

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

SEEKING FOR JESUS.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 21ST, 1870, BY

C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Seeking for Jesus.”—John vi. 24.

THE persons who are here described as seeking for Jesus, were looking after him from a very mean and selfish motive, not because of the gracious words which he spake, nor to render him thanks for benefits received at his hands, but merely because they had eaten of the loaves and fishes, and hoped to do so again. From such sordid motives let us flee. May we all shun with detestation the very idea of making a profession of religion for the sake of worldly advantage; it is detestable to the last degree. Those who seek Jesus Christ with the grovelling desire to make a gain of godliness are hypocrites of the meanest order; like Judas they will follow the Lord while they can filch from the bag, and like that “son of perdition,” they will sell him when the twenty pieces of silver are the reward of treachery. Let them know that such gain will involve their souls’ eternal loss.

I shall apply the words before us to those who really and spiritually seek Jesus, seek him as Jesus—the Saviour who saves his people from their sins. Last Sabbath morning I tried to speak concerning maturity in grace, giving the advanced believer a word; and as we are bound to give a portion of meat in due season to all classes, I will now deal with those who are but babes in grace, if indeed they be babes at all; I shall speak to those who cannot say, “We have found him,” but who are earnestly “seeking for Jesus.”

I. First, let us notice THE CHARACTER OF THE STATE described as “seeking for Jesus.” In it there is a mingling of good and evil. We see in it much of light, but too much of darkness. It is neither day nor night, a dim twilight, hopeful but overclouded. I may call it “not light, but darkness visible.” It is one of those miry places, a marsh, not altogether sea, and certainly not land. Like the brackish water of the river’s mouth, not altogether salt, but assuredly not sweet.

“Seeking for Jesus” has *a large amount of hopefulness* in it; it is as the almond tree in blossom, though as yet fruit there is not. The seeker at any

rate is not indifferent now; he is not a careless sluggard, demanding yet more sleep and folding of the hands; he is not a defiant rebel, daring the wrath of God with blasphemous audacity; he is no longer a denier of revelation; he would not be seeking for Jesus unless he had some kind of faith—at any rate, a theoretical faith—in a Saviour, and in his need of him. Now it is a very encouraging sign when we see men aroused and willing to hear. When we can bring men to think, we are very grateful, for thoughtfulness lies on the road to conviction of sin, and conviction is on the way to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I am glad, my dear friend, that you are now no longer deaf to the appeals of God's word; it is well that your ear is open, and though as yet what you hear is far from bringing you any comfort, rest assured it is a great blessing to you to hear the truth, even when it condemns you. I rejoice to see you under concern, and I hope that something may come of it.

Your face is now turned in the right direction, now that you are “seeking for Jesus.” When you sought sinful pleasure you were facing the pit of hell, now your face is heavenward. I am glad that Jesus is the object of your search, for depend upon it, nothing else is worth seeking for: salvation from sin and hell should be the first object of your soul's desire. For an alarmed and awakened sinner to seek rest in ceremonies, will be a search for bread among ashes; to labour for salvation by thine own righteousness, will be looking for substance among dreams. Thy seeking after Jesus shows that thou art on the right tack, and though as yet thou hast not reached the haven, the helm is set in the right direction, and I am grateful to God for it, and encouraged concerning thee. I regard thy present state as the little cloud which foretells the coming rain; but, alas! I maybe disappointed, and the early cloud may melt into nothingness. Hope tells a flattering tale, but she may be deceived. What a pleasing sight it is to see a man who has formerly been prayerless, casting himself upon his knees in secret! How gratifying to see the unread Bible brought out from the dust and carefully studied! Methinks an angel must look on with holy interest when he sees the fresh tear fall in the solitary chamber, and the unaccustomed suppliant bow before his God. Glad are those blessed spirits when they hear the seeker say, “O God, I will seek thee until I find thee; I will cry unto thee till I receive an answer of peace.” Intelligence of such a vow would make a church rejoice in hope; trusting that the time for newborn children of God to be found in her midst was fully come. A heart that turns itself to Christ if haply it may find him, is evidently in a hopeful condition.

Yet in the state of “seeking for Jesus” *there is much that is doubtful*; for, my brethren, the seeker after Christ remains disobedient to the great command of the gospel. If he were obedient to the great gospel precept, he would at once cease to be a seeker, and become a happy finder. What is the command of the gospel? “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be

saved.” Properly speaking, Christ is not an object for seeking, he is not far from any of us; like the brazen serpent uplifted by Moses, he is not so much to be looked *for* as looked *at*. We have neither to clamber to heaven to find him in the loftiness of his Deity, and bring him down; nor dive into the chambers of Hades, to bring him up again from the dead. Thus saith the Lord, “The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Jesus is Immanuel, God with us. A prayer will reach him, a wish will find him, a groan will pierce his heart—do but confide in him, and he is yours. The first command of the gospel to guilty sinners is not to pray, to search the Scriptures, to attend upon sermons—all these are natural duties, and woe unto the man who neglects any of them; but *the* command, the special command of the gospel is, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.” Now, the seeking sinner is disobedient to the command. He is going about hither and thither seeking, but he declines trusting; he is eagerly looking abroad for that which is at home; he is seeking for peace afar off when it is nigh him. He looks east and west to behold a wonder, while the Wonderful, the Saviour, stands at his right hand ready to forgive. The way of salvation for me as a sinner is simply this, that I, being a sinner, do now put my trust in Christ Jesus the substitute for sinners. God has set forth his crucified Son as the accepted propitiation for sin: the way of salvation is that I accept him for what God has set him forth, namely, as the atonement for my sin, in which I place my sole reliance. Seeing he is God, seeing he took upon himself the nature of man, seeing that as mediator he suffered in the stead of as many as trust in him, I trust him, and I obtain thereby the blessed result of his sufferings—I am in fact thereby saved. Now, it is some good thing certainly to be a seeker, but it is also an ill thing if I follow my seeking and refuse God’s way of salvation. Hear what the apostle John saith: “He that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.” This is no small sin to be guilty of, and it entails no small punishment, for “he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” Suppose that I have been told of a remedy for my disease. Well, it is so far good that I desire to be cured of my deadly malady, it is so far hopeful that I have sent for a physician. But after being informed that there is the one specific for my disease, and that it alone will certainly heal me—if I were still to continue seeking a remedy, or to say I am seeking this one true remedy, I shall remain sick, and ultimately die. I shall never be healed unless I take that which is prescribed: to seek it is not enough, I must actually take it. In seeking, then, there is some good, but oh, how much of evil! Here are gleams and flashes of light, but oh, how dense is the darkness! Here is a little smoke in the flax,

but I dare scarcely call it a spark. O seeker for Jesus, think of this, for while I would not discourage thee, yet would I encourage thee to end thy seeking by becoming a believer. Look not at salvation's cup, but drink of it. Stand not by the fountain's brim, but wash in it and be clean. O may the Holy Spirit lead thee to cease thy search for goodly pearls, for the pearl of great price is before thee. Jesus is not to be discovered as a secret, he stands before thee openly. Behold his hands and his feet, mark well his riven side, and as thou lookest trust, and henceforth he is all thine own.

Hear, dear friend, your true position. It is the case of a soldier on the battle field, wounded, bleeding, life oozing away from him, he is perishing, but he is sufficiently sensible to know it and to call for help. The surgeon is on the field within hearing, the sufferer pleads for relief with many cries and entreaties. So far well; but I pray you remember that crying and weeping will not of themselves heal the sick man—the surgeon must actually come and bind up his wounds; and if he refuses to receive him, he may cry as he wills, but he will bleed to death. So remember that your prayers and seekings of themselves cannot save you. Jesus must come to you, and it is madness on your part to refuse him by your unbelief. To give another similitude: you are today like the manslayer of old, you have done the murderous deed, vengeance is armed against you; swift as lightning judgment pursues you; you are not now slumbering in foolish security, or presumptuously defying the avenger, but happily you are so aroused that you are running towards the city of refuge. I delight to mark your earnest running, but run as you may, you are not safe until you are within the city gate; the most vigorous running will not save you if it do not end within the walls of refuge. To enter that open gate, to dwell within that sheltering wall, to enjoy the privilege of sanctuary—this is safety; all else is but hope of escape, and not deliverance itself. To pray, to hear, to desire, to seek—all this is the roadway and the running, but Christ himself must be laid hold upon by faith, or we are not saved. Run, man, but oh! take care that thou run in God's way, by faith in Jesus, and not by trusting in thy resolves and feelings. Thou must have Christ to be thine by personal faith, or thou must die eternally. Let me give yet another picture. You are like one who has been asleep in a burning house. At last you are awakened; the cries of those who would fain save you have broken your deadly slumbers. You start up in horror. I think I see you now at the upper window, with the flames drawing near to you. You clearly perceive your danger, you passionately clamour for aid; all your energies are aroused. So far, good; but, man, all this will not rescue thee; thou must get into the fire escape which is now uplifted to the window. Art thou unwilling to take the one and only way of escape? It is close to thee; it is suitable, it is efficient; why seek another? There it is, and precisely what thou needest. Thy present alarm will only be the prelude of thy despair, if thou dost put from thee the

way of escape. I put these figures before you that you may see that while you are only seeking for Jesus, your best friends dare not altogether hope for you. but are led to tremble too. We wonder which way the scale will turn, your future quivers in the balances. As anxious eyes watch a labouring barque making with difficulty for port, and in imminent danger of the rocks, so watch we you. We see you like Lot and his family, ready to leave the City of Destruction, but you have not yet reached the mountain, and our heart asks concerning you, “Will he linger in the plain? Will he look back? Or will he altogether be delivered?” If you remain as you are, there is no hope of you. All the supposed good which is now in you, is vanity itself if it leaves you short of Christ. Remember well this verse, and I will pass on:—

“Why those fears, poor seeking sinner?
Why those anxious, gloomy fears?
Sighs and sorrowings cannot save thee,

Healing dwells not in thy tears;
'Tis BELIEVING
Which the soul to Christ endears.”

II. The second part of our discourse shall deal with THE PERPLEXITIES OF THIS STATE.

“Seeking for Jesus” is a state of heart in which the poor soul is usually very much put to it—“tumbled up and down in his thoughts,” as John Bunyan would say; for first seekers are very often much perplexed, as the result of *their ignorance* of the way of salvation. Too often, awakened souls, though they may have heard the gospel, do not in their hearts understand it. Many enquirers do not know what faith is. I am persuaded millions of our fellow countrymen do not know what believing in Jesus means. Though every Sabbath-day they are told, yet do they not catch the thought, for the Spirit of God has not illuminated their minds. To believe in Jesus, as we say again, and again, and again, is simply to trust in Jesus—to take God at his word, to take Christ for what God says he is, namely, the atonement, the satisfaction for sin, the Saviour of sinners. But poor, troubled consciences think faith is a deep mystery, and they go about like blind men groping for the wall; they wander like travellers in a dense fog, not knowing which way leads to their homes; hoping, but hoping against hope, by reason of ignorance. Many, though desirous to be saved, do not understand the work of Christ, or know what atonement is. Though the doctrine of substitution, which is the very marrow of the gospel, is to believers so very plain, yet many seekers have not learned it. That Jesus bore the sin of his people; that “the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all;” that he was made a sin for us; that justice received its due at his hands; this precious fact many penitent sinners have

not grasped. They still think there is so much repentance to do, so much feeling to endure, so much praying to go through, so much mystery to be experienced; but the plain, simple precept, "Believe and live," trust and be accepted, hide under the shadow of the cross and be safe—this, through ignorance, they do not understand, and this involves them in trouble upon trouble, till their way is hedged up with thorns.

At such times, too, to increase their perplexity, they are usually *distracted with fear*. Persons in a panic act generally in the worst conceivable manner for their own safety, and an awakened sinner is in much the same condition; a terrible sound is in his ears, he hears the rumbling of the everlasting tempest, he sees the gathering storm. He knows not what to do, nor whither to flee. His sins, which once appeared such trifles, now rise before him like mountains of blackness; the wrath of God, which once he defied, makes him exceeding fear and quake. He sees the dark record of his transgressions, and anticipates the hour when all his sins shall be read before the assembled universe, and the sentence of wrath shall go forth against him. Whither shall he flee! He scarce knows how or where to fly. A spirit distracted with dread is never a wise spirit, and often is goaded on to madness. Pressed out of measure with forebodings of heart, and threatenings of conscience, many a man refusing to believe in Jesus, has laid violent hands upon himself. Do you wonder, then, that souls under a sense of sin and fear of wrath, are far from being calm and collected, but rather are like mariners in a storm, who "reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man"? How soon would their bewilderment end in sweet repose, if they would obey the divine mandate and accept the great salvation!

During these struggles for life, the mind is usually *harassed with a thousand questions*. The newly-awakened mind is very apt to lose itself in the many spiritual problems which lie before it. The man cared nothing for these matters before, but now he has even a morbid craving after knowledge; he seems as if he could not learn too much or too fast. How many an enquirer instead of turning to the cross, worries himself with intricacies of doctrine, vexed points which belong rather to metaphysics than to divinity! They are fascinated by the "things hard to be understood," and forget the truths which a wayfaring man, though a fool, may readily comprehend. How many ask themselves, "Are we elect?" when their enquiry should be, "How can a man be cleansed from iniquity?" Forsooth, they must learn Latin and Greek before they know their letters, and must fathom the doctrine of election before they will believe in the redemption of Jesus. They would come to the Father before they have come to the Son, and learn their predestination before their pardon. That which has perplexed the wisest of men, namely, how to reconcile divine ordination with the free agency of man, they attempt to grapple with while they are in danger of the unquenchable fire. They philosophise at

hell's mouth, and debate in the jaws of perdition. You may show them how absurd it is, as absurd as for a drowning man to wish to quibble about hydraulics, and refuse to lay hold on the friendly rope until he understands some mystery in hydrostatics; or, as if a person sorely sick refused all surgery until he understood anatomy, and comprehended the secret influences of drugs upon the divers portions of the body. Yet some enquirers will abide in this folly. I do not wonder at it, when I remember how foolish man is by nature. Men who have left the whole spiritual realms untrodden are very apt, when they see it open up suddenly before their eyes, to aspire in their hearts' pride to stand upon its loftiest peaks, to climb its Himalayas, to swim its Bosphorus, to fathom its Atlantic, and from this cause they forget its green pastures and still waters. I would have every convinced sinner here listen to my word this morning. Friend, thou hast to do with the plain truth of the gospel—namely, this, “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners”—sinners such as thou art, and faith links thee to that Saviour. When thou hast learned that lesson, then shalt thou discover that God hath chosen thee from the beginning, that he hath ordained thee unto eternal life; but as yet thou canst not unriddle that matter. Leave thou that glorious doctrine till first thy soul be saved by faith in Jesus Christ. It is plain, however, that this appetite for strong meat takes off the babe from the unadulterated milk of the word. These questions help to confuse, trouble, worry, and distract the seeker for Jesus.

At this hour too, to make confusion more confounded, Satan is quite sure to assail the soul with his diabolical insinuations and suggestions, with strong temptations and despairing thoughts. No king will willingly lose his subjects, and Satan when he sees his captives about to turn runaways, sets extra guards around them. He will set others on to tempt them, or he will come himself personally and inject into the soul the most horrible thoughts, the most blasphemous suggestions, and the most despairing forebodings that can be conceived of. Having felt this, I speak tenderly to such as may now be exercised with them. Marvel not at them, neither be dismayed. If thou canst, by the Holy Spirit's help, resist Satan, he will flee from thee; if thou canst assail him with “it is written,” he will leave thee; but be not astonished if now for awhile the fiery darts fly thick as hail. He has his mitrailleuses from which he can vomit ten thousand shots at once upon a poor lost soul, and make it feel as though it were broken in pieces all asunder with horror and dismay. Thou wilt triumph over him yet if thou believest: the Lord will bruise Satan under thy feet shortly. Be thou of good courage! Though thou fall, thou shalt rise again; faith will lift thee up in the power of Jesus. I marvel not that when that dog of hell howls in thine ears, thy spirit is sorely put to it for comfort.

It may be also that when the soul is seeking for Jesus, it is at the same time *much grieved to find it cannot even now cease from sin*. “My old sins,” saith the heart, “I would be rid of them, but how can I hope for forgiveness,

for I have sinned this very day? I went to my chamber, and I bowed my knee, and said, ‘God be merciful to me, a sinner!’ and I came down stairs resolved to be watchful, but something vexed me, and I spoke unadvisedly. How can I think God will have mercy on me?” Or saith another, “I was seeking the Saviour this morning; but I went out to my business, and I met with worldly company, and I forgot my Lord: I am afraid I mingled with them so closely as to participate in their sinful mirth, and now how can the Lord have any pity upon such a hypocritical seeker as I have been?” As if that poor heart expected to be perfect before it had even found pardon! As if a patient expected to be perfectly well before he had followed the advice of his physician! My dear hearer, if you were able to cease from all sin for a single day, I am sure you would be out of place on earth, for heaven is the place for perfect people, and not this sinful earth. If a fountain sent forth nothing but pure water for one whole day, we might conclude that it was completely purified. The bearing of good fruit for one season would prove the tree to be good. If your heart abstained from sin of itself throughout one day, it might for another, and so on for ever, and where would be the need of a Saviour? What, dost thou not know that Christ came to save thee from thy new sins as well as from thine old transgressions? Is his arm too short to reach thy daily needs? His blood of too little power to wash away thy fresh pollutions? Hast thou still some hope of bettering thyself? Have done with this trifling. Confess thyself a helpless sinner, shapen in iniquity, conceived in sin, depraved in heart, and, therefore, needing the never-ceasing mercy of the Lord thy God. Come, wash now in the fountain filled with blood, and if sin returneth, ask Jesus to wash thy feet again. Make Jesus your sole reliance. Cry to him, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” Nothing else can end your perplexities; you cannot untie the Gordian knot of your difficulties, cut it, then, by leaving all to Jesus. You cannot overcome your sins except by the blood of the Lamb. You cannot be what you should be, nor what you would be, except by taking Jesus to be your all in all. Here is a song for you—

“At last I own it cannot be
That I should fit myself for thee:
Here, then, to thee I all resign;
Thine is the work, and only thine.

What shall I say thy grace to move?
I give up every plea beside,
Lord, I am sin, but thou art love:
Lord, I am lost—but thou hast died!”

III. And now, in the third place, let me warn you of THE DANGERS OF THE STATE of “seeking for Jesus.”

I have already told you that there is much of hopefulness, but there is much of peril in your condition. Dear seeker, what a sad thing it is that you should be wasting so much time, and losing so much comfort, by this long-continued seeking, when it might all end so happily even now at this present hour. Hadst thou believed in Jesus at the very first, thou hadst had light at once. How often would he have gathered you, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but you would not! If you will trust him now, the day star shall shine in your heart. You are like Hopeful and Christian in Giant Despair’s Castle. They lamented and bemoaned their common sorrow, and planned divers unavailable methods of escape; but at last Christian, as one half amazed, broke out into this passionate speech: “What a fool, quoth he, am I to lie in this stinking dungeon, when I may as well walk at liberty! I have a key in my bosom called Promise, that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle.” Then said Hopeful, “That’s good news: good brother, pluck it out of thy bosom, and try.” My awakened hearer, this is your condition. You have in your bosom, and you have in God’s word, that which will unlock every door in your prison-house. Up, man, and try it now. Canst thou not believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that God has sent Jesus to bear thy sin? Canst thou not trust in him? If thou canst, thou art free; thy sins are forgiven thee, thou art saved. You have perhaps heard the incident of a dove pursued by a hawk, which flew into the bosom of a man who was walking in the fields, and you remember that it was safely protected by him whom it had trusted. The dove would not of itself have flown there, but under the terror of the hawk it sought a shelter. You have been afraid of Jesus, you have thought he would not receive you. But now that hell pursues you, be venturesome, and fly to him. Say as our hymn puts it:—

“I can but perish if I go;
I am resolved to try;
For if I stay away, I know
I must for ever die.”

If Christ stood with a drawn sword in his hand, you had better run on the point of his sword than perish without him. O come thou to him, driven by desperation itself, if by nothing else, come into his bosom! Thou shalt have peace at once. But all the while thou remainest seeking, I know not in what distracted manner, thou art wasting time, thou art missing comfort, thou art losing opportunities of happiness. Cease thy seeking, for there is the Man whom you seek. He stands revealed before thee. Reach hither thy finger and

put it into the print of the nails; or if that be too bold, touch but the hem of his garment, and thou shalt be made whole.

Another evil is not only the losing present peace and comfort, but the danger of being driven to despair. I do not doubt that some persons who were once sincere but unrenewed seekers, have now given up all thought of seeking Christ, because they continued to seek when he was near them, to look for him instead of looking to him; and they have waited so long in prayer and Bible reading, and so on, that now they utterly despair, and give all up as hopeless. It is no wonder. If you will try to do a thing in a wrong way, you cannot hope to succeed. If a man will not plough and sow, neither shall he reap. If ye will not believe, neither shall ye be established. A person may be very industrious indeed in what he does, but if he follows a method which never can produce the result he desires, he must not be surprised when he is disappointed. You are a seeker, and I am glad you are; but if you will not put your trust in Jesus, and lay your burden down at the cross where he offered the great sacrifice, it is no marvel if you continue to seek in vain. It will be a great sorrow, but it will not be a great wonder, if you become at last despairing, and are shut up in the iron cage. O man, O woman, break away from this. May God's Holy Spirit come to your rescue now! Give up thine own ideas of how to get peace, take God's method of salvation, and lay hold on eternal life by trusting in the Saviour slain.

Another danger is that in some cases, seeking at length dies out in indifference. Having sought after a fashion by prayer, and failing to find peace at once, temptations to go back to the world's pleasure attack the soul, and too often it becomes henceforth impervious to exhortations and expostulations. The unbroken, unrenewed heart grows sullen, and declares, "I tried, but I did not succeed. I may as well have what pleasure I can have, for spiritual joys are denied me. If the world to come cannot be mine, I will have this world and take my fill of it." I pray you may never be driven to that, but my fear is that if you tarry long in this border land, seeking but yet halting between two opinions, undecided and unbelieving, at last you will relapse into your former state of spiritual slumber, and your last end will be worse than the first.

Another danger is lest you should take up with something short of Jesus Christ. I have known persons who have been content to remain seekers all their days. They have felt comforted by the thought that they are seekers. Now, such comfort is daubing with untempered mortar. A man out of employment has been walking up and down the London streets to find something to do. His family is in need, and he must find a situation. He is quite right to seek, but he will not be satisfied with seeking, he wants to find. Tramping the street will not feed his children. He is not contented with having called at many shops; he will not rest till he finds what he is after—and he would be very foolish if he did. So to be a seeker after Christ, walking up

and down the streets as it were, will not fill your hungry soul; you must get Christ himself. If any unemployed father of a family were to say, “Well, I walk about so many days in the week, and so many hours in the day, and I am quite satisfied, though I do not find anything to do,” you would think him a great simpleton. And so with you. It is a good sign when there is an appetite; but a mere appetite does not satisfy a man—he must eat the food provided. Your seeking Christ will not save you, except it leads you in very deed to believe in Jesus. It is an ill sign when a man says, “Well, I am doing my best, I am always at a place of worship, I am a Bible reader, I practise prayer at home, I do my best.” My dear friend, if you settle down in that idea, you are self-righteous, and are off the road altogether; besides, you are lying to your own heart, for after all you are at enmity with God, and the sign of that enmity is this, that you refuse to believe on his dear Son. If you were reconciled to God you would love Jesus Christ, and trust in him. I see what it is—you have resolved, after all, to be your own saviour; you still think that there is something in outward religion to produce salvation; whereas, I solemnly assure you that, if you stand out against believing in Christ, if you will not fly to those dear wounds of his, if you will not hide beneath the shelter of the atonement, you will go to hell as well from a place of worship as from the haunts of sin, and will perish as certainly with a Bible read as with a Bible burned.

“None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good.”

“Oh, but,” you say, “I feel my sins so much!” Yes, but if you trust in your feelings you will perish in them as much as though you wallowed in your sins. O soul, resolve with Toplady—

“He that suffer’d in my stead,
Shall my Physician be;
I will not be comforted
Till Jesus comforts me.”

Never hope to be saved except by God’s way of salvation. O that the Holy Ghost would enable you in your heart to say, “Now I come to thee, O Jesus; guilty as I am, I lift my eye to thee, and this is my prayer: ‘Help me for thy mercy’s sake; have pity upon me and cleanse me in thy blood, for I put all my trust in thee.’” Resolve, O seeker, to have no refuge of lies, no Saviour but the Lamb of God.

I will confess to you, dear seeker, that often and often I am myself personally driven to do what I trust you may be led to do today. I look back upon my past life, and while I have much to thank God for, much in which to see

his Spirit's hand, yet when I feel my responsibilities and my shortcomings, my heart sinks within me. When I think of my transgressions, better known to myself than to any one else, and remember too that they are not known even to me as they are to God, I feel all hope swept away and my soul left in utter despair, until I come anew to the cross, and bethink me of who it was that died there, and why he died, and what designs of infinite mercy are answered by his death. It is so sweet to look up to the Crucified One again, and say, "I have nought but thee, my Lord, no confidence but thee. If thou be not accepted as my substitute I must perish, if God's appointed Saviour be not enough I have no other, but I know thou art the Father's Wellbeloved, and I am accepted in thee. Thou art all I want, and all I have." How I desire, with intense longing, that you may do the same; it would be a blessed day for you, and for me a joyful occasion. The Jews in the present chapter asked our Saviour, "What shall we do that we may work the works of God?" and he said, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." The greatest of all works, the most Godlike work, is to leave off self-righteous seeking, and trust in Jesus.

IV. Now I will conclude by delivering one or two DIRECTIONS TO THOSE WHO ARE "SEEKING FOR JESUS." Very brief shall these be.

The first direction is—*give attention, dear friend, to the object of faith.* The only way by which you can be saved is by faith. Take that to be settled. Now if a man says, "I cannot believe such a thing"—what then? What is his wisest course? Suppose you find a difficulty in believing a report—what do you do? why, you consider the probabilities of it. Suppose it had been rumoured that the Emperor Napoleon had shot himself. Shall I believe the report? I will ask whence the rumour comes, what intelligence corroborates it, upon what authority it is stated, and so on; by that means I arrive at a conclusion whether it is probably true, or is a mere idle tale. Now if you earnestly desire to believe, faith is the gift of God, and a work of the Spirit, but God works according to the laws of mind, and faith in Christ will most readily come to you in conformity with those laws. "Faith cometh by hearing," how by hearing? Why, because by hearing I learn the truth concerning Christ, and what I hear commends itself to my judgment and understanding, and so I come to believe. Faith comes to us by reading, which is another form of hearing. Read what the Scripture has to say about the Messiah and his work, and you will be helped to believe God's testimony, by knowing what it is and on what authority it comes to you. Let your hearing and your reading be accompanied with meditation; like the Virgin Mary, ponder these things in your heart. "Incline your ear," saith the Spirit, "and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live." Now, that inclining of the ear means a devout and diligent attention to the good news, and a weighing of it in your inmost heart. Now look at it, you have sinned, and God must punish sin. These two facts are

clear enough to your conscience. Is it not a marvellous system that God should be pleased to put away sin through an atonement, by laying the sin upon another, and punishing it in the person of his Son? Do you know of any other system that would meet the case so well, that would be so suitable to you? I believe that the authenticity of Scripture is better proved by the very existence of this doctrine than by anything else, for no human mind could ever have contrived or conceived of a way so just to God, and yet so infinitely gracious. I feel sure it is true, I am certain of it. Then I find it promised over and over again by God himself, that if I trust Christ I shall have the benefit of all his work. I therefore believe the thing is reasonable, it is proclaimed by divine authority. I have God's promise for it, I know that the Almighty One cannot lie; I cheerfully accept what he provides for me, and I am saved. My dear hearer, if thou findest it hard to believe, shut thyself up this afternoon in thy room, and come not out again till thou hast pictured to thy mind's eye the everlasting God unveiling himself of his ineffable splendours, and taking upon himself the nature of man; behold that glorious one nailed to Calvary's tree, forsaken of God, crying out in anguish, and dying without a friend, and all to make an atonement to the law of God! As thou art fixing thine eyes upon this, and bowing in humble prayer, faith will come to thee, the Holy Ghost will overshadow thee and beget it in thy soul; faith will drop in thy soul like the dew from heaven; thou wilt wonder to find the hardness of thine heart all gone, and thine unbelief all departed, and thou wilt say, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

Another direction, however, is—take care, my dear friend, to *clear away as far as possible everything that would hinder your believing*. Now you may depend upon it that going into sin hinders believing. You cannot continue in wilful sin and yet become a believer; sin cherished in the heart is an effectual hindrance. A man cannot be tied to a post and yet run away at the same time; if you bind yourself to your sin, you cannot escape. Withdraw at once from evil company—it is a very deadly mischief to young seekers. You hear an impressive sermon, but then you go away talking with idle gossips, and you fall into frivolous chit-chat on the Sabbath afternoon; you cannot expect your soul to grow in the right direction under such influences. Get you to your knees, get you to solitude, get you to your God, get you to Jesus Christ; this it is that will roll away the stone which blocks the door.

And, once again, do *remember that till you have believed, your danger is of the most imminent kind*. You are not in danger of something future only, you are in peril even now, for the wrath of God abideth on you. You are not like a city which is to be attacked by troops yet at a distance: the Judge is even at the door. You are actually besieged. The foes have encompassed you round about; they lift the scaling ladders, they will soon scale the walls. Beware, O sinner, beware, for thy present state is terrible; thy future state will

be hopeless. Today is the accepted time. Now or never it is with some of you—now escape for your lives: now seek, but seek in the right way, by believing in him who is the Saviour of the sons of men.

How I have longed, this morning, for a tongue like the pen of a ready writer: how I have opened my mouth and panted to speak these things in passionate earnest, for I hunger for your salvation. Speak from my soul I do, but I cannot preach as I would, else would I saturate this sermon with my tears. O that the Master might bless even my weakness of speech to carry home the truth to your hearts and consciences. I do not like to let one of you go unless you have thought over these things, and have given your hearts to Jesus. I shall probably never address many of you again, certainly not all of you. You have come across the sea and you are going to the ends of the earth, some of you. I speak in God's name. O now, ere yet thou hast gone from under the sound of the word, now let the believing look be given: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." It is the cry of the crucified Saviour. Turn not away from that dear voice so full of anguish, hide not your eyes from that brow still marked with the thorn-crown, despise not those nailed hands and feet, but yield to him as again he cries in agony of love, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." O Lord, do thou turn them, and they shall be turned. Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm xxxii.; Matthew xv. 21–28; Luke viii. 41–48.