

RESISTANCE TO SALVATION

“What have I to do with You, Jesus, You Son of the Most High God?”

Mark 5:7

WHEREVER Jesus comes, there is a commotion. No sooner does He set His foot on the shore at Gadara than He is at once assailed by the powers of darkness! And it is not long before the whole population of the district is affected by His Presence. However uninfluential other people may be, Jesus is never so. He is always either, “the savor of death unto death” or, “the savor of life unto life.” He is never a savorless Christ! Virtue is always going out of Him and that virtue stirs up the opposition of evildoers so that, straightaway, they come forth to fight against Him.

You remember that when Paul and Silas preached at Thessalonica, the unbelieving Jews cried out, “These that have turned the world upside down are come here also!” Was that an amazing thing? No, rather was it not exactly what the Lord Jesus Christ had prophesied when He said, “I came not to send peace, but a sword”? He said that because of Him, there would be division even in families, so that a man would be at variance against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a man’s foes would be those of his own household! Christ must make a stir wherever He comes and His Gospel must cause a commotion wherever it is preached. Stagnation is inconsistent with life. Death-like slumber is the condition of those who are dead in sin, but to be awakened to action is the sure consequence of the Gospel coming with power to anyone!

Yet Jesus Christ’s actions were, as a rule, very quiet and, on this occasion, He merely landed at Gadara. He had no trumpeters to herald His arrival and no squadron of cavalry to escort Him. In fulfillment of the ancient prophecy, He did not strive, nor cry, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. He was so gentle that a bruised reed He did not break, and the smoking flax He did not quench. Yet, wherever He went, there was always a stir. Well, we might have expected that it would be so—the analogies of Nature would teach us to look for that. When the morning sun arises, without sound of drum, or tramp of armed men, straightway it causes confusion among the doers of darkness! With a roar the lion goes back to his den and the wolf and the hyena flee before the eyes of light. I daresay, too, that the owl and the bat have a very strong aversion to the rising of the sun. If they could speak their minds, they would hoot or hiss out their opinions which would probably be found to be very much opposed to anything like daylight and noontide glory! “Oh, if all the passing hours could be one long night,” says the owl, “then I could continually seek my prey. But these long summer days are obnoxious to me.” And the bat would gladly pursue his tireless flight, but the light of the sun is too much for him, so he must get back to his hiding place till again the evening shades prevail. But the sunlight is only objectionable to creatures that delight in darkness—and so it happened that Christ’s landing at Gadara was like the sun rising upon the thick darkness in which that poor tortured demoniac was dwelling—and like the sun rising upon the dense darkness of ignorance and sin in which the swine-keeping Gadarenes were dwelling! So there was quite certain to be a stir, and a commotion, and an opposition!

I trust that the Lord Jesus Christ will be with us here in the preaching of His Gospel. And if so, there will be a stir here! And if some opposition should be awakened, we shall not wonder at it. And if others should find their opposition to the Truth of God disarmed by the power and Grace of the Holy Spirit, we shall not marvel at that, for it is God’s habit thus to overcome His adversaries!

1. The first point that I shall speak upon in connection with the demoniac’s question is this—THE DEVIL DREADS ALL CONTACT WITH CHRIST, for he moved the poor man to

cry out, with a loud voice, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, You Son of the Most High God?"

The devil dreads all contact with Christ and he does so because, first, Christ's Nature is so contrary to his own. "Cantwo walk together, except they are agreed?" And these two, so far from being agreed, are absolutely opposed to each other in every respect. There is a very ancient warfare between them—a warfare which, as far as this world is concerned, was proclaimed in the Garden of Eden when God said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; it shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." Christ loves light, Satan loves darkness. Christ works life, Satan works death. Christ is Love, Satan is hate. Christ is Goodness, Satan is evil. Christ is Truth, Satan is falsehood. Christ is God and Satan labors to supplant God—to set himself up for an antichrist, exalting himself above all that is called God. It is not possible that those two should dwell together in the same universe without continually coming to hand-to-hand conflicts. They are as much opposed to each other as water is to fire and, therefore, Satan cannot endure the Presence of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Moreover, in the next place,

Satan is well aware that the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ in this world is not for his

good. He has no share in Christ's Incarnation, nor in His atoning Sacrifice. This is one of the amazing results of the Election of Grace. Those persons who stumble at the election of some men rather than others ought equally to stumble at the fact that Christ did not redeem the fallen angels, but only fallen men—for why God chose to save men and not to save angels, who among us can tell? The only answer I know to that question is this, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight." It appears to me to be an instance of pure Sovereignty in harmony with the Lord's own declaration, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." Paul tells us that Christ took not up angels, but He took up the seed of Abraham. He passed by the seraph when he had fallen into sin. He passed by that mighty spirit, Satan, when he had fallen—and took up men. One naturally thinks that if any ruin should be restored, it should be the choicest of buildings and that if any fallen being is to be restored, it should be the one with the most colossal intellect that God ever made—but it was not so. The great and mighty angels were passed by and we, who are but worms of the dust, were looked upon with eyes of favor and love! And Satan, knowing this, and being jealous of the love which lights upon men, cannot endure the Presence of Christ.

Moreover, Satan knows that not only is there nothing for his good in the mission of Christ, but he understands that the whole drift of Christ's mission is against him. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." What horrible work the devil has already done in the world! Behold how the Garden of Eden is withered, blighted and burned into a desert. See the fertile earth bringing forth thorns and thistles and see man, who was made in the image of God, reduced to the position of a toiling sinner, earning his bread by the sweat of his face! See war, famine, pestilence and all kinds of evil and woe thickly spread over the whole earth! And remember that all this has come as the result of that one disobedience into which man was led by the temptation of the Evil One. But the Evil One has little room to glory in the mischief that he has worked, for Christ has come to undo it! He has come to lift man up and, in His own Person, He has lifted him up and made him to "have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth." In the Person of the Second Adam, the Lord from Heaven, man is lifted up from all the sin into which he fell through the first Adam. And, as to this poor world, itself, sin-blighted as it now is, it travails in anticipation of the new birth which yet awaits it. And the day shall yet dawn when new heavens and a new earth shall prove how completely Christ has cancelled the curse and made the earth fragrant with blessings! It is for this reason that Satan hates the Presence of Christ because Christ is to destroy his evil work and, therefore, he dreads that Christ should come near to him.

The whole wish of this particular legion of devils was concentrated into the one request that they might be left alone—and Satan wishes to be left alone—to be allowed to work his evil will and to do

whatever he pleases. He did not, at that time, want to come into conflict with Christ. He did not wish that Christ should be assailed, nor did he have any hope that Christ might be caused to suffer any sort of defeat—he was too cowardly to aspire to any such thing as that! That had been his dream, in earlier days, when he had met Him in the wildness, but now he only asked to be left alone—just to be allowed to skulk off and hide and keep himself out of Christ’s notice. That is very much what the devil wants nowadays when Christ’s power is manifestly working in His Church! In past times the devil has moved his minions to say, “We will overthrow the Gospel! With sword and stake, and rack, and dungeon we will destroy the people of God!” But when the Lord has, in His gracious Providence, given peace to the persecuted and, by His Spirit has given power to the preaching of the Gospel, then the devil whines out that he only wants to be left alone! Just leave him alone and all things will go on comfortably and pleasantly. He would have a kind of truce proclaimed between himself and Christ—he wants a little respite and desires to be left alone.

One reason for this is that he knows his own powerlessness in the Presence of Christ. In the presence of man, Satan is great and strong, and crafty. But in the Presence of the Christ of God, he shrinks into utter insignificance. He knows that he cannot resist even a word from Christ’s lips, or a glance from His eyes, so he says, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, You Son of the Most High God?” The question appears as if Satan pleaded with Christ not to put forth His power—not to touch him, but just to leave him alone as too insignificant to be noticed! Such is the craft of Satan, that he will whine like a whipped cur and crouch at the great Master’s feet, and look up to His face, and entreat to be left alone, for he knows well enough the power of the Son of God! On a later occasion, one of Satan’s imps said, “Jesus I know,” and there was such power in that name that the evil spirit added, “and Paul I know.” Paul was only a humble servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, yet the devil knew him and linked his name with his Master’s! Yes, the name of Jesus has wondrous power over all the hosts of Hell! So, Brothers and Sisters, let us not be discomfited nor dismayed by all the armies of Satan, but let us with holy courage contend against all the powers of evil, for we shall be more than conquerors over them through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior!

Satan also fears the Presence of Christ because he dreads the doom which awaits him. Those fallen spirits at Gadara were afraid that they were about to begin to endure the dismal fate which, certainly, will be theirs, by-and-by. There will come a day when the arch-traitor and all the multitudes of fallen spirits whom he dragged down with him from Heaven shall have to appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ. The saints of God will take part in that judgment, for Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “Know you not that we shall judge angels?” And then the devil shall receive his final sentence and be forever banished to Hell. There he will be bound, no more to wander through dry places, seeking rest and finding none—no more to tempt and beguile the sons of men by putting on the garb of an angel of light—no more to intrude into the assemblies where the sons of God come before the Lord—no more to dare to accuse the brethren—no more to be able to molest the children of God and disturb their devotions—no more to be able to lay traps for the ensnaring of the feet of God’s elect—no more to dress out his antichrists and to work with his puppets, the Pope of Rome and the false prophet, Mohammed—no longer able to beguile the multitude and lead them astray—no longer able to go through Christ’s fields by night and to sow his tares in the midst of the good wheat—but kept in prison, forever bound in chains, to continue as an eternal and awful evidence of the wrath of God against transgression! It is no wonder that in anticipation of his ultimate fate, in Hell, the very shadow of the Lord Jesus, as it falls upon him, makes him tremble! And, although he cannot repent and cannot turn from the evil in which his heart indulges, yet is he cowed as he feels how awful goodness is and how majestic is the supremacy of Christ over all who oppose His almighty will! It is for this reason that Satan so dreads to have Christ come near to him, that he says, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, You Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, that You torment me not.”

II. There will, perhaps, be more practical teaching in the second part of my subject which is this—WHEN SATAN GETS MEN INTO HIS POWER, HE ALSO LEADS THEM TO OPPOSE THE COMING OF CHRIST TO THEM.

When they submit to Satan’s sway, they cry out, in various ways, “What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of the Most High God?” I wonder whether there are any now in this house who are saying that in their hearts, if not with their voices. They do not oppose Christ actively. They do not

persecute His followers. They would let everybody do and think just what he pleases, but they do not want religion for themselves and, above all, they do not want the religion of Jesus Christ. All they want is to be left alone, and the reasons for that desire—which, perhaps, they would not state in words, but which are really in their hearts—are such as I will try to set before you.

First, conscience is feared by them. They have not quite lost all knowledge of right and wrong and, sometimes, Mr. Conscience, though drugged with Satanic opiates and very hoarse with the cold that he has taken in this sinful world, does cry out at such a rate that they cannot sleep at night and they cannot feel comfortable by day. So they say to themselves, “If we begin to think of Jesus and His Gospel, this conscience of ours will grow still more troublesome and we shall not have any peace or enjoyment at all. Even now we cannot indulge in our cups and our merry dances as we used to do. And we cannot go with our former jolly companions. If our conscience should once become thoroughly alive and active, it would follow us at our heels like a dog and we should not know how to get away from it. We do not want to have that state of things—we just want to be left alone.” So they carefully avoid attending a place of worship where there is likely to be anything to trouble and alarm their conscience. They do not object to go to a sort of Sunday music hall, or to a place where there is very fine oratorical preaching where they can get an intellectual treat. But they do not want Jesus Christ and His Gospel. They try to keep clear of preaching that is plain and outspoken against sin and if, perchance, they happen to hear a sermon which might come home to their conscience, they are all the while planning how they can keep out of its way! They even think how applicable it may be to other people, but they avoid, as much as they can, any idea that it is applicable to themselves, for they do not want conscience to be disturbed. They say, “Hush, Conscience, hush! Lie still and slumber. Do not cry out at such a rate—we shall get all right, by-and-by, and no doubt everything will be squared up at the last. But, for the present, keep quiet, Conscience, and do not trouble me, for I do not want to think.” There are some men who seem as if they would not mind six months imprisonment if, thereby, they could escape six months thinking about their character and their state before God! May the Holy Spirit graciously save all of us from getting into that terrible condition! That is one reason why men cry out, as this demoniac did, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, You Son of the Most High God?”—because conscience is feared by them.

Then, next, change is dreaded by them. They are content to remain as they are. In certain stages of a sinner’s life he feels as if he does not want to be anything but just what he is. He has succeeded in business, he is merry of heart, he is enjoying himself. No doubt there is a worm at the root of all his self-satisfaction, but he does not want to think about that worm. The tree looks all right—why do you want to interfere with it? The apple is beautiful, look at its fair rosy cheeks—suppose there is a maggot in the very core that will destroy it—why do you not let us look at the apple as long as we can be pleased with it? People who talk like that have built a very pretty house, but it is all cardboard—nothing more! But then, see how nicely it is painted and how very beautiful it looks! It is true that the first storm that arises will destroy it, but, possibly, there will not come a storm just yet, so why not let us be easy while we can? There are, alas, many of those easy-going souls. I pity the man who never has any troubles. I believe that there are some people who never will have the heartache till they have known what it is to be hungry almost to starvation. It was so with that poor prodigal—he never thought of going back to his father till, “he would gladly have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: but no man gave any unto him.” Poverty, sickness, bereavement and sorrow of heart are often God’s angels that come to smite men on the side and wake them up, as the angel awoke sleeping Peter and delivered him from prison, where he was to have been led forth to die on the morrow! Some of you ought to thank God that He does not let you have a very easy or merry time. He does not let you settle on your lees, but keeps on emptying you from vessel to vessel. The reason for this is that He has designs of love for you and He means that you never should rest till you rest in Him! But it is often because of the pride which comes of fullness of bread and the fatness of heart which grows out of worldly prosperity that many a man says to the Lord Jesus Christ, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, You Son of the Most High God?”

And then, if you try to probe such people a little deeper and begin to talk to them about death and judgment, they probably turn upon you with great indignation, for they claim the right to be left alone. “Surely,” they say, “this is a free country, so we ought to be left alone and not interfered with.” You will hear them say concerning a certain preacher, “Why does not that man preach his

own religion and leave other people alone?" Perhaps one of them says, "I liked that sermon very well, on the whole, but I did not like that part of it in which the minister attacked such-and-such an error, as he called it. Why cannot he leave other people alone?" Yes, that is the old cry, "Leave us alone! Leave us alone!" If you will only let the devil alone, the devil will let you alone—but if you once attack him, he will be certain to attack you! But just think for a moment what this foolish sinner claims—he claims the right to live in blindness! You who can see must not tell him that he is blind! If you do so, he says you are infringing his rights. He says that he has a right to lie in prison if he chooses to do so! And if you come and hammer at the door, or shout to him through the iron bars that there has come One who can let loose the captives, he complains that you are disturbing him!

Here is a man on the verge of destruction, asleep on the edge of a precipice! If you wake him, he tells you that he has a right to sleep there if he likes and that he does not want you to awaken him in that rough way and talk to him about his imminent danger! Here is another man lying down on the railway track and the engine and train are coming along that line. If you try to move him, he says that he has a right to lie there if he likes. What is it to you if the engine goes right over his body and cuts him in pieces? You cry to him, "Madman, escape for your life! The engine will be on you directly." If he does get up, he abuses you and says, "Mind your own business! You go your way and leave me alone." That is the style in which sinners talk when they claim the right to be left alone. But everybody who has any sense knows that such talk is the language of a fool, for a man has not the right to be damned! He has not the right to destroy himself eternally. Our law very properly withholds from a man the right to commit suicide—if he is caught in the act of attempting to take his own life, he is punishable as a criminal. The act of suicide is a grave offense against the Laws of God and man, and no man has the right to damn his own soul and so to commit spiritual suicide. So we mean to interfere, by God's help, with such a foolish and wicked man—and cry to him to escape from the wrath to come and, in doing so, we are only obeying the highest instinct of Nature—and the Law of Love, which is the Law of God.

What a blessing it is, dear Friends, that although some of us were once of that way of thinking, our Lord Jesus Christ would not leave us alone! We were sheep away on the mountains and we did not want the Good Shepherd, but He came after us! And even when we saw Him coming, we wandered further and further away from Him, yet He would not let us wander away from Him altogether. He followed us in all our devious tracks and, at last He found us and laid us on His shoulders, rejoicing—and carried us back to the fold where He still watches over us!

Once again, some of these people who entreat Christ to leave them alone do so because they fear that He will torment them. The demoniac at Gadara said to Christ, "I implore You by God that You torment me not." Many people seem to think that it is a very sorrowful thing to be a Christian, that believers in Christ are a miserable, unhappy lot of folk who never enjoy themselves. Well, I must admit that I do know some little communities of people who reckon themselves the very pick of Christians and who meet together on a Sunday to have a comfortable groan together, but I do not think that the bulk of us who worship in this place could be truthfully charged with anything like that! We serve a happy God and we believe in a joyous Gospel—and the love of Christ in our hearts has made us anticipate many of the joys of Heaven even while we are here on earth! "The peace of God, which passes all understanding," keeps our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. And "the joy of the Lord is our strength." Perhaps if we were to let the ungodly know more about this joy and peace, they would throw down the weapons of their rebellion and say, "We did not know that the religion of Jesus Christ was so blessed as this! We did not know that there was such music as this in the great Father's House. We did not know that there was a fatted calf waiting to be killed for us and that the whole household would begin to be merry over us! Now that we know what joy there is, we will enter and go no more out forever." O beloved Friends, if you have never believed that there is joy in coming near to God through Jesus Christ, His Son, believe it now! May the Holy Spirit graciously draw you to Him, so that you may no longer ask, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, You Son of the Most High God?"

III. Now I turn to the third part of the subject. We have seen what the devil's views concerning Christ's Presence are and how he makes sinners share those views. Now, thirdly, I want to show

you that SANE MEN MAY TAKE THE DEMONIAK'S QUESTION AND ANSWER IT. "What have I to do with You, Jesus, You Son of the Most High God?"

First, what have I, whoever I may be, inevitably to do with You? This is a question which concerns every person here. Suppose, my dear Hearer, that you are a stranger to these things of which I have been speaking and that you only came in here tonight by what you call, "chance"? I beg you to give me your earnest attention, for, whether you believe in Jesus Christ or not, you cannot escape from having some connection with Him, because, first of all, He has come into the world to save sinners and that good news has been made known to you! And everyone who hears that Gospel message and refuses to believe it, is responsible to God for that rejection!

Remember how the Lord Jesus Christ said concerning those cities in which His mighty works had been worked, that it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than it would be for Capernaum and Bethsaida where He had so often been. Christ has been near to you and you have heard His Gospel which many poor heathens have not heard. Now that you have heard the Gospel—the Gospel of the atoning Sacrifice of Christ—His blood will cry out against you, as the blood of Abel cried out against Cain, if it is not applied to you to cleanse you from sin! You cannot escape from the Lord Jesus Christ! You are caught in the meshes of the great net which He has cast over all those who have heard the Gospel! "He that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil." If you do not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you resolve not to be saved by Him, but to remain in the condition in which you now are, that is, "condemned already." If you believe not in Christ you do despite to Him! You bring dishonor upon His love and His blood! You cannot get away from that connection with Christ.

There is another connection between you and Christ which you cannot get away from, for there is a sense in which you belong to Christ whether you believe in Him or not. In one of the last prayers He offered before His death, He said, "Father, the hour is come; glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You: as You have given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him." For the special purposes of His Grace to His own elect, Christ has received from His Father power over the whole human race! And it is in this sense that it is said "that He, by the Grace of God, should taste death for every man," for, although the full saving results of His death will come only to His chosen and redeemed people, "even to them that believe on His name," yet that wondrous work of His upon the Cross has a relation to all the sons of men! All mankind is put under His mediatorial government, "for the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son." You cannot, therefore, get away from some connection with Christ even though you refuse to believe in Him. So I put the definite question to you—Will you receive Him, or will you reject Him? Will you be His subject, or will you be His foe? The marriage supper is spread and you are bid to come to it! You are not in the position of those who never were bid, so beware lest this sentence should be applied to you, "I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of My supper." If you refuse to accept the great King's invitation, He will declare that you insulted Him by doing so—and on your own head shall rest all the consequences of your refusal!

Remember, too, that all here, whether they receive Christ or reject Him, will have to stand before His Judgment Seat. The day comes when not only the sheep, but the goats shall be gathered before Him, so you must all be there. There is no way of escape for any of you! It used to be said of the whole world, under the Roman Empire, that it was one great prison for any man who had offended Caesar, for, wherever he might go, the officers of Caesar could follow him and arrest him. And, in a similar sense, the whole universe is, to an ungodly spirit, but one great house of detention where that spirit is awaiting the Last Dread Assize. In that day the ungodly shall know that they cannot escape from Christ! Oh, that they would be wise enough not to want to escape from Him, but would rather run to His open arms and find salvation there!

It is much more sweet to turn to the other form of the question, What connection is there between me and Christ by way of Grace? I believe my text might be read in two ways and that in either

sense it would be equally true to the original, for the Greek runs something like this, "What to me, to You?" And that may mean, "What have You to do with me?" Or, "What have I to do with You?"

Put it the first way, "What have You to do with me?" O my blessed Savior, what have You to do with me? Why, since I have believed on You, You have had everything to do with me! And I now know that even before I believed in You, You had everything to do with me! Did You not choose me before the earth was created? Did not Your Father give me to You? Did You not enter into Covenant with Him on my behalf? Did You not, in the fullness of time, redeem me with Your precious blood? Did You not call me by Your Grace and renew me by Your Holy Spirit, and intercede for me in my times of temptation and upheld me in my hours of trials? What have You to do with me, dear Savior? If there is anything good in me, You have put it there! If anything evil has been eradicated or weakened, You have done it! What have You to do with me? Why, You have had everything to do with me!

And, then, what have I to do with You? Why, I have everything to do with You! I have to receive my life from You, my food from You, my drink from You! I have to receive my cleansing from You, my keeping from You and everything else that I need in time or in eternity! You are now my Example and You are forever to be my exceedingly great Reward. What have I to do with You? I find in You my All-in-All. I am to sit at Your feet and learn of You. Or I am to wash Your feet with my tears. What have I to do with You? I am to serve You all my days, glad to be Your servant, and then I am to be forever with You where You are, that I may behold Your Glory! "What have I to do with You, Jesus, You Son of the Most High God?" You have taken me to be Your spouse, for You are married to me and You will bring me to the wedding feast before long!

Brothers and Sisters in Christ I am tempted to go on with this wondrous theme. What a subject it is! Yet I think you can work it out better in your private meditations than I can in this public assembly. The connection between us and Christ is very near, and very dear, and very strong—blessed be His holy name! We do not want to snap that connection, nor will it ever be snapped, for nothing in the whole universe "shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

IV. I can only refer very briefly to my last point which is this. WHEN MEN ARE BLESSED BY JESUS, THEY CHANGE THEIR MINDS WONDERFULLY WITH REGARD TO HIM.

Can you picture to yourself the change between that poor demoniac, as he was when he first spoke to Christ and the same man when he was clothed and in his right mind, sitting at the feet of Jesus? If I were able to give you a graphic sketch of that man in all the agony of his delirium, you would be sick at heart as you looked upon the picture. See him there, with unkempt locks, beard all matted and grimy, face covered with filth, eyes starting out of their sockets, limbs twisted with hideous contortions and the whole man a picture of horror! If you have ever had the misery of looking into the face of a man when he was in a delirium, you know what an awful sight it is! How glad you were to get away from that fearful spectacle! But this man had a whole legion of devils within him and must have looked a frightful object! He fell down before Jesus, crying, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, You Son of the Most High God?"—speaking with all his might in horrible tones which must have seemed terribly sad to all who were near.

But Jesus has said, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit." And now look at him! He has been washed, he has put on some garments, though he has not worn any for years, and he sits down at the feet of Jesus, calmly, collectedly. And when he gets up, he falls on his knees to pray! And what is his petition? "Lord, let me be with You. Do not send me away from You. You have done so much for me, let me always abide with You. Let me loose the laces of Your shoes. Let me wash Your feet. Let me be the servant of the servants of my Lord. Let me do what You will, only let me stay with You." Is not that a wonderful change? It is just the same with us who have come to Christ! Once we wanted to get away from Him, but now that we know Him, we cannot get near enough to Him! And, sometimes, we even carry that prayer of ours too far, as this man did, because he wanted to be near to the Person of Christ as to the flesh. And, at times I am afraid that our desires concerning going to Heaven savor a little of that spirit. When we are saying—

*“Let me be with You, where You are
Your unveiled glory to behold”–*

we must remember that, possibly, it is not the right thing for us, or for the Kingdom of God at large, that we should go to Heaven just yet. There is something more to be done by us down here and we ought to be just as happy to have Christ with us in spirit as we would be if we were actually with Him in Heaven. However, this man’s petition marks the change which had been worked in him, for, instead of begging Christ to leave him alone, he pleaded that he might always be with Him.

Notice, also, that this man promptly obeys the Lord Jesus Christ in something which must have been very unpleasant to him. In answer to his petition, Christ said, “No, you must not stay with Me. Go home to your friends.” That looked, on the face of it—did it not—rather a harsh answer? It seemed such a beautiful desire on the man’s part, “Let me abide with You.” And it seemed in opposition to the finest instincts of his newly-created nature to send him away. But it was not for this man to judge what was best for him and nor is it for us to judge what is best for us—

*“Ours not to reason why,
Ours not to make reply,
Ours but to do and die”–*

if so our Lord ordains! We are to do what Jesus tells us! That is what this man did.

And that led, in the last place, to this man’s glorifying Christ, for he went home to his friends and told them what great things the Lord had done for him! And then he went throughout all Decapolis—the ten cities—and told, wherever he went, the story of the Savior’s power and love! That is just what we will all try to do—and what we must do if the love of Christ has been shed abroad within us! We shall begin by telling the story to our friends, the members of our own family. We shall interest them in our account of what we have heard and seen and handled of the Word of Life. And when we have done that, we shall need a wider sphere, and our sphere of service will widen continually, for we shall keep on seeking fresh opportunities to publish the name, fame and Gospel of Jesus to others! “Ah,” we shall each one say, “this was not a pleasant theme to me, once, any more than it is to you now. You will think I am intruding upon your privacy now that I begin to talk to you about Christ, but the fact is, I once thought Christ was intruding Himself upon me and I actually said to Him, ‘Leave me alone.’ But He would not leave me alone. He cast sin out of me and now I cannot leave you poor sinners alone! I must win you to Christ if I can! I must pray you to Christ or I must pray to God for you until you are saved! As though God did beseech you by me, I pray you, in Christ’s stead, be you reconciled to God!”

Thus have I set before you the teaching that I find in this text. May God bless it to you, dear Friends! May His gracious Spirit put into the hearts of His people the prayer that if any sinners want to be left alone, Christ would, in His great mercy, come and deal with them this very hour, casting out the spirit of unbelief and bringing them to trust in Him!“ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” Amen, and Amen. HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”– 385, 611.—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307

PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON

TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.