

'Faith is trusting, trusting wholly upon the person, work, merit, and power of the Son of God.' And again, 'Faith is the linen which binds the plaster of Christ's reconciliation to the sore of our sin.' Or when looking at how people try to avoid faith, Spurgeon noted, 'Doubts are as plentiful as blackberries, and all hands and lips are stained with them.' With such deep and profound simplicity, Spurgeon adorns every page of this evangelistic booklet. *In Around the Wicket Gate* Spurgeon takes the role of John Bunyan's famous evangelist and pleads with sinners to 'Flee from the wrath to come' and assures them of the absolute sufficiency of Christ in his person and work and the impeccable trustworthiness of his word. Chapter seven on the sufferings of Christ—both in body and in soul—closes with theological propositions built on Toplady's 'Whence This Fear and Unbelief.' It is profoundly moving and seals the truth of the certainty of salvation through Christ and Christ alone. Read this book for your own edification and give it to a lost friend for a clear explanation of the gospel and an earnest and friendly appeal to believe.

Tom Nettles

Senior Professor of Historical Theology,
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky

This book is one of the most famous books that the kind, loving, extraordinary Christian, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, ever wrote. If you are just mildly interested in what is a Christian and how people become followers of Jesus Christ, then there is simply no more straightforward and fascinating book for you to read but this.

Geoff Thomas

Conference Speaker and author, Aberystwyth, Wales

If you grew up with a vague familiarity with Christianity, but it never meant much to you, read this book. Like no one else, Spurgeon lays out the simplicity, the power and the truth of the good news of Jesus. This classic gospel appeal is a model for Christian evangelism, and it may be life-changing for you.

John Folmar

Senior Pastor, United Christian Church of Dubai

This little gem of a book combines razor-sharp spiritual diagnoses, timeless and helpful illustrations, and a clear route back to Jesus Christ as the only source of personal freedom, forgiveness and future hope. Not only will those seeking after truth be helped by this book, those who share the good news of hope in Christ Jesus will be equipped to clear the clutter from people's minds and point them to the Saviour.

Alasdair MacLeod

Senior Minister, Smithton Free Church, Inverness

Re-reading *Around the Wicket Gate* brought back to mind the moment that both my wife and I trusted in Jesus for salvation – together!

We had been invited to church by a friend and the word preached had a powerful and profound effect on us both. But it was later through reading this book that we came to trust in Jesus, by simply accepting the gift of salvation.

I hope this little book will be used again by the Lord to bring many others to himself.

Iain MacAskill

Minister, Free Church of Scotland, Stirling, Scotland

AROUND
the
WICKET
GATE



Help for Those Who Only
Know *About* Christ

C. H. SPURGEON

CHRISTIAN
HERITAGE

Scripture quotations are taken from the *King James Version*. Some Scripture quotations in Spurgeon's writings reflect the *King James Version* but are worded differently. They have been left as Spurgeon wrote them.

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FOREWORD

The renowned Reformed Baptist preacher, Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892) is arguably the greatest pastor-evangelist that God has ever given to the church. Known as the undisputed 'Prince of Preachers,' this stalwart of the faith is easily the most beloved expounder of Scripture that we have witnessed over the last twenty centuries. Of the many superlatives that could be said of him, the greatest accolade was his unquenchable fire in proclaiming the gospel with contagious zeal. Simply put, Spurgeon was, first and foremost, a harvester of souls.

No man ever stood in one pulpit for almost four decades and preached the saving message of Jesus Christ with such far-reaching success. His famed pulpit at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London became the launching pad for his global outreach that stretched across oceans and around the world. By this public ministry, Spurgeon has become the gold standard in evangelistic preaching for the past century.

Not only was Spurgeon a prolific preacher, he was also a skilled author, who affected untold millions with his writings. He edited his weekly sermons, which were sold on the streets of London and throughout the United Kingdom as the 'Penny Pulpit.' In addition, he wrote many books that were purchased in voluminous numbers. Among his

works was *The Soul Winner*, written to believers, urging them to bear witness of the Lord Jesus Christ to a lost and perishing world. Spurgeon remains to this day the most widely read Christian author in history.

One of the more effective works to come from the pen of Spurgeon is the book that you presently hold in your hand, *Around the Wicket Gate*. The phrase 'the wicket gate' had been popularized by John Bunyan in his all-time classic, *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Bunyan drew from the imagery used by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount when He called out to the unconverted, 'Enter through the narrow gate' (Matt. 7:13, NIV). Spurgeon developed his book around this simple metaphor of the gate as he wrote this evangelistic tool. It is directed toward those who are near the kingdom of God, but who have not yet entered it.

Spurgeon rightly observed that many people are near the wicket gate, but have not come through it by faith. They have admired the beauty of the narrow gate, which is Jesus Christ Himself. They have watched others step through this gate. They have learned many fascinating truths about the gate. They have taken steps to draw close to the gate. Their toes are even pressing against the gate. But they have not yet taken that final, decisive step of faith to proceed through the gate and into the kingdom of God.

This book was written by Spurgeon to urge searchers to come all the way to saving faith in Jesus Christ. He answers the most common excuses of those who hesitate to enter through the gate. These often raised objections cause countless people to remain outside the gate, perishing in the barren wilderness of indecision. Tragically,

these weary souls halt between two opinions and remain uncommitted and, thus, unconverted.

With his brilliantly astute mind, Spurgeon rebuttals the many lame arguments that could be raised by unbelievers that keep them from making this vital decision to believe in Jesus Christ. In addressing those so close to the kingdom of God, but who have not yet entered it, Spurgeon warns that to be *almost* saved is to be altogether lost.

This book is a must-read for all who linger outside the gate. I wonder if this could describe *you*? Could it be that you still find yourself outside the kingdom? Maybe you have heard much about Jesus Christ, but you have not yet committed your life to Him. Are you a stranger to grace? Why do you procrastinate entrusting your life and soul to Him? What holds you back? Spurgeon addresses each of these concerns.

If this describes where you are, it is by no accident that you hold this priceless book in your hands. This treasure, written by Spurgeon, was designed especially for you. It has your name written on it. This book is yet another evidence of the mercy of God that continues to reach out to your lost soul in order that you would be saved. Here is the goodness of God that still pursues you and speaks the truth to you.

This book is also a must-read for those who have already entered into the kingdom of God. It is the responsibility of all believers to witness the gospel of Jesus Christ to those who are lost. In these pages, Spurgeon will better equip you concerning how to engage those who are yet undecided for Christ. Here you will find the wisdom you

need for your own evangelistic efforts to win others to Christ. Here you will be taught how to answer the many excuses offered by those who have not yet believed.

In these chapters, I want to remind you that you are reading the writings of perhaps the most skilled evangelist ever to take pen in hand and write to those who are without Christ. If you have not yet believed in Him, may the Lord use this book to lead you to enter through the narrow gate. And if you have already believed upon Him, may God use this resource to better prepare you for fruitful evangelistic endeavors in His vineyard.

STEVEN J. LAWSON

President, OnePassion Ministries,
Dallas, Texas

PREFACE

Millions of men are in the outlying regions, far off from God and peace; for these we pray, and to these we give warning. But just now we have to do with a smaller company, who are not far from the kingdom, but have come right up to the wicket gate which stands at the head of the way of life. One would think that they would hasten to enter, for a free and open invitation is placed over the entrance, the porter waits to welcome them, and there is but this one way to eternal life. He that is most loaded seems the most likely to pass in and begin the heavenward journey; but what ails the other men?

This is what I want to find out. Poor fellows! They have come a long way already to get where they are; and the King's highway, which they seek, is right before them: why do they not take to the Pilgrim Road at once? Alas! they have a great many reasons; and foolish as those reasons are, it needs a very wise man to answer them all. I cannot pretend to do so. Only the Lord Himself can remove the folly which is bound up in their hearts, and lead them to take the great decisive step. Yet the Lord works by means; and I have prepared this little book in the earnest hope that He may work by it to the blessed end of leading seekers to an immediate, simple trust in the Lord Jesus.

He who does not take the step of faith, and so enter upon the road to heaven, will perish. It will be an awful thing to die just outside the gate of life. Almost saved, but altogether lost! This is the most terrible of positions. A man just outside Noah's ark would have been drowned; a manslayer close to the wall of the city of refuge, but yet outside of it, would be slain; and the man who is within a yard of Christ, and yet has not trusted Him, will be lost. Therefore am I in terrible earnest to get my hesitating friends over the threshold. *Come in! Come in!* is my pressing entreaty. *'Wherefore standest thou without?'* is my solemn enquiry. May the Holy Spirit render my pleadings effectual with many who shall glance at these pages! May He cause His own Almighty power to create faith in the soul at once!

My reader, if God blesses this book to you, do the writer this favour – either lend your own copy to one who is lingering at the gate, or buy another and give it away; for his great desire is that this little volume should be of service to many thousands of souls.

To God this book is commended; for without His grace nothing will come of all that is written.

C. H. SPURGEON

1

AWAKENING

Great numbers of persons have no concern about eternal things. They care more about their cats and dogs than about their souls. It is a great mercy to be made to think about ourselves, and how we stand towards God and the eternal world. This is full often a sign that salvation is coming to us. By nature we do not like the anxiety which spiritual concern causes us, and we try, like sluggards, to sleep again. This is great foolishness; for it is at our peril that we trifle when death is so near, and judgment is so sure. If the Lord has chosen us to eternal life, he will not let us return to our slumber. If we are sensible, we shall pray that our anxiety about our souls may never come to an end till we are really and truly saved. Let us say from our hearts:

He that suffered in my stead,
Shall my Physician be;
I will not be comforted
Till Jesus comfort me.

It would be an awful thing to go dreaming down to hell, and there to lift up our eyes with a great gulf fixed between us and heaven. It will be equally terrible to be aroused to escape from the wrath to come, and then to shake off the warning influence, and go back to our insensibility. I notice

that those who overcome their convictions and continue in their sins are not so easily moved the next time: every awakening which is thrown away leaves the soul more drowsy than before, and less likely to be again stirred to holy feeling. Therefore our heart should be greatly troubled at the thought of getting rid of its trouble in any other than the right way. One who had the gout was cured of it by a quack medicine, which drove the disease within, and the patient died. To be cured of distress of mind by a false hope, would be a terrible business: the remedy would be worse than the disease. Better far that our tenderness of conscience should cause us long years of anguish, than that we should lose it, and perish in the hardness of our hearts.

Yet awakening is not a thing to rest in, or to desire to have lengthened out month after month. If I start up in a fright, and find my house on fire, I do not sit down at the edge of the bed, and say to myself, 'I hope I am truly awakened! Indeed, I am deeply grateful that I am not left to sleep on!' No, I want to escape from threatened death, and so I hasten to the door or to the window, that I may get out, and may not perish where I am. It would be a questionable boon to be aroused, and yet not to escape from the danger. Remember, awakening is not salvation. A man may know that he is lost, and yet he may never be saved. He may be made thoughtful, and yet he may die in his sins. If you find out that you are bankrupt, the consideration of your debts will not pay them. A man may examine his wounds all the year around, and they will be none the nearer being healed because he feels their smart,

and notes their number. It is one trick of the devil to tempt a man to be satisfied with a sense of sin; and another trick of the same deceiver to insinuate that the sinner may not be content to trust Christ, unless he can bring a certain measure of despair to add to the Saviour's finished work. Our awakenings are not to help the Saviour, but to help us to the Saviour. To imagine that my feeling of sin is to assist in the removal of the sin is absurd. It is as though I said that water could not cleanse my face unless I had looked longer in the glass, and had counted the smuts upon my forehead. A sense of need of salvation by grace is a very healthful sign; but one needs wisdom to use it aright, and not to make an idol of it.

Some seem as if they had fallen in love with their doubts, and fears, and distresses. You cannot get them away from their terrors – they seem wedded to them. It is said that the worst trouble with horses when their stables are on fire, is that you cannot get them to come out of their stalls. If they would but follow your lead, they might escape the flames; but they seem to be paralysed with fear. So the fear of the fire prevents their escaping the fire. Reader, will your very fear of the wrath to come prevent your escaping from it? We hope not.

One who had been long in prison was not willing to come out. The door was open; but he pleaded even with tears to be allowed to stay where he had been so long. Fond of prison! Wedded to the iron bolts and the prison fare! Surely the prisoner must have been a little touched in the head! Are you willing to remain an awakened one, and nothing more? Are you not eager to be at once

forgiven? If you would tarry in anguish and dread, surely you, too, must be a little out of your mind! If peace is to be had, have it at once! Why tarry in the darkness of the pit, wherein your feet sink in the miry clay? There is light to be had; light marvellous and heavenly; why lie in the gloom and die in anguish? You do not know how near salvation is to you. If you did, you would surely stretch out your hand and take it, for there it is; and *it is to be had for the taking*.

Do not think that feelings of despair would fit you for mercy. When the pilgrim, on his way to the Wicket Gate, tumbled into the Slough of Despond, do you think that, when the foul mire of that slough stuck to his garments, it was a recommendation to him, to get him easier admission at the head of the way? It is not so. The pilgrim did not think so by any means: neither may you. It is not what you feel that will save you, but what *Jesus* felt. Even if there were some healing value in feelings, they would have to be good ones; and the feeling which makes us doubt the power of Christ to save, and prevents our finding salvation in him, is by no means a good one, but a cruel wrong to the love of *Jesus*.

Our friend has come to see us, and has travelled through our crowded London by rail, or tram, or omnibus. On a sudden he turns pale. We ask him what is the matter, and he answers, 'I have lost my pocket-book, and it contained all the money I have in the world'. He goes over the amount to a penny, and describes the cheques, bills, notes, and coins. We tell him that it must be a great consolation to him to be so accurately acquainted with the extent of his loss.



He does not seem to see the worth of our consolation. We assure him that he ought to be grateful that he has so clear a sense of his loss; for many persons might have lost their pocket-books and have been quite unable to compute their losses. Our friend is not, however, cheered in the least. 'No,' says he, 'to know my loss does not help me to recover it. Tell me where I can find my property, and you have done me real service; but merely to know my loss is no comfort whatever.' Even so, to believe that you have sinned, and that your soul is forfeited to the justice of God, is a very proper thing; but it will not save. Salvation is not by our knowing our own ruin, but by fully grasping the deliverance provided in Christ Jesus. A person who refuses to look to the Lord Jesus, but persists in dwelling upon his sin and ruin, reminds us of a boy who dropped

a shilling down an open grating of a London sewer, and lingered there for hours, finding comfort in saying, 'It rolled in just there! Just between those two iron bars I saw it go right down.' Poor soul! Long might he remember the details of his loss before he would in this way get back a single penny into his pocket, wherewith to buy himself a piece of bread. You see the drift of the parable; profit by it.