

seemingly rude and inconsiderate and urgent as it is.

Naaman was wroth, and said, "I thought," that is what is wrong with some of us here until this hour. Why are you not as happy and rejoicing a Christian as there is in all London? I will tell you why in a word. You are just troubled with the same disease that troubled Naaman inwardly. Leprosy was his trouble outwardly, and the leprosy of pride was his trouble inwardly. He needed to be humbled before he could be healed. Now, your pride is very likely intellectual pride, intellectual vanity, intellectual conceit. I speak to men and women here who have read a little. If you had read more you would be very fine material for preaching the Gospel to, but you have read a little, just a little. You have got the names of Huxley and Spencer and Darwin on your tongues, and you could not very likely tell for the life of you what Huxley and Spencer and Darwin had particularly said; but you have got a hold of the names on your tongues, and you juggle, juggle, juggle away with these words and names, and you want to impress and overawe the poor preacher with a sense of your opinion, and "I think so and so," and you say, "When I go to hear a sermon, I think, and I like, and when you do not get what you like, the preacher gets your ugliest verdict. Now, my dear friend, come away from that, if you please. We are met here for far more serious work. You are a poor hopeless, helpless, condemned sinner; until you receive this Gospel in childlike simplicity you cannot be saved; you are neither fit to live nor fit to die, and you have both to do, so do come down off your horse of pride and headiness and high-mindedness and self content, and sit there as quietly and humbly as though you never read a book. Forget your wisdom and forget your knowledge, and remember that in all past ages, and even in this nineteenth century, thanks to God, wise men and learned who have forgotten more about literature and science and philosophy than you ever learnt, have with all their knowledge, contrived to be as simple, genuine, evangelical believers in the blood of the Lamb as any that ever lived. You 'thought.' Thank you for nothing. What did you think? Let us hear it. Well, here it is, 'I thought that he would surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place, and recover me of the leprosy.' That is 'I thought that he was a trickster and a juggler, and that he would come and say, 'Hey! Presto! Pass! and the thing would be done. Yes, is not that about the length and breadth and depth, and height, my

friend, of your notions of what genuine religion is? The thoughts of people in Naaman's condition—oh, they are worth little! Naaman spoke out his thought, and there it is. That is what he thought. When salvation comes to us, it comes when we get rid of our own thought, or we hold in our own thought, whatever it may be, and we choke it down, and we allow God to speak; for God's thoughts are what we need to know; and God says in this business, 'My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are My ways your ways, for as the heaven is high above the earth, so are My thoughts higher than your thoughts, and My ways than your ways.' Oh, hush, be still, and know that God is speaking, and that you ought to bow the head and keep silence and believe!

"Are not Abana and Pharpar—?" Oh, yes! With what contempt men sometimes speak of the Gospel until they have tried it.

"What's Yarrow but a river bare,
That rolls the dark hills under;
There are a thousand streams elsewhere
As worthy of your wonder."

Naaman dear, if Abana and Pharpar were waters that could have cleansed you, why did you not go to them? Why did you come here at all? That was a witless speech, surely! And have not some of us spoken in the same rude and contemptuous way about what we call old, narrow-minded, bigoted, Puritanical doctrines, until we have tried them? But when the day came when our sins were fastening upon us, and the sorrows of death compassed us, and the pains of hell got hold upon us, and we found trouble and sorrow, then we changed our tune. When no spiritual pains had fastened upon us, we could speak contemptuously of the old Gospel, and call it a "doctrine of the shambles," this salvation by blood; but when we stand naked and shivering and ready to perish, then this old Gospel of the Cross—the Gospel of salvation through the doing and dying of Another—is to us like a peal of heaven's own music. Do not talk against the Gospel, my friend. You are only showing your want of heart or the depth of your ignorance.

"And his servants came near, and spoke, and said, If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather, then, when he said, Wash, and be clean?" "Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan"—*verbatim et literatim* according to the saying of the man of God. He had to humble himself to obey the Gospel. And you and I must do the same. We do not give up intellectuality, we do not give up the powers of the mind. We simply crucify their pride; that is all.