

AN URGENT REQUEST FOR AN IMMEDIATE ANSWER NO. 2231

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1891,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, MAY 10, 1891.

*“And now if you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me;
that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left.”*
Genesis 24:49.

THE chapter from which the text is taken bristles with points. There is a remarkable parallel between Eliezer seeking a wife for Isaac and the ministers of Christ seeking souls for Jesus. It is something more than an allegory. It is really a very instructive parable of how we are to deal for our Master with the souls of men and women. For as truly as Abraham sent his servant to seek a bride for his son, we are commissioned to search for those who shall be brought into the Church, and at last, as the bride of Christ, sit down at the marriage feast in the Glory Land above!

You will notice how Eliezer prayed all along the way. He had no doubt in his mind as to whether God interfered in human affairs, but boldly and simply sought to know His will. Then, having presented his petition, we find him in quiet confidence holding his peace, “to wit whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not.” And when success crowned his efforts, he was forward to acknowledge that the speedy fulfillment of his objective was in answer to his supplication. It was the guidance of God and not his own acuteness or wisdom, which led to such a favorable issue. Thus it is also with every true minister of the New Testament. Oh, if we do not pray for you, my dear Hearers, our preaching to you will be hypocrisy! We shall never speak to men for God with any power of *persuasion* unless, first, we speak to God for men with power of *supplication*! Not without many a prayer and many a heaving of my heart in sighs have I come here to speak to you tonight. I believe that I am sent to find out some appointed for Christ in the Divine purpose and Covenant and I pray my Master that there may be many such!

While this trusty servant thus prayed to his master's God, see how loyal he was to his master. He evidently realized that he was not on his own errand, but was the chosen instrument to do his lord's will. The phrase, “my master,” is the refrain of this chapter. The word, “master,” occurs 22 times. Eliezer did not aspire to any independence of Abraham, or of Abraham's son. His thoughts were of his master—his words were in praise of his master—his deeds on behalf of his master. He was not his own, but the bond-servant of another. This is also *our* position. Woe to the minister who loses sight of the true relationship between himself and his Lord, or who begins to think of serving his own interests rather than that of Him who called and sent him! My Brothers and Sisters, we are not our own, but the slaves of Christ! May our hearts be always kept loyal to Him! May our lips constantly speak His praise! May our lives always witness to our devotion to our Lord! Nothing we have is our own—all is His—and His absolute ownership of us and ours is our highest delight!

George Herbert speaks of the “Oriental fragrance” which dwells in the words, “My Master.” It is, indeed, a name full of sweet savor and holy gladness. Even *here* it is Heaven to serve Him! But what will it be to see His face, when His bride is brought safely home?—

*“O Jesus, You have promised
To all who follow Thee
That where You are in Glory,
There shall Your servant be!
And Jesus, I have promised
To serve You to the end.
Oh, give me Grace to follow,*

My Master and my Friend.

See how alert Eliezer was to seize the opportunity of obeying his master's orders. His love to Abraham made him quick to carry out the commission with which he was charged. When Rebekah came to the well, he began the conversation in the same way as the Lord Jesus, long afterwards, at Jacob's well, began to talk to the woman of Samaria. He asked her to give him a drink. The two scenes by the well might almost form companion pictures. Then he very skillfully found out her name and was invited to her father's house as a guest. I always feel a special joy when I hear of the visit of a servant of God to a house being the means of winning some member of the household for his Master! We should always aim to make our visits a blessing to those with whom we visit. It speaks much for the consistent life of the man who is enabled to do so. If we realize that we are always on our Master's service, we shall bear a good testimony before those with whom we come in contact, making it quite clear that we watch for souls as those that must give account—that we may do it with joy—and not with grief.

One other thing in this man is noteworthy. He meant business and went with unerring aim straight to the mark. He had not many purposes, but only one. He did not go there for anything else but to find a wife for Isaac. And when he got into pretty comfortable quarters and had been called, by Laban, "the blessed of the Lord," he was not satisfied. He meant business and would not even eat the meat set before him until he had explained his errand. Like every true servant of Christ, he put his Master's business before his own ease or comfort—even before the question of necessary food. When a man begins to think more of his eating than of doing the will of God, he ceases to be a true-hearted minister! Let us imitate the thoroughness of Abraham's servant in this matter. He told Bethuel and Laban what he came for and, before he finished his address, he turned to them and said distinctly, "Now, what answer do you mean to give to my master's message? I cannot be kept in suspense. If you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me. And if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left."

I. Notice, first, that HE STATED HIS CASE. You must not expect men to come to a decision upon a matter which has not been laid before them. Our good young Brother who goes into the pulpit and cries, "Believe, believe," but does not tell his hearers what is to be believed, has not accomplished much! You cannot ask people to buy if you have no goods to show them. But Eliezer opened his pack, exposed his wares and sought, at once, to do business on his master's account. What did he say to his interested listeners?

To begin with, *he told them that his master was great* and gave them some idea how rich he was, for he went over the list of his possessions—his flocks and herds, his silver and gold, his camels and asses, his menservants and maidservants. Thus did he commend his master, as I would also seek to commend mine. Language fails me to speak of His greatness! This world is His and all the worlds that He has made. "The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, says the Lord of Hosts." He lays claim to all things in the earth, animate and inanimate. "Every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." None other can be mentioned beside Him. "Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand and meted out Heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?" So great is He that all other things are small compared with Him. "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, He takes up the isles as every little thing." Is He not a glorious Master to serve? "How great is His goodness and how great is His beauty!"

Having first spoken of his master, *he told them that his master's son was his heir*. That was a very important point in the business. And he spoke about how his master had put all that he had into the hands of his son—that the promises were his and that the inheritance would come to him. He called the son, "master," equally with the father. I also desire to glorify God and to magnify Christ Jesus, His Only-Begotten and Well-Beloved Son. It is the Father's will "that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." He is His Father's heir—He claimed the title in His parable of the wicked husbandmen. When we come on our Master's business, we seek those who shall become "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

This is the third point with Eliezer—*he wanted one who would leave her home and go and be one with his master's son*. He said that his master's son needed a wife and he had come to seek one for him. He needed one who would be willing to go on a long and venturesome journey and be a pilgrim in a strange land with her husband. He would have no other than one who would give herself up to the God of Israel and take a full share with Isaac in the Covenant blessing. Well, now, that is my case, too. The Lord God, the Creator of Heaven and earth, has all manner of good things to bestow upon the

sinful sons of men. There is no measuring the Grace and love of God and He would have you to be His people that He may be your God. He wants those who will be willing to leave all and be united to His Only-Begotten Son, the Lord Jesus, who for our salvation came down from Heaven and took our nature, and lived in it—who took our sin and died for us—that we might be pardoned and forever saved. The Son must see of the travail of His soul. There must be souls that shall be eternally saved through believing on Him. He cannot die in vain! He must have a people who shall be to Him a bride, with whom He shall delight Himself forever and ever. And the question is, are there any such *here*? Are there any here who will yield themselves to His sweet love, who will trust themselves with Him, as Rebekah trusted herself with Isaac—who will come out of the world—and live the separated life with Him? This is the errand on which we have come.

And Eliezer added that *he hoped that he had found the right person*. He believed that it was Rebekah, for he had put it before God in prayer—and in answer to his prayer she had come. She had done exactly as he had laid it down in prayer that she should do. Now, I have a hope dancing in my heart that I have, on this occasion, found the right person. I often wonder why some people are here. There has come into the Tabernacle on the Lord's-Day, many a time, a runaway from his father's house in the country. He has come to London to sin and he has little thought that he came to London to be saved—but here the Word of God has laid hold upon him! There has dropped in here a sailor who had only been a day or two in port, and the last thing that he ever thought was that he should be converted! But here he came and found eternal life! Your coming here in such numbers and your eyes, as you look at me, encourage me, while your willingness to hear what I have to say inspires me to fearlessly deliver my Master's message! Surely God means to bless you! If He gives the hearing ear, will He not give the broken heart? And if He has led you to be anxious to listen to my message, are you not, many of you, the very persons whom He has appointed to be forever united to His beloved Son?

The case being thus faithfully stated by Eliezer, *he now pressed for a reply*. "If you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me. If Rebekah will go with me to be the wife of Isaac, tell me." So I put it to you. If you are willing to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and are ready to leave the world and all its temptations and come to Him, say so! Tell me. Let us know if you have now come to a turning point. You remember how the Roman ambassadors demanded of some who came to them that they should, on the spot, decide whether they meant war with Rome or submission to it? When they asked for time, the ambassadors drew a circle round them, and said, "Before you exit that circle, you must settle whether it is to be peace or war." I would draw, here, a circle round some of you and say, "Your portion must be either salvation or damnation. You have already been hesitating and halting too long. Do not leave that seat till you have decided, one way or the other."

There is, just under the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral, a spot which I once had pointed out to me—it must have been 40 years ago—where a workman, busily engaged at the top of the dome, fell, and, of course, was dashed to pieces on the floor. And I saw the mark of his chisel on the place where he was killed. I wonder whether there are any marks in these pews where souls were lost, where some have parleyed with God, refused His Grace, resisted His Spirit and gone thenceforth the downward road? I would to God that, instead thereof, there might be some mark where the Grace of God has worked effectual salvation! I believe there is not a single pew or seat in the aisles in this place, that might not legitimately be marked as a place where souls have been saved, for, time out of mind, when friends come here and speak on Monday nights, you must have noticed how one of them says, "The third seat from that pillar over yonder was the place where I sat when the Light of God came." And another says, "Christ found me in a back seat in the top gallery," and so on, until they have pointed to almost every part of the building as the place where God has called someone by His Grace! I hope that some of you are now sitting in the very spot where you are predestinated to be born again unto everlasting life!

II. In the second place, it is clearly set before us, that when Eliezer had stated his case, HE WISHED TO HAVE A FAVORABLE REPLY. I might almost say he *expected* it. After his wonderful guidance and his hospitable reception, his hopes would rise high that his quest would be speedily brought to a satisfactory end.

If a favorable reply was given to him, *it would enable him to execute his errand*. Whereas, if the answer was against him, he could not, then, carry out his master's orders. If no soul gets saved through this discourse, I cannot carry on my business. "Oh, well," says one, "a man may preach very faithfully and yet he may have no souls saved." Yes, a fisherman may fish and never catch any fish, but he is not much of a fisherman, and so, if there were no souls saved, perhaps I might find some way of satisfying my conscience, but it is unknown to me as yet! I have never sought such a solace and hope I never shall. With me it is, "Give me children, or else I die." If you are not saved and brought to Christ, I feel as if I must

give up my work of preaching to you. I cannot stand here beating the air. If my hearers are not converted, I have lost my time—I have lost the exercise of brain and heart! I feel as if I had lost my hope and lost my life unless I find for my Lord some of His blood-bought ones—and I must find some of them by this sermon!

I think that Eliezer longed for a favorable reply because it would be an answer to his prayer. Possibly you have not prayed for yourself, but we have prayed for you—not that we know your name, or your case—but we have often gone over in secret a case just like yours, and we can say that we have brought you before God in earnest supplication. And perhaps there are godly people at home who are praying that as you are here, you may get a blessing. I frequently see people who come to join the Church and they say, “My husband is not converted,” or, “My daughter is not converted.” “Do you get them to come and hear the Word?” I ask. “Oh, yes, Sir, they come and hear!” “Well,” I have said, “if you get them into the battle, where the shots are flying, they are very likely to be wounded.” So we have often prayed that when some of you have been persuaded to come and hear the Word of God, the Spirit of God may get hold of you and that you may fall wounded beneath His sharp sword, or receive an arrow between the joints of the harness!

The principal reason, however, why this good man wanted to find a willing response about Rebekah was because *it would gladden his master’s son*. “Oh,” he thought, “what joy I shall give him if I take back to him the right woman, the wife whom God has appointed for him! He has lost his mother, Sarah, and he is pining and grieving. But if I can take him back one who will fill her place in his tender heart, I shall rejoice.” As for us, our one business is to make glad the heart of Christ! His heart was pierced with a spear after having been broken with great anguish—and there is nothing that will refresh Him like a soul yielding itself to His care. Who will do that here? Are there any in this house who are now saying, “I will belong to Christ from this time forth. I will trust Him, for He loved me, and gave Himself for me”? Happy messenger, to stand here and tell His story, and to say, “My Lord is waiting for you in the far country. He has sent me to invite you to share with Him all that He has! If your heart is willing to take Him, He gives Himself to you.”

His only complaint is, “You will not come unto Me that you might have life.” And His declaration is, “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” Any, “him” that comes to Him, He will receive and bless! Eliezer was quite sure his master would deal tenderly and truly with Rebekah, therefore he asked her father and brother to “deal kindly and truly” with him. I am quite sure that my Master will deal “kindly and truly” with you—He could not do otherwise! If you but knew His heart, or had a glimpse of His beauty, you would hesitate no longer. Will you not give Him a favorable answer, and say, “Yes, we will deal kindly and truly with your Master, and will yield our hearts to Him at once and forever”?

I think, too, that Eliezer had begun to feel that *it would be for Rebekah’s benefit* to go to his master. He had seen her face at the well. He liked the style of the young woman and he thought, “If I can get her for Isaac, she will be settled in life; she will be the mistress and queen of a great household; she will have a happy husband and all that her heart can desire.” As I think of some here who have never found peace, I say to myself that if I could only get you to Christ, how happy you would be! If you would come and trust Him, your everlasting fortune would be made. If you would yield yourselves to Him, there would be an end of sin, an end of doubt, an end of fear and an end of terror. You would be saved! Your morality, which is now so precarious, would rise into a solid spirituality, for you would be made holy through the indwelling Spirit. Seeing that this would be the case, could I do you a better turn than to lead you to Jesus?

John B. Gough tells a story of how he was fetched from a railway station to speak. one night, and the cab that was sent for him had a broken window. He noticed that the man who came in the cab put a handkerchief over his head as he sat close up against the hole in the window—and then he observed that he put his head against the window. Mr. Gough said, “Have you a cold in your head?” “No,” he said, “but there is a nasty hole in this pane of glass and I am afraid that *you* may take cold. I am sticking my head into the hole to shield you, for you taught me to be a man and a Christian.” Such gratitude as that was most touching—and if we can bring any to Christ, I am sure they will be very grateful to us. If we can lead them to Jesus, they will feel as if they could not do too much for us. therefore out of love to them, having so many who are now our dear children in Christ, we would plead with them, and say, “Give us a good answer and say ‘Yes’ to the overture of our Master’s Son.”

III. But now the point of the text is that HE WAS DETERMINED TO HAVE AN ANSWER. He says, “If you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me.” He would have their answer, whether it was, “Yes,” or, “No.” “If not, tell me.” May I ask that everyone here will say, “Yes,” or, “No,” to the invitation to give himself up

to Christ? If you will do so, say, "I will." If you will not do so, say deliberately, "I will not." I wish I could get hold of an undecided man and, taking his hand, could say to him, "Now, you must tell me which it will be." I can imagine some of you would say, "Oh, give me time to consider!" and I would reply, "You have *had* time to consider. Your hair is getting gray." In spite of all our entreaties, people say, "Oh, but I do not like to decide so suddenly!" If I asked you whether you would be honest, I hope that you would not take many minutes to answer that! Why, then, should you hesitate so long in giving your adherence to Christ? I am like Abraham's servant—I must have an answer!

But can we rightly press men to decide if we fear that they will answer, "No"? I think we may, because, from the nature of the case, *no answer means a denial*. How many of our hearers have thus, for years, turned their back upon Christ by the simple method of giving no answer at all? "We hear what you say, Sir," they murmur, "and thank you for saying it," but, nevertheless, they go out and go on their way—and forget what manner of men they are! Such a response is a refusal—and it is none the less a refusal because you will probably retort, "But I did not say, 'No,' Sir. Indeed, one of these days I may, perhaps, say, 'Yes.'" But, meanwhile, you reject the proposal and refuse to give yourself up to the Lord! The question is, Will you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? The absence of an affirmative answer means, "No, I will not." I am sure that it does in every case. No argument can be raised about that.

But if you will answer me, "No, I will not have Christ. I will not believe on Him. I will not become a Christian. I will not leave my old ways—I mean to go on in them," well, I thank you for the answer, pained as I am, because now we can talk it over! This is better than no response, for *now* we have something to work upon. *An ill answer can be considered*, while no answer baffles all our efforts to help you! It is far more hopeful to encounter opposition than to meet with indifference. It is a great thing, when a ship is at sea, for the captain to know whereabouts he is—and when we meet with those who distinctly reject Christ—we at once know our bearings. If you say, "No, I am not a Christian and I do not want to be," so far you are honest and I need you, now, to think it over.

Would you like to die in this frame of mind? You may die where you are sitting! Are you wise to come to this determination? Do you think that this is a resolution which you can justify before the judgement bar of God? You will certainly have to appear there! After death you will rise again when the trumpet of the archangel sounds and, as surely as you are here, you will have to stand before the Great White Throne whereon Christ will sit as Judge! How will the resolution which you have now made stand the light of that tremendous Day? I pray you, think of it, and I hope that you will alter your decision as many another man has done when he has calmly considered the magnitude of the issues at stake and the awful result which must come of rejecting Him who is now the Savior, but who will one day sit as the Judge!

But we are the more determined to press you for some decision because an *ill answer will set us free to go to others*. You see, Eliezer says, "If not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left." Do not suppose that if you refuse Christ, He will lose the effect of His death! "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied." If *you* will not come unto Him, others will. If you reject Him, He has a people who will accept Him, by His almighty Grace. O Sirs, if you that hear the Gospel will not have my Master, we will go and bring in the publicans and harlots—and they shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven before you! Sons of pious parents, children of Sunday schools, if you believe not, you shall be cast into "outer darkness" where shall be "weeping and gnashing of teeth"—while the people whom you despise—infidels and profligates, the very scum of society, shall accept the Savior and live!

Oh, I charge you, think not that your refusal of the Gospel invitation will leave any gaps in the ranks of the redeemed! Our Savior, in His parable of the marriage of the king's son, foretold what will happen. The king said to his servants, "The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go you, therefore, into the highways and as many as you shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests." But I would urge you to yield yourself unto the Lord, that you may be found at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Do not trifle with eternal matters! If you want to play the fool, do it with counters or with pebbles, but not with your *soul* that shall live forever in bliss or in woe!

My importunity with you is strengthened when I think that, perhaps, if you give me the answer straight out, "No, I am not a Christian and I do not mean to be one," you may, in saying it, see more clearly what a terrible decision you have arrived at. *An ill answer may startle you* and ultimately lead you to repent of your folly and reverse your decision! If you would write down—"I am not a Christian and I never mean to be one," it might startle you still more. I challenge you to

do so! And when it is written, put it over the mantelpiece and look at it. It will be far better to do that, horrible as it is, than to continue in this state of wicked suspense, indifferent as to whether you are lost or saved, undecided whether you are for Christ or against Him and yet, in your heart of hearts, dead in trespasses and sins! In this very place, I once urged those who were undecided to go home and write down, either the word, "Saved," or, "Lost," and sign their name to the paper. One man, when he got into his house, asked for pen and paper. And when his wife enquired why he wanted it, he said he was going to do what the parson said and write down, "Lost." She refused to fetch him the paper if he was going to do that.

So he got it himself and put down a capital L. At that time his little girl climbed up in the chair behind him and said, "No, father, you shan't do that! I'd rather die than you should do that"—and the child's tears fell on his hand as she spoke. What my sermon had failed to do, those tears accomplished! The strong man was bowed and yielded himself to Christ—and when they got up from their knees in that little room, he took the pen, and changing the L into an S, wrote "Saved." He was saved because he came face to face with the fact that he was lost! His ill answer startled both himself and his child! May God work the same change in you, both for your own sake and also for the sake of your loved ones!

I want to press you for some kind of answer because, like Eliezer, I have promised my Master to make a search for you and *an ill answer will clear me of my oath*. If I can get a, "No," from you as your answer, and am certain that you will not go with me to my Master's Son, I shall be clear. It was so with Abraham's servant—he and his master agreed to that at the first. When men say, "No," and entreaties are of no further use, and the preaching of the Gospel has no power over them, then we must leave them and carry the glad tidings to others, just as Paul and Barnabas of old said to the angry Jews at Antioch, "It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing you put it from you and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." I beseech you, do not put Christ away from you! And I press you for a definite answer. I say, as Eliezer said, "If you will deal kindly and truly with my Master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left."

Now I want to have a little talk with you over this matter. My dear Friend, you are in peril of eternal death. While you are hesitating, life is ebbing. During the past few months, how many of our dear friends have been taken away by influenza and other causes! This congregation has suffered from sickness, in family after family, as I never knew it suffer before! May you not be taken? I charge you, therefore, do not act as though you had plenty of time. Possibly you have not another week to live! The clock, as it ticks, seems to me to say, "Now, now, now, now, now, now." And for some of you, there is an alarm in the clock, which, when it runs down, utters this warning, "Now or never, now or never, now or never."

After all, the matter that we have in hand is not one that requires great debate! Whether I will believe the Truth of God or not should not be a matter of discussion. Whether I will receive the gift of God or not should not be a thing to be argued about if I am in my right mind! Whether, being lost, I am willing to be saved—whether, having the Gospel of eternal life proclaimed to me, I should accept it by faith—well, I need not ask the sages as to what I shall answer, nor need I go to the Law Courts to consult the judges as to my reply! This is a thing so simple that it requires no argument! Who will choose to be damned? Who will refuse eternal life? Surely these are questions that should be decided at once!

Waiting and trifling have done you no good up to now. The countryman, when he wanted to cross the river, and found it deep, said that he would sit down and wait till the water was all gone by. He waited, but the river was just as deep after all his waiting! And with all your delay, the difficulties in the way of your accepting Christ do not get any less. If you look at the matter rightly, you will see that there are no great difficulties in the way, nor were there ever such obstacles as your imagination pictures.

Another countryman, having to cross Cheapside one morning, was so confused by the traffic of omnibuses and cabs and foot passengers that he said he felt sure he could not get across the road and would wait till the people thinned out a little. But all day long they never did thin out. Unless he had waited till the evening, he would have found little difference in that perpetual stream of hurrying people. O Friends, you have waited until you can get "a convenient season" to become a Christian and, after all your delay, the way is not any clearer! Twenty years ago some of you were as near decisions for Christ as you are now. No, you seemed nearer! I then thought, "Oh, some of them will soon believe in Jesus and yield their hearts to Him!" But you said, then, that it was not quite time. Is it time *now*? Is the day without difficulty any nearer? Is the season any more suitable? No, indeed, there is no improvement!

Let me say that I believe that your waiting has not only done you no good, but has positively done you great harm! There were times when it seemed easy for you to yield to the pressure of the Divine Spirit. It certainly is not easier *now*. Indeed, it is more difficult. I think sometimes God treats men as Benjamin Franklin treated the man who stood loafing in his bookshop and, at last took up a book and asked, "How much is this?" Franklin replied, "A shilling." "A shilling?" Franklin said, "a shilling." And he would not give the price. After staying about 10 minutes, he said, "Come, Mr. Franklin, now what will you take for it?" Franklin answered, "Two shillings." "No," he said, "you are joking!" "I am not joking," said Franklin, "the price is two shillings." The man waited and sat a while, thinking. "I want the book," he drawled out, "still, I will not give two shillings. What will you take for it?" Franklin said, "Three shillings." "Well," the man said, "why do you raise your price?" To which Franklin responded, "You see, you have wasted so much of my time that I could better have afforded to take one shilling at first than three shillings now."

Sometimes, if men come to Christ at the very first invitation, it is a sweet and easy coming. See how dear young children often yield themselves to Christ and how peaceful is their entrance into the rest of faith! But when people wait. When they postpone believing. When they violate conscience. When they tread down all the uprising of holy thoughts within them, it becomes much harder for them to trust in Christ than it would have been when He was first preached to them. I come, therefore, to you, again, and say, "If you will deal kindly and truly with my Master, tell me. And if not, tell me, and tell me now."

"Well," says one, "I am glad you have spoken to us. I will think it over." No, Friend, I do not mean that. I do not want you to think it over. You have had enough of thinking! I pray that God's Spirit may lead you to an immediate decision. "Well, suppose that we consider it during the week?" you ask. No, that will not suit either my Master or myself. I want the answer *now*. I am like a messenger carrying a letter on which is written, "The bearer will wait for a reply." I was once in a country town and I said to my host, when I went to bed, "I have to be in London tomorrow and I cannot get up in time for my work unless I leave by a train which I can catch readily enough if you wake me at six o'clock." Well, my host was an Irishman, so he woke me at *five* o'clock. And when I sat up in bed, I said, "What time is it?" He said, "You have only another hour to sleep."

The consequence was that I missed my train. If He had only wakened me at the proper time and said, "Now you must get up," I would have dressed at once, but as he said, "You have only another hour to sleep," of course I slept that hour and another one as well, for I was weary. The same principle applies to you. If I say to you, "Go home and think it over all the week," I shall be giving you a week in which to remain in rebellion against God! And I have no right to do that. I shall be giving you a week in which you are to continue an unbeliever—and he that is an unbeliever is in peril of eternal ruin, for, "He that believes not shall be damned." Worse than all, the week may lead to many other weeks—to months, perhaps, and years—perhaps to a whole *eternity* of woe! I cannot give you five minutes! God the Holy Spirit speaks by me, now, to souls whom God has chosen from before the foundation of the world! And He says, "Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." The Holy Spirit says, "Today, even today." "Turn you, turn you from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?" The question comes to you, Will you be Christ's? "If you will deal kindly and truly with my Master, tell me: and if not, tell me."

The best answer you can give is in the verses that follow the text. "Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceeds from the Lord: we cannot speak unto you bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before you; take her." Oh I wish some of you would thus respond to my appeal this day! This thing is also from the Lord—it was He who gave me this message—it was He who brought you to hear it! Surely you will not be found fighting against God! Your heart is open to Him—He sees the faintest desire that you have toward Him. Breathe out your wish, now, and say, "My heart is before You—*take it.*"—

***"Take my poor heart, and let it be
Forever closed to all but Thee!
Seal You my breast and let me wear
That pledge of love forever there."***

He will not be slow to accept that which is offered to Him! He will take you now and He will keep you forever!

"How is it to be done?" says one. The plan is very simple. Jesus Christ took upon Himself the sins of all who ever will trust Him. Come and rest upon His atoning Sacrifice. Give yourself up to Him wholly and unreservedly and He will save you. Take Him to be your Savior by the simple act of faith. The pith of the matter is that I, being lost, give myself over to

Christ to save me. I believe that the act of faith was very well set forth in the statement of a poor imbecile. They said that he was an idiot, but I think that he had more real sense than many a man who boasts of his intellect. Someone said to him, "John, have you got a soul?" "No," he said, "I ain't got no soul." "Why, John, how is that?" He replied, "I had a soul once, but I lost it, and Jesus Christ found it, so I have just let Him keep it." There is the whole philosophy of salvation. You have lost your soul. Christ has found it! Let Him keep it! God bless you! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Genesis 24.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—508, 670, 568, 658.

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON:

DEAR READER—This sermon is an urgent appeal to the undecided. And if you are in that condition, I would by this letter press the suit home in the most personal manner. I am a sick man who has narrowly escaped the hand of death and I feel that the things of eternity ought not to be trifled with. To be saved at the last, our wisdom is to be saved at once. If I had left my soul's matters for a sick bed, I could not have attended to them there, for I was delirious and the mind could not fix itself sensibly upon any subject. Before the cloud lowers over your mind, give your best attention to the Word of the Lord. I beseech you, dear Reader, to do this, for you cannot tell how soon the hour of life may end.

It has been life to me to hear of souls saved by God's Grace through these sermons and I am praying the Lord to give me a deep and long draught of this heart-reviving joy, by causing me to hear that this discourse is made to thousands the means of life from the dead! It is a large request, but the Lord has said, "Open your mouth wide and I will fill it." Thus would I open my mouth in prayer for you, dear Reader, and thousands like you. Do you not, in your heart of hearts, desire that the Lord would hear His servant's petition?

Yours to serve as strength returns,

Mentone, November 14, 1891

C. H. SPURGEON.

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