



Spurgeon's Sermons Volume 39: 1893

by

Charles Spurgeon

About *Spurgeon's Sermons Volume 39: 1893* by Charles Spurgeon

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The Beloved Pastor's Plea for Unity

A Sermon

(No. 2320)

Intended for Reading on Lord's-Day, August 6th, 1893,

Delivered By

C. H. SPURGEON,

At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington

On Lord's-day Evening, July 7th, 1889.

"To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."—Romans 1:7.

IN A FEW MINUTES we shall gather together as members of the Church of Christ to celebrate the memorial of his death. It is a memorable sight to see so many Christian people sitting together with the object of observing this ordinance. Frequently as I have seen it, I must confess that, when sitting in the chair at the head of the table, I often feel overawed with the remembrance that it is the largest gathering of Christians anywhere beneath the sun, and that they have come there with one common object, namely, to show our Lord's death "till he come." The question then rises in our minds whether there is real fellowship in all this, for if there is not, it is a great sham; and the more numerous we are, if we have not fellowship with Christ, and with one another, the greater is the deception; it is only having a name to live while we are dead. So I want to-night, not so much to preach to you, as to exhort you, who are about to gather to this holy festival, so to think that your thoughts shall go out toward all your Christian brethren, and that you shall feel the power of that precious blood which makes us nearer akin than even the blood of Adam, that blood of Jesus, which makes us truly brethren and sisters, yea, members of one body, and so united by living communion the one to the other.

In this first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, you see the spirit of communion in the apostle Paul. He was, he says, anxious to do good to others. He longed to see the Roman Christians, in order that he might impart to them some spiritual gift. While he is writing to them, you can see that he is anxious that they may have the best thing that they can have. All his desire is for their good; he is lovingly interested in their welfare. That is how we ought to be the one to the other, not only the pastor to the people, but the people to the pastor, and the members of the church the one towards the other, all anxious for the good of the rest; no man living unto himself, but each one endeavouring to live for the benefit of the entire community in Christ Jesus.

Not only did the apostle's heart go out to the church in Rome, but to all the Gentiles. He felt himself, he says, a debtor to everybody, to the Greeks and to the barbarians, to the wise and to the unwise, to the bond and to the free. Do you not think that our loving sympathies should go out towards all mankind? Oh, let them do so! While you have the nearest and closest fellowship with the saints, yet desire to recognize your kinship with the rest of men, praying to God that he would enlighten them, and bring them also within the bonds of the covenant, that your fellowship with them might be loving, and true, and deep.

However, the apostle especially expresses his fellowship with the saints in Rome, and to prove that fellowship he calls them by endearing names, by the highest titles which they could have,

"beloved of God, called to be saints;" and then he salutes them with good wishes of the very sweetest, tenderest kind, when he says, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." While I am trying to talk on this text, will our dear brethren and sisters' hearts be going out the one towards the other, with a view to the increase of real spiritual communion in this church, and also in every branch of the one Church of Christ throughout the world?

First, notice, concerning these people, *their favoured condition*: "beloved of God;" secondly, *their sure proof of that favour*: "called to be saints;" and, thirdly, *their blessedness through that favour*. Paul wished them to have what he was allowed to wish for them, for it was truly theirs, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

I. First, then, notice concerning these people, THEIR FAVOURED CONDITION. They are said to be "beloved of God."

I wish that I could hope that this was true of everybody here, in the fullest and most emphatic sense, that we were all "beloved of God." There is a sense in which it is true, for God has a love of benevolence, and kindness, and well-wishing towards all his creatures. He is kind to the unthankful and the evil, and makes his rain to fall upon the field of the miser as well as on the ground of the gracious. He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." God is willing that all should come to him, repent of sin, believe in Jesus Christ, and find eternal life. We are all, in some respects, partakers of the love of God.

But, dear friends, there is a love to Peter which is greater than the love which Christ had to Judas. There is a love which he has to his own, which is of peculiar character, and differs very greatly from that common love which he bestows upon all the works of his hands, for there is a *love of choice*, and it is in this sense that Paul calls these Roman saints "beloved of God." God had chosen them; his prescient eye had foreseen them, and their condition, and he had selected them out of the mass of the Roman population that they might be his own. Whatever may be said about the doctrine of election, it is written in the Word of God as with an iron pen, and there is no getting rid of it; there it stands. To me, it is one of the sweetest and most blessed truths in the whole of Revelation; and those who are afraid of it are so because they do not understand it. If they could but know that the Lord had chosen them, it would make their hearts to dance for joy. The Lord has a people in this world, whom he has himself chosen, and given to his Son Jesus Christ, and whom the Lord Jesus Christ has redeemed from among men, for Christ "loved the church, and gave himself for it." These are the people of whom Paul speaks as beloved of God, those who have been, by divine grace, chosen out of the great mass of mankind. Beware, I pray you, of that desperately evil thing which is everywhere now, "the Christian world." There is no mixture that can be so bad as that. If it be the world, it is the world; if it be Christian, it is not the world; and the two things cannot be bound together. There is a divorce proclaimed between the two. Our Lord Jesus proclaimed it when he said, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world;" and he was never of the world. Nobody ever thought that he was of the world; and so his followers, if they are true to him, are not of the world. They are of another race. As the apostle John says, "Ye know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one." It is not, as some one said the other day, "a redeemed world"; it is a world that lieth in the wicked one, as a child lies in its father's arms. There is a redeemed people in it, whom Christ is calling out by his own wondrous and sovereign grace; but we are not to look upon them as tasting of the benefits of his redemption in any saving way until he calls them to faith in himself, and brings them to be washed in his precious blood. Then may they, indeed, be called "beloved of God."

These are, again, beloved with a *love of resolve*. He determined concerning those whom he loved that they should be saved, that they should repent, that they should accept the great Sacrifice. He ordained them unto eternal life, and he resolved so to work upon them that, while he did not violate the freedom of their wills, or treat them otherwise than as men, yet still he would accomplish his purpose with them, he would create in them a new heart and a right spirit, he would turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to himself. These were the beloved of the Lord.

And in consequence they came to be the beloved of God in another sense, namely, with a *love of complacency*. The Lord cannot love a wicked man with the love of complacency. He takes no delight in him; he cannot even look on him without abhorrence, for he provokes the Lord to anger by his iniquity. But there are men in the world in whom the Holy Spirit has wrought principles which delight God. He has given them a character which is pleasing to him. They are his Hephzibahs; his delight is in them. There are some, of whom he thinks with pleasure, though they were once sinful and vile as others. He has transformed them into new creatures in Christ Jesus, and now he delights in them. I do not know a more joyful thought than for a man to be led to believe that God takes complacency in him, and looks at him with the eye of loving approval. Such as he are the beloved of the Lord.

And because of this, dear friends, there was also a *love of unity*. God joins himself to the man in whom he takes delight. There is a friendship between them more close than that between David and Jonathan, so that God speaks with his servant, and hears what his servant has to say in reply. There are men who are on such intimate terms with God that they might be called the friends of God, as Abraham was; and God is both their shield, and their exceeding great reward. Oh, did some of you know what a joy it is to be the beloved of the Lord, you would reckon yourselves to be wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, while you are without him; and you would reckon that, even if you were poor, and blind, and naked, yet you would not be wretched and miserable if you did but know this wondrous love of God, which leads to the friendship of God, and to fellowship with God. There are many men and women, nowadays, thank God, who have a place where they are accustomed to meet with God, quite as regularly as they meet with their fellow-tradesmen at their stall or at their office. They keep tryst with God; and it would be a doleful day to them if, on any occasion, they should go to wait upon God, and find that he had closed the door against them. Yes, we have in London, and all over the world, a multitude who may truly be called the beloved of the Lord.

This is a very choice privilege; if you possess it, prize it beyond everything else. This is a crowning honour. Perhaps, if you were invited to attend the Queen, you might think something of it; but what would that be compared with being beloved of God? To have the love of our fellow-men, is very sweet; there are times when it comes with peculiar pleasantness; but oh, believe me, all the loves of all relationships, all the loves of all friendships heaped together, can never be compared with the love of God to us! All the goodness that there is in human love is derived from the love of God; and is at best but as a drop compared with the boundless ocean. If thou art beloved of God, I will not stay to ask whether thou art rich or poor, or even whether thou art in good health or in sickness, neither will I enquire whether thou art in honour or in disrepute, or whether thy life is likely to be long or to be suddenly cut short. All these things are but trifles; this is the solid fact that makes thee a happy and a blessed man, that thou canst be called "beloved of God."

Now the sweet thing here is that, if I am beloved of God, and you are beloved of God, here is a ground for us to meet. If you have not yet learnt to know your brother, if he is a stranger to you,

and if, because of this, no love has actually sprung up in your heart, yet, since Christ loves you, when you hear that Christ loves him, why, then you will seem at once knit to him! I recollect that, when I first came to London, I used to think a great deal of everybody who came up from Waterbeach. I believe that, if a dog had come up from Waterbeach, I should have fed him; and I think that, if anybody comes from where Christ is, the Christ who loves us, we shall be sure to love him. They who are beloved of God will love all others who are beloved of God. "But they are American friends." Never mind whether they are American or Dutch; if the Lord loves them, we love them. "Oh, but they live so many thousands of miles away; and they never come here." Never mind; what if seas and mountains divide us, yet are we one, and he who loves us loves them also. I am sure that I appeal to you with no doubt as to what your answer will be. If God has put us within the same circle of his infinite affection, may we not safely clasp hands feeling that we shall never have to unclasp them, nay, not even in death? The relationship between a husband and a wife, between a mother and her son, may be snapped entirely by death, never to be renewed; if there is no grace in the heart of the husband or the child, the weeping and the wailing will be useless at the last. They are parted, never to meet again; think of that, you who are still unsaved. But if we are one in Christ's love, we may have to bid "Good-bye" to one another here on earth for a time; but it is only for a time. Those bands, of which the love of God is the raw material, are everlasting. Some of you to-night, when I break the bread, will have to go upstairs, or to go home. I very often meet with good men, who come to join the church, and who say, "Nothing decided me till I had to leave my wife behind me, or when I stopped in the top gallery, and looked down upon her, and felt that I could not come and eat with her the memorial of the Lord's death. Then I felt that I could not hold out any longer." Oh, may you have that union in the love of God which never will be broken! Seek it to-night. May we all, in these two galleries, and this great area, be encompassed within the circle of the "beloved of God"!

II. Now, my second head is, THEIR SURE PROOF OF THAT FAVOUR, for they were "called to be saints": "beloved of God, called to be saints."

What were these people to whom Paul wrote? First, *they were saints*. You notice that the words "to be" are put in by the translators; but though they are supplied, they are not really necessary to the sense. These believers in Rome were "called saints." They were not called because they were saints; but they became saints through that calling. Now, here is a name that belongs to all the people of God; they are saints. It is not merely "St. John", and "St. James", and so on, as some foolish people talk, who cannot call Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, by their right names, but must always "Saint" them. I believe that there is a St. John; I dare say that there are twenty St. Johns in this Tabernacle to-night. I believe in St. Matthew; I expect that there are two or three St. Matthews here to-night. All the people of God, all who are really believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, are saints. They are all of them called saints, and we may call them so.

Is not that very wonderful, that these Romans should be called saints, for they were not saints once? The Romans were among the worst of mankind. This first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is one of the most awful that ever fell from a human pen; it so describes the infamous crimes of the Gentiles, that we might almost blush to read it in the presence of a congregation; and such were some of these people, but grace came and renewed them, and they were called saints, and really were saints, that is, dedicated persons. A saint is a person who is set apart unto God, consecrated to God, sanctified, separated, a man who is in the world, but not of it; he belongs to God, and he lives for God. Now, if God loves you in the sense in which we have been speaking, he has made a

saint of you, a dedicated man. You remember that Jonah was asked, "What is thine occupation, and of what people art thou?" and he answered, "I am an Hebrew; and I fear the Lord." That was his occupation; he was a God-fearing man. It is not every man who could give such an answer as that. When we feel that our very occupation is to serve God, then are we rightly "called saints", sanctified, set apart ones.

But the word "saints" really means also holy persons. If we are the beloved of the Lord, he will make us holy persons. There is a very wide difference between that and being merely moral. Here is a man who calls himself a saint, and he is not honest; do not call him a saint, he is not even a respectable sinner. Here is a man who says he is a child of God, and yet he is guilty of lewdness. Call him a saint, when even common morality is absent? Dear friends, all the charity we can possibly pump up will not allow us to call that man a holy man who is not even a moral man. What is holiness, then? It rises above morality as much as the heaven rises above the earth. Holiness is a more spiritual, a more intense, a more divine, a more heavenly thing than morality; but he who has not morality certainly falls very short of anything like holiness. We are called not merely to be moralists, but to be saints. If you go, to-morrow, into some place of amusement, where there is something not quite clean, something full of levity, I should like somebody to whisper in your ear, "Called to be saints;" or, if to-morrow, in business, you should lose your temper, and begin to speak rather strongly, I should like something, even if it were only a parrot, to say, "Called to be saints;" and if, when you go home, you begin to be very rough to the children, unkind to the wife, and not what you should be even to the servant, I should like you to hear a voice saying, "Called to be saints." It might make you blush, if you can,—there are some who cannot,—but every man, who professes to be a child of God, should recollect that this is what his calling is, and he cannot prove that he is beloved of God unless he can prove his calling to saintship by being really a saint. Oh, that we had a church all made up of saints! Our churches, nowadays, are very respectable communities, I do not doubt, and there is a good deal of sainthood in them; but, oh, if they were all saints, then indeed we should tell upon the world, and tell upon the age, and the kingdom of our Lord would come! They were saints, then, to whom Paul wrote.

He also says that *they were "called to be saints."* They were not saints originally; they were "called to be saints." They were not saints by their own native growth, they did not grow up into saints; they were "called to be saints." They were called of Christ himself. Read the sixth verse: "Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ." Being called by Jesus Christ, they were called by a voice which they recognized, a voice to which they yielded, a voice that spoke effectually, a voice that spoke transformingly; and they were called by him to be saints. Have you ever had such a call, my dear hearer? Sitting in your pew to-night, can you remember when that call came to you, as real a call as when God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, a call from heaven, mysterious, divine, which nobody else could hear, but which you heard and obeyed? "Called to be saints."

Now, then, see a ground of our communion one with another. If I have had a call to be a saint, I should not like to talk much about that to some people whom I know, for they would call it fanaticism. If you have had a call to be a saint, you have been very much in the same state; but when you and I meet together, we are not afraid to talk about it. You understand it, and I understand it; and on the ground of having had a common call, we feel ourselves at home. We are brothers and sisters at once, because we are equally "called to be saints." You cry and you sigh for saintship, and your friend cries and sighs for saintship, too. He is conscious that he comes short of his own

idea of it; he struggles, he groans. You and he have a secret between you; your experience is his experience, and you two feel, having equally received a call from God, and a call for the same purpose, that you should both become the same thing, namely, saints unto God. Here is ground for fellowship. The lambs can have no fellowship with the wolves; let them keep together, and have fellowship one with another. You who love God will not find much fellowship up and down these streets. In many of the houses, if you were to speak of God, they would ridicule you. Get all the fellowship that you can one with another. Let it be said of you, as of those of old, "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name." I like to think of this, that as we are one in being the beloved of the Lord, so are we one in the outcome of it; we have all been called, and we have all been called to the same high attainment of saintship. Paul does not say that he alluded to "the upper ten" at Rome; no, but he says, "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God." Do not you go about, and pick out a few of the best Christian people, and say, "I am in sympathy with them." Ah, dear friends, this is not like Christ; he washed his disciples' feet, but you are for looking up at their heads! Go and begin fellowship with him by washing his dear feet. Where there is *aliquid Christi*, as a good man used to say, anything of Christ, there should your love go forth. Where there is any work of Christ upon the soul of anyone, however uneducated, however poor, however rough he may be, ay, and however bad-tempered he may be, nevertheless endeavour to get to maintain and to increase fellowship with him, seeing that you and he have one calling, you are both "called to be saints."

III. Now I come to a close with the third point, where I think we shall also find some ground for fellowship, THEIR BLESSEDNESS THROUGH THE FAVOUR OF GOD. This was the same with regard to all to whom Paul wrote: "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

First, these good people had this blessedness, *they all had the same Father*. Suppose that two persons were to meet here to-night, who did not know each other, and they were to begin to talk to one another, and one said, "My father's name is So-and-so," and the other were to look at him, and say, "And where does he live?" "He lives at such a house, in such a city." "Does he? Why, do you know, that is my father?" Those two would be surprised that they did not know each other, for they evidently had the same father. I can see them backing a bit, and looking at one another, and saying, "Do you mean to say that really his name is John Smith?" "Yes." "And he lives at such a house?" "Yes." "What age is he? What kind of a man is he? Have you his portrait about you?" "Yes." "There, I have a good portrait of him, too, and it is the same man. He is father to us both; then what are we two?" "We are brothers;" and they put their arms about each other's neck, and say, "What have we been at, that, having the same father, we did not know each other?" Now, there are many Christian people who, if they came right, would be in much the same condition. They have the same Father, and do not know it, because they do not quite agree, perhaps, upon some form of doctrine, or even upon the rite of baptism, or something of that sort, which is of very great importance, but still the most important thing is,—Have we one Father? If we have, then let us have fellowship one with the other. I want this to be real. When I was very young, and first joined the church in Cambridge, I sat in a pew at the communion with a gentleman, perhaps with two or three, but none of them spoke to me. The next time I went to the communion, it was the same, nobody spoke to me. I was not anybody to be spoken to; so when I got outside the chapel, I said to one gentleman, "Well, dear sir, how are you?" He said, "I am pretty well, thank you, but you

have the advantage of me." "I do not think I have, sir; I do not know you any more than you know me; but I came to the communion-table to profess that I was a brother of those who were there, and I meant it; did not you mean it?" He put both his hands on me, for he was much older than I was, and he said, "What sweet simplicity! You have only acted according to truthfulness. I am glad," he added, "that you did not do it to our deacon." The next thing he said was, "Will you come in and have a cup of tea with me?" I said, "Thank you, sir, I could not do that to-night, because I am expected home at the place where I live." "Will you come in next Sunday?" "Yes." I continued to go in every Sunday as long as I could, and he remained, and does remain, a dear friend of mine to this day. Though he is very much older than I am, I established a friendship with him which never has been interrupted, and never will be, either in time or in eternity. Should it not be thus among all Christians?

Is the Fatherhood of God a reality among the children of God? If it is, let their brotherhood be a reality, and let them show that they are true brothers by their love one to another. May the Lord make it so! The common talk of the universal fatherhood of God is a flat contradiction of the teaching of the Bible. There is certainly in God's Word such a doctrine as adoption. Does God adopt his own children, then? There is certainly a revelation about the new birth. What are the regenerated born into, then? Only into the same nature as they had before? Is there anything fresh given to them which makes them to have the nature of the children of God? I thought, and I still think, that it was meant that, until then, they were heirs of wrath, children of disobedience, even as others, and children of the wicked one; but by no means children of the family of the Most High. By grace alone could the saints in Rome call God, "Abba, Father."

The next point in their blessedness was that *they had the same Saviour*, for so says the text, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." He who died for Paul died for them. The streams of blood, that flowed for the apostle, flowed for them. For them the bloody sweat, for all of them; for them the death cry, "It is finished," for all of them; and truly, I do think that, being bought with the same price, ought to make us feel that we are all one lump. We were all passed over to Christ by the one transaction of the paying down of his heart's blood to redeem us, and we ought to feel, nay, brothers and sisters, I hope that we do feel that we are all one, and we will endeavour as much as lieth in us to show this in our lives.

And, more than that, *they were going to the same heaven*. Beloved, the home of God should be the great goal to which we are always pressing forward. You see that the men of the world are coming this way in a great crowd, all in a hurry, rushing after their gods; and we, what are we doing? Threading our way, as best we can, pushing our way against the stream, going in an exactly opposite direction to the rest of mankind. Some of you cannot do this; you keep getting carried off your legs, and you are swept along by the torrent; but the man of God must go against the current. He is not to be swept back; but he is always pressing forward, ever seeking to make an advance, contending for every inch, and making up his mind that, come what may, he cannot go back. That is not his way; he must go forward, ever pressing on toward the city that hath foundations. Christians are like a live fish that goes up the stream, always up the stream. If the fish comes down the stream, and you see it floating with its white belly on the top of the water, you know that it is dead; and we can see plenty of these dead fish floating down the stream nowadays. But the live Christian is going straight up the stream, straight up, up, up. Whichever way the tide may be running, whether it is at the ebb or at the flood, he is going straight up the stream; and, God helping him, he will proceed

in that way right to the end. So, brethren, as we are going to the same heaven, let us have heaven begun below as we live in love one towards another.

These saints, also, *had the same grace*. I cannot stop to say much about it; but Paul wished for them all that they might have "grace." If you have grace, and I have grace, the grace is the same in us all. It may take a different shape as to the fruit that it produces; but grace is one. Whether it is grace in the babe in Christ, or grace in the strong man in Christ, it is the same grace; and if we all are debtors to grace, and if grace begins, and grace carries on, and grace completes its work in us all, let us, by the bonds of that grace, be knit together in mutual affection the one towards the other.

And then they all *had the same peace*. Oh, what a blessed thing is peace with God, peace with our own conscience, peace with the past, peace with the present, peace with the future, the peace of God, which passeth all understanding! Hast thou peace, brother, and have I peace? Then let us be as one, for we have the same peace. You must have noticed, in times of peril, how men are driven into each other's arms. If you are on board ship, and the vessel is ready to go down, his lordship will be seen at the pumps working as hard as any sweep who may be on board. Everybody must share alike when they divide the biscuit, and everybody must take his turn at working in the saving of the ship. Well, well, if it be so in time of danger, let it be so in time of peace. Let us have an equally hearty communion and fellowship the one with the other in happy times and under sad circumstances as well.

So have I tried to prepare you to come to this feast. If any of you have any ill-will towards the others, have done with it. If there are any bickerings and jealousies among you, wring the necks of those evil birds, and have done with them; put them to a speedy death. Now, surely, is the time, when we come to the common table of the Lord's one family, to feel that one heart is in us all, and that by him who loved us all, and through him whom we all love, we will love each other. God grant it! I am not aware that there is any special reason now why I should urge you to this unity more than at any other time; but there is always a reason for it. There is never a company of men and women, so large as ours, but what they have little jealousies between them, and you may be quite sure that these are displeasing to God, and should be put away as speedily as possible. So let it be, and thus may we keep the feast in union with Christ, and with one another, for our Saviour's sake! Amen.

Micah's Message for To-day

A Sermon

(No. 2328)

Intended for Reading on Lord's-Day, October 1st, 1893,

Delivered By

C. H. SPURGEON,

At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington

On Thursday Evening, August 22nd, 1889.

"Walk humbly with thy God."—Micah 6:8.

THIS is the essence of the law, the spiritual side of it; its ten commandments are an enlargement of this verse. The law is spiritual, and touches the thoughts, the intents, the emotions, the words, the actions; but specially God demands the heart. Now it is our great joy that what the law requires the gospel gives. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." In him we meet the requirements of the law, first, by what he has done for us; and next, by what he works in us. He conforms us to the law of God. He makes us, by his Spirit, not for our righteousness, but for his glory, to render to the law the obedience which we could not present of ourselves. We are weak through the flesh, but when Christ strengthens us, the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Only through faith in Christ does a man learn to do righteously, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God; and only by the power of the Holy Spirit sanctifying us to that end do we fulfil these three divine requirements. These we fulfil perfectly in our desire; we would be holy as God is holy, if we could live as our heart aspires to live, we would always do righteously, we would always love mercy; and we would always walk humbly with God. This the Holy Spirit daily aids us to do by working in us to will and to do of God's good pleasure; and the day will come, and we are pining for it, when, being entirely free from this hampering body, we shall serve him day and night in his temple, and shall render to him an absolutely perfect obedience, for "they are without fault before the throne of God."

To-night I shall have a task quite sufficient if I dwell only upon the third requirement, "Walk humbly with thy God," asking first, *What is the nature of this humility?* and secondly, *Wherein does this humilty show itself?*

I. First, WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THIS HUMILITY? The text is very full of teaching in that respect.

And, first, *this humility belongs to the highest form of character.* Observe what precedes our text, "to do justly, and to love mercy." Suppose a man has done that, suppose that in both these things he has come up to the divine standard, what then? Why, then he must walk humbly with God. If we walk in the light, as God is in the light, and have fellowship with him, still we shall need to walk before God very humbly, ever looking to the blood, for even then the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth and continues to cleanse us from all sin. If we have done both these things, we shall still have to say that we are unprofitable servants, and we must walk humbly with God. We have not reached that consummation yet, always doing justly, and loving mercy, though we are approximating to it by Christ's gracious help; but if we did attain to the ideal that is set before

us, and every act was right towards man, and more, every act was delightfully saturated with a love to our neighbour as strong as our love to ourselves, even then there would come in this precept, "Walk humbly with thy God."

Dear friends, if ever you should think that you have reached the highest point of Christian grace,—I almost hope that you never will think so,—but suppose that you should ever think so, do not, I pray you, say anything that verges upon boasting, or exhibit any kind of spirit that looks like glorying in your own attainments; but walk humbly with your God. I do believe that the more grace a man has the more he feels his deficiency of grace. All the people that I have ever thought might have been called perfect before God, have been notable for a denial of anything of the sort; they have always disclaimed anything like perfection, they have always lain low before God, and if one has been constrained to admire them, they have blushed at his admiration. If they have thought that they were at all the objects of reverence among their fellow-Christians, I have noticed how zealously they have put that aside with self-depreciatory remarks, telling us that we did not know all, or we should not think so of them; and therein I do admire them yet more. The praise that they put from them returns to them with interest. Oh, let us be of that mind! The best of men are but men at the best, and the brightest saints are still sinners, for whom there is still a fountain open, but not opened, mark you, in Sodom and Gomorrah, but the fountain is opened for the house of David, and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that even they may still continue, with all their lofty privileges, to wash therein, and to be clean. This is the kind of humility, then, which is consistent with the highest moral and spiritual character, nay, it is the very clothing of such a character, as Peter puts it, "Be clothed with humility," as if, after we had put on the whole armour of God, we put this over all to cover it all up. We do not want the helmet to glitter in the sun, nor the greaves of brass upon the knees to shine before men; but clothing ourselves like officers in mufti, we conceal the beauties which will eventually the more reveal themselves.

The second remark is this, *the humility here prescribed involves constant communion with God.* Observe that we are told to walk humbly with THY God. It is of no use walking humbly away from God. I have seen some people very proudly humble, very boastful of their humility. They have been so humble that they were proud enough to doubt God. They could not accept the mercy of Christ, they said; they were so humble. In truth, theirs was a devilish humility, not the humility that comes from the Spirit of God. Oh, no! This humility makes us walk with God; and, beloved, can you conceive a higher and truer humility than that which must come of walking with God? Remember what Job said, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Remember how Abraham, when he communed with God, and pleaded with him for Sodom, said, "I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes;" "dust"—that set forth the frailty of his nature, "ashes"—as if he was like the refuse of the altar, which could not be burnt up, which God would not have. He felt himself to be, by sin, like the sweeping of a furnace, the ashes, refuse of no value whatsoever; and that was not because he was away from God, but because he was near to God. You can get to be as big as you like if you get away from God; but coming near to the Lord you rightly sing,—

"The more thy glories strike mine eyes,
The humbler I shall lie."

Depend upon it that it is so. It might be a kind of weather-gauge as to your communion, whether you are proud or humble. If you are going up, God is going down in your esteem. "He must increase," said John the Baptist of the Lord Jesus; "but I must decrease." The two things go together; if this

scale rises, that scale must go down. "Walk humbly with thy God." Dare to keep with God, dare to have him as your daily Friend, be bold enough to come to him who is within the veil, talk with him, walk with him, as a man walks; with his familiar friend; but walk humbly with him. You will do so if you walk truly; I cannot conceive such a thing,—it is impossible,—as a man walking proudly with God. He takes his fellow by the arm, and feels that he is as good as his neighbour, perhaps superior to him; but he cannot walk with God in such a frame of mind as that. The finite with the Infinite! That alone suggests humility; but the sinful with the Thrice-holy! This throws us down into the dust.

But, next, *this humility implies constant activity*. "Walk humbly with thy God." Walking is an active exercise. These people had proposed to bow before God, as you notice in the sixth verse, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God?" But the answer is not, "Bow humbly before God," but "Walk humbly with God." Now, beloved, when we are very actively engaged, pressed with business, one thing after another coming in, if the great Master employs us in some large concern,—large, of course, only to us,—if we have work after work, we are too apt to forget that we are only servants, we are doing all the business for our Master, we are only commission agents for him. We are apt to think that we are the head of the firm; we should not think so if we did think steadily for a moment, for we should know our right position; but in the midst of activity we get cumbered with much serving, and we are too apt to get off our proper level. We have, perhaps, to rule others; and we forget that we also are men under authority. It is easy to play the little king over the little folk; but it must not be so. You must learn, not only to be humble in the closet of communion, and to be humble with your Bible before you, but to be humble in preaching, to be humble in teaching, to be humble in ruling, to be humble in everything that you do, when you have as much as ever you can do. When from morning to night you are still pressed with this and that service, still keep your proper place. That is where Martha went wrong, you know; not in having much serving, but by getting to be mistress. She was Mrs. Martha, and the housewife is a queen; but Mary sat in the servant's place at Jesus' feet. If Martha's heart could have been where Mary's body was, then had she served aright. The Lord make us Martha-Maries, or Mary-Marthas, when ever we are busy, that we may walk humbly with God!

Next, I do not think that it is far-fetched if I say that *this humility denotes progress*. The man is to walk, and that is progress, advancing. "Walk humbly:" I am not to be so humble that I feel that I cannot do any more, or enjoy any more, or be any better; they call that humility. It begins with an S in English, and the full word is SLOTH. "I cannot be as believing, as bold, as useful as such a man is." Thou art not told to be humble and sit still, but to be humble and walk with God. Go forward, advance, not with a proud desire to excel your fellow-Christians, not even with the latent expectation of being more respected because you have more grace; but still walk, go on, advance, grow. Be enriched with all the precious things of God; be filled with all the fulness of God; walk on, walk ever. Lie not down in despair; roll not in the dust with desperation because thou thinkest high things impossible to thee; walk, but walk humbly. Thou wilt soon find out, if thou dost make any progress, that thou hast need to be humble. I believe that when a man goes back he gets proud, and I am persuaded that when a man advances he gets humbler, and that it is a part of the advance to walk more and more and more humbly. For this the Lord tries many of us, for this he visits us in the night, and chastens us, that we may be qualified to have more grace, and get to higher attainments, by being more humble, "for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." If thou wilt climb the mountain-side, thou shalt be thirsty among the barren crags;

but if thou wilt descend into the valleys, where the red deer wander, and the brooks flow among the meadows, thou shalt drink to thy full. Doth not the hart pant for the water-brooks? Do thou pant for them; they flow in the valley of humiliation. The Lord bring us all there!

Next, *the humility here prescribed implies constancy*: "Walk humbly with thy God." Not sometimes be humble; but ever walk humbly with thy God. If we were always what we are sometimes, what Christians we should be! I have heard you say, I think, and I have said the same myself, "I felt very broken down, and lay 'very low at my Master's feet." Were you so the next day? And the day after did you continue so? Is it not very possible for us to be one day, because of our great debt to our Master, begging that he would not be hard with us, and is it not possible tomorrow to be taking our brother by the throat? I do not say that God's people would do that; but I do feel that the spirit that is in them may lead them to think of doing it, one day acknowledging your Father's authority, and doing his will, and another day standing outside the door, and refusing to go in because the prodigal son has come home. "Thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends; I have been a consistent believer, yet I never have any high joys; but as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. Here is a wretched sinner only just saved, and he is in an ecstasy of delight. How can this be right?" O elder son, O elder brother, walk humbly with thy Father! Always be so under any circumstances. It is all very fine to have a lot of humility packed away in a box with which to perfume your prayers, and then to come out, and to be "My lord," and some very great one in the midst of the church and in the world. This will never do. It is not said, "Bow humbly before God now and then; "but as a regular, constant thing, "Walk humbly with thy God." It is not, "Bow thy head like the bulrush under some conscious fault which thou canst not deny," but, in the brightness of thy purity, and the clearness of thy holiness, still keep thy heart in lowly reverence bowing before the throne.

Once more only, and then we will quit this part of the subject, *the humility that is here prescribed includes delightful confidence*. Do let me read the text to you, "Walk humbly with God." No, no, we must not maul the passage that way, "Walk humbly with *thy* God." Do not think that it is humility to doubt your interest in Christ; that is unbelief. Do not think that it is humility to think that he is another man's God, and not yours; "Walk humbly with *thy* God." Know that he is your God, be sure of it, come up from the wilderness leaning upon your Beloved. Have no doubt, nor even the shadow of a doubt, that you are your Beloved's, and that he is yours. Rest not for a moment if there is any question upon this blessed subject. He gives himself to you; take him to be yours by a covenant of salt that never shall be broken; and give yourself to him, saying, "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine." "Walk humbly with thy God." Let not anything draw you away from that confidence; but then, in comes the humility. This is all of grace; this is all the result of divine election; therefore, be humble. You have not chosen Christ, but he has chosen you. This is all the effect of redeeming love; therefore, be humble. You are not your own, you are bought with a price; so you can have no room to glory. This is all the work of the Spirit.

"Then give all the glory to his holy name,

To him all the glory belongs."

"Walk humbly with thy God." I lie at his feet as one unworthy, and cry, "Whence is this to me? I am not worthy of the least of the mercies that thou hast made to pass before me." I think this is the humility prescribed in the text. May the Spirit of God work it in us!

II. And now, secondly, with great brevity upon many points, I have to answer the question, **WHEREIN DOES THIS HUMILITY SHOW ITSELF?** I have what might be a long task; a Puritan would want an hour and a half more for the second part of the subject. Our Puritan forefathers preached, you know, by a glass, an hour-glass which stood by them, and sometimes, when they had let one glass run out at the end of the hour, they would say to the people, "Let us have another glass," and they turned it over again, and went on for another hour. But I am not going to do that, I do not wish to weary you, and I would rather send you away longing than loathing. Wherein, then, does this humility show itself? It ought to show itself in every act of life. I would not advise any of you to *try* to be humble, but to *be* humble. As to acting humbly, when a man forces himself to it, that is poor stuff. When a man talks a great deal about his humility, when he is very humble to everybody, he is generally a canting hypocrite. Humility must be in the heart, and then it will come out spontaneously as the outflow of life in every act that a man performs.

But now, specially, walk humbly with God *when your graces are strong and vigorous*, when there has been a very clear display of them, when you have been very patient, when you have been very bold, when you have been very prayerful, when the Scriptures have opened themselves up to you, when you have enjoyed a grand season of searching the Word, and especially when the Lord gives you success in his service, when there are more souls than usual brought to Christ, when God has made you a leader among his people, and has laid his hand upon you, and said, "Go in this thy might." Then, "Walk humbly with thy God." The devil will tell you when you have preached a good sermon; perhaps you will not have preached a good one when he tells you that you have, for he is a great liar; but you may go home wonderfully pleased with a sermon with which God is not pleased, and you may go home wonderfully humble about a sermon that God means to bless. But when there really does seem to be something that the evil one tempts you to glory in, then hear this word, "Walk humbly with thy God."

Next, *when you have a great deal of work to do*, and the Lord is calling you to it, then, before you go to it, walk humbly with God. Do you ask, How? By feeling that you are quite unfit for it, for you are unfit in yourself; and by feeling that you have no strength, for you have not any. When you are weak, by owning your weakness you will grow strong. Lean hard upon your God, cry to him in prayer. Do not open your own mouth, but from your heart pray, "Open thou my lips, and my mouth shall speak forth thy praise." Be intensely subservient to the Spirit of God, yield yourself up to be worked upon by him, that you may work upon others. Oh, there is such a difference between a sermon preached by our own power and a sermon preached in the power of the Holy Spirit! If you do not feel the difference, my brother, your people will soon find it out.

"Oh, to be nothing, nothing!

Only to lie at his feet!"

Then it is, when walking humbly with God in service, that he will fill us, and make us strong.

Next, walk humbly with God *in all your aims*. When you are seeking after anything, mind what your motive is. Even if it be the best thing, seek it only for God. If any man, or any woman either, tries to work in the Sunday-school, or if anyone preaches in the open air, or in the house of God, with a view of being somebody, with the idea of being thought to be a very admirable, zealous brother or sister, then let this word come into your ear, "Walk humbly with thy God." There is a word which Jeremiah spoke to Baruch which we need to have said to ourselves sometimes: "Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not." You young men of the College, do not be always hunting up big places; be willing to go to small places to preach the gospel to poor people. Never

mind if the Lord sends you right down to the lowest slum; but go, and let your aim always be this, "I do not desire for myself anything great except the greatest thing of all, that I may glorify God." "Walk humbly with thy God." You are the kind of man who will be promoted in due time if you are willing to go down. In the true Church of Christ, the way to the top is downstairs; sink yourself into the highest place. I say not this that even in sinking you may think of the rising; think only of your Lord's glory. "Walk humbly with thy God."

Walk humbly with God, also, *in studying his Word, and in believing his truth*. We have a number of men, nowadays, who are critics of the Bible; the Bible stands bound at their bar, nay, worse than that, it lies on their table to be dissected, and they have no feeling of decency towards it; they will cut out its very heart, they will rend asunder its tenderest parts, even the precious Song of Solomon, or the beloved apostle's Gospel, or the Book of the Apocalypse, is not sacred in their eyes. They shrink from nothing, their scalpel, their knife, cuts through everything. They are the judges of what the Bible ought to be, and it is deposed from its throne. God save us from that evil spirit! I desire ever to sit at the feet of God in the Scriptures. I do not believe that, from one cover to the other, there is any mistake in it of any sort whatever, either upon natural or physical science, or upon history or anything whatever. I am prepared to believe what ever it says, and to take it believing it to be the Word of God; for if it is not all true, it is not worth one solitary penny to me. It may be to the man who is so wise that he can pick out the true from the false; but I am such a fool that I could not do that. If I do not have a guide here that is infallible, I would as soon guide myself, for I shall have to do so after all; I shall have to be correcting the blunders of my guide perpetually, but I am not qualified to do that, and so I am worse off than if I had not any guide at all. Sit thou down, Reason, and let Faith rise up. If the Lord hath said it, let God be true, and every man a liar. If science contradicts Scripture, so much the worse for science; the Scripture is true, whatever the theories of men may be. "Ah ! "you say, "you are an old-fashioned foggy." Yes, I am; I will not disclaim any compliment which you choose to pass upon me; and I will stand or fall by this blessed Book. This was the mighty weapon of the Reformation; it smote the Papacy, and I shall not throw it down, whoever does. Stand thou still, my brother, and listen to the voice of the Lord, and "walk humbly with thy God" as to his truth.

Walk humbly with God, next, *as to mercies received*. You were ill a little while ago; and now you are getting well. Do not let pride come in because you feel that you can lift so many pounds. You are getting on in business; you wear a much better coat than you used to come here in; but do not begin to think yourself a mighty fine gentleman. Now you get into very good society, you say; but do not be ashamed to come to the prayer-meeting along with the Lord's poor, and to sit next to one who has not had a new coat for many a day. "Walk humbly with thy God," or else it may be that he will take thee down a notch or two, and bring thee back to thy old poverty; and then what wilt thou say to thyself for thy folly?

Next, walk humbly with God *under great trials*. When you are brought very low, do not kick against the pricks. When wave after wave comes, do not begin to complain. That is pride; murmur not, but bow low. Say, "Lord, if thou smite me, I deserve more than thou dost lay upon me. Thou hast not dealt with me according to my sin. I accept the chastisement." Let not the rebellious spirit rise when a child is taken away, or when the wife is taken from your bosom, or the husband from the head of the house. Oh, no; say, "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good."

And next, walk humbly with God *in thy devotions, as between thyself and God in thy chamber*. Dost thou read? Read humbly. Dost thou pray? Pray humbly. Dost thou sing? Sing joyfully, but

sing humbly. Do take care, when thy God and thyself are together, and none besides, that there thou showest to him thy humble heart, with deep humility that it is no more humble than it is.

And then, next, walk humbly *as between thyself and thy brethren*. Ask not to be head choir-master; desire not to be the principal man in the church. Be lowly. The best man in the church is the man who is willing to be a doormat for all to wipe their boots on, the brother who does not mind what happens to him at all so long as God is glorified. I have heard brethren say, "Well, but you must stand up for your dignity." I lost mine a long time ago, and I never thought it was worth while to look for it. As to the dignity of the pastor, the dignity of the minister, if we have no dignity of character, the other is a piece of rag. We must try to earn our position in the Church of God by being willing to take the lowest room; and if we will do so, our brethren will take care that before long they will say to us, "Go up higher." In thy dealings with weak Christians, with feeble Christians, do not always scold. Remember that, if thou art strong now, thou mayest very soon be as weak as thy brethren are.

And *in dealing with sinners*, "walk humbly with thy God." Do not stand a long way off, as if you loved them so much that distance lent enchantment to the view. Do you not think that, sometimes, we deal with sinners as if we would like to pluck them from the burning if there was a pair of tongs handy; but we do not care to do it if our own dainty fingers would be smutted by the brands? Ah, beloved, we must come down from all lofty places, and feel a deep and tender pity towards the lost, and so walk humbly with God!

Now, I have not time to go through all this subject *as to your circumstances*. If you are poor, if you are obscure, do not be pining after a higher place; walk humbly with your God, take what he gives you. In looking back, rejoice in all his mercy; and walk humbly at the recollection of all your stumbles. In looking forward, anticipate the future with delight, but do not be proudly imagining how great you will yet be made. "Walk humbly with thy God." In all thy thoughts of holy things, be humble; thoughts of God should lay thee low, thoughts of Christ should bring thee to his feet, thoughts of the Holy Ghost should make thee grieve for having vexed him. Thoughts of every covenant blessing should make thee wonder that such privileges ever came to thee. Thoughts of heaven should make thee marvel that thou shouldst ever be found among the seraphim. Thoughts of hell should make thee humble,—

"For were it not for grace divine,
That fate so dreadful had been thine."

Oh, brethren, the Lord help us to walk humbly with God! This will keep us right. True humility is thinking rightly of thyself, not meanly. When you have found out what you really are, you will be humble, for you are nothing to boast of. To be humble will make you safe. To be humble will make you happy. To be humble will make music in your heart when you go to bed. To be humble here will make you wake up in the likeness of your Master by-and-by. The Lord bless this word, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

The Lamb of God in Scripture

A Sermon

(No. 2329)

Intended for Reading on Lord's-Day, October 8th, 1893,

Delivered By

C. H. SPURGEON,

At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington

On Lord's-day Evening, August 25th, 1889.

"Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God."—John 1:35-36.

YOU ALL KNOW the old, old story. The world was lost; God must punish sin; He sent His son to take our sin upon Him that He might honor the law of God, and establish God's government by being obedient to the law, and yielding Himself up to the death-penalty. He whom Jehovah loves beyond all else came to earth, became a man, and, as a man, was obedient unto death of the cross. It is He who is called in our text "the Lamb of God," the one Sacrifice for man's sin. There is no putting away of sin without sacrifice; there is only one Sacrifice that can put away sin, and that is, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is divine, yet human; Son of God, yet son of Mary. He yielded up His life, "the Just for the unjust," the Sinless for the sinful, "that He might bring us to God," and reconcile us to the great Father. That is the story, and whosoever believeth in Him shall live. Any man, the world over, who will trust himself to Christ, God's great Sacrifice, shall be saved, for this is our continual witness, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Tonight I do not intend so much to preach a sermon as to urge those who have seen the Lamb of God to look at him more intently, to study Him more, and especially to please for the power of the Holy Ghost to reveal Him to them. I want to entreat men, who have looked elsewhere, now to turn their eyes away from the fruitless search after peace and life, and to come and "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." May the Spirit of God open their eyes, and incline their hearts, that tonight, even tonight, they may look unto Him and live!

When John saw Jesus on that memorable day, he, first of all, beheld Him himself and then he said to others, "Behold the Lamb of God." "Looking upon Jesus as He walked," steadfastly beholding Him, watching Him, gazing with humble admiration at Him, he said, "behold the Lamb of God!" Brethren, we cannot preach what we have not practiced. If these eyes have never looked to Jesus, how can I bid your eyes look at Him? Beholding Him, I found peace to my soul; I, who was disposed even to despair, rose from the depths of anguish to the heights of joy by looking unto Him; and I therefore dare to say to you, "Behold the Lamb of God?" Oh, that each one of you might believe our testimony concerning Jesus and look to Him and live!

What did John mean by saying, "Behold, in the Latin, *ecce*, is a note of admiration, of wonderment, of exclamation. "Behold the Lamb of God!" There was nothing of greater wonder ever seen than that God Himself should provide the Lamb for the burnt offering, that He should provide His only Son out of His very bosom, that He should give e the delight of His heart to die

for us. Well may we behold this great wonder. Angels admire and marvel at this mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh; they have never left off wondering and adoring the grace of God that gave Jesus to be the Sacrifice for guilty men. Behold and wonder, never leave off wondering; tell it as a wonder, think of it as a wonder, think of it as a wonder, sing of it as a wonder at this glorious Lamb of God.

I think that John also meant his disciples to consider when he said to them, "Behold the Lamb of God!" So we say to you, "Think of Him, study Him, know all that you about Him, look Him up and down. He is God; do you understand that He stood the sinner's stead? He is man; do you know how near akin He is to you, how sympathetic He is, a brother born for your adversity?" The person of Christ is a great marvel; how God and man can be in one person, it is impossible for us to tell. We believe what we cannot comprehend; and we rejoice in what we cannot understand. He whom God has provided to be your Saviour is both God and man; He can lay His hand upon both parties, He can touch your manhood in its weakness, and touch the Godhead in its all-sufficiency. Study Christ; the most excellent of all the sciences in the knowledge of a crucified Saviour. He is most learned in the university of heaven who knows most of Christ. He who hath known most of Him still says that His love surpasseth knowledge. Behold Him, then, with wonder, and behold Him with thankfulness.

But when John says, "Behold the Lamb of God!" he means more than wondering or considering. "Looking" is used in Scripture for faith: "Look unto me, and be ye saved." Therefore we sing—

There is life for a look at the crucified One,
There is life at this moment for thee!

Beholding is a steady kind of looking. Believe then, in Christ with a solid, abiding confidence. Come, ye sinners, come, and trust your Saviour, not for tonight only, but forever. Believe that he is able and willing to save you, and trust Him to do so.

Venture on him, venture wholly,
Let no other trust intrude.

Take your eyes off everything else, and behold the Lamb of God! You need not see anything else, nothing else is worth seeing; but behold Him. See how He takes your guilt, see how he bears it, see how He sinks under it, and yet rises from it, crying, "It is finished." He gives up the ghost, He is buried, He rises again from the dead because He is accepted of God, and His redeeming work is done. Trust Him, trust Him, trust Him. "Look and live," is now our nosegay; not "do and live," but "live and do." If you ask how you are to live, our answer is look, trust, believe, confide, rest in Christ, and the moment you do so, you are saved.

But once more, when John said to his disciples, "Behold the Lamb of God!" It was a hint that they should leave off at John, and turn their attention wholly to Jesus, and follow Him. Hence we find that John's two disciples left him, and became the disciples of Christ. Beloved, we who preached long to have your attention, but when you give your attention to us, our longing then is to pass it on to Christ our Lord. Look on Him, not us. What can we do, poor creatures that we are? Look unto Him, mark His footsteps, tread in them. Do as He bids you, take Him for your Lord, become His disciples, His servants. Behold the Lamb of God, and always behold Him. Look to Him, look up to Him, and follow where He leads the way.

Thus I have put the text before you pretty simply. Now, I want to talk to you a little about beholding this Lamb of God, taking a hasty run through various Scripture references to the Lamb;

and I will ask you, first, to *Behold the Lamb of God in His connections which men*, and secondly, to *Behold the Lamb of God in His benedictions to men*.

I. Let us, first, BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD IN HIS CONNECTION WITH MEN.

How was the Lamb of God first seen in the world? It was the case of *the lamb for one man*, brought be one man for himself, and on his own behalf. You all know that I refer to Abel, who was a shepherd, and brought of the firstlings, of his flock, that is, a lamb, and he brought this lamb for himself, and on his own account, that he might be accepted by God, and that he might present to God an offering well-pleasing in His sight. Cain brought of the fruit of the ground as an offering to God. I think that there was a difference in the sacrifice, as well as in the man bringing it, for the Holy Ghost says little about the difference of the man, but He says, "By faith Abel offered unto to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain," and he was accepted because he brought a more excellent sacrifice. The one sacrifice was bloodless, the fruit of the ground, the other was typical of Christ, the Lamb of God, and was therefore accepted: "and the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering."

Now, beloved, our first view of Christ usually is here, to know Him ourselves. I am a sinner, and I want to have communion with my God; how shall I obtain it? I am guilty, I am sinful; how shall I draw near to the holy God? Here is the answer. Take the Lord Jesus Christ to be yours by faith, and bring Him to God; you must be accepted if you bring Christ with you. The Father never repelled the Son, nor one who was clothed with the Son's righteousness, or who pleaded the Son's merit. Come you, as Abel came, not with fruits of your own growing, but with the sacrifice of blood, with Christ the holy Victim, the spotless Lamb of God, and so coming, whoever you may be, you shall be acceptable before God by faith. Now, behold Him, each one of you for yourself!

I know what someone will say, "I hope to do that by-and-by." I hope you do not so deceive yourself. I have heard that there was once a great meeting in the den of the arch-enemy, and he was stirring up his myrmidons to seek the destruction of men. One of the them said, "I have gone forth, and I have told men that there is no God, and no hereafter, and no difference between sin and righteousness, and that they may live as they like"; and there was considerable approbation among the evil spirits. But Satan himself said, "Thou hast done small service, for man has a conscience, and his conscience teaches him better; he knows that there is a God, he knows that there is a difference between sin and righteousness, he knows that there must be future punishment; you have done but little." Then another stood up, and said, "I have done better, I think, most mighty chieftain, for I have told them that the Bible is a worn-out book, that it was a fable at the first, and that they need not believe it." There was a round of cheers, for they said that he had done splendid service for the cause of darkness; but Satan said, "It is in vain that you meddle with the old Book, it has taken care of itself, and it can still do so. There is no shaking, it is like a rock. Thou hast done service for a time, but it will soon pass away." And scarcely did anyone of the fallen spirits venture to bring forward his boasting in the presence of the terrible master who sat it the midst of them; but, at last, one said, "I have told men that they have souls, and there is a God, and that the Bible is true. I have left them to believe as they will, but I have whispered in their ear that there is plenty of time to consider all this." Then there was a hush, and the great master of demons said, "Thou hast done best of all. This is my great net in which I take more souls that with any other, this net of procrastination or delay." Therefore say I to you, my hearers, disappoint the fiend. Fly to Jesus at once, Behold, not tomorrow, but tonight, behold the Lamb of God, each man for himself.

Now turn over the pages of the grand old Book, and you will find the Lamb in another connection. Israel was in Egypt, and there they had the *lamb for the family*, "In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house." Oh, I wish that you would all go on to behold the Lamb of God for your households! "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Why do you stop before you finish this verse? What said the apostle to the trembling jailer? Not merely all that I have quoted, but more; "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, *and thy house*." Are there not many believers who do not believe for their house. Come, now, and believe in his provision of the Lamb for the house. Trust the grace of God for that little girl, the last born, and for that boy who is still at school, who does not think much of these things as yet; and for that son of yours who has left home, and gone out as an apprentice. Oh, that the Lamb of God might be for him! Pray for him, tonight; and you older parents, pray for your sons who are married, and your daughters who have taken to themselves husbands, and are away from you. The Lamb is for the house, pray for the whole household tonight; take in your grandchildren, all you old folks, all of them who are in your house. Pray that the Lamb may be for the house. I do bless God that I can look upon all my household, and rejoice that they are converted to Christ. My father has this joy, too; and my grandfather also had that joy. Oh, it is a great bliss to have families, generation after generation, all brought to Christ without exception! Why should it no be so? Let us cry for it; surely we may expect the same blessing that God gave to His chosen people under the law, and expect it more largely. Grace does not run in the blood, but grace often runs side by side with it, so that Abraham is loved, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, and Ephraim, and Manasseh. Thus the covenant blessing goes from one to another. Please with God, tonight, that all in your house may be beneath the sprinkled blood of the lamb, and be saved from the destroying angel, and that all with you may go out of Egypt to have a possession in the land of the promised.

A little further on, following the Scripture, and asking you still to behold the Lamb, in the twenty-ninth chapter of that famous Book of Exodus, at the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth verses, we come across God's command for *the lamb for the people*. "Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually. The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even." Here is the lamb for all the chosen people, the lamb for Israel. It began with the unit, it went on to the family; and here the Lord, who "loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwelling of Jacob," makes His tabernacle to be the central place where a lamb shall be offered for the whole nation. Think of it with delight, tonight, that Christ died for all His chosen people. He hath redeemed them from among men. Though they be as many as the stars for number, or as the sand on the sea-shore innumerable, yet that one Sacrifice has redeemed them all. Glory be to God for the blood of the Lamb, by which the whole of Christ's people are redeemed!

Then let your mind take wing right out of the Old Testament into the New, for I have not time to trace all the successive steps. Come now to John, saying, in the twenty-ninth verse of this chapter, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Now you have gone beyond the bounds of Israel, and have come to *the Lamb for the world*. You have come to the Lamb of God, who dies for Gentiles as well as Jews, for men in the isles of the sea, for men in the wilds of Africa, for men of every color, and every race, and every time, and every clime. Oh, glory be to God, wherever there are men, we may go and tell them of Christ! Wherever there are men born of Adam's race, we may tell them of the second Adam, to whom looking, they who shall live, and in

Him they shall find eternal life. I love to think of the breaking down of the bounds that shut in the flow of grace to one nation. Behold, it flows over all Asia Minor, at first, and then over all Greece, and then to Rome, and Paul talks of going to Spain, and the gospel is borne across the sea to England, and from this country it has gone out unto the utmost of the earth.

Well, now, take your flight, if you can get beyond that, away to heaven itself, and there you will see *the Lamb for all heaven*. Look at Revelation, the seventh chapter, and the fourteenth verse; no, you need not look it out, you know it. All the saints in heaven are standing in the glittering ranks, white-robed, pure as the driven snow. They sing and praise one glorious name; when one of the elders first asked the question, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?" he himself gave the answer, "These are they which came out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

'Round the altar priests confess,
If their robes are white as snow,
'Twas the Saviour's righteousness,
And his blood that made them so.

The blood of the lamb has whitened all the saints who are in heaven; they sing of Him who loved them, and saved them from their own sins in His own blood. I have often wondered why that second word was not brought into our translation, for it so beautifully fits the language of the beloved Apostle John: "Unto him that loved us and saved us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us king and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." There is no whiteness in heaven but what the Lamb has wrought, no brightness there but what the Lamb has bought; everything there shows the wondrous power and surpassing merit of the Lamb of God.

If it be possible to think of something more glorious than I have already described, I think you will find it in the fifth chapter of Revelation, at the thirteenth verse: "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." The day shall come when, from every place that God has made, there shall be heard the voice of praise unto the Lamb; there shall be found everywhere men and women redeemed by blood, angels and glorious spirits, rejoicing to adore Him who was, and is, and is to come, the Almighty Lamb of God.

I think I have given you something to consider if you turn over the pages of Scripture, and follow the track of the bleeding Lamb.

II. But now, taking you again over the same road a little, I want you, in the second place, TO BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD IN HIS BENEDICTIONS TO MEN.

The first blessing of all is that of Abel. *He was accepted of God*; he offered a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain. Well now, let anybody here, who does not know it, try to learn this lesson tonight. You can only be "accepted in the Beloved." God loves His Son with such an overflowing love that He has love enough for you, love enough for me, if we are in Christ Jesus. He is the great conduit or channel of God's love, and that love flows through all the pipes to every soul that believes in Jesus. Hide behind your Lord, and you are safe. Trust His name, living and dying, and nothing can harm you. How many dear hearts, when passing through the valley of death-shade, when grim thoughts have clustered about them, have been cheered, and comforted by the thought of Christ! Remember the monk who, as he died, put away the priest, and the crucifix, and everything else,

and cried, "*Tua vulnera, Jesu! Tua vulnera, Jesu!*" "Thy wounds, Jesus! Thy wounds, Jesus!" I am not saved by what I can do, but by what He has done; not by what I have suffered, but by what He has endured. There hangs our everlasting hope; we trust to Christ in life and in death, and we are accepted for His sake. Come, every sinner, bring the Lamb of God; put Him on the altar, and you shall be accepted at once, and you may at once begin to praise the name of the Lord.

But then, as we go on, we find this Lamb of God useful, not only for acceptance, but also for *rescue and deliverance*. It is a dark and dreadful night; Egypt shivers, and stands aghast; and just at twelve at night forth flies an angel, armed with the sword of death. In every house of Egypt there is heard a wail, for the firstborn is dead, from the firstborn of Pharaoh to the firstborn of the woman who turns the mill to grind the daily corn. Death is in every house; nay, stay; there are houses wherein there is no death. What has secured those habitations? The father took a lamb, shed its blood, dipped the bunch of hyssop in it, and smeared the lintel and the two side posts; and then all sat down and feasted on the lamb undisturbed, and calm and happy. They rejoiced to have for food that lamb whose blood was the ensign of their safety. There was no crying there, no dying there; death could not touch the inhabitants of the house that was marked with the blood of the Paschal lamb. Beloved, you and I are perfectly safe if we are sheltered beneath the blood of the Lamb of God; nothing can harm us, everything must bless us; and we may go to our beds tonight singing—

Sprinkled afresh with pardoning blood,
I lay me down to rest,
As in the embraces of my God,
Or on my Saviour's breast.

We may rise tomorrow morning, if we are spared, and go into this busy world without any fear. The broad arrow of the King is set upon us in the blood-mark of the atoning sacrifice, and we are safe, and safe forever. Glory be to the name of the Lord for this!

Nor was that all. As I have told you, the blood of the Paschal lamb was not only sprinkled for the protection of the house, but its flesh was the *food* of the inmates. Oh, brethren, we do not at first know what it is to feed of Christ! We are satisfied to be sprinkled with His blood; but the believer afterwards find that Christ is the food of his soul. His blood is drink, indeed, and His flesh is meat, indeed. Oh, what a festival have we kept over the person of our Lord! Sometimes, when faint and hungry, we have begun to think of the Incarnate God, the bleeding Lamb, the full atonement paid, and we have said, "My soul is full, satisfied with favor, full of the blessing of the Lord." I do not know what there is in the gospel if you take away the atoning sacrifice; it seems to me that there would be nothing left but chaff, which might suit asses and horses, but would not be fit for men. Look to Jesus dying in our stead, and here is something for the soul to feed upon, aye, and to be satisfied with, as with marrow and fatness!

I pointed you a little further on, to the lamb in the wilderness, the lamb offered up every day; that brings us to another point in our Lord's work. We have had Christ for acceptance, Christ for safety, and Christ for food, now we have Christ for *perpetual resort*. The Lamb of God in the morning! Oh, blessed be God for a Saviour in the morning! If the night has gathered aught evil, He doth then disperse it, as the sun dispels the darkness. But oh, what a precious thing also to have the Lamb of God in the evening! If in the day we have soiled our feet in traversing this busy world, here we come to the fountain, and we are made clean through the blood of the Lamb. Perpetual merit, perpetual intercession, perpetual life-giving, perpetual salvation, flow from Jesus Christ the Lamb of God. He is not slain twice; His one wonderful offering has finished transgression, and

made an end of sin; but its efficacy continues as though He were sacrificed often, ever supplying us with merit, so that, in effect. His wounds continually do bleed. He is always a new Saviour for me every morning, always a new Saviour every night, and ; yet always the same Saviour, the same Christ. There is no getting weary of Him, there is nothing "stale" in Him. They may talk about "a new view of the atonement." I have no view of the atonement but this, "Who loved me, and gave himself for me"; "Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree"; and that old view of the atonement is ever fresh and ever new to the heart and conscience.

Well now, beloved, when we come to John again, following our former run of thought, we find the Lamb of God useful for *guidance*, for when John said, "Behold the Lamb of God," the two disciples followed Jesus; and we read of some, "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." The Lamb is our Guide. The Lord is a Shepherd as well as a Lamb, and the flock following in His footsteps is safely led. My soul, when thou wantest to know which way to go, behold the Lamb of God! Ask, "What would Jesus do?" Then do thou what Jesus would have done in such a case, and thou canst not do amiss.

Further on we find a passage as this, telling us of *victory* through the Lamb of God: "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb." The Lamb is a great Warrior, there is none like Him. Is He not the Lion of the tribe of Judah? Though He be gentle as a lamb, yet against sin and iniquity He is fiercer than a young lion when it roareth on its prey. If we follow Him, hold fast His truth, believe in His atonement, and perpetually proclaim His gospel, we shall overcome all error, and all sin, and all evil.

Well now, this blessed Lamb—it is not easy to leave off talking about Him when one once begins—is so blessed that you may well behold Him, for all *happiness* comes through Him. In heaven you will see nothing without Him. "Nothing?" say you. No, nothing; here is a proof of my words. "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." All the light, the knowledge, the joy, the bliss of heaven, come through the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Not Jesus only, but Jesus slain, Jesus the Lamb of God, is the very light of heaven.

And what, think you, is the joy-day of heaven, the time for the highest *exultation*? Why, the joyous day when all the golden bells shall peal out their glorious melodies, and all the silver trumpets shall ring out their jubilant notes, will be the day of the marriage of the Lamb. It is the heaven of heaven, the climax of ineffable delight; and the voice of the great multitude, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, sings, "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." So that, at the topmost round of the ladder of eternal bliss, there do you find the Lamb. You cannot get beyond Him. He gives you all He has, even Himself. Behold Him, then, and go on beholding Him throughout the countless ages of eternity.

I would to God that you had all beheld Him, and I pray you to behold Him tonight. It is but a little while, and the death-film will gather about your eyes; and if you have not seen the Lamb while yet you have mortal eyes, you will see Him, you will certainly see Him, but your vision will be like that of Balaam, "I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh." If it is with you "not now," it may be "not nigh" It will be an awful thing to see the Lamb with a gulf between yourself and Him, for there is a great impassable gulf fixed in the next world; and when you see Him across that gulf, how will you feel? Then shall you cry to the mountains and rocks. "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb!"

Jesus will still be a Lamb, even to the lost; it is "the wrath of the Lamb" that they will dread. The Lamb is always conspicuous; He may be neglected, rejected, refused tonight, but He will be beheld in eternity, and beheld to your everlasting confusion and unutterable dismay if you refuse to behold Him now. Let it not be so with any of you.

Ye sinners, seek his face,
Whose wrath ye cannot bear;
Fly to the shelter of his cross,
And find salvation there.
Amen.

Witnessing Better Than Knowing the Future

A Sermon

(No. 2330)

Intended for Reading on Lord's-Day, October 15th, 1893,

Delivered By

C. H. SPURGEON,

At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington

On Thursday Evening, August 29th, 1889.

"When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."—Acts 1:6-8.

THESE ARE AMONG THE LAST WORDS of our Lord. We greatly prize the last words of good men. Let us set high store by these later words of our ascending Lord. It is very curious to my mind that Jesus should make mention of John the Baptist and of John's baptism in these last words. Read the fifth verse: "John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." It is very usual for good men's memories, in their last hours, to go back to their first hours. I trust that some of us will think of our baptism even when we are dying.

"High heaven, that beard the solemn vow,
That vow renew'd shall daily hear:
Till in life's latest hour I bow,
And bless in death a bond so dear."

Our Lord began in such a way that he could afford to look back on his beginning. Some do not commence so; their beginning is so undecided, so imperfect, so hesitating, that they may well wish to have it forgotten. But our Lord, at the close of his sojourn on earth, thinks of John the Baptist, and pays him a dying word of respect just before he is taken up into glory. I like to notice that interesting fact.

But, now, to come more to the text, a question was put to our Lord. Many questions were asked of him by his disciples, some of them not very wise ones. We are very glad that they asked them, for they have extracted from the Savior a great amount of instruction; and although this question about restoring the kingdom to Israel may have been a mistaken one, and they may have meant a more material and carnal kingdom than our Savior intended to establish (of that I am not sure), yet the question brought to us a reply which we may well store up in our memories and hearts: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

We have three things to talk about to-night; first, *some things which are not for us*; secondly, *some things for us to receive*; and thirdly, *something for us to be*.

I. First, then, let us consider SOME THINGS WHICH ARE NOT FOR US. It is not for us to know the times and the seasons, and to be able to make a map of the future. There are some great

events of the future very clearly revealed. The prophecy is not at all indistinct about the facts that will occur; but as to when they will occur, we have no data. Some think that they have; but our Lord here seems to say that we do not know the times and the seasons, and that it is not for us to know them. I pass no censure upon brethren who think that, by elaborate calculations, they find out what is to be in the future; I say that I pass no censure, but time has passed censure of the strongest kind upon all their predecessors. I forget how many miles of books interpreting prophecy there are in the British Museum; but I believe it amounts to miles, all of which have been disproved by the lapse of time. Some of the writers were wonderfully definite; they knew within half-an-hour when the Lord would come. Some of them were very distinct about all the events; they had mapped them all within a few years. The men who wrote the books, happily for themselves, had mostly died before the time appointed came. It is always wise to pitch on a long period of prophecy, that you may be out of the way if the thing does not come off; and they mostly did so. There were very few of them who lived to suffer the disappointment which would certainly have come to them through having fixed the wrong date. I let time censure their mistake. God forgave it, for they did it with a desire for his glory. The bulk of them were most sincere students of the Word, and herein are a lesson to us, even though they were mistaken in their calculations; but, beloved, it is not for you to know the times and the seasons.

First, *it is not proper for you*. It is not your work. You are not sent into the world to be prophets; you are sent into the world to be witnesses. You do not come here to be prognosticators of the events of tomorrow about yourself, or about your children, or about your friends, or about the nations of the earth. A veil hangs between you and the future. Your prayer is to be, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." You are told to look for the coming of your Lord, and to stand in perpetual expectation of his return; but to know the time when he will come, is no part of your office. You are servants who are to look for your Lord, who may come at cock-crowing, or at midday, or at midnight. Keep you always on the tiptoe of expectation. It would be wrong for you to profess that you need not watch until such and such a time, for he would not come until such a date arrived.

As it is not proper for you, so *it is not profitable for you*. What would you be the better if you could make a map of all that is yet to be? Suppose it were revealed to you to-night, by an angel, in what respect would it alter your conduct for to-morrow? In what Way would it help you to perform the duties which your Master has enjoined upon you? I believe that it would be to you a very dangerous gift; you would be tempted to set yourself up as an interpreter of the future. If men believed in you, you would become eminent and notable, and you would be looked upon with awe. The temptation would be to become a prophet on your own account, to head a new sect, to lead a new company of men to believe in yourself. I say that that would be the temptation. For my part, I would rather not know any more than my Lord pleases to reveal to me; and if he did reveal all the future to me, I should feel like the prophets who spake of "the burden of the Lord." Neither would it ensure your salvation to be able to foretell the future, for Balaam was a great prophet, but he was a great sinner; he was an arch-rebel although he was an arch-divine. Nor do I know that, by foretelling the future, you would convince your fellow-men; for Noah told them that the world would be destroyed by the flood, he could give them a very accurate account of the time when the rain would descend, and yet they were not converted by his preaching, neither did they come into the ark. Those truths which God has revealed, you must accept for yourselves and proclaim to

others; they are profitable for all purposes, and sufficient for your work; but the future is known only to God.

And as it is not proper or profitable, so *it is not possible for you* to know the times and the seasons. You may study as you will, and pray as you please; but the times and the seasons are not committed to you. Our Lord, as man, spoke of one great event of which he did not know the time: "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." He does not say that now that he has risen from the dead, but he seems to hint that he did not know so as to tell his disciples; he must keep secret, even from them, that, which the Father hath put in his own power."

Notice, next, dear friends, that *it is not good for you* to know the times and the seasons. That is what the Savior means when he says, "It is not for you to know." For, first, it would distract your attention from the great things of which you have to think. It is enough for your mind to dwell upon the cross and the coming glory of your Lord. Keep these two things distinctly before you, and you need not puzzle your brains about the future. If you did know that something important was going to happen very speedily, you might be full of consternation, and do your work in a great hurry. You might be worked up into a frenzy that would spoil all your service. Or, if there was a long time to elapse before the great event, you might feel the indifference of distance. If our Lord were not to come for another hundred years, and he may not, we cannot tell,—then we might say, "My Lord delayeth his coming," and so we might begin to sleep, or to play the wanton. It is for our good to stand ever in this condition, knowing that he is coming, knowing that he will reign, knowing that certain great events will certainly transpire; but not knowing the exact times and seasons when those events are to be expected.

But there is something better than knowing the times or the seasons; *it is good for us to know that they are in the Father's power*: "which the Father hath put in his own power." The events will come to pass, then, in due time. The future is all in God's hand. No prophecy will lack its mate. No word of God will fall unfulfilled to the ground. Possess your souls in patience: the things that are foretold are sure to happen. "Though the vision tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." I am persuaded that God never is before his time, but he never is too late. He never failed to keep tryst with his people to the tick of the clock. The future is in the Father's power.

And especially let it be remembered that it is in his power as our Father. He must arrange it rightly; he must arrange it in infinite love to us. It cannot be that, in some dark hour yet to come, he will forget us. He is our Father; will he forget his children? If the times could be in my hand, how earnestly would I pray that Christ would take them into his hand, or that the Father would take away from me the dangerous power, and wield it all himself! Did we not sing just now,—

"All my times are in thy hand,
All events at thy command"?

The time of birth, the time of the new birth, the time of a sore trial, the time of the death of your beloved one, the time of your sickness, and how long it shall last, all these times must come, and last, and end, as shall please your Father. It is for you to know that your Father is at the helm of the ship, and therefore it cannot be wrecked. It may rock and reel to and fro; but, since he rules the waves, the vessel will not have one more tossing than his infinite love permits. Let us, then, not seek to unroll the map of the future, but calmly say,—

"My God, I would not long to see
My fate with curious eyes,

What gloomy lines are writ for me,
Or what bright scenes arise;"

but just leave it all with God. The Father hath it in his own hands, and there we wish it to be. So much concerning some things which are not for us.

II. And now, secondly, there are **SOME THINGS FOR US TO RECEIVE**. The Savior said to the eleven that they were to wait at Jerusalem till they had received power by the Holy Ghost coming upon them. This is what we want; we want the Holy Ghost. We often speak about this; but, in truth, it is unspeakable, the power of the Holy Ghost, mysterious, divine. When it comes upon a man, he is bathed in the very essence of the Deity. The atmosphere about him becomes the life and power of God. There is an old proverb that knowledge is power; Christ has taken away the knowledge that is not power. He said, "It is not for you, child; it is not for you." But he gives you the knowledge that is power; or, rather, that power which is better than all knowledge, the power of the Holy Spirit. Gotthold, in his parables, speaks of his little child who wanted to come into his room; but he was doing something there which he did not wish the child to see, and so he went on with his work, when, to his horror and surprise, he found that his child had in some way climbed up outside the window, and was standing on the sill trying to look in to see what his father was doing hazarding his life in the attempt. You may guess that it was not long before that child was taken down with a pat, and something more, to teach him not to pry into his father's secrets. It is so with some of us; we need just a little pat, and perhaps more than that, to keep us from looking into things that do not belong to us. We may be comforted even if we do not know the times and the seasons, for we may get something vastly better, namely, the Holy Spirit to give us real power for our life-work.

The Holy Spirit gives to his people power which may be looked at from different points. He gave to some of them in the olden times *miraculous power*, and they went forth, having received the Spirit of God, to do great signs and wonders in the name of Christ. If you have not that, you may hope to have *mental power*. The Holy Spirit does not educate us, or give us culture after the common method of men, and yet there is an inner education and a higher culture which is much more to be desired, which comes from him. He leads us into all truth; he makes us feel the force of truth; he gives us a grip of truth; he writes truth upon the heart; he applies it to the understanding. Many a man has become quick of understanding in the fear of the Lord, who was very slow of understanding in other respects. The Holy Spirit takes the fool, and makes him know the wonders of redeeming love. It is amazing how persons, of very scanty gifts, and very small attainments, have, nevertheless, become wise toward God, their mental faculties being quickened with regard to heavenly things in a very remarkable manner.

The power of the Spirit is also, in part, *moral power*. He gives to men qualities that make them strong and influential over their fellow-men, he imparts dauntless courage, calm confidence, intense affection, burning zeal, deep patience, much-enduring perseverance. Many other hallowed influences besides these are graces of the Spirit of God, which form in men a moral power exceedingly useful and exceedingly forcible. I have known men who have been slow of speech, and who have exhibited very few gifts, who have, nevertheless, been very strong men in our assemblies, true pillars of the church, for piety is power, and grace is power.

Besides that, there is a more secret, subtle power still, *spiritual power*, wherein, in the spiritual world, a man is made a prince with God, and hath power with God; and learning how to prevail with God for men, he catches the art of prevailing with men for God. He is first a wrestler alone by Jabbok; then he becomes a wrestler in the midst of the host of sinners, conquering them for

Christ, taking them captive in the name of the Most High. Power in prayer is the highest form of power; and communion with God is power; and holiness, above all things, is a great power among the sons of men.

This spiritual power makes a man influential, in a sense very different from that in which the world uses the word "influential"—a disgraceful use of the word. We want men who have influence in the divinest sense, men who, somehow or other, cast a spell over their fellow-men. In their presence men cannot do what they are accustomed to do elsewhere; when these men are in any company, they check sin without a word, they incite to righteousness almost without a sentence. They carry everything before them, not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord who dwells in them. Have I not seen some, decrepit and bedridden, yet ruling a house, and influencing a parish? Have I not seen some tottering old woman who, nevertheless, has been a very queen in the circle in which she moved? Have I not seen some poor, humble rustic from the plough who, nevertheless, has worn a coronet in the midst of his fellow-men by the holiness of his life, and the spiritual power that God the Holy Ghost had imparted to him?

Now, beloved, I have not time fully to describe this endowment; I have only mentioned one or two points in which it is seen, but this endowment is what we need before we can do anything for Christ. Do you always think enough of this? The teacher prepares her lesson; but does she also prepare herself by seeking the power of the Holy Spirit? The minister studies his text; but does he ask for a baptism of the Holy Ghost? I am afraid that this spiritual qualification, the most essential of all, is frequently overlooked. Then, the Lord have mercy upon us! The soldier had better go to battle without sword or rifle, the artilleryman had better wheel up his gun without powder or shot, than that we should attempt to win a soul until first of all the Holy Spirit has given us power. Power must go with the word that is preached or taught if any large result is to follow; and that power must first be in the man who speaks that word.

For this power the disciples were to wait. The world was dying, bell was raging, yet they must tarry at Jerusalem till they had that power. Impetuous Peter must hold his tongue, and loving John must be quiet and must commune in secret with his Master. None of them must go out into the street or stand in the temple to proclaim the words of this life. They must stop till God should see fit to pour out his Spirit upon them; and I would to God that sometimes we could be quiet, too. It were better to be dumb than to speak only in the power of our own spirit. It were better to lay the finger on the lip than to begin to talk before our message has been burnt into us by the Holy Ghost. Wait for the live coal from off the altar to blister thy lip, for then only canst thou speak with power when thou thyself hast felt the fire of the Spirit.

III. Now we pass on to the third point, which is a very important practical one, SOMETHING FOR US TO BE. If you are a disciple of Christ, you are not to look into the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power; you are to receive the Spirit of God, and then there is something for you to be. Did you expect me to say that then there is *something for you to do*? Well, there is a great deal for you to do; but the text says, "Ye shall be witnesses"; not "Ye shall act as witnesses" only, but "Ye *shall be* witnesses." Every true Christian should, in his own proper person, be a witness for his Lord. "Here I stand," says he, "myself a proof of what my Lord can do. I, his servant, saved by him, and renewed by him, washed in his blood, it is I who, while I live, whether I speak or not, am a monument of his love, a trophy of his grace." "Ye shall be Witnesses unto me."

Dear friends, we are to be *witnesses of what Christ has done*. If we have seen Christ, if we believe in Christ, let us tell it honestly. These apostles had a great deal to tell. They had been with

Christ in private; they had seen his miracles; they had heard his choicest and more secret words; they had to go and bear witness to it all. And you, who have been let into the secrets of Christ, you who have communed with him more closely than others, you have much to tell. Tell it all, for whatever he has said to you in the closet you are to proclaim upon the housetop. You are to witness what you have seen, and tasted, and handled, concerning your Lord.

You are to *witness to what he has revealed*, to make known to others the doctrine that he preached, or taught by his apostles. Mind that you do not tell any other. You are not sent to be "an original thinker", to make up a gospel as you go along; you are a witness, that is all, a retailer of Christ's truth, and you miss the end of your life unless you perpetually witness, and witness, and witness to what you know of him, and to what you have learnt from him. Let this be your prayer and your resolve,—

"Give me thy strength, O God of power!

Then let winds blow, or thunders roar,

Thy faithful witness will I be:

'Tis fixed: I can do all through thee."

You are to *witness to what you have experienced concerning Christ*. Now, what is that? I will just run over this witness, feeling that there are many hundreds of dear friends here to-night who could bear the same testimony, and who will do so as they have opportunity.

First, I beg to say to all present here, to-night, that the Lord Jesus Christ can remove despair, and every form of spiritual distress. He did so to me. I was full of darkness, the shadow of death was upon me, and I found no comfort till I heard that blessed text, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." I looked unto him, and was lightened, and my face was not ashamed; and I am here tonight to bear witness that it load was thus taken from me, which I could not get rid of in any other way, and my midnight was, in a single moment, turned into the blaze of midday. Neither have I ever gone back to that darkness, nor have I again had reason to cry, "Woe is me that ever I was born." Nay, there is in the name of Jesus a balm for every mental wound, a relief for all the agony of a tortured spirit. I am sure of it; I am not saying to you what I have merely heard from other people, but what I have myself felt, and there are many here who can endorse my testimony that there is no relief to a sinner's aching heart Like that which Jesus brings. I wish that you would all prove this truth for yourselves; but, at any rate, we are witnesses that it is so.

And, next, our Lord Jesus is a great transformer of character. I do not like to speak of myself, but I will speak of many a man whom I know. He came into this Tabernacle a drunkard, a swearer, a lover of unholy pleasures, and while the Word was preached, the Lord broke him down, and melted his heart. Now he hates what once he loved; and as to those pursuits which were once distasteful to him, so that he cursed and swore at the very mention of them, or at least poured ridicule upon others who loved them, he now loves them himself, and it is a wonder to himself to find himself where he now is. He never dreamt of being what he is. Ask his wife whether there is a change in him; ask his little children whether there is a change in him; ask his workmates, ask his employer, ask anybody, and they will all say, "He is not the same man." The Lord Jesus Christ has turned everything upside down with him. It was the wrong way up before, and so he has put it all right. He can turn the lion into a lamb, the raven into a dove; and he has done so to many of our friends who are sitting in this house to-night, as they would willingly bear witness. Oh, if there are any here, to-night, who would learn the way of righteousness, and quit the paths of sin, let them believe my testimony, which comes not out of feigned lips! "I speak the truth in Christ, and lie

not." The Lord is able to transform character in a very wonderful way; he has done it for many of us, and if thou believest in him, he will do it for thee also.

Next, we should like to bear witness to the sustaining power of Christ under temptation. After being saved, we have been tempted, and we are men of like passions with others. I speak for my sisters as well as for my brothers here. We have all been tempted, and we have been well nigh thrown back to our old condition; but when we have fled to Christ, and trusted in him, our feet have stood firm even upon the brink of the precipice. We have passed through fire and water by way of trial and temptation, and yet we stand, for Christ is able to guard us even from stumbling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with In exceeding joy. We are not talking to you of things that we have dreamt. O sirs, we would not like to tell some of you how we have been tempted, how hard it has gone with us, how we have been saved by the skin of our teeth; but saved we have been, to the praise of God's mighty grace. Let his name be praised for ever and ever. That is our witness. If you would be kept from temptation, come and trust him, too.

We wish also to say that the Spirit of God coming from Christ moves men to high and noble thoughts. Selfishness no longer rules the man who believes in Christ; he loves his fellow-men, he desires their good, he can forgive them if they persecute him, he can lay down his life for them. Have we not had many who have gone forth among the heathen, and laid down their lives for Christ? I was speaking with a brother from the Congo on Monday, and I spoke of the many deaths there, and he said, "Yes, it looks a sad. thing that so many missionaries should die; but, sir," he added, "that is the first thing that we have done in Africa that is really hopeful. I have often heard the natives say to me, 'These men must believe a true religion, or else they would not come here to die for us poor black men.' Men begin to believe this new kind of evidence. The blood of the missionary becomes the seed of the Church." I do not doubt that it is so and, beloved, if you and I can live wholly and alone for Christ, if we can live nobly, if we can get out of ourselves, if we can rise superior to worldly advantages, and prove that we believe all we say, we shall convince our fellow-men of the truth of our religion. This is what the Holy Spirit would have us to be, and we desire to obey his promptings more and more.

"Holy Spirit, dwell in me;
I, myself, would holy be."

I will not detain you many minutes more; but I must bear my testimony to the supporting power of Christ in the time of trouble. There are many here, who would have been in the asylum, in their time of trial, if it had not been that they could carry their grief to Christ. There are some of us who are not strangers to very acute pain, and to a long continuance of it, too; and we have found no comfort in the world like going to our Lord when racked with anguish, and torn with pain. There is a power about him to charm us into joy; when everything would drive us to distress, and almost to despair.

And, specially, I want to bear my witness, not of course a personal one, but that of an observer, as to the power of our holy religion in the hour of death. I have been at many death-beds; I have seen many Christians just about to die. There it is that the power of our holy religion comes in. How calm, how resigned, sometimes how triumphant, how ecstatic, is the frame of mind of the departing believer! I never heard one of them regret that he was a Christian. In times when men sift what they have done and believed, and when they tell no lies, for the naked truth comes up before them, I have heard them glory in belonging to Christ, and in resting in him; but I have never heard them regret that they did so. Our religion is not all of the future; it is not a thing that dreams

concerning the world to come. It gives us present joy, present strength, present comfort, and we commend it to you most heartily, for this is our duty, to be witnesses for Christ. There are some who can give their evidence-in-chief, but the pity is that, when they come to be cross-examined, when they get among the ungodly in the world, they make a mess of it. The Lord have mercy upon some who come in among us, and even profess to know Christ, and do not; it is their lie that taints the testimony of the true in the judgment of mankind! Be you the more zealous to overbear their treachery by your consistency. Be you the more full of integrity, and stern truthfulness, and boundless love, to make up for these wounds which your Lord receives so often in the house of his friends.

May the Spirit of God rest upon you, beloved in the Lord, and may you hear your Master say to you, *Ye shall be witnesses unto me!* Amen.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—208, 663, 262.

Luke 4:16-30; 9:57-62; And Matthew 28:16-20.

We will read three short passages of Scripture, all relating to Christ's service. The first concerns the ministry of the Lord Jesus himself.

Luke 4:16-19. *And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.*

What a glorious passage! This was the text of Christ's whole ministry not only of that day at Nazareth, but of all his life ever after.

20. *And he closed the book,*

Rolled up the sacred writing,—

20. *And he gave it again, to the minister, and sat down.*

Their practice was to sit down to speak, while the people usually stood to hear; a very good custom, indeed. If we did the same, perhaps we should have fewer of our hearers going to sleep.

20,21. *And the eyes of all them that were in, the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.*

That is the way to preach; bring home the Scripture to the present time, show its application to every-day life, especially point out its connection with Christ, and prove how it is fulfilled and verified in his sacred person. Doubtless, Jesus said a great deal besides what is here recorded; but there were no shorthand writers there to take down every word he uttered.

22. *And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?*

There! Did it matter whose son Jesus was? Yet, in order to abate the force and even the blessedness of divine truth, men turn their thoughts to the Speaker rather than to what he says. How foolish!

23. *And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.*

"Begin at home, work miracles here. You are the Son of the carpenter who lives here; now, do some wonderful work among us."

24-26. *And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.*

Elias did not feel bound to labor always among the Jews, but he went right to Sidon, to a heathen woman, and he sojourned with the widow in the far-away country. God is a Sovereign; he can save whom he wills; and he will exercise that sovereignty, and bless some of those who appear to be most hopeless, and to have the least signs of good about them, and to be the farthest removed from the means of grace.

27. *And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.*

Only the stranger and foreigner was cured of the disease of leprosy; another instance of divine sovereignty. Men do not like this doctrine of sovereignty; they are willing to have a god if he is not God; they do not mind believing in a god who is not King, and who does not do as he wills with his own. They believe in free will, they say. Yes, yes, free will for everybody but God! Man is to be the god of man and of God, too, according to the talk of some. But this is the thunder from the divine throne: "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." Blessed is he who humbly boweth his head, and saith, "Be it so, my Lord!" Absolute power cannot be in better hands than in those of the God of love.

28. *And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,*

They were at first very pleased to have a promising young Preacher out of their own town, and they said one to another, "Did not he speak well?" Now they have changed their note; he has been too faithful for them. He has exalted God instead of man; and now they are filled with wrath.

29,30. *And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down, headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way.*

With that holy calm in which he always dwelt, with wondrous self-possession, he passed through the midst of them, and escaped their malice. Now let us read what Christ says to those who would be his followers. Turn to—

Luke 9:57. *And it came to pass, that, as they went in, the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.*

He was a volunteer; but his zeal was too hot to hold out long. He had never fully known what following Christ meant, so he came forward without a thought.

58. *And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man, hath not where to lay his head.*

He did not reckon on such hard fare as that, to lie hard, and live hard; so we hear no more of him. That is would-be follower number one.

59. *And he said unto another, Follow me.*

Not a volunteer this time; but one actually called by Christ, and commanded to come, a conscript, as it were.

59. *But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.*

We do not even know that his father was dead. He would like to stop at home till the old man was ready to be buried.

60. *Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.*

When Christ wants men to go upon his errands, they must make no excuses. The King's business requireth haste. The King's commands are peremptory. Other people could bury the dead; let them do it. They were not alive unto this holy ministry; they would therefore be doing right in stopping to bury the dead. When Christ says to a man, "Follow me," he must not let even the tenderest relationship detain him, or the most proper duties stand in the way of the highest duty. That is would-be follower number two. We hear no more of him.

61. *And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.*

"Lord, I will follow thee; but I must have time. I want a little allowance, and a permit to leave home. I will follow thee; but let me first go and bid them farewell, which are at home at my house." It might be a long distance; and as it was now Christ's time to send out the seventy, they must go at once, or not at all. This man intends to wait till he has gone, perhaps, fifty miles home, and back again.

62. *And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*

You must go at once when you have orders to go, and not even the courtesies of life, or the fondnesses of affection, may make you disobey the command of the Captain. It would be a pretty thing, in the day of battle, if the soldiers came to the general, and one said, "I must go back to bury my father," and another said, "I cannot fight, for I want to go and bid farewell to my mother." The country would soon be in a desperate state for want of soldiers; and the great King, whose war is more important than any other, will not have for soldiers those who talk in this fashion. So, you see, there are three would-be followers gone; but there are at least seventy faithful followers left, as the next chapter shows.

Our third reading will be at the end of the Gospel according to Matthew.

Matthew 28:16. *Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.*

Away from the haunts of men, where he had been wont to be, in a country familiar to them, and with which he was familiar, in a despised country, "Galilee of the Gentiles."

17. *And when they saw him, they worshipped him:*

Probably this was the occasion referred to by Paul, when the risen Savior "was seen of above five hundred brethren at once."

17. *But some doubted.*

There were some honest doubters then. The breed has been kept up ever since, only there are more dishonest doubters by a great deal than there are of honest ones now. We can never expect to be quite free from doubters in the church, since even in the presence of the newly-risen Christ "some doubted."

18. *And Jesus came and spake unto them,*

These words seem to imply that he came nearer to them than he was at first; unveiling himself still more, and revealing himself more clearly.

18,19. *Saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,*

"Teach", that is, disciple, make disciples of "all nations."

19,20. *Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:*

There is teaching again. It is as much the duty of the Christian to teach after baptism as to teach before baptism; he must be ever teaching. Hence believers are always to be learners, since Christ would have his servants always to be teachers: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." We are not to invent a gospel; we are not to change, and shift, and cut, and shape it to meet the advancement of the age; Christ's command is plain: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

20. *And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

They have their commission, here is the seal to it; here is the source of their power; here is the society in which they are to work: "Lo, I am with you alway." God grant that you and I, going forth to teach for Christ. may always have the sound of our Master's feet with us, even to the end of the world! Amen.

Christ's Pastoral Prayer for his People

A Sermon

(No. 2331)

Intended for Reading on Lord's-Day, October 22nd, 1893,

Delivered By

C. H. SPURGEON,

At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington

On Lord's-day Evening, September 1st, 1889.

"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them."—John 17:9-10.

TO BEGIN WITH, I remark that our Lord Jesus pleads for his own people. When he puts on his priestly breastplate, it is for the tribes whose names are there. When he presents the atoning sacrifice, it is for Israel whom God hath chosen; and he utters this great truth, which some regard as narrow, but which we adore, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world." The point to which I want to call attention is this, the reason why Christ prays not for the world, but for his people. He puts it, "For they are thine," as if they were all the dearer to him because they were the Father's: "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine." We might have half thought that Jesus would have said, "They are mine, and therefore I pray for them." It would have been true; but there would not have been the beauty of truth about it which we have here. He loves us all the better, and he prays for us all the more fervently, because we are the Father's. Such is his love to his Father, that our being the Father's sheds upon us an extra halo of beauty. Because we belong to the Father, therefore does the Savior plead for us with all the greater earnestness at the throne of the heavenly grace.

But this leads us on to remember that our Lord had undertaken suretyship engagements on account of his people; he undertook to preserve the Father's gift: "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost." He looked upon the sheep of his pasture as belonging to his Father, and the Father had put them into his charge, saying to him, "Of thine hand will I require them." As Jacob kept his uncle's flocks, by day the heat devoured him, and at night the frost but he was more careful over them because they were Laban's than if they had been his own; he was to give in an account of all the sheep committed to him, and he did so, and he lost none of Laban's sheep; but his care over them was partly accounted for by the fact that they did not belong to himself, but belonged to his uncle Laban.

Understand this twofold reason, then, for Christ's pastoral prayer for his people. He first prays for them because they belong to the Father, and therefore have it peculiar value in his eye; and next, because they belong to the Father, he is under suretyship engagements to deliver them all to the Father in that last great day when the sheep shall pass under the rod of him that telleth them. Now you see where I am bringing you to-night. I am not going to preach at this time to the world any more than Christ upon this occasion prayed for the world; but I am going to preach to his own people as he in this intercessory prayer pleaded for them. I trust that they will all follow me, step by step, through this great theme; and I pray the Lord that, in these deep central truths of the gospel we may find real refreshment for our souls to-night.

I. In calling your attention to my text, I want you to notice, first, THE INTENSITY OF THE SENSE OF PROPERTY WHICH CHRIST HAS IN HIS PEOPLE.

Here are *six words selling forth Christ's property in those who are saved*: "Them which thou hast *given me*"—(that is one); "for they are *thine*. And all *mine* are *thine*, and *thine* are *mine*; and I am glorified in them." There are certain persons so precious to Christ that they are marked all over with special tokens that they belong to him; as I have known it man write his name in a book which he has greatly valued, and then he has turned over some pages, and he has written his name again; and as we have sometimes known persons, when they have highly valued a thing, to put their mark, their seal, their stamp, here, there, and almost everywhere upon it. So, notice in my text how the Lord seems to have the seal in his hand, and he stamps it all over his peculiar possession: "They are *thine*. And all *mine* are *thine*, and *thine* are *mine*." It is all possessive pronouns, to show that God looks upon his people as his portion, his possession, his property. "They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I makeup my jewels." Every man has something or other which he values above the rest of his estate; and here the Lord, by so often reiterating the words which signify possession, proves that he values his people above everything. Let us show that we appreciate this privilege of being set apart unto God; and let us each one say to him—

"Take my poor heart, and let it be
For ever closed to all but thee!
Seal thou my breast, and let me wear
That pledge of love for ever there."

I call your attention, next, to the fact that, while there are these six expressions here, *they are all applied to the Lord's own people*. "Mine" (that is, the saints) are *thine* (that is, the saints); "and *thine*" (that is, the saints) I am *mine* (that is, the saints). These broad arrows of the King of kings are all stamped upon his people. While the, marks of possession are numerous, they are all set upon one object. What, doth not God care for anything else? I answer, No; as compared with his own people, he cares for nothing else. "The Lord's portion is his people: Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." Has not God other things? Ah, what is there that he has not? The silver and the gold are his, and the cattle on a thousand hills. All things are of God; of him, and by him, and through him, and to him are all things; yet he reckons them not in comparison with his people. You know how you, dearly beloved, value your children much more than you do anything else. If there were a fire in your house to-night, and you could only carry one thing out of it, mother, would you hesitate a moment as to what that one thing should be? You would carry your babe, and let everything else be consumed in the flames; and it is so with God. He cares for his people beyond everything else. He is the Lord God of Israel, and in Israel he hath set his name, and there he takes his delight. There doth he rest in his love, and over her doth he rejoice with singing.

I want you to notice these different points, not because I can fully explain them all to you; but if I can only give you some of these great truths to think about, and to help you to communion with Christ tonight, I shall have done well. I want you to remark yet further, concerning these notes of possession, that *they occur in the private intercourse between the Father and the Son*. It is in our Lord's prayer, when he is in the inner sanctuary speaking with the Father, that we have these words, "All mine are *thine*, and *thine* are *mine*." It is not to you and to me that he is talking now; the Son of God is speaking with the Father when they are in very near communion one with the other. Now, what does this say to me but that the Father and the Son greatly value believers? What people talk about when they are alone, not what they say in the market, not what they talk of in the midst of

the confused mob, but what they say when they are in private, that lays bare their heart. Here is the Son speaking to the Father, not about thrones and royalties, nor cherubim and seraphim, but about poor men and women, in those days mostly fishermen and peasant folk, who believed on him. They are talking about these people, and the Son is taking his own solace with the Father in their secret privacy by talking about these precious jewels, these dear ones that are their peculiar treasure. You have not any notion how much God loves you. Dear brother, dear sister, you have never yet had half an idea, or the tith of an idea, of how precious you are to Christ. You think, because you are so imperfect, and you fall so much below your own ideal, that, therefore, he does not love you much; you think that he cannot do so. Have you ever measured the depth of Christ's agony in Gethsemane, and of his death on Calvary? If you have tried to do so, you will be quite sure that, apart from anything in you or about you, he loves you with a love that passeth knowledge. Believe it. "But I do not love him as I should," I think I hear you say. No, and you never will unless you first know his love to you. Believe it; believe it to the highest degree, that he so loves you that, when there is no one who can commune with him but the Father, even then their converse is about their mutual estimate of you, how much they love you: "All mine are thine, and thine are mine."

Only one other thought under this head, and I do but put it before you, and leave it with you, for I cannot expound it to-night. *All that Jesus says is about all his people*, for he says, "All mine are thine, and thine are mine." These high, secret talks are not about some few saints who have reached a "higher life", but about all of us who belong to him. Jesus bears all of us on his heart, and he speaks of us all to the Father: "All mine are thine." "That poor woman who could never serve her Lord except by patient endurance, she is mine," says Jesus. "She is thine, great Father." "That poor girl, newly-converted, whose only spiritual life was spent upon a sick-bed, and then she exhaled to heaven, like a dewdrop of the morning, she is mine, and she is thine. That poor child of mine, who often stumbles, who never brought much credit to the sacred name, he is mine, and he is thine. All mine are thine." I seem as if I heard a silver bell ringing out; the very tones of the words are like the music from the harps of angels: "Mine,—thine; thine,—mine." May such sweet risings and fallings of heavenly melodies charm all our ears!

I think that I have said enough to show you the intensity of the sense of property which Christ has in his people: "All mine are thine, and thine are mine."

II. The next head of my discourse is, THE INTENSITY OF UNITED INTEREST BETWEEN THE FATHER AND THE SON CONCERNING BELIEVERS.

First, let me say that *Jesus loves us because we belong to the Father*. Turn that truth over. "My Father has chosen them, my Father loves them; therefore," says Jesus, "I love them, and I lay down my life for them, and I will take my life again for them, and live throughout eternity for them. They are dear to me because they are dear to my Father." Have you not often loved another person for the sake of a third one upon whom all your heart was set? There is an old proverb, and I cannot help quoting it just now; it is, "Love me, love my dog." It is as if the Lord Jesus so loved the Father that even such poor dogs as we are get loved by him for his Father's sake. To the eyes of Jesus we are radiant with beauty because God hath loved us.

Now turn that thought round the other way, *the Father loves us because we belong to Christ*. At first, the Father's love in election was sovereign and self-contained; but now, to-day, since he has given us over to Christ, he takes a still greater delight in us. "They are my Son's sheep," says he; "he bought them with his blood." Better Stilly "That is my Son's spouse," says he, "that is my Son's bride. I love her for his sake." There was that first love which came fresh from the Father's

heart, but now, through this one channel of love to Jesus, the Father pours a double flood of love on us for his dear Son's sake. He sees the blood of Jesus sprinkled on us; he remembers the token, and for the sake of his beloved Son he prizes us beyond all price. Jesus loves us because we belong to the Father, and the Father loves us because we belong to Jesus.

Now come closer still to the central thought of the text, *All mine are thine.*" *All who are the Son's are the Father's.* Do we belong to Jesus? Then we belong to the Father. Have I been washed in the precious blood? Can I sing to-night—

"The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;
And there have I, though vile as he,
Washed all my sins away"?

Then, by redemption I belong to Christ; but at the same time I may be sure that I belong to the Father: "All mine are thine." Are you trusting in Christ? Then you are one of God's elect. That high and deep mystery of predestination need trouble no man's heart if he be a believer in Christ. If thou believest in Christ, Christ hath redeemed thee, and the Father chose thee from before the foundation of the world. Rest thou happy in that firm belief, "All mine are thine." How often have I met with people puzzling themselves about election! They want to know if they are elect. No man can come to the Father but by Christ; no man can come to election except through redemption. If you have come to Christ, and are his redeemed, it is certain beyond all doubt that you were chosen of God, and are the Father's elect. "All mine are thine."

So, if I am bought by Christ's precious blood, I am not to sit down, and say how grateful I am to Christ as though he were apart from the Father, and more loving and more tender than the Father. No, no; I belong to the Father if I belong to Christ; and I have for the Father the same gratitude, the same love, and I would render the same service as to Jesus; for Jesus puts it, "All mine are thine."

If, to-night, also, I am a servant of Christ, if, because he bought me, I try to serve him, then I am a servant of the Father if I am a servant of the Son. "All mine, whatever position they occupy, belong to thee, great Father," and they have all the privileges which come to those who belong to the Father. I hope that I do not weary you; I cannot make these things entertaining to the careless I do not try to do so; but you who love my Lord, and his truth, ought to rejoice to-night to think that, in being the property of Christ, you are assured that you are the property of the Father. "All mine are thine."

"With Christ our Lord we share our part
In the affections of his heart;
Nor shall our souls be thence removed
Till he forgets his first-beloved."

But now you have to look at the other part of it: "and thine are mine." *All who are the Father's are the Son's.* If you belong to the Father, you belong to the Son. If you are elect, and so the Father's, you are redeemed, and so the Son's. If you are adopted, and so the Father's, you are justified in Christ, and so you are the Son's. If you are regenerated, and so are begotten of the Father, yet still your life is dependent upon the Son. Remember that, while one Biblical figure sets us forth as children who have each one a life within himself, another equally valid figure represents us as branches of the Vine, which die unless they continue united to the stem. "All thine are mine." If

you are the Father's, you must be Christ's. If your life is given you of the Father, it still depends entirely upon the Son.

What, a wonderful mixture all this is! The Father and the Son are one, and we are one with the Father and 'with the Son. A mystic union is established between us and the Father, by reason of our union with the Son, and the Son's union with the Father. See to what a glorious height our humanity has risen through Christ. By the grace of God, ye who were like stones in the brook are made sons of God. Lifted out of your dead materialism, you are elevated into a spiritual life, and you are united unto God. You have not any idea to-night of what God has already done for you, and truly it doth not yet appear what you shall be. A Christian man is the noblest work of God. God has hero reached the fullness of his power and his grace, in making us to be one with his own dear Son, and so bringing us into union and communion with himself. Oh, if the words that I speak could convey to you the fullness of their own meaning, you might spring to your feet, electrified with holy joy to think of this, that we should be Christ's, and the Father's, and that we should be thought worthy to be the object of intricate transactions and inter-communions of the dearest kind between the Father and the Son! We, even we, who are but dust and ashes at our very best, are favored as angels never were; therefore let all praise be ascribed to sovereign grace!

III. And now I shall only detain you a few minutes longer while I speak upon the third part of our subject, that is, THE GLORY OF CHRIST: "And I am glorified in them." I must confess that, while the former part of my subject was very deep, this third part seems to me to be deeper still, "I am glorified in them."

If Christ had said, "I will glorify them," I could have understood it. If he had said, "I am pleased with them," I might have set it down to his great kindness to them; but when he says, "I am glorified in them," it is very wonderful. The sun can be reflected, but you need proper objects to act as reflectors; and the brighter they are, the better will they reflect. You and I do not seem to have the power of reflecting Christ's glory; we break up the glorious rays that shine upon us; we spoil, we ruin so much of the good that falls upon us. Yet Christ says that he is glorified in us. Take these words home, dear friend, to yourself, and think that the Lord Jesus met you to-night, and as you went out of the Tabernacle, said to you, "Thou art mine, thou art my Father's; and I am glorified in thee." I dare not say that it would be a proud moment for you; but I dare to say that there would be more in it to make you feel exalted for him to say, "I am glorified in you," than if you could have all the honors that all the kings can put upon all men in the world. I think that I could say, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word," if he would but say to me, "I am glorified in thy ministry." I hope that he is; I believe that he is; but, oh, for an assuring word, if not spoken to us personally, yet spoken to his Father about us, as in our text, "I am glorified in them"!

How can this be? Well, it is a very wide subject. Christ is glorified in his people in many ways. *He is glorified by saving such sinners*, taking these people, so sinful, so lost, so unworthy. When the Lord lays hold upon a drunkard, a thief, an adulterer, when he arrests one who has been guilty of blasphemy, whose very heart is reeking with evil thoughts, when he picks up the far-off one, the abandoned, the dissolute, the fallen, as he often does, and when he says, "These Shall be mine; I will wash these in my blood; I will use these to Speak my word," oh, then, he is glorified in them! Read the lives of many great sinners who have afterwards become great saints, and you will see how they have tried to glorify him, not only she who washed his feet with her tears, but many another like her. Oh, how they have loved to praise him! Eyes have wept tears, lips have spoken

words, but hearts have felt what neither eyes nor lips could speak, of adoring gratitude to him. "I am glorified in them." Great sinners, Christ is glorified in you. Some of you Pharisees, if you were to be converted, would not bring Christ such glory as he gets through saving publicans and harlots. Even if you struggled into heaven, it would be with very little music for him on the road, certainly no tears and no ointment for his feet, and no wiping them with the hairs of your head. You are too respectable ever to do that; but when he saves great sinners, he can truly say, "I am glorified in them," and each of them can sing,—

"It passeth praises, that dear love of thine,
My Jesus, Savior: yet this heart of mine
Would sing that love, so full, so rich, so free,
Which brings a rebel sinner, such as me,
Nigh unto God."

And *Christ is glorified by the perseverance which he shows in the matter of their salvation.* See how he begins to save, and the man resists. He follows up his kind endeavor, and the man rebels. He hunts him, pursues him, dogs his footsteps. He will have the man, and the man will not have him. But the Lord, without violating the free will of man, which he never does, yet at length brings the one who was most unwilling to lie at his feet, and he that hated most begins to love, and he that was most stouthearted bows the knee in lowliest humility. It is wonderful how persevering the Lord is in the salvation of a sinner; ay, and in the salvation of his own, for you would have broken loose long ago if your great Shepherd had not penned you up within the fold. Many of you would have started aside, and have lost yourselves, if it had not been for constraints of sovereign grace which have kept you to this day, and will not let you go. Christ is glorified in you. Oh, when you once get to heaven, when the angels know all that you were, and all that you tried to be, when the whole story of almighty, infinite grace is told, as it will be told, then will Christ be glorified in you!

Beloved, *we actively glorify Christ when we display Christian graces.* You who are loving, forgiving, tender-hearted, gentle, meek, self-sacrificing, you glorify him; he is glorified in you. You who are upright, and who will not be moved from your integrity, you who can despise the sinner's gold, and will not sell your conscience for it, you who are bold and brave for Christ, you who can bear and suffer for his name's sake, all your graces come from him. As all the flowers are bred and begotten of the sun, so all that is in you that is good comes from Christ, the Sun of righteousness; and therefore he is glorified in you.

But, beloved, God's people have glorified Christ in many other ways. *When they make him the object of all their trust, they glorify him,* when they say, "Though I am the chief of sinners, yet, I trust him; though my mind is dark, and though my temptations abound, I believe that he can save to the uttermost, I do trust him." Christ is more glorified by a sinner's humble faith than by a seraph's loudest song. If thou believest, thou dost glorify him. Child of God, are you to-night very dark, and dull, and heavy? Do you feel half dead, spiritually? Come to your Lord's feet, and kiss them, and believe that he can save, nay, that he has saved you, even you; and thus you will glorify his holy name. "Oh!" said a believer, the other day, "I know whom I have believed; Christ is mine." "Ah!" said another, "that is presumption." Beloved, it is nothing of the kind; it is not presumption for a child to own his own father; it might be pride for him to be ashamed of his father; it is certainly great alienation from his father if he is ashamed to own him. "I know whom I have believed." Happy state of heart, to be absolutely sure that you are resting upon Christ, that he is your Savior, that you

believe in him, for Jesus said, "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." I believe on him, and I have everlasting life. "He that believeth on him is not condemned." I believe on him, and I am not condemned. Make sure work of this, not only by signs and evidences, but do even better; make the one sign and the one evidence to be this, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; I, a sinner, accept his great sacrifice, and I am saved."

Especially, I think that *God's people glorify Christ by a cheerful conversation*. If you go about moaning and mourning, pining and complaining, you bring no honor to his name; but if, when thou fastest, thou appear not unto men to fast, if thou canst wear a cheerful countenance, even when thy heart is heavy, and if, above all, thou canst rally thy spirit out of its depths, and begin to bless God when the cupboard is empty, and friends are few, then thou wilt indeed glorify Christ.

Many are the ways in which this good work may be done; let us try to do it. "I am glorified in them," says Christ; that is, *by their bold confession of Christ*. Do I address myself to any here who love Christ, but who have never owned it? Do come out, and come out very soon. He deserves to have all the glory that you can give him. If he has healed you, be not like the nine who forgot that Christ had healed their leprosy. Come and praise the name of the great Healer, and let others know what Christ can do. I am afraid that there are a great many here to-night who hope that they are Christians, but they have never said so. What are you ashamed of? Ashamed of your Lord? I am afraid that you do not, after all, love him. Now, at this time, at this particular crisis of the history of the Church and the world, if we do not publicly take sides with Christ, we shall really be against him. The time is come now when we cannot afford to have go-betweens. You must be for him or for his enemies; and to-night he asks you if you are really his, to say it. Come forward, unite yourself with his people, and let it be seen by your life and conversation that you do belong to Christ. If not, how can it be true, "I am glorified in them"? Is Christ glorified in a non-confessing people, a people that hope to go slinking into heaven by the by-roads or across the fields, but dare not come into the King's highway, and travel with the King's subjects, and own that they belong to him?

Lastly, I think that *Christ is glorified in his people by their efforts to extend his kingdom*. What efforts are you making? There is a great deal of force in a church like this; but I am afraid that there is a great deal of waste steam, waste power here. The tendency is, so often, to leave everything to be done by the minister, or else by one or two leading people; but I do pray you, beloved, if you be Christ's, and if you belong to the Father, if, unworthy though you be, you are claimed with a double ownership by the Father and the Son, do try to be of use to them. Let it be seen by your winning others to Christ that he is glorified in you. I believe that, by diligent attendance to even the smallest Sabbath-school class, Christ is glorified in you. By that private conversation in your own room, by that letter which you dropped into the post with many a prayer, by anything that you have done with a pure motive, trusting in God in order to glorify Christ, he is glorified in you. Do not mistake my meaning with regard to serving the Lord. I think it exceedingly wrong when I hear exhortations made to young people, "Quit your service as domestics, and come out into spiritual work. Business men, leave your shops. Workmen, give up your trades. You cannot serve Christ in that calling, come away from it altogether." I beg to say that nothing will be more pestilent than such advice as that. There are men called by the grace of God to separate themselves from every earthly occupation, and they have special gifts for the work of the ministry; but ever to imagine that the bulk of Christian people cannot serve God in their daily calling, is to think altogether contrary to the mind of the Spirit of God. If you are a servant, remain a servant. If you are a waiter, go on with your waiting. If you are a tradesman, go on with your trade. Let every man abide in the

calling wherein he is called, unless there be to him some special call from God to devote himself to the ministry. Go on with your employment, dear Christian people, and do not imagine that you are to turn hermits, or monks, or nuns. You would not glorify God if you did so act. Soldiers of Christ are to fight the battle out where they are. To quit the field, and shut yourselves up alone, would be to render it impossible that you should get the victory. The work of God is as holy and acceptable in domestic service, or in trade, as any service that can be rendered in the pulpit, or even by the foreign missionary. We thank God for the men specially called and set apart for his own work; but we know that they would do nothing unless the salt of our holy faith should permeate the daily life of other Christians. You godly mothers, you are the glory of the Church of Christ. You hard-working men and women, who endure patiently "as seeing him who is invisible," are the crown and glory of the Church of God. You who do not shirk your daily labor, but stand manfully to it, obeying Christ in it, are proving what the Christian religion was meant to do. We can, if we are truly priests unto God, make our everyday garments into vestments, our meals into sacraments, and our houses into temples for God's worship. Our very beds will be within the veil, and our inmost thoughts will be as a sweet incense perpetually smoking up to the Most High. Dream not that there is anything about any honest calling that degrades a man, or hinders him in glorifying God; but sanctify it all, till the bells, upon the horses shall ring out, "Holiness to the Lord," and the pots in your houses shall be as holy as the vessels of the sanctuary.

Now, I want that we should so come to the communion-table tonight, that even here Christ may be glorified in us. Ah, you may sit at the Lord's table wearing a fine dress or a diamond ring, and you may think that you are somebody of importance, but you are not! Ah, you may come to the Lord's table, and say, "Here is an experienced Christian man who knows a thing or two." You are not glorifying Christ that way; you are only a nobody. But if you come to-night saying, "Lord, I am hungry, thou canst feed me; that is glorifying him. If you come saying, "Lord, I have no merit, and no worthiness, I come because thou hast died for me, and I trust thee," you are glorifying him. He glorifies Christ most who takes most from him, and who then gives most back to him. Come, empty pitcher, come and be filled; and, when thou art filled, pour all out at the dear feet of him who filled thee. Come, trembler, come and let him touch thee with his strengthening hand, and then go out and work, and use the strength which he has given thee. I fear that I have not led you where I wanted to bring you, close to my Lord and to the Father, yet I have done my best. May the Lord forgive my feebleness and wandering, and yet bless you for his dear name's sake! Amen.

John 17.

Verses 1-2. *These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*

Here the doctrines of a general and a particular redemption sweetly blend "As thou hast given him power over all flesh," they are all under Christ's mediatorial government by virtue of his matchless sacrifice; but the object in view is specially the gift of everlasting life to the chosen people: "that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him."

3. *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

No man has life eternal, then, who is in ignorance of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ; but once to know God, and to know Christ, is sure evidence that we possess a life that can never die: "This is life eternal."

4-6. *I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.*

Is not that sweetly put on the part of our divine Lord? These chosen men had been poor creatures at the very best; very forgetful and very erring; yet their Lord brings no charges against them but he says to his Father, "They have kept thy word."

7. *Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.*

"They have learnt to link the Father and the Son; they know that though I am the channel of all blessing, yet thou, O my Father, art the fountain from which it flows."

"Jesus, we bless thy Father's name

Thy God and ours are both the same;

What heavenly blessings from his throne

Flow down to sinners through his Son!"

8. *For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.*

He is looking at them in contrast with the world which utterly rejected him; in contrast with that world, the disciples had received and known Christ. Oh, what a blessed distinction does the grace of God make between men! We were all blind by nature; and now that we see, it is because the sacred finger of Christ hath touched our eyes, and opened them. Let him have all the glory of it; yet let us note how well he speaks of his people For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me."

9-10. *I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.*

Oh, the blessed union of interests between Christ and the Father! How surely do we belong to the Father if we in very deed belong to Christ, and what a holy unity is thus established!

11. *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.*

Here is a prayer, then, for the preservation and the unity of the people of God; two very necessary petitions. Would God that they might be fulfilled in us, that we might be kept, and kept even to the end, and then kept in living union with all the people of God, and with the Father and with the Son!

12-13. *While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.*

In this wondrous prayer, note the special design of the words of Christ; not only that we might have joy, but that we might have Christ's joy, and not merely have a little of it, but might have it fulfilled in ourselves.

14-16. *I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

Jesus puts twice over this most special and important fact, which we must never forget: "They are not of the world." Let us never live as if we were of the world; but where such a vivid distinction has been made, God grant that there may be an equal distinction in our lives!

Now comes the prayer for sanctification.

17-18. *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.*

Christ was the great Missionary, the Messiah, the Sent One; we are the minor missionaries, Sent out into the world to accomplish the Father's will and purpose.

19-20. *And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be Sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;*

That shows that Christ's prayer embraces us also who have been brought to believe on him through the word which the apostles declared. Christ, with prescient eye, looked on every one of us who believe on him, and prayed for each one of us as much as he did for John, and Peter, and James.

21,22. *That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:*

Unity is the glory of the Church of Christ. It shall be the very crown of the Church of the living God; and when she puts it on, then will the wondering world acknowledge and accept her Lord.

23. *I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.*

Wonderful words! How shall we dive into their depths? To think that the Father should have loved us even as he loved his only-begotten Son; oh, the heights and depths of this wondrous love!

24-25. *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.*

You notice the division that there is here. There are two parties; there is the world, and there is the Church; what is it that divides them? Read these two clauses: "The world hath not known thee:" "These have known that thou hast sent me." What stands between? "But I have known thee." It is Christ himself, coming in between the two parties, like the cloudy-fiery pillar, black with darkness to the Egyptians, but bright with light to the Israelites. Oh, to have Christ between you and the world! It is the best form of separation: "I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me."

26. *And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it:*

I read it to you as it stands. Our good translators were always afraid of using a word too often, for fear of falling into tautology; so for what they considered the beauty of the language they used the word "declared instead of I made known"; but why should they have done so? Who were they that they should have wanted to improve on Christ's words? It should be the same word right on: "The world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have made known unto them thy name, and will make it known:"

26. *That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

Oh, that this love may be in us, for Christ's sake! Amen.

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