

An Earnest Call To The Unsaved

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“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” —*Isaiah 1:18*

CHRIST IS THE REDEEMER OF SINNERS! It is for their salvation He came into the world. For this purpose He left heaven, took upon Himself humanity, and suffered the deepest pain and humiliation. It was for this He went to the cross to die the death of deaths. For this He sits in glory at the Father’s right hand in power. Over the conversion of sinners the angels that surround His throne rejoice. It is for the conversion of sinners that His providence is directed—determining the circumstances that shall fall out unto these for the purpose of bringing them to the end of themselves that they might trust in Him alone for their salvation. His marvellous grace has this as its end. It was grace that moved the Father to choose some before the foundation of the world to be partakers of the benefits of Christ’s atonement. It was grace that moved the Son to become Surety and Mediator for these chosen of the Father, and to purchase their redemption by His perfect obedience to the law and cruel death on the cross. It is by grace that the Spirit comes in power to accompany the Gospel to call these who were chosen by the Father and redeemed by the Son unto spiritual life.

Before sinners will come to Christ for salvation they must be made to see their sinfulness and inability to save themselves. Only those who see their danger of perishing under the curse of sin will see their need of Christ. Only those who are convicted of their lost condition will ever seek mercy from God through Christ. For the purpose of showing sinners their need of redemption, and to drive them to reason with God as they are invited to do in the invitation contained in our text, the responsibility of the creature is laid before us in the context. Listen to these words from verse 16 & 17: “Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.” The command here is far more than a call to outward reformation. God’s call in these verses is far deeper than to leave off certain sins that are outwardly committed by you. In these words the Lord is demanding of you perfection of nature, practice, and satisfaction to the demands of His justice. When He commands you to “make you clean,” it is a call to put away the *original corruption of nature*. When He calls you to “put away evil from before His eyes” it is a call to meet the holy requirements of His law—that He will not be able to behold any evil within you.

You will reply, “I am unable to do this. Why does He press upon me that which I am unable to do?” The very purpose of pressing upon you the holy demands of the law is to show you your inability to save yourself by your own works that you might apply to Christ, who has perfectly obeyed the law to establish its righteousness, and removed its curse by His death. This He did not do for His own benefit, but as a Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer in the room of sinners for their benefit. If you come not to Christ you must answer to the justice of God yourself for your own sinfulness. If you come to Christ, His righteousness is credited to your account, and your sins are removed by Him. If you miss Christ you must perish forever. Only Christ is the city of refuge for awakened sinners who are pursued by Divine wrath. Flee to Him; there is no case too difficult for Him to handle; no sins too great to be washed away in His blood. If you feel the burden of your sins you are invited to reason with God, and plead the promise of His mercy that He will wash you from your sins. My desire and prayer is that the Lord will see fit to open your eyes, break your will, and make an effectual entrance with His Word into your heart through this message.

There are three natural divisions to the text that I will bring before you: *First*, who it is that is invited to come to Christ; *second*, the invitation itself; and *third*, the One who invites.

I. SEE WHO IT IS THAT IS INVITED TO COME TO CHRIST FOR FORGIVENESS

These are they who have been made conscious of their sinfulness, and need of cleansing in the blood of Christ. "Though your sins be as scarlet...though they be red like crimson." These spoken of here have been brought to the knowledge of their sins as being scarlet and red like crimson. The promise of the Lord to these is that they shall be as "white as snow...they shall be as wool." If you have been awakened to the fact of your sinfulness, and your need of Christ, you have every reason to find encouragement in this invitation and promise from Christ. To know that you are a sinner is the beginning of grace within your heart. Only those who know that they are lost can be found; only those who see their need of Christ may come to Him; only those who know that they deserve hell ever take their place at the feet of Christ as helpless sinners, pleading mercy from Him.

Come, humble sinner, in whose breast
A thousand thro'ts revolve;
Come, with your guilt and fear oppressed,
And make this last resolve.

I'll go to Jesus, though my sin
Hath like a mountain rose;
I know His courts, I'll enter in,
Whatever may oppose.

Perhaps He may admit my plea,
Perhaps will hear my prayer;
But if I perish I will pray,
And perish only there.

I can but perish if I go;
I am resolved to try;
For if I stay away, I know
I must forever die.

From the whole of Isaiah 1 we receive a description of those "scarlet" sinners who are invited to Christ:

1. They are **SENSELESS SINNERS** who are invited: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider" (Isa. 1:3). These are unknowing, rebellious, ignorant, lost people that are described here. Dear friend, you are described here. All your life-time you have lived upon the common mercies of God; He has cared for you, fed you, given you health, and has been longsuffering with you; yet, you have lived as though He existed not, and as if you were your own master. If there has been a check of conscience now and then you have rebelled against the prick of it, and cast away the thoughts of death and eternity as a useless thing. You are ignorant of the ways of God, you know nothing of His Word, and the ways of righteousness have been far removed from your thoughts. You have not bowed your knee to the Kingship of Christ to confess that He is Lord of your life. In your actions you have said, "I will not have this man to reign over me." You are senseless of your danger, not knowing—

yea, I fear not caring—that hell is enlarged and moves toward all who do not know Christ. You are indifferent to the fact that death is near, that God gives you the life that you now possess, and that at His bidding the spirit will depart from your body, leaving you in an eternal hopelessness. Oh, what a dangerous, wasted life you live. I call to you in the name of Christ: Awake, awake! for there is salvation in none other but Him. If He passes you by you shall surely perish! To continue in your senseless, impenitent condition is to pass into eternity without hope! “Come now, and let us reason together:” you are in danger! It is turn or burn! It is Christ or perish! He has mercy for sinners. Fall before Him and plead His blood be put between you and offended justice. To know your need of Him is the beginning of grace in your soul and deliverance from this senseless condition.

2. These that are invited to Christ are described to be **SINNERS WORSE THAN BEASTS**: “The *ox* knoweth his owner, and the *ass* his master’s crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider” (Isa. 1:3). The beast knows his master, and owns the one that feeds him, but man does not recognize God to be his Owner and Creator. This is not pleasing to the much-refined flesh and pride of man, but I say to you, man in his sin is worse than the beast. It is said: He is as drunk as a dog, but I never saw a dog drunk. It is said: He is as mean as a snake, but I never knew of a snake attacking except out of fear, and for his survival; I never knew of a snake forsaking its young, but these things I have seen among men. You say that you know that you are not that bad. Ah, my dear friend, you are ignorant of your own heart. You have not yet seen yourself in the light of the holiness of Christ. You have not yet been awakened to your sinfulness. Until you are brought to see yourself as the chief of sinners you will never see your need of salvation through Christ. Christ is the sinner’s Saviour, and those whom He saves are convicted of their senselessness and beastlikeness. Until you are brought to the end of yourself, and see that you deserve hell, you will never recognize that there is hope for you in a sovereign Christ.

But you who are under the load of guilt, and are burdened with sin; you who know that there are none good, no, not one; you who know you have no claims personally upon mercy, and know that salvation is the sovereign prerogative of God to give, when, where, and to whom He pleases; ho! I speak to you: look to Christ and be ye saved. It is such as you that Christ came to save. He said, “I am come, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

3. These who are invited to come to Christ for forgiveness are described as being **LADENED WITH INIQUITY**: “Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward” (Isa. 1:4). Here is a sad description of mankind. *First*, they are a “seed of evil-doers.” This means that they are born in sin, with a corrupted nature that habitually bends them to evil. *Second*, these are “laden with iniquity,” have “forsaken the Lord,” and “have provoked God to anger.” This means that they outwardly manifest themselves to be sinners by nature and birth by their practice of evil and hatred of God. *Thirdly*, these are “children that are corrupters.” This means that those who are brought into the world are born sinful and are the corrupted offspring of man. Also, these are teachers of sin by their conduct before others who observe and learn from them. This is the sad case of all that are born into the world, but few are brought to see this true of themselves. To be awakened to this is the work of the Holy Spirit. To be made a sinner in one’s own eyes by the Spirit is the first work of God’s grace in bringing sinners to Christ. Do you know yourself a sinner by birth and practice? Do you know yourself to be born with the curse of God upon you? Can you say: “Everything you have said from the Word of God about sinners is true of me; my heart is pained within because of this sinful, helpless condition?” Then, my dear friend, I speak comfort to you. “Come now, and let us reason together: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” It is God’s grace that has made you to smart under the sense of your guilt; it is His grace that has given you a desire to know Christ, and be forgiven your transgressions; it is His grace that now draws you to Himself, and He gives you the desire to be saved.

I must speak a word to you who do not seriously consider what I have said. I ask you—How can you stand in the face of God and call Him a liar by denying this to be a true description of you when He has declared it to be so? As long as you are self-sufficient you will not go to Christ for salvation. Before you will

ever see your helpless condition and need of Him, Christ must break your proud heart, and lay you in the dust before Him as a beggar for mercy. He must cut from under you all your comforts and worldly hopes, strip you, and lay you naked before the cross. He will not put His garments of pure righteousness upon you until you are first stripped of your filthy garments of self-righteousness. I beseech you, ask Christ to break your heart and make you teachable that you might come to Him for mercy. Listen to the words of this hymn and lay them to heart:

To understand these things aright,
This grand distinction must be known
Though all are sinners in God's sight,
There are but few so in their own:
To such as these our Lord was sent
They're new-born sinners who repent.

What comfort can a Saviour bring
To those who never felt their woe?
A sinner is a scared thing,
The Holy Ghost hath made him so:
New life from Him we must receive
Before for sin we rightly grieve.

This faithful saying let us own,
Well worthy 'tis to be believed
That Christ into the world came down,
That sinners might by Him be saved:
Sinners are high in His esteem,
And sinners highly value Him.

4. Those who are invited to Christ for salvation are described as being **TOTALLY DEPRAVED**: "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment" (Isa. 1:5,6). Here we see that man is sinful throughout his whole being: his head is sick, i.e., his understanding is sinful and blinded, which brings his will under bondage to evil and renders it powerless toward good; his heart is faint, i.e., man's affections are set upon things of the flesh, the world and pleasure for self; he is unsound from head to foot, i.e., man is sinful in the use of the members of his body. All that a man is by nature is spiritually unsound, and there is nothing that can make him acceptable to God which is the production of his own hands. God looks upon those which have not been cleansed by Christ as large, ugly, open sores. There is nothing about man personally that would make God desire him. The only thing that He owes sinners is judgment on account of their sins. If any are saved it is because of His mercy and grace. Apart from the grace of God shed upon sinners through Christ's atonement there is no salvation for them.

The only ointment that can mollify the sinner's sores is the blood of Christ applied by the Holy Spirit. There is none other anointed of the Father to be Saviour but Christ. Only He entered into a covenant of redemption for sinners. There are none that could establish the righteousness of the law through perfect obedience but Him. There is no other who has the ability to take the sins of God's people upon Himself and suffer the eternal punishment due these but Christ. There is no other that is seated in heaven as the God-man, upon the throne of His Father, with all power in heaven and earth invested in him, to intercede for sinners and apply salvation to them but Christ. Oh, dear friend, if the Spirit has awakened you, and you see that you are a sinner, then look away from yourself to Him who is able to justify the ungodly. If you are bruised, sore, sick, sinful, Christ is the Physician that can heal you. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." You that are double-dyed sinners, look to Christ and be ye saved. You that have rebelled all the days of your life against His mercies, and were senseless to your danger, look to Christ. You that are below the beasts, look to Christ. You that are sick with sin from head to toe, from heart to practice, from thought to deed, look to Christ. There is forgiveness in Him. There is cleansing in Him. His blood cleanses from all sin!

5. Those that are RELIGIOUS SINNERS are invited to come to Christ for cleansing and forgiveness. Possibly, religious sinners are the deepest-dyed sinners in that they have lived so long in spiritual adultery, and have sinned against so much spiritual light. Yet the promise is that these sins shall be forgiven. In verses 16-17 the Lord describes His distaste and hatred of the religious activities of sinners. He is sick of your mock prayers on the Lord's Day when you live as though He were dead during the week. Away with your carnal sacrifices that you depend upon for salvation—they will not make you acceptable before Him. Your being a deacon, preacher, Sunday School teacher, or being engaged in any other religious activity will not save you. You are at the most just playing church. Christ is not in your thoughts, and you are the most contented with those religious activities where His Person, work, law, and claims are not spoken of. Oh, dear sinner, see the foolishness of this! Your sins can only be put away by the sacrifice of God's own Son. To come to Christ you must forsake all hope of salvation in church membership, baptism, church attendance, praying, etc. These things hold no comfort for you. You must turn away from all this as a way of salvation and come to Christ. You must come to Him stripped of all that which the world holds out for salvation, and trust in Him alone. These other things have their place, but not as the cause of salvation. When you are brought to Christ you will want baptism and church membership; you will be found in church attendance, prayer and reading the Bible. But Christ will be your all in all, and these religious services will be nothing more than an act of obedience in worshipping Him. These things apart from Christ can not save you, and no matter how religious you are if you know not Christ you have not salvation.

II. THE NEXT DIVISION OF THIS TEXT FOR OUR CONSIDERATION IS THE DIVINE INVITATION ITSELF

God invites afflicted, depraved, helpless, hell-bound, hell-deserving, sinners to reason with Him. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord." The Lord never treats men as though they were sticks and stones, but as rational creatures. He has given to you a mind and an understanding. In wooing you to Christ He entreats you with motives and reasons as to why you should close with Him as He is tendered in the Gospel. He appoints His ministers as His spokesmen to lay before you the excellencies of Christ, and the miseries of sin, that, through the power of the Spirit, you might be made willing to close with Christ as Lord and Saviour. I have spoken to you concerning your need of Him, and have tried to show you that He saves sinners of the worst sort. I would further woo you by showing that he promises forgiveness of sins to all that come to Him through Christ Jesus. He states that your scarlet sins will be like wool, and your deep-dyed, crimson sins will be washed as white as snow.

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord." About these words Dr. Gill said, (They) "are thrown in for the sake of the small remnant God had left among this wicked people, in order to comfort them, being distressed with sin. These, seeing their sins in their dreadful colours, and with all their aggravating circumstances, were ready to conclude that they were unpardonable; and seeing God as an angry Judge, dared not to come nigh Him, but stood at a distance, fearing and expecting His vengeance to fall upon

them, and therefore put away the promises, and refused to be comforted; when the Lord was pleased to encourage them to draw near to Him, and come and reason with Him, not at the bar of His justice; there is no reasoning with Him there; none can contend with Him, or answer Him, one of a thousand; if He marks iniquity in strict justice, none can stand before Him; there is no entering the lists with Him upon the foot of justice, or at its bar; but at the bar of mercy, at the throne of grace; there the righteous may dispute with Him from His declarations and promises, as well as come with boldness to Him; and at the altar and sacrifice of Christ, and at the fountain of His blood and sacrifice; and from the Lord's proclamation of grace and mercy through Him; and from His promises to forgive repenting and confessing sinners; and here God reasons with sensible souls from His own covenant promises and proclamations to forgive sin; from the abounding of His grace over abounding sin; from the righteousness of Christ to justify, His blood to cleanse from sin, and His sacrifice to atone for it; and from the end of His coming into the world to save the chief of sinners: saying, 'though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool'."

You say, "I know what you have said is true, I know that this sinful condition of men you have described is true of me. I am a sinner, I feel my guilt, I know my need of forgiveness, but I fear to reason with God in such a way lest I prove presumptuous. I fear that I am too great a sinner, and have followed this path of sin too long. Certainly Christ does not mean me, for I am beyond hope." Ah, my dear friend, it is to you that I speak in the name of Christ. It is to you that are awakened to see the true danger and misery of your sin that I would cry to flee to Christ from the wrath to come. It is to such a remnant that this invitation is given. You say you are a *senseless sinner*—it is to you that the invitation is given. You say that you have been an *ungrateful sinner* all the days of your life—it is to you I speak. You say you are *laden with iniquity*, depraved in every thought and action—God calls you to reason with Him on the basis of the righteousness, blood, mercy, and grace of Christ. For you there is cleansing in that fountain drawn from Immanuel's side! Can you give me one passage of Scripture that forbids you to seek mercy in Christ? I dare say that you cannot. Ah, but there are a multitude of promises to come. Read the Gospels and see Christ at His blessed work among sinners! There you see Him inviting sinners to come. If there be one now and then that He blocks and delays it is only to make them more conscious of their need, and to strengthen their faith, but in the end they find that for which they seek! You say, "I have not repentance enough. I have not been under the smart of my conscience enough. I feel that I have not prayed long enough, or wept to His satisfaction." My dear sinner, would you add your own works to the blessed work of Christ? Do you think that He needs you in addition to His blood to make it effectual in your forgiveness? You are not demanded to look to your repentance, but to Christ! The only requirement in coming to Christ for salvation is to feel your need of Him. If you are a bankrupt sinner, if you feel your lost condition, if you know your need of Him, come!

Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness He requireth,
Is to feel your need of Him:
This He gives you; this He gives you;
'Tis the Spirit's rising beam.

Take the place of the lepers, who were dying outside the city. The reasoning they used with one another is that which you are to use with your conscience. One said, "Let us go into the city, for if we stay here we shall surely die, and if we go we can but die." If you must perish, perish at the feet of Christ, pleading His mercy! I have not known of one yet to perish as a seeker at His blessed feet.

For your further encouragement: has the Lord openly refused you to enter into life? You say, “No, I just fear He will.” This is but foolish reasoning. Mr. Bunyan, in his *Pilgrim’s Progress*, wrote of you—you are Mr. Fearing. You stand at the very gate of salvation and watch others go in, but you are afraid to take the kingdom yourself. You are nervous, doubtful, mistrustful, suspicious, and over-loaded with doubts and fears. Christ commands you to fear not, but to come to Him! Do you doubt the sincerity of His invitation? Do you doubt His ability to save you? If He has not openly refused you to enter into life, but, instead, has commanded you to repent and trust Him, why stand back with your excuses? Did the damned in hell go there because they were refused when they sought the Lord? or, are they there because they despised the Lord, would have nothing to do with Him, and preferred their sins to His righteousness? Ah, you know the answer to this, for men perish on the account of their sins, and because they will not have Christ as their Lord and Saviour. If you perish it will be because you love your filthy self-righteousness above the perfect righteousness of Christ. If you perish it will be because you saw more in sin to be enjoyed than in Christ to love. Christ is the sinner’s Saviour and all who come to Him have life. Don’t blame your perishing condition upon the Saviour by saying that He would not have anything to do with you, but upon your own depraved, fainting, evil heart that will have nothing to do with Him. Linger not, my dear friend, but come now, just as you are. Your desire to come was planted there by the Spirit. If you truly come He will not cast you out. If you come it is the evidence of His work of grace within your heart. If you perish it is evidence of a wicked, blinded heart that saw no beauty in Christ that you should desire Him.

Look to Christ, and be ye saved! Fall at His feet and plead His mercy! Venture on Him, and He will save you.

Lo, the ‘Incarinate God, ascended,
Pleads the merit of His blood!
Venture on Him, venture wholly,
Let no other trust intrude;
None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good.

I am not pleading with you to join the church, I am not directing you to look to your baptism, I am not beseeching you to trust your works, I do not ask you to shake the preacher’s hand in token of decision! Salvation is not in these things, but in Christ. I am pleading with you to look to Christ—He only is the sinner’s Friend. He was born of a sinful woman, into a sinful race, yet, without sin Himself, that sinners might find in Him their Friend. While on the earth, in the days of His flesh, He was found in the society of great sinners, and showed mercy to them. Look at Mary Magdalene, a strumpet of no reputation, yet He saved her. Look at His apostles, the publicans, and the Gentiles that gathered about Him. See where He eats and visits? Wherever He was found there were sinners. He invited them to Him. He healed them. He saved them. In His death we see Him illustrating Himself to be the sinner’s Saviour in that He stopped dying long enough to save the deepest sort of sinner: a thief, murderer, and robber. If you are a sinner you can come to Christ for salvation, for He died for sinners.

III. I WILL NOW SPEAK OF THE ONE WHO INVITES

“Come now, and let us reason together, *saith the Lord.*” This is no common-place invitation given by those with no authority, but is bidding from the King of Kings and Lord of Lords Himself. It is God who speaks to you. It is your Creator that bids you come to Him. What could be more authoritative than this? He who is the planner, executioner, and applier of salvation invites sinners to come. Ah, what encouragement this should be to you that have despaired of all hope for salvation because of your sinfulness! Here is God Himself saying to you, “Come now, and let us reason together.” It is the Saviour who promises to those that come to Him forgiveness and salvation. Listen to the words of Christ: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and

are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Mt. 11:28-30). “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water” (Jn. 4:10). In the first place He spoke to those who were under a burden of sin which they were not able to bear; in the other He spoke to a woman that was a deep sinner with five husbands. You who are burdened and broken-hearted over sin; you who are outcast sinners in your own eyes; you who are thirsting for the water of life; Christ speaks to you to come to Him.

Oh, my dear friend, I never feel so much my helplessness as when I am pleading with sinners to come to Christ for salvation. I can preach, write, and plead with you lawfully, but you must look to the Inviter Himself for salvation. He only has the authority to effectually apply the message of salvation, and open your blinded understanding to see Him as sufficient for your every need. I can plead generally and outwardly by the Gospel, but the Holy Spirit only can give you life and bring you faith in Christ. Salvation is the sovereign prerogative of God to bestow upon whom He pleases. You can take your place as a poor lost sinner before Him and plead for mercy. You have no claims upon Christ by nature, but you can go to Him and confess that salvation is of the Lord, and that you come to Him with no price in your hand, but that you lean completely upon His grace to do you good. You can come to Him with no complaint against His sovereignty, but that you find comfort in it to save a sinner like you, who cannot save himself. Oh, may the Lord speak with power through this message to call you out of death into life, and translate you from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of His dear Son.

I close my appeal to you in the words of a great Puritan preacher. As these words sound forth from the past give careful consideration to them. “Arise then! What do you mean, O sleeper? Awake, O secure sinner! lest you be consumed in your iniquities: say, as the lepers, ‘If we sit here, we shall die.’ Verily, it is not more certain that you are now out of hell, than that you shall speedily be in it, except you repent and be converted: there is but this one door for you to escape by. Arise then, O sluggard, and shake off your excuses: how long will you slumber, and fold your hands to sleep. Will you lie down in the midst of the sea, or sleep on the top of the mast of a ship? There is no remedy, but you must either turn or burn. There is an unchangeable necessity of the change of your condition, except you have resolved to abide the worst of it, and try it out with the Almighty. If you love your life, O man, arise and come away. I think I see the Lord Jesus laying the merciful hands of a holy violence upon you; I think He acts as did the angels to Lot: ‘Then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, lest thou be consumed. And, while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, the Lord being merciful unto him; and they brought him without the city, and said, Escape for thy life, stay not in all the plain; escape to the mountains, lest thou be consumed.’

“O how wilful will your destruction be if you should yet harden yourself in your sinful state! But none of you can say that you have not had fair warning. Yet I think I cannot tell how to leave you so. It is not enough for me to have delivered my own soul. What! shall I go away without my errand? Will none of you arise and follow me? Have I been all this while speaking to the wind? Have I been charming the deaf adder, or allaying the restless ocean with argument? Do I speak to the trees or rocks, or to men? to the tombs or monuments of the dead, or to a living auditory? If you be men, and not senseless stocks, stand still and consider where you are going; if you have the reason and understanding of men, dare not to run into the flames, and fall into hell with your eyes open; but think with yourselves, and set to the work of repentance. What! men, and yet run into the pit, when the very beasts will not be forced in? What! endowed with reason, and yet trifle with death and hell, and the vengeance of the Almighty? Are men herein only distinguished from very brutes, and these, having no foresight, have no care to provide for the things to come; and will you, who are warned not hasten your escape from eternal torments? O show yourselves men, and let reason prevail with you.

“Is it a reasonable thing for you to contend against the Lord your Maker or ‘to harden yourselves against His word.’ (Job 9:4), as though the Strength of Israel would lie? Is it reasonable that an understanding creature should loose, yea, live quite against, the very end of his being, and be as a broken pitcher, only fit for the dunghill? Is it reasonable that the only things in this world that God has made capable of knowing

His will and bringing Him glory, should yet live in ignorance of his Maker, and be unserviceable to His use, yea, should be engaged against Him, and resist his Creator? ‘Hear O heavens, and give ear, O earth, and let the creatures without sense judge if this be reason, that man, whom God has nourished and brought up, should rebel against Him?’ Judge in your own selves. Is it a reasonable undertaking for briars and thorns to set themselves in battle against the devouring fire? or for the potsherd of the earth to strive with its Maker? You will say, ‘This is not reason,’ or surely the eye of reason is quite put out. And, if this be not reason, then there is no reason that you should continue as you are, but there is all the reason in the world that you should now turn and repent.

“What shall I say? I could spend myself in this argument. O that you would but hearken to me! that you would now set upon a new course! Will you not be made clean? When shall it once be? Will you sit down and consider the forementioned argument, and debate it, whether it be not best to turn? Come, and let us reason together; is it good for you to be here? Will you sit till the tide comes in upon you? Is it good for you to try whether God will be as good as His word, and to harden yourself in a conceit that all is well with you while you remain unsanctified?

“Alas! for such sinners; must they perish at last by hundreds? What course shall I use with them that I have not tried? What shall I do for the daughter of my people? O Lord God, help. Alas, shall I leave them thus? If they will not hear me, yet do thou hear me. O that they may yet live in Thy sight! Lord, save them, or else they perish. My heart would melt to see their houses on fire about their ears when they were fast asleep in their beds; and shall not my soul be moved within me to see them falling into endless perdition? Lord, have compassion, and save them out of the burning; put forth Thy divine power, and the work will be done; but as for me, I cannot prevail.” (Joseph Alleine—*An Alarm to Unconverted Sinners* .)

Ah, my dear friend, I have used the words of this Puritan to appeal to you in the matter of your conversion because I am at a loss to speak the desire of my heart to you. Is it not something, that the Lord has seen fit, in His mercy, to bring you into contact with this Divine invitation? My desire is that this call that has come from my heart to you will be made effectual by the blessed, sovereign Spirit, Who moves where, when, and upon whom He pleases. Give heed to this call and venture on Christ, and perhaps He will hear your cry and make this the day of His power of visitation upon your soul. Treat not lightly what you have read! If you must perish, let it be at the feet of a sovereign Christ, seriously pleading His mercy in your behalf. May the Lord make this a blessed day to you in revealing Christ to you as your Lord and Saviour! Oh, Lord, help!