

# The Folly of Refusing to Be Saved

by Charles Finney

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*Charles Finney's sermon emphasizes the folly of rejecting the salvation offered by God despite having all means to accept it.*

**Scripture:** Proverbs 17:16, Isaiah 55:1, Matthew 11:28, John 3:16, Romans 1:20, Ephesians 2:8-9, Hebrews 2:3, James 4:17, 2 Peter 3:9, 1 John 1:9

**Topics:** "Salvation", "Moral Responsibility"

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## Description

Charles Finney delivers a powerful sermon on the folly of refusing salvation, emphasizing that sinners possess the means to attain eternal life yet lack the heart to pursue it. He defines moral fools as those who, despite having the intelligence to choose wisely, allow their passions to dictate their actions, ultimately leading to their own destruction. Finney argues that God has provided everything necessary for salvation, including Christ's sacrifice and the Holy Spirit's guidance, yet many still choose to reject this gift. He challenges listeners to recognize the absurdity of prioritizing temporary pleasures over eternal happiness and to confront their own indifference towards the salvation offered to them. The sermon serves as a stark reminder of the responsibility each individual has in accepting or rejecting God's grace.

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## Transcript

"Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?" --Proverbs 17:16.

In ordinary discourse the term 'fool' is used in various senses; but generally in only one sense in the Bible. We sometimes speak of a natural fool, meaning one that is born so, or that becomes so by some injury of the brain. Sometimes persons are called fools who are deranged; and sometimes the term is applied to those who in common matters act unwisely.

Moral fools are those whose intelligence remains unimpaired, but who refuse to use it, and who give themselves up to be controlled by their sensibility and their passions as if they had no intelligence at all. This is the sense in which the Bible uses the term, fool.

It deserves special notice that this is the worst and most disgraceful sense of the term. Fools in most of the other senses of this word are not much if at all accountable; perhaps they are not moral agents at all; and hence the term as applied to them is not reproachful. We may pity them; but it were unreasonable and cruel to blame or even despise them.

But a moral fool, who has reason and will not use it, who gives himself up to his own gratification as if he had no intelligence and meant to stultify all the sense God has given him--he is a mean man, and the term fool which the Bible applies to him is intrinsically and most justly reproachful.

The term wisdom in scripture, denotes true religion, virtue, or holiness. It implies a knowledge of things as they are, and especially some right knowledge of God, and a corresponding conformity of heart to this knowledge. It always involves these two elements; enlightened intelligence, and a systematic yielding of the heart to the control of known truth.

The meaning of our text is obvious. It asks why sinners should possess all the means of salvation, and have the opportunity of laying hold of infinite good, and yet have no heart to use it. Wherefore is it that they have so great a price lodged in their hands? Why does God give them the means to buy, when they don't want the commodity?

The text assumes that sinners really have all the requisite means of salvation--that they have no heart to lay hold of it though it be an infinite good; and that, acting thus, they are really fools. It is taken for granted that having price enough in their hands to buy infinite good and yet refusing to buy, they are fools indeed. Then the inquiry is pressed;--Why is this so? Why are so many facilities afforded, and no use made of them?

This naturally leads us to inquire in the first place what constitutes the price which sinners have in their hands?

To this we answer,

1. God has removed the obstacles to their salvation by giving Christ to die for them. Now if they will only give themselves up to Christ and accept his atonement for their sins, there remains no need of their suffering the penalty of the law. They are indeed condemned to hell already, and most justly; but through the death of Christ, the redemption-money is put into their hands, and they may redeem themselves if they will.

2. God tenders to them the advocacy and mediation of Christ. It only remains that they accept it, and it is theirs--freely, faithfully, unceasingly. God has given his own Son to mediate between sinners on the one hand, and the infinite government and throne of Jehovah on the other. Now he only asks the sinner, will you have my own Son for your prevailing advocate? I "hear him always."

3. Christ himself in all his official relations is offered to sinners. Every thing that he is appointed to do, he offers to do for them. The true Christian can say in truth, Jesus is mine, my Teacher, my Mediator, my atoning Sacrifice, my everlasting Friend, my All. Now everything that Christ can do for the soul, he offers to do for every sinner. The price is put into the sinner's hands to obtain this immeasurable good.

4. God offers him also the Holy Spirit. Yea, this Spirit is given, is sent to strive with even the wayward, unwilling sinner. Fain would the Spirit lead him to forsake his sins and live. The heavenly voice calls, entreats, implores; the Divine Agent throws light before his mind; awakens solemn thought; bears long with his stubbornness and folly; so that no sinner can say--There is none to plead with me that I would turn and live, for the Spirit of God is doing this very thing.

5. All the promises are given the sinner. God has given you all these exceeding great and precious promises that he may encourage and incite you to lay hold of everlasting life. They cover every want you

have or can have, they come down to meet you just where you are, like a golden chain let down from the eternal throne to lift you out of the horrible pit, and raise you up to heaven. O, what promises! Surely such words could come from none but God! What a price are they! They are written pledges--the express bonds of the government of God--government bonds, sinner, enough to insure you the infinite riches of the treasury of Jehovah,--yet they are laid at your feet--a price put into your hands to get wisdom.

6. God gives you all things requisite to life and godliness. All needed grace is provided and proffered you to make sure to you eternal life. Provision enough is here to meet all your need for time and for eternity. You may have the prayers of this people, their sympathies, their counsels; all the aid they can afford you in your way to heaven. You cannot imagine a thing essential to your salvation which God has not furnished you--not one thing. On his part all is done. Nothing remains except what necessarily devolves on you to do.

There are some things essential to the salvation of the sinners which God cannot do. They must be done by the sinner himself. God cannot repent in your stead, you must repent for yourself. Neither can God believe on Christ for you; this also you must of necessity do yourself. The Deity cannot be born again for you, so that it shall answer instead of your "making yourself a new heart and a right spirit." It is no part of the provisions of salvation to relieve you of the responsibility of these duties. Indeed it is in the nature of the case impossible that you should be saved unless your own mind consents to obey God and accedes to the whole plan of salvation. No other being in the universe can give this consent of the mind in your stead, so as to exonerate you from the responsibility of doing it yourself.

But every thing that God could do, he has done. He knew the whole ground beforehand. His eye ran through the whole subject; he knew your guilt and condemnation, and consequent need of an atonement; he knew your ignorance and need of instruction; your waywardness and consequent need of guidance and quickening; your reluctance and aversion, and consequent need of mighty influences to constrain you to turn and live. Hence it is with the utmost truth that the Deity, looking over the whole case, says of you as of his ancient people, "what could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?"

And now in view of all that God has done to bless the sinner by putting in his hand a price of infinite value, how can we say less than this, that every sinner who has this price given him to get wisdom and will not use it, is a fool, really a fool in the worst sense of that term?

Sinner, your conduct is infinitely unreasonable. It would be wicked to call you any thing else than a fool. If any one should call you anything else than a fool, he would be a liar like yourself. You can rightly bear no other name than this, No other word so perfectly expresses your real character, and so well distinguishes you from all other beings in the universe. By pre-eminence, and in distinction from all other beings, you are a fool. Yes, a fool and a liar in the worst sense of the term are you--in the same sense in which Satan is a fool and a liar. --Did I say, in the same sense in which Satan is a fool? I take that back. The devil has no price put into his hands to get wisdom. Who knows that if he had, he would play the fool with it as you do? Go bear this price to hell, and then put it in the hands of Satan and his angels, and see if they will scorn it as you do. Let them have Bible societies there, and the glorious effusions of the Holy Spirit, and let the tidings ring through all the deep caverns of hell--"Behold now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."--Who knows that they would hear with cold indifference, and spurn with proud contempt as some of you do? We are too fast then, in saying that Satan and his legions are as wicked fools as those ungodly sinners who will not have salvation. We should not condemn them before they are proved guilty.

Put on trial, they might show vastly more wisdom than you do. It is by no means improbable that you are greater fools than they. We do not know that they would not reject the offer of eternal life. True they once played the fool when they broke away from their rightful allegiance to God. They did then just what you did when you began to sin; but no offers of mercy ever fell upon their ears. Who knows that they would have been so great fools as to have trampled Mercy underneath their feet? Surely they have never evinced that superlative folly which characterizes the sinner who will not have a redemption which costs him nothing but which cost the Son of God a cruel death.

But let us enter into some particulars which show the infinite folly and unreasonableness of the sinner's course.

1. Sinners prefer their own gratification to the happiness of God and of the universe. They had rather please themselves than please God, though they know that God's pleasure is perfectly right and perfectly vital to the happiness of the universe. O, what infinite folly to be willing to see the well-being of the universe put in jeopardy, or even sacrificed, to secure their own selfish gratification!

What should you think of a man who should see a city taking fire and know that by an effort he might extinguish the fire and save the city;--but prefers some slight gratification, and sees it burn down. He had rather read a novel, or finish his dinner, or play with a whistle,--any such paltry gratification he places before the saving of a city from devouring fire! O, you would cry out, What a contemptible fool! What a wicked fool, and a wretch! O, you would cry--What! would he stop to read his novel, or finish his dinner, or jingle a rattle-box, and give this mean gratification the preference over the salvation of a city from fire!--What a fool!

We do not call the fowls of the air or the beasts of the field fools, for they know no better;--but the beings whom God has given intelligence and who then make themselves like brutes, should be called fools in the worst sense of that term.

2. Sinners are fools because they give time the preference over eternity. These little interests that can endure but for a moment, they value more than those momentous interests that must endure through ceaseless ages. Just think of this! They not only hazard, but cast away eternal interests for those which are transient as a dream. If this is not folly, what can be?

3. Sinners prefer their own present gratification to eternal happiness with God. God promises them his own infinite smiles of love and favor; they of their own accord forfeit this blessedness every day they live for the sake of the pitiful pleasures of sin. What infinite folly is this!

4. Sinners are fools because they really care more for men than for God; care more for the good opinion of men than of God; are more afraid of offending men than God; care more to be loved by men than to be loved by God, and would sooner please man than God. All this you know is the fact. Some of you are conscious that it is your state of mind this very moment. You can all look back to the time when you practically acted and really felt as I have just described. You thought a thousand fold more of men than of God. Was there ever greater folly than this in hell?

How do you suppose that angels must regard this? What can be more wonderful to them than such folly in beings whom God has made capable of wisdom? What can astonish and amaze them more than to see how men treat God? How they must feel to see men treat their Infinite Father with absolutely no respect whatever--with not a thousandth part so much respect as they show to most of their fellow mortals! O, they

never saw God so abused and insulted in their worlds of light and love! O, they cry out--why does God bear with such outrageous insult? Why does he let any sinner breathe his air or see his sun light another moment?

And if they wonder that God should bear with the sinner's folly, surely they cannot any the less wonder that sinners should be such fools. O, they say, why will those sinners lose heaven and go down to hell for absolutely no good reason whatever--nay, when every imaginable reason urges them to win eternal bliss and shun eternal woe?

5. Sinners show their folly inasmuch as they care more for their bodies than they do for their souls. What hosts there are over all the land who really care more for dress than they do for heaven; or more for the low forms of sensual gratification than for the noble enjoyments of benevolent affections. O what folly to put the body before the soul! And what is that body, sinner, for which you care so much? Pray what is it made of, and what is it? Made of the same matter which last year was gathered in from your wheat field--the same which a little farther back was carted out from the dung-hill;--now you are strutting about with a portion of this same substance in your body; and you are proud of it, and value it more than your immortal soul! And where may this choice body of yours be when another summer shall have come and gone? Where? There is a place for it on yonder hill, and there are worms there to consume it. Ah, sinner, is this worth more to you than the soul that never dies?

Your soul--what is it? A spark of God--a living, thinking agent, made like it's Author to exist onward, and still onward through everlasting ages. In its essential nature as intelligent, and moral, it is made like God. Like God, your soul must exist eternally, reaping forever the fruits of seed sown in these passing years of your existence.

And yet this soul you value less than that earthly body! You would think a man mad if he should pay more attention to his shoes than to his feet--if he should value the cloth he wears more than the body that wears it! Yet your folly is greater far than this.

6. The sinner's folly is apparent also in this; he prizes other books more than the Bible. He reads other authors much; the Bible little, or perhaps none at all.

What strange conduct is this. Consider, of what does the Bible treat? Is it merely of history, or of philosophy, or is it to be valued merely for its poetry? No, no; it is far more than this;--it is a guide from earth to heaven--rather a guide from the way of hell to the way of heaven; it leads away from the doom of the lost to the joys of the blest. It puts into your hands a pearl of great price. O how precious! But in its place you put Byron and Shakespeare--and what next? Perhaps Tom Thumb or Don Quixote--nothing can be so mean or so frivolous that you will not prefer it before the glorious word of God.

Some of you probably know so little about the Bible that you would not know whether the preacher had quoted from the Bible or the Koran! Shame on such ignorance of such a book as the Bible! Let me ask these young men and young women; how much have you read in your Bible the past year? Is it so much that you are advancing in that knowledge of God which it reveals? Are you sure that you have made some fresh accessions to your knowledge of the Bible during the past week? Suppose your Bible could speak and were called on to testify how much you had read in it;--what sort of testimony would it bear? If that Bible could also testify how much you have neglected its pages and how much you have read other books of far less importance; if it could testify also to the small interest you have felt when you seemed to be reading its sacred lines and to your great interest, when you have read other pages inspired with far other

spirits;--what a testimony would be borne! How full of condemnation to your soul! Let this come home to every heart.

7. The sinner's madness appears also in this;--they postpone the one thing needful for almost any trifling matter. Religion is put off and made to give way to every thing else. One man pleads that he must pay his debts first; another must get his lessons first, or perhaps get through college first; and then, after all the more important things are done, he will attend to religion. Thus in practice religion is made the last of all things, and in time of being attended to it comes last of all. In theory, however, these same men will admit and even maintain that it should be first of all.

Now there can be no greater or surer mark of folly than to pursue a course directly the opposite of what we know to be right. This every sinner is doing.

You cannot conceive a more desperate folly in the universe than that of the sinner who has such a price put into his hands to get wisdom but who has no heart to improve it. Do you suppose there was ever heard of in the whole universe anything so shocking, so monstrous, so absurd, so foolish, so hateful, so devilish--devilish did I say?--so much worse than devilish, as this folly of the sinner who might buy heaven, but chooses to throw away his price and go to hell! O, this is the perfection of folly! Surely nothing in the line of folly can outdo this!

But we must pass now to answer the inquiry--"Why is this that such a price is put into the hands of sinners, when God who gives them the price foreknew the madness of their hearts?" Perhaps some are ready to think that God was not very wise to do so much for the salvation of the finally lost, and then leave things so that they do ultimately perish.

There are some things here to be taken into consideration in order to get the whole subject before us.

1. The making of these provisions has been instrumental in actually turning the hearts of many from sin to God. They could never have been saved if no such provision had been made. Their eternal happiness is a great good to the universe.

2. God has put this price into the hands of a great many who never use it, because in no other way could he give the price to those who would use it. In every age and country where the gospel has been preached, "some have believed the things spoken and some have believed not." How could the former have heard to their salvation, if the latter had not also been permitted to hear, although they refuse to obey and it issues in their damnation?

3. God doubtless designed to leave all sinners utterly without excuse. Hence He gives them the most perfect opportunity to secure their own salvation, and there leaves them--alone responsible for rejecting the gospel if so they choose, and thus deciding their own destiny. It is his policy to leave free agents to act freely and bear alone the responsibility of their own free actions. So shall "every mouth be stopped, and all the world" of the ungodly stand guilty before both God and the universe.

Again, it is plainly revealed that God's design in putting such a price under such circumstances into the hands of sinners is to glorify himself; that is, to pursue such a course as all the universe will approve as being perfectly holy and perfectly honorable to himself. They will see that God was moved throughout by the purest love--that every act of his, breathes good will to man--that God plainly has done and has intended to do all he wisely could do for the salvation of all, even of those who will finally choose death

and have their choice. All intelligent beings will be perfectly convinced that no sinner ever perished because of any want of love for his soul on God's part, nor for want of any effort that God could reasonably and wisely make for his salvation. They will see that every lost soul is lost because they would not have salvation when God had done enough on his part, and nothing remained but for them to do theirs. Then, seeing all this, they will glorify God. They will most perfectly exonerate him from all responsibility for the eternal death of the sinner. They will infinitely applaud and adore both the wisdom and the love of God in this whole scheme of salvation.

And yet we often meet with a sinner who is full of impious fault-finding against God. Let us pause and reason with such a sinner.

Why should you look up into the face of your [M]aker and say, Did you not know that I should act just so? Your Maker might answer, yes, I foreknew it, but the universe did not, and they never would have known it if it had not taken place before their eyes. If I had forbore to create those who will finally perish and had simply told the universe how I foresaw they would have acted in case I had created them, no intelligent beings in heaven, earth, or hell, would have believed me. If I had attempted to show them how you would have rejected my dying Son, and done despite to my Spirit--how long you would have resisted every effort I could make--how you would have hardened your heart under the richest mercies I could have shown you, and forced your way to hell through the strongest persuasions, and fiercest terrors I could have thrown in your pathway to ruin, no one would have believed it possible. Suppose I had done just what you now demand; suppose I had forbore to make provisions of grace for those who would despise them, and had forbore to create those sinners, who if created would not embrace the gospel, and instead of letting such sin and such grace develop itself in action, had simply proclaimed what it would have been; who would have believed me? Neither the folly of the rejecting sinner, nor the grace of the long-suffering Savior could have been believed if facts had not compelled belief.

It is doubtless infinitely wise in God to make the fullest possible manifestations of his own love and wisdom. He will so develop his own course towards the wicked that no stain can attach to his own blessed throne. He will so arrange all his course that no suspicion can arise in heaven, no murmur spring up in hell.

O what glorious developments there will be of the great fact that God is love! This alone will explain the reason why there is a price put into the sinner's hands to get wisdom, though he has no heart to improve it.

#### REMARKS.

1. Incidental to this arrangement is the fact that the sinner's refusing to improve the price put into his hands will greatly aggravate his own guilt. It must be so. No sinner can possibly avoid this result. If you will not improve your facilities for knowing and obeying God, and securing heaven, you must become vastly more guilty than without this price in your hands you could have been. The Bible is most explicit on this point. "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the final day than for those cities which Christ taught. Every body knows that reason harmonizes on this point with revelation.

2. Your ultimate damnation will be greatly aggravated if you will utterly reject this price put into your hands for wisdom. It had been better for you never to have heard of the gospel--yea; better never to have been born than to have salvation made possible and then rejected by your foolish guilty choice.

Perhaps you would stop me here and ask, Why then did God give me birth at all? Why in such a land as this; why among Bibles, Sabbaths, and Christian friends? Why did He give me all these things when he knew that I would abuse them, and thus aggravate my own damnation?"

Sinner, does it become you to ask such questions as these? Are you not perfectly free in all you do? Is it not of your own free choice that you keep on in sin, despite of all God does to stop you and turn you back to obedience? Are you not most fully conscious that you pursue your career of rebellion against God, of choice, and of choice do not embrace the Lord Jesus as your Savior? Who then have you to blame but yourself?

You may lie down at last in hell, yet will God appear glorious in all that he has done. He will appear before all heaven, and all hell too, to have been kind and most sincere--most truly desirous of your salvation; yea infinitely concerned and anxious to save you. So anxious that he spared not his own Son, but made him for a propitiation for the sins of the world. And who has fought God in all his efforts to save you? Who, but yourself? Who then is in fault? Who must bear the responsibility of the sin of your soul? Surely not its Maker, for he sent his own Son to save that soul?[,] Have you done as much to save it? Nay, have you done any thing to save it? Have you not done everything you could to destroy it? Then on whom lies the guilt and responsibility of its eternal ruin?

Now, for the sake of relieving you of the burden of this responsibility and guilt, shall the Deity withhold these glorious developments of his own wisdom and love? Shall he, for your sakes, rob the universe of the blessings accruing from these developments?

The text rather assumes than asserts the fact that the sinner has no heart to improve his price for salvation, yet this is an appalling fact. None can deny it. Precisely this is the great and the only difficulty in the way of your being saved. You need this salvation greatly, but you do not feel that need, you do not care for this salvation; you don[']t desire it and ask it with any earnestness which at all corresponds with its value. How can you expect to find by such seeking? You long for happiness--not for holiness. You would fain be saved from hell and not from sin. For a salvation from sin you have no heart whatever, you would like to be saved from hell by some scheme of your own providing; but this scheme of God's providing, you scorn. You cast it from you, and dash it away. You cannot bear to be wholly indebted to the grace of God for it, and you do not like another claim which it imposes, viz. that you should wholly die to sin.

Such an abuse of one's own intelligence or reason is the greatest curse a man can inflict upon himself. It is infinitely more wretched and cursed than to be a beast, nay, more than to be transformed to a beast. I have sometimes seen persons who were convinced of this. They saw themselves so guilty and so utterly without excuse that they envied the very beasts, and longed to become beasts themselves. Yes, they have sometimes cried out--O that I might become like the toad, or that dog which is kicked about the streets. O, sinner, if you will not yield to the law of your reason, how dreadful to you, must be the curse of having a reason! How fearful the guilt and the doom of being made a rational being, and of having prostituted your reason to the basest of folly!

Again it is impossible really and truly to respect impenitent sinners. Nobody can respect them. They do not respect one another. They do not even respect themselves. Their course is such as most utterly to forbid all proper self-respect. Self-respect demands for its foundation what by no means exists in their case. There can be no proper self-respect unless we are conscious of acting according to the best light we have. Every man who acts otherwise must be, in his honest moments, ashamed of himself. Hence a man can

have no just self-respect, who knows that he has the price of salvation placed in his hands, and yet is conscious of having no heart to use it.

Plainly then, a man who forfeits his own self-respect, and the respect of all mankind, has no right to demand the respect of his fellow men. You cannot respect him, any more than you can respect the devil. How would you feel if you should see the devil? Could you treat him with respect? Suppose you had before your mind in an instant his whole character--his towering intellect, and his utter perversion of it to hellish purposes--his whole career of malice and rebellion against God; could you respect him? Add to all this the supposition that Satan has had a Savior provided and offered, and that he has proudly and madly spurned this salvation; suppose that God has given him the Holy Spirit, and watched over him and kept him out of his deserved place in hell for half a century, "not willing that he should perish, but that he should come to repentance;" and yet Satan had only grown tenfold more desperate in sin. Then, knowing all this of him, could you respect him? Oh, no; your soul would recoil from such a monster in wickedness with horror! Oh, you would cry, what do I see? The very prince of devils--a being who has fought against God, who has spurned the redeeming love, and the redeeming blood of Jesus--who has resisted and grieved away the Holy Ghost, and has madly sought to ruin himself forever and ever! O what a being is this? Could you forbear to curse him? Your soul would so deeply execrate such conduct, methinks the spirit of cursing would burn in your soul, and you could not forbear to cry aloud; O cursed be the monster that can fight against God, and deny his son, and do despite to his Spirit! Let curses scathe the being who can stultify his intelligence for the sake of being as wicked as he can be.

And in these feelings of deep horror at such dreadful sin and folly, there might be no malevolence; it might be only the deep response of the inner soul against such wrong, the burning testimony of uprightness against such horrible perversity. Listen to St. Paul. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, accursed." So the pure spirits in heaven feel. When they see your wickedness they will be horrified, just as you would be to see the Devil himself, and to see disclosed the depths of his depravity.

Again, it is impossible that we should not intensely loathe the conduct of sinners. It infinitely deserves to be loathed, and all right-minded beings must loathe it.

Again, it is just as impossible that sinners should not loathe themselves whenever they come to take a fair and full view of their own conduct. Now, I beg of you, sinners, not to complain of others for not giving you that respect which you cannot give yourself. The fact is, that both you and we are so made that we cannot rationally have any other feelings than compassionate abhorrence of such a character as yours. All mortal beings must abhor you. All hell, all heaven, and if there be any other moral beings in the universe, they need but to see what you are, and what you have done, and they will utterly abhor you.

Let me go round and ask this assembly. Young friend, you have lived here these many years in impenitence, how ought this church to regard you? you have been rejecting salvation all your life. You have lived through several revivals in this place, hardening your heart more and more, and becoming more and more mad in sin. Four years or more perhaps you have spent in an institution founded in prayer, watched with tears, taught by men who labor for Christ, and supported by the "two mites" gathered from the humble cottages where there are tears and prayers for Zion; in such an institution you have passed your four years term, and still can scorn the service and the redeeming blood of Jesus. O, when you came up unto this stage to deliver your commencement speech, would it be strange if hosts of the "spirits unseen, who walk the earth" should break through the curtain that commonly veils them from our view and vent their hisses and curses upon you before the great assembly? Would it be an undeserved doom if God

himself should hurl you from this stage to hell?

It is at least safe to say that there would be bitter grief over the career of folly. How does that praying mother feel? I knew him well, she says, he was needy and I took him into my family and boarded him; he was sick, and I nursed him; he was far from God and I prayed for him, and with many tears have I besought him to return to his own Savior--O must it be in vain! And there is the agent who labored to collect funds to sustain the Institution. Faint and sick he held on his weary way, gathering up the little offerings made by piety and self-denial upon the altar of Immanuel. He wanted to raise up a spiritual ministry; he felt that the world needed such a ministry and he would not shrink from being spent in such a service. And yet, to such an institution you come and pervert all its facilities for education that you may train yourself for mightier warfare against God, and for pulling down a heavier damnation upon your own head.

You know that these things are so. Then do not call this scolding, and let your heart rise up against it. No. It is not scolding, but is truth and deep compassionate sympathy. When you get to hell, will you parade yourself in your pride and supposed dignity? Nay; you will hide your head in shame and everlasting self-reproach.

When sinners set up a claim to the respect of their fellow men, they are dishonest. They demand what they know no man can honestly give. What then can we say of you? Only that you are a poor degraded fool.

Now, do not suppose from any thing that I have said, that angels and spirits do not pity you. They do. I pity all the devils in hell. Often, as I have thought of their condition, I have said, "poor devils, poor devils, how much I pity you!"

Do the people treat you kindly? Every thing that is better than the fires and curses of hell, is better than you deserve--is gratuitous kindness. Don't imagine that this is real respect for you. No, it ought not to be, for you don't respect yourself and never can, so long as you madly fight against God and against your own well-being.

It is an infinite pity that you should have this great price in your hands, and no heart to use it. O, what an infinite pity! You need salvation, and God has in great mercy, and at great expense brought it within your reach. What is that which the sinner holds in his hands! O, it is the price to get wisdom: alas, that he will not use it! Salvation is brought to his parched and burning lips, but he will not drink. Madness is in his heart.

Go to your closet sinner, and tell God--say to him; Thou hast held me up from hell unto this day, and given for me thine own son to die. Christ put into my hands the price of wisdom--but Lord, I have not the least inclination to use it. I feel nothing in my heart but contempt of this great salvation. I cannot forsake my sins to day, if I knew I should thus secure the richest glories of Heaven.

Now, sinner, be honest enough to say this before God, and confess it before men. Fix your eye steadfastly on this dreadful pride and madness of your own heart, till you loathe, abhor, and forever renounce it.

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