

one assembly. Some out of this vast crowd—perhaps some two or three—shall depart ere the new year shall be ushered in. I remind you, then, my brother, that either the gate of salvation may be shut, or else you may be out of the place where the gate of mercy stands. Come, then, let the threatening have power with you. I do not threaten you because I would alarm you without cause, but in hopes that a brother's threatening may drive you to the place where God hath prepared the feast of the Gospel.

And now, *must I turn hopelessly away?* Have I exhausted all that I can say?—No, I will come to you again. Tell me what it is, my brother, that keeps you from Christ? I hear one say, "Oh, sir, it is because I feel myself too guilty."—That cannot be, my friend; that cannot be. "But, sir, I am the chief of sinners." Friend, you are not. The chief of sinners died and went to heaven many years ago. His name was Saul of Tarsus, afterward called Paul the apostle. He was the chief of sinners. I know he spoke the truth. "No," but you say still, "I am too vile." You cannot be viler than the *chief* of sinners. You must, at least, be second worst. Even supposing you are the worst now alive, you are second worst, for he was chief. But suppose you are the worst, is not that the very reason why you should come to Christ. The worse a man is, the more reason he should go to the hospital or physician. The poorer you are, the more reason you should accept the charity of another. Now, Christ does not want any merits of yours. He gives freely.—The worse you are, the more welcome you are. But let me ask you a question; Do you think you will ever get better by stopping away from Christ? If so, you know very little as yet of the way of salvation. No, sir, the longer you stay, the worse you will grow; your hope will grow weaker, your despair will become stronger; the nail with which Satan has fastened you down will be more firmly clenched, and you will be less hopeful than ever.—Come, I beseech you; recollect there is nothing to be gained by delay; but, by delay, everything may be lost.

"But," cries another, "I feel I cannot believe." No, my friend, and you never will believe, if you look first at your be-

lieving. Remember, I am not come to invite you to *faith* but am come to invite you to *Christ*. But you say, "What is the difference?" Why, just this: if you first of all say, "I want to believe a thing," you never do. But your first inquiry must be, "What is this thing that I am to believe?" Then will faith come as the consequence of that search. Our first business has not to do with faith, but with Christ. Come, I beseech you, on Calvary's mount, and see the cross. Behold the Son of God—he who made the heavens and the earth, dying for your sins. Look to him. Is there not power in him to save? Look at his face so full of pity. Is there not love in his heart to prove him *willing* to save? Surely, sinner, the sight of Christ will help thee to believe. Do not believe first, and then go to Christ, or else thy faith will be a worthless thing.—Go to Christ without any faith, and cast thyself upon him—sink or swim.

But I hear another cry, "Oh, sir! you do not know how often I have been invited—how long I have rejected the Lord." I do not know, and I do not want to know. All I know is that my Master has sent me to "*compel*" you to come in; so come along with me now.—You may have rejected a thousand invitations; don't make this the thousandth and one. You have been up to the house of God, and you have only been *Gospel hardened*. But do I not see a tear in your eye? Come, my brother, don't be hardened by this morning's sermon. O Spirit of the living God! come and melt this heart, for it has never been melted, and compel him to come in! I cannot let you go on such idle excuses as that. If you have lived so many years slighting Christ, there are so many reasons why *now* you should not slight him. But did I hear you whisper that this was not a convenient time? Then what must I say to you?—When will that convenient time come?—Shall it come when you are in hell? Will *that time* be convenient? Shall it come when you are on your dying bed, and the death rattle is in your throat—shall it come *then*? Or when the burning sweat is scalding your brow; and then again, when the cold clammy sweat is there, shall *those* be convenient times? When pains are racking you, and you are on the bor-