

despair of finding Him. It is a singular confirmation of his promise, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." It is truly wonderful that Christ should condescend to receive a poor vile sinner who has spent the prime and strength of his life in dishonouring Him. To do so to spend life so is most un-man-like. But the Redeemer waits, with the patience of God, to receive even the chief of sinners.

Again, He receives sinners of all grades. To the most hardened and depraved he says, "Come unto me," "Come now, and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; and though they be red as crimson they shall be like wool." If you had wronged, or offended, or insulted the best friend you have on earth half as much as you have Jesus, he long ago would have given you up—he would have dishonored you. But this precious Redeemer stands waiting with pity in his heart to press you to his bosom. He says, "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

Some of you, I fear, have said, "I am my own; I owe Christ nothing, I won't come to Him, I don't mean to serve Him, I won't be reconciled to Him, I can be happy without Him." Poor, ungrateful, deluded soul! You little know the love you are despising, the mercy you are regretting. Christ still stands over you, saying, "How can I give thee up? I died to save thee. Behold these wounds in my hands, my feet, my side, my brow. They were made on your account. I died that you might live. Come unto me; delay not. Why will ye die?"

"Delay not, delay not, O sinner draw near,
The waters of life are now flowing for thee;
No price is demanded, the Saviour is here,
Redemption is purchased, salvation is free."

Some of you long ago professed that you had given your heart to the Lord. You entered into a solemn covenant engagement with Him. In that covenant you pledged yourself to serve Him. You made a public profession of allegiance to Him. You sealed that profession at a communion table. But, on your part, that covenant has been broken. Your vows you have forgotten. You have backslidden into sin. Only God and your own heart know the sins which during those months or years of declension you have committed. You are not happy now. You know from sad experience that it is a bitter and painful thing to forsake God. You know from experience that the most fearful nest of scorpions this side of perdition is the heart of the backslider from God. And yet, even to you is this Gospel sent, "This man (Christ Jesus) receiveth sinners." Come with all your filthiness and your idols to Christ; come just as you are, and he will in no wise cast you out. Though you had all the sins of the entire human race resting on your conscience, repenting and trusting in the blood of Jesus Christ, there is no reason why you should for a moment indulge despair; for his blood "cleanseth us from all sin."

And, now, for what purpose does Christ receive sinners? He receives them to justify and forgive them. Man is by nature a rebel against God. In his heart there is enmity against Him. It is only his impotence that has kept him from waging war against the Almighty. By wicked works he has forfeited his life. Both God's word and his own conscience, which is God's organ in the soul, tell him that he is a sinner. He hates the great Father and dreads His wrath. God's voice, which at first was sweeter than the sweetest music of the human soul, now fills him with terror and dismay. When he looks thoughtfully to the judgment day he can see in it only his dread doom.