

A QUEST FOR SOULS

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TEN

THE CURE FOR A TROUBLED HEART

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THE OPENING PRAYER

Because we need Thee, O Thou gracious Friend Divine. we would again call upon Thee for thy guidance and favor.

Without any hesitation we make confession of our weaknesses, of our faults, of our sins and sinfulness, of our ignorance, of the many limitations that are upon us, and we plead for thy strength, and for thy forgiveness, and for thy righteousness. O Thou Divine Saviour, speak to us, we pray Thee, at this midday service, life by life, and heart by heart. May we have the word in season, each one of us, this hour, from thyself.

Give us, O Father, the consolation and counsel of thy Spirit. Whatever the hurts in our poor little lives, whatever the blunders, whatever the sad chapters, whatever our frailties, whatever our sins, whatever our needs, whatever our burdens, whatever the experiences that are to be for us in the future, certain it is that in them all we need a help above ourselves, and, therefore, do we make our appeal to GOD.

Speak to us this morning, O Holy Father, and may we hear what thou wouldst speak, and may we lay faithfully to heart thine own truth, and may we follow gladly, even from this hour forward, the Lord JESUS CHRIST, whithersoever He would lead us, knowing that all shall be well, now and forever, for those who trust and follow Him. And we make these requests in the blessed Redeemer's name. Amen.

Text: "**Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.**" - John 14:1.

If you were asked this morning to name the most comforting passage in the Bible, what would you say? It would be interesting to know what your answer would be. Many in this presence, perhaps, would name the Twenty-third Psalm, the great Shepherd Psalm, as the most comforting

passage in the Bible. Others would mention that oft-quoted verse in the eighth chapter of Romans: "**We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.**" But probably more of you would select the fourteenth chapter of John as the most comforting passage to be found in all the Bible. Every one of us ought to know that chapter by heart, even as we ought to know many other Scriptures by heart, because some day we may be blind and be unable to read at all, and then if we had hidden away in our hearts many Scriptures, we could read them even though our sight should be gone.

Listen to the opening sentences of this heavenly chapter:

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Memorize that fourteenth chapter of John's Gospel, all of it.

You will need it.

Probably our deepest troubles in this world are occasioned by separation from our loved ones. JESUS had just said to that little group of men about Him: "I am going away. Presently we are to be separated. I am going to die."

And the announcement stupefied them, dazed them, horrified them. "Isn't there some mistake? He has just said He is going away, and, more, He has just said that He must die. Isn't there some mistake?" They are stupefied. They are horrified. The separations from our loved ones wring our hearts to the deepest depths.

Just a few days ago, I was called to say some words at the grave of a dear, faithful mother, and the grief of her children was so terrible that it seems to me I can never forget it. The oldest daughter did her best to quiet and comfort the several younger children, with no success, and presently she tried a new turn on them. She went up and down the line of children, all bewildered and heart-broken, and said: "Stop your crying, children. Maybe it is all a dream. Maybe we are all at home. Maybe we are in our beds asleep, and will wake up in the morning and find it is just a bad dream, and mother will be with us."

And for a moment she thus quieted them.

Oh, the deep wrenchings of heart when our loved ones go away! JESUS had just spoken some words that pierced like arrows the hearts of the twelve men, when He told them: "I am going away." Then He proceeded to comfort them, to point them to the way of light and life, and then it was He spoke this fourteenth chapter of John.

Its opening sentence is the text for this morning: "**Let not your heart be troubled.**"

JESUS proceeded in these words to point the cure for a troubled heart. How may a troubled heart be cured? That is an old question. It is as old as the human heart. How may a troubled heart be cured? It is the question of all humanity, of all the ages, of all conditions and classes: How may a troubled heart be cured?

All along there have been given various answers to that question.

There is the answer of despair.

When trouble came upon Job, wave upon wave, and all was swept from him - first his property, and later his children, and later his health, and later his friends - finally his wife said to the husband: "**Curse God and die.**"

That is the answer of despair, and the answer of despair is not a cure for a broken, troubled heart. The poor suicide takes that course - the course of despair.

Different causes make for the despair of the human spirit.

Sometimes it is business reverses, and the man's spirit is broken, and down he goes, and he cannot recover himself any more, and despair grips at the throat of his soul.

Sometimes despair is occasioned by a shattered confidence. Oh, how terrible a thing it is to have our confidence in somebody fundamentally shattered!

Sometimes one's despair comes because of ill health. What weakness men's poor spirits feel when their bodies are in the grip of disease! What allowances we ought to make for those who are sick! What pity and patience and forbearance we ought to exercise towards people racked with pain! Just here is all exhortation every one of us should earnestly heed.

But full many a time the answer of despair follows the course of sin.

I was in a Southern city a little while ago, speaking for a half-dozen days, and my host drove me by two beautiful residences - two of the fairest in the city - and told me that in one home had been a mother and in the other had been a Father, and these two, because of sin which had made itself known, and was making itself known throughout the city, to the shame of both homes, had entered into a death pact, that they would each at a certain hour take the suicide's course. And they carried out such death pact. Oh, how terrible is the course of despair for a human heart when such heart has grievously sinned!

There is another answer proposed as the cure for a troubled heart, and that is *the answer of stoicism*.

And what is the doctrine of the stoic? The doctrine of the stoic is, to steel your heart against all feeling. The doctrine of the stoic is to put your tears all away and refuse to cry. The doctrine of the stoic is to deaden your feelings, and make your heart like a rock. The doctrine of the stoic is to be sublimely indifferent, no matter what comes. With rigid face, like a stone, go on, steeled

against it, indifferent to it, with your heart shutting it all out. That is the doctrine of the stoic, but that doctrine won't cure a broken heart.

If you have read carefully the stories of Darwin and Huxley, those world-famed scientists, you will find the confession, in the latter end of the life of both those notable men, of sorrow that they had so steadfastly steeled their hearts against that which was tender, against that which was gentle, against that which warms the heart, against that which provokes tears, against that which kindles the flames on the altars of emotion and sentiment and the finer feelings. Both of them bewailed the fact that they had pursued that course. The doctrine of the stoic is not the doctrine to cure a troubled heart. Sooner or later the heart will find it out, sometimes in the gathering shadows of old age.

Then, again, *Epicureanism* is proposed as the cure for a troubled heart, and the doctrine of Epicureanism is:

"Forget all your trouble. Plunge into the realm of pleasure. Sound all the depths of pleasure. Go the whole gamut of pleasure. Forget, forget all your troubles. Leap out into the deepest depths of pleasure, and there revel and swim in those depths, and put out of your sight and out of your mind all thought of sorrow. Drown it all in the realm of pleasure."

But that won't cure a broken heart.

When I was preaching awhile ago in another community one day there came to the service a young widow, robed in black, and the minister whispered to me:

"That is an unusually sorrowful case. Her husband was assassinated here a few months ago, all unexpectedly and wickedly, and she carries a broken heart. She is a woman of culture and of a noble family, and much appreciation is cherished for her here in this city, but she gropes in the darkness with her broken heart."

And then he went on to tell me that her friends took her, when the awful tragedy fell and smote her heart into the dust, and carried her away to Florida, in that midwinter time, and they said to her: "We will take you down there to one of the beautiful hotels, in the midst of the orange groves. We will take you there where music shall be heard, and where all that is gay and beautiful shall echo and re-echo in your ears, and you will forget all this sorrow in a little while. Come with us and you will forget it all."

And the poor, bruised, broken-hearted woman went with them, but she came back months later with that same broken heart. You cannot cure the heart in any such fashion.

There has been proposed still another answer as a cure for a troubled heart, and that is *the answer of denial*.

There is a fundamentally false philosophy abroad in the land, which proposes to cure a broken heart by denying that there is any brokenness of heart - that there is any trouble at all.

Now, that busy, noisy and fundamentally false philosophy simply denies the facts, and proposes to get past the difficulty by denying the facts. It denies the fact of sorrow, the fact of suffering,

the fact of sin, the fact of death. It denies them all.

But you cannot cure a troubled heart by simply denying that there is any trouble. The facts are here. All about us is the solemn fact of sin, and the fact of suffering, and the fact of tears, and the fact that a black Friday comes ever and anon, and the fact of the long and lonely and sleepless nights, and the fact of bewilderment and confusion, and the fact that all unexpectedly we are again and again beaten down into the dust by the flail of disappointment. We cannot cure the trouble by denying the facts.

Where can we get our trouble cured?

Just one way, at just one place, from just one source, and it is stated for us here in the glorious fourteenth chapter of John:

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."

JESUS here states the cure for a troubled heart. JESUS is himself the physician for a troubled heart. Nor is there any other anchorage and re-enforcement and healing and recovery and peace sufficient for any troubled heart, if you reject JESUS and put His counsel and comfort far aside. **"I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me."**

"Put your case in my hands," says JESUS. "Come, with your sorrows and your vexation and your disappointment and your surprise, and your reverses, and your consuming grief, and the pain of your spirit which never ceases; come to me, and I will cure your troubled heart, and I will unfailingly re-enforce you, if you will come to me."

CHRIST is humanity's cure for a troubled heart.

Have you a troubled heart? Is there in your life one experience and another and another, every thought of which brings a stab to your heart, or the deathly pallor to your cheeks? Have you a troubled heart? No matter what the occasion, there is one source to get it healed, and that source is JESUS. He is the one mediator between GOD and us. He is the daysman unto whom we may come, and unto whom we may confide our all, without any hesitation or reserve. CHRIST is the cure for a troubled heart.

Now, my fellow-men, why should you and I thus stake our all on CHRIST?

If you ask me if I have, I answer you modestly: "I have staked my all on CHRIST." Living and dying, and in GOD's vast beyond forever, GOD help me, I can do no other. I have staked my all on CHRIST. Now, why? Why should we stake our all on CHRIST? He tells us: **"I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me."**

Why should we come to the Father by CHRIST? Why should we accept CHRIST as our daysman, our umpire, our arbitrator, our mediator?

Why should we take CHRIST as our physician, our leader, to be our friend supreme, and stake our all upon Him?

First, because CHRIST in His own personality is entirely worthy. CHRIST has vindicated His claims to our absolute confidence. CHRIST in Himself attests His own worthiness to our absolute confidence. Can you find any fault in anything which JESUS ever said? Pray, tell me what it is.

Did there ever fall from His lips any word that you can gainsay and condemn? You can condemn the sayings of any other from whose lips words have ever fallen. Can you gainsay any word that ever fell from those gracious lips?

Can you gainsay any work that JESUS ever did? Did He do anything when He was here in the flesh, and in these nineteen centuries since He went back to His Father has He done anything for the world that you can gainsay and complain of and condemn? Is there anything in the person of JESUS, in the character of JESUS, in the life of JESUS, that you can gainsay and condemn and set aside?

JESUS in His own personality is the attestation, the authorization, the corroboration, the demonstration of His claim to human trust and human confidence, without any hesitation or reserve. CHRIST in His own personality authenticates His absolute right to human trust, without any reserve, from every human life.

And, more. If JESUS shall go away, and we shall set aside His counsel and leading, we are left bewildered utterly and broken in the world in which we live.

What that sun is to the vast physical world this midday hour, lighting up the world's darkness everywhere, JESUS is that, and more, in our world of morals, in the needy world of humanity. When He says for Himself: "**I am the light of the world,**" He makes no pretentious and vainglorious claim. JESUS is the light of the world.

Will you take the world's big questions and answer them? You are utterly bewildered and in the darkness if you take JESUS away, and if you fail to take His answer. Take the three questions that this hour most baffle and perplex poor humanity, and JESUS gives the only satisfying answer for each of them and all three of them.

There is the question of sin, and the question of sorrow, and the question of death. If you take JESUS CHRIST away and disregard Him, you are left utterly bewildered and baffled and broken in the presence of those blinding and burdensome mysteries - sin, sorrow and death.

What will you do about sin, if JESUS be disregarded and taken away?

What will you do about sin? Oh, my fellow-men, the one tragedy in all the world this hour is the tragedy of sin.

The one unbearable yoke that is on humanity everywhere is the yoke of sin. The most terrible and obtruding fact this Saturday morning in all the world is the fact of sin. Now, what will you and I do with the fact of sin, if JESUS be disregarded and taken away? No man within himself has moral resources sufficient to meet life like it ought to be met, to live life like it ought to be

lived, and to die at last like one ought to die, and to make personal answer to GOD as each must make such answer in the after world.

No man has moral resources within himself sufficient to overcome and be the Master of sin. JESUS comes in, the great physician, saying: "**I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.**" "If you will commit yourself to me, I will make you a new man." JESUS alone can save us from sin.

Speaking awhile ago in one of our larger American cities, one day friends brought to the service where I was speaking at midday to the busy citizens, an ex-registrar of one of America's largest universities. He had gone into the depths of poverty and failure and shame because of drink. Oh, how I pitied him, and how my heart yearned after him!

You do not throw stones at such men, do you? That is not the way to win them. That is not the way to win anybody. Oh, go down to them, and with a brother's hand, and a brother's heart, and a brother's pity, and a brother's patience, and a brother's re-enforcement, seek to win them, not by driving, but by the winning constraints of love.

So they brought this man to the service, and when the service was done they tarried behind in a little room, and I was introduced to him, and I could see in a moment how wretchedly he had fallen, and though he was terribly shattered by the down-dragging power of drink, I could see yet the traces of the strong man that he had been, and glimpses of the wonderful man that he could be.

There we sat conversing, and he said to me: "Sir, I seem done for. I seem to have lost the battle. I seem unable to extricate myself from the dominant passion of drink in my life."

Does it surprise you to hear that he was the son of the chief justice of one of our highest courts in one of our American states? Superb had been his opportunities. Quite honorable was his record in the university from which he had been graduated. But now he had fallen to the depths. I will tell you what I told him at last.

I told him the story that Henry Drummond tells, who won the same sort of a man once, from the depths to the heights, to CHRIST JESUS. Drummond was resting in a quiet home in the hills of Scotland, after an extended meeting that he had been holding in one of the Scotch universities. When he had been some three or four days in the quiet of that home in the hills, he said to his host and hostess: "I must go now and get the next train for my next engagement."

They said: "We are not going with you to the station" - a journey of three or four miles from the house - "we are going to let you go alone with our driver. Drink has brought our driver to the depths. He is an unusual scholar," they told Mr. Drummond. "He is a rare gentleman," they told Mr. Drummond, "and we are going to leave him with you. He is in the clutches of helplessness because of drink, so he tells us. He is in the grip of despair about himself, so he will avow to you. Maybe you can help him, and so we will leave you with him."

Drummond climbed out of the carriage, up on the seat with the driver, just like he should have done, and then, in his own winsome, gentle, gracious way, Drummond made his way to that

defeated fellow's conscience and heart.

Presently that driver was confessing his weakness, and failure, and lapse, and sin, and downfall, and defeat, and when Drummond had heard it, all Drummond said to him was this: "What if I, who drive beside you, were the finest horseman that ever drove a team of horses; what if I could control the wildest span of horses that ever pulled a carriage, no matter how strong, no matter how restive; what if these horses driven by you were such a span, and they rushed around this mountain road, and you could not restrain them, you could not control them, you were helpless, and I said to you: 'Man, give me the reins and I will control them,' what would you do?"

The man saw the point in one moment, and turning to his newfound friend, he said: "Oh, Mr. Drummond, is that what JESUS CHRIST proposes to do for a man defeated and down? Does He just wish me to give Him the reins to my life?"

"That is it," said Drummond. "Let CHRIST have the reins; though your sins be as scarlet, He will make them as white as snow. Though your heart and its weakness be poured out like water, He will fortify you with a power which is above men, and you will go your way, clad with a strength which is superhuman."

From that hour that defeated fellow walked in the conscious strength of his Saviour, and a little later was at the head of one of the chief places of trust and usefulness in all fair Scotland's borders. CHRIST was his deliverer from sin. "**Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.**"

If you are without JESUS, you are left baffled and helpless in the presence of sorrow. You can hear the undertone of sorrow everywhere. You can feel and see the awful reign of sorrow on every side.

The other day, one of our young carpenters in my city had me go with him to Oakland, where we put away our dead. He had lived just a little while with his beautiful wife, and they had recently brought to completion a lovely little home, and prospects like some rosy morning gleamed before them, because they were well and industrious, and their hearts were filled with love and hope. In one brief night she sickened and died.

He said to me, as we turned away from the freshly-made mound: "Oh, man, I had just got ready to live, and all this has come!" What was I to say to him? What would you have said to him? What should I say to you, if that were your position this morning, and I stood beside you as your friend? "There is one who can turn the very shadow of death into morning. There is one who can take life's tears and attune them to the sweetest music, and His name is JESUS."

At another time, there in the big hospital, a dear mother died, and I was with the husband and several children. Oh, the grief was heart-breaking as it seems always to be so when a mother dies. And then that little oldest one, twelve years old, mothered all the rest, and went to her utterly broken-hearted Father, and put her arms around him and said: "Papa, I will help you. Papa, we must do better than this. Papa, you and I love JESUS. Papa, I will help you take care of these children." The family was taken home, and the next morning we got ready for the funeral, and that little twelve-year-old girl, the most motherly child for her years I ever saw, mothered all

those five little ones through it all. Then we went to Oakland, and the funeral service was had, and the kindly men came to let down the body gently into the grave, and I felt somebody pulling at my coat.

I looked, and there was the little motherless twelve-year-old girl, and she said to me, with an agony that would break your heart: "Oh, Mr. Truett, if JESUS loves us, how could He have allowed this?" What could I say? I said: "Little woman, I cannot explain it, but let me tell you, my child, some day when you get to the Father's House above, and you shall sit down by JESUS, He will explain it all to you, and when He explains it, you will know it is all for the best, for He tells you, **'What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.'**"

You take JESUS away and we are helpless to comfort or be comforted in the day of broken hearts.

There is one more mystery to baffle you, and it is the chiefest mystery of all. What shall you and I do when we walk down into the valley of the shadow of death, if CHRIST be taken away? Caesar stood up in the Roman Senate and said: "If there be anything beyond death, I do not know. If there be anything beyond the grave, I cannot tell."

JESUS went down into the grave and explored its every chamber, and then on the third day He came back from the grave with the keys of death and the world invisible swinging at His girdle, and He says to you and to me: "You cleave to me, and you need not be afraid of death and what death can do to you."

The other day I saw a man, not a believer in CHRIST, bid his little curly-haired girl of six years good-bye, and as he kissed her little face and fingered the curls about her ears for a moment, he turned away with seemingly utter desperation, saying: "Good-bye, little tot, forever!"

And then, in a moment more, came the frail little mother, and she stroked the forehead and kissed the little girl's face again and again, and blessed GOD for the little girl, even though for only a few years. Life was richer and sweeter and better every way because of that child, she kept gratefully declaring. Then she kissed her, and said: "Goodbye, for just a little while, little tot. Mother will see you right soon, and be with you beyond the sunset and the night." She could say it because of JESUS.

Men and women, CHRIST is the Light of the world. Let us follow Him! Oh, let us follow Him! Let us follow to-day and forever! Let us sing with the poet:

"So, I go on not knowing,
I would not know if I might.
I would rather walk with CHRIST in the dark
Than to walk alone in the light.
I would rather walk with Him by faith
Than to walk by myself with sight."

Settle it now as we pray that CHRIST shall be your light, your Saviour and Master, from this hour until death, and beyond forever.

THE CLOSING PRAYER

And now, Holy Father, as the busy men and women go, may every one be definitely fixed in purpose: "As for me CHRIST shall be my Saviour and Master."

All about us are weighty questions. It is not easy to live, and the journey of the earthly life is soon ended, and then we pass into a land that shall never end. O JESUS, we would follow Thee faithfully all the days, and then when we come to the valley of the shadow, we would have Thee with us, and thy rod and thy staff to comfort us, and when the mists from off the sea of death come up into our faces, and we hear the echo of the breakers of that sea, O Thou loving Saviour, be thou the Pilot for us all, and bring us safely to the Father's house above, to the home of many mansions, where we shall be with JESUS and be like Him forever.

How we bless Thee for answering prayer, and for saving souls, and for keeping us in the love of GOD!

And as you go now, may the blessing of the triune GOD go with you to be your defense and inspiration, now and forever. Amen.

~ end of chapter 10 ~
