

A Free Salvation

A Sermon

(No. 199)

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on the Grand Stand, Epsom Race-Course.

“Yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”—*Isaiah 55:1*.

YOU see, I have something to sell this evening, I have to invite you to come and buy that which, in the gospel will this night be proclaimed. Now, it is usual when persons have anything to sell, *to exhibit the article*, to describe its character, and speak of its excellencies, for until persons are made aware of the nature of that which you exhibit, it is not likely that they will be prepared to buy it. That shall be my first business this evening Then the man who has aught to sell, in the next place, endeavors to bring those who hear him *up* to the price at which he desires to sell. My business tonight is to bring you *down to the price*—“Come buy wine and milk without money and without price.” I shall then conclude by addressing *a few sentences of earnest persuasion* to those who despise that glorious salvation which it is our privilege to preach, and turn away from those generous stipulations—“without money and without price.”

I. In the first place, then, I have to preach, to-night, WINE AND MILK—“Come buy wine and milk.” There we have a description of the gospel—wine that maketh glad the heart of man; milk, the one thing and the only thing in the world which contains all the essentials of life. The strongest man might live on milk, for in it. there is everything which is needed for the human frame—for bone, for sinew, for nerve, for muscle, for flesh—all is there. There you have a double description. The gospel is like wine which makes us glad. Let a man truly know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and he will be a happy man, and the deeper he drinks into the spirit of Christ, the more happy will he become. That religion which teaches misery to be a duty. is false upon the very face of it, for God, when he made the world, studied the happiness of his creatures. You cannot help thinking, as you see everything around you, that God has sedulously, with the most strict attention, sought ways of pleasing man. He has not just given us our absolute necessities, he has given us more, not simply the useful, but even the ornamental The flowers in the hedgerow, the stars in the sky, the beauties of nature, the hill and the valley—all these things were intended not merely because we needed them, but because God would show us how he loved us, and how anxious he was that we should be happy. Now, it is not likely that the God who made a happy world would send a miserable salvation. He who is a happy Creator will be a happy Redeemer, and those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, can bear witness that the ways of religion “are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace.” And if this life were all, if death were the

burial of all our life, and if the shroud were the winding-sheet of eternity, still to be a Christian would be a bright and happy thing for it lights up this valley of tears, and fills the wells in the valley of Baca to the brim with streams of love and joy. The gospel then, is like wine. It is like milk, too, for there is everything in the gospel that you want. Do you want something to bear you up in trouble? It is in the gospel—"a very present help in time of trouble." Do you need something to nerve you for duty? There is grace all-sufficient for everything that God calls you to undergo or to accomplish. Do you need something to light up the eye of your hope? Oh! there are joy-flashes in the gospel that may make your eye flash back again the immortal fires of bliss. Do you want something to make you stand steadfast in the midst of temptation? In the gospel there is that that can make you immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. There is no passion, no affection, no thought, no wish, no power which the gospel has not filled to the very brim. The gospel was evidently meant for manhood; it is adapted to it in its every part. There is knowledge for the head; there is love for the heart; there is guidance for the foot. There is milk and wine, in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And I think there is another meaning in the two words "milk and wine." Wine, you know, is a rich thing, something that requires much time to manufacture. There has to be vintage and fermentation and preservation before wine can come to its full flavour. Now, the gospel is like that, it is an extraordinary thing for feast days; it gives a man power to use a vintage of thought, a fermentation of action, and a preservation of experience, till a man's piety comes forth like the sparkling wine that makes the heart leap with gladness. There is that, I say, in religion, that makes it an extraordinary thing, a thing for rare occasions, to be brought out when princes sit at the table. But milk is an ordinary thing; you get it every day, anywhere. If you just run out into the farm yard there it is; there is no preparation required. it is ready to the hand. it is an ordinary thing. So is it with the gospel: it is a thing for every day. I love the gospel on Sunday, but, blessed be God, it is a Monday gospel too. The gospel is a thing for the chapel, and it is a thing for the church, there it is like wine. But it is a thing for the farm yard, it is a thing which you may observe behind the plough, and hum behind the counter. The religion of Christ is a thing that will go with you into your shop, on to the Exchange, into the market, everywhere. It is like milk—an everyday dish—a thing which we may always have, and upon which we may always feast. Oh! thank heaven, there is wine for that high day when we shall see the Saviour face to face; there is wine for that dread day when we shall ford the stream of Jordan—wine that shall remove our fears and bid us sing in the midst of the dark billows of Death: but thanks be unto him, there is milk too—milk for everyday occurrences, for every-day actions, milk for us to drink as long as we live, and milk to cherish us till the last great day shall come.

Now, I think I have explained the figure in my text; but still some will say, "What is the gospel?" Well, the gospel, as I take it, can be looked at in various ways, but I will put it to

night as this—the gospel is the preaching of a full, free, present, everlasting pardon to sinners through Jesus Christ’s atoning blood. If I understand the gospel at all, it has in it a great deal more than this; but still this is the substance of it. I have to preach to night the great fact that while all have sinned, Christ hath died, and to all penitents who now confess their sins and put their trust in Christ, there is a full, free pardon—*free* in this respect, that you have nothing to do in order to get it. The meanest sin-stricken sinner has simply to pour out his plaintive griefs before God; that is all he asks. There is no fitness needed;—

“All the fitness he requireth,
Is to feel your need of him:
This he gives you;
’Tis his Spirit’s rising beam.”

There is no need to pass through years of penance, of hard labor, and of trial; the gospel is as free as the air you breathe. You do not pay for breathing; you do not pay for seeing the sunlight, nor for the water that flows in the river as you stoop to drink it in your thirst. So the gospel is free; nothing is to be done in order to get it. No merits need be brought in order to obtain it. There is free pardon for the chief of sinners through Jesus Christ’s blood. But I said it was a *full* pardon, and so it is. When Christ does anything he never does it by halves. He is willing this night to blot out every sin and cleanse every iniquity of every soul present who is now prepared by God’s grace to seek his mercy. If now, sinner, God hath put it in thine heart to seek him, the pardon which he is prepared to give thee, is a full one; not a pardon for a part of your sins, but for all at once:—

“Here’s pardon for transgressions past,
It matters not how black their cast,
And, oh! my soul with wonder view,
For sins to come here’s pardon too.”

Here is pardon for your drunkenness, pardon for your oaths, pardon for your lust, pardon for your rebellion against heaven; for the sins of your youth and the sins of your old age, for the sins of the sanctuary and the sins of the brothel, or the tavern. Here is pardon for all sin, for “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” But again, the pardon we have to preach is a *present* pardon. If you feel your need of a Saviour, if now you are enabled to believe in Christ, you shall be pardoned now. Those who have ordinary hopes say they hope to be pardoned when they come to die. But, beloved, that is not the religion we preach. If you will now make confession of sin, now seek the Lord, you shall be pardoned now. It is possible for a man to have come in here with all his sins hanging about his neck like a millstone, enough to sink him lower than the lowest hell, and yet to go out of this door with every sin blotted out. If now he is enabled to believe on him, he may this night receive perfect pardon from the hand of God. The pardon of a sinner is not a thing done when he is dying, it is done when he is living—done now. And there be some here I trust, and they

not a few, who can rejoice to night in the fact that they are pardoned. Oh! Is it not a magnificent thing for a man to be able to tread God's earth with this for a song in his mouth, "I am forgiven, I am forgiven; I am pardoned?" I think it is one of the sweetest songs in all the world—scarcely less sweet than that of the cherubim before the throne—

"Oh. how sweet to view the flowing
Of his soul redeeming blood!
With divine assurance knowing,
He has made my peace with God."

Oh! what would you give for such a salvation as this, ye mourning souls? It is preached to you without money and without price, and I am bidden to cry "Ho! ho! Every one that thirsteth; if you feel your need of Christ, if you are now ready to confess your sins, come and take it freely without money and without price." But the best remains for the last. The pardon which is proclaimed to-night, is not only a free, and full, and present, but it is a pardon that *will last for ever*. If the Queen pardons any one—grants a free pardon—it is impossible that man should be punished for the same offense. Very often, however, the Queen grants a reprieve that is not a full pardon. There are cases in which persons are so far pardoned, that they are not executed for the crime, but confined during Her Majesty's pleasure. Now, our Lord never does that; he makes a clean sweep of it: there is not one sin that he allows to remain. When he does wash a soul, he washes it whiter than the driven snow. God doth things perfectly. But the best of it is, that what he does once is done for ever. This is the very glory of the gospel. If you get pardon to-night, you are saved now, but you never shall be condemned. If a man believeth in Christ with all his heart, his salvation is secure beyond hazard; and I always look upon this as the very jewel of the crown of salvation, that it be irreversible. If I commit my soul into the hands of God,

"His honor is engaged to save
The meanest of his sheep.
All that his heavenly father gave
His hands securely keep.
Not death or hell shall e'er divide
His fav'rites from his breast;
In the dear bosom of their God
They must for ever rest."

God does not make you his child to-day, and turn you out to-morrow; he does not forgive you to-day, and then punish you the next day. As true as God is God, if thou gettest thy pardon to-night Christian, the earth may melt away just as a moment's foam dissolves into the wave that bears it and is lost for ever; the great universe may pass away and be like the hoar-frost before the morning sun; but thou never canst be condemned. As long as God is God, he who has got his pardon signed and sealed, is beyond the reach of harm. I would

not preach any other—I dare not. It would not be worth your receiving, it would not be worth my taking the trouble to preach; but this is worth any man’s having indeed, for it is a sure investment. He Who puts himself into the hands of Christ has a sure keeper, come what may—and there may come strong temptations and strong affections, and there may come strong pains and hard duties, but he that hath helped us bears us through, and makes us more than conquerors too. Oh! to be pardoned once, with the certain assurance that we shall be pardoned for ever, beyond the hazard of being cast away!

And now again, I will just preach this *salvation*, for this is the wine and milk which is proclaimed without money and without price. Beloved, all this is to be gained by faith in Christ—whosoever believeth in him who died upon the tree, and groaned away his life for us—shall never come into condemnation: he is passed from death unto life, and the love of God abideth in him.

II. And now, having thus exhibited the article, my next business is to BRING THE BIDDERS UP TO THE AUCTION BOX AND SELL IT. My difficulty is to bring you down to my price, as old Rowland said. He was preaching in a fair, and he heard a man selling his goods. “Ah!” said he, “as for those people over there, their difficulty is to bring people *up* to their price; whereas, my difficulty is to bring you *down* to my price.”

Now, here is a gospel fully preached, without money and without price. Here comes some one up to the sacred desk, transformed for the moment into an auction box, and he cries, “I want to buy.” What will you give for it? He holds out his hands, and he has such a handful; he has to lift up his very lap with more, for he can hardly hold all his good works. He has Ave-Marias and Paternosters without number, and all kinds of crossings with holy water, and bendings of the knee, and prostrations before the altar, and reverence of the host, and attending at the mass, and so on. In French, they call the mass the *messe*, and a mess it is and no mistake, but there are a great many people who trust in it; and when they come before God, they bring all these things as the ground of their reliance.

And so, Sir Romanist, you are coming to get salvation are you? and you have brought all this with you. Friend, I am sorry for thee, but thou must go away from the box with all thy performances, for it is “without money and without price,” and until thou art prepared to come empty handed thou canst never have it. If thou hast anything of thine own thou canst not receive it. “But,” says he, “I am no heretic. Am I not true to the Pope? Do I not make confession and get absolution, and pay my shilling?” Do you my friend? Then because you pay your shilling for it, it is good for nothing, for that which is good for something you can have “without money and without price.” The light we pay for is a sickly thing, but that which we get from heaven for nothing, is the rich healthy light which makes the heart glad. So the pardon that comes from Christ is “without money and without price.”

Then another comes up and says “I am glad you have served the Romanist like that. I hate the Church of Rome, I am a true Protestant, and desire to be saved.” What have you

brought, sir? “Oh, I have brought no Ave-Marias, no Paternosters; I abhor the names; I do not like those Latin names, not I. But I say the collect every Sunday; I am very attentive to my prayers I go to church almost as soon as the doors are open,” or (if he is a Dissenter) “I go to chapel three times on the Sabbath. and I attend the prayer-meetings and beside that, I pay everybody twenty shillings in the pound. I had rather pay twenty-one shillings than nineteen. I would not like to hurt anybody. I do not tread upon a worm if I can help it, I am always liberal, and assist the poor when I can. I may make a little slip just now and then. I may turn aside a little; still, if I am not saved I do not know who will be. I am as good as my neighbors, and I think, sir, I certainly ought to be saved, for I have very few sins, and what few there are do not hurt other people; they hurt me more than any one else. Besides, they are mere trifles; only one or two days in the year I break loose, and a man must have a little amusement after all. I assure you I am one of the best, most honest, and sober, and religious people going.” Well, my friend, I am sorry to hear you quarrelling with the Romanist, for I do not like to see twin brothers disagree. You are both of the same kith and kin, believe me, for the essence of Popery is salvation by works and ceremonies. You do not practice his works and ceremonies, but then you hope to be saved by your own, and you are just as bad as he. I will send you away; there is no salvation for you, for it is “without money and without price;” and as long as you bring these fine good works of yours you cannot have it. Mark, I do not find any fault with them, they are good enough in their place, but they won’t do here to-night, and they won’t do at the judgment bar of God. Practise those things as much as you like, they are good in their place. but still, in the matter of salvation you must leave them out, and come for it as poor guilty sinners and take it “without money and without price.” Says one, “Do you find fault with good works?” Not at all. Suppose I see a man building a house, and he were fool enough to lay the foundation with chimney-pots. If I should say, “My dear man, I do not like these chimney-pots to be put into the foundation,” you would not say I found fault with the chimney-pots, but that I found fault with the man for putting them in the wrong place. Let him put good solid masonry at the bottom, and then when the house is built he may put on as many chimney-pots as he likes. So with good works and ceremonies they will not do for a foundation. The foundation must be built of more solid stuff. Our hope must be built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness, and when we have built a foundation with that, we may have as many good works as we like—the more the better. But for a foundation, good works are fickle and feeble things, and he that useth them will see his house totter to the ground.

But see another man. He is a long way off, and he says, “Sir, I am afraid to come; I could not come and make a bid for the salvation. Sir, I’ve got no larnin’, I’m no scholard I can’t read a book, I wish I could. My children go to Sunday-school; I wish there was such a thing in my time, I can’t read, and its no use my hoping to go to heaven. I goes to church sometimes, but oh dear! it’s no good; the man uses such long words I can’t understand’em, and

I goes to chapel sometimes, but I can't make it out. I knows a little of the hymns my child says, about

'Gentle Jesus meek and mild,'—and

'Oh! that will be joyful, when we meet to part no more.'

I wish they would preach like that, and then, maybe, I could make it out. But I'm no sholar, sir, and I don't think I can be saved." O my dear friend, you need not stand over there at the back. Come along with you. It wants no scholarship to go to heaven. The more you know the better it will be for you on earth no doubt, but it will be of no particular use to you in heaven. If you can "read your title clear to mansions in the skies," if you know enough to know yourself a lost sinner, and Christ a great Saviour, that is all you want to know to get to heaven. There is many a man in heaven that never read a letter on earth—many a man that could not, if his life depended on it, have signed his name, but was obliged to write a cross as "Tom Stiles's mark" and there he is among the brightest. Peter himself has not a brighter place than manly poor ignorant souls who looked to Jesus Christ, and were enlightened. I will tell you something to comfort you. Don't you know that Christ said, the poor had the gospel preached to them and besides that, he said, "Except a man be converted, and become as a little child, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." What does that mean, but that we must believe the gospel like little children? A little child has not much learning: he just believes what he is told, and that is what you are to do. You are to believe what God tells you. He says, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. That is no hard thing, is it? You can believe that; and if you can, it you are destitute of all human knowledge, you shall without doubt, know hereafter what you know not now.

Now, I see a man come up to the stall, and he says, "Well, I will have salvation sir, I have made in my will provisions for the building of a church or two, and a few almshouses, I always devote a part of my substance to the cause of God; I always relieve the poor, and such-like; I have a pretty good share of money, and I take care not to hoard it up; I am generous and liberal, I try to set up poor trades-people, and so forth. Won't that carry me to heaven?" Well, I like you very much, and I wish there were more of your sort. There is nothing like generosity and liberality certainly, where it is exhibited towards the sick and the poor, the destitute and the ignorant, and in the cause of God; but if you bring these things as your hope of heaven, my dear friend, I must undeceive you. You cannot buy heaven with gold. Why, they pave the streets up there with it. Are we not told in the book of Revelation, that the streets of the city were all of pure gold like unto transparent glass. Why, if you had twenty thousand pounds you could not buy a flag-stone with it. Baron Rothschild could not buy a foot of heaven if he spent all his money for it. It is too precious a place to be bought with gold and silver. If all the wealth of the Indies could be shot out in order to buy one glimpse of heaven, it would be useless. There is no man that could get so much as a distant peep within its pearly gates for all the gold that heart could conceive or covetousness desire. It is

given away for nothing. Christ will never sell it—never—because there is nothing that can be brought at all equal to its value. What Christ bought with *blood* you cannot buy with *gold*. He redeemed us not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with his precious blood; and there is no other price that can ever be allowed. Ah! my rich friend, you are just on a level with your poorest laborer. You may wear broadcloth, and he fustian, yet he has as good an opportunity of being saved as you. Ah! my lady, satin has no preference in heaven above calico or cotton.

“None are excluded hence but those who do themselves exclude.”

Wealth makes distinction on earth, but no distinction at the cross of Christ. You must all come alike to the footstool of Jesus, or else not come at all. I knew a minister who told me he was once sent for to the dying bed of a Roman who was very well to do in the world, and she said, “Mr. Baxter, do you think when I get to heaven Betsy my servant will be there?” “Well,” he said, “I don’t know much about you, but Betsy will be there; for if I know any one who is a pious girl, it is she.” “Well,” said the lady, “don’t you think there will be a little distinction? for I never could find it in my heart to sit down with a girl of that sort, she has no taste, no education, and I could not endure it. I think there ought to be a little difference.” “Ah! you need not trouble yourself, madam,” said he, “there will be a great distinction between you and Betsy, if you die in the temper in which you now are; but the distinction will be on the wrong side; for you will see her in Abraham’s bosom, but you yourself will be cast out. As long as you have such pride in your heart, you can never enter into the kingdom of heaven.” He spoke to her very plainly, and she was mightily offended. But I believe she preferred to be found out of heaven to submitting to sit with her servant Betsy. Let us respect rank and title here, if you please: but when we preach the gospel we know no such thing. If I preached to a congregation of kings, I would preach just the same gospel that I would preach to a congregation of clodhoppers. The king on his throne, and the queen in her palace, have no gospel different from you and me. However humble and obscure we may be there stands the gate of heaven wide open; there is the king’s royal highway for us. The highway is as much for the poor man as for the rich man; so is the kingdom of heaven—“without money and without price.”

Now I hear my friend the Calvinist over there say, “Well, I like that, but still I think I can come, and though I can say with you,—

‘nothing in my hands I bring, simply to thy cross I cling.’

Yet I can say this—I have had a deep experience, sir, I have been led to see the plague of my own heart, and I have felt a great deal. When I come to Christ I rely a great deal upon my feelings. I do not think you are right in calling all kinds of sinners to come to Christ, but you are right in calling me, for I am one of the right sort. I am one of the publican sort; I am pharisaical enough to think that; I think that I most certainly have a special commission to come, for I have such an experience that if I were to write my biography, you would say,

‘This is a good experience; this man has a right to come to Christ.’ ” Well, friend, I am sorry to upset you, but I shall be compelled to do so. If you bring your experience to Christ when you come to him, you are as bad as the Romanist who brings his masses and Ave-Marias. I like your experience very well, if it be the work of God’s grace in your heart, but if you bring it when you come to Christ, you put that before Christ, and it is an Anti-Christ. Away with it! away with it! When we have been preaching to poor sinners and tried to describe their state by nature and their feelings, I have been afraid after all, that we were fostering a spirit of self righteousness, and teaching our hearers to think that they must get certain feelings, before they can come to Christ. Let me just, if I can, preach the gospel in the broadest way possible, and that is the most truthful way. Christ wants your feelings no more than he does your money, and that is, not at all. If you want good experience you must come to Christ:—

“All the fitness he requireth, is to feel your need of him.”

Yes, but stop—

“This *he gives you*, ‘tis his Spirit’s rising beam.”

You are to come to Christ to get everything. You are not to say, “Well, I will believe first, and then come.” No; go to Christ for faith. You must look to the cross even to get a sense of sin. We do not feel our sins so much before we see the cross, but we feel them most afterwards. We look to Christ first; then repentance flows from both our streaming eyes. Remember, if you go anywhere else to find a Saviour, you are on the wrong track. If you try to bring anything to Christ, to use a homely proverb, it is like bringing coals to Newcastle. He has plenty—he does not want any of yours, and what is more, as soon as he sees anything in your hands he will turn you straight away. He will have nothing to do with you until you can say—

“Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to thy cross I cling.”

I have heard of a negro who was convinced of sin, and at the same time his master was under conviction. The negro found peace with God, but the master was a long time seeking without any hope; and at last he said, “I cannot make out how it is that you found comfort so soon, and I cannot get it at all.” So the negro after asking his master to excuse his speaking plainly, said, “Massa, I tink it is just dis. When Jesus say, ‘Come along,’ he say, ‘I give you a righteousness dat cover you from head to foot.’ I, poor negro, looks down at myself, covered all over wid filthy rags, and I say, ‘Lord, clothe me, I am naked,’—and off go my rags. Now, massa, you not so bad as dat. When he say, ‘Come along,’ to you, you look at your coat, and you say, ‘Well, it wants a little mending, but I fink it will wear a little longer. Dere is a great hole here, but a little darning and stitching will do it up again.’ So, massa, you keep your old coat; you keep on darning and stitching, and you never get comfort. But if you would take it off, you would get comfort at once.” That is just it, we will be trying to get something before we come to Christ.

Now I dare say in this congregation I have a hundred different phases of this singular fatuity of man—the desire to bring something to Christ. “Oh,” says one “I would come to Christ, but I have been too great a sinner.” Self again, sir; your being a great sinner has nothing to do with that. Christ is a great Saviour; and however great your sin, his mercy is greater than that. He invites you simply as a sinner. Be you big or little, he bids you come to him and take his salvation “without money and without price.” Another says, “Ah! but I do not feel it enough.” Self again. He does not ask you about your feelings he simply says, “Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth.” “But, sir, I cannot pray.” Self again. You are not to be saved by your prayers; you are to be saved by Christ, and your business is simply to look to Christ. he will help you to pray afterwards. You must begin at the right end by clinging only to his cross and trusting there. “But,” says another “if I felt as So-and-so did.” Self again. What business have you to talk so? Christ is where you are to look, not to self. “Yes,” you say, “I think he would receive anybody but me.” Please, who gave you any leave to think at all in the matter? Does he not say, “Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out?” Why, you are thinking your soul into eternal ruin. Give up thinking, and *believe*. Are your thoughts as God’s thoughts? Remember, his thoughts are as much higher than yours as heaven is higher than earth “But,” says one, “I have sought him and I have not found him.” Dear friend, can you truly say that you have come to Christ with nothing in your hand, and have looked alone to him, and yet he has cast you away? Do you dare to say that? No, if God’s Word be true, and you are true, you cannot say that. Ah! I remember how that struck my heart when I heard my mother say it once. I had been some years seeking Christ, and I never could believe he would save me. She said she had heard many people swear and blaspheme God, but one thing she had never heard—she had never heard a man say he had sought Christ, and Christ had rejected him. “And,” said she, “I do not believe that God would permit any man to live to say that.” Well, I thought I could say it; I thought I had sought him, and he had cast me away, and I determined I would say it, even if it destroyed my soul: I would speak what I thought was the truth. But, I said to myself, “I will try once more” and I went to the Master, with nothing of my own, casting myself simply on his mercy; and I believed that he died for me:—and I have never said that, and blessed be his holy name, I know I never shall. Nor will you. Oh, do try him.

“Make but a trial of his love;
Experience will decide
How blest are they, and only they,
Who in his love confide.”

If you will come down to this price, and take Christ for nothing, just as he is, “without money and without price,” you shall not find him a hard Master.

III. Now, I have to use a FEW ARGUMENTS with you, and may God apply them to your hearts! I would first speak to some of *you who never think about these things at all*. You

have come here to hear the Word today, because it is preached in a strange place; otherwise you might not have been in the house of God at all. Very seldom you vex yourselves with religious questions; you do not ask yourselves many questions about it, because you feel it would be an awkward thing for you if you were to think much of religion, you feel there would be a necessity for a change of life in you, for thoughts about religion and your present habits would not suit well together. My dear friends, bear with me a moment if I press you very much home. Did you ever hear of the ostrich? When the hunter pursues it, the poor silly bird flies away as fast as it can, and when it sees that there is no way of escape, what do you suppose it does? It buries its head in the sand, and then thinks it is safe, because it shuts its eyes and cannot see. Is not that just what you are doing? Conscience won't let you rest, and what you are trying to do is to bury it. You bury your head in the sand; you do not like to think. Ah! if we could bring men to think, what a wonderful thing we should have done! That is one of the things, sinner, that, without Christ, you dare not do. Do you think? We have heard of men afraid to be alone half an hour because of thoughts too terrible for them. I challenge any of you without God, to spend one hour on that heath, or in this balcony, or in your own house at home, and just chew these thoughts, masticate them—"I am an enemy to God, my sins are not forgiven; if I die to-night, I am damned to all eternity; I have never sought Christ, and never found him to be mine." I defy you to keep at that an hour. You dare not, you would be afraid of your shadow. The only way sinners can be happy is by thoughtlessness. They say, "Cover it up; bury my dead out of my sight." They put such thoughts away. Now is this wise? Is there anything in religion? If not, it will be consistent in you to deny it; but if this Bible is true, if you have a soul that is to live for ever, is it rational, is it sensible, is it prudent, to be neglecting your eternal soul? If you suffered your bodies to starve, you would not want much argument, would you, to induce you to eat? But here is your soul perishing, and yet no mortal tongue can persuade you to attend to that. Ah! is it not strange that men are going to live for ever in eternity, and yet they have never provided for it. I have heard of a certain king who had a fool in his court, who made a great many merry jests, and the king gave him a stick, and said, "Keep that till you find a bigger fool than yourself." At last the king came to die, and when he lay a-dying, the jester came to him and said, "Master, what is the matter?" "I am going to die" said the king. "Going to die—where's that?" "I am going to die, man, don't laugh at me now." "How long are you going to be there?" "Well, where I am going I shall live for ever." "Have you got a house there?" "No." "Have you made any preparation for the journey?" "No." "Have you got any provision whatever, as you are going to live there such a long time?" "No." "There, take the stick; fool as I am, I have made preparation. I am not such a fool as to have to live in a place where I have not got a house." Christ has prepared for his people a mansion in heaven. There was much wisdom in the jester's language. Let me speak to you, even though it be in his language, but very seriously. If men are to live for ever in heaven, is it not a strange, wild,

frantic freak of intolerant madness, that they never think of the world to come. To-day they think, but for ever—they put that away. Time, and its poor baubles and its toys do fill the heart; but eternity—that hill without a summit, that sea without a shore, that river without an end, over which they are to sail for ever—they never think of that. Will you pause a moment and recollect that you have to sail for ever, and you must sail o’er the burning waves of hell, or else o’er sparkling streams of glory. Which shall it be with you? You will have to consider this soon. Before many days, and months, and years are gone, God will say to you “Prepare to meet thy God,” and it may be that the summons shall come to you. Then you are in the death struggle when the stream of Jordan is chilling your blood, and your heart is sunken within you by reason of fear. And what will you do then? What wilt thou do in the swellings of sin in the day when thou art spoiled? What shalt thou do when God shall bring thee into judgment?

And I have now the pleasing task of closing by addressing men of another character: Ah! friend; you are not careless. You have many thoughts, and they pain you; but, although you would be glad to get rid of them, you would be afraid to do so. You can say, “Oh! I do feel it were well for me if I could rejoice in Christ—I do feel I should be happy if I could be converted.” Friend, I am glad to hear thee say so. Where God has put the work of an impressed heart, I do not think he will leave it till he has finished. Now, I want to speak to you very seriously to-night, but for a minute. You do feel your need of a Saviour. Remember, Christ died for you. Believe that—will you? There he hangs upon his cross, dying; look into his face, it is full of love, it is melting with forgiveness; his lips are moving, and he says, “Father forgive them.” Will you look to him? Can you hear him say it, and yet turn away? All he asks you is simply to look, and that look will save you. You do feel your need of a Saviour; you know you are a sinner. Why tarry? Do not say you are unworthy. Remember, he died for the unworthy. Do not say he will not save you. Remember, he died for the devil’s castaways; the very dram and scum of the world Christ has redeemed. Look at him. Can you look at him and not believe him? Can you see the blood streaming from his shoulders, and trickling from his hands and side, and not believe him? Oh! by him that liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore, I entreat you to believe on the Lord Jesus; for thus is it written, “He that believeth on the Lord Jesus, and is baptized, shall be saved.”

Once when Rowland Hill was preaching, Lady Ann Erskine happened to be driving by: she was in the outer ring of the circle, and she asked the coachman, what all the people were there for. He replied, “They are going to hear Rowland Hill.” Well, she had heard a great deal about this strange man, accounted to be the very wildest of preachers, and so she drew near. No sooner did Rowland Hill see her, than he said, “Come, I am going to have an auction, I am going to sell Lady Ann Erskine.” (She of course stopped, and she wondered how she was going to be disposed of.) “Who will buy her?” Up comes the world. “What will you give for her?” “I will give her all the pomps and vanities of this present life; she shall be a happy

woman here she shall be very rich, she shall have many admirers, she shall go through this world with many joys.” “You shall not have her; her soul is an everlasting thing; it is a poor price you are offering, you are only giving *a little* and what shall it profit her if she gain *the whole* world and lose her own soul? Here comes another purchaser—here is the devil. “What will you give for her.” “Well” says he, “I will let her enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, she shall indulge in everything her heart shall set itself unto; she shall have everything to delight the eye and the ear; she shall indulge in every sin and vice that can possibly give a transient pleasure.” Ah! Satan, what will you do for her for ever? You shall not have her, for I know what you are; you would give a paltry price for her, and then destroy her soul to all eternity. But, here comes another—I know him—it is the Lord Jesus. “What will you give for her?” Says he, “It is not what I will give, it is what I have given; I have given my life, my blood for her; I have bought her with a price, and I will give her heaven for ever and ever; I will give her grace in her heart now and glory throughout eternity.”

“O Lord, Jesus Christ,” said Rowland Hill, “thou shalt have her. Lady Ann Erskine, do you demur to the bargain?” She was fairly caught; there was no answer that could be given. “It is done,” he said, “it is done; you are the Saviour’s; I have betrothed you unto him; never break that contract.” And she never did. From that time forth, from being a gay and volatile woman she became one of the most serious persons, one of the greatest supporters of the truth of the gospel in those times, and died in a glorious and certain hope of entering the kingdom of heaven. I would be well pleased if I might make a match of some of you this night; if you would now say, “Lord, I will have thee,” Christ is ready. If he has made you ready he is never behind hand himself. Whosoever is willing to have Christ, Christ is willing to have him. What sayest thou? wilt thou go with this man? If thou sayest “Ay,” God bless thee! Christ saith “Ay” too, and thou art saved, saved now, saved for ever!