so that you take up the bitter cup and say, “Your will be done”? These things prove that you have faith in Jesus. Look well to them. But supposing, after using all enquiries and tests, you still say, “Sir, this is a grave question and requires great

care. I have not settled it yet”? Then follow this man in *his* method. When he was asked, “Do you believe on the Son of God?” he turned to the Lord and replied with another question to the Lord Jesus.

We may resort to Jesus for aid. He who had once been blind eagerly asked, “Who is He, Lord, that I may believe on Him?” Turn, then, O Enquirer, in the moment of your distress and cry, “Lord Jesus, I beseech You teach me to know You better, that I may have more faith in You.” Go to Jesus for faith in Jesus! Moreover, *there are certain great Truths upon which faith feeds* and, to be sure that you have faith you had better think of these Truths of God. May the Lord be pleased especially to reveal Himself to you so that you may know Him and thus may believe on Him! O Soul, you will not long be in any doubt if you perceive those glorious things which concern your Lord! Know *who* He is and *what* He is, and what He has done and this will enable you to believe in Him as the Son of God.

As men were accustomed, when hardly pressed before the courts to say, “I appeal unto Caesar,” so do you appeal unto Christ Himself and rest assured that in Him you will find deliverance! If your faith is hidden from yourself it is not hidden from Him—and if you cannot call it forth by thoughts of the work of Grace within, turn your mind towards your Savior and Covenant Head in Heaven—and faith will open itself as the cups of the flowers open to the sun. The question can be answered.

III. Thirdly, THE QUESTION SHOULD BE ANSWERED AND SHOULD BE ANSWERED AT ONCE. If I could, I would concentrate all *your* thoughts upon this one investigation which to each man so vitally concerns himself—“Do you believe on the Son of God?” Answer this from your own soul. I am no father confessor—be father confessors to yourselves. Let each man give his verdict at the bar of his conscience. Answer, also, as in the Presence of Christ for, like the man in the narrative, you are in His Presence now.

Answer for yourself before the heart-searching, heart-trying God. Answer it to men, also, for this your Savior deserves of you. Be not ashamed to say outright, “I do believe on the Son of God.” This fact must not be hidden away in a corner. Remember how our Lord in Holy Scripture always puts open confession side by side with faith as a part of the plan of salvation? You will never find anywhere in the Word of God—“He that believes and takes the Lord’s Supper shall be saved”—but you do find it written, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Why does *baptism* take such a prominent place? Partly because it is the ordained form of *open confession* of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The passage is parallel with that other, “He that with his heart believes and with his mouth makes confession of Him, shall be saved.” What less can Christ expect than an outspoken faith if there is any faith at all? Will you bring to Him who redeemed you a cowardly faith? To Him that intercedes for you a dumb faith? To Him that opened your eyes a faith which dares not look your fellow men in the face? No! No! Speak! And speak out and let the world know that He who died on Calvary is to you, if not to anybody else, the Son of God! The question ought to be answered—answered before men—and answered at once. Do not delay, but make haste to keep your Lord’s command.

The question ought to be answered at once because *it is of first importance*. If you do not believe on the Son of God, where are you? You are not alive unto God, “For the just shall live by faith.” You cannot stand, for it is written, “You stand by faith.” You cannot work for God, for it is faith that works by love. Where is your justification if you have no faith? “We are justified by faith.” Where is your sanctification? Does not the Lord say, “Sanctified by faith that is in Me”? Where is your salvation without faith? “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” You cannot *be* or *do* anything acceptable without faith for, “without faith it is impossible to please God.”

You are in an evil case and will soon be in a worse one unless you can say—“I believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and I trust Him as my All in All.” He that does not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ is under present condemnation for, “He that believes not is condemned already.” *Condemned already*—and therefore this question must be answered immediately—unless you are content to abide under wrath and content to live unreconciled to God! While sitting here you are in danger of the wrath to come. Can you be at ease? Remember, you are losing time while you are in ignorance as to your faith. If you are not believing in Jesus you are spending your days in death and in alienation from God.

If it is a question whether you *have* believed on the Son of God, it is no question that you are losing comfort and happiness. If you go up and down this troubled world without a knowledge of your own salvation—without an assurance of your acceptance with God—you are losing power to honor the name of the Lord by a joyful conversation. You are in an inconsistent position and in an inconvenient one. If you really have not believed in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, you are resting short of eternal life!

Meanwhile, you come up to the Lord's house and unite avowedly in worshipping Him while you deny Him the first essential of true worship—namely, your faith in Him! Ah, dear Friend, if you have not believed that Jesus is the Son of God, the hope that you will ever do so grows fainter every day. The longer a man lingers in any state, the more likely it is that he will continue there. When men have long been accustomed to do evil the Prophet cries over them, “Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots?” It is an awful thing to have heard the Gospel so long in vain. If even the appeals of Calvary are lost on you, what remains? Gospel-hardened sinners are hardened, indeed. Some of you have been unbelievers in the Lord Jesus Christ for 50 years and, I fear, will die in unbelief—and what then?

The portion of unbelievers is terrible. “If you believe not that I am He, you shall die in your sins.” Horrendous words! “*Die in your sins.*” That is what will, in all probability, happen to many of you—no, it will surely happen unless you believe on the Son of God! Come, therefore, to this question at once. Do not delay for an hour. If the answer is unsatisfactory, the case can be altered if attended to at once. He that has not as yet believed on the Son of God may yet do so. Still is time afforded you—do not despise the respite of mercy. Upon you shines the light of another Sunday—long-suffering is not yet exhausted. The Gospel is still preached in your ears—the day of hope is not over!

The Bible is still open before you and the gate of Mercy is open, also, for all who will enter by faith. Therefore I pray you to now believe on the Son of God! You may not live to see another Lord's-Day—therefore snatch the present opportunity. Soon will the tidings come to us about you, as they have so often come about others, “He is dead,” or, “She has gone.” Since eternity can be molded by today, I pray you, awaken yourselves! Look to your faith in Jesus, for if that is right, all is well—but if that is found wanting, all is wanting.

IV. So I close with my fourth point which is this—THE QUESTION MAY BE OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE TO US IF WE ANSWER IT. “Do you believe on the Son of God?” Suppose that the question has to be answered in the negative. If you are compelled to sigh and say, “No, no!” then be it so and look the truth in the face. It will tend to awaken you from your carelessness if you know where you are.

One came to join the Christian Church the other day who said, “While I was at my work in the parlor, this thought suddenly came to me, ‘You are an unsaved woman.’ I could not shake it off. I went down to my cooking in the kitchen but it followed me. From the fire and from the water I seemed to hear the accusation, ‘You are an unsaved woman.’ When I went in to my meals I could scarcely eat my bread because of this choking thought. It haunted me, ‘You are an unsaved woman!’” It was not long before that unsaved woman sought the Lord and became a saved woman by faith in Christ Jesus!

Oh, that I might put this idea into some minds this morning! You are an unsaved man! You do not believe on the Son of God and therefore you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity! I would like to make the seat you sit upon grow hard and the very house to grow uncomfortable, so that you should vow, “Please, God, I can but stagger home. I will seek my bedside and cry for mercy.” I wish you were under even greater urgency and would entreat the Lord for mercy at once, on the spot! You would do so, I think, if you fairly answered this question and felt that the reply must be, “No.”

But, supposing you are able to say, “Yes”—this question will have done great service—for it will have brought you great peace. As long as you leave this matter in doubt you will be tossed about. But when it is decided, you will enter into rest. Peace, like a river, shall flow into your soul when you can say—

*“I do believe, I will believe,
That Jesus died for me;
That on the Cross He shed His blood,
From sin to set me free.”*

Know that He is yours and you will rejoice in Him! You cannot obtain settled peace till you settle this question. This done, you will try to do something for Jesus to show your gratitude for His salvation. Until I know that I am saved I shall have no heart for holy work. A wise man stops at home and looks after his own concerns when he feels that they are in peril—but when they are all safe he can look to the interests of his neighbors.

When I know I am saved and that there is nothing more for me to do in that matter, for Christ has finished it all, then I enquire what I can do for Him who has done so much for me! Where is the child or the man I can talk to about my Savior? I will go and hunt up lost ones and tell them of a present salvation. Perhaps I have never dared to speak to my

wife or to my children about eternal life—but now that I possess it and *know* that I do—because I believe on the Son of God I will begin to instruct others in this good doctrine. Yes, diligence grows out of assurance.

And what a help assurance will be in the time of trouble! You have a great affliction coming on, but if you can say, “I know that I believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God,” you will face it with quietness. Is it a surgical operation? You will lie still and yield yourself up to the surgeon’s knife, come life or death—and you will do it easily. Is it a cruel persecution which you have to face tomorrow? You will not be afraid—but, believing in Jesus—you will take up His Cross. Are you growing old and thinking of the time when you must die? It will not matter—for you know that you will only be going Home since you believe on the Son of God!

He never lets a soul believe on Him in vain. He never casts away a poor heart that trusts Him. What strength your faith will give you! You will be a hero whereas you might have been a coward. Now that you know and are sure that you believe on the Son of God, you will fear no evil. This, I think, will fire you with holy zeal and praise. You have been saying, “I do not know how it is that I am so dull and stupid! I go to the house of God and I do not feel the power of the Word—I am afraid I am not a Christian.” Just so. As long as you have that chilling fear upon you, you will not be sensitive to the cheering truth—but when you know that you believe on the Son of God and are sure of your salvation—your heart will beat to another tune and the music of the upper spheres will take possession of your bosom. I should not wonder if you should sing, as Toplady does—

*“Yes, I to the end shall endure
As sure as the earnest is given;
More happy, but not more secure,
The glorified spirits in Heaven.”*

You will begin to taste heavenly happiness when you have a sense of heavenly certainty. Being thus moved with gratitude and filled with joy, the result will be a great concern for others who have not believed on the Son of God. You will look upon unbelievers with sorrow and alarm. They are very wealthy, perhaps—but you will despise their gold because it blinds their eyes. They are very clever, perhaps—but you will not worship their abilities because the eternal light is hid from their eyes. You will say to yourself, “They may have all their wealth and all their cleverness, but I have the Son of God!” In having Christ, you have more than Alexander possessed when he had won the world! He could conquer the earth, but he could not win Heaven, for he knew nothing of believing on the Son of God!

In this respect you have done more than an angel could do—for an angel has no lost soul to trust with the Son of God—no sin to wash away in the Savior’s blood. But you have trusted Him and you have been washed in His blood—and you are clean. Go home and sing, my Brothers and Sisters! Go home and tell it out among your fellows that Jesus is the Son of God and abundantly able to save! Go home and weep some poor sinner to Jesus! Go home and never rest until you can say to God—“Here am I, and the souls that You have given me. We are believing on the Son of God.” Peace be with you! Amen.

***PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—John 9.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—906, 550, 549.***

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