

OVERWHELMING OBLIGATIONS

NO. 910

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

“What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?”
Psalm 116:12.

DEEP emotion prompts this question; but where are the depths of love and gratitude that can meet its exuberant demands? You will perhaps remember an incident in the life of a famous soldier, who also became a famous Christian, Colonel James Gardiner. One night he was little thinking of Divine things, but on the contrary had made an appointment of the most vicious kind; he was waiting for the appointed hour when he saw, or thought he saw before him in the room where he sat alone, a visible representation of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the Cross. He was impressed, as if a voice, or something equivalent to a voice, had come to him to this effect—“O sinner, I did all this for you; what have you done for me?” Some such representation as that I would put before the eyes of every person in this assembly; I earnestly pray that the vision of the Christ of God, the Mercy of God, the Love of God, may appear to all your eyes, and may a Voice say in your conscience, both to saint and sinner, “I did all this for you; what have you done for Me?” It will be a humiliating night probably for us all, if such should be the case; but humiliation may prove healing; yes, the very healthiest frame of mind in which we can be found!

I. I shall first of all this evening, invite you to CAST UP A SUM IN ARITHMETIC.

The text suggests this. “What shall I render unto the Lord *for all His benefits toward me?*” Come, let us reckon up! Though I know that the number will surpass all human numeration, let us try to reckon up His benefits toward any one of us; I wish each one of you, distinctly and severally, would now endeavor to think of the Mercy of God towards yourself.

First, let us call over the roll of our *temporal mercies*. They are but secondary, but they are very valuable. There is a special Providence in the endowment of life to each individual creature; David did not disdain to trace back the hand of God to the hour of his nativity; Paul adored the Grace of God that separated him from the time that his mother gave him birth; and our gratitude may, in like manner, revert to the days when we hung upon the breast. Or in the case of some, you may thank the goodness that supplied the lack of a mother’s tender love. Childhood’s early days might then make our thoughts busy, and our tongues vocal with praise. But here we are now; we have been preserved, some of us, these 30 or 40 years; we might have been cut down, and punished in our sin; we might have been swept away to the place where despair makes eternal night, but we have been kept alive in the midst of many accidents; by some marvelous godsend, death has been turned aside just as it seemed with a straight course to be posting toward us. When fierce diseases have been waiting round to hurry us to our last home, we have yet escaped. Nor have we merely existed; God has been pleased to give us food, raiment, and a place to lay our weary heads. To many here present He has given all the comforts of this life, till they can say, “My cup runs over, I have more than any heart can wish.” To all here He has given enough, and though you may have passed through many straits, your bread has been given you, and your water has been sure. Is not this cause for thankfulness? You cannot think of a shivering beggar tonight in the streets; you cannot think of the hundreds of thousands in this unhappy country; unhappy because they have no shelter, but such as the poorhouse can afford them, and no bread but such as is doled out to them as a pauper’s meager pittance; I say you cannot think of these without being grateful that you have been up to now supplied with things convenient for your sustenance, and defended from that bitter, biting penury which pall self-respect, crows industry, damps the ardor of resolution, chafes the heart, corrodes the mind, prostrates every vestige of manliness, and leaves manhood itself to be the prey of misery, and the victim of despair.

More than that, we have reason tonight to be very grateful for the measure of health which we enjoy. It is indeed a strange and awful sensation to be suddenly reduced by the unnerving hand of sickness to the feebleness of infancy; for giant strength to lie prostrate, and busy activity to be chained to the weary bed. Oh, when the bones begin to ache, and sinews and tissues seem to be but roads for pain to travel on, then we thank God for even a moment's rest! Do you not know what it is to toss to and fro in the night, and wish for the day, and when the daylight has come, to pine for the night? If there has been an interval of relief, just a little lull in the torture and the pain, how grateful you have been for it! Shall we not be thankful for health, then, and especially so for a long continuance of it? You strong men who hardly know what sickness means, if you could be made to walk the wards of the hospital, and see where there have been broken bones, where there are disorders that depress the system, incurable maladies, pangs that rack and convulse the frame, and pains all but unbearable, you would think, I hope, that you had cause enough for gratitude. Not far off this spot there stands a dome—I thank God for the existence of the place of which it forms a part, but I can never look at it. I hope I never shall, without lifting up my heart in thanks to God that my reason is spared! It is no small unhappiness to be bereft of our faculties, to have the mind swept to and fro in hurricanes of desperate, raging madness, or to be victims of hallucinations that shut you out from all usefulness, and even companionship with your fellow men; that you are not in St. Luke's or Bedlam tonight should be a cause for thankfulness to Almighty God!

But why do I enlarge here? Consider to what pains the human body may be subjected; imagine what ills may come upon humanity; conceive what distress, what woe, what anguish we are all capable of bearing, and then in proportion as you have been secured from all these, and in proportion on the other hand as you have been blessed with comforts and enjoyments, “let each generous impulse of your nature warm into ecstasy.” And then ask yourselves the question, “What shall we render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward us?” Cast up the sum, and then draw a line, and ask what is due to God for even these common gifts of Providence. But, my Brothers and Sisters in Christ, you who have something better than this life to rest upon; I touch a higher and a sweeter string, a chord which ought to tremble with a nobler melody, when I say to you think of the *spiritual blessings* which you have received! It is not very long ago that you were in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity; we look back but for a little while, some of us, and we were under the bondage of the Law. We had been awakened, and we felt the load and the guilt of sin, a grievous burden from which we feared we never could escape—a flagrant defilement from which we knew no means of cleansing. Do not I remember well my fruitless prayers, my tears that were my meat both day and night, my grief of heart? They cut me to the quick, and I found no kind of deliverance! How I sought the Lord then; how I cried for mercy, but I found none! I was shut up, and could not come forth; I was delivered up to fear, and doubt, and despair! Bless the Lord, it is over now! Blessed be the name of God, my soul has escaped like a bird out of the net! And this night, instead of talking of sin as an unpardonable thing, I can stand here and say for you, as well as myself, that He has put away all our iniquity, and cast our transgressions into the depths of the sea!

If He had never done anything for us but that, it seems to me that we should be bound forever and forever to extol His name with as much exultation as Miriam and Moses felt, when Miriam took the timbrel, and Moses wrote the song, “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider has He cast into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation.” Not indeed, Beloved, that forgiven sin was the total; it was but an *item*, the beginning of His Tender Mercies towards us, for after that He comforted us like a mother comforts her children; He bound up every wound; He removed every blot; He covered us with a robe of Righteousness, and decked us with the jewels of the Spirit's Graces; He adopted us into His family, even we who were aliens by nature, foes by long habit, rebels and traitors by our revolt against His government! He made us heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ; all the privileges of sonship, which never would have been ours by nature, have been secured to us by Regeneration, and by Adoption. *All His benefits!* If these were all, oh, what should we render unto Him who is the Author and Giver of such inestimable blessings? *All His benefits!* How could we estimate their value, even if we had to stop here? Mark you, they *are* benefits, indeed, not

merely the kind intent of Benevolence, or good wishes, which may or may not be of real service to us; but verily the saving effect of beneficence, or good deeds accomplished for us—the full advantage of which we have richly to enjoy.

There is a vexatious uncertainty about all human philanthropy; how weak it often is, expending strength for nothing, and failing to mature its best projects! Though the physician should exhaust the resources of medical science while he spares no pains in watching his patient, that patient may die; though the advocate pleads for his client with intense fervor, cogent reasoning, and a torrent of eloquence, that client may yet lose his cause; though the general of an army commands the troops ever so skillfully, and they fight against the enemy ever so bravely, the battle may yet be lost. The heroic volunteer who assays to rescue a drowning man may fail in the endeavor, and lose his own life in the attempt. The valiant crew that man the lifeboat may not succeed in bringing the shipwrecked to shore. The best aims may miscarry; kindness, like ore of gold in the breast of the creature, may never be minted into the coin of benefit, or pass current for its real worth; not all donations expended in charity are effectual to relieve distress, but the benefits of *God* are all fully beneficial; they answer the ends they are designed to serve! Forgetfulness on the part of God's children is without excuse, for here we are, monuments of Mercy, pillars of Grace, living Epistles—yes, the living, the living to praise You, O God, as I do this day. And thus beholden to the Lord for all His benefits, I feel that my thoughts and actions of adoring gratitude should break forth, restrained by no shore, but be continually overflowing every embankment that custom has thrown up, and send out in tears of love, and sweat of labor, fertilizing streams on the right hand, and on the left.

All His benefits! Ring that note again! His benefits are so many, so various, so minute, that they often escape our observation while they exactly meet our needs! True it is the Lord has done great things for us which may well challenge the admiration of angels, but true it also is that He has done little things for us, and bestowed attention upon all our tiny needs, and our childish cares and anxieties. As we turn over the leaves of our diary, we are lost in wonder at the keenness of that vision, and the extent of that knowledge whereby even the hairs of our head are all numbered! O God, what Infinite Tenderness, what boundless Compassion You have shown us! You have continued to forgive our offense; You have perpetually upheld us in the hour of temptation; what comforts have delighted our soul in the times of trouble; what gentle admonitions have brought us back in the times of our going astray! We have had preserving Mercies, sustaining Mercies, enriching Mercies, sanctifying Mercies; who shall count the small dust of the favors and bounties of the Lord? My dear Brothers and Sisters, it is no small benefit that God has conferred upon some of us that we are members of a happy Church on earth; that we are united together in the bonds of love. I know some of you used to be members of other Churches where there were periodic conflicts, and you are glad enough that you have come with a loving and happy people where you can serve the Lord to your heart's content. By His Grace you meet with warm-hearted fellow Christians who bid you Godspeed. My heart exults in the thought of all the prosperity we have enjoyed in this place; the Lord's name be praised! Even as a Church, over and above the Mercies which have come to us as private Christians, I would say, and I would invite you to join me in saying—"What shall we render to the Lord for all His benefits toward us?"

But, Beloved, we have only *begun* the list of those Mercies that we strive in vain to enumerate. We shall not try to finish it, for blessed be God, it never will be finished! He has given us *Himself* to be our portion! He has given us His Providence to be our guardian; He has given us His Promises to be the vouchers of our inheritance! We shall not die, though we must sleep, unless the Lord first comes; yet we shall sleep in Jesus! Our bones and ashes shall be watched over and preserved until the Resurrection trumpet shall summon them by its voice, and our bodies shall be reanimated by Divine Power. For our souls we have the sure and certain hope that we shall be with Christ where He is, that we may behold His Glory. We are looking forward to the blessed day when He shall say to us, "Come up higher," and from the lower room of the feast, we shall ascend into the upper chamber, nearer to the King, to sit at

His right hand and feast forever. Oh, the depths of His Mercy! Oh, the heights of His Loving Kindness! Faithfulness has followed us; not a Promise has been broken; not one good thing has failed us!

Now, my dear Brothers and Sisters, what have I just given you but a sort of general outline of the Mercies the Lord has bestowed on us, and the benefits we have received at His hand? If each one would try to fill that outline up by the rehearsal of his own case, and the life story of his own experience, how much Glory God might get from this assembly tonight! Your case is different from mine in the incidents that compose it; I believe mine is different from any of yours, but this I know, there is not a man or woman in this place who owes more to God than I do; there is not one here who ought to be more grateful; there cannot be one who is more indebted to the Goodness of the Lord than I am for every step of the pilgrimage that I have trod, from the first day even until now. I can, no, I *must* speak well of His name! Truly God is Good, and I have found Him so. “The Lord is good unto them who wait for Him, to the soul that seeks Him.” I have proved Him so. Well, I know all your tongues are itching to say the same; you feel that though He has led you through deep waters, and through fiery trials, and sometimes chastened you very severely, He has not given you over to death; He has dealt with you as a father with His son whom He loves, and been to you as a Friend who never forsakes. You would not breathe half a word against His blessed name; rather you would say, to borrow an expression which Rutherford constantly used, that you are, “drowned debtors to God’s Mercy.” He meant that he was over head and ears in debt to God; he could not tell how deep his obligations were, so he just called himself, “a drowned debtor” to the Loving Kindness and the Mercy of his God. Well, there is a sum for you; if you want to use your arithmetical faculties, sit down when you can get an hour’s quiet, and try to identify all the precious thoughts of God towards you—all His benefits.

II. Our second point shall be A CALCULATION OF THE GRATITUDE WHICH IS DUE TO GOD FOR ALL THIS.

I should like to make each man his own assessor tonight, to assess the income of Mercy which he has received, and put down what should be the tribute of gratitude which he should return to the revenue of the Great King. “What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits?” Calculate for a minute, what we owe to God the Father, and what we ought to render Him for the debt; as many as have believed in Christ were chosen of God the Father from before all worlds; He might have left them unchosen. It was His own absolute good pleasure which wrote them in the roll of the Elect; He has chosen you, my Brothers and Sisters, that you should be Holy, that you should be His children, that you should be made like your elder Brother, Christ Jesus; and because He chose you to this, to this you shall come—though all the powers of Earth and Hell should withstand, for the Divine Decree abides Immutably steadfast, and shall surely be fulfilled. You are God’s favorite one, His child, ordained to dwell forever in eternal bliss! What shall we render for this? O let the thought just stir the depths of your soul a minute, if indeed it is so, that the seal of the Everlasting Covenant has been set upon you! Before the sun began to shine, or the moon to march in her courses, God did choose me, in whom there was nothing to engross His Love; nothing to attract His Favor. O my God, if it is so that I, of all the sons of Adam, should be made a distinguishing object of Your Grace, and the subject of Your discriminating Favor, take me! Take my body, take my soul, take my spirit, take my goods, my talents, my faculties—take all I have, and all I am, and all I ever hope to be, for I am Yours! You have loosed my bonds, but Your Mercy has bound me to Your service forever!

Now think for a minute of what you owe to God the Son, to Jesus Christ. I mean as many of you as have believed on Him. Think for a moment on the habitation of the highest Glory, and consider how Jesus left His Father’s Throne, deserted the courts of angels, and came down below to robe Himself in an Infant’s clay. There contemplate Him living in our nature; see Him after He has grown up, leading a life of toil and pain, bearing our sicknesses, and carrying our sorrows; let your eyes look straight into the face of the Man who was acquainted with grief. I shall not ask you to trace all His footsteps, but I would bid you come to that famous Garden, where in the dead of the night He knelt and prayed, until in agony, He sweat drops of blood. It was for you, for you, Believer, that there the bloody sweat fell to the ground!

You see Him rise up; He is betrayed by His friend; for you the betrayal was endured. He is taken; He is led off to Pilate; they falsely accuse Him; they spit in His face; they crown Him with thorns; they put a mock scepter of reed into His hands—for *you* all that ignominy was endured; for you especially and particularly, the Lord of Glory passed through these cruel mocking! See Him as He bears His Cross; His shoulders are bleeding from the recent lashes. See Him, as along the Via Dolorosa He sustains the cruel load; He bears that Cross for *you!* *Your* sins are laid on His shoulders, and make that Cross more heavy than had it been made of iron! See Him on the Cross, lifted up between Heaven and Earth, a spectacle of grievous woe. Hear Him cry, “I thirst!” And hear His still more bitter cry while Heaven and Earth are startled by it, “Why have You forsaken Me, My God, My God?” He is enduring all those griefs for *you*; for you the thirst and the fainting, the nakedness and the agony; for you the bowing of the head, the yielding up the ghost, the slumber in the cold and silent tomb; for you His Resurrection when He rises in the Glory of His Might, and for you afterwards the Ascension into Heaven, when they sing, “Lift up your heads, O you gates, and be you lift up, you everlasting doors.” For you His constant pleading at the right hand of the Father—yes, all for YOU!

And what should be done for Him? What tribute shall we lay at the pierced feet? What present shall we put into that nailed hand? Where are kisses that shall be sweet enough for His dear wounds? Where is adoration that shall be reverent enough for His blessed and exalted Person? Daughters of music, bring your sweetest songs! You men of wealth, bring Him your treasures! You men of fame and learning, come lay your laurels at His feet; let us all bring all that we have, for such a Christ as this deserves more than all! What shall we render, Christ of God, to You for all Your benefits towards us? Let me ask you to think for a moment on the third Person of the blessed Godhead, namely, the Holy Spirit. Let us never forget that when we were like filthy rags, His hand touched us; when we were like corrupt and rotten carcasses in the graves of sin, His breath quickened us; it was His hand that led us to the Cross; it was His fingers that took the film from our eyes; it was His eye salve that illuminated us that we should look to Jesus and live! Since that hour the blessed Spirit has lived in our hearts! Oh, what a dreadful place, I was about to say, for God to dwell in! But the Holy Spirit has never utterly left us; we have grieved Him; we have oftentimes vexed Him—but still He is here, still resident within the soul, never departing, being Himself the very Life of the Living incorruptible Seed that abides forever!

My dear Friends, how often the Holy Spirit has comforted you! How very frequently in your calm moments has He revealed Christ to you! How often has the blessed Truth been laid home to you with a Divine Savor which it never could have had, if it had not been for Him! He is God, and the angels worship Him, and yet He has come into the closest possible contact with you. Christ was Incarnate, and the flesh in which He was Incarnate was pure and perfect; the Holy Spirit was not Incarnate, but still He comes to dwell in the *bodies* of His saints—bodies still impure, still unholy! Oh, what Grace and condescension is this! You blessed Dove, You dear Comforter, You kind Lover of the fallen sons of men—Your condescension is matchless! We love You even as we love Christ Himself, and this night if we ask the question, “What shall we render unto the Lord, the Holy Spirit, for all His benefits towards us?” we know not how to answer, but can only say, “Take us, take us, Holy Spirit! Use us! Fill us with Yourself! Sanctify us to Your holiest purposes! Use us right up—make us living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God, for it is our reasonable service.”

Now perhaps, by God’s Spirit, the text may come a little more vividly before your minds. You have had another opportunity of adding up all the benefits of God—another opportunity, dear Brothers and Sisters, of calculating what you ought to do. Give heed, then, for I intend to come, in closing, to be very personal and practical; I wish to speak very pointedly to you as individuals, but there are so many of you that some are sure to slip away in the crowd. I half wish I were in the position of the preacher who had but one hearer, and addressed him as, “Dearly Beloved Roger.” I want to put the question of my text as though only one person were here, and that one person, *yourself*. “What shall I render to the Lord?” Never mind your neighbor, your brother, your sister, your husband, your wife, or anybody else just now; if you are a saved soul, the question for you is, “What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits

toward me?" "What shall I render?" Suppose, dear Friend, you had been the woman bowed with an infirmity for so many years, and Christ had cured you, and you had stood upright tonight? What would you render? Well, you HAVE been cured of your infirmity—a much worse decrepitude than the physical ailment she was released from! Suppose you had been poor blind Bartimeus sitting by the wayside begging, born blind, and you had your sight given you tonight? What would you render? Well, you HAVE had such a gift bestowed on you! You were in *spiritual* blindness, worse than that which is only natural—and Christ has opened your eyes! What will you render? Suppose you had been Lazarus, and had been in the grave so long that you began to be corrupt, and Christ had raised you to life? What would you render? Well, you HAVE been quickened when you were dead in sin; you were corrupt; you were buried in darkness, and in sin, but you can say with the Psalmist, "O Lord, You have brought up my soul from the grave."

Now what will you render to Him? Suppose He stood on this platform tonight, and instead of this poor voice, and these unclean lips, the voice of the Well-Beloved should speak in music to you? And the lips that are like lilies dropping sweet smelling myrrh could talk to each of you? What would you render to Him, then? Well, do the same as though He were here, for He sees you! Yes, and His Spirit, hovering over this assembly, will accept the tribute you give as though He were here in the flesh—or otherwise He will grieve over you, and resent the neglect of your heart. Think of Him as being here, and render unto Him as though He were visibly and audibly in our midst. What will you render? Let me ask you, dearly Beloved, whether you have ever thought of what men and women can render. You may have read the lives; I hope you have, of Mr. and Mrs. Judson in Burma, ready to sacrifice all for Christ; or the lives of our martyrs in Foxe's Martyrologies, who rejoiced if they might burn for Christ. We still have some men and women among us; I wish there were more whose lives of consecration tell you what men can be and do. Are you anything like they are? If not, while they are not what they ought to be, and they fall short of the Master's Image, how far short must you be? Oh, I pray you are grieved that it is so, and press the question upon yourselves the more, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" A side question may help you. What *have* you rendered? You are getting old now, or at least you are getting to the prime of life; what have you done for Christ up to this time? Come, look. Look back now; I must urge you to do it. Converted late perhaps, or if converted young, it matters not, still the question must come—"What have you done up to now?" Oh, I dare not answer the question myself; yet I am not in that respect the worst here; I dare not look back upon *my* past life of service for God with anything like satisfaction. After having done all that we could do, we are but unprofitable servants; we have not done what was our duty. There is no man here, I fear, who can answer the question, "What have I rendered?" with any self-contentment; we must all drop a tear, feel abashed, and say, "Good Lord, let not the future be as barren as the past; but by Your Mercy help us to a better and a nobler sort of living!"

May I ask you, as it may assist in answering the question, how old you are? Some of you tell me that you are far advanced in age. Then what must you render in the few years you can have to live? Live hard, Beloved, live hard—live fast in a *spiritual* sense, for you have little time to use, none to waste! Get as much done as can be done for your dear Lord before He calls you to His face. You are young, others of you tell me. Oh, then with such a long opportunity as God may give you, you ought to be diligent every moment! If you are not diligent now in your early days, there is no likelihood that you will be afterwards; since you have the special and peculiar advantage of early piety, O render more to the Lord because He has opened before you a wider field, and given you more time to cultivate it than full many of His people have known! Let me ask you, again, What are your capacities? That, perhaps, will help you to answer the question. "Oh," says one, "I cannot do much." Well then, my dear Friend, do the little you can! Do it all; do it up to the very point; do not leave an inch untouched! If you can only do a little, do all of that, and do it heartily; and keep at it till you die. Says another, "Perhaps God has entrusted some talents to me." Then He expects a great deal from the employment of them! O do not let your talents lie idle! Your talents are not meant for *your* gain, nor merely to serve the *world*; they are meant to

serve your God, who has redeemed you with the precious blood of Jesus. Take care, whether you have much or little, to give Him all. I will put another question to you that may stir your mettle. How did you serve Satan before you were converted? What rare boys some of you were—not sparing body or soul to enjoy the pleasures of sin! Oh, with what zest, with what fervor, and force, and vehemence did many of you dance to the tune of the devil’s music! I wish you would serve God half as well as some of the devil’s servants serve him! What? Now you have a new Friend, a new Lover, a new Husband—shall He ever look you in the face and say, “You do not love Me as well as the old; you do not serve Me as zealously”? Shall Jesus Christ say to any man or woman among us, “You do not love Me as well as you loved the world; you were never weary of serving the world, but you soon get weary of serving Me”? O my poor Heart, wake up! Wake up! What are you doing, to have served sin at such a rate, and then to serve Christ so little?

Another question may be to the point. How do you serve yourselves? You are in business, some of you, and I like to see a man of business with his hands full, and his wits about him. You lazy fellows who go about the shop half asleep, and seem as if you never will wake up, what is the use of you? Men who seem to cumber the earth; men who never did see a snail unless they happened to meet one, for they could not have overtaken it, they travel so slowly; such men are of little use to God or man. I know that the most of you are diligent in business; you never hear the ring of a guinea without being on the alert to earn it if possible. Your coats are off, and very likely your shirtsleeves are turned up when there is a chance of driving trade. That I commend, but oh, do let us have something like *it* in the service of Jesus Christ! Do not let us be drudging in the world, and drawling in the Church; lively in the service of mammon, and then laggard in the service of Christ! Heart and soul, manliness, vigor, vehemence—let the utmost strain of all our powers be put forth in the service of Him who was never prone to be slow in the service of our souls when they had to be Redeemed!

I shall not keep you much longer, but still pressing the same question, let me ask you, dear Friends, how do you think such service as you have rendered will look when you come to see it by the light of Eternity? Oh, nothing of life will be worth having lived when we come to die, except that part of it which was devoted and consecrated to Christ! Live, then, with your deathbeds in immediate prospect! Live in the light of the *next* world so your pulse will be quickened, and your heart excited in the Master’s service. I now put the question, What shall we render? What shall I render unto the Lord? Let the question go all round the pews, and let everybody answer! What shall I render? Is there any new thing I can do for Christ that I never did before? Cannot I speak a word for Christ to somebody tonight? *Tonight*, because you cannot overtake the loss of a single opportunity; tomorrow’s Mercies will bring tomorrow’s obligations; today’s obligations must be discharged today! What shall I render tonight? Is there anybody I can speak to of Jesus before I retire to my chamber? It is a little thing, but let me do it! What shall I render? Let me give my God praise tonight somehow. There is the Communion Table around which we are about to gather. That may help me to render Him some homage; I will there take the cup of Salvation, and call upon His name. Tomorrow I shall be in the world going forth to my labors; what shall I render? I will consecrate part of my substance to God, but I will try to consecrate all tomorrow, and the next day to Him. While I am at my work, if I use a saw, or use a hammer, or if I stand at a counter, or in the fields, or in the streets, I will ask that my thoughts may be on God, that I may be kept from sin, and that by my example I may render some tribute of honor to His name, in the sight of my fellow men. And I will try to seize every opportunity that comes in my way of telling—

*“To sinners round,
What a dear Savior I have found.”*

And yet, dear Friends, it is not for me to answer the question that is propounded for you! With these few brief hints I do put the question in all its touching pathos, in all its deep solemnity, in all its momentous gravity, before every Christian man and woman here—and I ask you to answer it before the Searcher of all hearts—“What shall I render?” Thrice happy you who respond in lip and life to the urgent call! “For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which you have showed toward His

name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end that you are not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”

As for those of you, my Hearers, who are not yet converted—you who are not saved; this is not the question for you. Your question is, “*What must I do to be saved?*” And the answer is, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” O believe on Him tonight! Trust Him; that is the point—trust Jesus Christ! You may come to Him and be saved at once! *Then*, not till then, you will begin to *serve* Him. May God bless you, my dear Friends, every one of you, for Christ’s sake.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON.—PSALM 116.

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