

THE SINNER'S FRIEND

NO. 556

BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“A friend of publicans and sinners.”
Matthew 11:19.

MANY a true word is spoken in jest, and many a tribute to virtue has been unwittingly paid by the sinister lips of malice. The enemies of our Lord Jesus Christ thought to brand Him with infamy, hold Him up to derision, and hand His name down to everlasting scorn as “a friend of publicans and sinners.” Short-sighted mortals! Their scandal published His reputation! To this day the Savior is adored by the title which was minted as a slur. It was designed to be a stigma that every good man would shudder at and shrink from; it has proved to be a fascination which wins the heart and enchants the soul of all the godly. Saints in Heaven and saints on earth delight to sing of Him thus—

*“Savior of sinners they proclaim,
Sinners of whom the chief I am.”*

What the invidious Jews said in bitter spleen, has been turned by the Holy Spirit to the most gracious account! Where they poured out vials of hate, odors of sacred incense arise. Troubled consciences have found a sweet balm in the very sound. Jesus, “the friend of publicans and sinners,” has proved Himself friendly to them, and they have become friends with Him; He has completely justified the very name which His enemies gave Him in ribald affront!

We shall take this title of Jesus tonight as an order of distinction which sets forth His excellency, and, as God helps us, we shall try to exalt His name and proclaim His fame, while we attempt to *explain how He was the Friend of sinners; and how He shows that He is still the same.*

I. OUR LORD PROVED HIMSELF IN HIS OWN TIME TO BE THE FRIEND OF SINNERS.

What better proof could He give of it than coming from the majesty of His Father's house to the meanness of Bethlehem's manger? What better proof could He give than leaving the society of cherubim and seraphim to lie in the manger where the horned oxen fed, and to become the associate of fallen men? The Incarnation of the Savior in the very form of sinners, taking upon Himself the flesh of sinners, being born of a sinner, having a sinner for His reputed father—His very Being a Man which is tantamount to being in the same form with sinners—surely this were enough to prove that He is the sinner's Friend!

When you take up the roll of His earthly lineage and begin to read it through, you will be struck with the fact that there are but few women mentioned in it; and yet three out of those mentioned were harlots, so that even in His lineage there was the taint of sin, and a sinner's blood would have run in His veins if He had been the true son of Joseph. But inasmuch as He was begotten by the Holy Spirit, who overshadowed the Virgin, in Him was no sin; yet His reputed pedigree ran through the veins of sinners. Tamar, and Rahab, and Bathsheba, are three names which bring to remembrance deeds of shame, and yet these stand in the records as the ancestors of the Son of Mary, the sinner's Friend!

As soon as Jesus Christ, being born in the likeness of sinful flesh, has come to years of maturity, and has commenced His real life-work, He at once discloses His friendship for sinners by associating with them. You do not find Him standing at a distance, issuing His mandates and His orders to sinners to make themselves better, but you find Him coming among them like a good workman who stands over his work! He takes His place where the sin and the iniquity are, and He personally comes to deal with it. He does not write out a prescription and send by another hand His medicines with which to heal the sickness of sin, but He comes right into the leper-house, touches the wounded, looks at the sick; and there is healing in the touch; there is life in the look! The Great Physician took upon Himself our sicknesses, and bore our infirmities, and so proved Himself to be really the sinner's Friend. Some people appear to like to have a philanthropic love towards the fallen, but yet they would not touch them with a pair of tongs! They would lift them up if they could, but it must be by some machinery—some sort of contrivance by which they would not degrade themselves or contaminate their own hands. Not so the Savior! Up to the very elbows He seems to thrust those gracious arms of His into the

mire to pull up the lost one out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay. He takes, Himself, the mattock and the spade, and goes to work in the great quarry that He may get out the rough stones which afterwards He will Himself polish with His own bitter tears and bloody sweat, that He may make them fit to shine forever in the glorious Temple of the Lord His God! He comes Himself into direct, personal contact with sin, without being contaminated with it; He comes as close to it as a man can come; He eats and drinks with sinners; He sits at the Pharisee's table one day, and does not rise because there is a crowd of people no better than they should be coming near Him. Another day He goes to the publican's house, and the publican had, no doubt, been a great extortioner in his time; but Jesus sits there, and that day does salvation come to that publican's house! Beloved, this is a sweet trait about Christ, and proves how real and how true was His love, that He made His associations with sinners, and did not shun even the chief of them!

No, He not only came among them, but He was always seeking their good by His ministry. If there were anywhere a sinner, a lost sheep of the house of Israel, Christ was after that sinner. Never such an indefatigable shepherd—He sought that which was lost till He found it. One of His earliest works of mercy we will tell you of in brief. He was once on a journey, and Samaria was a little out of His way; but there lived in a city of that country a woman—ah, the less said of her the better! She had had five husbands, and he whom she then had was not her husband, nor were any of the others, either. She was a disgrace to that city of Samaria. But Jesus, who has a keen eye for sinners, and a heart which beats high for them, means to save that woman, and He must and He will have her! Being weary, He sits down on a well to rest. A special Providence brings the woman to the well. The conventionalities of society forbid Him to talk with her. But He breaks through the narrow bigotry of caste. She is a Samaritan by birth—He cares not for that; but will that most holy Being condescend to have familiar conversation with her—a dishonor to her sex? He will. His disciples may marvel when they come back, and find Him talking with her, but He will do it. He begins to open up the Word of Life to her understanding, and that woman becomes the first Christian missionary we ever hear of—for she ran back to the city, leaving her water pot and crying, “Come, see a Man who told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?” And they came and believed; and there was great joy in that city of Samaria!

You know, too, that there was another sinner. He was a bad fellow—I fear him. He had been constantly grinding the faces of the poor, and getting more out of them by way of taxation than he should have done; but the little man had the bump of curiosity, and he must see the Preacher, and the Preacher must love him—for I say there was a wonderful attraction in Jesus to a sinner! That sinner's heart was like a piece of iron—Christ's heart was like a loadstone; and wherever there was a sinner, the loadstone began to feel it, and soon the sinner began to feel the loadstone, too! “Zaccheus,” said Christ, “make haste and come down, for today I must abide at your house.” And down comes the sinner, and salvation has come to his house at that hour! Oh, Christ never seemed to preach so sweetly as when He was preaching a sinner's sermon! I would have loved to have seen that dear face of His when He cried, “Come unto Me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;” or better still, to have seen His eyes running with whole showers of tears when He said, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered your children together, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not come;” or to have heard Him preach those three great sermons upon sinners when He described the woman as sweeping the house and taking away the dust, that she might find the lost piece of her money; and the shepherd going from hill to hill after the wandering sheep; and the father running to welcome that rag-clad prodigal, kissing him with the kisses of love, clothing him with the best robe, and inviting him into the feast while they did dance and make merry because the lost was found, and he who was dead was alive again!

Why, beyond a doubt Jesus was the mightiest of preachers for sinners! Oh, how He loved them! Never mind the Pharisees—He has thunderbolts for them. “Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees!” But when publicans and harlots come, He always has the gate of mercy ajar for them. For them He always has some tender word, some loving saying, such as this—“Him who comes unto Me, I will in no wise cast out.” “All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men;” or such like words of tender wooing. The very chief of sinners was thus drawn into the circle of His disciples!

And you know, dear Friends, He did not prove His love merely by preaching to them, and living with them, and by His patience in enduring their contradiction against Himself, and all their evil words and deeds, but He proved it by His prayers, too. He used His mighty influence with the Father on their behalf. He took their polluted names on His holy lips; He was not ashamed to call them Brethren. Their cause became His own, and in their interests His pulse throbbed. How many times on the cold mountains He kept His heart warm with love to them! How often the sweat rolled down His

face when He was in an agony of spirit for them I cannot tell you, but this much I do know, that on that *same night* when He sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground, He prayed this prayer—after having prayed for His saints, He went on to say—“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on Me through their word.” Here, truly, the heart of the Savior was bubbling up and welling over towards sinners! And you never can forget that almost His last words were, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” Though willfully and wickedly they pierced His hands and His feet, yet were there no angry words, but only that short, loving, hearty prayer—“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” Ah, Friends, if there ever was a man who was a friend to others, Jesus was a Friend to sinners His whole life through.

This, however, is but little. As for the river of the Savior's love to sinners, I have only brought you to its banks. You have but stood on the bank and dipped your feet in the flood; but now prepare to swim. So fond was He of sinners that He made His grave with the wicked. He was numbered with the transgressors. God's fiery sword was drawn to strike a world of sinners down to Hell. It must fall on those sinners. But Christ loves them. His prayers stop the arm of God a little while, but still the sword must fall in due time. What is to be done? By what means can they be rescued? Swifter than the lightning's flash I see that sword descending. But what is that in the vision I behold? It falls—but where? Not on the neck of sinners; it is *not their neck* which is broken by its cruel edge; it is not their heart which bleeds beneath its awful force. No. The “Friend of sinners” has put Himself into the sinner's place! And then, as if He had been the sinner, though in Him was no sin, He suffers, bleeds and dies—no common suffering—no ordinary bleeding—no death such as mortals know. It was a death in which the second death was comprehended—a bleeding in which the very veins of God were emptied. The God-Man Divinely suffered. I know not how else to express the suffering. It was more than a mortal agony, for the Divine strengthened the Human, and the Man was made vast and mighty to endure through His being God. Being God and Man He endured more than 10,000 millions of men all put together could have suffered! He endured, indeed, the hells of all for whom He died. The torments, or the equivalent of the torments, which all of them ought to have suffered—the eternal Wrath of God condensed and put into a cup, too bitter for mortal tongue to know—and then drained to its utmost dregs by the loving lips of Jesus! Beloved, this was love. “Herein is love, that while we were yet sinners, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” “Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” This Christ has done and He is, therefore, demonstrated to be the Friend of sinners.

But the trial is over; the struggle is passed; the Savior is dead and buried; He rises again, and after He has spent 40 days on earth—in that 40 days still proving His love for sinners—He rose again for their justification; I see Him ascending up on high. Angels attend Him as the clouds receive Him—

*“They bring His chariot from on high,
To bear Him to His Throne,
Clap their triumphant wings and cry,
‘The glorious work is done.’”*

What pomp! What a procession! What splendor! He will forget His poor friends, the sinners now, will He not? Not He! I think I hear the song, “Lift up your heads, O you gates; and be you lifted up, you everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in.” The bars are all unloosed—the pearly gates are all flung wide open; and as He passes through, mark you, the highest joy which swells His soul is that He has opened those gates, not for Himself, for they were never shut on Him—but that He has opened them for sinners! It was for this, indeed, He died; and it is for this that He ascends on high, that He may “open the Kingdom of Heaven for all Believers.” See Him as He rides through Heaven's streets! “You have ascended up on high; You have led captivity captive; You have received gifts of men.” Ah, but hear the refrain, for this is the sweetest note of all the hymn—“Yes, for the rebellious, also—yes, for the rebellious, also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.” The scattered gifts of His coronation—the lavish bounties of His Ascension—are still for SINNERS! He is exalted on high—for what? To give repentance and remission of sins! He still wears upon His breastplate the names of sinners! Upon His hands, and upon His heart does He still bear the remembrance of those sinners; and every day for the sinner's sake He does not hold His peace! And for the sinner's sake He does not rest, but cries unto God until every sinner shall be brought safely home! Every sinner who believes, every sinner who was given to Him, every sinner whom He bought with blood—He will not rest, I say, till all such are gathered to be the jewels of His crown, world without end!

I think we cannot say more; and I think you will say we could not have said less concerning the way in which the Savior proved Himself to be the sinner's Friend. If there are any of you who dare to doubt Him after this, I know not what further to say. If there can be one who has proved himself your friend, surely Jesus did it, and He is willing to receive you now. What He has done He still continues to do. O that you might have Divine Grace to perceive that Jesus is the lover of your soul, that you might find the blessedness which all these tokens of friendship, of which we have been speaking, have brought for believing sinners!

II. While we change the subject a little, we shall still keep to the text and notice **WHAT CHRIST IS DOING NOW FOR SINNERS.**

There is a deep principle involved here—a principle the Pharisee of old could not understand, and the cold heart of humanity is slow to embrace today. I have two explanations to offer of the way in which Jesus personally discovers Himself to be the Friend of sinners, and I will just mention these before I come to the application of the subject I intend. Once upon a time a woman was brought to Jesus by the Scribes and Pharisees—she was an adulteress—she had been taken in the very act. They tell “the sinner's Friend” what sentence Moses would pronounce in such a case, and they ask Him, “What do You say?” This they said tempting Him. They were not much concerned about the unhappy creature; the accusation they were intent to lay was against the Man of Nazareth. You know how He disposed of the case, and put her accusers out of countenance. He did not bring the sinner up before the magistrate; no, He would not act the judge's part and pronounce sentence—rather would He act the neighbor's part—He acquitted Himself as a friend. There is a proverb among a certain class of hard-dealing tradesmen, “We know no friendship in business,” and full well they carry it out while they grind the faces of the poor without pity, and strive to over-reach one another without fairness! And there was in like manner no friendship, no mercy whatever, among those gentlemen of the long robes. Righteousness, to their idea, stood in exacting justice with rigid severity; and as for wickedness, it was only shameful when it was discovered! She who was taken in the act must be stoned. They who had done it secretly must prosecute. The real friendship of Jesus appears in His singling out the object of pity; and where they accused Him of winking at crime, and harboring the criminal, He was truly laying the axe at the root of the tree, and sheltering the victims while He upbraided the arrogant rulers—whose secret vices were the genuine cause of the wretchedness which had fallen upon the dregs of the nation!

I commend this thought to your consideration. When it is said of Him, He is a “friend of publicans and sinners,” it was implied that He was *not* a friend of Scribes and Pharisees. Yet again, I want you to notice that the office which Christ came to fulfill towards sinners was that of pure, unmingled friendship. Let us give you an illustration. There is an awful story abroad—a murder has been committed—and the poor wretch who committed it has cut his own throat. The policeman and the surgeon are quickly on the spot. The one comes there in the interest of law, the other attends in the interest of humanity. Says the officer of police, “Man, you are my prisoner!” Says the doctor, “My dear fellow, you are my patient.” And now he lays a delicate hand upon the wound, he stanches the blood, applies soft liniments, binds it up with plasters and, bending down his ear, listens to the man's breathing. Taking hold of his hand, he feels his pulse—gently raising his head, he administers to him some wine or stimulant, takes him to the hospital, gives the nurse instructions to watch him, and orders that he shall be given a nutritious diet as he is able to bear it. Day after day he still visits him, and uses all his skill and all his diligence to heal the man's wounds. Is that the way to deal with criminals? Certainly it is not the manner in which the police deal! Their business is to find out all the traces and evidences of his guilt. But the medical attendant is not concerned with the man as an evil doer—but as a sufferer.

So is it with the sinner. Moses is the officer of justice who comes to arrest him. Christ is the Good Physician who comes to heal him. He says, “O Israel, you have destroyed yourself but in Me is your help.” Christ deals with the disease, with the wounds, with the sufferings of sinners. He is, therefore, their Friend. Of course the parallel will only go a little way. In the instance of the murderer, the surgeon would hand his patient over to the officers as soon as his wound was healed; but in the conduct of our Savior, He redeems the soul from under the Law, and delivers it from the penalty of sin, as well as restores it from the self-inflicted injuries. But oh, if I could but show you that Christ treats the sinner with pity rather than with indignation; the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them! His visit to our world was mediatorial, not to condemn the world, but to give His life a ransom for many—surely, then, you would see reason enough why the sinner should look to Him as a Friend, indeed!

Ah, then, I would go further. I would entreat you to make the case your own. You are a sinner! Can I not convince you that He is your Friend?

You were sick the other day. The physician looked very grave and whispered something to your wife. She did not tell you what it was, but your own life trembled in the scale, and it is a wonder you are here tonight. Shall I tell you why you are here? Do you see that tree yonder? It has been standing in its place for many years, but it has never yielded any fruit, and several times the master of the garden has said, "Cut it down." The other day the woodman came with his axe. He felt its edge—it was sharp and keen enough—and he began to cut, and the chips were flying as he made a deep gash. But the gardener came by, one who had watched over the tree, and had hope of it even yet, and he said, "Spare it—spare it yet a little longer. The wound you have made may heal; and I will dig about it, and fertilize it, and if it brings forth fruit, good; spare it another year, and if not, then cut it down." That tree is you. The woodman is Death. That chipping at the trunk of the tree was your sickness. Jesus is He who spared you. You had not been here tonight—you had been there in Hell among damned spirits, howling in unutterable woe, if it had not been that the Friend of sinners had spared your life!

And where are you tonight? Perhaps, my Hearers, you are in an unusual place for you. Your Sunday evenings are not often spent in the House of God. There are other places which know you, but your seat there is empty tonight. There has been much persuasion to bring you here, and it may be that you have come against your will; but some friend has asked you to conduct him to the spot, and here you are. Do you know why you are here? It is a friendly Providence, managed by the sinner's Friend which has brought you here, that you may hear the sound of mercy, and have a loving invitation tendered to you. Be grateful to the Savior that He has brought you to the Gospel-pool. May you—O, may you this night be made to step in, and be washed from sin! It is kind of Him, and proves how true a Friend He is of sinners, that He has brought you here. I will leave you now where you are, and I will tell you how He has dealt with other sinners, for perhaps this may lead you to ask Him to deal the same with you.

I know a sinner—while I live I must know him. Full well do I remember him when he was hard of heart, and an enemy to God by a multitude of wicked works. But this Friend of sinners loved him; and passing by one day, He looked right into his soul with such a look that his hard heart began to break. There were deep throes as though a birth of a Divine sort were coming on; there was an agony, and there was an unutterable grief; and that poor soul did not think it kind of Jesus—but, indeed, it was kindness too intense ever fully to estimate—for there is no saving a soul except by making it feel its need of being saved! There must be in the work of Grace an emptying and a pulling down before there can be a filling and a building up! That soul knew no peace for many a year, and the sole of its feet had no rest. But one day—

*"I heard the voice of Jesus say,
Come unto Me and rest.
Lay down, you weary one, lay down
Your head upon My breast.
I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary and worn and sad;
I found in Him a resting place,
And He has made me glad!
I heard the voice of Jesus say,
Behold, I freely give
The living water, thirsty one,
Stoop down and drink and live!
I came to Jesus, and I drank
Of that life-giving stream—
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And now I live in Him!
I heard the voice of Jesus say,
I am this dark world's Light,
Look unto Me, your morn shall rise,
And all your days be bright.*

*I looked to Jesus, and I found
In Him my star, my sun!
And in that Light of Light I'll walk,
By His Grace,
Till traveling days are done."*

Yes, said I, Christ is the Friend of sinners! So say I, and so will I say while this poor lisping, stammering tongue can articulate a sound! And I think God had a design of abundant mercy when He saved my soul. I had not then believed it, though a mother's loving accents might have whispered it in my ears. But He seems to remind me of it over and over again, till love and terror mingle in my breast, saying, "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel." O my blessed Master, You do trust my lips when You bear witness to my heart. You give charge to my tongue when You constrain my soul. "Am I a chosen vessel?" It is to bear His name to sinners. As a full bottle seeks vent, so must my testimony pant for utterance. O Sinner, if you trust Him, He will be such a Friend to you! And if you have now a broken heart, and a contrite spirit, these are His works; and it is a proof of His great love to you if He has made you to hunger and thirst after Him.

Let me impress upon you that Jesus is the Friend of the friendless. She who had spent all her money on physicians without getting relief, obtained a cure, gratis, when she came to Him! He who has "nothing to pay" gets all his debts cancelled by this Friend; and he who was ready to perish with hunger finds not only a passing meal, but a constant supply at His hands!

We know of a place in England still existing, where there is a slice of bread served to every passerby who chooses to ask for it. Whoever he may be, he has but to knock at the door of St. Cross Hospital, and there is a slice of bread for him. Jesus Christ so loves sinners that He has built a St. Cross Hospital so that whenever a sinner is hungry, he has but to knock and have his needs supplied! No, He has done better! He has attached to this hospital of the Cross, a bath; and whenever a soul is black and filthy, it has but to go there and be washed. The fountain is always full, always efficacious. There is no sinner who ever went into it, and found it could not wash away his stains. Sins which were scarlet and crimson have all disappeared, and the sinner has been whiter than snow! As if this were not enough, there is attached to this hospital of the Cross a wardrobe; and a sinner, making application simply as a sinner, with nothing in his hands, but being just empty and naked, may come and be clothed from head to foot! And if he wishes to be a soldier, he may not merely have an undergarment, but he may have armor which shall cover him from the sole of his feet to the crown of his head. No, if he wants a sword, he shall have that given to him and a shield, too! There is nothing that his heart can desire that is good for him which he shall not receive! He shall have spending money so long as he lives, and he shall have an eternal heritage of glorious treasure when he enters into the joy of his Lord!

Beloved, I cannot tell you all that Christ has done for sinners, but this I know—if He meets with you tonight, and becomes your Friend, He will stand by you to the last. He will go home with you tonight. No matter how many pairs of stairs you have to go up, Jesus will go with you; no matter if there is no chair to sit down on, He will not disdain you. You shall be hard at work tomorrow, but as you wipe the sweat from your brow, He shall stand by you. You will, perhaps, be despised for His sake, but He will not forsake you; you will, perhaps, have days of sickness, but He will come and make your bed in your sickness for you. You will, perhaps, be poor, but your bread shall be given you, and your water shall be sure, for He will provide for you. You will vex Him much and grieve His Spirit. You will often doubt Him—you will go after other lovers; you will provoke Him to jealousy, but He will never cease to love you. You will, perhaps, grow cold to Him, and even forget His dear name for a time, but He will never forget you. You may, perhaps, dishonor His Cross, and damage His fair fame among the sons of men, but He will never cease to love you. No, He will never love you less—He cannot love you more. This night He does espouse Himself unto you. Faith shall be the wedding ring which He will put upon your finger. He pledges His fidelity to you—

*"Though you should oftentimes forget Him
His loving kindness fast is set."*

His heart shall be so true to you that He will never leave you nor forsake you. You will come to die soon, but the Friend of sinners who loved you as a sinner, and would not cast you off when your sinnership kept breaking up, will still be with you when you come to the sinner's doom, which is to die. I see you going down the shelving banks of Jordan, but the sinner's Friend goes with you. Ah, dear Heart, He will put His arm beneath you, and bid you fear not. And when in the thick shades of that grim night you expect to see a fearful visage—the grim face of Death—you shall see, instead, His

sweet and smiling face, bright as an evening star, by your soul, and you shall hear Him say, "Fear not, I am with you. Be not dismayed, I am your God."

You will land in the world of spirits by-and-by; but will the sinner's Friend forsake you then? No, He will be pleased to acknowledge you; He will meet you on the other side of the Jordan, and He will say, "Come, My Beloved, I have loved you with an everlasting love, and have bought you, though you were a vile sinner, and now I am not ashamed to confess you before my holy angels. Come with Me, and I will take you to My Father's face, and will confess you there." And when the day shall come in which the world shall be judged, He will be your Friend then, too. You shall sit on the bench with Him. At the right hand of the Judge shall you stand, accepted in Him who was your Advocate, and who is now your Judge, to acquit you! And when the splendors of the millennium shall come, you shall partake of them—when the end shall be, and the world shall be rolled up like a worn-out vesture, and these arching skies shall have passed away like a forgotten dream—when eternity, with its deep-sounding waves, shall break upon the rocks of time, and sweep them away forever—then, on that sea of glass mingled with fire you shall stand with Christ, your Friend still, claiming you, notwithstanding all your misbehavior in the world which has gone, and loving you now, loving you on as long as eternity shall last! Oh, what a Friend is Christ to sinners!

Now do remember that we have been talking about sinners. There is a notion abroad that Jesus Christ came into the world to save respectable people, and that He will save decent sort of folks—those of you who go regularly to a place of worship, and are good sort of people, will be saved. Now Jesus Christ came into the world to save SINNERS. And who does that mean? Well, it includes some of us who have not been permitted to go into outward sin; but it also includes, within its deep, broad compass, those who have gone to the utmost extent of iniquity.

Talk of sinners! Walk the streets by moonlight, if you dare, and you will see sinners then! Watch when the night is dark, and the wind is howling, and the picklock is grating in the door, and you will see sinners then! Go to yon jail and walk through the wards, and see the men with heavy, over-hanging brows—men whom you would not like to meet out at night—and there are sinners there! Go to the Reformatories and see those who have betrayed an early and a juvenile depravity, and you will see sinners there! Go across the seas to the place where a man will gnaw a bone upon which is reeking human flesh, and there is a sinner there! Go where you will, and ransack earth to find sinners, for they are common enough! You may find them in every lane, and street of every city, and town, and village, and hamlet. It is for such that Jesus died. If you will select me the most gross specimen of humanity—if he is but born of woman—I will have hope of him because the Gospel of Christ is come to sinners, and Jesus Christ is come to seek and to save sinners! Electing love has selected some of the worst to be made the best. Redeeming love has bought, especially bought, many of the worst to be the reward of the Savior's passion! Effectual Grace calls out and compels to come in many of the vilest of the vile; and it is therefore that I have tried tonight to preach my Master's love to sinners!

Oh, by that love, looking out of those eyes in tears; oh, by that love, streaming from those wounds flowing with blood; by that faithful love, that strong love, that pure, disinterested and abiding love; oh, by the heart of the Savior's compassion, I do implore you—turn not away as though it were nothing to you; but believe on Him, and you shall be saved! Trust your souls with Him, and He will bring you to His Father's right hand in Glory everlasting!

May God give us a blessing for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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