

tually. You have no faith, you have no good works, you have no grace, and what is worse still, you have no hope. Ah, my Master has sent you a gracious invitation: Come and welcome to the marriage feast of his love. "*Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*" Come, I must lay hold upon you, though you be defiled with foulest filth, and though you have nought but rags upon your back; though your own righteousness has become as filthy clouts, yet must I lay hold upon you, and invite you first, and even *compel you to come in.*

And now I see you again. You are not only poor, but you are "*maimed.*"—There was a time when you thought you could work out your own salvation without God's help—when you could perform good works, attend to ceremonies, and get to heaven by yourselves; but now you are maimed—the sword of the law has cut off your hands, and now you can work no longer; you say, with bitter sorrow—

"The best performance of my hands
Dares not appear before Thy throne."

You have lost all power now to obey the law; you feel that *when you would do good, evil is present with you.* You are maimed; you have given up, as a forlorn hope, all attempt to save yourself, because you are maimed and your arms are gone. But you are worse off than that; for if you could not *work* your way to heaven, yet you could walk your way there along the road *by faith*; but you are maimed in the feet as well as in the hands; you feel that you cannot believe, that you cannot repent, that you cannot obey the demands of the Gospel. You feel that you are utterly undone, powerless in every respect to do anything that can be pleasing to God. In fact you are crying out—

"Oh, could I but believe,
Then all would easy be;
I would, but cannot; Lord, relieve;
My help must come from thee!"

To you also am I sent. Before you am I to lift up the banner of the Cross. To you am I to preach this Gospel, "*Whoso calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved;*" and unto you am I to cry, "*Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*"

There is yet another class. You are "*halt.*" You are "*halting between two*

opinions." You are at one time seriously inclined, and at another time worldly gaiety calls you away. What little progress you do make in religion is but a limp. You have a little strength, but that is so little that you make but painful progress. Ah, limping brother, "*to you [also] is the word of this salvation sent.*" Though you halt between two opinions, the Master sends me to you with this message: "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." Consider thy ways; "set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live." Because I will do this, "prepare to meet thy God." Halt no longer, but decide for God and His truth.

And yet I see another class—"the blind." Yes, you that cannot see yourselves—that think yourselves good when you are full of evil—"that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"—to you am I sent. You, blind souls, that cannot see your lost estate—that do not believe that sin is so "exceedingly sinful" as it is, and who will not be persuaded to think that God is a just and righteous God—to you am I sent. To you, too, that do not see the Saviour—that see no beauty in him that you should desire him; who see no excellence in virtue, no glories in religion, no happiness in serving God, no delight in being His children—to you, also, am I sent. Ay, to whom am I not sent, if I take my text? For it goes further than this—it not only gives a particular description, so that each individual case may be met, but afterwards, it makes a general sweep, and says, "Go out into the highways and hedges." Here we bring in all ranks and conditions of men; my lord upon his horse in the highway, the woman trudging about her business, and the thief waylaying the traveller—all these are in "the highways," and they are all to be compelled to come in. And there away in "the hedges" lie some poor souls whose refuges of lies are swept away, and who are seeking now to find some little shelter for their weary heads—to you, also, are we sent. This is the universal command, "Compel them to come in."

Now, I pause, after having described your character—I pause to look at the Herculean labour that lies before me.—