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What are You Waiting for?

SERMON PREACHED AT THE GREAT REVIVAL MISSION IN MILD MAY CONFERENCE HALL, LONDON.

(Dr. R. A. Torrey, in the 'Christian Herald.')

My subject to-night is, What are you waiting for? The text is Acts xxii., 16: 'And now, Why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.' Especially the first part of the verse, 'Why tarriest thou?'

It was God who asked the question, through his servant Ananias, of Saul of Tarsus, and I believe that God is asking the same question to-night, though me, of every man, woman, and child in this building that is not an open, confessed, out-and-out follower of Jesus Christ. God is saying to you to-night, 'What are you waiting for? Why do you not come out to-night on the side of Jesus Christ?'

Saul of Tarsus hated Jesus Christ, he thought that Jesus of Nazareth was an impostor. He did not believe that he was the Christ sent of God, as he claimed to be. Away down in the depths of his heart, Saul of Tarsus had an uneasy feeling that perhaps he was the Christ, perhaps he was the Son of God, but he never admitted it to himself as far as his admitted convictions were concerned. Saul of Tarsus thought that Jesus was an impostor, and he hated Jesus with intense hatred, and said, 'I am going to stamp out this religion of the followers of Christ,' and he hated everybody that bore the name of Christ. He went from house to house, and arrested men, women, and children, sparing neither age nor sex, drawing them before the courts to be tried, and when they were sentenced to death, giving his vote for their execution. At last Saul of Tarsus had exhausted all the opportunities of murder in Jerusalem, but he had not exhausted the hate in his own heart. He was yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples, and when he heard that 150 miles off, away in the city of Damascus, there were followers of Jesus, with his heart still full of hate he went to the chief priest and said, 'Give me letters to Damascus, and I will go to Damascus, and I will do there as I have done in Jerusalem. I'll arrest the Christians, men and women, and drag them here in chains to be punished.' His request was readily granted. He started on his long journey across the barren, desolate, dreary desert; on foot or horseback, day by day Saul of Tarsus pressed on, not even stopping for the burning heat of the noontide sun, and thus he has almost reached Damascus. He is on the hill-top before you come to the city, and there Damascus lies before him in all its beauty, a city of olive groves and vineyards, of palaces, rivers and fountains,—the most beautiful city of the ancient world, of which poets loved to sing and which one Persian poet has compared to a pearl in a goblet of emerald. But



The air is rather
chill, my Love -
It means a spell of weather:
But many a cold and cheerless day
We've braved - Dear Heart - together
So storms may come and winds may blow
The sky will soon be clearer
And every wintry blast you know
But brings the springtime nearer!

Jessie B. McClure

Saul of Tarsus had no eye for beauty. His only thought was, 'Down in that city are some of these accursed Christians, and I'll soon have them in my power and drag them back to Jerusalem,' and he continues to press on. Suddenly there shines round about him a light that outshines even that of the noontide sun, and there, standing in that glory he beholds the most wonderful face and form his eyes had ever gazed upon, the face and form of the glorified Christ. He is blinded by the glory, and falls upon his face on the earth, and out of the glory he hears a voice speaking, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' The scared man cries out from the ground, 'Who art thou, Lord?' And back comes the crushing reply, 'I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest.' Overwhelmed, he cries, 'What wilt thou have me to do, Lord?' 'Arise, stand on thy feet, go into Damascus, and there it shall be shown thee what thou oughtest to do.' He rises: everything is blank. Turning his eyes hither and thither, he sees nothing, he has to hold out his hand and be led as a helpless child into the city which he had expected to enter as a conqueror. He goes to the house

of friends. For three days and nights he shuts himself up, neither eats nor drinks nor sleeps; but he does not come out on the side Christ; and at last God, weary of waiting, sends his servant Ananias with the question of the text, 'Why tarriest thou, Saul? What are you waiting for? Why don't you come out openly and confess me, whom you now know to be the Christ?'

Men and women out of Christ in Mildmay Hall to-night, God is putting the same question to you. 'Why tarriest thou? Why don't you come out openly and accept Christ and confess him before the world as your Saviour and Lord and Master? I wish it were possible for me to come down from this platform and go from seat to seat and man to man, and put to every man and woman the question, 'What are you waiting for before you come out on the side of Christ?' and then have you give me an honest answer, have you tell me your real reason, and then sit down beside you and lead you to Christ. I believe if I could do that to-night I could get almost every man and woman out of Christ to accept him. But, of course, it is