

UNIMPEACHABLE JUSTICE

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A SERMON

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AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK

*“Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight:
that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.”
Psalm 51:4*

YESTERDAY was to me a day of deep solemnity. A pressure rested on my mind throughout the whole of it, which I could not by any possibility remove, for at every hour I remembered that during that day one of the most fallen of my fellow creatures was launched into an unknown world and made to stand before his Maker.

Some might have witnessed his execution without tears. I think I could not even have thought of it for long together without weeping at the terrible idea of a man so guilty, about to commence that endless period of unmingled misery, which is the horrible doom of the impenitent, which God has prepared for sinners.

Yesterday morning the sun saw a sight which sickened it—the sight of a man launched, by a judicial process, into eternity, for guilt which has rendered him infamous and which will stamp his name with disgrace as long as it shall be remembered.

There is now agitating the public mind something which I thought I might improve this day and turn to a very excellent purpose. There are only two things concerning which the public have any suspicion. The verdict of the jury was the verdict of the whole of England—we were unanimous as to the high probability, the well-nigh absolute certainty of his guilt. But there were two doubts in our minds—one of them but small, we grant you, but if both could have been resolved, we should have felt more easy than we do now. The one was concerning the criminal’s guilt and the other was concerning his punishment.

At least some few of our fellow countrymen have been afraid, lest we may not have been justified when we spoke against him, and quite clear when he was judged. Two things were wanted—we should have liked to have had his own confession, and certainly we should have preferred something more than circumstantial evidence. We desired to have had the testimony of an eyewitness, who could swear to the deed of murder done.

But moreover, there is also a strong feeling in the mind of many that the severity of the punishment is questionable. There are some who pronounce authoritatively that the murderer’s blood must be shed for murder. But there are some who think the Christian dispensation has ameliorated the law and that now it is no longer, “eye for eye, tooth for tooth.”

Many persons in England have shuddered at the thought of executing a penalty so fearful on any man, however great his crime, seeing that it puts him beyond the pale of hope. I shall not enter into the question of the rightness of capital punishment. I have my opinion upon it, but this is not exactly the place to state it—I only wish to use these facts as an illustration of the text.

David says, “O Lord, hear my own confession, ‘against thee, thee only, have I sinned,’ and by my own confession You would ‘be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest.’ And Lord, there is something else besides my own confession. You, Yourself, were eyewitness of my deed. ‘Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.’ And now you are, indeed, ‘justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest.’ And as to the severity of my punishment, there can be no doubt of that.”

There may be doubt of the severity when man executes punishment for a crime against man, but there can be no doubt when God Himself executes vengeance for a crime that is committed against Himself. “Thou art justified when thou speakest; thou art clear when thou judgest.”

Our subject this morning, then, will be, that both in the condemnation and in the punishment of every sinner, God will be justified, and He will be made most openly clear, from the two facts of the sinner’s own confession and God Himself having been an eyewitness of the deed. And as for the severity of it, there shall be no doubt upon the mind of any man who shall receive it, for God shall prove to him in his own soul, that damnation is nothing more nor less than the legitimate reward of sin.

There are two kinds of condemnation, *the one is the condemnation of the elect*, which takes place in their hearts and consciences, when they have the sentence of death in themselves, that they should not trust in themselves—a condemnation which is invariably followed by peace with God, because after that there is no further condemnation, for they are then in Christ Jesus and they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

The second condemnation is that of the *finally impenitent*, who, when they die, are most righteously and justly condemned by God for the sins they have committed—a condemnation not followed by pardon, as in the present case, but followed by inevitable damnation from the presence of God. On both these condemnations we will discourse this morning.

God is clear when He speaks and He is just when He condemns, whether it be the condemnation which He passes on Christian hearts, or the condemnation which He pronounces from His throne, when the wicked are dragged before Him to receive their final doom.

I. In the first place, CONCERNING THE CHRISTIAN, when he feels himself condemned by conscience and by God’s Holy Spirit, and when he hears the thunders of God’s law proclaiming against him a sentence which, if it had not been already executed on his Savior, would have been fulfilled on him, the man has no grounds whatever at that time to plead any excuse, but he will say, in the words of the Psalmist, “Thou art justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest.” Let me show you how.

1. In the first place, *there is a confession*. With regard to the man who was executed yesterday, there was no confession. We could not have expected it—such crimes could not have been committed by a man capable of confessing them. The fact that he died hardened in his guilt is proof well-nigh conclusive that he was guilty, for had he betrayed any emotion, or had he bowed his knees and cried for mercy, we might then have suspected that he had not been guilty of so dark a deed of blood.

But from the very fact that he hardened his heart, we infer that he was capable of committing crimes, the infamy of which point them out as the offspring of a seared and torpid conscience. The Christian, when he is condemned by the holy law, makes a confession, a full and free confession. He feels, when God records the sentence against him, that the execution of it would be just, for his now honest heart compels him to confess the whole story of his guilt. Allow me to make some remarks on the confession which is followed by pardon.

First, such a confession is *a sincere one*. It is not the prattling confession used by the mere formalist, when he bends his knees and exclaims that he is a sinner. But it is a confession which is undoubtedly sincere, because it is attended by awful agonies of mind and usually by tears, and sighs, and groans. There is something about the penitent’s demeanor which puts it beyond the possibility of a fear that he is a deceiver when he is confessing his sin.

There is an outward emotion, manifesting the inward anguish of the spirit. He stands before God and does not merely turn king’s evidence against himself, as the means of saving himself, but with tears in his eyes he cries, “O God, I am guilty,” and then he begins to recount the circumstances of his crime, even as if God had never seen him. He tells God what God already knows, and then the Gracious One proves the truth of the promise, “He who confesses his sin shall find mercy.”

In the next place, that confession is *always abundantly sufficient* for our own condemnation. The Christian feels that if he had only half the sin to confess that he is obliged to tell God, it would be

enough to damn his soul forever—that if he had only one crime to acknowledge, it would be like a millstone round his neck to sink him forever in the bottomless pit. He feels that his confession is superabundantly enough to condemn him—that it is almost a work of supererogation to confess all, for there is enough in one tenth of it to send his soul to hell and make it abide there forever.

Have you ever confessed your sins like this? If not, as God lives, you have never known what it is to make a true confession of your sin. You have never had the sentence of condemnation passed on you in that way which is succeeded by mercy. But you are yet awaiting that terrible sentence which shall be succeeded by no words of love, but by the execution of the sentence of infinite indignation and displeasure.

This confession is attended with *no apology on account of sin*. We have heard of men who have confessed their guilt, and afterwards tried to extenuate their crime, and show some reasons why they were not so guilty as apparently they would seem to be. But when the Christian confesses his guilt, you never hear a word of extenuation or apology from him. He says, “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.” And in saying this, he makes God just when He condemns him, and clear when He sentences him forever.

Have you ever made such a confession? Have you ever thus bowed yourselves before God? Or have you tried to palliate your guilt, and call your sins by little names and speak of your crimes as if they were but light offenses? If you have not, then you have not felt the sentence of death in yourselves, and you are still waiting till the solemn death-knell shall toll the hour of your doom, and you shall be dragged out, amidst the universal hiss of the execration of the world, to be condemned forever to flames which shall never know abatement.

Again, after the Christian confesses his sin, *he offers no promise that he will of himself behave better*. Some, when they make confessions to God, say, “Lord, if you forgive me I will not sin again.” But God’s penitents never say that. When they come before Him they say, “Lord, once I promised, once I made resolves, but I dare not make them now, for they would be so soon broken, that they would but increase my guilt and my promises would be so soon violated, that they would but sink my soul deeper in hell. I can only say if You will create in me a clean heart, I will be thankful for it and will sing to Your praise forever. But I cannot promise that I will live without sin, or work out a righteousness of my own. I dare not promise, my Father, that I will never go astray again—

*‘Unless Thou hold me fast,
I feel I must, I shall decline,
And prove like they at last.’*

“Lord, if You do damn me, I cannot murmur. If You cast me into perdition, I cannot complain, but have mercy upon me, a sinner, for Jesus Christ’s sake.” In that case, you see, God is justified when He condemns and He is clear when He judges, even clearer than any earthly judge can be, because it is seldom that such a confession as that is ever made before the bar.

2. Again—when the Christian is condemned by the law in his conscience, there is something else which makes God just in condemning him beside his confession, and that is the fact that *God Himself*, the Judge, comes forward as a *witness* to the crime. The convinced sinner feels in his own soul that his sins were committed in the face of God, in the teeth of His mercy, and that God was an exact and minute observer of every part and particle of the crime for which he is now to be condemned, and the sin which has brought him to the bar. “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in *thy sight*: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.”

The convinced sinner who has just become a Christian feels at that time that God was a witness and that He was a most *veracious* witness—that He saw, and saw most clearly, and when God, by His law, says to him, “Sinner, you did such and such a thing and such and such a thing,” the awakened conscience says, “Lord, that is true. It is true in every circumstance.”

And when God goes on to say, “Your motives were vile, your objects were sinful,” conscience says, “Ay, Lord, that is true. I know that You did see it and that You are a sure observer. You are no false witness, but all that You say in Your law about me is true.” When God says, “The poison of asps is under thy lips, thy throat is an open sepulcher, thou dost flatter with thy tongue,” conscience says, “It is all true.”

And when He says, “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked,” conscience says, “It is all true.” And the sinner has this awful thought, that every sin he ever sinned is written in heaven and God records it there. He feels, therefore, that God is just when He condemns and clear when He judges.

And, moreover, God is not simply a veracious witness, but the testimony God gives is *an abundant one*. You know that in some cases which are brought before our courts, the witness swears that he saw the man do so and so, but then he may be mistaken as to the identity of the person. Perhaps he did not see the whole transaction and then he has not pried into the man’s heart to see what were the man’s reasons, which may make the crime lighter or greater, as the case may be.

But here we have a witness who can say, “I saw all the crime. I saw the lust when it was conceived. I saw the sin when it was brought forth. I saw the sin when it was finished, bringing forth death. I saw the motive. I beheld the first imagination. I saw the sin when, as a black rivulet, it started on its way, when it suddenly began to increase by contributions of evil, and I saw it when it became at last a broad ocean of unfathomable depth—an ocean of guilt which human feet could not pass, and over which the ship of mercy could not have sailed, unless some mighty pilot had steered it by shedding His own blood.”

Then the Christian feels that God, having seen it all, is justified when He speaks and clear when He condemns.

I would feel a solemn responsibility, if I were a judge, in putting on the black cap to condemn a man to death, because, however carefully I may have weighed the evidence and however clear the guilt of the prisoner may have seemed, there is a possibility of a mistake, and it seems a solemn thing to have consigned a fellow creature’s soul to a future world, even with a possibility of an error in that judgment.

But if I had myself beheld the bloody act, with what ease of mind might I then put on the black cap and condemn the man as being guilty, for I should know, and the world would know, that having been a witness, I should be just when I spake and clear when I condemned. Now, that is just what the Christian feels when God condemns him in his conscience, he puts his hand upon his mouth and yields without a word to the justness of the sentence. Conscience tells him he was guilty, because God Himself was a witness.

3. The other question which I hinted at as being on the public mind, is *the severity of the punishment*. In the case of a believer, when he is condemned, there is no doubt about the justice of the punishment. When God the Holy Ghost in the soul passes sentence on the old man and condemns it for its sins, there is felt most solemnly in the heart the great truth that hell itself is but a rightful punishment for sin.

I have heard some men dispute whether the torments of hell were not too great for the sins which men can commit. We have heard men say that hell was not a right place to send such sinners to as they were. But we have always found that such men found fault with hell because they knew right well they were going there.

As every man finds fault with the gallows who is going to be hung, so do many men find fault with hell, because they fear that they are in danger of it. The opinion of a man about to be executed must not be taken with regard to the propriety of capital punishment, nor must we take the opinion of a man who is himself marching to hell concerning the justice of hell, for he is not an impartial judge.

But the convinced sinner is a fair witness. God has made him so, for he feels in his soul that there will be pardon given to him, and that God, by grace, will never condemn him there, but at the same time, he feels that he deserves it and he confesses that hell is not too great a punishment, and that the eternity of it is not too long a duration of punishment for the sin which he has committed.

I appeal to you, my beloved brethren and sisters. You may have had doubts as to the propriety of your being sent to hell before you knew your sins, but I ask you, when you were convinced of God, whether you did not solemnly feel that He would be unjust if He did not damn your soul forever? Did you not say in your prayer, "Lord, if You should now command the earth to open and swallow me up quick, I could not lift up my finger to murmur against You. And if You were now to roll o'er my head the billows of eternal fire, I could not, in the midst of my howlings in misery, utter one single word of complaint about Your justice?"

And did you not feel that if you were to be ten thousand, thousand years in perdition, you would not have been there long enough? You felt you deserved it all, and if you had been asked what was the right punishment for sin, you dare not, even if your own soul had been at stake, written anything except that sentence "everlasting fire."

You would have been obliged to have written that, for you felt it was but deserved doom. Now, was not God just then when He condemned, and clear when He judged? And did He not come off clear from the judgment seat, because you yourself said the sentence would not have been one whit too severe if it had been fulfilled instead of being simply recorded and then you yourself set at liberty?

Ah! my dear friends, there may be some who rail at God's justice, but no convinced sinner ever will. He sees God's law in all its glorious holiness, and he smites his hand upon his breast, and he says, "O sinner that I am! that I ever could have sinned against such a reasonable law and such perfect commandments!"

He sees God's love towards him and that cuts him to the very quick. He says, "Oh! that I should ever have spit on the face of Christ who died for me! Wretch that I am, that I could ever have crowned that bleeding head with the thorns of my sins, which gave itself to slumber in the grave for my redemption!" Nothing cuts the sinner to the quick more than the fact that he has sinned against a great amount of mercy. This, indeed, makes him weep and he says, "O Lord, seeing as I have been so ungrateful, the direst doom You can ever sentence me to, or the fiercest punishment You can ever execute upon my head, would not be too heavy for the sins I have committed against You."

And then the Christian feels, too, what a deal of mischief he has done in the world by sin. Ah! if he has been spared to middle age before he is converted, he looks back and says, "Ah! I cannot tell how many have been damned by my sins. I cannot tell how many have been sent down to perdition by words which I have used or deeds which I have committed."

I confess before you all, that one of the greatest sorrows I had, when first I knew the Lord, was to think about certain persons with whom I knew right well that I had held ungodly conversations and sundry others that I had tempted to sin. And one of the prayers that I always offered, when I prayed for myself, was that such a one might not be damned through sins to which I had tempted him.

And I dare say this will be the case with some of you when you look back. Your dear child has been a sad reprobate, and you think, "Did not I teach him very much that was wrong?" And you hear your neighbors swear and you think, "I cannot tell how many I taught to blaspheme."

Then you will recollect your companions, those you used to play cards or dance with, and you will think, "Ah! poor souls, I have damned them." And then you will say, "Lord, You are just if You damn me." When you reflect what a deal of mischief you have done by your sin, you will then say, "Lord, thou art clear when thou judgest; thou art justified when thou condemnest." I warn you who are going on in your sins, that one of the most fearful things you have to expect is to meet those in another world who perished through being led astray by you.

Think of it, O man! You who have been a universal tempter! There is a man now in perdition who was taught to drink his first glass through you. There lies a soul on his deathbed and he says, "Ah! John, I had not been here, as I now am, if you had not led me into evil courses which have weakened my body and brought me to death's door."

Oh! what a horrible fate will yours be, when, as you walk into the mouth of hell, you will see eyes staring at you and hear a voice saying, "Here he comes! Here comes the man that helped to damn my

soul!” And what must be your fate when you must lie forever tossed on the bed of pain with that man whom you were the means of damning?

As those who are saved will make jewels in the crowns of glory to the righteous, sure those whom you helped to damn will forge fresh fetters for you and furnish fearful faggots to increase the flames of torment which shall blaze around your spirit! Mark that and be you warned. The Christian feels this terrible fact, when he is convinced of sin, and that makes him feel that God would be clear if He judged him and would be justified if He condemned him. So much concerning this first condemnation.

II. But now a little concerning THE SECOND CONDEMNATION, which is the more fearful of the two.

Some of you have never been condemned by God’s law in your conscience. Now, as I stated at first that every man must be condemned once, so I beg to repeat it. You must either have the sentence of condemnation passed on you by law in your conscience and then find mercy in Christ Jesus, or else you must be condemned in another world, when you shall stand with all the human race before God’s throne.

The first condemnation to the Christian, though exceedingly merciful, is terrible to bear. It is a wounded spirit which none can endure. But, as for the second condemnation, if I could preach with sighs and tears, I could not tell you how horrible that must be. Ah, my friends, could some sheeted ghost start from its tomb and be reunited to the spirit which has been for years in perdition, possibly such a man might preach to you and let you know what a fearful thing it will be to be condemned at last.

But as for my poor words, they are but air, for I have not heard the *miserere* of the condemned, nor have I listened to the sighs, and groans, and moans of lost spirits. If I had ever been permitted to gaze within the sheet of fire which walls the Gulf of Despair—if I had ever been allowed to walk for one moment o’er that burning marl whereon is built the dreadful dungeon of eternal vengeance, then I might tell you somewhat of its misery.

But I cannot now, for I have not seen those doleful sights which might fright our eyes from their sockets and make each individual hair stand upon your heads. I have not seen such things, yet though I have not seen them, nor you either, we know sufficient of them to understand that God will be just when He condemns and that He will be clear when He judges. And now, I must go over the three points again, but I must be very brief about them.

1. God will be clear when He condemns a sinner from this fact, that the sinner, when he stands before God’s bar, will either have made a *confession*, or else such will be his terror that he will scarce be able to brazen it out before the Almighty. Look at Judas. When he comes before God’s bar, will not God be clear in condemning him? For he himself confessed, “I have sinned against innocent blood,” and he cast down the money in the temple. And few men are so hardened as to restrain themselves from acknowledging their guilt.

How many of you, when you thought you were dying, made a confession upon your deathbeds to your God! And mark you, there will be many of you, who, when you come to die, though you have never confessed, yet will lie there and confess before God in your moments of wakefulness during the night, the sins of your youth and your former transgressions. And it may be that when you are laying there, God’s vengeance will be heavy on your conscience, that you will be obliged to tell those who stand about your bed that you have been guilty of notorious sins.

Ah! will not God be just when you shall go straight from your deathbed to His bar and He shall say, “Sinner, you are condemned on your own confession. There is no need for Me to open the book, no need for Me to pronounce the sentence. You have yourself pronounced your own guilt. Ere you died, you did stamp yourself with condemnation—‘Depart ye cursed!’”

And though there will be many die who never made a confession in this world, and perhaps there will be some professors so brazen-faced that they will even stand before God’s throne and say, “When saw we You hungry and fed You not? When saw we You naked and clothed You not?” Yet I cannot believe that most of them will be able to plead any excuse.

I find Christ saying of one that he stood speechless when he was asked how he got in, not having on a wedding garment. And so it may be with you, sirs. You may brazen it out when here, you may scorn the law and despise the thunders of Sinai, but it will be different with you then. You may sit up in your bed and rail against Christ, even when death is staring you in the face, but you will not do it then.

Those bones of yours which you thought were of iron, will suddenly be melted. That heart of yours, which was like steel or the nether millstone, will be dissolved like wax in the midst of your bowels. You will begin to cry before God, and weep, and howl. You will testify to your own guilt when you say, “Rocks! hide me! Mountains! on me fall.” For you would need no mountains and no rocks to fall upon you if you were not guilty. You will be justly condemned, for you will make your own confession when you stand before God’s bar.

Ah! if you could see the criminal then, what a difference there is in him! Where now are those eyes that stared so impiously at the Bible? Where now are those lips which said, “I curse God and die!” Where now is that heart which was once so stout, that spirit once so valiant, as to laugh at hell and talk familiarly with death? Ah! where is it?

Is that the selfsame creature—he whose knees are knocking together, whose hair is standing up on end, whose blanched cheek displays the terror of his soul? Is that the selfsame man who just now was burning with impudent rage against his Maker? Yes, it is he. Hear what he has to say, “O God, I hate You. I confess it. I was unjust in the world that has gone by and I am unjust now. Wreak your vengeance on me. I dare ask no mercy and no pardon, for fixed is my heart still to rebel against You. Indissoluble are the bonds of my guilt—I am dammed, I am damned, and I ought to be.”

Such will be the confession of every man when he shall stand before his God at last, if he is out of Christ and unwashed in the Savior’s blood. Sinners! Can you hear that and not tremble? Then I have a wonder before me this day—a wonder of conscience, a wonder of hardness of heart, a wonder of impenitency.

2. But in the second place, God will be just, because *there will be witnesses* there to prove it. There will be none of you, my dear friends, if you are ever condemned, who will be condemned on circumstantial evidence—there will be no necessity for the deliberation of a jury. There will be no conflicting evidence concerning your crimes. There will be no doubts to testify in your favor.

In fact, if God Himself should ask for witnesses in your case, all the witnesses would be against you. But there will be no need of witnesses. God Himself will open His Book and how astonished will you be when all your crimes are announced—with every individual circumstance connected with them—all the minuteness of your motives and an exact description of your designs!

Suppose I would be allowed to open one of the books of God and read that description, how astonished you would be! But what will be your astonishment when God shall open His great book and say, “Sinner, here is your case,” and begin to read! Ah! mark how the tears run down the sinner’s cheeks. The sweat of blood comes from every pore, and the loud thundering voice still reads on, while the righteous execrate the man who could commit such acts as are recorded in that book.

There may be no murder staining the page, but there may be the filthy imagination, and God reads what a man imagines, for to imagine sin is vile, though to do it is viler still. I know I would not like to have my thoughts read over for a single day. Oh! when you stand before God’s bar and hear all this, will you not say, “Lord, You will condemn me, but I cannot help saying You are just when You condemn and clear when thou judgest.” There will be eyewitnesses there.

3. But lastly, in the sinner’s heart there will be no doubt at last as to the *righteousness of his punishment*. The sinner may in this world think that he can never by his sins by any possibility deserve hell, but he will not indulge that thought when he gets there. One of the miseries of hell will be that the sinner will feel that he deserves it all.

Tossed on a wave of fire, he will see written in every spark that emanates therefrom, “You knew your duty and you did it not.” Tossed back again by another wave of flame, he hears a voice saying,

“Remember, you were warned!” He is hurled upon a rock and while he is being wrecked there, a voice says, “I told you it would be better for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.”

Again he plunges under another wave of brimstone and a voice says, “He that believeth not shall be damned—you did not believe—and you are here.” And when again he is hurled up and down on some wave of torture, each wave shall bear to him some dreadful sentence, which he read in God’s Word, in a tract, or in a sermon.

Yes, it may be, my friends, that I shall be one of your tormentors in hell, if you should be damned. I trust in God that I myself shall be in heaven. And perhaps, if you are lost, one of the most powerful things that shall tend to increase your misery will be the fact that I have always tried to warn you, and warn you as earnestly as possible, and when you lift up your eyes to heaven, you will shriek and say, “O God! There is my minister looking down reprovably on me and saying, ‘Sinner, I warned you.’”

If you are lost, it is not for lack of preaching. If you are damned, it is not because I did not tell you how you might be saved. If you are in hell, it is not because I did not weep over you and urge you to flee from the wrath to come, for I did warn you, and that will be the terror of your doom—that you have despised warnings, and invitations, and have destroyed yourself!

God is not accountable for your damnation and man is not accountable for it, but you yourself have done it. And you will say, “O Lord, it is true I am now tossed in fire, but I myself lit the flame. It is true that I am tormented, but I forged the irons which now confine my limbs. I burned the brick that has built my dungeon. I myself did bring myself here. I walked to hell, even as a fool goes to the stocks, or an ox to the slaughter. I sharpened the knife which is now cutting my vitals. I nursed the viper which is now devouring my heart. I sinned, which is the same as saying that I damned myself, for to sin is to damn myself—the two words are synonymous.”

Sin is damnation’s sire. It is the root and damnation is the horrible flower which must inevitably spring from it! Ay, my dear friends, I tell you yet again, there will be nothing more patent before the throne of God than the fact that God will be just when He sends you to hell. You will feel that then, even though you do not feel it now.

I thought within myself just this minute, that I heard the whisper of someone saying, “Well, sir, I feel that such men as Palmer, a murderer, will feel that God is just in damning them, but I have not sinned as they have done.” It is true, but if your sins be less, remember that your conscience is more tender, for according to the amount of guilt, men’s consciences generally begin to get harder. And because your conscience is more tender, your little sin is a great sin, because it is committed against greater light and greater tenderness of heart.

And I tell you—that a little sin against great light may be greater than a great sin against little light. You must measure your sins not by their apparent heinousness, but by the light against which you sinned. No crime could be much worse than the crime of Sodom. But even Sodom, filthy Sodom, shall not have so hot a place as a moral young lady, who has fed the poor and clothed the naked, and done all she could, except loving Christ. What do you say to that? Is it unjust? No. If I be a less sinner than another, I all the more deserve to be damned, if I do not come to Christ for mercy.

Oh! my dear hearers, my beloved hearers, I cannot bring you to Christ. Christ has brought some of you Himself, but I cannot bring you to Christ. How often have I tried to do it! I have tried to preach my Savior’s love and this day I have preached my Father’s wrath, but I feel I cannot bring you to Christ. I may preach God’s law, but that will not affright you, unless God sends it home to your heart.

I may preach my Savior’s love, but that will not woo you, unless my Father draws you. I am sometimes tempted to wish that I could draw you myself—that I could save you. Sure, if I could, you should soon be saved! But ah! remember, your minister can do but little, he can do nothing else but preach to you.

Do pray that God would bless that little, I beseech you, you who can pray. If I could do more, I would do it. But it is very little I can do for a sinner’s salvation. Do, I beseech you, my dear people, pray to God to bless the feeble means that I use. It is His work and His salvation, but He *can* do it.

O poor trembling sinner, do you now weep? Then come to Christ! O poor haggard sinner, haggard in your soul! Come to Christ! O poor sin-bitten sinner! Look to Christ! O poor worthless sinner! Come to Christ! O poor trembling, fearing, hungering, thirsting sinner! Come to Christ! “Ho! Every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come, buy wine and milk; yea, come buy wine and milk, without money and without price.”

Come! Come! Come! God help you to come! For Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.