

food, bones for fertilizer, and 1700 gallons of whale oil. It is obvious that whale fishing is a profitable business. It is just as obvious that both SIMON's fishing and his fishing for a whale were unquestionable indications of a normal grade of intelligence.

Let us suppose that SIMON had actually caught a whale in his mother's pail. Within one hour after the big haul, SIMON would have been "headline news." The news boys would have shouted: "Extra! Extra! Just out! SIMON catches whale in mother's pail! Read all about it! Extra! Extra!" as they rapidly sold out their sensational special editions. Every TV evening news program would have pictures, interviews, and special analysis by the experts. Several offers from Hollywood for the movie rights would be "ready to sign" by the following morning. SIMON's house would be turned into a museum with a \$3.00 admission charge, not including tax. The pail and fishing pole with which SIMON made the famous catch would be resting in a large glass case. The guard with the blue uniform and brass buttons would try to sell all visitors an autographed copy of SIMON's life story with glossy colored photographs for \$3.50. The city would place road markers that read: "TO THE SIMON WHALE MUSEUM." All of this, not to mention the sale of the big fish itself, would have made both SIMON and his family very wealthy.

But alas! Poor SIMON has been laughed at by generations of people for just one reason: He went fishing for a whale in a pail where a whale could not possibly have existed.

This world is inhabited by millions of "SIMPLE SIMONS." Yes, literally millions of people are involved, in a spiritual sense, in exactly what SIMPLE SIMON was doing. They truly believe that satisfaction can be found in the things that this world has to offer, that lasting peace and joy can be found in the materialistic vanities of this life. They feel that these things will satisfy their eternity-bound souls, and fill that aching void and longing deep down in their hearts. Are

you one of those silly people? Are you one who's "fishing" in a "pail" that's much too small to hold what your soul needs and is craving for? Are you one of those spiritual simpletons who believe that this world can give you what God alone can give?

Millions, like SIMON, go fishing in the pails of business, family, pleasure, travel, education, literature, entertainment, art, science, etc. to satisfy the desires of their heart. Failing to find reality in any of these pails, many turn to theatre, parties, booze, drugs, sports, sex, pornography, and a host of other empty pails, but peace for their soul they never find.

Having fished for the "whale" they never catch, some try to find a way out of life's disappointments with a suicidal plunge into eternity. Like poor SIMON, they've fished all their lives only to discover that what they've really sought for—contentment of heart, peace and joy—is not found in any of the pails in which they were looking.

It was said long ago, "Man was made for God, and he'll know no rest, and no peace, until he rest in God." The real need and desire and longing in our heart is spiritual. And that's why this world and all that it has to offer cannot possibly satisfy our true need. Fishing in this world for what we really want deep down inside is SIMPLE SIMON fishing in his mother's pail.

In the Garden of Eden man sinned against his Creator. In that moment man was cut off spiritually from God, as he was warned, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die" (*Gen 2:17*). The aching void in our hearts is due to this spiritual death that lies within (*Rom 5:12; Eph 2:1*). The barrenness of our souls is the result of separation from God (*Eph 4:17-18*). We're born this way (*Psalms 51:5; 58:3*); we need spiritually to be "born again." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (*John 3:6*).

The life, the rest, the peace, and satisfaction of heart that we need is in Jesus

Christ, who is "God manifest in the flesh" (*1 Tim 3:16*), "the way, the truth, and the life" (*John 14:6*). He said, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest...ye shall find rest unto your souls" (*Math 11:28-29*). This is that eternal rest and peace which only God can give, and which when received, can never be lost or taken from us.

Not only do the "pails" of this world not have any "whales," they don't have any fish at all. If you, like SIMON, are fishing for reality and satisfaction where these are impossible to find, turn your eyes upon Jesus; for in him you'll find the Water of Life that forever quenches the thirst within, and the Bread of Life that forever satisfies the hunger of our souls (*John 6:35*). □

—Adapted from SOUND OF GRACE



"And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame"
—Luke 16:24

Our Saviour gives us the history of two men as no other person could. First, he gives a brief account of their lives on earth—one man is rich and enjoys the luxuries of this world; while the other is very poor and must beg for a miserable sustenance. Then our Lord tells of these two men at death—the rich man is buried, no doubt very elaborately, with many mourners in attendance; the beggar also died and was afforded no better funeral than the potter's field could provide.

To this point perhaps, any biographer could take us. However, the Saviour goes on to give us the picture of these two men in eternity! He was not compelled to stop where human writers

must, because he could pull back that thin veil which separates this life from the next and unfold their eternal state.

While they lived, this is a story of two satisfied men—the beggar is satisfied with nothing but God; the rich man is satisfied with everything but God! Nonetheless, how soon after death did the rich man's satisfaction completely disappear! In agony he cries out from the "everlasting burnings" (*Isaiah 33:14*). The Bible records many prayers, but this is the only account of a prayer from hell!

The Circumstances of this Prayer

Consider that the rich man prayed **when he saw the kingdom of God**. "He lift up his eyes...and seeth..." (*v23*). Like so many others, he had never been aware of spiritual realities in this life. It was not that he denied them, he was merely oblivious to them! The reason for this was that he had never experienced the new birth. Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (*John 3:3*). In this life, a sure evidence of God's quickening power within our hearts is the realization of spiritual truths that drives us to begin to cry out to God in prayer.

He prayed **earnestly from a sense of need**: "being in torments" (*v23*). During his lifetime he had often "said his prayers." Being a religious man, he was not unfamiliar with a cold, formal type of praying, both public and private. How blasphemous a thing it is for us just to "say" prayers, whether they're written or spontaneous! But now the man is praying with all his might, without the aid of a prayer book. Had he prayed so earnestly while he lived on earth, he would not have ended up in this place of torment!

He prayed **in great soul-agony**: "in hell...he cried" (*vv 23-24*). Since he never had experienced such agony of soul on earth, he never had prayed like this. Some have known what it is to be pressed to such painful prayer in this life. Some can say with the Psalmist, "The sorrows of death compassed me,

and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow..." (Psalm 116:1-8). It would be good for all to know such trouble and sorrow of heart here and now! Most people are far too satisfied and comfortable to pray like this. The most pitiful sight upon earth is an un-saved soul at peace!

Sadly, he prayed **too late!** How we long to see people stirred by a realization of God's kingdom, and begin to pray in earnestness and agony of soul. However, this must be done while there is yet time. We must "seek the Lord while he may be found" (Isaiah 55:6), while we still have our life and being upon this earth, or else we pray too late. It was Matthew Henry who said of God's mercy, "If you will not have it when you can, you cannot have it when you will!"

The Petitions of this Prayer

This man **prayed to the wrong person:** "Father Abraham" (v24). Even "the friend of God" and "the father of all the faithful" is not the correct object of prayer. It is more than a little interesting that this is the only prayer in the Bible addressed to a saint! Remember, it came from hell! Only God can answer prayer. He alone, in the Trinity of his Being, is to be addressed in prayer. Let all who make it a practice to pray to "the Mother of God," or any other saint, be corrected by this hellish petition!

He **asked for the wrong deliverer:** "send Lazarus" (v24). Lazarus indeed was now among the blessed who had come to an end of all hunger, thirst, pain, and tears (Rev 7:15-17), but he was not able to relieve this rich man's agony—nor are any of the saints above! He could not surmount nor cross that "great gulf" between himself and the damned (v26).

In the fulness of time, God sent the only Deliverer, Jesus Christ, his own Son! Christ spanned the "great gulf" between God and man in his nature when he took upon himself our flesh. He lived a perfect life and satisfied actively all that the law of God demanded of us. Going to Calvary, Jesus did bear our sins in his own body and bridged

that infinite expanse between our sin and God's righteousness. This rich man left himself without hope, for he ignored and rejected the one and only Saviour. In vain does any sinner seek consolation from any other but Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12).

He **sought the wrong water:** "Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue" (v24). Even if Lazarus could have crossed over and done as this rich man requested, what good would a drop of water have done him? How long would a momentary cooling have benefited him in those flames? Oh, that he had asked for and received, while he yet lived on earth, the "living water" which Jesus alone can give! (John 7:37-39). Then had his soul been eternally refreshed and satisfied!

The Answer to this Prayer

We should tremble to see that the answer given to this prayer from hell is only mockery! This should not surprise us since mockery is exactly what God has promised to such a prayer as this—"Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh" (Prov 1:24-26). Notice how each part of Abraham's reply is only sheer mockery!

He **called him "son"** (v25). He was a son of the flesh, but not of the Spirit. He was a son of Abraham by his first birth, but not a son of God by the new birth. For Abraham to bring up this natural relationship now that he was in the flames of hell was only mockery. Many who are baptized church members, but not truly saved, will likewise be mocked one day!

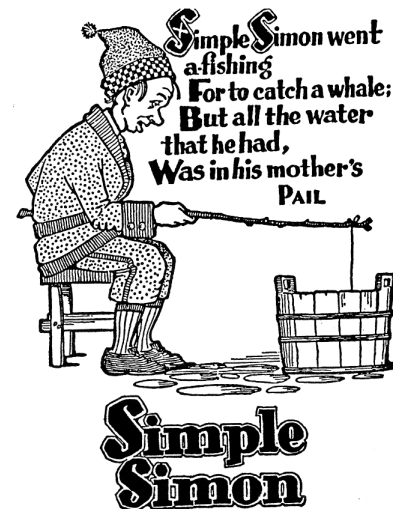
He **asked him to "remember"** (v25). What memories there will be in hell! This is one thing that this man did not want to do, nor will any one who makes his bed in hell. That for which he sold his soul, Abraham calls it—"thy good things." Though once considered dear,

all of his fine clothing and expensive living do nothing now but bitterly mock his soul!

He is directed to **consider what he has missed.** "But now he is comforted, and thou art tormented" (v25). Never once on earth had he faintly thought of changing places with Lazarus, but now he would give ten thousand worlds of gold to do so!

He is told **hell is forever.** "There is a great gulf fixed" (v26). To go to hell is to be there forever. There will never be the hope of a brighter day or of relief from the torments of the pit. This dreadful fact will mock its inhabitants as long as God lives. □

—Holmes Moore



TOMORROW!

"Boast not thyself of **TOMORROW**; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth"
—Prov 27:1

He was going to be all that a mortal should be
TOMORROW.

No one should be kinder or braver than he
TOMORROW.

A friend who was troubled and weary he knew,
Who'd be glad of a lift and who needed it too;
On him he would call and see what he could do
TOMORROW.

Each morning he stacked up the letters he'd write
TOMORROW.

And thought of the folks he would fill with delight
TOMORROW.

It was too bad, indeed, he was busy today,
And hadn't a minute to stop on his way;
More time he'd have to give others, he'd say,
TOMORROW.

The greatest of workers this man would have been
TOMORROW.
The world would have known him, had he ever seen
TOMORROW.

But the fact is he died and faded from view,
And all that he left here when living was through
Was a mountain of things he intended to do
TOMORROW.

Many and varied have been the characters who have appeared on the pages of the nursery books and lived in the imagination of childhood's sunny hours in the happy days of yesteryears. We all remember the fabled and interesting Old Mother Hubbard, Little Miss Muffet, Old King Cole, Tom the Piper's Son, Humpty Dumpty and many others too numerous to be recalled. Probably no character is better known, and more pitied, than **SIMPLE SIMON**, the good natured, harmless, mentally retarded boy who went fishing for a whale in his mother's pail.

No one would accuse **SIMON** of being a simpleton just because he went fishing. Some Presidents, prominent Governors, famous business executives, athletes, lawyers, physicians and other professional people have been avid followers of this absorbing and interesting sport.

Furthermore, the fact that **SIMON** went fishing for a whale could not qualify him to be labeled a feeble-minded person. One fishery on the Pacific Coast operates from April 1 to October 31 with the sole purpose of catching whales. A single one of these sea monsters will yield a liver weighing over 800 pounds containing valuable vitamin A. Every whale will provide seven tons of meat for dog