

## **The King's Highway Opened and Cleared**

A Sermon

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REV. C.H. SPURGEON

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“And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”—*Acts. 16:31.*

YOU WILL REMEMBER that when the children of Israel were settled in Canaan, God ordained that they should set apart certain cities to be called the Cities of Refuge, that to these the man-slayer might flee for security. If he killed another unawares, and had no malice aforethought, he might flee at once to the City of Refuge; and if he could enter its gates before the avenger of blood should overtake him, he would be secure. We are told by the rabbis that once in the year, or oftener, the magistrates of the district were accustomed to survey the high roads which led to these cities. they carefully gathered up all the stones, and took the greatest possible precautions that there should be no stumbling-blocks in the way which might cause the poor fugitive to fall, or might by any means impede him in his hasty course. We hear, moreover, and we believe the tradition to be grounded in fact, that all along the road there were hand-posts with the word “Refuge” written very legibly upon them, so that when the fugitive came to a crossroad, he might not need to question for a single moment which was the way of escape; but seeing the well-known word “Refuge,” he kept on his breathless and headlong course until he had entered the suburb of the City of Refuge, and he was then at once completely safe.

Now, my brothers and sisters, God has prepared for the sons of men a City of Refuge, and the way to it is by FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS. It is needful, however, that very often the ministers of Christ should survey this road, lest there should be any stumbling-blocks in the path of the poor sinner. I propose this morning to go along it, and, by God's grace, to remove any impediment which Satan may have laid upon the path, and may God so help me, that this survey may be of spiritual benefit to all your souls, that any of you who have been made to stumble in the path of faith may now pluck up courage, and run joyfully forward; hoping yet to escape from the fierce avenger of your sins.

Well may the minister be careful to keep the road of faith clear for the seeking sinner, for surely the sinner hath a heavy heart to carry, and we ought to make the road as clear and as smooth as we can. We should make straight paths for the feet of these poor benighted souls. It should be our endeavor to cast loads of promises into every slough that runs across the path, that so it may be a king's highway, and may be safe and easy for travelling for those weary feet that have to carry such a heavy heart. Besides, we must remember that the sinner

will make stumbling-blocks enough for himself, even with our greatest and most scrupulous care to remove any others that may naturally lie in his way. For this is one of the sad follies of the poor desponding soul—that it spoils its own road. You have sometimes seen, perhaps, the newly-invented engine in the streets, the locomotive that lays down its own pathway and then picks it up again. Now, the sinner is the very reverse of that; he spoils his own road before himself, and then carries behind him all the mire and dirt of his own mishaps. Poor soul! he flings stones before himself, cuts out valleys, and casts up mountains in his own pathway. Well may the ministers, then, be careful to keep this road clear. And, let me add there is another weighty reason. Behind him comes the furious avenger of blood. Oh, how swift is he! There is Moses armed with all the wrath of God, and Death following hard after him—a mounted rider upon his pale horse; and after Death there cometh Hell with all the powers and legions of Satan, all athirst for blood and swift to slay. Make straight the road, oh ministers of Christ, level the mountains, fill up the valleys; for this is a desperate flight, this flight of the sinner from his ferocious enemies towards the one City of Refuge—the atonement of Jesus Christ.

I have thus given the reasons why I am compelled in spirit to make this survey this morning. Come, O Spirit, the Comforter, and help us now, that every stone may be cast out of the high road to heaven.

The road to heaven, my brethren, is BY FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS. It is not by well-doing that you can be saved, though it is by ill-doing that you will be damned if you put not trust in Christ. Nothing that you can do can save you. Albeit that after you are saved it will be your delightful privilege to walk in the ways of God and to keep his commandments, yet all your own attempts to keep the commandments previous to faith, will but sink you deeper into the mire, and will by no means contribute to your salvation. The one road to heaven is BY FAITH IN CHRIST. Or to make it plainer still as the countryman said, there are but two steps to heaven—out of self into Christ, and, then, out of Christ into heaven. Faith is simply explained as *trusting in Christ*. I find that Christ commands me to believe in him, or to trust him. I feel that there is no reason in myself why I should be allowed to trust him. But he *commands* me to do so. Therefore altogether apart from my character or from any preparation that I feel in myself, I obey the command, and sink or swim, I trust Christ. Now, that is faith,—when with the eye shut as to all evidence of hope in ourselves, we take a leap in the dark right into the arms of an Omnipotent Redeemer. Faith is sometimes spoken of in Scripture as being a leaning upon Christ; a casting of one's self upon him, or, as the old Puritans used to put it, (using a somewhat hard word) it is recumbency on Christ—the leaning of the whole weight upon his cross; ceasing to stand by the strength of one's own power and resting wholly upon the rock of ages. The leaving of the soul in the hands of Jesus is the very essence of faith. Faith is receiving Christ into our emptiness. There is Christ like the conduit in the market-place. As the water flows from the pipes, so does

grace continually flow from him. By faith I bring my empty pitcher and hold it where the water flows, and receive of its fullness, grace for grace. It is not the beauty of my pitcher, it is not even its cleanness that quenches my thirst: it is simply holding that pitcher to the place where water flows. Even so I am but the vessel, and my faith is the hand which presents the empty vessel to the flowing stream. It is the grace, and not the qualification of the receiver which saves the soul. And though I hold that pitcher with a trembling hand, and much of that which I seek may be lost through my weakness, yet if the soul be but held to the fountain, and so much as a single drop trickle into it, my soul is saved. Faith is receiving Christ with the understanding, and with the will, submitting everything to him, taking him to be my all in all, and agreeing to be henceforth nothing at all. Faith is ceasing from the creature and coming to the Creator. It is looking out of self to Christ, turning the eye entirely from any good thing that is here within me, and looking for every blessing to those open veins, to that poor bleeding heart, to that thorn-crowned head of him whom God hath set forth "to be the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world."

Well, having thus described the way, I now come to my real business of removing these stones.

1. A very common impediment in the pathway of the soul that is desiring to be saved, is *the recollection of its past life*. "Oh," saith the sinner, "I dare not trust Christ, because my past sins have been of an unusually black dye. I have been no common sinner, but I have been one singled out from the herd, a very monster in sin. I have taken the highest degree in the devil's college, and have become a master of Belial. I have learned to sit in the seat of the scornful, and have taught others to rebel against God." Ah, soul, I know very well what this impediment is, for once it laid in my way, and very sorely did it trouble me. Before I thought upon my soul's salvation, I dreamed that my sins were very few. All my sins were dead as I imagined, and buried in the graveyard of forgetfulness. But that trumpet of conviction which aroused my soul to think of eternal things, sounded to all my sins, and oh, how they rose up in multitudes more countless than the sands of the sea! Now, I saw that my very thoughts were enough to damn me, that my words would sink me lower than the lowest hell; and as for my acts of sin they now began to be a stench in my nostrils, so that I could not bear them. I recollect the time when I thought I had rather have been a frog or a toad than have been made a man; when I reckoned that the most defiled creature, the most loathsome and contemptible was a better thing than myself; for I had so grossly and grievously sinned against Almighty God. Ah, my brethren, it may be that this morning your old oaths are echoing back from the walls of your memory. You recollect how you have cursed God, and you say, "Can I, dare I trust him whom I have cursed?" And your old lusts are now rising before you; midnight sins stare you in the face, and snatches of the lascivious song are being yelled in the ear of your poor convinced conscience. And all your sins as they rise

up, cry, "Depart, thou accursed one! Depart! thou hast sinned thyself out of grace! Thou art a condemned one! Depart! There is no hope, there is no mercy for thee!"

Now, permit me in the strength and name of God to remove this stumbling block out of your way. Sinner, I tell thee that all thy sins, be they never so many cannot destroy thee if thou dost believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. If now thou castest thyself simply on the merits of Jesus, "Though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool." *Only believe.* Dare to believe that Christ is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him. Take him at his word and trust him. And thou hast a warrant for doing it; for remember it is written "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from *all sin*." Thou art commanded to believe, therefore, be thou never so black a sinner, the command is, thy warrant—oh, may God help thee to obey the command. Now, just as thou art, cast thyself on Christ. It is not the greatness of the sinner that is the difficulty; it is the hardness of the sinner's heart. If now thou art conscious of the most awful guilt, thy guilt becomes as nothing in the eye of God when once he sees the blood of Christ sprinkled upon thee. I tell thee more, if thy sins were ten thousand times as many as they be, yet the blood of Christ is able to atone for them all. Only dare to believe that. Now, by a venturesome faith trust thyself in Christ. If thou art the most sick of all the wretches that ever this divine physician essayed to cure, so much the more glory to *him*. When a physician cures a man of some little finger-ache or some little disease, what credit doth he get? But when he heals a man who is all over diseased, who has become but a putrid mass, then there is glory to the physician. And so will there be to Christ when he saveth thee. But to put this block out of the way once for all. Remember, sinner, that all the while thou dost not believe in Christ, thou art adding to thy sin this great sin of *not believing, which is the greatest sin in the world*. But if thou obey God in this matter of putting thy trust in Christ, God's own Word is guaranteed that thy faith shall be rewarded, and thou shalt find that thy sins which are many are all forgiven thee. By the side of Saul of Tarsus and of her, out of whom was cast seven devils, shalt thou one day stand. With the thief shalt thou sing of love divine, and with Manasseh shalt thou rejoice in him who can wash away the foulest crimes. Oh, I pray God there may be some one in this great crowd today, who may be saying in his heart, "Sir, you have described *me*. I do feel that I am the blackest sinner anywhere, but I will risk it, I will put my trust in Christ and Christ alone." Ah, soul, God bless thee; thou art an accepted one. If thou canst do this, this morning, I will be God's hostage that he will be true to thee and true to his Son, for never sinner perished yet that dared to trust the precious blood of Christ.

2. Now let me endeavor to upheave and eject another stumbling block. Many an awakened sinner is troubled because of *the hardness of his heart and the lack of what he thinks to be true penitence*. "Oh," saith he, "I can believe that however great my sins are they can be forgiven, but I do not feel the evil of my sins as I ought."—

"My heart how dreadful hard it is;

How heavy here it lies!

Heavy and cold within my breast,

Just like a rock of ice."

"I cannot feel," says one, "I cannot weep, I have heard of the repentance of others, but I seem to be just like a stone. My heart is petrified, it will not quake at all the thunders of the law, it will not melt before all the wooings of Christ's love." Ah, poor heart, this is a common stumbling-block in the way of those who are really seeking Christ. But let me ask thee one question. Dost thou read anywhere in the Word of God that those who have hard hearts are not commanded to believe? Because if thou canst find such a passage as that, I will be sorry enough to see it, but then I may excuse thee for saying, "I cannot trust Christ because my heart is hard." Do you not know that the Scripture runs thus? "Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." Now, if thou believest, though thy heart be never so hard, thy believing saves thee; and what is more, thy believing shall yet soften thy heart. If thou canst not feel thy need of a Savior as thou wouldst, remember that when thou hast a Savior thou wilt begin then to find out more and more how great was thy need of him. Why, I believe that many persons find out their needs by receiving the supply. Have you never walked along the street, and looking in at a shop window have seen an article, and have said, "Why, that is just what I want." How do you know that? Why, you saw the thing and then you wanted it. And I believe there is many a sinner who when he is hearing about Christ Jesus is led to say, "That is just what I want." Did not he know it before? No, poor soul, not till he saw Christ. I find my sense of need of Christ is ten times more acute now than it was before I found Christ. I *thought* I wanted him for a good many things then, but now I *know* I want him for everything. I thought there were some things which I could not do without him; but *now* I find that without him I can do nothing. But you say, "Sir, I must repent before I come to Christ." Find such a passage in the Word if you can. Doth not the Word say? "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." Doth not one of our hymns translate that verse into rhyme and put it thus?

"True belief and true repentance.

Every grace that brings us nigh—

Without money

Come to Jesus Christ, and buy."

Oh, these graces are not of nature's spinning. We cannot make these in the loom of the creature. If you would know your need of Christ, take him now by faith and sense and feeling shall follow in the rear. Trust him now for everything. Dare to trust him. Hard as your heart is, say, "Just as I am, without a plea, but that thou commandest me, and bid'st me come, I come to thee!" Thy heart shall be softened by the sight of Christ, and love divine shall so

sweetly commend itself to thee, that the heart which terrors could not move shall be dissolved by love.

Do understand me, my dear hearers. I wept to preach in the broadest manner I possibly can this morning the doctrine that we are justified by faith alone; that man is commanded to believe, and that altogether apart from anything in man, man has a right to believe. Not from any preparation that he feels, not from anything good he discerns in himself, but he has a right to believe simply because he is commanded to believe; and it, relying upon the fact that he is commanded, God the Holy Spirit enables him to believe, that faith will surely save the soul, and deliver him from the wrath to come. Let me take up, then, that stumbling stone about hardness of heart. Oh, soul, trust Christ and thy heart shall be softened. And may God the Holy Spirit enable thee to trust him hard heart and all, and then thy hard heart shall soon be turned into a heart of flesh, and thou shalt love him who hath loved thee.

3. Now, for a third stumbling block. "Oh," saith some poor soul, "I do not know whether I believe or not, sir. Sometimes I do believe; but oh, *it is such little faith* I have that I cannot think Christ can save me." Ah, there you are again you see, looking to yourself. This has made many trip and fall. I pray God I may put this out of your way. Poor sinner, remember it is not the *strength* of thy faith that saves thee, but the *reality* of thy faith. What is more, it is not even the reality of thy faith that saves thee, it is the object of thy faith. If thy faith be fixed on Christ, though it seems to be in itself a line no thicker than a spider's cobweb, it will hold thy soul throughout time and eternity. For remember it is not the thickness of this cable of faith, it is the strength of the anchor which imparts strength to the cable, and so shall hold thy ship in the midst of the most fearful storm. The faith that saves man is sometimes so small that the man himself cannot see it. A grain of mustard seed is the smallest of all seeds, and yet if thou hast but that quantity of faith, thou art a saved man. Remember what the poor woman did. She did not come and take hold of Christ's person with her hand, she did not throw her arms about his knees; but she stretched out her finger, and then—she did not touch Christ's feet or even his dress—she touched but the ravelling, the fringe of his garment and she was made whole. If thy faith be but as little as that, seek to get more of it, but still remember that it will save thee. Jesus Christ himself compares Little-faith to a smoking flax. Does it burn? is there any fire at all! No; there is nothing but a little smoke and that is most offensive. "Yes," saith Jesus, "but I will not quench it." Again, he compares it to a bruised reed. Of what service is it? It is broken, you cannot bring music from it; it is but a reed when it is whole, and now it is a bruised reed. Break it, snap it, throw it away? "No," says he. "I will not break the bruised reed." Now, if that is the faith thou hast, the faith of the smoking flax, the faith of the bruised reed, thou art saved. Thou wilt have many a trial and many a trouble in going to heaven, with so little faith as that, for when there is little wind to a boat there must be much tugging at the oar; but still there will be wind enough to land thee in glory, if thou dost simply trust Christ, be that trust never so

feeble. Remember a little child belongs to the human race as much as the greatest giant; and so a babe in grace is as truly a child of God as is Mr. Great-heart, who can fight all the giants on the road. And thou may'st be as much an heir of heaven in thy minority, in the infancy of thy grace, as thou wilt be when thou shalt have expanded into the full grown Christian, and shalt become a perfect man in Christ Jesus. It is not, I tell thee, the *strength of thy faith*, but the *object of thy faith*. It is the blood, not the hyssop; not the hand that smites the lintel, but the blood that secures the Israelite in the day when God's vengeance passes by. Let that stumbling block be taken out of the way.

4. "But," saith another, "I do think sometimes I have a little faith, but *I have so many doubts and fears*. I am tempted every day to believe that Jesus Christ did not die for me, or that my belief is not genuine, or that I never experienced the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit. Tell me Sir, can I be a true believer in Christ if I have doubts and fears?" My answer is simply this, there is no Scripture which saith, that "He that believeth, shall be damned, if that faith be mixed: with doubts." "He that believeth shall be saved," be that faith never so little, and even though it be intermingled with multitudes of doubts and fears. You remember that memorable story of our Savior, when he was on board a ship with his disciples. The winds roared, the ship rocked to and fro, the mast was strained, the sails were rent, and the poor disciples were full of fear:—"Lord save us or we perish." Here were doubts. What did Jesus say when he rebuked them? "Why are ye fearful"—O ye of *no faith*? No, "O ye of *little faith*." So there maybe little faith where there are great doubts. There is light at eventide in the air; even though there is a great deal of darkness, yet there is light. And if thy faith should never come to noon-day, if it do but come to twilight, thou art a saved man. Nay, more, if it doth not come to twilight, if thy faith is but starlight, nay, candlelight, nay, a spark—if it be but a glow-worm spark, thou art saved; and all thy doubts, and all thy fears, and thy distresses, terrible though they may be, can never trample thee in the dust, can never destroy thy soul. Do you not know that the best of God's children are exercised with doubts and fears even to the last? Look at such a man as John Knox. There was a man who could face the frowns of a world, who could speak like a king to kings, and fear no man; yet on his dying bed he was troubled about his interest in Christ, because he was tempted to self-righteousness. If such a man have doubts, dost *thou* expect to live without them? If God's brightest saints are exercised, if Paul himself keeps under his body lest he should be a castaway, why how canst thou expect to live without clouds? Oh, my dear man, drop the idea that the prevalence of thy doubts disproves the truth of the promise. Again believe; away with all thy doubts; sink or swim; cast thyself on Jesus; and thou canst not be lost, for his honor is engaged to save every soul that puts its trust in him.

5. "Ah," says another, "but you have not yet hit upon my fear." I used when I first knew the Savior, to try myself in a certain manner, and often did I throw stumbling blocks in my path through it, and therefore I can speak very affectionately to any of you who are doing

the same. Sometimes I would go up into my chamber, and by way of self-examination, I used to ask myself this question—*Am I afraid to die?* If I should drop down dead in my chamber, can I say that I should joyfully close my eyes? Well, it often happened that I could not honestly say so. I used to feel death would be a very solemn thing. Ah, then I said “I have never believed in Christ, for if I had put my trust in the Lord Jesus, I should not be afraid to die, but I should be quite confident. I do not doubt that there are many here who are saying, “Sir, I cannot follow Christ, because I am afraid to die; I cannot believe that Jesus Christ will save me, because the sight of death makes me tremble.” Ah, poor soul, there are many of God’s blessed ones, who through fear of death, have been much of their lifetime subject to bondage. I know precious children of God now: I believe that when they die, they will die triumphantly; but I know this, that the thought of death is never pleasing to them. And this is accounted for, because God has stamped on nature that law, the love of life and self-preservation. And again, the man that hath kindred and friends, it is natural enough that he should scarce like to leave behind those that are so dear. I know that when he gets more grace he will rejoice in the thought of death; but I do know that there are many quite safe, who could die triumphantly, who, now, in the prospect of death feel afraid of it. I remember my aged grandfather once preach a sermon which I have not forgotten. He was preaching from the text “The God of all grace,” and he somewhat interested the assembly, after describing the different kinds of grace that God gave, by saying at the end of each period “But there is one kind of grace that you do not want.” After each sentence there came the like, “But there is one kind of grace you do not want.” And, then, he wound up by saying, “You don’t want dying grace in living moments, but you shall have dying grace when you want it.” Now, you are testing yourself by a condition in which you are not placed. If you are placed in the condition, you shall have grace enough if you put your trust in Christ. In a party of friends we were discussing the question, whether if the days of martyrdom should come we were prepared to be burned. Well, now, I must frankly say, that speaking as I feel to-day, I am not prepared to be burned. But I do believe if there were a stake in Smithfield, and I knew that I were to be burned there at one o’clock, that I should have grace enough to be burned at one o’clock; but I have not yet got to a quarter past twelve, and the time is not come yet. Do not expect dying grace, until you want it, and when the time comes, you may be sure you will have sufficient grace to bear it. Cast out that stumbling-block then. Rest thyself on Christ, and trust a living Christ to help thee in thy dying hour.

6. Another most grievous perplexity to many a seeking soul is this: “Oh, I would trust Christ, but *I feel no joy*. I hear the children of God singing sweetly about their privileges. I hear them saying that they have been to the top of Pisgah and have viewed the promised land, have taken a pleasant prospect of the world to come; but oh, my faith yields me no joy. I hope I do believe, but at the same time I have none of those raptures. My worldly troubles press heavily upon me, and sometimes even my spiritual woes are greater than I

can bear.” Ah, poor soul, let me cast out that stone from thy road. Remember, it is not written “he that is joyful shall be saved,” but “he that *believeth* shall be saved.” Thy faith will make thee joyful by-and-bye, but it is as powerful to save thee even when it does not make thee rejoice. Why, look at many of God’s people, how sad and sorrowful they have been. I know they ought not to be. This is their sin; but still it is such a sin that it does not destroy the efficacy of faith. Notwithstanding all the sorrows of the saint, faith still keeps alive, and God is still true to his promise. Remember, it is not what you feel that saves you, it is what you believe. It is not feeling but believing. “We walk by faith, not by sight.” When I feel my soul as cold as an iceberg, as hard as a rock, and as sinful as Satan, yet even then faith ceases not to justify. Faith prevails as truly in the midst of sad feelings as of happy feelings, for then, standing alone, it proves the majesty of its might. Believe, O son of God, believe in him, and look not for aught in thyself.

7. Then, again, there are many that are distressed because *they have blasphemous thoughts*. Here, too, I can heartily sympathise with many. I remember a certain narrow and crooked lane in a certain country town, along which I was walking one day while I was seeking the Savior. On a sudden the most fearful oaths that any of you can conceive rushed through my heart. I put my hand to my mouth to prevent the utterance. I had not, that I know of, ever heard those words; and I am certain that I had never used in my life from my youth up so much as one of them, for I had never been profane. But these things sorely beset me: for half an hour together the most fearful imprecations would dash through my brain. Oh, how I groaned and cried before God. That temptation passed away; but ere many days it was renewed again; and when I was in prayer, or when I was reading the Bible, these blasphemous thought would pour in upon me more than at any other time. I consulted with an aged godly man about it. He said to me, “Oh, all this many of the people of God have proved before you. But,” said he, “do you hate these thoughts?” “I do,” I truly said. “Then,” said he, “they are not yours; serve them as the old parishes used to do with vagrants—whip them and send them on to their own parish. So” said he, “do with them. Groan over them, repent of them, and send them on to the devil, the father of them, to whom they belong—for they are not yours.” Do you not recollect how John Bunyan hits off the picture? He says, when Christian was going through the valley of the shadow of death, “There stepped up one to him, and whispered blasphemous thoughts into his ear, so that poor Christian thought they were his own thoughts; but they were not his thoughts at all, but the injections of a blasphemous spirit.” So when you are about to lay hold on Christ, Satan will ply all his engines and try to destroy you. He cannot bear to lose one of his slaves: he will invent a fresh temptation for each believer so that he may not put his trust in Christ.” Now, come, poor soul, notwithstanding all these blasphemous thoughts in thy soul, dare to put thy trust in Christ. Even should those thoughts have been more blasphemous than any thou hast ever heard, come trust in Christ, come cast thyself on him. I have heard that when an elephant is going over

a bridge he will sound the timber with his foot to see if it will bear him over. Come thou, who thinkest thyself an elephantine sinner, here is bridge that is strong enough for thee, even with all these thoughts of thine:—"All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven thee." Throw that in Satan's face, and trust thyself in Christ.

8. One other stumbling-block, and I will have done. Some there be that say; Oh, sir, I would trust in Christ to save me *if I could see that my faith brought forth fruits*. Oh, sir, when I would do good, evil is present with me." Excuse my always bringing in my own feelings as an illustration, but I feel when I am preaching to tried sinners that the testimony of one's own experience is generally more powerful than any other illustration that can be found. It is not, believe me, any display of egotism, but the simple desire to come home to you, that makes me state what I have felt myself. The first Sunday after I came to Christ I went to a Methodist chapel. The sermon was upon this text: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" I had just got as far as that in the week. I knew that I had put my trust in Christ, and I knew that, when I sat in that house of prayer, my faith was simply and solely fixed on the atonement of the Redeemer. But I had a weight on my mind, because I could not be as holy as I wanted to be. I could not live without sin. When I rose in the morning I thought I would abstain from every hard word, from every evil thought and look; and I came up to that chapel groaning, because "when I would do good evil was present with me." The minister said that when Paul wrote the verse I have quoted, he was not a Christian; that this was his experience before he knew the Lord. Ah, what error, for I know that Paul was a Christian, and I know the more Christians look to themselves the more they will have to groan, because they cannot be what they want to be. What, you will not believe in Christ until you are perfect? Then you will never believe in him. You will not trust the precious Jesus till you have no sins to trust him with! Then you will never trust him at all. For rest assured you will never be perfect till you see the face of God in heaven. I knew one man who thought himself a perfect man and that man was hump-backed. This was my rebuke to his pride, "Surely if the Lord gave you a perfect soul he would give you a perfect body to carry it in." Perfection will not be found this side of the grave. Your business is to trust in Christ. You must depend on nothing but the blood of Christ. Trust in Christ and you stand secure. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life." It is our duty to fight against corruption; it is our privilege to conquer it; it is our honor to feel that we are fighting against sin, it shall be our glory one day to tread it beneath our feet. But to-day expect not complete victory. Your very consciousness of sin proves that you are alive. The very fact that you are not what you want to be, proves that there is some high and noble thoughts in you that could not come by nature. You were content with yourself some six weeks ago, were you not? And the fact that you are discontent now, proves that God has put a new life into you, which makes you seek after a higher and better element in which to breathe. When you become what you want to be on earth, then despair. When the law jus-

tifies you, then you have fallen from grace; for Paul has said, "When we are justified by the law we are fallen from grace." But while I feel that the law condemns me it is my joy to know that believing in Christ, "There is no condemnation to him that is in Christ Jesus, who walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

And now though I have been trying to clear the way I feel conscious that very likely I have been putting a stone or two in the road myself. May God forgive me—it is a sin of inadvertance. I would lay this road as straight and clear as ever was turnpike road between one city and another. Sinner, there is nothing which can rob thee of *thy right* to believe in Christ. Thou art freely invited to come to the marriage banquet. The table is spread, and the invitation freely given. There are no porters at the door to keep thee out; there are none to ask a ticket of admission of thee:

"Let not *conscience* make you linger;  
Nor of fitness fondly dream;  
All the fitness he requireth  
Is to feel your need of him;  
*This he gives you;*  
'Tis his Spirit's rising beam."

Come to him just as thou art. But, ah, I know that when we sit in our studies it seems a light think to preach the gospel and make people believe in Christ, but when we come to practice, it is the hardest thing in the world. If I were to tell you to do some great thing you would do it; but simply, when it is, "Believe, wash and be clean!" you will not do it. If I said, "Give me ten thousand pounds," you would give it. You would crawl a thousand miles on your hands and knees, or drink the bitterest draught that was ever concocted; but this trusting in Christ is too hard for your proud spirit. Ah, sinner, art thou too proud to be saved? Come, man, I beseech thee by the love of Christ, by the love of thine own soul, come with me, and let us go together to the foot of the cross. Believe on him who hangs groaning there, oh, put thy trust in him, who is risen from the dead, and has led Captivity captive. And if thou trustest him, poor sinner, thou shalt not be disappointed; it shall not be trust misplaced. Again I say it, I am content to be lost if thou art lost trusting in Christ; I will make my bed in hell with thee should God reject thee, if thou puttest thy simple trust in Christ. I dare to say *that*, and to look *that* boldly in the face; for thou wouldst be the first sinner that was ever cast away trusting in Jesus. "But, oh," saith one, "I cannot think that such a wretch as I am can have a right to believe." Soul, I tell thee it is not whether thou art a wretch, or not a wretch; it is *the command* that is thy warrant. Thou art commanded to believe. And when a command comes home with power the power comes with the command; and he who is commanded, being made willing, casts himself on Christ, and he believes, and is saved.

I have labored this morning to try and make myself as clear as I can about this doctrine. I know if any man is saved it is the work of God the Holy Ghost from first to last. "If any man is regenerate, it is not of the will of the flesh, nor of blood, but of God." But I do not see how that great truth interferes with this other, "Whosoever believeth in Christ shall be saved." And I would again, even to the falling down on my knees, as though God did beseech you by me, pray you "In Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God." And this is the reconciliation, "That ye believe on the Lord Jesus Christ whom he hath sent," that ye trust Christ. Do you understand me? That ye cast yourself on him; that ye depend on nothing but what he has done. Saved you must be, lost you cannot be, if you fling yourself wholly upon Christ, and cast the whole burden of your sins, your doubts, your fears, and your anxieties wholly there. Now, this is preaching free grace doctrine. And if any wonder how a Calvinist can preach thus, let me say that this is the preaching that Calvin preached, and better still it is the preaching of our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles. We have divine warrant when we tell you, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned."