

Clinging to Christ

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that true discipleship requires clinging to Christ despite the division caused by His challenging doctrines, and that genuine followers will remain steadfast while nominal ones will depart.

Scripture: John 6:67-68

Topics: "Discipleship", "Faithfulness", "Christology"

Description

In this powerful sermon, C.H. Spurgeon explores the challenging reality that true preaching of Christ's doctrines naturally divides hearers between genuine disciples and nominal followers. He emphasizes the importance of steadfast faithfulness to Christ despite misunderstandings, offense, or personal conviction that may cause many to depart. Spurgeon calls believers to examine their own commitment in light of Christ's personal question, 'Will you also go away?' This sermon encourages ministers to preach boldly and listeners to cling firmly to Christ.

Transcript

"Then Jesus said unto the twelve, Will you also go away? Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." John 6:67, 68.

[See Sermons #2914, Volume 50—A MOURNFUL DEFECTION and #1646, Volume 28—A HOME QUESTION AND A RIGHT ANSWER.]

I. WITHOUT any preface, we will proceed at once to consider the first division of our subject, which is that THE PREACHING OF THE DOCTRINES OF TRUTH IS OFTEN THE MEANS OF SEPARATING THE PRECIOUS FROM THE VILE.

In the case before us, we see that the preaching of the Lord Jesus Christ acted like a great winnowing machine. His nominal disciples were like a heap of wheat and chaff all mingled together on the threshing floor. His words were like a mighty wind passing through the whole mass, separating the chaff from the wheat and driving it away—leaving only the good corn lying all around Him. This leads me to say that apart from afflictions, temptations and persecutions, the preaching of the Gospel is, in itself, a means of dividing the true followers of Christ from those who are only His disciples in name and, wherever there is a faithful, Christ-like ministry, you will find many going away from it for the very same reasons that those nominal disciples went away from Christ. "From that time many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him."

Some went away from Christ because His doctrine was too mysterious. They heard His wondrous words only with their outward ears and, judging them in the letter and not comprehending the spirit of them, they said, "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" They misunderstood and misrepresented what intelligent Sunday school children nowadays easily comprehend! And as they did not know what the Savior really meant, they argued that this was a reason why they should not listen to Him any longer. We must, therefore, not be surprised if when we are speaking to our congregations upon the deep things of God, there are some who do not comprehend the spiritual meaning of what we are saying, and who, instead of patiently waiting until they can understand it, or coming to us for an explanation of their difficulties, turn away from us, crying, "We will hear no more of these mysteries! We cannot at once understand them and, therefore, we will not take the trouble to learn what the preacher intends to teach us by them."

Others went away from Christ because His teaching was too spiritual for them. He said to them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you." They gave only a carnal interpretation to Christ's words and altogether missed their spiritual meaning. If He had talked to them as the Pharisees did, they would have understood Him and enjoyed His message. If Christ had spoken to them about phylacteries, making broad the borders of their garments, the tithing of mint and anise and cummin, fasting two or three days in a week and washing their hands before they ate bread, they would have comprehended such talk as that and would have exceedingly liked it! And there are still many, even in England, who would listen gladly to the praise of mere outward rites and ceremonies and who would find intense satisfaction in millinery, wax candles, crosses and anything that is externally ornamental or attractive—but they have no love for that which is spiritual! Our Lord's teaching was too spiritual for those nominal followers of His. He did not give them husks such as swine might relish, but He gave them the very kernels of the Truth of God and, therefore, they turned away from Him. He gave them not chaff, but the very finest of the wheat—but they, being unrenewed by Divine Grace and, therefore, having no appetite for such food, "went back, and

walked no more with Him." And every ministry that is truly spiritual will drive away some who come for a while under its influence, for there are still many to be found who will say, "If the preacher would confine himself to moral duties, or even to Scripture histories, we would not mind listening to him. But when he talks about feeding upon Christ, and about communion with Jesus, and about the spiritual separated life, these are things of which we know nothing and of which we do not wish to know anything." And so they go their way.

Others there were, no doubt, who were offended with Christ because what He said glorified Himself. He contrasted Himself with the manna that their fathers ate in the wilderness and of which they naturally thought very highly, for man then "ate angels' food." But Jesus said, "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead...I am the Living Bread which came down from Heaven: if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live forever." He proclaimed Himself the Son of Man who came down from Heaven and who would go back to Heaven—and this offended them—and there are still many to whom the glorifying of Christ is obnoxious. If the Doctrine that is preached glorifies the Creator and abases the creature, there are some of our hearers who at once get angry! They cannot endure the extolling of our glorious Lord and Master. Our praise of Him makes discord in their ears. If we would prate about the dignity of human nature. If we would extol that poor foolish creature, the son of Adam, they would be pleased enough! But to put all crowns upon Jesus Christ's head, to ascribe all honor and glory to Him and to Him alone—to preach up nothing but a full Christ for empty sinners—there are many who will be annoyed by such preaching as this and straightway they will turn back and walk no more with us.

Chiefly, however, Christ's nominal disciples left Him because His preaching was too personal for them. He proclaimed what was in their hearts and, therefore, He spoke to them with the utmost directness. And this plainness of speech offended them, so they turned away from Him. How many sermons have been preached before people and how few have been preached at them! Yet the sermons that are preached before us are good for nothing, but the sermons that are preached at us are the only ones that are likely to be blessed to us! We have known some hearers who have winced considerably when the preaching has been plain and personal. The description of their case has been so graphic and the cap fitted them so well that, rather than wear it, they have taken themselves to a preacher with a smoother tongue, who—

"To soothe the unholy throng"—has laid aside the boldness of speech which it is both his privilege and his duty to exercise! There are some of our hearers who suspect that somebody has told the minister all about them—but what has happened is that God has guided the preacher unconsciously to picture them so accurately that they cannot help recognizing their own portrait! One says, "I do not like the preacher because he tells me so much about my sins." Another, who is a drunk, says, "I do not like him because, after listening to him, I cannot enjoy my cups as I did before." Another, who is the slave of some other form of sin, says, "I do not like him because he lays the axe to the very root of the tree of my sin. His blows come too closely home to please me." There are others who are not honest enough to confess that it is so with them, also, but though they may not admit it, this is really the fact—they do not like the Truth of God because the Truth of God does not like them!

We have in all our congregations a certain number of hearers who make great professions for a time, but afterwards go back and leave us. The reason very often being that the preaching has sifted them out from the wheat and proved that they are only chaff. I know that some of you feel very uncomfortable when I am preaching the Doctrine of Election or any of the other great Doctrines of Sovereign Grace. I am very sorry for any of you who cannot appreciate those glorious Truths of God in which my soul delights itself to the fullest—and I would earnestly and solemnly urge you to examine yourselves to see whether you have ever had Divine Grace in your hearts at all if you do not love to hear the Doctrines of Grace preached! There are others, though not many in this congregation, who are not pleased when I begin preaching concerning human responsibility and the duty of sinners to repent and believe the Gospel. They do not like to hear me proclaim that part of the Truth of God, though they revel in Divine Sovereignty, Predestination, Election and such great Truths! So it comes to pass that there is, occasionally, a small stream of hearers trickling away towards Antinomianism, and another stream flowing in the opposite direction towards legalism! I hope that at least in the case of some of them, though they leave us, they do not, at the same time, leave Christ! A man may turn away from sound Doctrine and yet may not have left a personal Savior. Though he may have rejected some part of the Truth of God, he may still have his finger upon the hem of Christ's garment, and so may remain in contact with Him. But I am greatly afraid that there are some who leave us, who go away to Hell! Some who, when they forsake the Lord's House, also forsake the Lord

of the house. Some who, when they leave the congregation of the saints, also leave the King of saints and turn aside unto crooked ways.

II. Well now, suppose that they do leave Christ when they leave us? That suggests a second topic of consideration in

our text, which is that WHEN SOME PEOPLE GO AWAY, WE MUST NOT BE SURPRISED, NOR UNDULY ALARMED.

You notice that in the narrative there is no mention of any remark by Christ concerning those who had turned back, nor any expression of a desire for their return. He could read their hearts and knew the motives that had caused them to reject His teaching and cease to be even nominally His followers, so He turned to His 12 Apostles and put to them the pathetic question which we will presently examine—"Will you also go away?" This silence of our Savior concerning those who were driven away from Him by His preaching of the Truth of God suggests that they were not plants of His Father's right-hand planting, but only weeds that had to be pulled up by the roots and thrown away!

Among Christ's nominal disciples, there were some who followed Him for the loaves and fishes. They enjoyed His discourses, especially those that finished up with the feeding of the multitude! They were greatly gratified by being in His society, especially when they shared in the distribution that was made to the poor out of the bag that Judas carried as treasurer to the company. They always profited under Christ's ministry, but if they did not profit in spirituals, they took good care to profit in temporals! These were the people who went away from Christ when He set before them the spiritual meat and drink which had no attraction for them. "No," they said, "we did not bargain for that kind of fare. Let those have it who like it. As for us, we need something more substantial than that" and, therefore, from that time they "went back, and walked no more with Him." There are a few people of this sort in most congregations even now. They always have an eye to anything material that can be gained by mingling with the disciples of Christ. But as soon as there are no more loaves and fishes to be had, no more doles or grants or gifts—away they go— and we see them no more in our midst! Now, when such people as these take offense at the Truth of God and leave us, we really need not regret their going except for their own sakes. While they remain with us, there is always a faint hope that some higher motive may cause them to stay and that the nominal follower of Christ may become one of His true disciples. But, apart from that view of the case, we cannot greatly mourn when He, whose fan is in His hand, drives away the chaff which has been all too long reckoned as wheat!

Then, among the apparent disciples of Christ, were some who followed Him because they were charmed by His oratory. Even the officers who were sent by the chief priests and Pharisees to arrest Christ returned without Him and gave as their excuse for not taking Him, "Never man spoke like this Man." He was, indeed, unrivalled in His eloquence. His parables were so interesting that they won the attention of the multitude—"the common people heard Him gladly." There is a great power of attraction in real natural oratory—and in our Lord's case there was a Divine Power far beyond anything to which the loftiest human eloquence has ever attained. So there were many who said, "We never heard such a preacher as this before. Wherever He preaches, there is sure to be a crowd. The multitudes throng around Him and press upon Him! Let us also go and hear Him." As they listened to Him, their ears were charmed, but their hearts were not changed and, by-and-by, they "went back, and walked no more with Him." We also have had nominal adherents of this sort. We are always glad to see all who come to hear the Word, but if they unite with the disciples of Christ simply because of some excellence of speech which they admire in the preacher and are not, themselves, truly converted, the sooner such dross is scummed from the surface of the molten gold, the better will it be for the gold!

Others, no doubt, followed Christ for a time because they liked anything new, curious and singular. Here was a strange preacher who had not even a house to live in. The foxes had holes and the birds of the air had nests, but He had nowhere to lay His head. He was also a preacher who said and did unusual things. He saw some lilies growing and He said, "Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." He pointed to some

ravens flying overhead, and said, "Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them: how much more are you better than the fowls?" He was a preacher who used simple language, so that even children could comprehend it! Yet, at the same time, He talked so wondrously that the people were astonished at His Doctrine, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." Yet, when the novelty of His teaching had worn off, they "went back, and walked no more with Him." There are some people of this sort still living—they go to hear every fresh preacher who attracts a crowd and they may be sufficiently fascinated to gain admission to the church. But they vanish as soon as there is a new attraction! And any church that has had them on its roll need not sorrow greatly when the chaff is winnowed from the wheat.

So I might go on describing those who go away from us even as Christ's nominal followers went away from Him, but I will just say to any minister here who has lost any of his hearers through his faithful preaching of the Truth, "Do not fret, my dear Brother, on their account, and do not abate a single jot or tittle of anything that you believe to be the Truth of God." I would not alter my preaching in order to retain any individual, however eminent or influential he might be. Others may fish for him if they like, but I shall not. My business is to declare my Master's message exactly as He has revealed it to me in His Word and by His Spirit! I am responsible to Him for the faithful discharge of the duties to which He has called me—and when I have, in His name, fully and fearlessly proclaimed all the Truth that He has taught me, I am not to be blamed if some refuse to receive the Word, and so it becomes a savor of death unto death to them. It was so with the preaching of our Lord Himself, for there were many who "went back, and walked no more with Him," when He uttered Truths of God which were unpalatable to them.

III. Now I come to the very important matter upon which I want to especially speak to you, as it particularly concerns you who are now present. Some have gone out from us because they were not of us, for if they had really been of us they would doubtless have continued with us. And this fact suggests the need of putting to you THE SOLEMN QUESTION WHICH OUR LORD PUT TO HIS DISCIPLES—"Will you also go away?"

Every word in this question is important. Let us first consider the little pronoun, "you." "Will you also go away?" "You, the 12 who have been with Me from the beginning. You who have been with Me in my tribulation and have shared My reproach. You who were, some of you with Me on the Mount of Transfiguration and in the room where the little maid was bid to rise—will you go away from Me? To you," Christ seemed to say, "I have expounded the parables as I never explained them to the mixed multitude. To you I have unlocked the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. To you My heart has been opened as it has been to no one else—I have not kept back from you anything that was good for you to know—you are My chosen ones, My favorites, My much-loved ones. To deliver you from peril, I walked upon the stormy waves. To preserve you in the time of temptation, I spent whole nights in prayer. Upon you I have poured a plenitude of blessings—will you go away from Me after all this?" Now Christ seems to me to put this solemn, personal question to you, my dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ! Will you go away from Him after all that He has done for you? You believe that you have been called by His Grace, for you have enjoyed the sweetness of His love and you have been admitted into close personal fellowship with Him. The secret of the Lord is with you who fear Him. He has delivered you in six troubles, and in seven no evil has touched you. You bear your willing witness that He is a gracious Lord and Master, and that He has been a precious Christ to you! Indeed, you say that He is your All-in-All and that words fail you to tell all that you think of Him! Then can you, will you go away from Him after all this? I think I know what your answer must be, but I will not speak of that just now.

Now put the emphasis upon the first word in the question—"Will you also go away?" Matthew Henry says that our Lord left the disciples to make the choice whether they would go or stay—and then he observes that, "Christ will detain none with Him against their wills. His soldiers are volunteers, not pressed men." Christ also says to us who profess to be His disciples, "Will you go away from Me?" Remember this, beloved Friends, although the Spirit of God keeps us following Christ, yet He never does this against our wills. He makes us willing in the day of His power, but still, it is quite true that Christ has no unwilling followers. If you are willing to leave Him. If your will would permit you to be a deserter from the army of Christ, you have already deserted! So I put the question to you as though the whole matter rested with you, "Will you go away from your Lord and Master? Do you really wish to leave your Savior? Do you, in your heart, say, "I will never again endure suffering and reproach for His name's sake. I will never again put my trust in Him who died upon the Cross. I will go back to the world and be content with the world's joys and pleasures"? Will you thus go away from Christ and walk no more with Him?

Then take the next word in the question: "Will you also go away?" There is often a disposition in us to do what others do. Young man, you know that your father, who once professed to be a follower of Christ, afterwards apostatized. Will you, also, go back because he turned traitor to Christ? When some great monarch among the trees of the forest feels the woodman's axe and quivers and, at last, falls with a tremendous crash, many a shrub and plant that grew securely

near it are crushed to death by its fall. And so, sometimes, when some great professor falls and goes down to destruction, there are many young Believers, growing, as it were, under his shadow, who are in imminent peril of being dragged down with him! Now, my young Friends, you have heard that So-and-So and So-and-So have turned back, like Pliable, to the City of Destruction—"will you also go away?" Will the tide also sweep you away, or will you, by the Grace of God, swim against it? There it goes, broad and deep! Upon its surface is the foam of pleasure, but in its depths is the damnation of Hell—will you also float adown it as multitudes of others are doing, or will you stem the current—

"Strong in the strength which God supplies Through His eternal Son"?

We must, all of us know some of these reprobates who once were numbered among the people of God. There is one who used to partake of the Communion Cup at the Lord's Table, but now he is drinking of the cup of devils at the bar of the gin palace—"will you also go away" as he has gone? There is another who used to go up to the House of Prayer and his voice was often heard at the Prayer Meetings. But the greed of gold sized him and now he is a sordid money-grabber and he would grind an orphan's bones if they would make him bread! "Will you also go away" as he has gone? Saddest of all, there is one who used to preach the Gospel and many were charmed by his brilliant oratory. But now he is blaspheming God with his fellow infidels! "Will you also go away" as he has gone? Young men and women, and old ones, too, you see what the apostates have become! You see what has happened to some who apparently did run well, but who never really started in the right course—or they would have continued in it till they reached the goal. You see how some who left the harbor with a fair wind and all sails set have made shipwreck of faith because they never knew the Grace of God in truth—are you willing to be like they? "Will you also go away?" I know I shall not be alone in giving the answer that John Newton puts into his well-known hymn—

"When any turn from Zion's way (Alas, what numbers do)! I think I hear my Savior say, 'Willyou forsake Me too?' Ah, Lord, with such a heart as mine, Unless You hold me fast I feel I will! I shall decline, And prove like they at last. What anguish has that question stirred, If I will also go?

Yet, Lord, relying on Your Word, I humbly answer, 'No.'"

IV. Now, as briefly as we can, let us consider PETER'S REPLY TO OUR LORD'S QUESTION, and I hope that

many a heart here will make that reply its own. It was a grand answer! There is a magnificence about it which I cannot expect to bring out to the fullest—"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

"Lord, to whom shall we go?" When I was meditating upon this subject yesterday, I turned that question over and over again in my mind and I asked myself, "Where could I go if I were to forsake my Lord?" Earth has no place where I could hide my guilty head if I, after preaching the Gospel to others, should desert the Cross of Christ! Not even across the ocean could I find a harbor of refuge or a hermit's cave where I could secure seclusion if I tried to run away from my Lord. I would be hounded and denounced everywhere by those who know my name, even if they do not know me, as one who has preached the Gospel to tens of thousands. And I should be pointed at by the finger of scorn and all who have desired my fall would gloat over it—and think me only fit to be a football for Satan and his hosts to kick. I can indeed adopt John Newton's lines and say with him to my dear Lord and Savior—

"To whom or where could I go If I should turn from You?"

That is how I personally feel with regard to Peter's reply to our Lord's question. Will each one of you put the matter before yourself from your own standpoint as I have put it from mine? Let me take the case of any avowed follower of Christ here. Where could you go to find comfort if you should forsake your Lord? Suppose you turn from Christ—perhaps you might try to find peace and comfort in ceremonies. Can you imagine yourself sitting or kneeling in a Popish place of

worship? Can you think of yourself as trying to get comfort by watching those boys in white swinging the smoking censers, or those men in blue and purple and scarlet and fine linen bowing before their images and chanting in a language that you probably do not understand? Can you imagine yourself deriving comfort from those wax candles, those crucifixes or that little wafer-god of which the idolaters think so much? Could you get comfort out of the gorgeous architecture, the dim religious light, the pealing organ and all the paraphernalia inseparably associated with the Romish ritual? If you should ever spend a few minutes in one of those places, I think you would say, "Well, whatever becomes of me, I could not come here! I know too much to ever put any trust in such childish ceremonies and superstitious observances. I cannot imagine my soul ever being satisfied with such husks as these."

Next, let us suppose that you go to Moses and try to be saved by the Law. As you have given up Christ, you try whether you cannot find comfort in your own good works. You become eminently religious, devout, charitable, moral and upright. You try, from morning till night, to live a perfect life. You are wanting to see if you can, by any means, build a road to Heaven for yourself, or construct a ladder out of your own good works by which you can reach God's Presence in Glory. Now, my Brothers and Sisters in Christ, what do you think of such a scheme as this? "Oh, Sir!" says one friend, "I once tried to go round by Mount Sinai, but there were such lightning and thunder—and the mountain was so full of terror to me that I dare not go that way again! Whatever else I might do, I could not go back again to the beggarly elements of the old Law! I did once think that I could be saved by my own good works, but I found that I had launched my boat upon such a stormy sea that I was glad to get back to land again—and I shall never again venture out upon those perilous waters." I expect this friend says just what many more of you feel—that you could no

more go back to Moses, and seek to be saved by the Law—than you could hope to be saved by Popish rites and ceremonies!

We will suppose, next, that you try to live an utterly careless life. Let us imagine, if we can, that you give up all thoughts of religion, that you do not attend any place of worship, that you abandon your present habit of prayer, Bible reading and so on, and that you just settle down to attend to your earthly business and have no care about the business of the world to come! Can you manage to do that? There are many, all around us, who are constantly acting thus—and some of them are quite used to it by this time, for they have never cared for anything but the things of time and sense. But I am quite sure there is no true child of God who could live such a life as that! If some of you were to stay away from the House of God for a month, you know that you would be utterly miserable! You could not help thinking about Divine things—they would force themselves upon you, for you have a conscience which is neither dead nor seared. It is like that Mr. Conscience, of whom John Bunyan says in his *Holy War*—"The old gentleman, too, the Recorder, who was so before Diabolus took Mansoul—he also began to talk aloud. And his words were now to the town of Mansoul as if they were great claps of thunder." It is so with you, and that enlightened and awakened conscience of yours would make you, of all men, most miserable if you tried to live a careless, godless life! Why, you know that even when you are dull and heavy with regard to spiritual things, you are most unhappy, and you cry out in your agony—

"Dear Lord, and shall we always live At this poor dying rate?"

Well, if you cannot endure that state of things even in a small degree, it is quite certain that you could not endure it altogether! So, if you think of leaving your Lord, it is evident that you could not live in utter carelessness.

Suppose that you turn aside to the pleasures of the world. Suppose you take a ticket tomorrow evening for the theater and go there? The moment you had taken your seat, you would say to yourself, "I wish I had never come in this place." And as soon as the performance began, you would be so nervous and unhappy that at every creaking noise, or the slamming of a door, you would fear that the building was about to tumble down upon you! Such amusements as these are not for us who profess to be followers of the Crucified! Let others do as they please—we do not interfere with their liberty. We believe that husks are the proper food for swine, but we have no desire to share the feast with them! And we leave the world's pleasures to the men of the world who have their portion in this life. If we have really received a new life, and been made partakers of the Divine Nature, it would be no use for us to seek satisfaction in the world's pleasures—we would be obliged to cry out, "Vanity of vanities! All is vanity!"

Now just once more, suppose we leave Christ and turn to the lower and grosser forms of vice. Why, the mere suggestion seems to make our blood run cold and then to make us blush with shame at the very thought of such degradation! Some of us tremble every time we hear a profane oath or a blasphemous or obscene expression—and we would rather be

tied up and whipped with a cat-o'-nine-tails, than live among those who are continually cursing God! And as for doing it, ourselves, we would rather that our tongue should cleave to the roof of our mouth, or that we should be dumb for the rest of our lives! If one has ever known the woe, sorrow and redness of eyes of the drunk—and been saved from such sin and wretchedness by Sovereign Grace—how can he or she ever go back to their cups again? If one has been the companion of a harlot and has tasted the bitterness of life (or rather, death) in the house of the strange woman—and yet has been delivered by Almighty

Grace—how can you ever again wallow in such filth? The very thought of such a thing makes us shudder and it is well that it does! God has made all sin to be full of vinegar and gall to a Christian! And there is nothing sweet to him, the wide world over, but that which appertains to Christ! No, my Brothers and Sisters, we cannot go back to the world and to sin! We must cling to Christ, for there is nowhere else for us to go if we should ever leave Him. Respectable carelessness refuses us and disreputable sin rejects us after we are once united to Christ! Even the world could not endure us when once we have lost our taste for its follies and its sins. We cannot go back, we have burnt our boats and destroyed our bridges—the only course left to us is to follow our glorious Leader wherever He goes before us here and then to follow Him forever in that blest state where it shall be impossible for us to go away from Him!

My time has almost gone, but I must remind you of the last words of Peter's reply to his Lord—"You have the words of eternal life." I hope that you, also, dear Brothers and Sisters, feel that you cannot turn back from Christ because He has saved you by His Grace. What He has done for us must bind us forever to Him! He has loved us with an everlasting love. He has given Himself for us on Calvary's Cross. He has given us His Spirit and Word—a new heart and a right spirit has He put within us—we cannot and we will not desert Him after all this! Besides, He is our hope for the eternity of bliss that we expect to share with Him. All our hopes of life beyond the grave center in Him. Apart from Him, there would be nothing for us but the blackness of darkness forever! So it is impossible for us to turn away from Him. No, we must cling to Him whatever happens, for there is nothing or no one that can ever take His place—

"None among the sons of men,

None among the heavenly train,

Can with Jesus Christ compare,

None so sweet, and none so fair!" I wish that some who have never yet been followers of the Lord Jesus Christ would become His disciples right now. But remember that if you enlist beneath His banner, it is for life. The Captain of our salvation has not six-months' soldiers—He grants no discharge from His army till the fight is fought, the victory won and the crown is bestowed upon those who have been faithful even unto death! Those are the conditions of His service. Will you accept them and enlist in His army tonight? There is nothing for you to pay, but everything for you to receive! Open your empty hand, bring your empty heart and receive Christ—and so shall you be enlisted into His service! And more than that, you shall become members of the great family of the redeemed, for "as many as received Him, to them He gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." Believe on Him now and you, too, shall become the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus! And then if He says to you, when others turn back and walk no more with Him, "Will you also go away?" you will answer, as Peter did, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." The Lord bless you, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

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