

NO ROOM FOR CHRIST IN THE INN

“And she brought forth her first-born Son and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger. Because there was no room for them in the inn.”

Luke 2:7

IT was necessary that it should be distinctly proven, beyond all dispute, that our Lord sprang out of Judah. It was necessary, also, that He should be born in Bethlehem-Ephratah, according to the Word of the Lord which He spoke by His servant Micah. But how could a public recognition of the lineage of an obscure carpenter and an unknown maiden be procured? What interest could the keepers of registers be supposed to take in two such humble persons?

As for the second matter, Mary lived at Nazareth in Galilee and there seemed every probability that the birth would take place there. Indeed, the period of her delivery was so near that, unless absolutely compelled, she would not be likely to undertake a long and tedious journey to the southern province of Judea. How are these two matters to be arranged? Can one turn of the wheel effect two purposes? It can be done! It shall be done! The official stamp of the Roman empire shall be affixed to the pedigree of the coming Son of David and Bethlehem shall behold His nativity.

A little tyrant, Herod, by some show of independent spirit, offends the greater tyrant, Augustus. Augustus informs him that he shall no longer treat him as a friend but as a vassal. And albeit Herod makes the most abject submission, and his friends at the Roman court intercede for him, yet Augustus, to show his displeasure, orders a census to be taken of all the Jewish people, in readiness for a contemplated taxation, which, however, was not carried out till some ten years after. Even the winds and waves are not more fickle than a tyrant's will.

But the Ruler of tempests knows how to rule the perverse spirits of princes. The Lord our God has a bit for the wildest war horse and a hook for the most terrible leviathan. Autocratic Caesars are but puppets moved with invisible strings, mere drudges to the King of kings. Augustus must be made offended with Herod. He is constrained to tax the people. It is imperative that a census be taken—no, it is of necessity that inconvenient, harsh and tyrannical regulations should be published and every person must repair to the town to which he was reputed to belong.

Thus, Mary is brought to Bethlehem. Jesus Christ is born as appointed and, moreover, He is recognized officially as being descended from David by the fact that His mother came to Bethlehem as being of that lineage. She remained there and returned to Galilee without having her claims questioned, although the jealousy of all the women of the clan would have been aroused had an intruder ventured to claim a place among the few females to whom the birth of Messiah was now, by express prophecies, confined. Remark here the wisdom of the God of Providence and believe that all things are ordered well.

When all persons of the house of David were thus driven to Bethlehem, the scanty accommodation of the little town would soon be exhausted. Doubtless, friends entertained their friends till their houses were all full, but Joseph had no such willing kinsmen in the town. There was the caravanserai, which was provided in every village, where free accommodation was given to travelers. This, too, was full, for coming from a distance and compelled to travel slowly, the humble couple had arrived late in the day. The rooms within the great brick square were already occupied with families.

There remained no better lodging, even for a woman in travail, than one of the meaner spaces appropriated to beasts of burden. The stall of the ass was the only place where the Child could be born. By hanging a curtain at its front, and perhaps tethering the animal on the outer side to block the passage, the needed seclusion could be obtained. And so, here, in the stable, was the King of Glory born and in the manger was He laid.

My business, this morning is to lead your meditations to the stable at Bethlehem, that you may see this great sight—the Savior in the manger, and think over the reason for this lowly bed—“because there was no room for them in the inn.”

1. I shall commence by remarking that THERE WERE OTHER REASONS WHY CHRIST SHOULD BE LAID IN THE MANGER.

I think it was intended thus to show forth His humiliation. He came, according to prophecy, to be “despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” He was to be “without form or comeliness,” “a root out of a dry ground.” Would it have been fitting that the Man who was to die naked on the Cross should be robed in purple at His birth? Would it not have been inappropriate that the Redeemer who was to be buried in a borrowed tomb, should be born anywhere but in the most humble shed, and housed anywhere but in the most ignoble manner?

The manger and the Cross standing at the two extremes of the Savior’s earthly life seem most fit and congruous the one to the other. He is to wear through life a peasant’s garb. He is to associate with fishermen. The lowly are to be His disciples. The cold mountains are often to be His only bed. He is to say, “Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests but the Son of Man has not where to lay His head.” Nothing, therefore, could be more fitting than that in His season of humiliation, when He laid aside all His glory, and took upon Himself the form of a servant, and condescended even to the mean estate, He should be laid in a manger.

By being in a manger He was declared to be the king of the poor. They, doubtless, were at once able to recognize His relationship to them, from the position in which they found Him. I believe it excited feelings of the most tender brotherly kindness in the minds of the shepherds, when the angel said—“This shall be a sign unto you. You shall find the Child wrapped in swaddling-clothes and lying in a manger.” In the eyes of the poor, imperial robes excite no affection—a man in their own garb attracts their confidence.

With what pertinacity will workingmen cleave to a leader of their own order, believing in him because he knows their toils, sympathizes in their sorrows, and feels an interest in all their concerns! Great commanders have readily won the hearts of their soldiers by sharing their hardships and roughing it as if they belonged to the ranks. The King of men, who was born in Bethlehem, was not exempted in His infancy from the common calamities of the poor. No, His lot was even worse than theirs. I think I hear the shepherds' comments on the manger-birth:

“Ah,” says one to his fellow, “then He will not be like Herod the tyrant. He will remember the manger and feel for the poor. Poor helpless Infant, I feel a love for Him even now. What miserable accommodation this cold world yields its Savior. It is not a Caesar that is born today. He will never trample down our fields with His armies, or slaughter our flocks for His courtiers. He will be the poor man’s Friend, the people’s Monarch. According to the words of our shepherd-king, He shall judge the poor of the people. He shall save the children of the needy.”

Surely the shepherds and such as they—the poor of the earth, perceived at once that here was the plebeian king—noble in descent, but still as the Lord has called Him, “one chosen out of the people.” Great Prince of Peace! The manger was Your royal cradle! Therein were You presented to all nations as Prince of our race, before whose Presence there is neither barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free. But You are Lord of all. Kings, your gold and silver would have been lavished on Him if you had known the Lord of Glory but inasmuch as you knew Him not, He was declared with demonstration to be a leader and a witness to the people.

The things which are not, under Him shall bring to nothing the things that are, and the things that are despised which God has chosen, shall under His leadership break in pieces the might and pride and majesty of human grandeur.

Further, in thus being laid in a manger, He did, as it were, give an invitation to the most humble to come to Him. We might tremble to approach a throne but we cannot fear to approach a manger. Had we seen the Master at first riding in state through the streets of Jerusalem with garments laid in the way and the palm branches strewed and the people crying, "Hosanna," we might have thought, though even the thought would have been wrong, that He was not approachable. Even there, riding upon a colt, the foal of an ass, He was so meek and lowly, that the young children clustered about Him with their boyish "Hosannas."

Never could there be a being more approachable than Christ. No rough guards pushed poor petitioners away. No array of officious friends were allowed to keep off the importunate widow or the man who clamored that his son might be made whole. The hem of His garment was always trailing where sick folk could reach it, and He, Himself, had a hand always ready to touch the disease, an ear to catch the faintest accents of misery, a soul going forth everywhere in rays of mercy, even as the light of the sun streams on every side beyond that orb itself.

By being laid in a manger He proved Himself a priest taken from among men, one who has suffered like His Brethren and therefore can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. Of Him it was said, "He does eat and drink with publicans and sinners." "This Man receives sinners and eats with them." Even as an Infant, by being laid in a manger, He was set forth as the sinner's Friend. Come to Him, you that are weary and heavy laden! Come to Him, you that are broken in spirit, you who are bowed down in soul! Come to Him, you that despise yourselves and are despised of others!

Come to Him, publican and harlot! Come to Him, thief and drunkard! In the manger there He lies, unguarded from your touch and unshielded from your gaze. Bow the knee and kiss the Son of God. Accept Him as your Savior, for He puts Himself into that manger that you may approach Him. The throne of Solomon might awe you, but the manger of the Son of David must invite you.

Methinks there was yet another mystery. You remember, Brethren, that this place was free to all. It was an inn, and please remember the inn in this case was not like our hotels, where accommodation and provision must be paid for. In the early and simple ages of the world, every man considered it an honor to entertain a stranger. Afterwards, as traveling became more common, many desired to shift the honor and pleasure upon their neighbors—why should they engross all the dignity of hospitality?

Further on still, some one person was appointed in each town and village and was expected to entertain strangers in the name of the rest. But, as the ages grew less simple and the pristine glow of brotherly love cooled down, the only provision made was the erection of a huge square block, arranged in rooms for the travelers and with lower stages for the beasts. And here, with a certain provision of water, and in some cases chopped straw for the cattle, the traveler must make himself as comfortable as he could.

He had not to purchase admittance to the caravanserai, for it was free to all and the stable especially so. Now, Beloved, our Lord Jesus Christ was born in the stable of the inn to show how free He is to all comers. The Gospel is preached to every creature and shuts out none. We may say of the invitations of Holy Scripture, "None are excluded but those—

Who do themselves exclude.

Welcome the learned and polite,

The ignorant and rude.

Though Jesus' Grace can save the prince,

The poor may take their share.

No mortal has a just pretense

To perish in despairs."

Class exclusions are unknown here and the prerogatives of caste are not acknowledged. No forms of etiquette are required in entering a stable. It cannot be an offense to enter the stable of a public caravanserai. So, if you desire to come to Christ you may come to Him just as you are. You may come now. Whosoever among you has the desire in his heart to trust Christ is free to do it. Jesus is free to you. He will receive you. He will welcome you with gladness and to show this, I think, the young Child was cradled in a manger.

We know that sinners often imagine that they are shut out. Oftentimes the convicted conscience will write bitter things against itself and deny its part and lot in mercy's stores. Brother, if God has not shut you out, do not shut yourself out. Until you can find it written in the Book that you may not trust Christ. Until you can quote a positive passage in which it is written that He is not able to save you, I pray you take that heavenly word wherein it is written—"He is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him." Venture on that promise. Come to Christ in the strength and faith of it, and you shall find Him free to all comers.

We have not yet exhausted the reasons why the Son of Man was laid in a manger. It was at the manger that the beasts were fed. And does the Savior lie where weary beasts receive their provender and shall there not be a mystery here? Alas, there are some men who have become so brutal through sin, so utterly depraved by their lusts, that to their own consciences everything manlike has departed. But even to such, the remedies of Jesus, the Great Physician, will apply.

We are constantly reading in our papers of men who are called incorrigible, and it is fashionable just now to demand ferociously that these men should be treated with unmingled severity. Some few years ago all the world went mad with a spurious humanity, crying out that gentleness would reform the brutal thief whom harsh punishments would hopelessly harden. Now the current has turned, and everybody is demanding the abandonment of the present system. I am no advocate for treating criminals daintily. Let their sin bring them a fair share of punishment. But if by any means they can be reformed, pray, let the means be tried.

The day will come when the paroxysm of this garroting fever is over, and we shall blush to think that we were frightened by silly fears into a dangerous interference with a great and good work which up to now has been successfully carried on. It is a fact that under the present system, which (abating some faults that it may be well to cure) is an admirable one, crime is growing less frequent and the class of gross offenders has been materially lessened.

Whereas in 1844 18,490 convicts were transported, in 1860 the corresponding number was 11,533 and that notwithstanding a chance of gaining a new character, worked so well that little more than one percent in a year were re-convicted and even now only five per cent per annum are found returning to crime and to prison. Well, now, if the five percent receive no good, or even become worse, ought we not to consider the other ninety-five and pause awhile before we give loose to our vengeance and exchange a Christian system of hopeful mercy for the old barbarous rule of unmitigated severity?

Beware, fellow citizens, beware of restoring the old idea that men can sin beyond hope of reformation, or you will generate criminals worse than those which now trouble us. The laws of Draco must ever be failures but fear not for the ultimate triumph of plans which a Christian spirit has suggested. I have wandered from the subject—I thought I might save some from the crime of opposing true philanthropy on account of a sudden panic. But I will return at once to the manger and the Babe.

I believe our Lord was laid in the manger where the beasts were fed, to show that even beast-like men may come to Him and live. No creature can be so degraded that Christ cannot lift it up. Fall it

may, and seem to fall most certainly to Hell, but the long and strong arm of Christ can reach it even in its most desperate degradation. He can bring it up from apparently hopeless ruin. If there is one who has strolled in here this morning whom society abhors and who abhors himself, my Master in the stable with the beasts presents Himself as able to save the vilest of the vile and to accept the worst of the worst even now. Believe on Him and He will make you a new creature.

But as Christ was laid where beasts were fed, you will please remember that after He was gone beasts fed there again. It was only His Presence which could glorify the manger and here we learn that if Christ were taken away, the world would go back to its former heathen darkness. Civilization itself would die out, at least that part of it which really civilizes man, if the religion of Jesus could be extinguished. If Christ were taken away from the human heart, the most holy would become debased again, and those who claim kinship with angels would soon prove that they have relationship to devils.

The manger, I say, would be a manger for beasts still, if the Lord of Glory were withdrawn. And we should go back to our sins and our lusts if Christ should once take away His Divine Grace and leave us to ourselves. For these reasons which I have mentioned, methinks, Christ was laid in a manger.

II. But still the text says that He was laid in a manger because there was no room for Him in the inn and this leads us to the second remark, **THAT THERE WERE OTHER PLACES BESIDES THE INN WHICH HAD NO ROOM FOR CHRIST.** The palaces of emperors and the halls of kings afforded the royal stranger no refuge? Alas, my Brethren, seldom is there room for Christ in palaces! How could the kings of earth receive the Lord? He is the Prince of Peace and they delight in war!

He breaks their bows and cuts their spears in sunder. He burns their war chariots in the fire. How could kings accept the humble Savior? They love grandeur and pomp, and He is all simplicity and meekness. He is a carpenter's son, and the fisherman's companion. How can princes find room for the new-born monarch? Why, He teaches us to do to others as we would that they should do to us! And this is a thing which kings would find very hard to reconcile with the knavish tricks of politics and the grasping designs of ambition. O great ones of the earth, I am but little astonished that amid your glories, and pleasures, and wars, and councils, you forget the Anointed and cast out the Lord of All.

There is no room for Christ with the kings. Look throughout the kingdoms of the earth now and with here and there an exception it is still true—"The kings of the earth stand up and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed." In Heaven we shall see here and there a monarch. But ah, how few. Indeed a child might write of them, "Not many great men after the flesh, not many mighty are chosen."

State-chambers, cabinets, throne-rooms, and royal palaces are about as little frequented by Christ as the jungles and swamps of India by the cautious traveler. He frequents cottages far more often than regal residences, for there is no room for Jesus Christ in regal halls—

*"When the Eternal bows the skies
To visit earthly things,
With scorn Divine He turns His eyes
From towers of haughty kings.
He bids His awful chariot roll
Far downward from the skies,
To visit every humble soul
With pleasure in His eyes."*

But there were senators, there were forums of political discussion, there were the places where the representatives of the people make the laws, was there no room for Christ there? Alas, my Brethren, none. And to this day there is very little room for Christ in parliaments. How seldom is religion recognized by politicians! Of course a State religion, if it will consent to be a poor, nized. But the true Christ, and they that follow Him and dare to obey His laws in an evil generation, what room is there for such?

Christ and His Gospel—oh, this is sectarianism and is scarcely worthy of the notice of contempt. Who pleads for Jesus in the Senate? Is not His religion, under the name of sectarianism, the great terror of all parties? Who quotes His golden rule as a direction for prime ministers, or preaches Christ-like forgiveness as a rule for national policy? One or two will give Him a good word, but if it is put to the vote whether the Lord Jesus should be obeyed or not, it will be many a day before the ayes have it. Parties, policies, place-hunters and pleasure-seekers exclude the Representative of Heaven from a place among representatives of Earth.

Might there not be found some room for Christ in what is called good society? Were there not in Bethlehem some people that were very respectable, who kept themselves aloof from the common multitude? Persons of reputation and standing? Could not they find room for Christ? Ah, dear Friends, it is too much the case that there is no room for Him in what is called good society. There is room for all the silly little forms by which men choose to trammel themselves—room for the vain niceties of etiquette, room for frivolous conversation, room for the adoration of the body. And there is room for the setting up of this, and that, as the idol of the hour—but there is too little room for Christ—and it is far from fashionable to follow the Lord fully.

The advent of Christ would be the last thing which society would desire. The very mention of His name by the lips of love would cause a strange sensation. Should you begin to talk about the things of Christ in many a circle, you would be tabooed at once. “I will never ask that man to my house again,” so-and-so would say—“if he must bring his religion with him.” Folly and finery, rank and honor, jewels and glitter, frivolity and fashion—all report that there is no room for Jesus in their abodes.

But is there not room for Him on the exchange? Cannot He be taken to the marts of commerce? Here are the shop-keepers of a shop-keeping nation—is there not room for Christ here? Ah, dear Friends, how little of the spirit and life and doctrine of Christ can be found here! The trader finds it inconvenient to be too scrupulous. The merchant often discovers that if he is to make a fortune he must break his conscience. How many there are—well, I will not say they tell lies directly but still, still, still—I had better say it plainly—they do lie indirectly with a vengeance!

Who does not know, as he rides along, that there must be many liars abroad? For almost every house you see is, “The cheapest house in London,” which can hardly be—full sure they cannot all be the cheapest! What sharp practice some indulge in! What puffery and falsehood! What cunning and sleight of hand! What woes would my Master pronounce on some of you if He looked into your shop windows, or stood behind your counters. Bankruptcies, swindling, frauds are so abundant that in hosts of cases there is no room for Jesus in the market or the shop.

Then there are the schools of the philosophers, surely they will entertain Him. The wise men will find in Him incarnate wisdom. He, who as a youth is to become the teacher of doctors, who will sit down and ask them questions and receive their answers, surely He will find room at once among the Grecian sages, and men of sense and wit will honor Him. “Room for Him, Socrates and Plato? Stoics and Epicureans give way! And you, you teachers of Israel, vacate your seats. If there is no room for this Child without your going, go. We must have Him in the schools of philosophy, even if we have to put you all away.”

No, dear Friends but it is not so. There is very little room for Christ in colleges and universities, very little room for Him in the seats of learning. How often learning helps men to raise objections to Christ! Too often learning is the forge where the nails are made for Christ’s crucifixion. Too often human wit has become the craftsman who has pointed the spear and made the shaft with which His heart should be pierced. We must say it—philosophy, falsely so called, (for true

philosophy, if it were handled aright, must ever be Christ's friend)—philosophy, falsely so called, has done mischief to Christ but seldom has it served His cause.

A few with splendid talents, a few of the erudite and profound have bowed like children at the feet of the Babe of Bethlehem, and have been honored in bowing there. But too many, conscious of their knowledge, stiff and stern in their conceit of wisdom, have said—"Who is Christ, that we should acknowledge Him?" They found no room for Him in the schools.

But there was surely one place where he could go—it was the Sanhedrim, where the elders sit. Or could He not be housed in the priestly chamber where the priests assemble with the Levites. Was there not room for Him in the temple or the synagogue? No, He found no shelter there. It was there, His whole life long, that He found His most ferocious enemies. Not the common multitude but the priests were the instigators of His death! The priests moved the people to say, "Not this Man, but Barabbas." The priests paid out their shekels to bribe the popular voice, and then Christ was hounded to His death.

Surely there ought to have been room for Him in the Church of His own people. But there was not. Too often in the priestly Church, when once it becomes recognized and mounts to dignity, there is no room for Christ. I allude not now to any one denomination, but take the whole sweep of Christendom. It is strange that when the Lord comes to His own, His own receive Him not. The most accursed enemies of true religion have been the men who pretended to be its advocates.

It is little marvel when bishops undermine the popular faith in revelation. This is neither their first nor last offense. Who burned the martyrs and made Smithfield a field of blood, a burning fiery furnace, a great altar for the Most High God? Why, those who professed to be anointed of the Lord, whose shaven crowns had received Episcopal benediction. Who put John Bunyan in prison? Who chased such men as Owen and the Puritans from their pulpits? Who harried the Covenanters upon the mountains? Who, Sirs, but the professed messengers of Heaven and priests of God?

Who have hunted the baptized saints in every land and hunt them still in many a continental state? The priests. The priests. There is no room for Christ with the prophets of Baal, the servants of Babylon. The false hirelings that are not Christ's shepherds and love not His sheep, have ever been the most ferocious enemies of our God and of His Christ. There is no room for Him where His name is chanted in solemn hymns and His image lifted up amid smoke of incense. Go where you will, and there is no space for the Prince of Peace but with the humble and contrite spirits which by Divine Grace He prepares to yield Him shelter.

III. But now for our third remark, THE INN ITSELF HAD NO ROOM FOR HIM. And this was the main reason why He must be laid in a manger. What can we find in modern times which stands in the place of the inn? Well, there is public sentiment free to all. In this free land, men speak of what they like and there is a public opinion upon every subject. And you know there is free toleration in this country to everything—permit me to say, toleration to everything but Christ. You will discover that the persecuting spirit is now as much abroad as ever.

There are still men at whom it is most fashionable to sneer. We never scoff at Christians now-a-days. We do not sneer at that respectable title, lest we should lose our own honor. We do not now-a-days talk against the followers of Jesus under that name. No—but we have found out a way of doing it more safely. There is a pretty word of modern invention—a very pretty word—the word "Sectarian." Do you know what it means? A sectarian means a true Christian—a man who can afford to keep a conscience and does not mind suffering for it. A man who, whatever he finds to be in that old Book, believes it and acts upon it and is zealous for it.

I believe that the men aimed at under the term, "sectarians," are the true followers of Christ and that the sneers and jeers and all the nonsense that you are always reading and hearing, is really aimed at the Christian, the true Christian, only he is disguised and nicknamed by the word sectarian. I would give not a farthing for your religion, no, not even the turn of a rusty nail, unless you will sometimes win that title. If God's Word is true, every atom of it, then we should act upon

it. And whatever the Lord commands, we should diligently keep and obey, remembering that our Master tells us if we break one of the least of His commandments and teach men so, we shall be least in His kingdom.

We ought to be very jealous, very precise, very anxious, that even in the least significant of our Savior's laws, we may obey, having our eyes up to Him as the eyes of servants are to their mistresses. But if you do this, you will find you are not tolerated and you will get the cold shoulder in society. A zealous Christian will find as truly a Cross to carry now-a-days, as in the days of Simon the Cyrenian. If you will hold your tongue, if you will leave sinners to perish, if you will never endeavor to propagate your faith, if you will silence all witnessing for the Truth of God, if, in fact, you will renounce all the attributes of a Christian, if you will cease to be what a Christian must be, then the world will say, "Ah, that is right. This is the religion we like."

But if you will believe, believe firmly, and if you let your belief actuate your life and if your belief is so precious that you feel compelled to spread it, then at once you will find that there is no room for Christ even in the inn of public sentiment, where everything else is received. Be an infidel and none will treat you contemptuously. But be a Christian and many will despise you. "There was no room for Him in the inn."

How little room is there for Christ, too, in general conversation, which is also like an inn. We talk about many things. A man may now-a-days talk of any subject he pleases. No one can stop him and say, "There is a spy catching your words. He will report you to some central authority." Speech is very free in this land. But, ah, how little room is there for Christ in general talk! Even on Sunday afternoon how little room there is for Christ in some professed Christian's houses.

They will talk about ministers, tell strange anecdotes about them—perhaps invent a few, or, at least, garnish the old ones and add to them and make them a little more brilliant. They will talk about the Sunday school, or the various agencies in connection with the Church—but how little they say about Christ! And if someone should in conversation make this remark, "Could we not speak upon the Godhead and manhood, the finished work and righteousness, the ascension, or the second advent of our Lord Jesus Christ?" Why we should see many, who even profess to be followers of Christ, who would hold up their heads and say, "Why, dear, that man is quite a fanatic, or else he would not think of introducing such a subject as that into general conversation." No, there is no room for Him in the inn.

To this day He can find but little access there. I address many who are working men. You are employed among a great many artisans day after day. Do you not find, Brethren—I know you do—that there is very little room for Christ in the workshop. There is room there for everything else. There is room for swearing. There is room for drunkenness. There is room for lewd conversation. There is room for politics, slanders, or infidelities—but there is no room for Christ.

Too many of our working men think religion would be an encumbrance, a chain, a miserable prison to them. They can frequent the theater, or listen in a lecture hall, but the House of God is too dreary for them. I wish I were not compelled to say so, but truly, in our factories, workshops and foundries, there is no room for Christ. The world is elbowing and pushing for more room, till there is scarce a corner left where the Babe of Bethlehem can be laid.

As for the inns of modern times—who would think of finding Christ there? Putting out of our catalog in those hotels and roadside houses which are needed for the accommodation of travelers, what greater curse have we than our taverns and pothouses? What wider gates of Hell? Who would ever resort to such places as we have flaring with gas lights at the corners of all our streets to find Christ there? As well might we expect to find Him in the bottomless pit! We should be just as likely to look for angels in Hell, as to look for Christ in a gin palace! He who is separate from sinners finds no fit society in the reeking temple of Bacchus. There is no room for Jesus in the inn.

I think I would rather rot or feed the crows, than earn my daily bread by the pence of fools, the hard earnings of the poor man, stolen from his ragged children and his emaciated wife. What do

many publicans fatten upon but the flesh and bones and blood and souls of men? He who grows rich on the fruits of vice is a beast preparing for the slaughter. Truly, there is no room for Christ among the drunkards of Ephraim. They who have anything to do with Christ should hear Him say—"Come you out from among them and be you separate. Touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you and be a Father unto you and you shall be My sons and daughters." There is no room for Christ now-a-days even in the places of public resort.

IV. This brings me to my fourth head, which is the most pertinent and the most necessary to dwell upon for a moment. HAVE YOU ROOM FOR CHRIST? HAVE YOU ROOM FOR CHRIST? As the palace and the forum and the inn have no room for Christ, and as the places of public resort have none, have you room for Christ?

"Well," says one, "I have room for Him but I am not worthy that He should come to me." Ah, I did not ask about worthiness. Have you room for Him? "Oh," says one, "I have an empty void the world can never fill!" Ah, I see you have room for Him. "Oh, but the room I have in my heart is so base!" So was the manger. "But it is so despicable!" So was the manger a thing to be despised. "Ah, but my heart is so foul!" So, perhaps, the manger may have been. "Oh, but I feel it is a place not at all fit for Christ!" Nor was the manger a place fit for Him and yet there He was laid.

"Oh, but I have been such a sinner. I feel as if my heart had been a den of beasts and devils!" Well, the manger had been a place where beasts had fed. Have you room for Him? Never mind what the past has been. He can forget and forgive. It matters not what even the present state may be if you mourn it. If you have but room for Christ, He will come and be your guest. Do not say, I pray you, "I hope I shall have room for Him." The time is come that He shall be born. Mary cannot wait months and years.

Oh, Sinner, if you have room for Him let Him be born in your soul today. "Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation." "Today is the accepted time. Today is the day of salvation." Room for Jesus! Room for Jesus, now! "Oh," says one, "I have room for Him but will He come?" Will He come, indeed! If you but set the door of your heart open, and say, "Jesus, Master, all unworthy and unclean I look to You. Come, lodge within my heart," He will come to you and He will cleanse the manger of your heart. No—He will transform it into a golden throne and there He will sit and reign forever and forever.

Oh, I have such a free Christ to preach this morning! I would I could preach Him better. I have such a precious, loving, Jesus to preach! He is willing to find a home in humble hearts. What? Are there no hearts here this morning that will take Him in? Must my eye glance round these galleries and look at many of you who are still without Him, and are there none who will say, "Come in, come in"? Oh, it shall be a happy day for you if you shall be enabled to take Him in your arms and receive Him as the consolation of Israel!

You may then look forward even to death with joy, and say with Simeon—"Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation." My Master wants room! Room for Him! Room for Him! I, His herald, cry aloud, Room for the Savior! Room! Here is my royal Master—have you room for Him? Here is the Son of God made flesh—have you room for Him? Here is He who can forgive all sin—have you room for Him? Here is He who can take you up out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay—have you room for Him? Here is He who, when He comes in will never go out again but abide with you forever to make your heart a Heaven of joy and bliss for you—have you room for Him?

It is all I ask. Your emptiness, your nothingness, your want of feeling, your want of goodness, your want of Grace—all these will be but room for Him. Have you room for Him? Oh, Spirit of God, lead many to say, "Yes, my heart is ready." Ah, then He will come and dwell with you—

*"Joy to the world the Savior comes,
The Savior promised long;*

*Let every heart prepare a throne
And every voice a song."*

1. I conclude with the remark, that if you have room for Christ, then from this day forth remember THE WORLD HAS NO ROOM FOR YOU. For the text says not only that there was no room for Him but look—"There was no room for them"—no room for Joseph, nor for Mary—any more than for the Babe. Who are His father and mother and sister and brother but those that receive His word and keep it? So, as there was no room for the blessed Virgin, nor for the reputed father, remember from now on there is no room in this world for any true follower of Christ.

There is no room for you to take your ease. No, you are to be a soldier of the Cross and you will find no ease in all your life-warfare. There is no room for you to sit down contented with your own attainments, for you are a traveler and you are to forget the things that are behind and press forward to that which is before. No room for you to hide your treasure in, for here the moth and rust does corrupt. No room for you to put your confidence, for "Cursed is he that trusts in man and makes flesh his arm." From this day there will be no room for you in the world's good opinion—they will count you to be an offscouring.

No room for you in the world's polite society—you must go without the camp, bearing His reproach. From this time forth, I say, if you have room for Christ, the world will hardly find room of sufferance for you. You must expect now to be laughed at. Now you must wear the fool's cap in men's esteem. And your song must be at the very beginning of your pilgrimage—

*"Jesus, I Your Cross have taken, (by Your Grace)
All to leave and follow You.
Naked, poor, despised, forsaken,
You from now my All shall be."*

There is no room for you in the worldling's love. If you expect that everybody will praise you and that your good actions will all be applauded, you will be quite mistaken. The world, I say, has no room for the man who has room for Christ. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you." "You are not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world." Thank God, you need not ask the world's hospitality. If it will give you but a stage for action and lend you for an hour a grave to sleep in, it is all you need.

You will require no permanent dwelling place here, since you seek a city that is to come, which has foundations and whose builder and maker is God. You are hurrying through this world as a stranger through a foreign land, and you rejoice to know that though you are an alien and a foreigner here, yet you are a fellow citizen with the saints and of the household of God. What do you say, young Soldier, will you enlist on such terms as these?

Will you give room for Christ when there is to be from now on no room for you—when you are to be separated forever, maybe cut off from among the world's kith and kin—cut off from carnal confidence forever? Are you willing, notwithstanding all this, to receive the Traveler? The Lord help you to do so and to Him shall be glory forever and ever. Amen.