

PEOPLE OF THE HOLY BIBLE

*3. Aeneas
A Man at Lydda, Sick of the Palsy*

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“And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda. And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy. And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately. And all that dwelt in Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord” Acts 9:32-35.

I may not hope that I shall see you all again, and so, as I have the opportunity of only preaching one sermon to you, I must make it as full as I can of *essence of gospel*, from beginning to end. We have heard of a chaplain who preached in a jail, who selected a subject which he divided into two heads. The first part was the sinner’s disease; this he took for his topic on one Sabbath, and closed the sermon by saying that he should preach upon the sinner’s remedy upon the following Sunday. Now, there were several of the prisoners hanged on the Monday, according to the custom of the bad old times, so that they did not hear that part of the discourse which it was most necessary for them to hear. It would have been well to have told out the great news of salvation at once to men so near their end, and I think that in every sermon, if the preacher confines himself to one subject, and leaves out essential gospel truth, under the notion that he will preach salvation by Jesus another day, he is very unwise, for some of his congregation may be dead and gone — alas, some of them lost — before he will have the opportunity of coming to the grand and all-important point, namely, the way of salvation. We will not fall into that evil to-night. We will try to shoot at the very centre of our target, and preach the plan of salvation as completely as we can; and may God grant that his blessing may rest on it, the Holy Spirit working with it.

I shall only preach this one sermon to some of you: you will, therefore, have the greater patience with me, as I shall not inflict myself upon you again: but, if we are to have only one

communication with each other, let us come to real practical business and waste no time to-night. A good deal of sermon-hearing is mere trifling; let us come to matter-of-fact preaching and hearing at this time. I am afraid that some sermon preaching is playing too — fine words and oratorical fireworks, but no agony for souls. We mean business to-night. My heart will not be satisfied unless many of you who came in here without Christ shall go down those steps saved by his atoning blood. Bitter will be my disappointment if many do not lay hold of Jesus, and realize in their own souls Peter's words, "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." I have faith in the great Physician that many of you will go away whole to-night, though sin-sick when you came into this house of prayer. Much supplication has gone up to heaven for this, and the Lord heareth prayer; and therefore do I reckon that miracles of healing will surely be wrought in this house on this occasion.

To the point, then. Peter came to Lydda, and found one who bore the classic name of Aeneas: no mighty warrior, however, but a poor paralyzed man, who had been confined to his bed for eight long years. Touched with a sight of the man's feebleness, Peter felt the impulse of the Spirit upon him; and, looking at him as he lay there, he said, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed." Touched by the same Spirit who inspired the apostle, the man believed the message, — believed that Christ had healed him, at once rose and made his bed, and in an instant was perfectly restored. Now let us hear something about this man. We are not to hear Virgil sing, "arms and the man," but we are to let Luke tell us of the man and his Saviour.

In the first place, then, it is very clear that THE MAN WAS TRULY SICK. Had he not been *really sick*, the incident before us would have been all a piece of imposture — a feint and a presence from beginning to end: but he was hopelessly infirm. He had been anxiously watched by his friends for eight years, and was so completely palsied that during all those years he had not left his bed, which had grown hard as a stone beneath him. Now, as there is no room for a great cure unless there is a great sickness, so there is no room for God's great grace unless there is great sin. Jesus Christ did not come into the world to save sham sinners, but real sinners; neither did he descend from heaven to seek those who are not

diseased with sin, for the whole have no need of a physician, but he has come to seek those who are deeply diseased, and to give them real healing. This man's sickness was no imaginary ill, for he could not move; his hands and feet were quite paralyzed. If in any limb there was a measure of motion, it was only a tremulous quiver, which rather indicated growing weakness than remaining force. He was bereaved of all strength. Are you such by nature, my friend, in a spiritual sense? Certainly you are so; but have you found it out? Has the Spirit of God made you feel that you can do nothing aright apart from him, and that you are altogether ruined and palsied unless Jesus Christ can save you? If so, do not despair because you feel how terribly your soul is smitten; but, on the contrary, say to yourself, "Here is room for mercy in me. If ever a soul wanted healing, I do. Here is space for divine power to operate in me, for if ever a soul was weak and palsied, I am just that soul." Be thou cheered with the hope that God will make of thine infirmity a platform upon which he will display his power.

The man had been paralyzed *eight years*. The length of its endurance is a terrible element in a disease. Perhaps yours is no eight years' malady, but twenty-eight, or thirty-eight, or forty-eight, or seventy-eight, perhaps, eighty-eight years have you been in bondage under it. Well, blessed be God, the number of years in which we have lived in sin cannot prevent the mercy of God in Christ Jesus from making us whole. You have a very long bill to discharge, while another friend has but a short one, and owes comparatively little; but it is just as easy for the creditor to write "paid" at the bottom of the large bill as the smaller one. And now that our Lord Jesus Christ has made full atonement it is as easy for God to pardon the iniquities of eighty years as the sins of the child of eight. Be not despairing, then. Jesus Christ can make such as thou art whole, even though thy heart and thine understanding have been long paralyzed with sin.

The man's disease was one which was then reckoned to be, and probably is now, *entirely incurable*. Who can restore a palsied man? Aeneas could not restore himself, and no merely human physician had skill to do anything for him. Dear hearer, has the Spirit of God made you feel that your soul's wound is incurable? Is your heart sick? Is your understanding darkened? Do you feel your

whole nature to have become paralyzed with sin, and is there no physician? Ah, I know there is none among men, for there is no balm in Gilead, there is no physician there; there never was, or else the daughter of my people would have been healed of her hurt long ago. There is no soul physician except at Calvary; no balm but in the Saviour's wounds. If you feel that you are incurably soul-sick, and the case is desperate unless infinite mercy shall interpose, then I am glad that you are here to-night. I am glad that there is such a one as Aeneas present. Do you know that the most delightful task in the world is to preach to those who consciously need the Saviour? Mr. Whitfield used to say that he could wish to preach all day and all night long to those who really knew that they wanted Christ. We are bound to preach to everybody, for our Master said, "preach the gospel to every creature" under heaven; but, oh, when we can get at a knot of hungry souls it is easy and pleasant work to feed them with the bread of heaven; and when hearts are thirsty it is sweet work to hand out the living water, for they are all eager to take it. You know, the great difficulty is that you can bring a horse to the water, but you cannot make him drink if he is not thirsty; and so you may set Jesus Christ before men, but if they do not feel their need of him they will not have him. You may preach in tones of thunder, or plead with accents of intense affection, but you cannot stir them to desire the grace which is in Christ Jesus, unless they feel their need of it Oh, I am happy to-night — thrice happy — if anywhere in this house there is an Aeneas who is sick, and knows that he is sick; who knows his disease to be incurable, laments that he is palsied and can do nothing, and longs to be healed by divine power. He is the man who will welcome the glad news of the gospel of free grace. The man was really sick, and so are you, my hearer; your sins are great, your sinfulness of nature is grievous, and your case is beyond reach of human skill.

In the second place, THIS MAN, AENEAS, KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT JESUS; because, otherwise, when Peter said, "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole," Aeneas might have earnestly enquired what he meant, but could not intelligently have acted upon what he could not comprehend. He could not have believed what Peter said, because he would not have understood his meaning. Mere words, unless they appeal to the understanding,

cannot be useful; they must convey light as well as sound, or they cannot breed faith. When Peter said, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole," I have no doubt that Aeneas remembered what he had aforetime heard about Jesus Christ, and his wondrous life and death. Now, lest there should be one in this congregation who does not know Jesus Christ, and does not understand how it is that he is able to heal sin-sick souls, let us briefly tell the old, old story over again.

"Jesus Christ," translated into English, means a "Saviour anointed." Who is he? He is the Son of the Highest, very God of very God; and when we were lost in sin he who is called the Son of God laid aside his most divine array, and came hither to be dressed like ourselves in this poor flesh and blood; in the manger he lay as an infant, and on a woman's breast he hung a feeble babe. The God who stretched forth the heavens like a tent to dwell in, and digged the deep foundations of the earth, came down to earth to take upon himself our nature and to be born of a woman. Oh, matchless stoop of unbounded condescension that the Infinite should be an infant, and the Eternal God should conceal himself within the form of a babe. This marvel was performed that we might be saved. Being here, the Lord of angels lived some thirty years or so amongst men; he spent the earliest part of his life as a carpenter's son obedient to his father, and he was throughout the whole of his earthly sojourn obedient to his father, God. Inasmuch as we had no righteousness, for we had broken the law, he was here to make a righteousness for us, and he did so. But there was also wanted an atonement, for we had sinned, and God's judgment demanded that there should be punishment for sin: Jesus stepped in as the Surety and the Substitute for the guilty sons of men. He bared his back to the lash of justice, and opened his breast to her lance, and died that sinners might live. The just for the unjust, he died that he might bring us to God: —

***"He bore, that we might never bear,
His Father's righteous ire."***

Now, when he had thus lived and died, they placed his body in the tomb, but he rose again on the third day, and he is yet alive; and by this man Christ Jesus, who is risen from the dead, is preached

unto the nations the remission of sins. For after forty days this same Jesus, who had been dead and buried, rose into the heavens in the presence of his disciples, ascending till a cloud concealed him from their sight, and he now sits at the right hand of God, even the Father, pleading there the merit of his blood, making intercession for sinners that they may be reconciled to God. Now, brethren, this is the story that we have to tell you, with the addition that this same Jesus is coming again to judge the quick and the dead, for he is Lord of all. He is at this hour the Mediator appointed by the infinitely glorious Jehovah, having power over all flesh that he may give eternal life to as many as Jehovah hath given him, and this we beseech you to consider, lest when he comes as a judge you should be condemned at his bar. Aeneas had heard more or less of these great facts. The story of the incarnate God had come to his ears by some means or other, and Aeneas understood that though Jesus Christ was not in the room, and there was only Peter and a few friends there, and though Jesus Christ was not on earth, but was gone to heaven, yet his power on earth was the same as ever it was. He knew that Jesus could work miracles from heaven as well as when he was here below. He understood that he who healed the palsy when he was here, could heal the palsy now that he has risen to his throne; and so Aeneas believed in Jesus Christ from what he had heard, simply trusting in him for healing. By means of that faith Aeneas was made whole.

I will very earnestly dwell on that point for a second or two. I am persuaded that in this congregation all of you know the story of Jesus Christ crucified. You have heard it on the Sabbath from the pulpit. Your children sing it when they come home from the Sunday School. You have a Bible in every house, and you read the “old, old story” in the plain but sublime language of our own noble version; but, oh, if you have heard it and know it, how is it that you have not drawn from it the same inference that this poor paralyzed man did? How is it that ye have no faith? Jesus lives, he sits on Zion’s hill, he receives poor sinners still. Jesus lives “exalted on high to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel and remission of sins.” He can heal you now, and save you now as well as if you met him in the street, or saw him standing at your door knocking for admittance. I would to God that this inference

were drawn by you all.

We have got so far: the man was sick, and the man knew something about Christ. And now, thirdly, came the most important point of all: THE MAN BELIEVED ON THE LORD JESUS.

Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole.” The man did not believe in Peter as the healer, for you notice Peter does not say anything about himself. Peter does not say, “As the head of the church, I, by power delegated to me, make thee whole.” There is no allusion to any such claim, Peter preached too clear a gospel for that. That is the purest gospel which has the least of man in it, and the most of Christ. I charge you, men and brethren, do not listen to that teaching which sets the priest in front of the Saviour, or even by the side of the Saviour, for it is false and ruinous. Your forefathers, Englishmen, your forefathers bled and died that they might never submit to that vile superstition which is being now propagated by a considerable party in the Established Church of this once Protestant land! No man beneath the sky has any more power to save your soul than you have yourself, and if any presumptuous priestling tells you that he has, do not believe him, but despise his claims. An old woman asks me to cross her hand with a sixpence, and says that she will tell my fortune. I am not such a fool. And if another person dressed in habiliments, which are not quite so becoming to him as a red cloak is to an old woman, tells me that he can regenerate my child, or forgive my sins, I treat him with the same contempt and pity as that with which I treat the wicked hag. I believe in neither the one imposter nor the other. If ever you are saved you must be saved by Jesus Christ alone through your own personal belief in him; certainly not by the intervention of any man, or set of men, hail they from whatever church they will. God send that the Pope and the priesthood and all their detestable deceits may go down in this land, and that Christ may be exalted!

As this man had no faith in any supposed power coming from Peter, much less had he any faith in himself, neither did he look within himself for hope. He did not say to Peter, “But I do not feel strength enough to get well;” neither did he say, “I think I do feel power enough to shake off this palsy.” He said neither the one nor the other. Peter’s message took him off from himself. It was,

“Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole;” it is not that thou hast stamina in thy constitution and rallying points about thy bodily system. No, Aeneas, thou art paralyzed; thou canst do nothing; but “Jesus Christ maketh thee whole.” That was what the man had to believe; and it is very much what you also, my dear hearer, must believe.

With his faith Aeneas had the desires which showed that it was not mere speculation, but solid practical believing; he anxiously wished to be made whole. Oh, that sinners anxiously wished to be saved! Oh, that yonder angry man wished to be cured of his bad temper! Oh, that yonder covetous man wished to be cured of his avarice! Oh, that yonder lustful man wished to be cured of his uncleanness! Oh, that you drunkard wished to be cured of his excess! Oh, that men really wanted to get rid of their sins! But no. I never heard of men reckoning a cancer to be a jewel, but there are many men who look upon their sins as if they were gems, which they keep as hid treasure, so that they will sooner lose heaven than part with their lustful pleasures. Aeneas wanted to be made whole, and was ready to believe when Peter spoke to him about Jesus Christ.

And what did Aeneas believe? He believed — and may you believe the same! — first, that Jesus could heal *him*, could heal *him*, *Aeneas*. John Brown, do you believe that Jesus Christ can cure you? I do not care, John, what your faith is about your wife’s case; it is about yourself that you want faith: Jesus Christ is able to save *you* — you, Aeneas; you, John Brown; you, Thomas; you, Sarah; you, Mary. He is able to save *you*. Can you grip that, and reply, “Yes, he is able to save *me*?”

And Aeneas believed that Jesus Christ was able to save him *there and then*, just as he was. He had not taken a course of physic; he had not been under galvanism to strengthen his nerves and sinews and prepare him to be cured, but he believed that Jesus Christ could save him without any preparation, just as he was, then, immediately, with a present salvation. When you think what Christ is, and what he has done, it ought not to be difficult to believe this. But truly God’s power must be revealed before your soul will believe this unto salvation. Yet is it true that Jesus Christ can heal, and can heal at once. Whatever the sin is, he can cure it. I

mentioned a whole set of sins just now. The scarlet fever of pride, the loathsome leprosy of lust, the shivering ague of unbelief, the paralysis of avarice, — he can heal all, and with a word, instantaneously, for ever, completely, just now. Yes, sinner, he can heal *you now*. Aeneas believed that. He believed, and, as he believed, Jesus did make him whole. Oh, I wish I could to-night so preach the gospel that my Lord and Master would lead many unbelievers to believe in him. O Holy Spirit, work thou with the word! Sinner, dost thou want forgiveness? Christ has wrought it out. Every sin that you have done shall be forgiven you for his name's sake if you trust Jesus to do it. Do you see your sins like a great army pursuing you? Do you think they will swallow you up quick? Jesus Christ, if you believe in him, will make an end of them all. You have read in Exodus how Pharaoh and his hosts pursued the tribes of Israel, and the people were terribly alarmed; but early in the morning they were no more afraid, for Miriam took her timbrel, and the daughters of Israel went forth with her in the dance; and they sang, "Sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously. The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." One of the most magnificent notes in that marvellous song was this. "The depths have covered them: there is not one of them left." The damsels took up the refrain, and sang, "Not one, not one, not one! The depths have covered them: there is not one of them left." Now, if you believe in Jesus, the whole army of your sins shall sink beneath the sea of his blood, and your soul shall sing, "The depths have covered them: there is not one of them left." Such shall be your song to-night, if you are enabled to believe in Jesus Christ, God's crucified Son.

But do not think that we preach about the pardon of past sin only, because if a man could get his past sins pardoned, and go on as he did before, it would be so much the worse for him. Pardon of sin, without deliverance from its power, would be rather a curse than a blessing; but wherever sin is pardoned, God breaks the neck of its power in the soul. Mind, we do not tell you that Jesus Christ will forgive the past and then leave you to live the same life as before; but we tell you this: whatever the sin is that is now a disease to you, Jesus Christ can heal you of it. He can save you from the habit and power of evil doing and thinking. I will not attempt to go into

details. There are odd people coming into the tabernacle on ordinary occasions, and so I dare say there may be to-night. How often has there come in a man to whom I might say, "Put out your tongue, sir. Ah, I see red spots, and black spots, for you are a liar and a swearer." Can my Master heal such a diseased tongue as that? Yes, trust thou him to-night, and he will make thee truthful, and purge thee from thy profanity. But here is another; I dare not describe him. Look at him! He has lived an unchaste life, and strong are his passions; and he says, "Can I ever be recovered from my vile desires?" Oh, sir, my Lord can lay his hand on that hot heart of thine, and cool it down to a sweet sobriety of chastity. And thou, fallen woman, do not think that thou art beyond his powers; he shows himself mighty to save such as "the woman that was a sinner." Ah, if you are a slave to vile sins, Jesus can give perfect freedom from vicious habits. You young man there, you know that you have fallen into many sins which you dare not mention, which coil about your heart, and poison your life like serpents writhing within your conscience. My Lord can take them all out of the soul, and deliver you from the results of their fiery venom. Yea, he can make you into a new creature, and cause you to be born again. He can make you love the things which you once hated, and hate the things which you aforesaid loved, and turn the current of your thoughts in quite another way. You see Niagara leaping down its awful height, and you say, "Who can stop this?" Ay, indeed, who can stop it? But my Master can, and if he speaks to the Niagara of your lust, and says, "Cease thy raging!" it will pause at once; yea, if he bids the waters of desire leap up instead of down, you shall be as full of love to Christ as once you were full of love to sin. He made the sun to stand still, and caused the moon to pause upon the hill of Gibeah and he can do all things. Spake he not the world out of nothing? And can he not create new hearts and right spirits in the souls of men who have been far off from him by wicked works? He can do so, and blessed be his name he will: the world of mind is as much beneath his control as that of matter. If thou believes, O man, to thee I may say as Peter did to Aeneas, "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole."

Well, now, let us pass on to notice, fourthly, that the MAN WAS MADE WHOLE. There was no imposture about it; he was made

whole, and made whole there and then. Just fancy, for a minute, what would have been the result if he had not been made whole. What dishonour it would have been to Peter! Peter said, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole:" but there lies Aeneas as palsied as before. Everybody would say, "Peter is a false witness." Well now, I will not say that the preacher of the gospel must see souls saved, or else he is a false witness. I will not say that, but I will say that if ever my ministry, under God, does not save souls I will give it up; for it seems to me that if we do not bring souls to Christ we preachers are just good for nothing. What are we if we do not turn many to righteousness? Reapers who never reap, soldiers who never win a battle, fishermen who take no fish, and lights which enlighten no one. These are sad but true comparisons. Do I address any unsuccessful minister? I would not speak harshly to him, but I would speak very severely to myself if I were in his case. I remember the dream of a minister. He thought that he was in hell, and being there, he was dreadfully distressed, and cried out "Is this the place where I am to be for ever? I am a minister." A grim voice replied, "No, it is lower down for unfaithful ministers, much lower down than this." And then he awoke. Ah, and if we do not agonize till souls are brought to Christ, we shall have to agonize to all eternity. I am persuaded of it: we must have men saved, or else we shall be like Peter would have been if he had said, "Jesus Christ makes thee whole," and the man had not been made whole, — we shall be dishonoured witnesses.

What dishonour would have been brought upon the name of Jesus if the man had not been made whole. Suppose, my dear fellow sinner, you were to believe in Jesus Christ, and yet were not saved; what then? Oh, I do not like to suppose so, for it is almost a blasphemy to imagine it, but yet consider it for a moment. Believe in Jesus and not be saved! Then he has broken his word, or lost his power to save, either of which we are unwilling to tolerate for a minute. If thou believest in Jesus Christ, as surely as thou livest Jesus Christ has saved thee. I will tell thee one thing, — if thou believest in Jesus Christ and thou art damned, I will be damned with thee. Come! I will risk my soul on that bottom as surely as thou wilt risk thine, for if the Lord Jesus Christ does ever lose a soul that trusts him he will lose mine: but he never will, he never can: —

***“His honour is engaged to save
The meanest of his sheep;
All that his heavenly Father gave,
His hands securely keep.”***

Rest ye in him and ye shall be saved, else were his name dishonoured.

And suppose that, like Aeneas, you trusted Christ — if you were not saved, what then? Why, then the gospel would not be true. Shut up those churches, close those chapels, banish those ministers, burn those Bibles; there is no truth in any of them if a soul can believe in Jesus and yet not be saved. The gospel is a lie, and an imposture, if it be true that any poor sinner can put his trust in Jesus and not be healed of his sins; for thus saith the Lord of old, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” This is his last word to his church, “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.” If men believing are not saved from the power of sin, then the gospel is not true, and we are sent on a fool’s errand: but they *are* saved, blessed be the name of God, and the gospel is truth itself.

Oh, my dear hearer, fain would I urge thee to put thy trust in Jesus Christ to-night, by the experience which I and other believers have enjoyed; for some of us have relied on the name of the Redeemer, and he has saved us. We shall never forget the day, some of us, when we left off self-righteousness and believed in Christ to the salvation of our souls. The marvel was done in a minute, but the change was so great that we can never explain it, or cease to bless the Lord for it.

***“Happy day! Happy day!
When Jesus washed my sins away.”***

I recollect the morning when salvation came to me as I sat in a little Primitive Methodist chapel under the gallery, and the preacher said, “That young man looks unhappy;” and added, “Young man, you will never find peace except you look to Christ;” and he called out to me, “Look!” With a voice of thunder he shouted, “Young man, look! Look now!” I did look, I turned the eye of faith to Jesus at once. My burden disappeared, and my soul was merry as a bird

let loose from her cage, even as it is now as often as I remember the blessed salvation of Jesus Christ. We speak what we do know; ours is no hearsay or second-hand testimony; we speak what we have felt and tasted and handled, and our anxiety is that you may know and feel the same. Remember, my dear hearer, that the way to use the gospel is to put it to yourselves like this. What is your name? I said, "John Brown," just now did I not? Suppose it is John Brown, then. Well, the gospel says, "He that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ hath everlasting life." Then it means, "If John Brown believes on Jesus he has everlasting life." "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," — "Then I, John Brown, believing and being baptized, shall be saved." Lay hold of it in that way. Perhaps you say, "But may I put my name to a promise, and appropriate it in that fashion?" Yes, you may, because there is nothing in the Bible to say that your name was left out from the list of those to whom the promise is made. If I were a beggar in the streets, and were very hungry, and I heard that there was a gentleman who was giving a good meal away, and that he had advertised that any beggar might come, I do not think I should say, "Well, my name is not down in his list." I should stop away when I found that he inserted an excluding clause, "Charles Spurgeon shall not have any of the food I distribute," but not till then. Until I read in black and white that he excluded me I should run the risk, and get in with the other hungry folk. Until he shut me out I would go. It should be his deed and not mine that kept me from the feast. Sometimes you say, "But I am not fit to go to Christ." The fittest way to go to Christ is to go just as you are. What is the best livery to wear when you go a-begging? I recollect some long time ago, when I lived not far from here, in the extremeness of my greenness, I gave a man who begged at the door a pair of patent leather boots. He put them on, and expressed great gratitude; but I met him afterwards, and I was not at all surprised to find that he had pulled them off. They were not at all the style of things to go about begging in. People would look at him and say, "What! you needing coppers while wearing those handsome boots? Your tale won't do." A beggar succeeds a deal better barefoot than in fine shoes. Rags are the livery of mendicants. When you go and beg for mercy at the hand of God, do not put on those pretty righteousnesses of yours, but go with all

your sin and misery, and emptiness, and wretchedness, and say, "Lord, here am I. Thou hast said that Christ is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him. I am a soul that wants saving to the uttermost, and here I am. I have come. Lord, save me."

Now, summing all up: this is what you have to do, sinner, in order to be saved to-night, simply believe in Jesus Christ. I saw a young woman from America in the vestry some little time ago who came in great concern of soul to know the way of salvation, and I said to her. "Do you not see it? If you trust Christ, you are saved." I quoted the Scriptures which teach this great truth and made them plain to her, until the Holy Spirit opened her eyes; light came on her face in a moment, and she said, "I do see it. I trust Christ with all my heart: and I am to believe that I am saved because I trust Jesus, and he has promised to save believers?" "Yes," I replied, "you are getting on the rock now." "I feel," she said, "a deep peace beginning in my soul, but I cannot understand how it can be, for my grandfather belonged to the old school Presbyterians, and he told me he was six years before he could get peace, and had to be put into a lunatic asylum, for he was so miserable." Ah, yes, I have no doubt such cases have happened. Some will go seventeen thousand miles round about merely to go across a street, but there is no need for it. There it is — "The word is nigh thee, on thy lip and in thy heart. If with thy heart thou wilt believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and with thy mouth make confession of him, thou shalt be saved." There is naught to be done, there is naught to be felt; there is naught to be brought. No preparation is wanted. Come just as you are, and trust Christ to save you out and out this night, and you shall be saved. God's honour and Christ's word are pledged to it.

This is the last thing. **WHEN AENEAS WAS HEALED HE ACTED IN CONFORMITY THEREWITH.** "Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed." He did so. He rose directly and made his bed.

Now, if any of you say to-night, "I have believed in Jesus," remember you are bound to prove it. How prove it? Why, if you have believed in Jesus, you are made whole, and you are to go home and show people how whole you are. This man was palsied, and had been lying there prostrate eight years, and could never

make his bed, but he proved he was healed by making his bed for himself. Perhaps here is a man who when he has entered his house has generally opened the door with an oath. If there is such a person here, and Christ saves you — he will wash your mouth out for you. You will have done with profane language for ever. Your wife will be surprised when you go home to hear how differently you talk. Perhaps you have been used to mix with rough companions in your work, and you have talked as they have done: if Jesus Christ has made you whole, there is an end to all filthy speaking. Now you will talk graciously, sweetly, cleanly, profitably. In years gone by you were angry and passionate; if Jesus Christ has made you whole, you will be as tender as a lamb. You will find the old lion lifting his head and giving an occasional roar and a shake of his mane, but then he will be chained by the restraints of grace, while the meek and gentle lamb of the new nature will feed in pastures wide and green. Ah, if the Lord has saved you, the drunkard's ale bench will have no more of you, for you will want better company than the seats of scoffers can afford you. If the Lord saves you, you will want to do something for him, to show your grateful love. I know this very night you will long to tell your children, and tell your friends, that Jesus Christ has made you whole. John Bunyan says that when he was made whole he wanted to tell the crows on the ploughed land about it. I do not wonder that he did. Tell anybody, tell everybody, "Jesus Christ has saved me." It is a sensation the like of which no man can imagine, if he has not felt it, to be made a new creature right away, in a moment. That surprises all who see it, and as people like to tell news — strange news — so does a new-born man long to go and tell others, "I have been born again: I have found the Saviour."

Now, mark, you will have to prove that this is so by an honest, upright, consistent, holy life, — not, however, by being merely sternly honest. If Christ has saved you, he will save you from being selfish. You will love your fellow men; you will desire to do them good. You will endeavour to help the poor; you will try to instruct the ignorant. He who truly becomes a Christian becomes in that very same day a practical philanthropist. No man is a true Christian who is un-Christlike — who can live for himself alone, to hoard money or to make himself great. The true Christian lives for others:

in a word, he lives for Christ.

If Christ has healed you, gentle compassion will saturate your soul from this time forth and for ever. O Master, thou who didst heal men's bodies in the days of thy flesh, heal men's hearts to-night, we pray thee.

Still this word more. Somebody says, "Oh, I wish I had Christ!" Soul, why not have him at once? "Oh, but I am not fit." You never will be fit; you cannot be fit, except in the sense in which you are fit even now. What is fitness for washing? Why, being dirty. What is fitness for alms? Why, being in distress. What is fitness for a doctor? Why, being ill. This is all the fitness that a man wants for trusting in Christ to save him. Christ's mercy is to be had for nothing, bribe or purchase is out of the question. I have heard of a woman whose child was in a fever and needed grapes; and there was a prince who lived near, in whose hothouse there were some of the rarest grapes that had ever been grown. She scraped together the little money she could earn, and went to the gardener and offered to buy a bunch of the royal fruit. Of course he repulsed her, and said they were not to be sold. Did she imagine that the prince grew grapes to sell like a market-gardener? And he sent her on her way, much grieved. She came again; she came several times, for a mother's importunity is great; but no offer of hers would be accepted. At last the princess heard of it and wished to see the woman; and when she came the princess said, "The prince does not sell the fruit of his garden:" but, snipping off a bunch of grapes and dropping them into a little bag, she said, "He is always ready to give it away to the poor." Now, here is the rich cluster of gospel salvation from the true vine. My Lord will not sell it, but he is always ready to give it away to all who humbly ask for it and if you want it come and take it, and take it now by believing in Jesus.

The Lord bless you for Christ's sake. Amen.

