

Good Cheer For Outcasts

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon passionately proclaims that Jesus Christ tenderly gathers and saves the outcasts and sinners, demonstrating God's infinite mercy and power to redeem even the lowest and most despised.

Scripture: Psalm 147:2, Matthew 9:12, John 3:16, Luke 15:4-7, Isaiah 1:18, Hebrews 7:25, John 10:11, Numbers 21:9

Topics: "Divine Mercy", "Salvation of Sinners"

Description

In this stirring sermon, C.H. Spurgeon explores the profound mercy and compassion of Jesus Christ as He gathers the outcasts of Israel. Spurgeon highlights how Christ's love transcends social status and human merit, reaching out to the poorest, the despised, and the most sinful. With passionate evangelistic fervor, he encourages all listeners—especially those who feel rejected or unworthy—to come to Jesus for forgiveness and new life. This sermon is a powerful reminder of the boundless grace available through faith in Christ.

Transcript

BY C. H. SPURGEON,

"He gathers together the outcasts of Israel." Psalm 147:2.

DOES not this show us the great gentleness and infinite mercy of God? And as we know most of God in the Person of our Lord, Jesus Christ, should it not charm us to remember that when He came on earth He did not visit kings and princes, but He came unto the humble and simple folk? He did not seek out Pharisees, wrapped up in their own supposed righteousness, but He sought out the guilty, for He said, "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick."

The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost! It would have seemed natural that our Lord Jesus, when He came here, should, first of all, have addressed Himself to the most respectable people He could find and should have sent His message to the rabbis of Jerusalem, to the senators at Rome, to the philosophers of Greece. But instead, the common people heard Him gladly and He rejoiced in spirit while He said, "I thank You, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because You have hid these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight."

I think you may judge of a man's character by the persons whose affection he seeks. If you find a man seeking only the affection of those who are great, depend upon it, he is ambitious and self-seeking. But when you observe that a man seeks the affection of those who can do nothing for him, but for whom he must do everything, you know that he, himself, is not seeking, but that pure benevolence sways his heart. When I read in the text that the Lord gathers together the outcasts of Israel—and when I see that the text is truly applicable to the Lord Jesus Christ, because this is just what He did—I see another illustration of the gentleness of His heart, who said, "Take My yoke upon you, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls."

Be glad tonight, dear Friends, that we gather around such a Savior as this, from whom all pride and self-seeking are absent and who, coming down among us in gentleness and meekness, comes to gather those whom no man cares for—those who are judged to be worthless and irreclaimable! He comes to gather together the outcasts of Israel! Applying this text to our Lord Jesus Christ, we not only see His gentleness, but we also clearly see an illustration of His love to men, as men. If you seek only after rich men, suspicion arises—and it is more than suspicion—that you seek their wealth rather than they. If you aim only at the benefit of wise men, it is probably true that it is their wisdom which attracts you, and not their manhood.

But the Lord Jesus Christ did not love men because of any advantageous circumstances, or any commendable incidents of their condition. His love was to manhood. He loved His own chosen people as men, not as this or that among men. He has no respect for rank, nor care for wealth. A man is a man with Christ whether the "guinea-stamp" is there or not. He died not for titles and dignities, but for men. "Not yours, but you," our Lord Jesus could truly say. Where Jesus Christ sees a man, though he is an outcast, an outlaw or one condemned by the law of his own country—He sees a human being—a creature capable of awful sin and terrible misery, but yet, renewed by Grace, capable of bringing wondrous glory to the Most High.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, by gathering together the outcasts, proves that it is not the things which surround men, but the men, themselves, that He cares for. He considers not so much where a man is, but what he is—not what he has learned, or what he is thought of, or what he has done—just what he is. The man is the jewel. The immortal soul is the Pearl of Great Price which Jesus seeks as a merchantman seeks goodly pearls. Another thing is also clear. If Jesus gathers together the outcasts of Israel, it proves His power over the hearts of men. There is a certain class of men who follow that which is morally good because the Lord has given them a noble disposition. Thank God, He has, in mercy, been pleased to give

some men a desire after that which is beautiful and true. They, too, are merchantmen seeking goodly pearls, and it is not difficult, when the heart is brought into such a desirable state, for the excellence and beauty of Jesus Christ to attract it!

But here is a tug of war—there are men still left in the guilt and filthiness of human nature who have no desire after that which is good—but whose entire longings are after evil, only evil and that continually. These have no more eye to anything that is high and noble than the swine has for the stars. The minister of Christ may appeal to them, but he will appeal in vain. And Providence may warn them, by the deaths of others and by personal sickness, but they are not to be separated from the earth to which they are glued. Yet our Lord Jesus can gather together even these, the outcasts of Israel! Such is His power that He does not stop till He sees good desires in men—He imparts those desires to those who have them not! Such are the charms of His Cross, that blind eyes are made to see by its beauty! Such is the music of His voice,

that deaf ears are opened by it! Such is the majesty of His life, that the dead hear His voice and they that hear are made to live!

No groundwork of goodness is asked or expected from any man that Christ may come and act upon it—He takes man in his ruin and in the extremity of his depravity—and begins with him then and there. When the good Samaritan came to the wounded man, he did not wait for him to make the first advance, or come a little towards him. He went to him, where he was, and poured into his wounds the oil and the wine. So the Lord comes where hurtful nature is and, bad as its condition is, He stoops to it and He gathers together the outcasts of Israel! Oh, it is a wonderful thing, this, that there should be attractions about the Lord Jesus Christ which can draw to Him those whom nothing else that is good can possibly stir!

You may preach virtue to the sinner, but he does not practically yield to its charms. You may preach to the drunk, to the unchaste, to the immoral, the beauties and excellences of honesty and of all the virtues and the Graces, but little good will come of it—the result is infinitesimal. You may charm very wisely upon those subjects, but these deaf adders do not care for charming. We have heard of a Divine who said that he had preached honesty till he had not an honest person left in the parish! And he preached of virtue till he did not know where Diogenes, with his lantern, could find it! Nothing worth having comes of preaching when Christ is not the theme!

You may preach the Law and men will be frightened by it, but they will forget their fears. Yet if Jesus Christ is preached, He draws all men unto Him. The most wicked will listen to the news of Him who is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him. The most stubborn have been known to weep when they have heard the story of His grief and of His love! The most proud have found themselves suddenly humbled at His feet, of which some of us are witnesses, for we marveled to find the hardness and loftiness of our hearts suddenly removed by a sense of His goodness! I do not believe that we preachers have half enough, or a tenth enough faith in Jesus Christ. If we could preach Jesus Christ to a company of convicted felons, should we be wrong in hoping to see the larger part of them converted on the spot?

If we had but faith enough to preach to them as we should, aiming directly, distinctly and believingly at their souls, might we not look for great results? We go so timidly, so doubtingly to work. We pray that God would save some out of our congregations and that He would be pleased to bless the Word here and there! But, such a splendid Gospel as we have to preach should not be preached so, nor should we so pray about it! When Moses lifted up the bronze serpent in the wilderness, it was not with this prayer—"Lord, grant that one or two of those who are bitten by the serpent may look and live." No, Moses came out boldly with his serpent high upon the pole! He believed that thousands would look—they did look—and they lived! May we, after the same manner, proclaim Jesus who "gathers together the outcasts of Israel."

Now, with this introduction, I would speak upon the text a little more particularly, and we shall observe with brevity, first, to whom the text applies—"He gathers together the outcasts of Israel." Secondly, we shall consider in what sense He may be said to gather them. And then, thirdly, what lesson this teaches us.

I. First, then, TO WHOM MAY THIS TEXT APPLY—"He gathers together the outcasts of Israel"? It refers to several classes in different ways. First, it is a fact that our Lord Jesus gathered together some of the very poorest and most despised among men—those who might, under some respects, be regarded as outcasts. And it is certain that, to this day, the Gospel comes in the largest measure of power to the poor

of this world. Often, too, it comes with amazing power to those who are despised by others, or are regarded as being of inferior degree.

You know that at this time it is boastfully said by the enemies of the Gospel that the culture, the brain, the intellect, the education of England is all on the side of skepticism. I am not so sure. When people say that they possess a great deal

of brains, I am not certain that their claim is correct, unless it is that as sheep have a good deal of brains and yet are not the wisest animals in the world, so these gentlemen, also, are no wiser than they should be. As to those gentlemen who so evidently claim to be the cultured people, who monopolize all the sweetness and the light, I am not clear that they have all the modesty. It does seem to me that if they talked in a lower key, it would be as well. And if they thought a little less of their own culture and allowed a little more to other people, we might have more faith in this wonderful "culture" of theirs.

Some of us have failed to see the deep thought and the profound learning we were told to look for in the books of the skeptical cultured mind and, therefore, we are less patient when we hear the perpetual bragging of our foes. Still, let it stand so. We will not quarrel with it. Suppose it to be so—that none but foolish people embrace the old-fashioned faith—Puritanism which, they say, is nearly dead—the old evangelism which they ridicule as being exploded. Let it be so, that we are an inferior order of people with very little brains and all that. Well, we are not out of heart on that account, because we find that it so happened in our Savior's day and has happened all days since—that the wisdom of the world has been at enmity with God.

And it has also flamed out that the foolishness of God has been wiser than men and God has mastered human wisdom by the foolishness of preaching! By that Gospel which wise men laughed at as being folly, God has brought carnal wisdom to nothing! The Lord Jesus Christ looks with love on those whom others look down upon with scorn—

"He takes the fool and makes him know.

The wonders of His dying love,

To lay aspiring wisdom low,

And all our pride reprove."

I am thankful when I meet with poor saints and see what a grip humble men and women get of the promises of God. Laboring men, humble shepherds and the like have often been more distinguished for deep insight into the mysteries of Grace than learned doctors of divinity! Where there has been little in the cupboard and the provision on the table has been but slender, there has been more enjoyment of the favor of God than among the great ones of the earth!

They may regard those who still stand by the old-fashioned Truth of God as being outcasts from the commonwealth of letters and not worthy to be named among the cultured intellects of the age, but if the Lord will but gather us continually to His bosom and refresh us with Himself, we shall be content! The text should be a source of joy to us if any of us happen to be extremely poor—so poor that even Christian men are so ungenerous as to give us the cold shoulder, or if we happen to be the despised ones of our family. Here and there, sad to say it, there will be, in families, a better one than the rest, less thought of than the others—a Joseph whom his brothers hate because he loves his God.

Well, you may become as a stranger to your mother's children and you may have no one to give you a good word, yet may you put this verse under your tongue as a sweet morsel—"He gathers together the outcasts of Israel." Those who are lowest in the esteem of men are still remembered by the Lord! The text may be applied very well to those who have made themselves outcasts by their wickedness and are deservedly cast out of society. May God grant that none of us may be, or may have been, among that number. But if I should be addressing any such at this time, I have a word for them. If there should be some such here, tonight, who do not often attend places of worship, but have dropped in from curiosity, I may suppose your case to be that of one who has broken a mother's heart and brought a father's gray hairs to the grave with grief.

You have lived such a life that your own brothers could scarcely be expected to acknowledge you. You have sinned and sinned terribly. Man or woman—for woman, also, becomes an outcast—she is too severely treated, as a general rule, and more often becomes an outcast than the man who deserves it more! If I address such, it is a great joy to me to know that our Lord Jesus Christ can save the most wicked of the wicked, the most fallen of the fallen, the most depraved of the depraved! If you have sunk so low that there is not much to choose between you and a devil—and some men and women do get as low as that—yet Jesus Christ can lift you up!

If your life story is such that it would be a pity it should ever be told and most grievous that it should ever have been enacted, yet Jesus can wash all the stains of your life away and save you, even you! Only one such may be present here tonight, but I make no apology for concentrating my whole thoughts upon one single person! I leave the 99, to go after the one lost sheep, that in the one lost one may be revealed the richness and freeness of the Grace of God in Jesus Christ! Come, then, Outcast! Come to your Redeemer and find pardon! "Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as snow!

Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool!" Jesus is able to wash away every transgression from those who are steeped in guilt. Countless iniquities dissolve and disappear before the presence of His mighty love, for He, even Jesus, gathers together the outcasts of Israel!

Is there no helper on earth? Yet is there One in Heaven! Is there no friend below? Yet is there One above! Is there nothing that can save you? Do you contemplate suicide? Stop, stop your hand, for Jesus is "able to save to the utter-most"—to the uttermost—"them that come unto God by Him." Let the prayer go up, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and go your way with hope in your soul, for "He gathers together the outcasts of Israel."

A third class of persons consists of those who judge themselves to be outcasts, though, as to outward actions they certainly do not deserve the label. Many who have written about John Bunyan have been surprised at the description which he gives of his own life, for it does not appear that, with the sole exception of the use of blasphemous language, John Bunyan was one of the very worst of mankind. But he thought himself to be so. Now it often happens—I do not say always, but I think it is generally so—that when the Spirit of God comes, with power, to the conscience and awakens it, the man judges himself to be the very chief of sinners.

For it may be that you have never gone into actual vice. You have never been a blasphemer or dishonest. You have, on the contrary, from the instructions of your childhood, been led into the path of right—and yet, when you are awakened, you may feel yourself to be vilest of the vile. Everything that is lovely and of good report has been found in you—you do not know the time in which you would not have been shocked to

hear a blasphemous word—and yet when the Holy Spirit awakens you, you will plead guilty among the very worst! I know in my own case I had a horror of ungodliness. And, yet, when the Spirit of God came to me, I felt myself to be far worse than the swearer or the drunk—for this reason—that I knew that many who indulged in those open sins did so ignorantly. They did so from the imitation of those in whose society they had been brought up.

But as for me, with a godly parentage, with a mother's prayers and tears, with light and knowledge, understanding the letter of the Gospel, having read the Bible from my youth, up, I felt that my sins were blacker than those of others because I had sinned against light and knowledge. And you must have felt the same, I am persuaded. Perhaps you are even, now, feeling it. You remember that night when you stifled conviction, when conscience had an earnest battle with you and it seemed that you must yield to God and to His Christ—but you deliberately did violence to the inward principle and resolved to go on in sin. Do you remember that? If you do, it will sting you as does a serpent, now that you are under conviction of sin—and you will feel yourself to be the very chief of sinners on account of it, though no public sin may ever have stained your life.

Well, I should not wonder, if such is your condition, that you also judge that there is no salvation for you—that God might save your mother, your brother, or your friend—but not you. You believe the blood of Jesus to be very precious, but you think it never will be applied to you. You heard, the other day, of the conversion of a friend and you felt glad, but at the same time you thought, "Grace will never come to me." When the preacher has exhorted his hearers to believe in Jesus Christ, you have said, "Ah, but I—I cannot! I am in a condition in which that Gospel is of no use to me." You think yourself an outcast. You feel that you deserve to be.

You are not content to be so, but, at the same time, you could not blame the Lord if He left you to perish. You feel that your transgressions have been so great that if He should leave you out of His gracious plans and Grace should come to others and not to you, you could only bow your head in bitterest sorrow and say, "You are just, O God." Now, listen, you who have condemned yourself! The Lord absolves you! You who have shut yourself out as an outcast, you shall be gathered! For whereas they call you an outcast, whom no man seeks after, you shall be called Hephzibah, for the Lord's delight is in you! Only believe in Jesus Christ and cast yourself upon Him! Outcasts of this sort are the people who most gladly welcome Christ. People who have nowhere else to go but to Him—people so cast down, so full of sin, so everything but what they ought to be—these are the people to whom Christ is very precious!

"Oh," says one, "but I do not feel like that. I cannot feel my guilt as I should." Very well, then, you are one of the outcasts among the outcasts—you do not think yourself to be as good, even, as they are! You are, in your own esteem, one of the worst outcasts of them all because you lack even the feeling of your need. You say, "I have a hard heart. I cannot see sin as others have seen it who have found Christ. I wish I could. I smite my breast and mourn that I cannot mourn,

for if anything is felt, it is only pain to find that I cannot feel. I seem made of Hell-hardened steel which will not melt or

break."

Well, I see that you are, but, "such were some of us." We, also, knew our insensibility and lamented that we could not lament! But He gathered us! And there stands the text, "He gathers together the outcasts of Israel." If you have not a broken heart, only Christ can give it to you! If you cannot come to Him with it, go

to Him for it! If you cannot come to Him wounded, come to Him that He may wound you and make you whole! You need bring nothing to Jesus! I would like to whisper in your ear just this—that those people who think themselves insensible, generally think so because they are more than usually sensitive. And those who think that they do not feel, are usually those who feel the most! I do not think we are ever good judges of our own feeling in this matter.

The day may come when, in looking back, you will say, "I did, after all, mourn over sin when I thought that I did not. I had such a sense of how black it was that I felt I was not mourning enough, even when I was deeply mourning!" Brother, you never will mourn enough. Enough? Would oceans full of tears be enough to mourn the guilt of sin? No, but, blessed be God, we are not asked to repent or to mourn up to a certain standard! O outcast Soul, trust in Jesus and He will save you! I must not dwell, however, on this class, but proceed further to notice that there is another sort of people whom Jesus gathers who are even more truly the outcasts of Israel.

I mean the backsliders from the Church—the outcasts of Israel who have been put out, and properly put out, for their unholy lives and inconsistent actions—those whom the Church is obliged, alas, to look upon as diseased members that must be removed. They are sickly sheep that infect the flock and must be put away. They are lepers that must be set aside from the camp. O Wanderer, banished from a Church, there is a word in the Gospel for you, also—even for the backslider! The Lord calls back His wandering children. Though His Church does right to put out those who do dishonor to His holy name, yet she would do wrong if she did not follow her Lord in saying, "Return, you backsliding children."

It is not easy to persuade one who has been a backslider to come back to his first love. The return journey is uphill and flesh and blood do not assist us in it. Many new converts come, but the old wanderers remain outside and sometimes they do this because they fancy they will not be welcome. But if you are sincerely repenting of the sin which has put you away from the Church, the Church of Christ will be glad to receive you! And if you are, indeed, the Lord's believing one, though you have defiled yourself, He does not forget you! He does earnestly remember you, still, and He bids you come, in all your defilement, and wash in His atoning blood!

The fountain that Jesus has opened is not only for strangers, when they are first brought near—but it is opened "for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem"—those who know the Lord, that they may be daily purged from their transgressions and be cleansed from the filthiness of their backslidings. The Lord gathers together those who have been carried captive by their sins and makes them, once more, to dwell in the land of uprightness—and all His wandering sheep He brings back to Himself.

The expression of the text may certainly be applied to those, also, who have loved the Lord for years, but who have fallen into great depression of spirit. We happen, every now and then, to meet with some of the best of God's people who get into the Slough of Despond and stick there by the month together—yes, by the year together! These are Believers who take periodically to despondency, as birds do to molting, and when the fit is on them you cannot cheer or comfort them. They then write bitter things against themselves and call themselves all the ugly names in the dictionary—until they make us smile to hear them—because we know how mistaken they are. We are admiring their consistency and they are mourning over their foolishness.

We see their generosity towards the cause of God and their devotion to everything that is good. Yet they say there is nothing good in them. We know where they are, for we have been laid in iron, ourselves, and

set fast in the very same stocks. What a mercy it is that when you who love the Lord thus, and sit down and commune with your despondencies—I mean you, Miss Much-Afraid, you, Mr. Ready-to-Halt and you, Mr. Feeble-Mind—my Lord does not leave you nor judge you as you judge yourselves! He is pleased to gather together, in mercy, those who think themselves outcasts in Israel.

Lastly, upon this point, there are some who become outcasts through their love to Christ and of these the text is peculiarly true. I mean those who suffer for righteousness' sake till they are regarded as the off-scouring of all things. Are there any that serve God faithfully, who have escaped the trial of cruel mockery? The names of those who are eminently

useful are generally used as footballs for an ungodly world. The world is not worthy of them and yet their enemies think they are hardly worthy to live in the world. We do not hear much about persecution nowadays, but in private life there is a world of it! The cold shoulder is given where once friendship was sought—hard, cruel, cutting things are said where once admiration was expressed—and separations take place between good friends because of Christ.

It is still true, in the Christian's case, that a man's foes are they of his own household. But if you should become an outcast upon the face of the earth for Christ's sake, there is this for your comfort—"The Lord does build up Jerusalem, He gathers together the outcasts of Israel." Of the persecuted He makes pillars in His holy temple forever. Blessed are those who are outcasts for Christ! Rich are those who are so honored as to be permitted to become poor for Him! Happy are they who have had this Grace given them—to be permitted to lay life, itself, down for Jesus Christ's sake!

II. Now a few words upon the second point—IN WHAT SENSE DOES THE LORD JESUS GATHER TOGETHER THESE OUTCASTS OF DIFFERENT CLASSES? Of course I should have to vary the explanation to suit each case, but as that would take a long time, let me say that the Lord Jesus has several ways of gathering together the outcasts. He gathers them to hear the Gospel. Preach Jesus Christ and they will come! Both outcast saints and outcast sinners will come to hear the charming sound of His blessed name! They cannot help it. Nothing draws like Jesus Christ!

Jesus Christ next gathers them to Himself. The parable of the wedding feast is repeated again, "Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that My house may be filled." "Bring in here the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind." In this sort, the Lord Jesus Christ gathers multitudes where He is faithfully preached. He gathers all sorts of characters and especially the odds and ends of society—the despised of men and the despised of themselves. He gathers them to Himself.

And oh, what a blessed gathering place that is where there is cleansing for their filthiness, health for their disease, clothing for their nakedness and all-sufficient supplies for their abundant necessities! He gathers them to Himself—which is to gather them to God—to gather them to blessedness and peace through reconciliation with the Father. "To Him shall the gathering of the people be."

When He has done that, He gathers them into the Divine family. He takes the outcasts and makes them children of God—heirs with Himself. From the dunghill He lifts them and sets them among princes! He takes them from the swine trough and puts the ring on their fingers and the shoes on their feet—and they sit down at the Father's table to feast and to be glad! Jesus Christ, as the good Shepherd, gathers the lost sheep, the lame, the halt, the diseased and feeds them. He makes them to lie down and restores their souls and, finally, He leads them to the rich pastures of the Glory Land.

In due time the Lord gathers together the outcasts into His visible Church. As David enrolled a company of men that were in debt and discontented, so does Jesus Christ gather the indebted ones and the malcontents and makes them His soldiers. These are known as the Church militant. Surely as David did great exploits by those Pelethites, Cherethites, Gittites and strange men of foreign extraction whom he gathered to himself, so does Jesus of Nazareth do great things by those great sinners whom He greatly forgives—those hard-hearted ones whom He so strangely changes and makes to be the Old Guard of His army.

Yes, He gathers them into His Church and He gathers them into His work. The outcasts of Israel He uses for His own Glory. And when He has done that, He gathers them into Heaven. What a surprise it must be for any man to find himself in Heaven when he remembers where he once was! The outcast remembers the ale-bench on which he sat and soaked himself in liquor till he degraded himself below the brute beast. And now to be cleansed in the Redeemer's blood and to sit among the angels—this will be surprising Grace, indeed! "Oh, to think," one might well say, "that I, who was once in lewd company, polluted and defiled, am now made to wear a crown and sit at the Redeemer's feet!"

When we reach Heaven, Brothers and Sisters, I do not suppose that we shall forget all the past. And sometimes it must burst in upon us as a strangely Divine instance of love that Christ should have brought us there and set us among the peers of His realm! And yet He will do it! And you, Mrs. Much-Afraid—you will be there! And you who think, "surely Satan will have me!" you will be there! You who are stumbling over every straw! You who seem stopped by every little gully in the road and who fancy, "Surely, there is no Grace in my heart." And yet you are still holding on, "faint, yet pursuing."

You who touch the hem of Christ's garment, but have so little faith that you are afraid that you have none at all— you shall get up from that mourning and moaning, you shall rise from that despondency and distress—and among the sweetest music of Heaven shall be your songs of gratitude and joy! "He gathers together the outcasts of Israel."

III. Well, now, WHAT IS THE LESSON OF THIS? I think there are three lessons and I will just hint at them. One is this—encouragement to those who are unworthy, or think themselves so, to go to Jesus Christ tonight. I have been trying to think of all I know and I have lifted up my heart to the Holy Spirit to guide me that I may cheer some discouraged one. It was my objective, last Sunday night, to comfort the broken-hearted, and I do not seem to have gotten out of that vein, yet.

I believe there are some here, whom God has sent me to, who really believe themselves to be out of the region of hope. My dear Friends, if God gathers together the outcasts, why should He not gather you? And if it is true that Jesus Christ does not look for goodness, but that He only considers our sin and misery, why should He not look upon you? May I urge you to try my Master? If you go to Him confessing your unworthiness and trusting yourself with Him, if He does not save you, I would like to know about it, because you will be the first person I have ever heard of that trusted himself with Jesus and was rejected! It will not be the case, whatever your condition may be, however desperate your state!

You think your condition to be worse than I have pictured it to be and you fancy that I cannot know anything about how bad you are. Well, I do not know your special form of rebellion, but you are the very person I mean, for all that. I say, if you are as black as Hell. If you are as foul as the Stygian bog. If you have sinned till your sins cannot be counted and if your actions are so heinous that infinite wrath is their just desert—yet come and look to those five wounds and to that sacred head once wounded, and to that

heart pierced with the spear! There is life in a look at Jesus crucified! Will you try it? As surely as God's word is true, if you do but glance your eyes at Him who "died the just for the unjust," you shall be brought to God and reconciled!

And that now—note—while sitting in that seat, before the last word of this sermon shall be uttered, for whoever believes in Him shall be saved! "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." O that you would believe on Jesus now! We sometimes sing—

"Venture on Him: venture wholly. Let no other trust intrude. None but Jesus

Can do helpless sinners good."

But, Sinner, it is not a venture! As surely as you cast yourself upon Him, He will be sure to save you! I will not multiply words, but I would, if I thought words would draw you. I pray the blessed and eternal Spirit to sweetly influence your minds, young people, tonight—and old people, too, and middle-aged people, too—that you may have done with trying to do anything, or to be anything in order to your own salvation, and know that it was all done when Jesus bled and died, all finished when He cried, "It is finished!" You have only to take believingly what He presents to you and accept Him as your All in All. God help you to do it!

The second reflection is this. If Jesus Christ received some of us when we felt ourselves to be outcasts, how we ought to love Him! It does us good to look back to the hole of the pit from where we were dug. We get to be very top-lofty at times, my Brothers and Sisters. We are wonderfully big, are we not? Are we not experienced Christians, now? Why, we have known the Lord these 25 years! Dear me, how important we are! And perhaps we are deacons of Churches, or, at any rate, we have a class in the Sunday school and we pray in the Prayer Meetings—considerable importance attaches to us and we are high and mighty on that account.

Ah, I have heard say of a man worth his thousands that once he had not a shirt on his back—and if he remembered what he sprang from he would not carry his head so high! I do not see much in that, but I do see something in this—that if we remembered the time when we were dead in trespasses and sins. When we had not a rag to cover us. When we were under God's frown and were heirs of wrath even as others—if we remembered our lost and ruined state by nature—I am sure that we should not lift our heads so very loftily and want to have respect paid to us in the Church, or think that God ought not to deal so very harshly with us, as if we had cause for complaint!

Dear Friends, let us remember what we used to be, and that will keep us low in our own esteem. But, oh, how it will fire us with zeal to remember from what a depth He has lifted us up! Did Jesus save such a wretch as I was? Then for Him would I live and for Him would I die! This ought to be the utterance of us all. We ought to live in that spirit. God grant we may! Then, again, let us always feel that if the Lord Jesus Christ took us up when we were not worth having, we will never be ashamed to try and pick up others who are in the same condition. We will not count it any lowering of our dignity to go after the most fallen of all. We will reckon that they are no worse than we were, if we were viewed from a certain point, and we will, therefore, aim at their conversion, hope for it and expect it!

This lesson is peculiarly applicable to some Christians here present. Dear Brothers and Sisters, if you really feel yourselves to have been outcasts and yet have been received into the Divine family—and are

now on the road to Heaven—I ask you to pay every attention to any whom you meet with who are, now, what you once were! If you meet with any in great despair of soul, say, "Ah, I must be a comforter here, for I have gone through this. I will never let this poor soul go till, by God's help, I have cheered him." If you meet with one who is an open sinner, perhaps you will have to say to yourself, "I was an open sinner, too." But if not, say, "My sins were more secret, but still they were as bad as his and, therefore, I have hope of this poor soul and will try whether he cannot be loved to Christ by me."

Mark my expression—"loved to Christ," for that is the power we must use—sinners are to be loved to Christ! The Holy Spirit uses the love of saints to bring poor sinners to know the love of Christ! Search after them and do not let them perish. May God put this resolve into your soul—"If there is anything that I can do, in the name of Jesus, and with the power of the Holy Spirit upon me, that might save that soul, it shall be done and, if that soul dies lost, when I hear the passing bell I will, God helping me, be able to say, 'I did set Christ before that soul. I did plead with that conscience. I did seek to bring that sinner to Jesus.'"

The outcast, when converted, should seek after his brother outcasts. Young man, did you ever swear? Seek the conversion of swearers! Young man, have you been fond of the card table? Have you been a frequenter of low resorts of pleasure? Then addict yourself to looking after persons of the same sort! George Whitefield says that after his own conversion his first concern was the conversion of those with whom he had taken pleasure in sin. And he had the privilege of seeing many of them brought to Christ! Have you been a man of business and have you been associated in wrongdoing with others? Seek the salvation of those who were associated with you! It is a natural obligation which Christ imposes upon all of any special sort, that they should seek those of their own sort, and labor to bring them to repentance.

May God bless you, Beloved. We shall soon be in Heaven. I can see some here tonight who, owing to their age, cannot be long before they enter the Glory of Christ. I see others of us who are younger, who do not know, from feebleness of health, how long it may be before we see the face of the Beloved. But we would say of Him tonight, what a blessed Savior He is and what an infinity of love there must be in Him to have ever revealed Himself to such as we are!

Oh, when shall we be near Him and worship Him forever and ever? Make no tarrying, O our Beloved!

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm 147. HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—587; 147 (SONG II.); 784.

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