

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

“EVEN NOW.”

A Sermon

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Even now.”—John xi. 22.

I HOPE that there are a great many persons here who are interested in the souls of those around them. We shall certainly never exercise faith concerning those for whose salvation we have no care. I trust, also, that we are diligent in looking after individuals, especially those who are amongst our own family and friends. This was what Martha did; her whole care was for her brother. It is often easier to have faith that Christ can save sinners in general, than to believe that he can come into our own home, and save some particular member of our household. But, oh, the joy when this comes to pass; when we are able to kneel beside some of our loved ones, and rejoice with them in being made alive by the power of the Holy Ghost! We cannot expect to have this privilege, however, unless like Martha we send our prayer to Jesus, and go to meet him, and tell him of our need. In the presence of Christ it seems very natural to trust him even at the worst extremity. It is when we are at our wits’ end that he delights to help us. When our hopes seem to be buried, then it is that God can give us a resurrection. When our Isaac is on the altar, then the heavens are opened, and the voice of the Eternal is heard. Art thou giving way to despair concerning thy dear friend? Art thou beginning to doubt thy Saviour, and to complain of his delay? Be sure that Jesus will come at the right time, though he must be the judge of which is the best time for him to appear.

Martha had a fine faith. If we all had as much honest belief in Christ as she had, many a man, who now lies dead in his sins, would, ere long, hear that voice which would call him forth from his tomb, and restore

him unto his friends. Martha's faith had to do with a dreadful case. Her brother was dead, and had been buried, but her faith still lived; and in spite of all things which went against her, she believed in Christ, and looked to him for help in her extremity. Her faith went to the very edge of the gulf, and she said, "But I know, that *even now*, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee."

Still, Martha had not so much faith as she thought she had. But a few hours after she had confessed her confidence in the power of the Lord Jesus, or perhaps it was only a few minutes, she stood at the grave of her brother, and evidently doubted the wisdom of him she professed to trust. She objected to the stone being removed; and, strong in the admitted facts of the case, she urged her reason, and said, "Lord, by this time he stinketh." Well, but, Martha, you said, not very long ago, "I know that even now the Christ can interpose." Yes, she said it, and she believed it in the way in which most of us believe; but when her faith was sharply tried by a matter of fact, she did not appear to have had all the faith she professed. I suspect this also is true of most of us. We often fancy our confidence in Christ is much stronger than it really is. I think I have told you of my old friend, Will Richardson, who said, when he was seventy-five years of age, that it was a very curious thing, that all the winter through, he thought he should like to be a-harvesting, or out in the hay-field, because he felt so strong. He imagined that he could do as much as any of the youngsters. "But," he said, "do you know, Mr. Spurgeon, when the summer comes, I do not get through the haymaking; and when the autumn comes, I find I have not sufficient strength for reaping?" So it often is in spiritual things. When we are not called upon to bear the trouble, we feel wonderfully strong; but when the trial comes, very much of our boasted faith is gone in smoke. Take heed that ye examine well your faith; let it be true and real, for you will need it all.

However, Christ did not take Martha at her worst, but at her best. When our Lord says, "According to your faith be it unto you," he does not mean "According to your faith in its ebb," but "According to your faith in its flood." He reads the thermometer at its highest point, not at its lowest; not even taking the "mean temperature" of our trust. He gives us credit for our quickest pace; not counting our slowest, nor seeking to discover our average speed in this matter of faith. Christ did for Martha all she could have asked or believed; her brother did rise again, and he was restored to her, and to his friends. In thy case, too, O

thou trembling, timorous believer, the Lord Jesus will take thee at thy best, and he will do for thee great things, seeing that thou desirest to believe greatly, and that thy prayer is, “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief! ”

The point upon which Martha chiefly rested, when she expressed her faith, was the power of Christ in intercession with his Father. “I know,” said she, “that, even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.” Since the omnipotence of God could be claimed, she felt no anxiety as to the greatness of the request. “Whatsoever” was asked could easily be gained, if it was only asked by him who never was denied. Beloved in the Lord, our Christ is still alive, and he is still pleading. Can you believe, even now, that whatever he shall ask of God, God will give it him, and give it you for his dear Son’s sake? What an anchorage is the intercession of Christ! “He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Here is a grand pillar to rest the weight of our souls upon: “He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Surely, we may have great faith in him who never wearies, and who never fails; who lives, indeed, for no other purpose than to plead for those who trust in his dying love, and in his living power. “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” Fall back upon the intercessory power of Christ in every time of need, and you will find comfort that will never fail you.

It is a grand thing to have faith for the present, not bemoaning the past, nor dreaming of some future faith which we hope may yet be ours. The present hour is the only time we really possess. The past is gone beyond recall. If it has been filled with faith in God, we can no more live on that faith now than we can live today on the bread we ate last week. If, on the contrary, the past has been marred by our unbelief, that is no reason why this moment should not witness a grand triumph of trust in the faithful Saviour. Let us not excuse our present lack of faith by the thought of some future blessing. No confidence which we may learn to put in Christ, in the days to come, can atone for our present unbelief. If we ever mean to trust him, why should we not do so now, since he is as worthy of our belief now as he ever will be, and since what we miss now we miss beyond recall.

“The present, the present is all thou hast
For thy sure possessing,

Like the patriarch's angel, hold it fast,
Till it give its blessing."

In this verse, "I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee," I want to fix your attention only on the two words, "Even now." We have just sung—

"Pass me not, O tender Saviour,
Let me love and cling to thee;
I am longing for thy favour;
When thou comest, call for me:
Even me."

Our hymn was, "Even me." The sermon is to be "Even now." If you have been singing "Even me," and so applying the truth to your own case, say also, with an energy of heart that will take no denial, "Even now," and listen with earnest expectation to that gospel which is always in the present tense: "While it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart, as in the provocation." Remember, too, that this is not only the preacher's word, for the Holy Ghost saith, "Today": "Even now."

I shall use these words, first, in reference *to those who are concerned about the souls of others*, as Martha was about her dead brother. Believe that Christ can save even now. Then I shall speak *to you who are somewhat concerned about your own souls*. You believe, perhaps, that Christ can save. I want you to be persuaded that he can save you even now; that is to say, at this exact hour and minute, going by the clock, while you hear these words, even now, Christ can forgive; even now, Christ can save; even now, Christ can bless.

I. First, CAN WE BELIEVE THIS WITH REFERENCE TO OTHERS? If you are in the same position as Martha, I can bring out several points of likeness which should encourage you to persevere. You, mother, have prayed for your boy; you, father, have pleaded for your girl; you, dear wife, have been much in prayer for your husband; you, beloved teacher, have frequently brought your class before God; and yet there is a bad case now pressing upon your mind, and your heart is heavy about some dear one, whose condition seems hopeless. I want you to believe that now, even now, Christ can grant your prayer, and save that soul; that now, even now, he can give you such a blessing that the past delay shall be more than recompensed to you.

There is one, for instance, in whom we are deeply interested, and we can say that *the case has cost us great sorrow*. So Martha could

have said of Lazarus. “Blessed Master”, she might have said, “my brother took the fever”—(for I should think it was a fever that he had)—“and I watched him; I brought cold water from the well, and I lavèd his burning brow; I was by his bedside all night. Nobody knows how my heart was wrung with anguish as I saw the hot beaded drops upon his brow, and tried to moisten his parched tongue and lips. I sorrowed as though I was about to die myself; but in spite of all that, I believe even now that thou canst help me; even now.” Alas! there are many griefs in the world like this. A mother says, “Nobody knows what I have suffered through that son of mine. I shall die of a broken heart because of his conduct.” “No one can tell,” says a father, “what grief that daughter of mine has caused me. I have sometimes wished that she had never been born.” There have been many, many such stories told into my ear, in which a beloved one has been the cause of anguish and agony untold to gracious, loving hearts. To those so sorely troubled I now speak. Can you believe that *even now* the living Intercessor is “mighty to save”? It may be that you are at this moment trembling on the verge of the blessing you so long have sought. God give you faith to grasp it “even now”!

With other persons we are met with a fresh difficulty. *The case has already disappointed us.* That is how some of you have found it, is it not? “Yes,” you say, “I have prayed long for a dear friend, and I believed, some time ago, that my prayer was heard, and that there was a change for the better; indeed, there was an apparent change; but it came to nothing.” You are just like Martha. She kept saying to herself, “Christ will come. Brother is very ill, but Jesus will come before he dies; I know he will. It cannot be that he will stay away much longer; and when he comes, Lazarus will soon be well.” Day after day, Mary and she sent their messenger to look toward the Jordan, to see if Jesus was not coming. But he did not come. It must have been a terrible disappointment to both these sisters; enough to stagger the strongest faith they had ever had in the sympathy of Christ. But Martha got the better of it, and she said, “Even now, though disappointed so bitterly, I believe that thou canst do whatsoever thou wilt.” Learn from Martha, my discouraged brother. You thought that your friend was converted, but he went back again; you thought that there was a real work of grace upon his heart, but it turned out to be a mere disappointment, and disappeared, like the mist before the sun. But can you not believe over the head of your disappointment, and say, “I believe even now, even

now”? Blessed shall your faith be, if it gets so far.

Perhaps further difficulties have met us. We have attempted to help someone, and *the case has proved our own helplessness*. “Ah, yes,” says one, “that exactly describes me. I never felt so helpless in my life. I have done all that I can do, and it amounts to nothing. I have been careful in my example. I have been prayerful in my words. I have been very patient and longsuffering. I have tried to induce my beloved one to go and listen to the gospel here and there. I have put holy books in his way, and all the while I have seized opportunities to plead with him, often with tears in my eyes, and I can do nothing! I am dead beat.” Yes, that is just where Martha got to; she had done everything, and nothing seemed to be of the least use. None of the medicines she applied seemed to soothe the sufferer. She had gone down the village, perhaps to the house of Simon the leper, who was a friend of hers, and he possibly advised some new remedies; but nothing seemed to make the least difference. Her brother got worse and worse, until she saw that, though she had nursed him back to health the last time he had been ill, she was now utterly powerless. Then he died. Yet, even though things had gone so far as that, she had faith in Christ. In like manner, your case is beyond your skill; but can you not believe that, even now, the end of nature will be the beginning of grace; can you not even now feel that you shall find that word true, “He shall not fail”? Christ never did fail yet, and he never will. When all the doctors give a patient up, the Great Physician can step in and heal. Can you believe concerning your friend “even now”?

But perhaps you are in a worse plight still. *The case has been given up*. I think I hear one kind, gracious soul, whose hope has been crushed, say, “Well, sir, that is just what we have come to about my boy. We held a little family meeting, and said we must get him to go away to Australia, if we can. If he will only go to America, or somewhere abroad, it will be a relief to have him out of our sight. He keeps coming home intoxicated, and gets brought before the magistrates. He is a disgrace to us. He is a shame to the name he bears. We have given him up.” Martha had come to this. She had given her brother up, and had actually buried him; yet she believed in the power of Christ. Ah, there are many people that are buried alive! I do not know that such a thing ever happens in the cemetery; but I know it happens in our streets and homes. Many are buried morally, and given up by us before God gives them up. And, somehow, it is often the given-up people that God

delights to bless. Can you believe that even now, *even now*, prayer can be heard, that even now the Holy Ghost can change the nature, and that even now Christ can save the soul? Believest thou this? I shall rejoice if thou canst, and thou too shalt rejoice ere long.

But there is still a lower depth. Here is one who is much concerned about an individual, and *the case is loathsome*. “Though we loved him once,” he says, “his character has now become such that it is pestilential to the family. He leads others astray. We cannot think of what he has done without the very memory of his life spreading a taint over our conscience, and over our mind.” There are persons alive in the world, who are just masses of living putridity. There may be such here. I should be glad if a word I said could reach them. It is a shocking thing that there are men and women, made in the image of God, with talents and ability, with capacity and conscience, who, nevertheless, seem to live for nothing else but to indulge their licentious passions, and to lead others into vices which else they had never known. There must come an awful day of reckoning to such when the Christ of God shall sit upon the throne, and shall weigh before all men the secret doings of libertines, of debauched men, and depraved women. If any of you have such a one related to you, can you believe that even now Christ can raise that one? Yours is just the same sort of case as Martha had. She could have said, “Brother is buried: worse than that, he stinketh.” She did not like to say that of dear Lazarus, her own brother, but she could not help saying it. And there are some men, of whom we are compelled to say, no matter how much our love seeks to shield them, that their character stinks. But can you still believe that, even now, there is hope that God can intervene, and that grace can save? Why, my dear friend, you and I know that it is so! I do believe it; we must all believe it. If it comes to a case very near and dear to you, and you begin to be a little bit staggered, recollect what you used to be yourselves—not openly so depraved, perhaps, but inwardly quite the same, and take hope for these foul men and women from the remembrance of what you were: “and such were some of you; but ye are washed.” When John Newton used to preach at St. Mary Woolnoth, he always believed in the possibility of the salvation of the worst of his hearers; for he had been himself one of the vilest of the vile. When he was very old, and they said, “Dear Mr. Newton, you are too old to preach; you had better not go into the pulpit now,” he said, “What! shall the old African blasphemer, who has been saved by grace, leave

off preaching the gospel while there is breath in his body? Never.” I think while there is breath in the body of some of us, we must go on telling the gospel; for, if it saved us, it can save the worst of sinners. We are bound to believe that even now Christ can save even the most horrible and the most vile.

“His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood availed for me.”

Perhaps there is even a more desperate difficulty still, with reference to someone whom we would fain see living for God. *The case is beyond our reach.* “Yes,” that brother quickly answers, “now you have come to my trouble. I do not even know where my boy is; he ran away, and we have not heard from him for years. How can I help him? “Why, believe that “even now” Christ can speak to him, and save him! He can send his grace where we can send our love. The great difficulty which lies like a stone at the door of the sepulchre will not prevent him speaking the life-giving word. He has all forces at his command, and when he says the word, the stone shall be rolled away, and the son that is lost shall be found; the dead shall be made alive again. Though you cannot reach your son, or your daughter, Christ can meet with them. “The Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear.” Though your prodigal boy or your wandering girl be at the end of the earth, Christ can reach them, and save them. “Have faith in God.” “Even now” Christ can aid you.

“Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to God alone,
Laughs at impossibilities,
And says, ‘It shall be done.’”

I know there are some Christian people who have drifted into the terribly wicked state of giving up their relatives as hopeless. There was a brother here, who is now in heaven, a good, earnest Christian man, whose son had treated him very shockingly indeed, and the father, justly indignant, felt it right to give his son up. He had often tried to help him, but the young man was so scandalous a scapegrace that I did not wonder that the old man turned him away. But one night, as I was preaching here, I spoke in something like the same way in which I have spoken now; and the next morning the old man’s arm was about his child’s neck. He could not help himself; he felt he must go and find his son out, and seek again to reclaim him. It seemed to have been the

appointed time for that boy's salvation, for it pleased God that within a few months that son died, and he passed away with a good hope, through grace, that he had been brought to his Saviour's feet by his father's love. If any of you have a very bad son, go after him, seeking, until by the grace of God, you shall find him. And you that have grown hopeless about your relatives, you must try not to give them up. If other people cast them off, you must not, for they are allied to you by the ties of blood. Seek them out. You are the best person in the world to seek them, and the most likely to find them, if you can believe that even now, when the worst has come to the worst, "even now," almighty grace can step in, and save the lost soul.

Oh, that some here may have faith to claim at this moment the salvation of their friends! May desire be wrought into expectancy, and hope become certainty! Like Jacob at Jabbok, may we lay hold of God, saying, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." To such faith the Lord will give a quick response. He that will not be denied shall not be denied. My friend, Hudson Taylor, who has done such a wonderful work for China, is an instance of this. Brought up in a godly home, he, as a young man, tried to imitate the lives of his parents, and failing in his own strength to make himself better, he swung to the other extreme, and began to entertain sceptical notions. One day, when his mother was from home, a great yearning after her boy possessed her, and she went up to her room to plead with God that "even now" he would save him. If I remember aright, she said that she would not leave the room until she had the assurance that her boy would be brought to Christ. At length her faith triumphed, and she rose quite certain that all was well, and that "even now" her son was saved. What was he doing at that time? Having half an hour to spare, he wandered into his father's library, and aimlessly took down one book after another to find some short and interesting passage to divert his mind. He could not find what he wanted in any of the books; so, seeing a narrative tract, he took it up with the intention of reading the story, and putting it down when the sermon part of it began. As he read, he came to the words "the finished work of Christ", and almost at the very moment in which his mother, who was miles away, claimed his soul of God, light came into his heart. He saw that it was by the finished work of Christ that he was to be saved; and kneeling in his father's library, he sought and found the life of God. Some days afterwards, when his mother returned, he said to her, "I have some news to tell you." "Oh, I know what it is!" she

answered, smiling, "You have given yourself to God." "Who told you?" he asked, in astonishment. "God told me," she said, and together they praised him, who, at the same moment, gave the faith to the mother, and the life to the son, and who has since made him such a blessing to the world. It was the mother's faith, claiming the blessing "even now", that did it. I tell you this remarkable incident that many others may be stirred up to the same immediate and importunate desire for the salvation of their children and relatives. There are some things we must always pray for with submission as to whether it is the will of God to bestow them upon us: but for the salvation of men and women we may ask without a fear. God delights to save and to bless; and when the faith is given to us to expect an immediate answer to such a prayer, thrice happy are we. Seek such faith even now, I beseech you, "even now."

II. But, in the second place, I want to speak very earnestly to any here who are concerned about their own souls. Jesus can save you "even now." CAN WE BELIEVE THIS FOR OURSELVES? Can you expect the Lord, even while you hear these words, to speak to you the word of power, and bring you forth from your sleep of sin?

For some of you, *the time is late, very late; yet it is not too late.* You are getting into years, my friend. I want you to believe that even now Christ can save you. I often notice the number of old people who come to the Tabernacle. I am glad to see the aged saints; but amongst so many elderly people, no doubt, there are some unsaved sinners, whose grey hairs are not a crown of glory, but a fool's cap. But, however old you are, though you are sixty, seventy, eighty, or even ninety years of age, yet "even now" Christ can give you life. Blessed be God for that! But it is not altogether the years that trouble you; it is your sins. As I have already said, if you have gone to the very extremity of sin, you may believe that, after all these years of wandering, the arms of free grace are still open to receive you "even now." There is an old proverb, "It is never too late to mend." It is ever too late for us to mend ourselves, but it is never too late for Christ to mend us. Christ can make us new, and it is never too late for him to do it. If you come to him, and trust him, he will receive you "even now."

By the longsuffering of God, *there is a time left to you*, in which you may turn to him. What a thousand mercies it is that "even now" is a time of mercy to you: it might have been the moment of your everlasting doom! You have been in accidents; you have been within

an inch of the grave many times; you have been ill, seriously ill; you have been well-nigh given up for dead; and here you are yet alive, and still an enemy to God! Plucked by his hand from fire and flood, and, mayhap, from battle; delivered from fever and cholera, and still ungrateful, still rebelling, still spending the life that grace has lent you in resisting the love of God! Long years ago you should have believed in Christ, but the text is “even now.” Do not begin to say, “I believe that God could have saved me years ago;” there is no faith in that. Do not meet my earnest plea, by saying, “I believe that God can save me under such-and-such conditions.” Believe that he can save you now, up in the top gallery there, just as you are. You came in here careless and thoughtless; yet, even now, he can save you. Away yonder, quite a man of the world, free and easy, destitute of all religious inclinations though you may be, he can save you even now. O God, strike many a man down, as thou didst Saul of Tarsus, and change their hearts by thine own supreme love, as thou canst do it, even now, on the very spot where they sit or stand!

But though God waits to be gracious to you, though you have yet time to repent, remember, *it is but a time, therefore seize it*. Your opportunity will not last for ever. I believe that even now God can save; but if you reject Christ, there will come a time when salvation will be impossible. On earth, as long as a man desires to be saved, he may be saved: while there is life there is hope. I believe that, if a man’s breath were going from his body, if he could then look to Christ, he would live. But—

“There are no acts of pardon passed
In the cold grave, to which we haste;
But darkness, death, and long despair,
Reign in eternal silence there.”

Do not venture on that last leap without Christ; but even now, ere the clock strikes another time, fly to Jesus. Trust him “even now.”

It is a time of hope. Even now, there is still every opportunity and every preparation for the sinner’s salvation. “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” Shall I give you some reasons for believing that “even now” is a time of hope? There are many good arguments which may be brought forward, in order to banish the thought of despair.

First, *the gospel is still preached*. The old-fashioned gospel is not dead yet. There are a great many who would like to muzzle the mouths

of God's ministers; but they never will. The old gospel will live when they are dead; and, because it is still preached to you, you may believe and live. What is the old gospel? It is that, seeing you are helpless to save yourself, or bring yourself back to God, Christ came to restore you; that he took those sins of yours, which were enough to sink you to hell, and bore them on the cross, that he might bring you to heaven. If you will but trust him, even now, he will deliver you from the curse of the law; for it is written, "He that believeth on him is not condemned." If you will trust him, even now, he will give you a life of blessedness, which will never end; for again it is written, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." Because that gospel is preached, there is hope for you. When there is no hope, there will be no presentation of the gospel. God must, by an edict, suspend the preaching of the gospel ere he can suspend the fulfilment of the gospel promise to every soul that believeth. Since there is a gospel, take it; take it now, even now. God help you so to do!

In the second place, I know there is hope now, "even now"; for *the Christ still lives*. He rose from the dead, no more to die, and he is as strong as ever. "I am he that liveth and was dead," he saith, "and behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen." Those words were spoken to the Apostle John, and when he saw him, he said that "His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow;" but when the spouse saw him, she said, "His locks are bushy, and black as a raven." Yet both saw truly; John's vision of the white hair was to show that Christ is the Ancient of Days; but the view of the spouse was to show his everlasting youth, his unceasing strength and power to save. If there is any difference in him, Christ is today more mighty to save than he was when Martha saw him. He had not then completed the work of our salvation, but he has perfectly accomplished it now; and therefore there is hope for everyone who trusts in him. My Lord has gone up yonder where a prayer will find him, with the keys of death and hell jingling at his girdle, and with the omnipotence of God in his right hand. If you believe on him, by his "eternal power and Godhead" he will save you, and save you even now, on the spot, before you leave this house.

Moreover, I know that this is a time of hope, in the next place, because *the precious blood still has power*, All salvation is through the blood of the Lamb. Still—

"There is a fountain filled with blood,

Drawn from Immanuel's veins;"

and still, "even now,"—

"Sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains."

The endless efficacy of the atoning sacrifice is the reason why you may come and believe in Jesus, "even now." If that blood had diminished in its force, I should not dare to speak as I do; but I can, "even now," say with confidence,—

"Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved to sin no more."

How many have already entered into glory by the blood of the Lamb! When a man comes to die, nothing else will do for him but this: our own works are a poor staff for us when we pass through the river. All those who are now in the land of light have but one confidence, and but one song: they stand upon the merit of Jesus Christ, and they praise the Lamb who was slain, by whose blood they have been cleansed and sanctified. There is no other way of salvation but that. "Even now" that blood has virtue to take away your sin. Christ is a sufficient Saviour, because his death has unexhausted power. Believe that he can save you "even now."

Again, I would remind you that "even now" is a time of hope to you, because *the Spirit still can renew*. He is yet at work, regenerating and sanctifying. He came down at Pentecost to dwell with his people, and he has never gone back again. He is still in the church. Sometimes we feel his mighty power more than at other times, but he is always at work. Oh, you that do not know anything about the power of the Holy Ghost, let me tell you that this is the most wonderful phenomenon that can ever be observed! Those of us, who have seen and known his mighty energy, can bear testimony to it. In my retirement, at Menton, during the last few weeks, if you had seen me, you would have found me sitting every morning, at half-past nine o'clock, at my little table, with my Bible, just reading a chapter, and offering prayer, my family prayer with the little group of from forty to fifty friends, who daily gathered for that morning act of worship. There they met, and the Spirit of God was manifestly moving among them, converting, cheering, comforting. It was because of no effort of mine; it was simply the

Word, attended by the Spirit of God, binding us together, and binding us all to Christ. And here, in this house, for seven-and-thirty years, have I in all simplicity preached this old-fashioned gospel. I have just kept to that one theme; content to know nothing else amongst men; and where are they that have preached new gospels? They have been like the mist upon the mountain's brow. They came, and they have gone. And so it will always be with those who preach anything else but the Word of God; for nothing will abide but the mount itself, the everlasting truth of the gospel to which the Holy Ghost bears witness. That same Holy Ghost is able to give you a new heart "even now", to make you a new creature in Christ Jesus at this moment. Believest thou this?

Once more. I know that "even now" Christ can save you, and I pray you to believe it, for *the Father is still waiting to receive returning prodigals*. Still, as of old, the door is open, and the best robe hangs in the hall, ready to be put upon the shoulders of the son who comes back from the far country, even though he returns reeking with the odour of the swine-trough. How longingly the Father looks along the road, to see whether at length some of you are turning homeward! Ah! did you but know the joy that awaits those who come, and the feast which would load the welcoming table, you would "even now" say, "I will arise, and go to my Father." You should have returned long ago; but blessed be his love, which "even now" waits to clasp you to his heart!

Last of all, *faith is but the work of a moment*. Believe and live. Thou hast nothing to do; thou needest no preparations: come as thou art, without a single plea, but that he bids thee come. Come now, "even now." If Christ were far away, the time that is left to some of you might be too short to reach him; if there were many things which first of all you had to do, your life might close before they were half done; if faith had to grow strong before it received salvation, you might be in the place of eternal despair before your faith had time to be more than a mere mustard seed. But Christ is not far away; he is in our midst, he is by your side. You have nothing to do before you trust him, he has done all; and however weak your faith, if it but comes in contact with Christ, it will convey to you instant blessing. "Even now" you may be saved for ever; for—

"The moment a sinner believes,
And trusts in his crucified God,
His pardon at once he receives.

Redemption in full, through his blood.”

Surely all these are sufficient reasons why “even now” is a time of hope to you; may it also be a time of blessing! It shall be so if thou wilt but at this instant cast thyself on Christ. He says to thee that, if thou wilt but believe, thou shalt see the glory of God. Martha saw that glory. Thou shalt see it too if thou hast like precious faith.

I long that God would give me some souls tonight, on this first occasion when I have met an evening congregation since my return from the sunny South. I desire earnestly that he would set the bells of heaven ringing because sinners have returned, and heirs of glory have been born into the family of grace. I stirred you up to pray this morning. Pray mightily that this word tonight, simple but pointed, may be blessed to many.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—JOHN xi.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—95 (PART II), 607, 612.