

Number One Thousand; Or, “Bread Enough and To Spare”

A Sermon

(No. 1000)

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“And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!”—[Luke 15:17](#).

HE came to himself.” The word may be applied to one waking out of a deep swoon. He had been unconscious of his true condition, and he had lost all power to deliver himself from it; but now he was coming round again, returning to consciousness and action. The voice which shall awaken the dead aroused him; the visions of his sinful trance all disappeared; his foul but fascinating dreams were gone; he came to himself. Or the word may be applied to one recovering from insanity. The prodigal son had played the madman, for sin is madness of the worst kind. He had been demented, he had put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, darkness for light and light for darkness; he had injured himself, and had done for his soul what those possessed of devils in our Savior's time did for their bodies, when they wounded themselves with stones, and cut themselves with knives. The insane man does not know himself to be insane, but as soon as he comes to himself he painfully perceives the state from which he is escaping. Returning then to true reason and sound judgment, the prodigal came to himself. Another illustration of the word may be found in the old world fables of enchantment: when a man was disenthralled from the magician's spell he “came to himself.” Classic story has its legend of Circe, the enchantress, who transformed men into swine. Surely this young man in our parable had been degraded in the same manner. He had lowered his manhood to the level of the brutes. It should be the property of man to have love to his kindred, to have respect for right, to have some care for his own interest; this young man had lost all these proper attributes of humanity, and so had become as the beast that perisheth. But as the poet sings of Ulysses, that he compelled the enchantress to restore his companions to their original form, so here we see the prodigal returning to manhood, looking away from his sensual pleasures, and commencing a course of conduct more consistent with his birth and parentage. There are men here to-day perhaps who are still in this swoon; O God of heaven arouse them! Some here who are morally insane; the Lord recover them, the divine Physician put his cooling hand upon their fevered brow, and say to them: “I will; be thou made whole.” Perhaps there are others here who have allowed their animal nature to reign supreme may he who destroys the works of the devil deliver

them from the power of Satan, and give them power to become the sons of God. He shall have all the glory!

It appears that when the prodigal came to himself he was shut up to two thoughts. Two facts were clear to him, that there was plenty in his father's house, and that he himself was famishing. May the two kindred spiritual facts have absolute power over all your hearts, if you are yet unsaved; for they were most certainly all-important and pressing truths. These are no fancies of one in a dream; no ravings of a maniac; no imaginations of one under fascination: it is most true that there is plenty of all good things in the Father's house, and that the sinner needs them. No where else can grace be found or pardon gained; but with God there is plenitude of mercy; let none venture to dispute this glorious truth. Equally true is it that the sinner without God is perishing. He is perishing now; he will perish everlastingly. All that is worth having in his existence will be utterly destroyed, and he himself shall only remain as a desolation; the owl and the bittern of misery and anguish shall haunt the ruins of his nature for ever and for ever. If we could shut up unconverted men to those two thoughts, what hopeful congregations we should have. Alas! they forget that there is mercy only with God, and fancy that it is to be found somewhere else; and they try to slip away from the humbling fact of their own lost estate, and imagine that perhaps there may be some back door of escape; that, after all, they are not so bad as the Scripture declares, or that perchance it shall be right with them at the last, however wrong it may be with them now. Alas! my brethren, what shall we do with those who wilfully shut their eyes to truths of which the evidence is overwhelming, and the importance overpowering? I earnestly entreat those of you who know how to approach the throne of God in faith, to breathe the prayer that he would now bring into captivity the unconverted heart, and put these two strong fetters upon every unregenerate soul; there is abundant grace with God, there is utter destitution with themselves. Bound with such fetters, and led into the presence of Jesus, the captive would soon receive the liberty of the children of God.

I intend only to dwell this morning, or mainly, upon the first thought, the master thought, as it seems to me, which was in the prodigal's mind—that which really constrained him to say, "I will arise and go to my father." It was not, I think, the home-bringing thought that he was perishing with hunger, but the impulse towards his father found its mainspring in the consideration, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare!" The plenty, the abundance, the superabundance of the father's house, was that which attracted him to return home; and many, many a soul has been led to seek God when it has fully believed that there was abundant mercy with him. My desire this morning shall be to put plainly before every sinner here the exceeding abundance of the grace of God in Christ Jesus, hoping that the Lord will find out those who are his Sons, and that they may catch at these words, and as they hear of the abundance of the bread in the Father's house, may say, "I will arise and go to my Father."

I. First, then, let us consider for a short time THE MORE THAN ABUNDANCE OF ALL GOOD THINGS IN THE FATHER'S HOUSE. What dost thou need this morning, awakened sinner? Of all that thou needest, there is with God an all-sufficient, a superabounding supply; "bread enough and to spare." Let us prove this to thee. First, *consider the Father himself*, and whosoever shall rightly consider the Father, will at once perceive that there can be no stint to mercy, no bound to the possibilities of grace. What is the nature and character of the Supreme? "Is he harsh or loving?" saith one. The Scripture answers the question, not by telling us that God is loving, but by assuring us that God is love. God himself is love; it is his very essence. It is not that love is in God, but that God himself is love. Can there be a more concise and more positive way of saying that the love of God is infinite? You cannot measure God himself; your conceptions cannot grasp the grandeur of his attributes, neither can you tell the dimensions of his love, nor conceive the fullness of it. Only this know, that high as the heavens are above the earth, so are his ways higher than your ways, and his thoughts than your thoughts. His mercy endureth for ever. He pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage. He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. "Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive: and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee." "Thy mercy is great above the heavens." "The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

If divine love alone should not seem sufficient for your salvation, remember that with the Father to whom the sinner returns, there is as much of wisdom as there is of grace. Is thy case a very difficult one? He that made thee can heal thee. Are thy diseases strange and complex? He that fashioned the ear, can he not remove its deafness? He that made the eye, can he not enlighten it if it be blind? No mischief can have happened to thee, but what he who is thy God can recover thee from it. Matchless wisdom cannot fail to meet the intricacies of thy case.

Neither can there be any failure of power with the Father. Dost thou not know that he who made the earth, and stretched out the heavens like a tent to dwell in, hath no bound to his strength, nor limit to his might? If thou needest omnipotence to lift thee up from the slough into which thou hast fallen, omnipotence is ready to deliver thee, if thou cry to the strong for strength. Though thou shouldest need all the force with which the Creator made the worlds, and all the strength with which he bears on the pillars of the universe, all that strength and force should be laid out for thy good, if thou wouldst believingly seek mercy at the hand of God in Christ Jesus. None of his power shall be against thee, none of his wisdom shall plan thy overthrow; but love shall reign in all, and every attribute of God shall become subservient to thy salvation. Oh, when I think of sin I cannot understand how a sinner can be saved; but when I think of God, and look into his heart, I understand how readily he can forgive. "Look into his heart," saith one; "how can we do that?" Hath he not laid bare his heart to you? Do you enquire where he has done this? I answer, yonder, upon

Calvary's cross. What was in the very center of the divine heart? What, but the person of the Well-beloved, his only begotten Son? And he hath taken his only begotten and nailed him to the cross, because, if I may venture so to speak, he loved sinners better than his Son. He spared not his Son, but he spares the sinner; he poured out his wrath upon his Son and made him the substitute for sinners, that he might lavish love upon the guilty who deserved his anger. O soul, if thou art lost, it is not from any want of grace, or wisdom, or power in the Father; if thou perish, it is not because God is hard to move or unable to save. If thou be a castaway, it is not because the Eternal refused to hear thy cries for pardon or rejected thy faith in him. On thine own head be thy blood, if thy soul be lost. If thou starve, thou starvest because thou wilt starve; for in the Father's house there is "bread enough and to spare."

But, now, consider a second matter which may set this more clearly before us. Think of *the Son of God*, who is indeed the true bread of life for sinners. Sinner, I return to my personal address. Thou needest a Savior; and thou mayst well be encouraged when thou seest that a Savior is provided—provided by God, since it is certain he would not make a mistake in the provision. But consider who the Savior is. He is himself God. Jesus who came from heaven for our redemption was not an angel, else might we tremble to trust the weight of our sin upon him. He was not mere man, or he could but have suffered as a substitute for one, if indeed for one; but he was very God of very God, in the beginning with the Father. And does such a one come to redeem? Is there room to doubt as to his ability, if that be the fact? I do confess this day, that if my sins were ten thousand times heavier than they are, yea, and if I had all the sins of this crowd in addition piled upon me, I could trust Jesus with them all at this moment now that I know him to be the Christ of God. He is the mighty God, and by his pierced hand the burden of our sins is easily removed; he blotteth out our sins, he casts them into the depths of the sea.

But think of what Jesus the Son of God has done. He who was God, and thus blessed for ever, left the throne and royalties of heaven and stooped to yonder manger. There he lies; his mother wraps him in swaddling clothes, he hangs upon her breast; the Infinite is clothed as an infant, the Invisible is made manifest in flesh, the Almighty is linked with weakness, for our sakes. Oh, matchless stoop of condescension! If the Redeemer God does this in order to save us, shall it be thought a thing impossible for him to save the vilest of the vile? Can anything be too hard for him who comes from heaven to earth to redeem?

Pause not because of astonishment, but press onward. Do you see him who was God over all, blessed for ever, living more than thirty years in the midst of the sons of men, bearing the infirmities of manhood, taking upon himself our sicknesses, and sharing our sorrows: his feet weary with treading the acres of Palestine; his body faint often times with hunger and thirst, and labor; his knees knit to the earth with midnight prayer; his eyes red with weeping (for oftentimes Jesus wept), tempted in all points like as we are? Matchless

spectacle! An incarnate God dwells among sinners, and endures their contradiction! What glory flashed forth ever and anon from the midst of his lowliness! a glory which should render faith in him inevitable. Thou who didst walk the sea: thou who didst raise the dead, it is not rational to doubt thy power to forgive sins! Didst thou not thyself put it so when thou badest the man take up his bed and walk? "Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?" Assuredly he is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him: he was able even here on earth in weakness to forgive sins, much more now that he is seated in his glory. He is exalted on high to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance and remission of sins.

But, ah! the master proof that in Christ Jesus there is "bread enough and to spare," is the cross. Will you follow me a moment, will you follow him, rather, to Gethsemane? Can you see the bloody sweat as it falls upon the ground in his agony? Can you think of his scourging before Herod and Pilate? Can you trace him along the *Via Dolorosa* of Jerusalem? Will your tender hearts endure to see him nailed to the tree, and lifted up to bleed and die? This is but the shell; as for the inward kernel of his sufferings no language can describe it, neither can conception peer into it. The everlasting God laid sin on Christ, and where the sin was laid there fell the wrath. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief." Now he that died upon the cross was God's only begotten Son. Can you conceive a limit to the merit of such a Savior's death? I know there are some who think it necessary to their system of theology to limit the merit of the blood of Jesus: if my system of theology needed such a limitation, I would cast it to the winds. I cannot, dare not, allow the thought to find a lodging in my mind; it seems so near akin to blasphemy. In Christ's finished work I see an ocean of merit; my plummet finds no bottom, my eye discovers no shore. There must be sufficient efficacy in the blood of Christ, if God had so willed it, to have saved not only all this world, but ten thousand worlds, had they transgressed the Maker's law. Once admit infinity into the matter, and limit is out of the question. Having a divine person for an offering, it is not consistent to conceive of limited value; bound and measure are terms inapplicable to the divine sacrifice. The intent of the divine purpose fixes the application of the infinite offering, but does not change it into a finite work. In the atonement of Christ Jesus there is "bread enough and to spare;" even as Paul wrote to Timothy, "He is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe."

But now let me lead you to another point of solemnly joyful consideration, and that is *the Holy Spirit*. To believe and love the Trinity is to possess the key of theology. We spoke of the Father, we spoke of the Son; let us now speak of the Holy Spirit. We do him all too little honor, for the Holy Spirit condescends to come to earth and dwell in our hearts; and notwithstanding all our provocations he still abides within his people. Now, sinner, thou needest a new life and thou needest holiness, for both of these are necessary to make thee fit for heaven. Is there a provision for this? The Holy Spirit is provided and given in the

covenant of grace; and surely in him there is “enough and to spare.” What cannot the Holy Spirit do? Being divine, nothing can be beyond his power. Look at what he has already done. He moved upon the face of chaos, and brought it into order; all the beauty of creation arose beneath his moulding breath. We ourselves must confess with Elihu, “The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.” Think of the great deeds of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, when men unlearned spake with tongues of which they knew not a syllable aforetime, and the flames of fire upon them were also within them, so that their hearts burned with zeal and courage to which they hitherto had been strangers. Think of the Holy Spirit’s work on such a one as Saul of Tarsus. That persecutor foams blood, he is a very wolf, he would devour the saints of God at Damascus and yet, within a few moments, you hear him say, “Who art thou, Lord?” and yet again, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” His heart is changed; the Spirit of God has new created it; the adamant is melted in a moment into wax. Many of us stand before you as the living monuments of what the Holy Ghost can do, and we can assure you from our own experience, that there is no inward evil which he cannot overcome, no lustful desire of the flesh which he cannot subdue, no obduracy of the affections which he cannot melt. Is anything too hard for the Lord? Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? Surely no sinner can be beyond the possibilities of mercy when the Holy Spirit condescends to be the agent of human conversion. O sinner, if thou perish, it is not because the Holy Spirit wants power, or the blood of Jesus lacks efficacy, or the Father fails in love; it is because thou believest not in Christ, but dost abide in wilful rebellion, refusing the abundant bread of life which is placed before thee.

A few rapid sentences upon other things, which will go to show still further the greatness of the provision of divine mercy. Observe well that *throughout all the ages God has been sending one prophet after another*, and these prophets have been succeeded by apostles, and these by martyrs and confessors, and pastors and evangelists, and teachers; all these have been commissioned by the Lord in regular succession; and what has been the message they have had to deliver? They have all pointed to Christ, the great deliverer. Moses and the prophets all spoke of him, and so have all truly God-sent ambassadors. Dost thou think, sinner, that God has made all this fuss about a trifle? Has he sent all these servants to call thee to a table insufficiently furnished? Has he multiplied his invitations through so long a time to bid thee and others come to a provision which is not, after all, sufficient for them? Oh, it cannot be! God is not mocked, neither does he mock poor needy souls. The stores of his mercy are sufficient for the utmost emergencies.

“Rivers of love and mercy here

In a rich ocean join;

Salvation in abundance flows,

Like floods of milk and wine.

Great God, the treasures of thy love

Are everlasting mines,
Deep us our helpless miseries are,
And boundless as our sins."

Recollect, again, that *God has been pleased to stake his honor upon the gospel*. Men desire a name, and God also is jealous of his glory. Now, what has God been pleased to select for his name? Is it not the conversion and salvation of men? When instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree, and instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off. And dost thou think God will get a name by saving little sinners by a little Savior? Ah! his great name comes from washing out stains as black as hell, and pardoning sinners who were foulest of the foul. Is there one monstrous rebel here who is qualified to glorify God greatly, because his salvation will be the wonder of angels and the amazement of devils? I hope there is. O thou most degraded, black, loathsome sinner, nearest to being a damned sinner, if this voice can reach thee, I challenge thee to come and prove whether God's mercy is not a match for thy sin. Thou Goliath sinner, come thou hither; thou shalt find that God can slay thine enmity, and make thee yet his friend, and the more his loving and adoring servant, because great forgiveness shall secure great love. Such is the greatness of divine mercy, that "where sin abounded, grace doth much more abound."

Dost thou think, again, O sinner, that Jesus Christ came out of heaven to do a little deed, and to provide a slender store of mercy? Dost thou think he went up to Calvary, and down to the grave, and all, that he might do a commonplace thing, and provide a stinted, narrow, limited salvation, such as thine unbelief would imagine his redemption to be? No. We speak of the labors of Hercules, but these were child's play compared with the labors of Christ who slew the lion of hell, turned a purifying stream through the Augean stables of man's sin, and cleansed them, and performed ten thousand miracles besides: and will you so depreciate Christ as to imagine that what he has accomplished is, after all, little, so little that it is not enough to save you? If it were in my power to single out the man who has been the most dishonest, most licentious, most drunken, most profane—in three words, most earthly, sensual, devilish—I would repeat the challenge which I gave just now, and bid him draw near to Jesus, and see whether the fountain filled with Christ's atoning blood cannot wash him white. I challenge him at this instant to come and cast himself at the dear Redeemer's feet, and see if he will say, "I cannot save thee, thou hast sinned beyond my power." It shall never, never, never be, for he is able to the uttermost to save. He is a Savior, and a great one. Christ will be honored by the grandeur of the grace which he bestows upon the greatest of offenders. There is in him pardon "enough and to spare."

I must leave this point, but I cannot do so without adding that I think "BREAD ENOUGH AND TO SPARE" might be taken for the motto of the gospel. I believe in particular redemption, and that Christ laid down his life for his sheep; but, as I have already said,

I do not believe in the limited value of that redemption; how else could I dare to read the words of John, "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sine of the whole world." There is a sure portion for his own elect, but there is also over and above "to spare." I believe in the electing love which will save all its objects—"bread enough;" but I believe in boundless benevolence, "Bread enough *and to spare*." We, when we have a purpose to accomplish, put forth the requisite quantity of strength and no more, for we must be economical, we must not waste our limited store; even charity gives the poor man no more than he absolutely needs; but when God feeds the multitude, he spreads the board with imperial bounty. Our water-cart runs up and down the favored road, but when heaven's clouds would favor the good man's fields, they deluge whole nations, and even pour themselves upon the sea. There is no real waste with God; but at the same time there is no stint. "BREAD ENOUGH AND TO SPARE;" write that inscription over the house of mercy, and let every hungry passer-by be encouraged thereby to enter in and eat.

II. We must now pass on to a second consideration, and dwell very briefly on it. According to the text, there was not only bread enough in the house, but THE LOWEST IN THE FATHER'S HOUSE ENJOYED ENOUGH AND TO SPARE.

We can never make a parable run on all fours, therefore we cannot find the exact counterpart of the "hired servants." I understand the prodigal to have meant this, that the very lowest menial servant employed by his father had bread to eat, and had "bread enough and to spare." Now, how should we translate this? Why, sinner, the very lowest creature that God has made, that has not sinned against him, is well supplied and has abounding happiness. There are adaptations for pleasure in the organisations of the lowest animals. See how the gnats dance in the summer's sunbeam; hear the swallows as they scream with delight when on the wing. He who cares for birds and insects will surely care for men. God who hears the ravens when they cry, will he not hear the returning penitent? He gives these insects happiness; did he mean me to be wretched? Surely he who opens his hand and supplies the lack of every living thing, will not refuse to open his hand and supply my needs if I seek his face.

Yet I must not make these lowest creatures to be the hired servants. Whom shall I then select among men? I will put it thus. The very worst of sinners that have come to Christ have found grace "enough and to spare," and the very least of saints who dwell in the house of the Lord find love "enough and to spare." Take then *the most guilty of sinners*, and see how bountifully the Lord treats them when they turn unto him. Did not some of you, who are yourselves unconverted, once know persons who were at least as bad, perhaps more outwardly immoral than yourselves? Well, they have been converted, though you have not been; and when they were converted, what was their testimony? Did the blood of Christ avail to cleanse them? Oh, yes; and more than cleanse them, for it added to beauty not their own. They were naked once; was Jesus able to clothe them? Was there a sufficient covering

in his righteousness? Ah, yes! and adornment was superadded; they received not a bare apparel, but a royal raiment. You have seen others thus liberally treated, does not this induce you also to come? Some of us need not confine our remarks to others, for we can speak personally of ourselves. We came to Jesus as full of sin as ever *you* can be, and felt ourselves beyond measure lost and ruined; but, oh, his tender love! I could sooner stand here and weep than speak to you of it. My soul melts in gratitude when I think of the infinite mercy of God to me in that hour when I came seeking mercy at his hands. Oh! why will not you also come? May his Holy Spirit sweetly draw you! I proved that there was bread enough, mercy enough, forgiveness enough, and to spare. Come along, come along, poor guilty one; come along, there is room enough for thee.

Now, if the chief of sinners bear this witness, so do *the most obscure of saints*. If we could call forth from his seat a weak believer in God, who is almost unknown in the church, one who sometimes questions whether he is indeed a child of God, and would be willing to be a hired servant so long as he might belong to God, and if I were to ask him, "How after all how has the Lord dealt with you?" what would be his reply? You have many afflictions, doubts and fears, but have you any complaints against your Lord? When you have waited upon him for daily grace, has he denied you? When you have been full of troubles, has he refused you comfort? When you have been plunged in distress, has he declined to deliver you? The Lord himself asks, "Have I been a wilderness unto Israel?" Testify against the Lord, ye his people, if ye have aught against him. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, whosoever there be in God's service who has found him a hard task-master, let him speak. Amongst the angels before Jehovah's throne, and amongst men redeemed on earth, if there be any one that can say he hath been dealt with unjustly or treated with ungenerous churlishness, let him lift up his voice! But there is not one. Even the devil himself when he spoke of God and of his servant Job, said, "Doth Job serve God for nought?" Of course he did not: God will not let his servants serve him for nought; he will pay them superabundant wages, and they shall all bear witness that at his table there is "bread enough and to spare." Now, if these still enjoy the bread of the Father's house, these who were once great sinners, these who are now only very commonplace saints, surely, sinner, it should encourage you to say, "I will arise and to my Father," for his hired servants "have bread enough and to spare."

III. Notice in the third place, that the text dwells upon THE MULTITUDE OF THOSE WHO HAVE "BREAD ENOUGH AND TO SPARE." The prodigal lays an emphasis upon that word, "*How many* hired servants of my father's!" He was thinking of their great number, and counting them over. He thought of those that tended the cattle, of those that went out with the camels, of those that watched the sheep, and those that minded the corn, and those that waited in the house; he ran them over in his mind: his father was great in the land, and had many servants; yet he knew that they all had of the best food "enough and to spare." "Why should I perish with hunger? I am only one at any rate; though my hunger seem insa-

tiable, it is but one belly that has to be filled, and, lo, my father fills hundreds, thousands every day; why should I perish with hunger?" Now, O thou awakened sinner, thou who dost feel this morning thy sin and misery, think of the numbers upon whom God has bestowed his grace already. Think of the countless hosts in heaven: if thou wert introduced there to-day, thou wouldst find it as easy to tell the stars, or the sands of the sea, as to count the multitudes that are before the throne even now.

They have come from the east and from the west, and they are sitting down with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, and there is room enough for thee. And beside those in heaven, think of those on earth. Blessed be God, his elect on earth are to be counted by millions, I believe, and the days are coming, brighter days than these, when there shall be multitudes upon multitudes brought to know the Savior, and to rejoice in him. The Father's love is not for a few only, but for an exceeding great company. A number that no man can number will be found in heaven; now, a man can number a very great amount. Set to work your Newtons, your calculators, they can count great numbers, but God and God alone can tell the multitude of his redeemed. Now, sinner, thou art but one at any rate, great sinner as thou art, and the mercy of God which embraces millions must have room enough in it for thee. The sea which holds the whales and creeping things innumerable, dost thou say, "It will overflow its banks if I bathe therein"? The sun which floods the universe with light, canst thou see "I should exhaust his beams if I should ask him to enlighten my darkness"? Say not so. If thou comest to thyself thou wilt not tolerate such a thought, but thou wilt remember with hope the richness of the Father's grace, even though thine own poverty stare thee in the face.

Let us add a few words to close with, close grappling words to some of you to whom God has sent his message this morning, and whom he intends to save. O you who have been long hearers of the gospel, and who know it well in theory, but have felt none of the power of it in your hearts, let me now remind you where and what you are! You are perishing. As the Lord liveth, there is but a step between you and death; but a step, nay, but a breath between you and hell. Sinner, if at this moment thy heart should cease its beating, and there are a thousand causes that might produce that result ere the clock ticks again, thou wouldst, be in the flames of divine wrath canst thou bear to be in such peril? If you were hanging over a rock by a slender thread which must soon break, and if you would then fall headlong down a terrible precipice, you would not sleep, but be full of alarm. May you have sense enough, wit enough, grace enough, to be alarmed until you escape from the wrath to come.

Recollect, however, that while you are perishing, you are perishing in sight of plenty; you are famishing where a table is abundantly spread; what is more, there are those whom you know now sitting at that table and feasting. What sad perversity for a man to persist in being starved in the midst of a banquet, where others are being satisfied with good things!

But I think I hear you say, "I fear I have no right to come to Jesus." I will ask you this: have you any right to say that till you have been denied! Did you ever try to go to Christ? Has he ever rejected you? If then you have never received a repulse, why do you wickedly imagine that he would repel you? Wickedly, I say, for it is an offense against the Christ who opened his heart upon the gross, to imagine that he could repel a penitent. Have you any right to say, "But I am not one of those for whom mercy is provided"? Who told you so? Have you climbed to heaven and read the secret records of God election? Has the Lord revealed a strange decree to you, and said, "Go and despair, I will have no pity on you"? If you say that God has so spoken, I do not believe you. In this sacred book is recorded what God has said, here is the sure word of testimony, and in it I find it said of no humble seeker that God hath shut him out from his grace. Why hast thou a right to invent such a fiction in order to secure thine own damnation? Instead thereof, there is much in the word of God and elsewhere to encourage thee in coming to Christ. He has not repelled one sinner yet; that is good to begin with: it is not likely that he would, for since he died to save sinners, why should he reject them when they seek to be saved? You say, "I am afraid to come to Christ." Is that wise? I have heard of a poor navigator who had been converted, who had but little education, but who knew the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and when dying, very cheerfully and joyful longed to depart. His wife said to him, "But, mon, ain't ye afeared to stand before the judge?" "Woman," said he, "why should I be afeared of a man as died for me?" Oh, why should you be afraid of Christ who died for sinners? The idea of being afraid of him should be banished by the fact that he shed his blood for the guilty. You have much reason to believe from the very fact that he died, that he will receive you. Besides, you have his word for it, for he saith, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out"—for no reason, and in no way, and on no occasion, and under no presence, and for no motive. "I will not not cast him out," says the original. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." You say it is too good to be true that there can be pardon for you: this is a foolish measuring of God's corn with your bushel, and because it seems too good a thing for you to receive, you fancy it is too good for God to bestow. Let the greatness of the good news be one reason for believing that the news is true, for it is so like God.

"Who is a pardoning God like thee?

Or who hath grace so rich and free?"

Because the gospel assures us that he forgives great sins through a great Savior, it looks as if it were true, since he is so great a God.

What should be the result of all this with every sinner here at this time? I think this good news should arouse those who have almost gone to sleep through despair. The sailors have been pumping the vessel, the leaks are gaining, she is going down, the captain is persuaded she must be a wreck. Depressed by such evil tidings, the men refuse to work; and since the boats are all stove in and they cannot make a raft, they sit down in despair. Presently the

captain has better news for them. "She will float," he says; "the wind is abating too, the pumps tell upon the water, the leak can be reached yet." See how they work; with what cheery courage they toil on, because there is hope! Soul, there is hope! *There is hope!* THERE IS HOPE! To the harlot, to the thief, to the drunkard.

"There is no hope," says Satan. Liar that thou art, get thee back to thy den; for thee there is no hope; but for fallen man, though he be in the mire of sin up to his very neck, though he be at the gates of death, while he lives there is hope. There is hope for hopeless souls in the Savior.

In addition to arousing us this ought to elevate the sinner's thoughts. Some years ago, there was a crossing-sweeper in Dublin, with his broom, at the corner, and in all probability his highest thoughts were to keep the crossing clean, and look for the pence. One day, a lawyer put his hand upon his shoulder, and said to him, "My good fellow, do you know that you are heir to a fortune of ten thousand pounds a year?" "Do you mean it?" said he. "I do," he said. "I have just received the information; I am sure you are the man." He walked away, *and he forgot his broom*. Are you astonished? Why, who would not have forgotten a broom when suddenly made possessor of ten thousand a year? So, I pray that some poor sinners, who have been thinking of the pleasures of the world, when they hear that there is hope, and that there is heaven to be had, will forget the deceitful pleasures of sin, and follow after higher and better things.

Should it not also purify the mind? The prodigal, when he said, "I will arise and go to my father," became in a measure reformed from that very moment. How, say you? Why, he left the swine-trough: more, he left the wine cup, and he left the harlots. He did not go with the harlot on his arm, and the wine cup in his hand, and say, "I will take these with me, and go to my father." It could not be. These were all left, and though he had no goodness to bring, yet he did not try to keep his sins and come to Christ. I shall close with this remark, because it will act as a sort of *caveat*, and be a fit word to season the wide invitations of the free gospel. Some of you, I fear, will make mischief even out of the gospel, and will dare to take the cross and use it for a gibbet for your souls. If God is so merciful, you will go therefore and sin the more; and because grace is freely given, therefore you will continue in sin that grace may abound. If you do this, I would solemnly remind you I have no grace to preach to such as you. "Your damnation is just;" it is the word of inspiration, and the only one I know that is applicable to such as you are; but every needy, guilty soul that desires a Savior is told to-day to believe in Jesus, that is, trust in the substitution and sacrifice of Christ, trust him to take your sin and blot it out; trust him to take your soul and save it. Trust Christ entirely, and you are forgiven this very moment; you are saved this very instant, and you may rejoice now in the fact that being justified by faith you have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. O come ye, come ye, come ye; come and welcome; come ye now to

the Redeemer's blood. Holy Spirit, compel them to come in, that the house of mercy may be filled. Amen, and Amen.

THE reader, if a believer in Christ, is requested to unite with the preacher in praising the Lord for grace abundantly given in connection with these sermons. This is the thousandth of the series of sermon which we have published consecutively week by week, and of which the circulation has continued to increase. These discourses have many of them been reprinted in the United States, and have also been translated into German, French, Swedish, Dutch, Italian, and Welsh. Some of them have also been issued in the Hungarian, Russian, Danish, Spanish Telugu, Malagasay, Maori, and Gaelic tongues. Of their effect by the blessing of God's Spirit, thousands in heaven, and in all parts of the earth, are joyful witnesses. If we did not praise God for such mercy the stones would cry out.