

Indwelling Sin

A Sermon

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“Then Job answered the Lord and said, Behold, I am vile.”—[Job 40:3-4](#).

SURELY, if any man had a right to say, I am *not* vile, it was Job; for, according to the testimony of God himself, he was “a perfect and an upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil.” Yet we find even this eminent saint, when by his nearness to God he had received light enough to discover his own condition, exclaiming, “Behold I am vile.” We are sure that what Job was forced to say, we may each of us assent unto, whether we be God’s children or not; and if we be partakers of divine grace, it becomes a subject of great consideration for us, since even we, although we be regenerated, must exclaim, each one for himself, “Behold, I am vile.”

It is a doctrine, as I believe, taught us in Holy Writ, that when a man is saved by divine grace, he is not wholly cleansed from the corruption of his heart. When we believe in Jesus Christ all our sins are pardoned; yet the power of sin, albeit that it is weakened and kept under by the dominion of the new-born nature which God doth infuse into our souls, doth not cease, but still tarrieth in us, and will do so to our dying day. It is a doctrine held by all the orthodox, that there dwelleth still in the regenerate, the lusts of the flesh, and that there doth still remain in the hearts of those who are converted by God’s mercy, the evil of carnal nature. I have found it very difficult to distinguish, in experimental matters, concerning sin. It is usual with many writers, especially with hymn writers, to confound the two natures of a Christian. Now, I hold that there is in every Christian two natures, as distinct as were the two natures of the God-Man Christ Jesus. There is one nature which cannot sin, because it is born of God—a spiritual nature, coming directly from heaven, as pure and as perfect as God himself, who is the author of it; and there is also in man that ancient nature which, by the fall of Adam, hath become altogether vile, corrupt, sinful, and devilish. There remains in the heart of the Christian a nature which cannot do that which is right, any more than it could before regeneration, and which is as evil as it was before the new birth—as sinful, as altogether hostile to God’s laws, as ever it was—a nature which, as I said before, is curbed and kept under by the new nature in a great measure, but which is not removed and never will be until this tabernacle of our flesh is broken down, and we soar into that land into which there shall never enter anything that defileth.

It will be my business this morning, to say something of that evil nature which still abides in the righteous. That is does remain, I shall first attempt to prove; and the other points I will suggest to you as we proceed.

I. The FACT, the great and terrible fact, that EVEN THE RIGHTEOUS HAVE IN THEM EVIL NATURES. *Job* said, "Behold, I am vile." He did not always know it. All through the long controversy he had declared himself to be just and upright: he had said, "My righteousness I will hold fast, and I will not let it go;" and notwithstanding he did scrape his body with a potsherd, and his friends did vex his mind with the most bitter revilings, yet he still held fast his integrity, and would not confess his sin; but when God came to plead with him, he had no sooner listened to the voice of God in the whirlwind, and heard the question, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" than at once he put his finger on his lips, and would not answer God, but simply said, "Behold, I am vile." Possibly some may say, that *Job* was an exception to the rule; and they will tell us, that other saints had not in them such a reason for humiliation; but we remind them of *David*, and we bid them read the 51st penitential Psalm, where we find him declaring that he was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did his mother conceive him; confessing, that he had sin within him. In many other places in the Psalms, *David* doth continually acknowledge and confess, that he is not perfectly rid of sin; that still the evil viper doth twist itself around his heart. Turn also, if you please, to *Isaiah*. There you have him, in one of his visions, saying that he was a man of unclean lips, and that he dwelt among a people of unclean lips. But more especially, under the gospel dispensation, you find *Paul*, in that memorable chapter we have been reading, declaring, that he found in "his members a law warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin." Yea, we hear that remarkable exclamation of struggling desire and intense agony, "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Do you expect to find yourselves better saints than *Job*? do you imagine that the confession which befitted the mouth of *David* is too mean for you? are ye so proud, that ye will not exclaim with *Isaiah*, "I also am a man of unclean lips?" Or rather, have ye progressed so far in pride, that ye dare to exalt yourselves above the laborious Apostle *Paul*, and to hope that in you, that is, in your flesh, there dwelleth any good thing? If ye do think yourselves to be perfectly pure from sin, hear ye the word of God: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we say we have no sin, we make God a liar."

But scarcely do I need to prove this, beloved; for all of you, I am sure, who know anything about the experience of a living child of God, have found that in your best and happiest moments sin still dwells in you; that when you would serve your God the best, sin frequently works in you the most furiously. There have been many saints of God who have abstained, for a time, from doing anything they have known to be sin; but still there has not been one who has been inwardly perfect. If a being were perfect, the angels would come down in ten minutes, and carry him off to heaven, for he would be ripe for it as soon as he had attained

perfection. I have found in talking to men who have said a good deal about perfection, that after all they really did not believe in any such thing. They have taken with the word and attached a different meaning to it, and either then proved a doctrine which we all knew before, or else supposed a perfection so absurd and worthless, that I would not give three half-pence for it if I might have it. In many of them it is a fault, I believe, of their brains, rather than their hearts; and as John Berridge says, "God will wash their brains before they get to heaven." But why should I stay to prove this, when you have daily proofs of it yourselves? how many times do you feel that corruption is still within you? Mark how easily you are *surprised into sin*. You rise in the morning, and dedicate yourselves by fervent prayer to God, thinking what a happy day you have before you. Scarce have you uttered your prayer, when something comes to ruffle your spirit, your good resolutions are cast to the winds, and you say, "This day, which I thought would be such a happy one, has suffered, a terrific inroad; I cannot live to God as I would." Perhaps you have thought, "I will go up stairs, and ask my God to keep me." Well, you were in the main kept by the power of God, but on a sudden something came; an evil temper on a sudden surprised you; your heart was taken by storm, when you were not expecting an attack; the doors were broken open, and some unholy expression came forth from your lips, and down you went again on your knees in private, exclaiming, "Lord, I am vile." I have found out that I have a something in my heart, which, when I have bolted my doors, and think all is safe, creeps forth and undoes every bolt, and lets in the sin. Besides, beloved, you will find in your heart, even when you are not surprised into sin, such *an awful tendency to evil*, that it is as much as you can do to keep it in check, and to say, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further." Nay, you will find it more than you can do, unless a divine power is with you, and preventing grace restrains your passions and prevents you from indulging your inbred lusts. Ah, soldiers of Jesus, ye have felt—I know ye have felt the uprisings of corruption, for ye know the Lord in sincerity and in truth; and ye dare not, unless you would make yourselves liars to your own hearts, hope to be in this world perfectly free from sin.

Having stated that fact, I must just make a remark upon it, and leave it. How wrong it is of any of us, from the fact of our possessing evil hearts, to excuse our sins. I have known some persons, who profess to be Christians, speak very lightly of sin. There was corruption still remaining, and therefore they said they could not help it. Such persons have no visible part nor lot in God's covenant. The truly loving child of God, though he knows sin is there, hates that sin; it is a pain and misery to him, and he never makes the corruption of his *heart* as an excuse for the corruption of his *life*; he never pleads the evil of his nature, as an apology for the evil of his conduct. If any man can, in the least degree, clear himself from the conviction of his own conscience, on account of his daily failings, by pleading the evil of his heart, he is not one of the broken-hearted children of God; he is not one of the tried servants of the Lord, for they *groan* concerning sin, and carry it to God's throne; they know it is in

them—they do not, therefore, leave it, but seek with all their minds to keep it down, In order that it may not rise and carry them away. Mind that, unless you should make what I say a cloak to your licentiousness, and a covering to your guilt.

II. Thus we have mentioned the fact, that the best of men have sin still remaining in them. Now, I will tell you what are the doings of this sin. What does the sin which still remains in our hearts do? I answer—

1. Experience will tell you that *this sin exerts a checking power upon every good thing*. You have felt, when you would do good, that evil was present with you. Just like the chariot, which might go swiftly down the hill, you have had a clog put upon your wheels; or, like the bird that would mount towards heaven, you have found your sins, like the wires of a cage, preventing your soaring towards the Most High. You have bent your knee in prayer, but corruption has distracted your thoughts. You have attempted to sin, but you have felt “hosannah’s languish on your tongue.” Some insinuation of Satan has taken fire, like a spark in tinder, and well nigh smothered your soul with its abominable smoke. You would run in your holy duties with all alacrity; but the sin that doth so easily beset you entangles your feet, and when you would be nearing the goal, it trips you up, and down you fall, to your own dishonor and pain. You will find indwelling sin frequently retarding you the most, when you are most earnest. When you desire to be most alive to God—you will generally find sin most alive to repel you. The “evil heart of unbelief” puts itself straight in the road, and saith, “Thou shalt not come this way;” and when the souls says, “I will serve God—I will worship in his temple,” the evil heart saith, “Get thee to Dan and Beersheba, and bow thyself before false gods, but thou shalt not approach Jerusalem; I will not suffer thee to behold the face of the Most High.” You have often felt this to be the case: a cold hand has been placed upon your hot spirit when you have been full of devotion and prayer. And when you have had the wings of the dove, and thought you could flee away and be at rest, a clog has been put upon your feet, so that you could not mount. Now, that is one of the effects of indwelling sin.

2. But indwelling sin does more than that: it not only prevents us from going forward, but at times even *assails us*, as well as seeks to obstruct us. It is not merely that I fight with indwelling sin; it is indwelling sin that sometimes makes an assault on me. You will notice, the Apostle says, “O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” Now, this proves that he was not attacking his sin, but that this sin was attacking him. I do not seek to be delivered from a man against whom I lead the attack: but it is the man who is opposing from whom I seek to be delivered. And so sometimes the sin that dwelleth in believers flies at us, like some foul tiger of the woods, or some demon, jealous of the celestial spirit within us. The evil nature riseth up: it doth not only seek to stop us in the way, but, like Amalek, it labours to destroy us and cut us off utterly. Did you ever feel, beloved, the attacks of inbred sin? It may be, you have not: but if not, depend upon it you

will. Before you get all the way to heaven, you will be attacked by sin. It will not be simply your driving out the Canaanite; but the Canaanite, with chariot of iron, will attempt to overcome you, to drive you out, to kill your spiritual nature, damp the flame of your piety, and crush the new life which God has implanted in you.

3. The evil heart which still remaineth in the Christian, doth always, when it is not attacking or obstructing, *still reign and dwell within him*. My heart is just as bad when no evil emanates from it, as when it is all over vileness in its external developments. A volcano is ever a volcano; even when it sleeps, trust it not. A lion is a lion, even though he play like a kid; and a serpent, is a serpent, even though you may stroke it while for a season it slumbers; there is still a venom in its sting when its azure scales invite the eye. My heart, even though for an hour, it may not have had an evil thought, is still evil. If it were possible that I could live for days without a single temptation from my own heart to sin, it would be still just as evil as it was before; and it is always either displaying its vileness, or else preparing for another display. It is either loading its cannon to shoot against us, or else it is positively at warfare with us. You may rest assured that the heart is never other than it originally was; the evil nature is still evil; and when there is no blaze, it is heaping up the wood, wherewith it is to blaze another day. It is gathering up from my joys, from my devotions, from my holiness, and from all I do, some materials to attack me at some future period. The evil nature is only evil, and that continually, without the slightest mitigation or element of good. The new nature must always wrestle and fight with it; and when the two natures are not wrestling and fighting, there is no truce between them. When they are not in conflict, still they are foes. We must not trust our heart at any time; even when it speaks most fair, we must call it liar; and when it pretends to the most good, still we must remember its nature, for it is evil, and that continually.

The doings of indwelling sin I will not mention at length: but it is sufficient to let you recognize some of your own experience, that you may see that it is in keeping with that of the children of God, for that you may be as perfect as Job, and yet say, "Behold, I am vile."

III. Having mentioned the doings of indwelling sin, allow me to mention, in the third place, THE DANGER WE ARE UNDER FROM SUCH EVIL HEARTS. There are few people who think what a solemn thing it is to be a Christian. I guess there is not a believer in the world who knows what a miracle it is to be kept a believer. We little think the miracles that are working all around us. We see the flowers grow; but we do not think of the wondrous power that gives them life. We see the stars shine; but how seldom do we think of the hand that moves them. The sun gladdens us with his light; yet we little think of the miracles which God works to feed that sun with fuel, or to gird him like a giant to run his course. And we see Christians walking in integrity and holiness; but how little do we suspect what a mass of miracles a Christian is. There are as great a number of miracles expended on a Christian every day, as he hath hairs on his head. A Christian is a perpetual miracle. Every hour that

I am preserved from sinning, is an hour of as divine a might as that which saw a new-born world swathed in its darkness, and heard “the morning stars sing for joy.” Did ye never think how great is the danger to which a Christian is exposed from his indwelling sin? Come let me tell you.

One danger to which we are exposed from indwelling sin arises from the fact that *sin is within us*, and therefore it has a great power over us. If a captain has a city, he may for a long preserve it from the constant attacks of enemies without. He may have walls so strong, and gates so well secured, that he may laugh at all the attacks of besiegers; and their sallies may have no more effect upon his walls than sallies of wit. But if there should happen to be a traitor inside the gates—if there should be one who hath charge of the keys, and who could unlock every door and let in the enemy, how is the toil of the commander doubled! for he hath not merely to guard against foes without, but against foes within. And here is the danger of the Christian. I could fight the devil; I could overcome every sin that ever tempted me, if it were not that I had an enemy within. Those Diabolians within do more service to Satan than all the Diabolians without. As Bunyan says in his Holy War, the enemy tried to get some of his friends within the City of Mansoul, and he found his darlings inside the walls did him far more good than all those without. Ah! Christians, thou couldst laugh at thine enemy, if thou hadst not thine evil heart within; but remember, thine heart keeps the keys, because out of it are the issues of life. And sin is there. The worst thing thou has to fear is the treachery of thine own heart.

And moreover, Christian, remember *how many backers* thy evil nature has. As for thy gracious life, it finds few friends beneath the sky; but thine original sin hath allies in every quarter. It looks down to hell, and it finds them there, demons ready to let slip the dogs of hell upon thy soul. It looks out into the world, and sees “the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life.” It looks around, and it seeth all kinds of men, seeking, if it be possible, to lead the Christian from his steadfastness. It looks into the Church, and it finds all manner of false doctrine ready to inflame lust, and guide the soul from the sincerity of its faith. It looks to the body, and it finds head, and hand, and foot, and all other members ready to be subservient to sin. I could overcome my evil heart if it had not such a mighty host of allies, but it makes my position doubly dangerous, to have foes without the gates, in league and amity with a foe more vile within.

And I would have thee recollect, Christian, one more thing, and that is, that this evil nature of thine is *very strong and very powerful*—stronger than the new nature, if the new nature were not sustained by Divine power. How old is my old nature? “It is as old as myself,” the aged saint may say, “and has become all the stronger from its age.” There is one thing which seldom gets weaker through old age—that is, old Adam; he is as strong in his old age as he is in his young age, just as able to lead us astray when our head is covered with grey hairs, as he was in our youth. We have heard it said that growing in grace will make our

corruptions less mighty; but I have seen many of God's aged saints, and asked them the question, and they have said, "No," their lusts have been essentially as strong, when they have been many years in their Master's service, as they were at first, although more subdued by the new principle within. So far from becoming weaker, it is my firm belief that sin increases in power. A person who is deceitful becomes more deceitful by practising deceit. So with our heart. It did inveigle us at first, and easily entrapped us, but having learnt a thousand snares, it doth mislead us now perhaps more easily than before; and although our spiritual nature has been more fully developed, and grown in grace, yet still the old nature hath lost little of its energy. I do not know that the house of Saul waxeth weaker and weaker in our hearts; I know that the house of David waxeth stronger; but I do not know that my heart gets less vile, or that my corruptions become less strong. I believe that if I should ever say my corruptions are all dead, I should hear a voice, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson;" or, "The Philistines be in thee, Samson." Notwithstanding all former victories, and all the heaps upon heaps of sins I may have slain, I should yet be overcome if Almighty mercy did not preserve me. Christian! mind thy danger! There is not a man in battle so much in danger from the shot, as thou art from thine own sin. Thou carriest in thy soul an infamous traitor, even when he speaks thee fair he is not to be trusted; thou hast in thy heart a slumbering volcano, but a volcano of such terrific force that it may shake thy whole nature yet; and unless thou art circumspect, and art kept by the power of God, thou hast a heart which may lead thee into sins the most diabolical, and crimes the most infamous. Take care, O take care, ye Christians! If there were no devil to tempt you, and no world to lead you astray, you would have need to take care of your own hearts. Look, therefore, at home. Your worst foes are the foes of your own households. "Keep thine heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life," and out of it death may issue too,—death which would damn thee if sovereign mercy did not prevent. God grant, my brethren, that we may learn our corruptions in an easy way, and not discover them by their breaking out into open sin.

IV. And now I come to the fourth point, which is, THE DISCOVERY OF OUR CORRUPTION. Job said, "Behold, I am vile." That word "behold" implies that he was astonished. The discovery was unexpected. There are special times with the Lord's people, when they learn by experience that they are vile. They heard the minister assert the power of inbred lust, but perhaps they shook their heads and said, "I cannot go so far as that;" but after a little while they found, by some clearer light from heaven, that it was a truth after all—"Behold, I am vile." I remember preaching a little while ago from some deep text concerning the desperate evil of the heart; and one of my most esteemed friends said, "Well, I have not discovered that," and I thought within myself, what a blessing, brother! I wish I had not; for it is a most fearful experience to pass through: I dare say there are many here now who say "I trust in no righteousness of my own. I trust in nothing in the world but the blood of Christ; but still I have not discovered the vileness of my heart in the way you have men-

tioned." Perhaps not, brother; but it may not be many years before you are made to learn it. You may be of a peculiar temperament. God has preserved from all contact with temptations which would have revealed your corruptions, or perhaps he has been pleased, as a reward of his grace for deeds which you have been enabled to do for him, to give you a peaceable life, so that you have not been often tossed about by the tumults of your own soul; but nevertheless, let me tell you, that you must expect to find, in the inmost depths of your heart, a lower depth still. God comfort you, and enable you, when you come out of the furnace, to lie lower than ever at the footstool of divine mercy! *I believe we generally find out most of our failings when we have the greatest access to God.* Job never had such a discovery of God as he had at this time. God spoke to him in the whirlwind, and then Job said, "I am vile." It is not so much when we are desponding, or unbelieving, that we learn our vileness; we do find out something of it then, but not all. It is when by God's grace we are helped to climb the mount, when we come near to God, and when God reveals himself to us, that we feel that we are not pure in his sight. We get some gleams of his high majesty; we see the brightness of his skirts, "dark—with insufferable light;" and after having been dazzled by the sight, there comes a fall: as if, smitten by the fiery light of the sun, the eagle should fall from his lofty heights, even to the ground. So with the believer. He soars up to God, and on a sudden down he comes. "Behold," he says, "I am vile. I had never known this if I had not seen God. Behold, I have seen him; and now I discover how vile I am." Nothing shows blackness like exposure to light. If I would see the blackness of my own character, I must put it side by side with spotless purity; and when the Lord is pleased to give us some special vision of himself, some sweet intercourse with his own blessed person, then it is that the soul learns, as it never knew before, with an agony perhaps which it never felt, even when at first convinced of sin, "Behold, I am vile." God is pleased to do this. Lest we should be "exalted above measure, by the abundance of the revelation," he sends us this "thorn in the flesh," to let us see *ourselves* after we have seen *him*.

There are many men who never know much of their vileness till after the blood of Christ has been sprinkled on their consciences, or even till they have been many years God's children. I met, some time ago, with the case of a Christian, who was positively pardoned before he had a strong sense of sin. "I did not," he said, "feel my vileness, until I heard a voice, 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions;' and after that, I thought how black I had been. I did not think of my filthiness," said he, "till after I saw that I had been washed." I think there are many of God's people, who, though they had some notion of their blackness before they came to Christ, never knew how thoroughly vile they were till afterwards. They thought then, "How great must have been my sin to need such a Saviour! how desperate my filth, to require such a washing! how awful my guilt, to need such an atonement as the blood of Christ." You may rest assured, that the more you know of God and of Christ, the more you will know of yourself; and you will be obliged to say, as you did before, "Behold,

I am vile;" vile in an extraordinary sense, even as you never guessed or fancied until now. "Behold, I am vile!" "I am vile, indeed!" No doubt many of you will still think, that what I say concerning your evil nature is not true, and you may, perhaps, imagine that grace has cut your evil nature up; but you know little about spiritual life, if you suppose that. It will not be long before you find the old Adam as strong in you as ever; here will be a war carried on in your heart to your dying day, in which grace shall prevail, but not without sighs, and groans, and agonies, and wrestlings, and a daily death.

V. Here is the way in which God discovers our vileness to ourselves. Now, if it be true that we are still vile, WHAT ARE OUR DUTIES? And here let me solemnly speak to such of you as are heirs of eternal life, desiring as your brother in Christ Jesus to urge you to some duties which are most necessary, on account of the continual filthiness of your heart.

In the first place, if your hearts be still vile, and there be still an evil nature in you, *how wrong it is to suppose that all your work is done*. There is one thing concerning which I have much reason to complain of some of you. Before your baptism you were extremely earnest; you were always attending the means of grace, and I always saw you here; but there are some, some even now in this place, who, as soon as they had crossed that rubicon, began from that moment to decrease in zeal, thinking that the work was over. I tell you solemnly, that I know there are some of you who were prayerful, careful, devout, living close and near to your God, until you joined the church; but from that time forth, you have gradually declined. Now, it really appears to me a matter of doubt whether such persons are Christians. I tell you I have very grave doubts of the sincerity of some of you. If I see a man less earnest after baptism, I think he had no right to be baptized; for if he had had a proper sense of the value of that ordinance, and had been rightly dedicated to God, he would not have turned back to the ways of the world. I am grieved, when I see one or two who once walked very consistently with us, beginning to slide away. I have no fault to find with the great majority of you, as to your firm adherence to God's word. I bless God, that for the space of two years and more you have held firm and fast by God. I have not seen you absent from the house of prayer, nor do I think your zeal has flagged; but there are some few who have been tempted by the world, who have been led astray by Satan, or who, by some change in their circumstances, or some removal to a distance, have become cold, and not diligent in the work of the Lord. There are some of my hearers who are not as earnest as they once were. My dear friends, if you know the vileness of your hearts, you would see the necessity of being as earnest now as ever you were. Oh! if, when you were converted, your old nature were cut up, there would be no need of watchfulness now. If all your lusts were entirely gone, and all the strength of corruption dead within you, there would be no need of perseverance; but it is just because ye have evil hearts, that I bid you be just as earnest as ever you were, to stir up the gift of God which is in you, and look as well to yourselves as ever you did. Fancy not the battle is over, man; it is but the first trump, summoning to the warfare. The trump has

ceased, and thou thinkest the battle is over; I tell thee, nay, the fight has but now begun; the hosts are only just led forth, and thou hast newly put on thine harness; thou hast conflicts yet to come. Be thou earnest, or else that first love of thine shall die, and thou shalt yet “go out from us, proving that thou wast not of us.” Take care, my dear friends, of backsliding; it is the easiest thing in the world, and yet the most dangerous thing in the world. Take care of giving up your first zeal; beware of cooling in the least degree. Ye were hot and earnest once; be hot and earnest still, and let the fire which once burnt within you still animate you. Be ye still men of might and vigour, men who serve their God with diligence and zeal.

Again, if your evil nature is still within you, *how watchful you ought to be!* The devil never sleeps; your evil nature never sleeps; you ought never to sleep. “What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.” These are Jesus Christ’s words, and there is nothing needs repetition half so much as that word “watch.” We can do almost anything better than watch; for watching is very wearisome work, especially when we have sleepy souls to watch with. Watching is very fatiguing work. There is little open honor got by it, and therefore we do not have the hope of renown to cheer us up. Watching is a work that few of us, I am afraid, rightly perform; but if the Almighty had not watched over you, the devil would have carried you away long ago. Dear friends, I bid you watch constantly. When the adjoining house is on fire, how speedily do persons rise from their beds, and if they have combustibles, move them from the premises, and watch, lest their house also should become a prey to the devouring element! You have corruption in your heart: watch for the first spark, lest it set your soul on fire. “Let us not sleep as do others.” You might sleep over the crater of a volcano, if you liked; you might sleep with your head before the cannon’s mouth; you might, if you pleased, sleep in the midst of an earthquake, or in a pest-house; but I beseech you, do not sleep while you have evil hearts. Watch your hearts; you may think they are very good, but they will be your ruin if grace prevent not. Watch daily; watch perpetually; guard yourselves, lest you sin. Above all, my dear brethren, if our hearts be, indeed, still full of vileness, how necessary it is that we should *still exhibit faith in God*. If I must trust my God when I first set out, because of the difficulties in the way, if those difficulties be not diminished, I ought to trust God just as much as I did before. Oh! beloved, yield your hearts to God. Do not become self-sufficient. Self-sufficiency is Satan’s net, wherein he catcheth men, like poor silly fish, and doth destroy them. Be not self-sufficient. Think yourselves nothing, for ye are nothing, and live by God’s help. The way to grow strong in Christ is to become weak in yourself. God poureth no power into man’s heart till man’s power is all poured out. Live, then, daily, a life of dependence on the grace of God. Do not set thyself up as if thou wast an independent gentleman; do not start in thine own concerns as if thou couldst do all things thyself; but live always trusting in God. Thou has as much need to trust him now as ever thou hadst; for, mark thee, although thou wouldst have been damned without Christ, at

first, thou wilt be damned without Christ now, unless he still keeps thee, for thou has as evil a nature now as thou hadst then.

Dearly beloved, I have just one word to say, not to the saints, but to the ungodly—one cheering word, sinner, poor lost sinner! You think you must not come to God because you are vile. Now, let me tell you, that there is not a saint in this place but is vile too. If Job, and Isaiah, and Paul, were all obliged to say, “I am vile,” oh, poor sinner, wilt thou be ashamed to join the confession, and say, “I am vile,” too? If I come to God this night in prayer, when I am on my knees by my bedside, I shall have to come to God as a sinner, vile and full of sin. My brother sinner! dost thou want to have any better confession than that? Thou wantest to be better, dost thou? Why, saints in themselves are no better. If divine grace does not eradicate all sin in the believer, how dost thou hope to do it thyself? and if God loves his people, while they are yet vile, dost thou think thy vileness will prevent his loving thee? Nay, vile sinner, come to Jesus! vilest of the vile! Believe on Jesus, thou off-cast of the world’s society, thou who art the dung and dross of the streets, I bid thee come to Christ. Christ bids thee believe on him.

“Not the righteous, not the righteous,
Sinners, Jesus came to save.”

Come now; say, “Lord, I am vile; give me faith. Christ died for sinners; I am a sinner. Lord Jesus, sprinkle thy blood on me.” I tell thee, sinner, from God, if thou wilt confess thy sin, thou shalt find pardon. If now with all thy heart thou wilt say, “I am vile; wash me;” thou shalt be washed now. If the Holy Spirit shall enable thee to say with thine heart now, “Lord, I am sinful—

’Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bid’st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.”

Thou shalt go out of this place with all thy sins pardoned; and though thou comest in here with every sin that man hath ever committed on thy head, thou shalt go out as innocent, yea, more innocent than the new-born babe. Though thou comest in here all over sin, thou shalt go out with a robe of righteousness, white as angels are, as pure as God himself, so far as justification is concerned. For “now,” mark it “now is the accepted time,” if thou believest on him who justifieth the ungodly. Oh! may the Holy Spirit give thee faith that thou mayest be saved now, for then thou wilt be saved for ever! may God add his blessing to this feeble discourse for his name’s sake!