

A HOLY CELEBRATION NO. 1092

A SERMON DELIVERED
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord.”
Exodus 12:42.*

OF course you will understand that our text relates to the Passover. This is its first meaning. The Israelites were enjoined never to forget that they were once slaves in Egypt and that God, with a strong hand, brought them forth. To help their memories an ordinance was instituted which was to be celebrated every year by every person in the nation. The young children were to be taught the meaning of that ordinance so that *never* in time should it be forgotten that God passed over His own people when He smote His enemies in the land of Egypt.

To this day the Israelites continue to hold this epoch in their national history among their most cherished traditions—and although the rites with which they observe the Passover are so distorted that we might well say they cannot sing the Lord’s song in a strange land—yet the Passover is still Israel’s celebration. And so long as there exists a Jew, there will not lack a man to tell how his fathers came out of Egypt in that night which is to be much observed.

But, dear Friends, the Passover was a type of our Lord’s passion. He is the Lamb of God’s Passover. It is by His blood that we are preserved. It is by virtue of His Sacrifice that God passes over us who, through faith, have received the sprinkling of that blood. Never let us forget that night which is to be much remembered—that night when the Lord was taken from prison and from judgment—when there was none to declare His generation. Let us not forget that night when, for the transgression of His people, He was smitten.

It was a dark night when He arose from the table where He had supped for the last time with His disciples, and went to Gethsemane, there to begin to suffer and in the very beginning to be sorrowful, even unto death. Then to be taken off to Pilate and to Herod, and to Caiaphas—to be condemned to die—to be lifted high upon the Cross, to bleed, to suffer physical pain, mental anguish and spiritual grief unknown—never to be estimated by us. It was a night to be remembered in all our generations. Let it never be forgotten. Whatever we do not know, my Brothers and Sisters, let us know the Cross. Whatever subject may have a second place in our estimation, always let the ransom paid on Calvary be first and foremost.

I would have you study much the four records of the Evangelists. Dwell upon them. Christians ought to be familiar with every little incident of their Savior’s death. There is teaching in every nail. The sponge, the vinegar and the hyssop all have a meaning in them—and the spear that pierced His side is full of instruction. We ought to study them—study them again and again, and again. Here is the very essence of our confidence! This is the pillar upon which our souls lean! If there is any hope for sinners; if there is any consolation for sufferers; if there is any cleansing for the guilty; if there is any life for the dead, it is here. In Your words Emmanuel—it is here and only here. O, dwell at the Cross, then! Whatever your minds may forget to consider, let them never lose the savor of this, or leave the meditation of Christ Crucified!

Keep to this. Remember, that to help our frail memories, God has given us an ordinance. Even as He gave to Jews the Passover, He has given to us the Lord’s Supper. “This do you, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” It is important beyond everything that you should remember a bleeding Savior! Therefore He gives you the wine cup to symbolize His blood and that blood separated from the flesh—and, therefore, He gives you the bread as the emblem of flesh without the life-blood in it—that the two together might be the symbols to you of a violent death suffered by your Lord on your behalf!

Instructive are the symbols—do not miss the main intention of them, namely, to draw you with cords of love and bands of a man, to the Person of your vicarious Sacrifice—Jesus Christ bleeding for you! And while you harbor this much in your own thoughts, speak much of it to others. Let your testimony be full and frequent. If you are ministers, preach much about the “Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.” If you are teachers of others in the Sunday

school, or anywhere else, make this the main head and front of your teaching—Christ in the sinner’s place; Christ bearing the sinner’s sin; Christ smitten with the sinner’s stripes—and by His stripes healing sinners and putting away their sin.

Insist upon this again and again, and again. Make it plain to all, so that if they reject it they may reject that which was evidently set forth before them. Unveil the mystery, the sacred mystery of the Incarnate God bleeding in the sinner’s place. Yes, should men upbraid you as foolish because you have nothing else to teach but this—keep on, and be thus foolish, still! Let them say that you have nothing but a monotony to repeat concerning the blood! Let them have that monotony again sounded in their ears! To that, to that, to that bend all your strength—to that direct all their attention, for, surely, the night of the passion—or call it day if you will, for though it was day, naturally, it was more nearly night in many senses—surely, that “is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.”

This, however, is not exactly the subject to which we propose to direct your meditation this evening. It is the night of our regeneration. It is the night of our conversion—(night or day, it matters not which)—the time in which we actually received salvation and were made partakers of this Passover that we would just now admonish you to remember. At that particular time important events transpired for us. The most important events, to us, that ever occurred in our history happened on that occasion! There was a point in our life up to which we were dead—then we were made alive! There was a point up to which we were condemned—then, in an instant, we were acquitted! There was a moment up to which we were enemies to God by wicked works—and at once, by an act of God’s Grace—we were reconciled and were made to be God’s children and were God’s enemies no more!

I want to look back upon that. Our first birth would have been a hurt to us if it had not been for this second birth. Our being in this world would be a calamity—it had been better for us that we had never been—if it had not been for this second creation, which gives us our well-being! O, it was a night to be observed before the Lord, in which we came out of Egypt, passed from death unto life and were saved! Now, what events transpired on that occasion? Well, the first was it pleased God, then, to show us the blood of Jesus and to apply it to our souls. Do you remember it? I remember well when this came to my heart. You had *heard* the doctrine of the Cross before, but you *felt* it, then. You knew that the blood could save, but at that moment you had faith in that blood and it did save you!

It was applied to you by the hyssop of faith, which sprinkled it upon the lintel and doorposts of your house and you were saved! Do you remember the place—the spot of ground? Some of us remember and never can forget it. O, happy day that brought us to the Savior’s feet, took all our guilt away and banished all our fears—removed the enmity and made us friends—prostrated, conquered and subdued us—then cheered, comforted, and blessed us! No man has anything in the incidents or the records of his life that can compare in importance with that moment in which the blood was applied to his guilty conscience!

“Well,” says one, “I think nothing of it.” No, because you never felt it. If you had ever felt it, you would. He that has ever felt the weight of the Law’s great whip upon his conscience—has ever had those lashes laid about him till he hated his very life and longed to die—he will know what it is to have that whip taken away, to have oil and wine poured into those wounds, to have them healed in a moment and to find himself ready to leap for very joy because of the wondrous things which God has done for him! They that know it not, ought not to say anything about it. They are strangers to it. I know some who are constantly prone to speak lightly of conversion. Why should they? If they do not know anything about it, let them hold their tongues until they do.

But those that have been converted—those that have been regenerated and know it—if they are honest men and I believe they are accepted as such in other matters—let them be believed here, also, when they declare that there is nothing like it under the sun for joy to a man’s soul! This application of the blood of sprinkling is the thing above all others to be remembered! Whatever else happened that night, let us remember this, that the old leaven was purged out of our hearts. At once, as soon as ever we believed in Jesus, we found ourselves hating the things we loved before. We did not hear the Law which said, “You shall not do this, and you shall do that”—but we felt our heart changed, so that we did not want to do the evil and we longed to do the right.

And now, though since then we have found another Law in our members warring against the law of our mind and causing a frequent conflict—yet the true man, the I, the real I—longs after holiness! And it is no sorrow, now, to be

obedient. It is bliss to obey! And it is no joy now to be sinful, but it brings a thorn into the eyes, a palpitation to the heart and a trembling into the soul to stain the hands or defile the conscience with sin. That is a thing to be remembered! Where such a thing as that has happened, it never can be forgotten. And, thank God, this has not occurred merely to those who were amiable before and honest before, but it has occurred to some of the very worst of mankind. O, we could tell stories, tonight, which have come under our own observation, of some of the most abandoned transgressors who have become some of the purest characters, full of “sweetness and light,” from the very moment of their conversion!

The more they were formerly known to delight in sin, the more they have subsequently humbled themselves before God. And the more they had lent themselves to do iniquity, the more they have addicted themselves to works of righteousness, seeking to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. O Beloved, it is a night to be observed of the Lord in which the leaven is put away and we are made to keep the feast in godly sincerity! That night, too, or that day, whichever it may have been, we do remember that we enjoyed a feast upon our Savior. The blood was sprinkled and so we were saved, and then we sat down at the table and began at once to feast upon the precious things stored up in the Person of Christ.

I remembered one thing that troubled me. It was that it did seem too good to be true. That I was absolved forever from all my sins, I did believe, for God said it. “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” But this used to stagger me, “Am I really, now, in the condition of a child of God—as much a child of God as I am a child of my own father? And has He loved such an insignificant worm as I am? And will He surely bring me into the promised rest and give me a place and a name among His beloved, at His right hand?” O, how I revolted in such thoughts as that, when faith was strong, when first I knew the Lord!

Do you remember it, dear Brothers and Sisters? I want you to let your souls fly back to those early mornings with Christ, when the dew was upon your soul, when the birds began to sing in your hearts and their notes had not yet grown stale to you. O, the delicacies of the first days with Christ! O, the sweetness of the love of our espousals! Do you not remember how you fed upon Christ to the very full and did rejoice in Him? Well, look back and say it is a time to be observed before the Lord. And then it was that for the first time in your life, dear Friends, you felt that you were free! Israel in Egypt was free from that night. They were slaves and brick makers, but the moment that blood was over the door and God had sent forth the angel to smite the Egyptians, the Israelites were free.

They were even pressed to go away! O, do you remember how free you felt? You could sing with John Kent—

*“Now free’d from sin, I walk at large,
The Savior’s blood’s my full discharge,
At His dear feet my soul I lay,
A sinner saved, and homage pay.”*

You remember how you rejoiced in the liberty in which Christ had made you free? You wanted to tell other people about it. You could not hold your tongue. You could have sung as we have been singing tonight—

*“Now, oh joy, my sins are pardoned,
Now I can, and do believe.”*

You were free! But finding yourself so, you also discovered, for the first time, that you were a pilgrim, for the Israelites, as they ate that paschal supper, had to do so with their loins girt and staves in their hands—like men that were to leave that country. You found that now you were a stranger. If you had an unconverted parent, you could not talk to him or her about your soul. If you had old companions, you felt you must bid them farewell, for they would not understand you. If you did not know you were a pilgrim before, you found it out the very next day when you began to talk with them.

Your speech betrayed you and they began at once to scoff and jeer at you, as a Presbyterian or a Methodist, or by some other name they called you—thus you soon found that because you were not of the world, therefore the world would hate you. Perhaps you were surprised at it, but you plucked up courage and you took up Christ’s Cross, and you have carried it till now. At length you begin to love it, to esteem it an honor and to count it to be greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt which you left behind you.

O, it is a time to be remembered and I want you to remember it now—those blessed days when we began to live! I think we might date our existence from that time. When we count up our birthdays, we ought always to reckon that among them. To leave that out seems to be leaving out the one that makes all the others worth having! I remember a man’s tombstone on which was inscribed—“Here lies one who died a child three years old at the age of eighty.” You are

only as old as the number of years you have lived unto God! All the rest you might wish to be wiped out—yes, and the blood of Christ has wiped them out and you are alive from the dead, new-born souls. O, let the time of your second birth be a season to be remembered before the Lord!

Important results will flow to you from the preservation of this memorial. It will humble you and foster the Grace of humility. Have you become an old experienced Christian, my Brother? Go back to the hole of the pit from which you were dug. While I stand here, tonight, preaching to a great many of you, I feel brought down to my proper bearings when I remember how I sat, at about the age of 16, a poor trembling sinner under the galleries of a Primitive Methodist meeting house and heard Christ preached, and came to Him. O, that ever I should live to preach the Gospel to you! I feel humbled at the very thought of it. Get back, you great professors—get back to the Cross again! There is nothing about which to vaunt yourselves after all. Look to the hole of the pit from which you were dug—remember what you were when God met with you—and remember what you would have been if He had *not* met with you!

Israel would have died like the Egyptians if it had not been for the blood—and you might have been dead and damned at this hour, instead of sitting here to praise God—if it had not been for special Grace. It was no goodness of yours that made you God's child. You know it, for when the Lord cast an eye of love on you, He could not see anything in you to love. You were all unholy and unclean. You were according to Isaiah's description—"From the sole of the foot to the crown of your head you were all wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores"—and yet He looked upon you! Remember that, and be humbled within you.

Remember your conversion, also, and let your faith be refreshed. It does us good to remember—especially some of you, my dear Brothers and Sisters, that are now a long way on the road—it does you good to remember what peaceful hours you had at first. O, what lively joy you had then! Well, I daresay you have purer joy now, deeper peace, more unruffled calm. There was a good deal of flesh about you then. But still, for all that, as a man never will forget the honeymoon, so can we never forget that honeymoon with Christ. There was a certain exquisite sweetness in it that lingers on our souls still. We have the flavor of that honeycomb in our mouths up to this moment and we shall never get it out. Well, it will revive our faith to remember it and it will bring back our love, too.

We shall begin chiding ourselves and saying, "Why haven't we done more for His dear name?" O, what we thought we should do when we first began to serve Jesus! We have not been true to those vows and promises, but yet what a mercy that, if *we* have not been true, He has! He has never failed us, but has kept every promise and never left us in any emergency. We have been held up till now and who could have held us up but our Lord? We have sometimes been in a very perilous condition—temptation has almost overcome us, but—

*"We know the arm on which we lean,
The name in which we trust,"*

and we will bless that name! I am sure if we were to live in recollection of our conversion, we should have our zeal kindled for the conversion of others. Ah, you get altogether away from your first standing-point, some of you! You used to be willing to run anywhere to talk of Jesus and if you had half a hope of impressing anyone, you had no fear about speaking of Him.

Now, perhaps, you have become so familiar with the Gospel that, though it ought to have more charms, through the hardness of your heart it has fewer charms with you than it had. Oh, be ashamed and be confounded about it! And get back, get back, to your first love and you will feel the first zeal come again! I sometimes wonder what old churches would do if it were not for new converts. The new converts put fresh blood into the veins of the Church. The Church would die of sheer imbecility were it not that great sinners come in with their great love! They do what Simon would not do—they not only wash the Savior's feet and perform the common acts of piety—but they begin to anoint His head with an extraordinary zeal. And they set the Church an example of doing great things—and in this way keep us somewhat alive.

But I would like to be a young convert always! I would like to be green in old age with young love to Jesus and would not you, too, Brothers and Sisters? Well, if you would have it so, go back to the night to be observed and remember it this evening with tears of gratitude. Cannot some of you picture that young man—(yes, you have got boys as old as you were then)—cannot you remember the young man that dropped into Park Street and heard the Word of God there? Don't you remember your experience at that time, young woman? You do not call yourself a young woman

now, but do you remember when you sat and wept and your heart broke—and when the very thing happened that we have been singing of in our hymn—that first look and that second look from Him that hung upon the Cross?

You have not forgotten that. Many days have passed over some of you and you are getting near to the end of life, but will you not remember and lift now a new song for the old mercies and magnify God whom you have tried and proved this score of years, and so tried Him that you can speak well of His name? Maybe there is a question which will naturally arise in some minds. Do not I hear someone say, “I trust I am a Christian. I believe I have experienced a great change of heart, but I do not remember the time”? Beloved Friend, there is an old legal maxim that, “possession is nine points of the Law,” and as long as you have Christ, I am not going to raise many questions about when you got Him.

Surely, if the hold you have is equivalent to nine points of the Law, it represents all the points of the Gospel! If you have Christ He will never be taken away from you. If you are resting upon His blood and righteousness, it is well enough. And, if you are producing the fruits of the Spirit and your life is what it should be, by your fruits you are to be known. We shall ask you no more questions. “But I should like to know exactly when I was converted,” says one. Well, I do not wonder that you should. But suppose you do not know and cannot ascertain, what then? Suppose there is a person here who does not exactly know his age and he wants to find the register of his birth? And suppose he has tried and cannot find it?

Now, what is the inference that he draws from his not being able to tell the day of his birth? Well, I do not know what the inference may be, but I will tell you one inference he does *not* draw. He does not say, therefore, “I am not alive.” If he did he would be an idiot, for if the man is alive he is alive, whether he knows his birthday or not. And if the man really trusts in Jesus and is alive from the dead, he is a saved soul whether he knows exactly when and where he was saved or not. At the same time, do not let me be misunderstood. “You must be born-again.” There is, and must be, in every man that will enter Heaven, a time—a point and a place, too—in which he did pass out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God’s dear Son.

I believe that in many cases it is not easy to tell the precise point, for with them it is like the rising of the sun. Sometimes the sun is up before you know whether he has risen or not because a long morning twilight precedes his actual appearance above the horizon. So it may be that spiritual life begins by slow degrees before we quite perceive it there. But there is a time when it begins. There is a point—there is a place in which the unsaved become saved and the unregenerate become regenerate—and there is a broad line between the two characters. A great gulf, indeed, is fixed between them, which only the supernatural Grace of God can enable any one to cross. Do not doubt *that!* Do not imagine that I call it in question, for I would not deceive you.

I believe there are many people who *think* they have been converted, who are not—who have experienced a change, but not *the* change—who have made a change of life and a very good change, too, but still it is not being born-again. A man may change from a drunkard to a sober man and that is a noble thing—but that will not save him. He may change from being a thief to being honest and that is a grand thing—but that will not save him. He may change from being a habitual violator of the Sabbath to being a constant attendant upon the means of Grace—and that is a good thing—but that will not save him. It is not the washing of the stain—it is the washing of the *soul* that is effected in regeneration. The man’s love must be different. The man’s whole affections must run in another channel—in the direct opposite channel from that which they pursued before. In a word, “Except a man is born-again from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

There must be a time of your new birth, or else, as the Lord lives, you shall never see His face with joy. You must pass under the hand of the Holy Spirit and nothing short of that will enable you to enter Heaven. “It troubles me,” says one. Does it? I am glad of that. It is a great mercy when there is enough life to be troubled—a real blessing when that trouble leads to Christ, for if you have ever been to Christ, you have found the Savior and if you are now looking to Christ you are saved. Do you say, “But how about that great change?” I reply that every Believer must have experienced that change, for the greatest of all worlds is faith. What does Christ say?—“This is the work of God (or the God-like work), that you believe on Jesus Christ whom He has sent.” To believe in Jesus is the climax of virtue and the surest evidence of a new heart that can possibly be given.

Have you that evidence? If you have not, be troubled. The Lord trouble you more and more lest you be troubled in the world to come with a grievous trouble from which there is no relief! To full many here present the personal enquiries

we suggest are momentous and urgent. You say that our preaching is inquisitorial. Be it so, but you, yourselves, are the sole inquisitors—each one of you into his own estate and his own pedigree. Murmur not, therefore, if I press you to be strict and rigid. Whatever verdict you pass, it will be referred to a higher court, there to be affirmed or annulled. I felt, before I came into this pulpit, that I might never speak to you again, or that at any rate, some of the hearers now present, would, before my return, be sure to be in another world.

We do not speak to a “perhaps,” because, from long familiarity with this great congregation, we note how regularly some die each week. Of our membership we lose so many in the year as to make a weekly item of names to be removed from the roll because they have joined the Church triumphant above, and, in the congregation, we know that it is a rare thing that ever there should pass a week without someone, who has been our hearer, being transferred to stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. Now, if I never speak to you again, or you shall never hear this voice again, I would like to put it to you, my dear Friend—might not this night become to you a night to be observed unto the Lord for bringing you out of the land of Egypt? Might not this be a night much to be observed with you as long as ever you should live?

“Oh,” says one, “I do not know. I am hopeless about ever being saved.” Where does the hopelessness lie? It does not lie in your *character*, for have we not told you a thousand times over, that, “though your sins are as scarlet they shall be as wool,” if you will but believe in Jesus? I know that you are not tied up with the notion that you have got to do some works to save yourself. If so, I must have spoken very strangely, or you must have listened to me very oddly, for have we not every Sunday told you that it is, “not by works, lest any man should boast,” but by the Grace of God and the free favor of God towards the most undeserving of men?

God saves no man for his goodness! However bad you are, God is willing to forgive and to accept you and receive you as His child. “No,” you say, “it is not that, but still I despair of ever being saved. I cannot come up to the point.” Then whose fault is that, I want to know? Whose fault is that? I will ask you. You say, “I have tried to be saved and I am not.” Did you ever go to God in the silence of your chamber, alone, and confess to Him that you were guilty? Did you ever lie at the foot of His throne, and say, “O God, I deserve Your wrath. I have broken Your Law. I justly deserve Your anger”? Have you done that?

Now, He has said, “he that confesses his sin shall find mercy.” If you have not confessed your sins, whose fault is it that you have not got the mercy? Well, then, have you ever believed in Jesus?—that is, have you trusted in Him who, being God, became Man that He might suffer instead of you what was due from God on account of your sins? “Ah, that is the point. I break down there,” says one. “I cannot believe.” In what can you not believe? Cannot you believe what God tells you? Do you believe the Bible to be God’s Word? “Yes!” Then, I ask, how dare you say, “I cannot believe it”? In believing that Book to be true, you believe what it contains to be true! And God’s own testimony concerning His Son is this—that, “He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him,” and that whoever trusts in Him is saved, and his sins are forgiven him at once.

“Oh, but I do not feel that I am forgiven.” Who says you are to *feel* yourself forgiven? God says you are sinful and admonishes you to confess your sins—to renounce your sins, to supplicate pardon for your sins—to believe in the remission of your sins by the Atonement offered once. It is enough for you that the witness of God is what you are to believe. It is not your *feeling* that is to furnish the rule of your faith. You shall feel happy by-and-by. You shall feel a change of heart by-and-by. But the first thing is to believe God’s witness concerning His Son. “But oh, somehow or other I cannot attain to faith.” Say, have you ever tried? “Well, I have sat down and tried to believe.”

Now, be a reasonable man. Were I to tell you a something that had occurred to your immediate advantage, you would sit down and try to believe it, looking at the possibilities of its being true with many a wishful thought. Or suppose you were compelled to doubt it and thought that I was mistaken, yet if you had an interest, you would go and look at the papers—you would go and inquire at offices where there are telegrams of fresh news. You would ask persons who were likely to judge whether such an event was at all possible. And in that way you would never rest till you could satisfy yourself about the truth of the statement.

Did you ever search God’s Word in that way? Have you read the story of the four Evangelists, to see whether it is so? Have you gone to hear sermons with this in your mind—“I desire to hear in order that I may believe”? Have you been really anxious to try and believe it? I speak to you as a believer in the Bible—and to me it seems monstrous that I should believe what is in the Bible, and yet not trust in Jesus Christ! But have you ever sought to trust Him? “Well, I don’t

know.” No, but I *do* know. You are not in earnest! That is the point. You are earnest sometimes, if you are stirred up. But you go to sleep again. The fact is, there is some private sin you don’t like to give up, or else there is some old companion that you like to keep on with—and you know you cannot go with him and enjoy his conversation—and yet be a Christian.

Ah, there is something that keeps you back, for when the Lord makes a man resolute to be saved, all the devils in Hell cannot daunt His resolution. When once the soul says, “I must be reconciled to God. I must have peace. I must have the Savior. I must be cleansed by the precious blood”—who is there to stop him? Will God stop him? He delights in mercy! Will Jesus stop him? His flowing wounds invite him! Will the Holy Spirit stop him? It were blasphemy to suppose it! Who is to stop him, then? “Why, Satan.” But is Satan by force or fraud to be a match for Christ? “Well, his own heart will stop him.” Yes, but God is greater than his heart and is able to withstand his temptations and to help his infirmities. I charge you, Soul, if you would be saved, get to your chamber and tell God so! Go and speak to Him in the simplest language—“My God, I have offended You. Have mercy upon me. I have followed my own will, but now I desire to be obedient to You. Change my heart. Give me Your Holy Spirit. I have no merits of my own, but You have given Jesus to die for sinners. Lord, I am a sinner. I put my child-like trust in You. Save me, Lord.”

Do you think you will ever be cast away? Why, you will be the first sinner that ever was, who sincerely came to Jesus that way. It cannot be! Do not be afraid, Soul. If you cast yourself on Christ, you can no more be sent to Hell than Christ can! If you have cast in your lot with Christ and have linked yourself to Him by faith, because He lives you shall live, also. Perhaps you know how Mr. Ryland put it? When his wife was dying and she was deeply desponding, though she had been for years a Christian, he said to her—“Well, where are you going, Betsy?” She had been saying to the nurse that she felt she was going to Hell and she said to her husband, “Oh, my Dear, I am going down to Hell.”

“Betsy,” he said, “what do you mean to do when you get there?” “Oh, John, don’t talk so,” she said. “But do you think you will pray, Betsy, when you get there?” “Pray? Yes,” she said, “I will never leave off praying.” “And do you think you will praise God when you get there?” “Ah, yes, I will never, never leave off praising God, whatever He does to me.” “Why,” he said, “they would say, ‘Here is praying Betty Ryland and she is beginning to praise God. Turn her out—we can’t bear to have her here.’” Of course, if any soul were sent there that really believed in Jesus, it would make a revolution in Heaven *and* Hell. It cannot be! God must change before He will let a sinner perish who trusts in Christ!

O, it is wonderful what power faith has! I remember standing at the Mansion House one day waiting to cross over to the other side when the omnibuses were coming from all the corners of the compass and I was looking for an opportunity to run in and out between them. A blind man came up and said, “I am sure you will lead me across. I am sure you will lead me across.” I am sure I did not want the job, but I was quite sure that, if the blind man was sure I would do it, I could not decline to do it—and I did it accordingly. I did not like to have a blind man’s confidence thrown away. It seemed as if his confidence was my compulsion. And, oh, blind Sinner, lay hold upon the garment of Christ tonight and say, “Jesus, I believe You will lead me into Heaven. At any rate, I mean to trust You to do it. I have done with saving myself and I mean to rely on You, and You only.”

I tell you, your faith will compel Him—your trust shall hold Him fast. He will do anything for faith! Was He not overcome at the brook Jabbok by Jacob’s faith? Did not faith in the woman that touched the hem of His garment win a cure? And when He spoke to the Syro-Phoenician woman and called her a dog—did she not win healing for her daughter by the brave stand she made by her faith? The Lord waits to be gracious! Trust Him, Sinner! The Lord help you to do so and He shall have the glory, forever and ever!

And let me just add, here, that it is a night to be much observed among saints in their fellowship one with another. It does us good to listen as well as to talk when the mighty arm and the gracious hand of God, stretched forth on our behalf, furnishes the theme of conversation. There seems to me somehow or other to be a bias given to the whole life by the first call a man receives, as though it tinted the character with a purer hue than most of the subsequent incidents that belong to individual experience. Besides, dear Friends, in recalling the circumstances there will spring up a tender sympathy as well a devout gratitude, like that to which Paul bears witness—“and they glorified God in me.” What love feasts those are in which we commemorate the dawn of spiritual life! How free from conflicting opinions and turbulent passions!

As Cowper sings—

*“Hearts may be found that harbor, at this hour,
The love of Christ in all its quickening power
And lips unstained by folly or by strife,
Whose wisdom, drawn from the deep well of life
Tastes of its healthful origin, and flows
A Jordan for the ablution of our woes.
O days of Heaven, and nights of equal praise,
Serene and peaceful as those heavenly days
When souls drawn upward in communion sweet,
Enjoy the stillness of some close retreat;
Discourse, as if released and safe at home,
Of dangers past and wonders yet to come,
And spread the sacred treasures of the breast
Upon the lap of covenanted rest.”*

Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Exodus 12.

Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.