

A QUEST FOR SOULS

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TWENTY-THREE

SERVICE FOR MEN, SUNDAY AFTERNOON - JUNE 24, 1917

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

Very gladly, my brother men and gentlemen, do I welcome the privilege of speaking at this hour to the men of this goodly city. I know about men's battles, their temptations, their questions, their heart hungers, and I find in my own heart a longing inexpressible to help them. That is the feeling now in my heart, as I look you in the face, and stretch out to you a brother's hand, and offer you a brother's heart. I have counted it a very rare privilege for these past few days to be the guest of the two honored pastors who sit behind me, Dr. Smith and Dr. Edwards, and to be refreshed by fellowship with them - men modest and valiant and true; men whose ministry is so nobly constructive, and men whose words and examples point always toward the morning.

I have counted it a rare privilege to be their guest, and the guest of their two noble congregations. And, more, I have counted it a very refreshing privilege to meet many of GOD's men of other congregations than these two, to meet many of the noble ministers of these various flocks, and their people, whose courtesies to the visiting preacher have been so constant and gracious. And still more, I have counted it a privilege to meet face to face, and to know at close range, many of your citizens who are not yet church men at all, but who are giving their splendid, capable energy to aid in bringing in a larger and better civilization for the world. These men, I pray, may soon come with us to the side and service of CHRIST.

I covet every man of you for CHRIST. I have a passionate longing for the spiritual welfare of this whole great state of ours, and though I live in one of its cities, and have for a long time therein lived, I have the most earnest interest in all our cities and in all our people. I have said, from one coast of America to the other, that nowhere in all this world, in my humble judgment, was there a greater-hearted, cleaner-minded, more forward-looking type of men than we have here in this vast, renascent, responsive state.

The men of this state incarnate as do no other men I know, that little poem:

WHERE DOES THE WEST BEGIN?

Out where the handclasp is a little bit stronger.

Out where the smile lasts a trifle longer
That's where the West begins.

Out where the sun shines a trifle brighter,
Where the snows that fall are a trifle whiter.
And the bonds of home are a wee bit tighter
That's where the West begins.

Out where the sky is a trifle bluer,
Where friendships formed are somewhat truer
That's where the West begins.

Out where a fresher breeze is blowing,
Where there's laughter in every stream that's flowing.
Where there is more of reaping and less of sowing
That's where the West begins.

Out where the world is in the making,
Where fewer hearts with despair are breaking
That's where the West begins.
Where there's more of singing and less of sighing,
Where there's more of giving and less of buying,
And a man makes friends without half trying -
That's where the West begins.

Oh, how I covet this great West, every man in CHRIST, my Saviour and Lord!

THE ONE SUFFICIENT REFUGE

Text: "**Refuge failed me. . . . I cried unto Thee, O Lord, I said, Thou art my refuge.**" - Psalm 142: 4, 5.

What shall I say to you, my brothers, as I come for an afternoon service, for a little while just with the men? I would say to you that all is well, whatever comes, whether in life or death, or in GOD's great beyond, forever, if it is well with the soul. And I would say that nothing is well, nothing really and abidingly succeeds, if it is not well with a man's soul.

In the old world there is a painting, which has been copied, and the copy hangs in every noble art gallery in the world - a painting of a storm, before which terrible storm, men and beasts are fleeing, if haply they may find a refuge. That is a picture of every rational human life. This, then, is the text upon which I would speak to you: "**Refuge failed me**" (or as the marginal reading has it, "fled away from me"), "**then I cried unto the Lord, and said, 'Thou art my refuge.'**"

A refuge means protection against danger. It means a source of safety. I wonder, as I search this audience now, and glance at every face before me, if you have a refuge, each one of you, for

your soul, and what is that refuge, and does that refuge suffice you, and is that refuge safe, and will that refuge meet all the tests?

You will agree with me, I doubt not, that the fundamental need of every man is a refuge for his soul. That need takes precedence of every other need, and that need is fundamental. That every man needs a refuge for his soul will be indicated by a glance in anyone of many directions.

For one thing, a man needs a refuge against the accusing cry of his own conscience. Oh, what pain there is, at times, in the human conscience! 'Tis the acutest and most terrible pain of all, and every man needs a refuge against the accusing cry of his own conscience. Conscience may be dulled; conscience may be seared; conscience may be mistaught; and yet conscience will have its hours when it will make its serious and terrible cry.

I talked a little while ago with a man well reared. His position has been lofty, but he has missed the right road terribly, and has fallen more terribly. He said to me after our interview, and as we were separating: "Oh, man, GOD Almighty alone knows how I have suffered in my conscience!" Every man needs a refuge from the accusing cry of his own conscience, for every man must live with himself.

When we turn to the Bible, it makes that insistence, by precept and by illustration, after the most impressive fashion.

Take the case of John the Baptist, that intrepid preacher who stood before purple-robed Herod and spoke to him concerning righteousness and temperance and the judgment to come, and at last paid for it with his life. You remember the outcome of it to that man Herod. Herod had John killed, and you remember the later outcome.

Months afterward, as Herod with his courtiers feasted, suddenly the topic of conversation with him and his men changed, and they began to speculate as to who that wonderful man was out yonder in the country, who was so speaking that the very cities were emptied of their people, to go out by the riverside to hear what He said. And Herod rose up, trembling like an aspen leaf, and blurted out his cry: "I suspect you are talking about John the Baptist, whom I beheaded months ago, but who has risen from the dead." Conscience was not dead!

You recall the tragic case of Judas, who sold JESUS for thirty pieces of silver - about fifteen dollars of our money - and then came back a few hours later, and threw down the thirty pieces of silver to the men with whom he traded, and said: "Let's rue the bargain. I have betrayed the innocent blood. Take this money back. It burns my brain. It burns my pockets. It burns my hand. It burns my conscience." And the men with whom he traded, mocked him and scorned him, and then, goaded by conscience, Judas went out and took his own life. Oh, my brother men, there is no pain so terrible as the accusing cry of the human conscience!

Take human life, temporal and secular, and it is crowded with illustrations bearing upon this same point.

I recall that realistic story of a man in another land, years ago, a judge, who had there in his court a young man charged with murdering his Master, and who, to conceal his crime, had burned down the house over the Master's head. The trial was stubbornly fought, and was at last drawing

to a conclusion, and the judge had to give his charge in the matter.

He stood up to give the charge, and they saw his exceeding agitation, and then he sat down without speaking. And then, with still deeper agitation, he left the judge's bench, and went down into the prisoner's dock, and sat down beside the prisoner, and put his face in his hands and groaned aloud. There was a sensation, of course, in the court room. Lawyers on either side looked aghast at one another and wondered what it all meant. And presently, when they got up and went to him, and said: "What on earth is it, Judge?" with choking difficulty he said to them: "I have tried my own case.

Thirty years ago I murdered my Master, and to hide my crime I burned down the house over his head, and if any person ever suspected me, I do not know it. I cannot go on with this trial. I have tried my own case. I cannot continue further with this case."

Thirty years had elapsed, but conscience had made its cry.

The writings of the great dramatists, Shakespeare and George Eliot and Victor Hugo, and men and women of their class, are going to live, while ten thousand piles of trashy literature die, because they have recognized the vitality of the human conscience. Take Macbeth; see the effort made there to get the blood off the hands, and hear the pitiful cry as the hands are lifted up, with the exclamation: "Oh, the blood, the blood! Though I lave here in this basin, I cannot get it off!"

Take the story by George Eliot, where she tells of the fatal going astray of a young girl. Earth's saddest sight is that. Let angels veil their faces, and let crepe be put on the door of Heaven, when a young girl thus falls into shame. George Eliot tells it in her own inimitable fashion, and then she describes the young girl putting to death the little child to which she had given birth, seeking thus to hide the shame and crime. She slew the little child out there in the hedge, and later she was apprehended and brought to justice and judgment, and kindly women got around the wretched and fallen girl, and sought to counsel and help her.

She listened to them - listened as if in a trance - and when they would finish saying to her every kindly and helpful thing they could think to say, she would answer them with the wailing chant: "Yes, yes, I hear all that you say, but will I always hear the cry of the little child that I put to death in the hedge?"

What is the great dramatist saying? She is saying that conscience lives, and that men must reckon with conscience. Now, every man needs a refuge from the accusing cry of his own conscience.

Nor is that all. Every man needs a refuge from the slumbering power of sin in his own life. I grieve for any man who boasts of his strength. No man knows how weak he is, and every man needs a refuge against the slumbering power of sin in his own life. Many of the finest, most splendid, most gifted, most generous, most lovable men, go down to doom and death because of the slumbering power of sin in their own lives.

Every man needs a refuge when he comes to that last hour that awaits us everyone, to that grim sarcasm of human life called death. Every man needs a refuge when he comes to that hour - an hour we cannot escape, an hour we cannot evade or miss. Oh, there are times when we wonder if

there is not some way past it!

I told a group the other day of the recent funeral of a mother in my city, who left a houseful of children, and the oldest girl mothered all those younger children. It was pitiful, and it was wonderful, how she mothered those little girls and boys, who cried in vain for the mother, the child's best friend, who would never come back. And when we got to the cemetery, and they lowered the body into the grave, the children seemed wild with grief; and the oldest girl went up and down the line, saying to this one and that one: "Do not cry. Maybe it is not so. Maybe it is all a dream. Maybe we are at home in bed. Maybe we will wake up in the morning and mother will be with us and kiss us, like she always did. Maybe it is not so. Maybe it is all a dream!"

Oh, how we would get away from death! How we wish we might! Every man needs a refuge against death.

And every man needs a refuge out yonder beyond death, where the issues of conduct and character are going to come into judgment before CHRIST.

Every man needs a refuge when he comes to that day of days, called the judgment day of GOD. Now, that there is such a day is insisted upon even by human reason. Human reason makes its cry that somewhere there ought to be a place for explanation, for revelation. Somewhere there ought to be a place where the tangled threads shall be disentangled, where the irregularities shall be straightened out, where the mysteries shall be interpreted and explained. Every man needs a refuge at that great day.

When we turn to the Word of GOD, the Holy Book, the guide-book for men, it is clear as the light about the reality of a judgment day.

- Listen to it: "**God hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ.**"
- Listen to it: "**We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.**"
- Listen to it: "**We must everyone give account of himself to God.**"

Surely, my brother men, when we stand at that great assize, at that day of judgment, every man of us will need a refuge.

Every man has a refuge of some sort.

There went through this country some years ago an almost matchless orator, who was also. an aggressive opponent of the Christian religion. I need not speak his name. No man should carelessly speak the name of either the living or the dead. This brilliant orator, an infidel, went up and down the land, caricaturing Christians and their faith, but he had his refuge.

He began one of his most caustic addresses with the remark: "So-and-so and so-and-so is my religion." He had his refuge.

Every man, my brother men, has a refuge of some sort for himself, something that he falls back on, something that he hopes in, something in which he trusts. Alas, alas, my brothers, full many a

time the peril is that the man's refuge is untrustworthy, that it is vain, that it is false!

- The Bible warns us at that point.
- The Bible tells us that we can cry peace, peace, when there is no peace.

JESUS himself tells us: "**Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven.**"

JESUS tells us that, and then He goes on to tell us a sentence that is enough to make every man of us pause and search our hearts and shudder. Listen to it.

JESUS says: "**Many will say unto me in that day**" - the day of judgment - "**Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?**" Were we not preachers? "**Have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them**" - JESUS is speaking - "**I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity.**" Oh, how serious is this matter of our meeting that final test like we ought to meet it, and of our having a refuge sufficient in that hour of hours!

And now, gentlemen, it is an all-important matter that we be able to detect the false refuges behind which Satan would have us hide, and lure us, to deceive us and destroy us. May we detect these false refuges for the soul? We may. There are certain inexorable tests whereby we may detect the false refuge for the soul. What are these tests?

For the moment, I will lay aside the Word of GOD, the guide-book, the divine revelation for human conduct and character and opinion, and I will come to certain other inexorable human tests that we must grapple with. If our refuge for our soul be trustworthy, if it be reliable, if it be dependable, if it will suffice us, then such refuge will meet every test, no matter what the test may be. If the refuge for a man's soul will do to trust, then I say that such refuge will meet these four tests.

Look at these four tests.

First of all, it will satisfy the conscience. I have already indicated what an exacting test the conscience makes. It must satisfy the man's conscience, if a man's religious refuge, whatever it is, be trustworthy and reliable. Nor is that all. If a man's refuge for his soul be trustworthy, then it must make his life better. Mark that. A tree is known by its fruits, and if a man's religious refuge does not make his life better, then such refuge is vain and false.

Life must be made better if one's religious refuge be dependable. And, again, if a man's religious refuge be dependable, it will fortify such man and uphold him in the solemn hour when he comes to die, when all the masks are off, when all the guises and disguises must be laid aside, when his feet dip into the stream separating time and eternity. If a man's refuge for his soul be trustworthy, it must be one that will suffice him when his feet touch the river of death, and the mists from that river come up into his face.

Moreover, if a man's refuge for his soul will do to tie to, will do to rely upon, then such refuge must completely fortify a man out yonder at the judgment, when he makes personal answer to

CHRIST, as every man of us must make such answer.

What are some of the false refuges? I will tell you four. There are many more, but I will briefly tell you four, and these four are - representative - four false refuges that lure men to deception and darkness and death.

I dealt with four men recently, in another place, and they gave these four different false refuges, behind which men are lured, and by which men are deceived and lost.

The first one said: "I am trusting in my own goodness. Therefore, I am good enough in myself without GOD's help at all." His refuge for himself, for his soul, was his own goodness. Do you think that refuge is sufficient? Will that refuge meet the tests? Mind you, we are considering four great tests, not naming the fifth, which is the Book of GOD, which I leave aside for the present. There are four inexorable tests for these refuges for our souls. Now, will this false refuge I have just named, the man's own personal goodness, as his dependence for safety and salvation, meet these four tests I have just named? First, will it satisfy his own conscience? Is your conscience satisfied, and is mine, for us to say: "I am good enough without GOD's help at all?" Is our conscience satisfied to say: "No matter what this Bible teaches, and no matter what JESUS taught, no matter though He died, I am good enough?" Does that satisfy your conscience and mine? It does not satisfy mine.

I pass you to the next test. Does it make your life better to say: "I am trusting to my own goodness, and I will discard CHRIST and His religion, and all that?" Does that make your life better? And, mind you, if a man's refuge for his soul does not make his life better, he is missing the road. But I pass you to the next test.

Will it suffice you in the solemn hour when you shall be dying upon your couch, and let us fancy that I shall be beside you, and take your hand, and say: "My friend, do you know that this is the last hour?" Will you answer me: "Yes, I know it well. The doctor has told me, and I am conscious that he speaks correctly." And I shall ask you: "What is your hope?" Do you think you will be able to look me smilingly in the face, and say to me: "Why, man, I am good enough! You need not pray, nor take the Bible, nor talk of CHRIST. I am good enough?"

Do you think that will make the pillow soft when a man comes to die, to wave CHRIST's religion away with his hand, and say: "I am good enough without it?"

I pass you to the other great test, out beyond death. When you shall answer to JESUS, as He sits upon His judgment throne, as every man of us must personally there answer by and by, do you think it will suffice you to say to Him: "I am here, but I am good enough without you, or your Gospel, or your blood, or your grace?" Do you suppose that any sinner of all the earth will at last make such a presumptuous plea as that at the judgment bar of CHRIST? No man will say it. That is not your refuge, is it?

Then, here was the second man's false refuge. It was just the opposite of this first man's refuge. The second man said: "Oh, well, I am not very good; I am quite frail, and know it, and grant it, but I am as good as a great many around me, in the churches and out of them, and therefore I will just let it go at that."

His refuge was this: Not his own goodness, but the fact of other people's badness. Come, gentlemen, will that meet these four great tests I have named? Does it satisfy a man's conscience to say: "I will put these challenging claims of CHRIST away, because a great many other men have done the same thing?" Should it satisfy a man's conscience, and can it, to say: "I will not pay my debts to the doctor or the grocery man or the merchant or the bank, because a good many other people evade theirs, and won't pay theirs?" Does it satisfy to say: "I will ignore JESUS and put Him away, because a great many other people are doing the same thing?"

But I pass you to the next test. Does it make your life better to say: "I am as good as a great many other people, and I am going to let it go at that, and pass it all by?"

And then I pass you to the next great test. Does it satisfy you, and will it, when you come to the solemn hour of death, to say: "I am dying without CHRIST and His religion and His comfort and strength, because other men have essayed to go the same dark way, and I am going just as they have gone?"

And then that other test that awaits you beyond death and the grave, when you shall answer at the judgment seat of CHRIST, will it suffice you then to say to CHRIST: "I rejected you, Lord JESUS, and put you away, and would not have you, because a great many other men did the same thing?" That refuge is not yours, is it?

The third man stated this as his refuge: "I do not believe any of it. I am an outright and downright disbeliever. I reject it all." Now, come, is that the refuge of any man here - unbelief?

No matter what its form, infidelity, atheism, agnosticism, materialism, no matter what its form - unbelief - does that meet the tests?

Let us see. Does it satisfy your conscience to say: "I reject the Bible and reject JESUS both, as untrustworthy, in the face of all that the Bible has done, and in the face of CHRIST's influence over men, great and small, big and little. I reject it all as untrustworthy?" Does that satisfy your conscience?

Then I pass you to the next test. Does it make your life better to say: "Unbelief is the refuge for my soul?" Does it help your life to be better?

And to the next test I bring you quickly, to the time when you shall depart from time into death. Are you able to contemplate that hour with complacency and felicity, saying: "I reject CHRIST and the Bible, and all that they offer to man, because I do not believe any of it?"

And then I pass you out to the final test, when you shall answer personally to CHRIST himself at His judgment bar. How will you answer to Him, as each man of us must personally answer by and by? When you answer there to Him, saying: "My theory, my pilot, my defense, my refuge was unbelief. I rejected all the claims and teachings of CHRIST, because of unbelief - do you think that will suffice you?"

When you stand before Him, He will say to you what He says to you now, while you are in life, in the flesh, this side of the grave, here in earth's battle: "Whatever your unbelief, you may know the truth about CHRIST's religion."

Do I speak to some man in this audience who is a doubter? Oh, I stretch out to him a friendly hand! I know something of the darkness and withering power of doubt. Do I speak to some man who doubts? Let me pray him not to trifle with his doubts. Somebody has well said that doubt is the agony of some earnest soul, or it is the trifling of some superficial fool. If I speak to some man who doubts, let me pray him to probe his doubts clear to the bottom, and make his doubts give him re-enforcement, or throw them everyone away. JESUS comes to you, saying: "No matter what your doubt, no matter what your unbelief, no matter what your question, no matter what your skepticism, if you will just be candid and honest, I will bring you into the light, and you shall be the judge."

Listen to His clear challenge, which now I quote to you. What a challenge it is! Listen to it: "**If any man**" - that is as broad as the world, as comprehensive as humanity - "**if any man willeth to do the will of God,**" says JESUS, "**he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God.**"

Oh, my brother, if any man will come to GOD like this: "Oh, GOD, if there be one, on the premise, on the hypothesis that there is one - I don't know - I want light. If thou hast any interest in my getting it, and if thou will give light, no matter how it comes, I will follow it, no matter where it leads," any skeptic on the earth will be brought to GOD, if he will follow the light like that.

Some time ago, two of the world's most prominent skeptics were Gilbert West and Lord Littleton, and they were two of the most brilliant intellects of their own or any age. They made fun of Christianity, whenever they met.

By and by, they said: "There are two things we must explode, and then we will have the Christian religion all tumbled into the ditch, and nothing will be left." And these were the two things they said they would have to explode: They said they would have to explain away the doctrine that JESUS CHRIST rose from the dead on the third day, as the Scriptures teach, and they would have to explain that wonderful man, the Apostle Paul, whose influence was so powerful in the world eighteen centuries even after he had died.

Gilbert West said: "I will explode the resurrection of CHRIST and blow it all up," and Lord Littleton said: "I will explain Paul."

They went their way, and after weeks and weeks, by appointment they came together again, and Littleton said: "West, what have you to say?" Gilbert West replied: "Oh, Littleton, I have something wonderful to tell you. When I came to explode the doctrine that JESUS of Nazareth rose from the dead on the third day, I had to be candid, I had to be sincere, I had to be honest, I had to search for my evidence. You may laugh at me, Littleton, if you will, but when I looked into it honestly, my mind and my deepest soul were convinced that JESUS did rise from the dead, and I prayed to Him, and He saved me, and I am His friend."

And then Lord Littleton answered: "Thank GOD, West! I have something just as wonderful to tell you. When I came to explain that man Paul, and get rid of him, I, too, had to be thorough and candid. I had to search. I had to be true. And you will rejoice with me, West, when I tell you that after I had searched and studied about Paul, by and by I found myself down on my knees, just as

Paul got down on his knees on that Damascus road, and my cry was his: **'Lord, what will thou have me to do?'** And I am a Christian, also, West."

And these two outstanding skeptics became two of the world's most noted Christians, and have written two of the noblest apologies of the Christian religion that have ever been penned.

Gentlemen, the Christian religion submits to the scientific method always, and that is the method of personal experience.

My brother men, you will not think I am boasting - I speak it to the praise of my Saviour: One thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see. Once I went my way reading law, wanting to give my life to that high calling. One of earth's noblest callings it is. And the Master crossed my path, and I was reminded of my sins,. and I went to Him and said: "Have mercy on me," and He did.

That is the thing, gentlemen, that I know better than I know anything else in the world. Oh, men, unbelief can find the way out! Obedience is the solvent of every doubt in the world. If a man will turn to JESUS and say: "Show me the way, and I will walk in it, wherever it leads, and whatever it costs," he will be brought in the right way safely home at last.

And now the fourth man, the last man, said: "Well, here is my refuge. I do not expect any man to be lost. I expect every man to be saved in GOD's fair Heaven above, not one of them missing, no matter what his crimes, no matter what his sins, no matter what the wretchedness of his conduct and character." That was his refuge - universal salvation. Now, will that meet the tests? I waive the Bible, for the present. The Bible speaks plainly on all these points, but I waive that for the moment, and I come to other grounds for the present moment. Will that meet the tests, that no matter how a man lives and sows and dies, yet all is well out there beyond?

First, does it satisfy a man's conscience to say that vice and virtue shall have the same reward? Is a man's conscience at rest to say that this good man, who serves GOD and follows Him, shall have no more, and nothing different, from the man who does not serve Him, and wastes his life? Is the man's conscience at rest to say that they shall have the same harvest?

I pass to the next test. Does it make a man's life better here and now to say: "No matter how a man lives, all will be well a little later, beyond the sunset and the night?"

I pass you to the third test. Is a man made ready for the solemn hour of death who says: "I can sow to the flesh, and give absolute license to the sins of my life, and no matter, for all is well for me?" Do you think that will qualify a man to die in peace, when the hour comes for him to go?

And then beyond death, do you think a man can stand up yonder, before the face of JESUS, who said: "I came to the earth to die for sinners, that they might not die and shall not die, if they will repent of sin and turn to me" - do you think a man will be fortified in the judgment at last to say to JESUS: "I am here because I said, I taught, and I believed that no matter how a man sowed, the harvest would come out all right?"

Oh, gentlemen, you will not take that theory, either.

A man does violence to all law and to all philosophy, unless he knows that as a man sows, so must he reap. If a man sows wheat, he will reap wheat. A man will not sow one thing and reap another. If one man comes humbly, despite all his weaknesses, and gives his case to CHRIST, CHRIST will be his friend and helper. If a second man says: "None of it for me; I will put it away," the two men cannot have the same result. They cannot have the same harvest. And your own conscience, your own judgment, and all law, and all philosophy, rise up with the cry that as men sow, so shall they reap.

There is a law of physical gravity in the physical world, but it is no more real than the law of moral gravity in the moral world. Every man, gentlemen, when he comes to die, "**shall go to his own place.**" If he continues in the wrong road here, the wrong road there will be his portion. If he chooses the right road here, the right, there, will be his portion.

Now, this man who speaks our text, tried the false refuges, and this is his cry when he tried them: "Refuge failed me. Refuge fled away from me. Refuge broke down. Refuge could not suffice me. The bridge went down. The physician could not help."

What are we to do?

Nowhere, gentlemen, in all this vast world, is there a human refuge ample for a human soul. Nowhere, human and earthly, is there a refuge sufficient for the human soul. What shall we do about it? Is there any door of hope in the valley of Achor? Is there any gate through which a man may pass, and have deliverance and safety?

Oh, where shall rest lie found,
Rest for a weary soul?
'T were vain the ocean's depths to sound.
Or pierce to either pole.
Beyond this vale of tears
There is a life above,
Unmeasured by the flight of year..
And all that life is love.

There is a death whose pang
Outlasts this fleeting breath.
Oh, what eternal horrors hang
Around man's second death!
Lord GOD of truth and grace,
Teach us that death to shun,
Lest we be banished from thy face
And evermore undone.

Come, my brother men, is there any refuge sufficient or you and for me?

- Is there any balm in Gilead ample for us?
- Is there any physician anywhere that can take me and take care of me, a sinful, eternity-bound man?

- Is there any door of hope in the valley of Achor for you and for me?

Thank GOD, there is!

There is a refuge sufficient for us, and here it is, and I bring you to it. This man said: "**Refuge failed me**, fled away from me, broke down, could not suffice me." Now listen to him: "**Then I turned to the Lord, and I said to the Lord, Thou shalt be my refuge.**"

Oh, he is on terra firma now! He is on sure foundations now. I turned away from these refuges that misled me, false and illusory and deceiving and insufficient, and I turned to the Lord, and I said: "Lord, I will surrender to you, that you may be my refuge forever." Gentlemen, the Lord meets all the tests. Of course, He meets the test of the Bible, for He gave the Bible to us, and is inseparably linked with it, but He meets all these other tests. Every test you can think of for a human soul, no matter how bedarkened and sinful, the Lord JESUS CHRIST meets it!

I will show you that He meets these four inexorable tests that I have just described.

First, the Lord JESUS satisfies the human conscience. We sowed to the flesh. We went to the bad. We sinned. We went the wrong road. Every man of us has come short of GOD's glory.

Not a perfect man is there in all this group, or in all the world, and our consciences know it. JESUS comes to us, saying: "You submit your case to me. I died, the just, for you, the unjust. If you will submit your case to me, if you will give up to me, if you will be for me, if you will say yes to me, and mean it; if you will surrender to me, I will take care of your conscience."

And though we have sinned and come short of GOD's glory, we can be at peace, because JESUS, to whom we yield, speaks peace to our conscience.

Paul would have gone with a ball and chain about him, but for the fact that he gave up to JESUS, and JESUS said: "My blood forgives and sets you free. Let Satan clamor and let him accuse. I do the saving, and I will take care of you."

JESUS meets the next test. He helps a man to live.

I would be found a false witness to-day, if I did not declare to you men that He is helping our Christian men to live. I can prove it by these hundreds of men before me.

A big fellow lost his property the other day, and he was a pauper, whereas twenty-four hours before he was counted a rich man. I went to him and said: "What have you now to say?" He bowed his head and said: "Wife and I did not sleep last night, but, Oh, sir, we have CHRIST left, and why should we grumble? CHRIST is our Saviour."

I saw a toiling carpenter the other day put away his wife's body in the grave, and she left six children, and they cried from morning till night, after the mother that could not come back. What so wrings the heart as the cry of a bairn for its mother, who will never come back to the child? I laid my arm in this carpenter's hand, and we went away into the other room, and the babies gathered around us, and when I had quieted them the best I could, I said: "I am going to pray that

GOD will help us." and I prayed, and when I had finished, he turned to the children and said: "Children, we are going to be brave and strong. Papa has peace in his heart. JESUS is going to help us; papa is trusting JESUS, and you children are going to follow papa as he trusts CHRIST and serves Him." And the oldest little boy said: "Papa, I am going to trust Him now." And then it seemed that the night was turned into day, and the shadow of death was turned into morning. Oh, men, CHRIST fortifies us when the black Friday comes!

And He will help us to die. You recall the recent letter from one of the chaplains on the far field of battle, telling how one of the fine Christian boys died there a few weeks ago. He was torn by shot and shell, his head frightfully torn, and yet for hours he was conscious, but he grew steadily worse, as he lay there dying on his cot. Presently his mind wandered, and he imagined that the chaplain, who was comforting him, was his mother, and the dying boy said so tenderly: "Mother, put your dear, soft hands under my head. It hurts me so, and your soft hands will make it better."

The chaplain did just like the mother would have done, the best he could, and then the dying boy said: "Mother, bend over me. You taught me the way to live, and I am ready to die. Bend over me and kiss me once more, mother, and then I will pray my last prayer and leave all to CHRIST, for I am not afraid to die." And the chaplain did just what you or I would have done.

He bent over the boy and kissed him as nearly like a mother as he could. And the boy faintly said: "Thank you, mother. Now let me tell JESUS as I am dying that I will just lean on Him, for I leaned on Him back yonder, months and years ago, and now I am not afraid." Yes, my brother men, JESUS helps us to die.

There is more yet to be said. He is going to help us yonder at the judgment. Let us imagine that this audience of men is now assembled at the judgment bar of GOD. What are you going to plead there? What am I going to plead? I will tell you what I shall say when I get there: "Lord, I am not good in myself. I did not plead myself, Lord JESUS, on earth. In Fort Worth I said: 'Other refuge have I none, hangs my helpless soul on Thee.' Lord JESUS, on earth I said that I trusted my case wholly to Thee, and here at the judgment thou art my refuge." And I shalt pass to CHRIST's right hand, and all will be well forever.

Come, my brother men, I would take the hand of every one of you, and look up into your faces and say: "My brothers, come now to CHRIST, before we leave this building." Oh, my brother men, do you say to me: "Sir, I can lay my hand on my heart and tell you that CHRIST is now my refuge; that fact is settled?" Every man here that says: "I can lay my hand on my heart and truthfully say to you and to these comrades about me that I am relying on CHRIST as my refuge, I have already received Him for my Saviour," will please lift his right hand, this moment. I see you. That is a sight to move us profoundly.

But before I let you, go, I come to ask: Are there men here who personally say: "I am wrong with GOD?" It may be that you are in some church, or never were in a church, a professor of religion, or never a professor of religion, but now you say: "I am wrong with GOD. Today I tell you, and these men about me, that I want CHRIST for my refuge. I want it to be well with my soul here and hereafter. I want CHRIST to be my refuge in His own way and time." Every man here who says: "I want CHRIST for my refuge, for I am wrong with GOD," will please tell us so, just now. I want you to be candid, like these Christians were, and tell us so. I will now look slowly over this audience, from the right to the left, to see the uplifted hand of the man who says: "I lift my

hand to tell you I want you to pray for me, for I want CHRIST for my refuge, before it is too late. I am wrong with Him, but I want you to pray for me, that I may be right with GOD, in His own time and way."

(In tense silence many men lifted their hands.)

My heart is deeply moved, my brother men, that so many of you candidly tell us of your desire to be right with GOD. Settle the matter to-day. Oh, the grandeur of decision!

Interested men, purposeful men, living men, dying men, eternity-bound men, needy men, sinful and sinning men, my brother men, knowing what I know, if I were in your place, I would end the battle to-day and stop my delay. This day I would take the supreme step and say: "I surrender my life to CHRIST." Remember that waiting does not do any good. Waiting cannot help. Waiting is the very thing that Satan wants you to do.

Say it: "I surrender my life to CHRIST. I am a duty-neglecting, wandering, backslidden Christian. Something turned me away. Something set me drifting."

No matter what it was, nor when, you find yourself now drifting, and neglecting duty, but your conscience is alert this hour, and you say: "I do not want to keep this evil course. I do not want to continue in this wrong and hurtful way. Today I want to take a great step forward and upward and surrender my life to CHRIST." Do you say: "That is my case?" Then I pray you, just surrender yourself, your all, this hour, to CHRIST.

I am going to ask if every interested man here will not settle the matter to-day. Here are scores of men who tell us: "We are wrong with GOD, but wish to be right." Some of them are duty-neglecting, backslidden Christians. Many others have never been for CHRIST at all. I am going to ask all these, my brother men - you will now act just as you think you ought, and you are not to feel at all embarrassed by the proposition I am going to make. I would have you follow your own judgment and conscience, as I ask you, if every interested man in this room is not willing to stand before us all today and say: "GOD help me, because it is my duty, because it is my need, because of my danger, because of happiness, because of influence, because of time, because of eternity, because of life and death and the judgment and the issues of eternity, I am both willing and ready to-day and now to stand to say, I do now surrender my life to CHRIST, that He, in His own way, may forgive me and be my refuge and strength forever."

Every man in this room who can stand on that proposition will do so now.

(The vast audience was profoundly moved, as many men rose to their feet.)

Just a moment do I wait, for nearly all the men are on their feet. My brother, I call to you yet again for just a moment, not to embarrass you - GOD forbid! - but to help you. I would come and kneel at your feet if that would help you, and if that were proper. I want to ask you if there are not other men who can stand in this decisive hour? My appeal is to your judgment and conscience. I have no respect for any other kind of appeal in my Master's name. Does still another man rise to his feet to say: "I will surrender?" There stands another. Does yet another stand, saying: "I am ready to-day to make my surrender to CHRIST, and leave the case with Him?" I search the balcony. I wait a moment. Does another in the balcony stand, saying: "That is

my case?" I see you, my brother. Does another? There stands another man. Does another man stand, saying: "That is my case?" GOD be praised!

THE CLOSING PRAYER

And now, Lord, before we go our ways, O, we pray Thee that this army of men who have heretofore followed CHRIST may be better Christians from to-day than ever - far better. But here are numbers and numbers who stand with us to-day to say that from this day they will follow CHRIST.

O, GOD, forgive and guide, and keep them all. They may be, some of them - Thou knowest - duty neglecting Christians, lapsed church members. This or that or something else has turned them from the right path. They have gone away from Thee and the darkness came, and doubts came. They have drifted from Thee, and have gone away as they should not have done. But to-day they wish to be right with Thee, and return to Thee, and to do their duty. Grant that from this hour they may go and do and say and be in thy sight - Just as thou wouldst have at their hands.

And then, here are men who to-day stand with us to say: "To-day we take our places with CHRIST's people. To-day, we surrender to CHRIST. To-day we see the truth of the glorious Gospel of CHRIST, that salvation is by grace, that it cannot be by what we will do, or by what any human instrumentality shall do for us, but CHRIST alone can save, He alone must be our refuge, and to-day we surrender to CHRIST. From to-day we will follow Him."

Lord, from to-day, may they humbly follow CHRIST forever.

And then there are some who are not ready yet to follow Thee. Lord, we breathe our most fervent prayer for them. Speak to their minds, speak to their judgments. Speak to their wills the initial springs of human action. Speak to their consciences. Oh, bring to bear upon them such mighty motives as move serious men to make mighty decisions. Oh, grant that these men, all and each, who do not find themselves ready to take the great step right now, grant that the hours may be just a few, that even this very day, before they sleep, that every man will be gladly ready to say from his heart: "To-day is my crisis day, my epochal day. To-day I make the surrender of my life to CHRIST, consenting that He may be my refuge to-day and to-morrow and forever."

Oh, bless with GOD's own gracious blessing this vast group of men, and their brother men throughout Fort Worth, every man in the city, in every place, however high, however low. Bless all and each, and through these men may the kingdom of GOD be brought in in Fort Worth, and in the great West and around the world.

And as you go now, may the blessing of GOD, bright like the light when the morning dawneth, and gracious as the dew when the eventide cometh, be granted you all and each to abide with you forever. Amen.

~ end of chapter 23 ~