

A Serious Reprimand

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon warns against the pride of human effort in salvation, urging believers to embrace the simple, gracious gift of faith in Christ as the only true remedy for sin.

Scripture: 2 Kings 5:13, John 3:16, Acts 16:31, Romans 3:28, Galatians 2:16, Isaiah 1:18, 2 Corinthians 5:21

Topics: "Salvation by Faith", "Human Pride", "Gospel Simplicity"

Description

In 'A Serious Reprimand,' C.H. Spurgeon confronts the prideful human tendency to seek salvation through great deeds rather than simple faith. Using the biblical example of Naaman, Spurgeon illustrates how God's remedy for sin is straightforward and gracious, yet often rejected due to pride. This sermon calls believers and seekers alike to embrace the gospel's simplicity and trust fully in Christ's finished work for salvation.

Transcript

"My father, if the Prophet had bid you do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much rather, then, when he says to you, Wash and be clean?"- 2 Kings 5:13.

I am somewhat, myself, in the position of Elijah, when Naaman, the Syrian, came dashing up with his horses and with his chariot and stood at the door of the house of the Prophet. There are before me in this house, I fear, many who are spiritually diseased. Your motive for coming up to this assembly should be to hear the Gospel and to discover the remedy by which your spiritual disease may be removed. But what, let me ask, are really the thoughts that occupy your minds? I can suppose that you are looking for different things from me. One, perhaps, imagines that something will be said odd and strange that shall provoke a smile. Another imagines that I shall labor to make some display of elocution and speak tender words softly, like flakes of feathered snow melting as they fall and so draw forth the silent, graceful tear.

When both of these are, alike, disappointed, you will probably say to yourselves, "Well, it is only the old story we used to hear when we went to Sunday school. It is just what we have listened to Sunday after Sunday, till we turn away disgusted with it. It is, 'Believe in Jesus Christ and live.' There is nothing fresh or new to stimulate our intellect— nothing original to whet our curiosity. In whatever shape the preacher puts it, whatever illustrations he uses to enforce it, it comes to just what we have always heard—'believe and live.'" And you take offense.

Because it is so simple and so plain, you will not attend to it. I will therefore suppose myself to mingle in the crowd as you retire and come up to you, one by one, and kindly take you by the hand and say, "If the preacher had told you of some new and strange thing, some difficult matter, you would have inclined your ear and devoted your heart to it. How much more, then, when he has simply told you a plain matter and laid before you a simple method by which you may obtain pardon for your sins, cleansing for your guilt, health and cure for your conscience! If the intricate and the hard would have commanded your interest, how much more should the simple and the easy engross your attention?"

The thing I spoke of cannot be, wish it as I might. I cannot speak to every one of you individually. It remains that I stand here, returning the glance of each and all of you as best I can, while I converse with you freely and friendly, but firmly and truly, of the things that make for your peace.

I. Our subject shall be full of reprimands. First of all, let me notice the PRIDE OF MAN'S HEART. Stands there before your mind's eye this great man, the captain of the host of the King of Syria. He is a typical character, or to say the least, he is a representative man. His haughty bearing prompts the inquiry, "Who is this?" As you learn that he holds a high office, that he has served his country well and that he enjoys the favor of his master, you will be apt to count him a man of mark, one to be admired.

But look at him more closely. Observe his pale face and his emaciated frame and your pity is moved. Now you ask with concern, what ails this mighty man of valor? The fatal secret is quickly told—he is a leper. Why, then, comes he thus with his splendid equipage to Samaria? Surely it is not to air his nobility, but to get relief from his debility that he takes this journey into the land of Israel. How better, then, could his distressing case be met than by the simple message which Elisha sent him? The manner disappoints his expectation—his temper is irritated by a method of treatment that he thinks beneath his station—and he indignantly rejects the faithful admonition of the Prophet.

The more you consider his circumstances, the more surprise you will feel at his conduct! Why, his own servant respectfully expostulates with him, "My father, if the Prophet had bid you do some great thing, would you not have done it?" Ah, he thinks himself great and therefore only a great thing will be becoming! If he is commanded to make some great sacrifice, or to do some great service, he will do it, do it willingly. It suits his high and lofty nature. I am not about to launch on a sea so wide as the theme of human pride in general—that would require many a sermon—but only this

one point of human pride which shows itself in wanting to do some great thing in order to obtain eternal salvation, concerns us now.

It is a universal rule of the entire family of man, in every place and at every time, that man wants to do some great thing by which to restore himself to the favor of God. If you had asked the ancient heathen how men could win the favor of the gods, they would have told you that, like Socrates, they must drink the hemlock cup and die with words of cheer upon their lips. Or like the brave 10,000 under Xenophon, cut their way through innumerable difficulties, or die like victims for freedom at the pass of Thermopylae. For such men there would be quiet resting places in the Elysian fields and perhaps some men might be caught up to high Olympus, to sit down in the circle of the celestials.

That was the old heathen notion, and it is much the same in the present day. To obtain salvation, a man, among the Hindus, must torture himself. He must lie down in the path of the car of Juggernaut to be crushed, or hold up his hand till it grows stiff and he is unable to take it down. All forms of self-denial and of torture are practiced to this very day in the heathen world, for man longs to do some great thing that he

may be cured of his spiritual leprosy. This is the character of heathenism in every place.

The Jews ought to have known better. They had a pure law put before them—they ought to have perceived the impossibility of their altogether keeping it. And in their constant sacrifices there was a very distinct intimation given to them that the salvation of man must depend upon the offering of a sacrifice given by another for his ransom. But in our Lord's day the Jews had the idea that a man must make wide the phylactery to the hem of his garment if he would enter into eternal life. He must fast on certain days of the week, must wash so many times a day when he had been to the marketplace, or had been with the multitude. That he must, in fact, do some great thing or other in order that he might be healed of his sin. That was the Jewish notion everywhere.

And this is the kernel of the Roman system. Stripped of its less important features, it comes to this—you must do some great thing! If you would be saved and enter into eternal life, you must wear hair shirts, abstain from meat on Fridays, shut yourself up in a nunnery or a monastery. Or if you would do it perfectly, get up to the top of a pillar with Simon Stylites and live, there, a noble specimen of humility in obscurity. This is what Romanism says in some form or other—"By doing some great thing, work out your own salvation and work it out constantly." I know the canon of Inspiration is partly acknowledged. I know there is something said about the blood of Jesus Christ. I know the work of the Spirit is not entirely denied, but at the same time this is the main evil—there is a superscription written over the Gospel—not that the tablet is summarily obliterated, but that the handwriting is written over, so that you cannot decipher the original record—"Do this and you shall live."

Nor less is it the current religion of this exceedingly Protestant country. Most of the men you meet with, if they have not been accustomed to attend an evangelical ministry and catch the phrases of religious society, you will find adhering to the doctrine that goodness, virtue, morality, excellence and subscriptions to charitable objects will win for us eternal life. The trader has never been in the bankruptcy court, therefore he is clean from the great transgression and he will be saved! The laborer who has always paid his way and never had relief from the parish—he is exemplary in the eyes of the poor law guardians and surely he will be saved!

Every man in his own order and each with his mode of respectability! I do not know all the shapes that the certificate takes, but the general belief current everywhere is that good of all sorts are sure to save. You are to do some great thing! You are to be better than your neighbors, to keep yourselves above the common tuck and you shall certainly, without fail, attain unto everlasting life. Though some have thought that we may preach the doctrine of justification by faith too nakedly and affirm it too frequently, I have the fullest possible belief that we have not erred yet in that direction, we have need, still, to keep on hammering in the public ear that great Truth of God, that by the works of the Law shall no flesh living be justified! He that believes has everlasting life! We want to revive more clearly and fully the old testimony which Christ has left to us, that, "he that believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believes not shall be damned."

Here, then, is human pride always longing to do some great thing. I have mentioned several phases it assumes, but to make the description complete, I must bring home the censure to myself and to you. I honestly confess that before I knew Christ and the way of salvation by His finished work, I would have done anything in order to be saved. Such was my sense of guilt and such my fear of the wrath to come that no pilgrimage would have been too wearisome, no pain too intense, no slavery too severe to appease my troubled conscience. I would gladly have laid down my life, if I might have, thereby,

saved my soul. Times without number have I thought I wished I had never been born, and could there have been put before me any possible form of penance, though it might have consisted of excruciating agony, I am sure I would gladly have accepted it if I might be saved.

Little did I think that it was done for me by Another and that what I had to do was to accept what had been done and not to do anything but to trust in Christ! I appeal to any unprofessing, unconverted persons here, whether you do not say inwardly, when you hear a Gospel sermon, "I do not understand this believing. I cannot make it out. It puzzles me. I wish the preacher would tell me straightway what I had to do and I would do it"? Supposing you had to walk to John O'Groat's house—you would start off tonight if your soul could thereby be saved. You would open your hearts to notice all the particulars of duty and you would, with those little pencils, be jotting down every minute point of rite or custom in order that you might make yourselves secure of salvation!

It just suits us all, indeed it does! We all lean that way because we are proud. We do not like to be saved by charity—we cannot conceive it possible that so simple a thing as relying and trusting upon Christ can save our souls—and yet not only can it save us, but nothing else can! Not only is there salvation in Christ, but there is salvation in no other, for there is no other name given under Heaven, among men, whereby we must be saved!

II. We can all see in Naaman's case, that IT WERE A GREAT PITY IF HE SHOULD BE SO PROUD AS TO GO HOME WITH THE LEPROSY ABOUT HIM. Would not he be a great fool? Would not his arrogance be manifestly the very highest form of madness if it led him to reject the only method of cure? Make the case, however, your own, while I say a little about the folly of men who will not come and trust in Jesus Christ because they want to be doing some great thing.

This is a grievous infatuation, my dear Friend, and I will try to show you how. The great things you propose to do, these works of yours, what comparison do they bear to the blessing which you hope to obtain? I suppose by these works, whatever they may be, you hope to obtain the favor of God and procure a place in Heaven. What is it, then, you propose to offer? What estimation could you bring to God? Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof for a burnt-offering! Would you bring Him rivers of oil, or 10,000 of the fat of fed beasts? Suppose you were to empty Potosi of its silver and Giaconda should be drained of its diamonds—no, count up all the treasures that couch beneath the surface of the earth—if you brought them all, what would they be to God?

And if you could pile up gold reaching from the nether-most parts of the earth to the highest heavens, what would the mass be to Him? How could all this enrich His coffers, or buy your salvation? Can He be affected by anything you do to augment the sum of His happiness, or to increase the glory of His kingdom? If He were hungry, He would not tell you. "The cattle on 10,000 hills," says He, "are Mine." Your goodness may please your fellow creatures and your charity may make them grateful, but will God owe anything to you for your alms, or be beholden to you for your influence? Preposterous questions!

When you have done all, what will you be but a poor, unworthy, unprofitable servant? You will not have done what you ought, much less will there be any balance in your favor to make atonement for sin, or to purchase for you an inheritance in the realms of light. O Sirs, if you would but think of it, God's value of Heaven and yours are very different things! His salvation, when He set a price upon it, was only to be brought to men through the death of His own dear Son! And do you think that your good works—oh, what mockery to call them so!—can win the Heaven which Christ, the Son of God, procured at the cost of His

own blood! Would you dare to put your miserable life in comparison with the life of God's obedient Son who gave Himself, even to death?

Does it not strike you that you are insulting God? If there is a way to Heaven by works, why did He put His dear Son to all that pain and grief? Why the scenes of Gethsemane, with its bloody sweat? Why the tragedy on Golgotha, with its Cross and nails and cries of, "Lama Sabachthani?" Why all this, when the thing could be done so easily another way? You insult the wisdom of God and the love of God! There is no attribute of God which self-righteousness does not impugn. It debases the eternal perfections which the blessed Savior magnified, in order to exalt the pretensions of the creature which the Almighty spurns as vain and worthless.

The poor Indian may barter his gold for your trinkets and glass beads, but if you should give all the substance you have to God, it would be utterly contemptible! He will bestow the milk and the honey of His mercy without money and without price, but if you come to Him trying to bargain for it, it is all over with you—God will not give you choice

provisions of His love that you know not how to appreciate! Further, to show the folly of this, let me remind you that when you talk about doing better for the future and saving yourselves by your works, you forget that you can no more do this in the future than you have done it in the past. You that are going to save yourselves by reforms and by earnest trying and endeavors, let me ask you, if man could not perform a certain work when his arm had strength in it, how will he be able to perform it when the bone is broken?

When you were young and inexperienced, you had not yet fallen into evil habits and customs. Though there was depravity in your nature, then, you had not become bound in the iron net of habit. Yet even then you went astray like a lost sheep and you followed after evil! What reason have you to suppose that you can suddenly change the bias of your heart, the course of your actions and the tenor of your life and become a new man? Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Are there not 10,000 probabilities against one, that as you did sin before you will sin still? You found the pathway of evil to be attractive and fascinating, so that you were enticed into it and you will still be enticed and be drawn away from that path of integrity which you are now so firmly resolved to tread.

O Man, the way up to Heaven by Mount Sinai is very steep and narrow and by one wrong step a man is dashed to pieces! Stand at the foot and look up at it if you dare! On its brow of stone there is the black cloud, out of which leaps the live lightning, while there is the sound of the trumpet that waxes exceedingly loud and long. Do you not see Moses tremble? And will you dare to stand unabashed where Moses does exceedingly fear and quake? Look upwards and forget about the thought of climbing those steep crags, for no man has ever strived to clamber up there in hope of salvation without finding destruction among the terrors of the way! Be wise—give up that deceitful hope of salvation which your pride leads you to choose and your presumption would soon cause you to regret.

But suppose you could do some great thing, which I am sure you cannot—but what if it were possible that you could, from this day on, be perfect and never sin again in thought, or word, or deed—still how would you be able to atone for your past delinquencies? Shall I call for a resurrection in that graveyard of your memory? Let your sins start up for a moment and pass in review before you. Ah, they may well frighten you, the sins of your youth! Those midnight sins. Those midday sins. Those sins against light and knowledge. Those sins of body, those sins of soul! You have forgotten them, you say, but God has not! Behold the file! They are all written there, all registered in God's day-book—not one forgotten—all to be

read against you in the day of the last assize.

How can future obedience make up for past transgression? The cliff has fallen and though the wave washes up 10,000 times, it cannot set the cliff up again. The day is bright, but still there was a night and the brightest day does not obliterate the fact that it was once dark. Your sins, how are these to be blotted out? "Trifles," you say, but they are not so to God, nor will they be to you in that day when your reason shall be taught right judgment and you shall stand amidst the thunders of the last tremendous day and receive, according to the deeds done in your body, whether they have been good or evil—

"Could your tears forever flow,

Could your zeal no respite know,

All for sin could not atone

Christ must save and Christ alone." This doing of great things is an empty conceit! Nor could it avail you even if you had the power to put your grand resolutions into full effect and fulfill the schemes that your folly dotes upon. Ah, you who seek salvation by your own doings, let the example of others warn you. All those who do thus labor for that which satisfies not. They lead miserable lives in this world, and in the world to come their existence is without hope. I have seen many of those who hope to be saved by ceremonies, by prayers and by holy services, as they think them to be, but I am sure when I have come to talk to them, I have never met with one of them that possessed perfect peace. How could they? The foundation is so rotten that the house cannot stand!

Look at them! When they have done their best, what does conscience say? Why, like the horse-leech, it cries "Give, give, give!" With many men, when they lie awake at night, or seriously think about their lives, there is an inward suspicion creeping over them that though they stand so well with the Church and with their neighbors and are spoken so well of, yet it is not quite right. They say, "after all, my Church attendance and Chapel attendance and prayers and almsgiving do not stand me in so good a turn as I could wish." I tell you, such people are like the blind horse going round the mill—they never get any further. They realize the old fable of those who tried to fill up the bottomless pit. They are like

Sisyphus who was always rolling a stone up hill that always rolled back to his feet again before he could accomplish the task.

The self-righteous man knows that what he is doing cannot satisfy God, for it cannot satisfy himself! And though he may, perhaps, drug his conscience, there is generally enough left of the Divine element within the man to make him feel and know that it is not satisfactory. When he lets his heart speak he finds it so. It is dreadful to die with no other hope than what you have done for yourselves! Oh, it is poor work and it is poor comfort, too, to lay on a dying bed and turn over such poor rotten rags as prayers, attendances at worship, alms-giving and religious exercises that looked so nice when we were in the dark. When the veil begins to be pulled up and the light of eternity comes streaming in, then we see that we had bad motives for our good actions—that our charities were done out of ostentation—that our worship of God was only formality and even our own private prayers, if not insincere, were yet mixed with such selfishness and inconsistency as to make them unacceptable to God.

Oh, it is a sad discovery the unbeliever makes when he feels that his righteousness has vanished and all his fair white linen is suddenly turned to masses of spiders' webs to be swept away! But what must be the

fate of such a man at the bar of God? I think I see the King coming in His Glory and the last tremendous morning dawn. When the King sits on His Glory-Throne, where are the self-righteous? Where are they? I cannot see them! Where are they? Come, come, Pharisee, come and tell the Lord that you did fast twice in the week and then were not even as the Publican! There sits the Publican, at the right hand of the Judge! Come and say that you were cleaner and more holy than he!

But where is the wretch? Where is he? Come here, you proud and ostentatious ones, who said you had no need to be washed in blood! Come and tell the Judge so! Tell Him He made a mistake! Tell Him that the Savior was only needed to be a make-weight and assistant to those who could help themselves! But where are they? Why, they were dressed so finely. Can those poor, naked, shivering wretches be the gay, vaunting professors we used to know? Yes. Hear them as they cry to the rocks to fall on them and the hills to cover them, to hide them from the Presence of the great Judge whom in their lifetime they insulted by putting their poor merits in comparison with the boundless wealth and merit of His blood!

Ah, may it never be your lot nor mine to commit the blasphemy of preferring the labor of our hands to the handiwork of Christ! And what will be the lot of such men when they are cast down to Hell? Then those whom they despised so much on earth, the old sinners, will be their companions, for there are not two Hells, one for respectable moral sinners and another for the openly profane and the drunken. "Bind them up in bundles to burn," is the command, and you cannot choose your company.

If you are out of Christ, though your self-righteousness is ever so fair, I tell you it will not yield you a drop of water to cool your parched tongue. If your self-righteousness is ever so fine to look upon today, it will appear loathsome enough when you turn over in the lurid light of that anguish which shall never be relieved, of that torment which shall know no change! I pray you cast not yourself into the sea with such a millstone about your neck, for instead of lifting you up, it shall sink you lower and lower. This shall be the arrow which shall pierce your heart forever—"I would not have Christ. I relied on my own merits. I believed that I must do something and I would not yield to have it all done for me. I would not consent to be saved by the righteousness of Jesus Christ. I persisted in being saved by some doings of my own and now I have forever to bewail my foolish pride—without hope, without chance of mercy."

May infinite mercy prevent this being the lot of so much as one of us in this assembly.

III. Think, Sirs, now, while escaping this false pride and deprecating this offensive folly, what is MAN'S BEST WISDOM! I think I see you, Brother, baffled in all your schemes, sickened of your solemn but hollow pretences, bewildered with strange imaginations and thoroughly out of conceit with yourself. Is it thus with you? Do I rightly describe your present feelings? Sit not down desponding, though your lips are parched and your strength exhausted. One drop from the pure fountain of faith will refresh your spirits! Yield yourself up like a child to be taught by the great Comforter and you shall not only find rest unto your soul, but you shall be able to instruct and cheer others also.

To believe that which God says. To do that which God bids. To take that salvation which God provides—this is man's highest and best wisdom. Begin with the alphabet and spell out the golden letters from this great prophetic Book. It is the child's primer, the pilgrim's guide and still it is the apocalypse of the saint in which he descries the Glory yet to be revealed. This is the one message of the Gospel, "Believe and live." Trust in the Incarnate Savior, whom God appointed

to stand in the place of sinners. Trust in Him and you shall be saved! The whole Gospel is condensed into one sentence as Christ left it before He ascended up on high, "He that believes and is baptized shall be

saved."

He who with his whole heart relies on Christ and then avows his faith by being buried with Christ in Baptism, such a one has the promise that he shall be saved. But, "He that believes not"—that being a vital omission—"he that believes not, shall be damned"—condemned, cast away forever. Your sole business then, Sinner, is with this trusting yourself to Christ. Surely you know what this means! The old divines used to call it "recumbency," a leaning—a leaning with all your weight, so that you have no dependence but on that upon which you lean—leaning just so on Christ, with all the weight of your soul and all the weight of your sin. The Negro had a good idea of faith who said he, "fell down flat on de promise," and then, said he, "when I am flat down on de promise, I cannot fall no lower."

Nor can you be safer than when you fall flat on the promise of mercy which God has given through our Lord Jesus Christ. You remember what those who were bitten by the burning serpents were told to do. They had but to look to the bronze serpent and the moment they looked they were healed. There were no rounds of prayer, no performances, nothing else than a look. If the eye was filled with tears and the force of the venom had half poisoned the man, a glance did it. One glance of the eye at the bronze serpent which blazed and glittered in the sunlight, the venom stayed its force, the man was healed. So, if you but trust in Jesus, you shall be saved!

"Well," says one, "I do not see how it will be." Well, if you do not see how it will be, try it and find out! But I will tell you. God must be just—He must punish sin. It is a necessity of His Divine Nature that sin should not be winked at. Jesus Christ came into the world and took upon Himself, as the great Substitute, the sins of all those who ever did, or who ever shall, believe on Him. He was punished instead of them. Consequently, Justice cannot require that those for whom He was punished should be punished for themselves. Their debt was paid by Him—their penalty was endured in His Person. If you trust Him, that is evidence that you are one of such, one of those for whom He effectually and practically stood as a Substitute.

"Oh," says one, "then if Christ stood in my place, I am altogether forgiven! If I could believe that, I should feel very happy. I should feel very grateful to God and I think I should spend all my life in serving Him." Ah, that is the salvation we require. To serve God is a salvation from your old hatred of God. To desire to be like God and to love Him fervently—that is a salvation from your former indifference and waywardness. It is an evidence of the new birth. One of the immediate results of the thorough change of your nature is that you desire to love and serve the God whom once you only thought of with a fear that brought torment—never with a love that made His name sweet as music—His courts amiable and His precepts more to be desired than gold, yes, than much fine gold.

You will never get to that point by coming to God, first, in the bald revelation of His adorable attributes. No man comes to the Father but through the Son. You must believe in the Man, Christ Jesus, the Man in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily, for He is God, over all blessed forever! Trust Him for the remission of your sins and the acceptance of your person! And when you know in your soul that your sins are forgiven, with holy joy you will sing—

"Now for the love I bear His name, What was my gain I count my loss. My former pride I call my shame, And nail my glory to His Cross. Yes, and I must and will esteem All things as loss for Jesus' sake. O may my soul be found in Him, And of His righteousness partake." The man who has not the work of saving himself to do—the man who feels that Christ has saved him, now, out of love gives himself up to

holiness—and this is salvation practically illustrated.

When people put water in children's faces and regenerate them, we say—"Well, if you do it, let us see it—are those children better than anybody else's children?" And we do not find out that they are the least better. I consider that such regeneration is not worth the snap of a finger! When a man really believes in Jesus Christ, he lives to Christ and to righteousness. If he has been a drunk, or unchaste, or a swearer, he renounces his former evil course and becomes a new man! That which satisfactorily and practically saves men from guilt deserves notice and consideration and with some reason it may be supposed to rescue them from the doom of transgressors.

The Gospel does this. It makes the leper whole. Did not Naaman return to his master with his flesh like the flesh of a little child? Surely the king would believe that a wonderful cure had been worked and, heathen though he was, he could hardly reproach the God of the Prophet, or the Prophet of God with the result. I would to God that some here might be led to try it. May the Lord show you that your best works are sins—that your righteousness is unrighteousness—that your supposed obedience is essentially disobedience! And may you be brought to look to God's own dear Son and to the work which He has finished and then, looking to Him and finding that you are saved, there will spring up in your bosom a loving life, a holy life, a Divine life!

You will be a living monument of the power of God. As Naaman was in his way, so will you be in your way, a proof that there is a Prophet and that there is a God in Israel. O my dear Hearers, may the Holy Spirit constrain you, now, to trust in Jesus! I think I never see the depravity of man's heart so clearly as in this reluctance to believe in Christ which is so easy, yet no man will believe in Him till the Holy Spirit gives him a sounder and a better mind. What a fool must man be that he cannot trust God—that he cannot trust God's own Son—when He dies that sinners may live! Why, I feel as if I could not only trust Christ with my poor guilty soul, but if I had all your souls in my soul, I could trust Him for you all!

I feel that if I had all the sins of all the men that ever lived, the precious blood of Jesus could wash them all away! I am sure it could, I cannot doubt its infinite power. Since I believe that Christ is God, I cannot doubt the efficacy of His atoning, cleansing blood. Then how is it that you do not trust Him, that you do not believe Him? What? Did He die in vain? Is there no merit in the pangs He endured? That bloody sweat, does it mean nothing? That bitter cry, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" That face clad in the pallor of death. Those blessed limbs, all dislocated on the Cross. Those dear—those ruby wounds, flowing with rivulets of gore—oh, are these nothing?

Can you look and yet not trust Him? Can you look at the Incarnate God, laying down His life for sinners and yet doubt? Oh, blackest of sins is this doubting of God and of Christ! Yield, I pray you! Yield to a simple faith in Jesus and there shall rush through your soul a life the like of which you never knew and you shall go out of this tabernacle saying in your spirit, "I have been born again this night! The mystery has been unraveled! The Divine deed is done! I am forgiven! I am forgiven, glory be to His name!"—

"Oh, how sweet to view the flowing Of the Savior's precious blood, With Divine assurance knowing He has made my peace with God!"

May that be your portion, every one of you. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—2 Kings 5

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