

Spurgeon on Romans-Pt2

SPURGEON'S SERMONS ON ROMANS-2

Romans 8:17 Heirs of God

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“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.”-Romans 8:17 (note)

THIS chapter — the 8th of Romans, like the garden of Eden, full of all manner of delights. Here you have all necessary doctrines to feed upon, and luxurious truths with which to satisfy your soul. One might well have been willing, to be shut up as a prisoner in paradise, and one might well be content, to be shut up to this one chapter, and never to be allowed to preach from any other part of God's Word. If this were the case — one might find a sermon in every line; nay, more than that, whole volumes might be found in a single sentence by anyone who was truly taught of God. I might say of this chapter, “All its paths drop fatness.” It is among the other chapters of the Bible like Benjamin's men which was five times as much as that of any of his brothers. We must not exalt one part of God's Word above another; yet, as “one star differeth from another star in glory,” this one seems to be a star of the first magnitude, full of the brightness of the grace and truth of God. It is an altogether inexhaustible mine of spiritual wealth, and I invite the saints of God to dig in it, and to dig in it again and again. They will find, not only that it hath dust of gold, but also, huge nuggets, which they shall not be able to carry away by reason of the weight of the treasure.

I notice, in this chapter, and also in many other parts of Paul's writings, that it is his habit to make a kind of ladder — a sort of Jacob's ladder, let me call it, — which he begins to climb. But every step he takes leads to another, and that one to another, and that again to yet another. You see it here. “As many as are led by the Spirit of God,” — there is the leading of the Spirit, — “they are the sons of God.” And when he gets to sonship, then he says, “And if children, then heirs.” So he gets to heirship, and he climbs still higher when he says, “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” I think he means us to judge, by this mode of writing, that this ought to be the style of our Christian experience. Every measure of grace which we receive should lead us to seek after something higher still. We are never to say, “This is the pinnacle of grace; I cannot get beyond this.” Self-satisfaction is the end of progress; so we are constantly to cry, “Higher, and yet higher still; onward and upward,” — and still to ask to be filled yet more completely with all the fullness of God.

My text is far too large for me to attempt to preach from it in an exhaustive style; so I will just make four observations upon it; and even those observations will only give you a bird's-eye, view of the great truths here revealed. May God grant that, in each of those four things, there may be food for your souls!

I. These first thing that I see in the text is The Ground Of Heirship: “If children, then heirs.” The children of God are heirs of God, and they come to be heirs through being his children, and in no other way.

Mark that we are not heirs of God as the result of creation. I cannot say what we might have been by creation had the Fall not ruined us; but that fatal disobedience of our first parent robbed us of any inheritance that, might have come to us in that way; and now, by nature, we are “children of wrath, even as others,” but certainly not, heirs of the promise or heirs of the graces of God. No, beloved friend, nature will never entitle you to be a joint-heir with Christ. Whatever you may think of your human nature, — and you may suppose that it is not so depraved as the nature of others — you may even get the notion that yours is a very superior sort of human nature; — well, let it be what it may, it will not entitle you to this inheritance. For as it was not the children of the flesh who were necessarily the heirs of the old covenant, even as; Ishmael, born after the flesh, was not; the heir, but Isaac, born after the spirit; and not Ishmael, but Jacob; so is it now. It is not what you are by nature, — not that which is born of the flesh, but what you are by grace, — that which is born of the Spirit, — that is the ground upon which heirship may be claimed before God. So, my dear hearer, if you are in a state of nature, — if you have never passed out of that state into a state, of grace, — this text has nothing to do with you.

And, further, as our heirship with God depends upon our being the children of God, it does not depend upon our natural descent. I have already shown you that it does not depend upon our nature, but there is another phase of that truth which needs to be

mentioned. There were some, of old, who said, "We have Abraham to our father;" but being born as sons of Abraham after the flesh availed not to give them any part, in the inheritance which was according to the Spirit. And, today, there are some who say, "We are the children of godly parents. We were born in a Christian land, so, of course, we are Christians." Not so, you are no more Christians, on that ground, than if you were the children of the Hottentot in his kraal. You need as much to be born again as does "the heathen Chineese"; you need to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit as much as if you had been taught from your childhood to bow your knee to a block of wood or stone. O ye, who are the inhabitants of this so-called Christian country, you stand before the living God in no sort of preference to the heathen, except that you have the privilege of hearing the gospel; but if you reject it, it shall be more tolerable for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the inhabitants of heathen lands, in the day of judgment, than for you. Did not our Lord Jesus Christ say that "many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit, down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom" — the flavoured ones of his day, or of our day, — "shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth"?

Further, as the inheritance is not by creation, nor by natural descent, neither can it come by meritorious service. The apostle says, "If children, then heirs;" — not, "if servants." You may toil, and keep on toiling all your life, but that will not make you an heir of God. The servant in your house, however diligent, is not your heir; for a servant to claim to be the heir, would not be tolerated for a moment in a court of law. The servant may be able truthfully to say, "I have been in my master's house these many years, neither transgressed I at any time his commandments; and all that is right for a servant to do, I have done for him from my youth up;" but if he were to go on to ask, "What lack I yet?" the reply would be, "You lack the one thing that is absolutely essential to heirship, namely, sonship." Oh, how this truth cuts at the root of all the efforts of those who hope to win heaven by merit, or to obtain the favor of God by their own exertions! To them all, God says what Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again." Birth alone can make you children, and you must be children if you are to be heirs. O sirs, if you remain what you are by nature, you may strive to do what you please; but, when you have dressed out the child of nature in its finest garments, it is still only the child of nature, finely dressed, but not, the child of God. Ye must be, by a supernatural birth, allied to the living God, for, if not, all the works that you may perform will not entitle you to the possession of the inheritance of the Most High.

And as good works cannot do this, neither can any ceremonial observances. You know that there is a ceremony of which children are, taught to say, "In my baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." It does not matter what people may say in order to make an excuse for believing that this statement is true, for it is as gross a falsehood as was ever put into human language. We know it is not true. Look where we may, we can see numbers of persons who were sprinkled in their infancy, or were even baptized after they had reached years of discretion, but their conduct shows that they are not members of Christ children of God, or inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. And as that ceremony cannot make them Christians, neither can any other, whether it be devised by man, or ordained by God himself, for God never intended that any ceremony should take the place of the new birth, the regeneration, which must be wrought by the Spirit of God himself.

**"Not all the outward forms on earth,
Nor rites that God has given,
Nor will of man, nor blood, nor birth,
Can raise a soul to heaven.
'The sovereign will of God alone
Creates us heirs of grace;
Born in the image of his Son,
A new peculiar race."**

And, without the Holy Spirit to carry out that sovereign will of God by making us to be born into the image of his Son, we are not his heirs, for thus it stands in our text, "If children, then heirs;" which implies that, if we are not children, we are not heirs.

So this is the all-important enquiry for us to make. Do we, beloved friends, possess this qualification which is absolutely essential to our heirship? Have we been born again? We cannot have been born into, God's family when we were born the first time, for Christ himself said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and nothing more; — "and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," so we must be born of the Spirit, we must be born again, born from above, if we are to be children of God. Did you ever undergo that great change? Do you know what regeneration means? I do not mean, have you read of it in the Confession of Faith, but have you experienced it in your own soul? Are you known creatures in Christ Jesus? For, as the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, if any of us have not been created anew in Christ Jesus, if we have not been born again by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, we cannot possibly be the children of God, and heirs according to the promise.

If we have been thus regenerated, we shall certainly know it. There may be times when we shall doubt it; but we shall know it, partly by the indwelling of the Spirit, as Paul wrote to the Galatians, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father;" and in the verse before our text, we read, "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Do you know anything, dear friend, about this witness-bearing by the Holy Spirit? I have often asked myself that question, so I feel free to ask you the same. This is not a thing that you may know, or may not, know, and yet possibly may be safe; but you must have this witness of the Holy Spirit, or else the witness of your own Spirit will be a very doubtful thing indeed. The Holy Spirit never confines a false witness, but a true witness he will confirm; and if the witness of your spirit be true, you will have, more or less definitely, the witness of the Spirit within you, bearing confirmatory testimony that it is even so.

Those who are truly the children of God have yet another mark by which they can be recognized, namely, that there is a likeness to their Heavenly Father begotten in them. If a man says to you, "I am the son of So-and-so,"—some old friend of yours, — you look into his face to see whether you can trace any likeness to his father. So, when a man says to us, "I am a child of God," we have the right to expect that there shall be at least some trace of the character of God visible in his walk and conversation. Come, dear friend, with all your imperfections, are you seeking to be an imitator of God, as one of his dear children? Do you try to do that which he wishes you to do? Do you make his Son to, be your Exemplar? Do you strive after holiness? Are you aiming at obedience to those divine commands, "Be ye holy; for I am holy:" "be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect"? Do you feel that, because you are a child of God, it becomes you to walk even as his firstborn Son walked while he was here below? Remember that, without holiness no man shall see the Lord; because, without holiness, no man has the evidence that he is indeed a child of God.

And, once more, the main evidence of our being children of God, by the new birth, lies in our believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." There are many evidences of the life of God in the soul, but there is no other that is so abiding as the possession of faith in Jesus Christ. Perhaps, dear friend, you are afraid to say that you have the likeness of God upon you, although others can see it, but I hope you are not afraid to say, "I do believe that Jesus is the Christ" and the apostle John says, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." If you accept him as appointed and anointed of God to be your Savior, and commit your soul into his hands, then be you sure that you are a child of God, for true, simple, sincere faith in the Lord Jesus exists only in the heart of the regenerate. No unregenerate man ever did, or ever could, believe in Jesus Christ; but where the Lord has given the divine life, he gives faith at the same time, — faith which is the surest proof of the existence of that divine life in the soul.

God grant to each one of you the grace to test yourself by these four questions: — "Have I been born again? Have I the Spirit of adoption? Have I at least some likeness to my Heavenly Father? Do I believe in Jesus Christ?" If so, then you are a child of God, and that childhood is the ground of heirship, so we can leave that point, and go on to the next.

II. The text teaches, in the second place, The Universality Of Heirship To All The Children Of God: "If children, then heirs;" — not some of them heirs, but, "if children, then heirs," all of them without an exception.

Proven that they are children, it is also proven that they are heirs it is not so among men, for, often, it is only the firstborn sons who are the heirs; but, with God, the rule is, "If children,"—whenever born, — "then heirs."

Why is it that all the children of God are his heirs? First, because the principle of priority as to time cannot possibly enter into this question. There is a Firstborn, who has priority by nature, and honor, and right; but he is "the firstborn among many brethren:" and in him all the rest of the children of God are also firstborn for Paul writes of "the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are, written in heaven." The question of the time of birth is, sometimes, a matter of very great concern on earth. In the ways of twins, a few minutes may make all the difference between his lordship and his brother who is no Lord at all, — between the brothers who shall be heir of many broad acres, and the one who shall go forth upon the broad acres to earn his bread. But, with God's children, there is no difference in point of time. Adam, if he was the first man converted, certainly has no priority over Paul, although Paul says that he was as "one born out, of due time." Noah, an early member of God's great family, has no preference over Abraham; indeed, Abraham seems to be mentioned with greater honor than any of those who had gone before him; certainly, they had no priority over him. Time has to do with time, but time has not to do with eternity; so, whether you, my brother, were born to God fifty years ago, and I five-and-twenty years ago, and our young friend over there five-and-twenty days ago, it makes no difference. "If children, then heirs," because the date of birth cannot come into our reckoning when we have to do with eternal things.

Again, we know that the love of God is the same toward all his children. They are all his children, — all chosen, all redeemed, all regenerated, all called, all justified, and they shall be all glorified. Where a father loves all his children alike, his disposition leads him to treat them all alike, both as to what he gives them now, and also as to what he will leave them as an inheritance; but, sometimes, circumstances such as the law of the land and the title-deeds of estates, — prevent the father from treating all alike. But, in the case

of the children of God, laws cannot hamper or hinder him. He is the great Law-Maker, and he can control circumstances so as to do everything according to the dictates of his own heart; and his heart of love says, "I have loved all my children alike, and they shall all have the blessing;" and so they shall, beloved. Though you, my dear friend, think yourself obscure, and one of the least in God's Israel, your name is just as prominently written upon the heart of Christ as the names of his apostles are, and you are as dear to the Lord as the very noblest among his saints. Indeed, he carries the lambs in his bosom, so the little ones have the best chariot of all. He may leave the sheep to walk, but he carries the lambs; and he always takes special care of the weak and feeble. "If children, then heirs," because all God's children are, equally partakers of their Father's love.

Again, we know, from Scripture, that all the children of God are favored with the same promise. If you turn to the 6th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the 18th verse, you will find there what Paul says to all the Lord's children. What a precious passage that, is where he; tells us that, "by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." In the previous verse, he mentions the heirs of promise, and by that expression he means all the children of God, for they are all heirs according to the promise, and all heirs of the promise. Well, then, as God has given them a promise, he will fulfill it; and that promise is that they shall be heirs of this world, and also heirs of the world to come; and he will fulfill it to them all, and keep his oath by which he has confirmed it to them, so they shall surely be his heirs.

Notice, again, that all God's children are his heirs because they are all equally related to him through whom the heirship comes, for every child of God is neither more nor less than brother to the Lord Jesus Christ yea, a member of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. In this brotherhood with Christ there can be no degrees; a man is not partly a brother, and partly not a brother. If he is a brother of Christ he is his brother. A man is not partly in Christ and partly out of Christ. If one with Christ, he is one with Christ; and all the members of Christ's mystical body are quickened with the same life, and shall have the same heaven to dwell in for ever. Seeing, then, that we are all one in Christ Jesus, the heirship which comes to us by way of the Firstborn must, come equally to, all the children.

And there is one more very comforting reflection, and that is, that the inheritance is large enough for all the children. Rich men sometimes have to let their estates go to the eldest son, according to the stupid regulations of this age, "to keep up the family dignity." There are some great lords, who, find that they can accumulate wealth enough to set up two or three sets of families, and they do so; but, in other families, there generally are some of the children who must, remain lean in order that the firstborn son may grow fat. Now, it is not so with the inheritance of God, because there is enough for all; and there is this peculiarity about it, that every child of God has all the inheritance, yet there is not any the less for all the rest of the family. It, can never be said, in relation to human heirs, that each heir has all the inheritance, yet no one else has any less than all. You, my brother, if you are a child of God, are an heir of God, and so am I; and I have not any the less of God because you have him, and you have not any the to of God because I have him. Nay, if it were possible, for it to be so, I should have the more in the joy that you also have the same blessing, and you would have the more in the joy of seeing others partaking in the same privilege as you have. The whole of God belongs to Christ and the whole of God belongs to the least member of Christ all are "heirs of God." So, you see that there was no reason for the exclusion of the younger branches of God's family in order to make, up a greater estate for the older ones. All the children of God are the heirs of God, because the inheritance is an infinite one, and there is an infinite inheritance for each one of them.

O beloved, let us dwell for a moment or two on this theme! The text says, "If children, then heirs." It does not say, "If children, then apostles." None of us could attain to that high office. It does not say, "If children, then preachers." Here and there, one of us could claim that title. It does not say, "If children, then deeply-experienced saints." Some of us may never be that. It does not say, "If children, then mighty men of valor." Perhaps some of us are too timid ever to grow to that. It does not say, "If children, then rich men," because some of us are poor. It does not say, "If children, then favored with health," for some of us have little enough of that boon. It does not say, "If children, then filled with full assurance," for some of us are vexed with many doubts and fears. But it does say, "If children, then heirs." So let us rejoice that we are "heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Let us rejoice in that fact now, and let us begin to live worthily of our rank as heirs of God. Let us strive after holiness, and seek to live as becometh the heirs of eternal life considering what manner of pews we ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness.

Thus I have spoken of the universality of the heirship to all the children of God.

III. Now, thirdly, I want to speak concerning The Inheritance Itself: "If children, then heirs; heirs of God."

That little phrase, which I have just uttered, is one which none of us can fully comprehend, and none of us may even attempt to do so. This is the glory of our inheritance, that we are "heirs of God." Will you give men your most earnest attention while! I remind you of some of the descriptions of our inheritance which are given in Scripture?

Here is one, which you will find in the 21st chapter of the Revelation, and the 7th verse: "He that overcometh shall inherit all things."

That is the extent of your inheritance, "all things"; and it is not a singular expression, for you have it again in 1 Corinthians 3:21, 22: "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours." The richest man who ever lived could not say that all things were his, but the poorest Christian who ever lived can say that. If you turn to the 1st chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the 14th verse, you will find that we are there called "heirs of salvation." Looking on a little further in the same Epistle, in the 6th chapter, and the 17th verse, you will find that we are called "the heirs of promise." In his Epistle to Titus, the 3rd chapter, and the 7th verse, Paul calls us "heirs according to the hope of eternal life," while James says, in the 2nd chapter of his Epistle, at the 5th verse, that we are "heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him;" and Peter says, in his first Epistle, the 3rd chapter, and 7th verse, that we are "heirs together of the grace, of life." If any preacher wants to deliver a series of sermons upon the heirship of the saints, let him take these texts, and preach upon them. I have not time to do that to-night, and even if I should say all that I could upon all these texts put together, I should not then have said so much as my text says, for that does not speak of "the heirs of promise," or the "heirs of salvation," or the "heirs of the kingdom," but it says, "heirs of God."

"Heirs of God,"-what does that mean? Well, it means, first of all, that we are heirs to all that God has. Suppose I am my father's heir, and that he has an old thatched cottage worth a shilling a week, — well, that is what I am heir to; but if I happened to be the heir of the Duke of Westminster, he might take me over a county, and say to me, "That is what you are heir to." Ah, just so! Whatever the father has, that is what the child is heir to. Now think what God has Stretch your wings, most vivid imagination! Fly abroad, most capacious thought, and when the remotest bounds of space have been crossed, you have only just commenced your endless journey. We will not attempt such a flight as that. We will stop at home, and meditate upon the great truth that all God has is ours because we are his, — heirs of God.

Yet even that, great as it is, is only part of the meaning of our text, for the apostle next means that God himself belongs to us. David said, "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and this is what every child of God can say; so that the portion of each child of God is not only what God has, but what God himself is. O child of God, thou hast God's power to protect thee, God's even to guide thee, God's justice to defend thee, God's immutability to be constant to thee, God's infinity to enrich thee! Thou hast Gods heart of love, God's hand of power, God's head of glory, — time would fail me to tell all that thou hast, for thou hast all that God is to be thine for ever and ever.

All the worlds that at present, have been created are but as mere trifles compared with what God could make if he so pleased. A thousand, thousand, thousand, thousand worlds, when they were all made, would be but as a handful of dust scattered from his almighty hand, and he could, if he willed, do the like; again a thousand, thousand, thousand, thousand times over. "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering." Think of the whole mountain range as one great altar, and all the cedars set ablaze, and them all the beasts that feed there offered up as a burnt sacrifice, yet the prophet says that is not sufficient for God. Then, how great he must be Oh, make him great in your hearts, and reverence and adore him; but when you do so, do not forget to say, "My God! my God! my God!" How often you have that expression in the Psalms! It never could have been there, as the utterance of any mere man, if it had not been first in the eternal purpose of God as the utterance which was to be on the lip of Christ in that dread hour when he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" So, now, each believer can say, "my God;" for Jesus Christ himself puts it, "My Father and your Father; my God, and your God." In some aspects God is as much my God as he is Christ's God, and as much my Father as he is Christ's Father. O beloved, I have got out of my depth now! I wish I were able to go even deeper into this wondrous, truth, but there I must leave off what I have to say concerning the inheritance itself: "heirs of God."

IV. My last point is, perhaps, as blessed as any in the whole text. It is, The Partnership Of The Claimants To The Inheritance: "joint-heirs with Christ."

This is, first of all, the test of our heirship. Listen. You are not an heir of God alone; you cannot be. You can only be an heirs of God through being "in Co." — in company — joint-heir with Christ. Now, are you and Christ in company? That is a simple question. Are you and Christ, in company, or do you stand alone? If you stand alone, you are a poor miserable bankrupt, gazetted in the court of heaven; so do not try to stand alone. You will perish if you do. But are Christ and you thus joined together? Have you learned to trust in Christ to live in Christ, to pray in Christ, to trade with heaven through Christ and to have everything in Christ? That is the text of heirship. God's child is born God's heir, but it is because he is in Christ and is born in union with Christ, that he becomes God's heir. If we are out of Christ we are out of the family of God, and out of the heirship of God. "Without Christ" you are "without God in the world;" but in Christ, joined in company with Christ, you are an heir of God.

This, beloved, seems to me to be the sweetest part of all the inheritance. Once let me know that I am one with Christ and so have become a fellow-heir with him, and it is like heaven below to my soul. Indeed, I shall like heaven itself all the better, and I shall like all

that God is aging to give me by-and-by all the better, because I am gain to share it with Christ. A good deal depends upon the company we may meet in going to any place to which we may be invited. A person might ask you to his house, and you might not know whether you cared to go there. But suppose the host were to tell you that a very dear friend of yours was going to be there, you would say, then, "Oh, yes, I will go for the sake of having his company!" Now, wherever Jesus Christ is, — I do not care whether it is in the house of a Pharisee, or on some lonely hillside, — it is good to be where he is, and to go shares with him; it makes everything more sweet, to, be able to enjoy it with him. So, beloved, while you are heirs of God, you are not the only heirs; for you are joint-heirs with Christ and you will share, the inheritance with him. When the Lord Jesus Christ prayed the best prayer that he could pray for his people, do you remember what he asked for? It was this: "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;" — as if he knew that his people would prize something that belonged to him better than anything else in all the world, or even in heaven itself. If Christ sups with us, it is a blessed supper though it is only a dish of herbs; but if Christ is absent, it is a poor dinner though there may be joints enough to make the table groan. T's my mind, then, this is the sweetness of sure inheritance, that it is a joint-heirship with Christ.

This also shows the greatness of the inheritance; because, if we are to be joint-heirs with Christ it cannot be a little thing that we are to share with him. Can you imagine what the Father would give to his Son as the reward of the travail of his soul? Give yourself time to think what the everlasting God would give to his equal Son, who took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and who humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Can you think of a reward that would be large enough for him? Let the Father's love and the Father's justice judge. Oh, it must be a large inheritance, for such a well-beloved Son, and such an obedient Son as he was! I, a poor worm of the dust, cannot think of anything that I consider good enough for him. Lord, I would have him crowned with many crowns, and set up on a glorious, high throne. But what must be the reward which his Father devises for him? What must be the greatness of the infinite recompense which the infinite God will bestow upon his Only-begotten? Follow that line of thought as far as you can, and then recollect that you are to be joint-heir with Christ. What he has, you are to share. I will read those wonderful words again;" If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." The same glory that is to be his, he will have us to enjoy with him.

Again, this joint-heirship ensures the inheritance to us. I am quite sure that I should not like to go into partnership with just anybody whom I might meet in the street; indeed, if I had a share in any limited liability company, I would do with it as the man did with the bad bank-note, — lay it down, and run away from it as fast as over I could. What multitudes of people have been ruined by taking shares in companies which seemed to be the nicest, neatest, most money-getting schemes under heaven! But one need not mind going shares if one has nothing at all, and the other partner is the wealthiest person in the whole world. So, what a blessing it is to go shares with Christ because we know that he cannot fail. I was thinking, just now, that, if I ever should lose heaven, seeing that I am joint-heir with Christ it would be "the firm" that would lose it, because we must stand or fall together if we are joint-heirs. Somebody once said to a holy man, "Your soul will be lost." "Then," said he, "Christ will be the loser." He was like the negro, who was quite unconcerned when the ship was being wrecked. He said that he should not lose anything, for he belonged to his massa, and his massa would lose it. Well, what the negro said in his simplicity, we may say in real earnest. If our souls are lost, it will be Christ who will be the loser, for he bought us with his blood, and he will lose what he purchased at so great a cost. And his Father gave us to him, so he will lose his Father's gift. And he has loved us, and is married to us, so he will lose his spouse, the beloved of his soul. But he will not lose us, — he cannot lose us, and if Christ cannot lose his inheritance, then none of his people can lose theirs, for we are joint-heirs with him. If two partners go into a court of law, and the case is decided against the one, it is against the other also, for the two are one in that matter. So, if the decision could, by any possibility, be given against anyone who is in Christ Jesus, it would be given equally against the Lord Jesus Christ himself; but that cannot be. How secure, then, is the inheritance of the saints! We are joint-heirs with Christ.

And, my brethren, to conclude, how this endears his love to us, — that he should thus put himself on the same footing with us as- to his heirship, first taking us into union with himself, making us joint-heirs with himself, and then himself going back to heaven to plead for us, and to make it part of his glory up there to prepare the place which we are to share with him. Does not this bind us fast to him? If he lets us be sharers in his inheritance in glory, will we not gladly be sharers here in his sufferings and in his shame? Is there anybody who desires to spite upon Christ as they did of old? Then, let him do me the honor to spite upon me for Christ's sake. Is there anyone who has an evil word for Christ? Then, let that word fall upon my ears. Do you not feel, beloved, that it is an honor for you to endure any reproach for Christ's sake! Surely, if we are to be with him there for ever, it is but right that we should be with him here; if we are to share the splendor of his throne, we may be joyful to; share the dishonor of his cross so far as we may.

I have thus set before you the heirship of the saints, and the way to attain it. I pray God the Holy Spirit to apply the message to his own people, and to make them feel glad in the Lord. As for the others, I have shown that they can only be heirs through being children, and if you are not the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, I pray the Lord to reveal to you whose children you must be, and what inheritance you must expect to have at the last. Yet I pray you to remember that the way of salvation lies in simply looking to Jesus Christ. May you look to him tonight, — not to-morrow, ere you leave this place, present this prayer, "O Lord, give me the

nature of thy children, and the spirit of thy children, and faith in Jesus, as all thy children have it, for his dear name's sake! Amen."

Romans 8:32 The Saints Riches

NO. 3204

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"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" — Romans 8:32 (note)

Many of you, dear friends, are coming to the Lord's table at the close of this service. Our blessed Redeemer instituted that simple but sublime ordinance so that we might be kept in constant remembrance of him. The bread is nothing but bread, yet it is the very suggestive emblem of Christ's flesh; and it shall be well with you if, after a spiritual fashion, you shall thus eat the flesh of Christ. The wine is nothing but wine, yet is it the emblem of Christ's blood; and they are thrice blessed who experimentally understand the meaning of Christ's words, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life." Christ is yours, believer; you know that he is more yours than even your own life, for that you may lose; when God gave you your existence, he gave it to you without any covenant as to its prolongation, but he has given Christ to you by an everlasting covenant, to be yours for ever and ever. Christ is yours, beloved; oh, that you knew how to make the best use of this blessed property! Christ is yours to live upon and to spend, yours to have and to hold, to keep and to enjoy, yours not only to look at that you may be saved, and to wear that you may be justified, but yours, to eat that you may be refreshed by him, and live upon him. Christ is yours to the fullest extent possible; there is no reservation, he is your absolute, indefeasible, and inalienable property; yours to-day as perfectly as he will be when you are in heaven, yours as certainly as you are his. Oh, that you may now, knowing that Christ is thus your property, live upon him, and rejoice in him, and feel that you are indeed immeasurably rich!

When we come to this communion table, to partake of these emblems of Christ's death, it will be a very happy thing for us if we remember that, possessing Christ, we have everything. There is no want that you have which will not be supplied if you really know that Christ is yours; there is no necessity, however great, which may press upon you which shall not be instantaneously supplied if Christ is truly yours. You come to Christ's table to meet with Christ, and you know that, when you have him, you have everything, so you do well to sing, —

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want," —

for in him you have all that you can possibly need. And, moreover, the gift of Christ is God's solemn pledge that he will keep back from you nothing that you really need. "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Having given you Christ, he must, he will, with him, freely give you all things.

"How vast the treasure we possess! How rich thy bounty, King of grace! This world is ours, and worlds to come: Earth is our lodge, and heaven our home.

"All things are pure; the gift of God,

The purchase of a Savior's blood;

While the good Spirit shows us how

To use and to improve them too."

I am going to make it my business, in a very simple but earnest manner, to try and exhort the children of God to cast aside all thoughts of their being poor, and to rejoice now in their boundless riches in Christ Jesus.

I. First, let me remind you, believer, that, whatever you may really require, God will not deny it to you, for he has already given you Christ, Think What This Gift Was To The Father; it was his only-begotten and well-beloved Son.

Perhaps you have a wilful, wayward boy, one who costs you much, but brings you little comfort; yet, would you like to lose him? If you saw him in his coffin to-morrow, would you not cry over him as David cried over his son, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son

Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son"? Vile he may be, and a disgrace to your name, yet he is still your child, and you could not bear to give him up. But what shall I say of the child who, from his youth up, has been obedient to you; who, having grown up to manhood, has become your friend as well as your offspring, who has been with you in every holy enterprise, and has proved himself to be worthy of his fathers love and esteem? Could you give him up? Mother, thou knowest how dear is thy firstborn son to thee. Of all griefs that rend a mother's heart, perhaps the greatest is to lose her firstborn. Even if he is only in his infancy, it is a wound from which the mother's tender heart does not soon recover, but to lose that son in manhood, to see the hale strong man suddenly cut down, this is no small sorrow; and many, under such trying circumstances, have found it no easy task to say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

To lose one's child even for some object which is nearest and dearest to our heart, is pain and grief indeed; then what must it have cost God to give up his Son to die for his people? What must God's love to his only-begotten Son be? We can only speak of God after the manner of men, for we know not how otherwise to speak of him; and inasmuch as God is infinitely greater than we are, his love is infinitely greater than ours. We can only love, to the finite degree of which humanity is capable; but God loveth beyond all degree. The heart of God is filled with fathomless oceans of eternal affection, and this affection has ever been fixed upon his Son. Christ is infinitely more dear to God than your son can ever be to you, because of the greatness of the heart of the Father who loves his Son who has been ever with him, and ever his delight, who has never offended him, who takes, his share in all the Father's plans, and who said of old, and says it ever, "I delight to do thy will, O my God."

Besides, Christ is one with his Father in essence. What that mysterious unity is, we cannot tell; and how Christ is the Son of God, we do not know. We know that his sonship: does not imply any inferiority in the Son, nor that the Father existed before, the Son. He was not the Father till the Son was his Son; and the names "Father" and "Son" are not to be understood as; they are used among us, although the marvellous, indescribable relationship which we cannot fully understand cannot be better expressed than by the terms used, "the Father" and "the Son." Again I ask, — what must it have cost such a Father's heart to give up such a Son, — a Son so near and so dear to him? Yet the Father gave up his Son to die for you and for me, beloved. Theologians lay it down as an axiom that God cannot suffer, but I am not sure that they are right. I cannot understand God's love to me, I cannot rejoice as I should in his goodness to me unless I believe that the gift of his Son cost his heart divine and awful pangs. I know that I am treading upon delicate ground, and that I am standing where thick darkness gathers; but I am not certain that what theologians take for granted is necessarily true. That God can do everything, I do believe, and that, if he wills to suffer he can do so, I also believe. I cannot think of God as an insensible being when he gave his Son to die for sinners; I cannot imagine him giving his only-begotten Son, and feeling no more than a heathen idol of stone could have done. I do think that the Father, in giving up that Son who had always given him such intense joy, must have suffered in his Son's death.

Well then, as God has thus given up his only-begotten and well beloved Son, how can he deny anything to you who believe in him? Do you feel anxious about the bread that perisheth? Is that worthy to be compared with God's only begotten Son? Are you concerned about how you are to get food and raiment? How can God deny you such trifles as these when he has given you his Son? Perseverance in grace, — is that what you ask? Even that is but a crumb under the Master's table compared with his Son. You want certain virtues, you want help in trouble, you want sustenance under stern difficulties; — I know not what you want, but this I know, all the wants of all of us put together could only make one little drop in comparison with the tremendous ocean of benevolence which flowed out of God's heart when he spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all. As we look at Christ, whom God has given to us, we must believe that, with him, he will give us whatsoever we need.

II. I shall try to knock a second time at the door of your hearts to comfort you by reminding you now Precious Christ Was Intrinsically In Himself:

The wonder is, not only that God gave his Son, but that his Son was what he was. Paul says he is "over all, God blessed for ever." Jesus himself said, "Before Abraham was, I am," — claiming the very name of the eternal Jehovah. In due time, Christ became man; and, as man, he was very dear to his Father; even his earthly mother could not look upon her Child with half the affection that his Father had for him. He was a perfect man, and therefore lovely in his Father's sight; he was, indeed, himself God, and therefore one with the Father even while he was man. The loftiest angel could not adequately preach to you upon this point; unto what, then, shall I liken the preciousness of this gift? Similes fail me, metaphors I have none, "no mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls; for the price of Jesus is above, rubies;" he shall not be given for gold, nay, not for much fine gold; as for topaz, and onyx, and sapphire, and all other precious stones, these must not be mentioned in comparison with him. Paul's expression is the only appropriate one, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." Eternity alone can reveal the value of Christ. By the miseries of the hell from which he saves us, let us measure him; by the bliss of the heaven to which he lifts us, let us estimate his worth; by the depths of ignominy and shame into which he dived, let us conceive of him; by the glories he relinquished, and by the agonies he bore, let us attempt to form some faint idea of his value. But this pearl of great price is so precious that I am bold to say that, if heaven, and earth, and all the starry orbs could be sold, their united price could not buy such another pearl as this one which God has given to us in Christ

Jesus.

So, beloved, as God has already given you this, priceless pearl, will he not also, give you all else that you need? If a man gave you ten thousand pounds, would you doubt his willingness to give you a farthing? If he should give you a munificent income, to last throughout all your life, would you doubt his willingness to give you a penny if you were ever in need of one? I think I need not attempt to draw the inference, you can draw it for yourselves. See, then, the wondrous treasure you possess if you are a believer in Jesus; God is yours, the perfect man is yours, Christ's life, his death, his blood, his righteousness, his intercession, his incarnation, his second advent are all yours; and all else that you need. Do but ask boldly, receive gratefully, wait patiently, hope trustfully, and walk rejoicingly; for, as God has given you his Son, shall he not with him also freely give, you all things? Sing, with good old John Ryland,

“He that has made my heaven secure,

Will here all good provide;

While Christ is rich, can I be poor?

What can I want beside?”

III. But now, as a third blow at your unbelief, I want you to remember, beloved, The Manner In Which This Gift Was Given.

The text says, “He that spared not his own Son.” A mother may give up her tall strong son to fight in the army of her country, and he may perish by an enemy's hand; but I cannot conceive of a mother slaughtering her own son for her country's good. We have wondered as we have read of Brutus, who, when his sons, had entered into a conspiracy against the Republic, could say, “Lictors, do your duty.” The father saw the corpses of his sons with the pangs of a father, but with the stern serenity of a judge; they had offended, so they must die. Strong must be a man's sense of justice to be able to overcome his love so as to give up his own son to die; but our gracious God not only gave up his Son to die for us, but he was himself (if I may use such an expression,) the executioner of Christ. Isaiah tells us, in his wonderful, fifty-third chapter, that

“The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all ... It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: ... thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin ... We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.”

This indeed was the very sting of Christ's death, for he cried out in his worst agony, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Oh, what love God must have had to you and to me, for it overcame his love to his only-begotten Son! So we read in Zechariah 13:7, “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.” My tongue cannot tell the story of this marvellous grace of God to you and to me; but I again remind you that, although God knew that his plan of salvation involved his smiting his own Son, and deserting him in his hour of deepest need, yet, that you and I should not perish, the Father smites, and wounds, and slays) his own Son; and there upon the accursed tree, in pangs intense, unutterable, unknown, the Son of God dies, “the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.”

Well, then, beloved, as God has given you his Son, will he not also give you all else that you need? You are about to ask for fellowship with Christ, but that will not cost the Father the smiting of his Son again, so he will surely give it to you. You are going to ask God for holiness, but it will give him pleasure, and nothing but pleasure, to make you holy; it will certainly not involve his lifting up his hand against his only-begotten Son any more, so it shall be God's delight to give you your heart's desire. Having given you his Son, will he not, with him, give you whatsoever you believingly ask of him? He says still, “Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.” Tell him what thy present need is, and thou shalt have all that thou needest. Cast all thy care upon him, for he careth for thee, and he will take all thy care away. Shame on thee, Christian, if thou shalt give way to sadness now; surely thou wilt not let unbelief vex thee now. Thou knowest that God has given Christ for thee, then canst thou fear that he will deny thee anything, or leave thee at last in trouble to sink? That is impossible; God forbid that you should slander him by thinking that he can so act! What were you saying, poor aged Christian? “I shall want for bread.” How can it be? How can it be? The God, who out of his amazing love to you, has smitten his only-begotten Son, will certainly give to you whatsoever your soul or body may need.

“Seek first his kingdom's grace to share,

Its righteousness pursue;

And all that needs your earthly care

Will be bestow'd on you.

“Why then despond in life's dark vale?

**Why sink to fears a prey?
Th' almighty power can never fail,
His love can ne'er decay."**

IV. Now, as a fourth stroke of the axe at the root of unbelief, let me remind you of The Spirit In Which Christ Was Given.

The Father gave his Son, but who asked him to do so? Not you, certainly; for, even after the Father had given Christ, you despised the wondrous gift. Who asked him? No one of the whole human race. The thought never crossed any created mind.

Angels did not throw themselves down between justice and the sinner, and intercede for him. I have never read of any burning seraph crying to God, "Spare the guilty, Lord, spare the guilty; give up thine only-begotten Son to die, and let the guilty live."

I cannot conceive of anyone proposing to the Most High to make so tremendous a sacrifice. The Father did it according to his own sovereign will, unswayed by anything outside himself. That self sustained, almighty Being deigned to give this matchless manifestation of his inflexible justice and his infinite love to the sons of men; it was his own conception freely welling up from the depths of his own loving heart. Well, beloved, if he gave his Son unsolicited, will he not give you all you need now that you have learned to ask of him, now that you understand the art of the widow woman who came to the unjust judge, and can plead with the Lord in holy importunity? Now that you have been taught to knock and knock again at God's door, — as the man knocked at his friend's door until, at last, he arose at midnight to give him the loaves he needed, — surely he will not deny you what you ask. As he gave you Christ unasked, unsought, when you were dead in sin, when you were his enemy, when you hated him, how much more — now that you are his son, adopted into his family, and taught by his Spirit to pray, and to plead the promises he has given you, — how much more will he give, you all things that you need! If you have not, surely it must be because you ask not, or because you ask amiss. Ask now, ask in faith, ask in the name of Jesus, and all you need shall be given unto you.

V. A fifth time let me try to smite down that old giant, Incredulity, by bidding you remember The Persons To Whom This Gift Was Given: delivered him up for us all.

Not one child of God is left without that gift. Little Benjamin has as great a share in Christ as Reuben or Judah has. Mr. Ready-to-halt has as true an interest in the blood of Jesus as Mr. Greatheart himself has. The ancient Jews, on the day they were numbered, had to pay half a shekel each as a ransom for their souls. The Lord said to Moses, "The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less." The redemption money was the same for all, and Christ has paid the redemption money equally for all who believe in him. Not one of those whom he bought with his blood is left out, not one of his chosen, not one whom he calls, not one whom he justifies; but all are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. I know you are apt to say, "No doubt the Lord will give much to So-and-so, for he is an eminent saint, but not to me." Yet, as he gave Christ to you, why should he not give you all else that you need? "Oh, but I am so obscure, no one will take notice of me." Did not the Lord take notice of you when he gave you Christ? Then why should he not, with him, freely give you all things?

"Ah!" says another, "but I have been such a backslider; not only my faith, but all my other graces are so feeble, I do not feel fit to be numbered with the Lord's people." Ah, poor heart, that may be true; yet, as God has given you Christ, why should he deny you anything that you need? I wish I could put this truth in words that would never be forgotten; I should like to help every heir of heaven to carry this truth with him even to his tomb. It is certain that, as you believe in Christ, he is yours; then it must be equally certain, be you who you may be, that "all things are yours." Go, ye lonely ones, up from the hour of your mourning, take down your harps from the willows, and make every string in them praise the name of the Lord. Come, ye afflicted ones, where'er ye wander; come, ye who think yourselves poverty-stricken, and find yourselves infinitely rich in Christ Jesus. It always delights me to know how many poor people there are, and some very poor ones too, who say that this house of prayer is the happiest place to which they ever go. Dearly do they love the truth, and the preacher too for the truth's sake; and he often thinks, with gratitude, when other things have failed to cheer him, that there are poor and needy ones who will come up to the sanctuary, seeking comfort, and finding it, while critics, who come only to judge, will go away thinking there is nothing notable here; and the wise men of the world and the disputers will cavil at this, and carp at that, and get no good out of it all. But these afflicted and poor people of God know the joyful sound of his truth, and they walk in the light of his countenance, and find it sweet indeed to know that Christ is theirs and that all good is theirs in Christ.

VI. Now let us turn to another argument from The Value Of Christ To Us.

What is the value of Christ to us? Christ is to us — I pause, for what shall I say? I cannot tell all that Christ is to us, for what is he not to us? He is the sun of our day; he is the star of our night; he is our life; he is our life's life, he is our heaven on earth, and he shall be our heaven in heaven. How sweetly does Madame Guyon sing of Christ and of his exceeding preciousness to her soul! I was reading, only yesterday, an account that she gives of herself and of the persecutions she endured for Christ's sake; yet she says that it seemed to her to be just the same whether she was a prisoner in the Bastille or in the gay society of Paris so long as she was in communion with Christ, for Christ was everything to her; and the grace-taught Christian will tell you that he has had his happiest times on a bed of sickness, or when losses and crosses have come quickly one upon another. Fellowship with Christ transforms a desert into a garden, a wilderness into a paradise; it makes the beggar a prince, and sets the prince above the angels. Give a man Christ, — and this is no dream I speak of, no vision of a heated imagination, but in sober solemn earnest do I say it, — and he has everything that a believer can desire; yea, there is more in Christ than a Christian can hold, and, like good John Welsh, the old Covenanter, he is ready to cry, at times, when Christ's love is very sweet to him, "Hold, Lord, hold! for I can hear no more; the joy of thy love is, too great for me." Beloved of God-not beloved of kings, though men grow great if they have a king's affection, — not beloved of angels, yet it were no trifle to have a seraph's affection, but beloved of Jesus, the eternal Son of God, to have our names written on his heart, and engraved on his hands, oh, how exceedingly precious is Christ to us!

"Precious in his death victorious,

He the host of hell o'erthrows;

In his resurrection glorious,

Victor crown'd o'er all his foes.

"Precious, Lord! beyond expressing,

Are thy beauties all divine;

Glory, honor, power, and blessing

Be henceforth for ever thine."

Well then, I hope you never set your food and raiment in comparison with Christ. He who gave you his unspeakable gift will give you such trifles as those. I hope you never put your worldly estate, nor even your spiritual comforts, in comparison with your blessed Lord Jesus; for, as God has given you him, what can he deny you? Pick up heart, poor fainting one; be of good courage, and face the foe again; thou hast no armor for thy back, so show thy breastplate to thine adversary, and never even dream of defeat. He who has brought thee thus far, and enriched thee with such a priceless gift, can deny thee nothing that thou really needest.

VII. And, lastly, remember The Purpose For Which God Gave His Son, Jesus Christ, For Us.

His purpose was our salvation, and it is inconsistent with all right ideas of Deity to believe that the purposes of God can be frustrated. We know that our God made the heavens and the earth, and that the Word of our God shall stand for ever. Our God is not a lackey to the will of men, and his purposes are not like footballs to be kicked about as men may please. What God says, is done; what he commands, stands fast for ever; and what his heart deviseth, that his hand doeth. "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent;" and if he wills to save, none can damn. He has proved the honesty and sincerity of his purpose to save us by giving us Christ; and if my faith has laid hold of Christ, and Christ is mine, then I know that it is God's purpose to save me, and I also know that all things that are necessary to my being saved must surely be bestowed upon me. I have never yet been able to put my mind into such a condition as to understand that God would give Christ to die with the intention of saving a man, and yet that man would not be saved.

I know that you and I, in ordinary business transactions, are accustomed to expect, if we pay the price for anything, that we should have what we buy. I am sure that I could not speculate with another man's blood, and especially I know that I could make no speculation with the blood of my own son; I must know beforehand what so great a sacrifice would effect. In like manner, we believe that God well knew what Christ's blood would buy, and what Christ's death would effect; and we cannot think that Calvary was a venture, that the cross was a speculation, and that the death of Christ was a lottery. God forbid! Be of good courage, then, thou who art redeemed, not with corruptible things such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, all things must shine. How can he, who has already given Christ to be the Way to heaven, leave thee without shoes for thy feet, or without armor for the fight, or without anything else that thou wilt need? He who has given the greater must and will give the less. Lay thy many needs before him; throw thyself, penniless, at his feet; and plead thus, "Lord, thou hast given me Christ with the purpose of saving me, such-and-such a thing I need for my soul's salvation, Lord, give it me, that thine eternal purpose may be fulfilled." This is a plea that must prevail, a

knock that shall make heaven's gates ring till the porter shall open them, and the favor that thou needest shall be given with open hands.

The only question I have to ask ere I have done is this, — Is Christ yours? Is Christ thine, my hearer? Answer "Yes," or No," to-night; he is thine, or he is not thine, there is no, third answer. Is Christ yours? Do you say "No"? Alas, poor wretch, how miserable is thy state now! — "condemned already." How wretched shall thy state be hereafter, when "Depart, ye cursed," shall be thy sentence! "I know not," says one, "whether Christ is mine or not." Dost thou trust him? This is the deciding question. If thou dost trust thyself with Christ fully and implicitly, he is thine. If thou retest in any degree upon thine own works, frames, doings, or willings, he is not thine; but if thou dost take him now to be thine All-in-all, trusting him, and him alone, he is thine, and he shall be thine for ever and ever. Let there be no aching heart at this communion table to-night, let every one of us come to this feast of love with joy and gladness, because, when we can say that Christ is ours we-

"Can smile at Satan's rage,

And face a frowning world."

May the Lord give Christ to each one of us, and unto him shall be the glory world without end! Amen.

Romans 8:34 A Bold Challenge Justified

NO. 3067

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"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who will, maketh intercession for us." — Romans 8:34 (note)

ALL through this very wonderful chapter the apostle seems to be piling up, in heaps upon heaps, the many marvels of divine grace. I might quote from the old classic fable of the giants who piled the mountains one upon the other, — Pelion upon Ossa, and I might say that, even so has Paul done here. He has piled mountain upon mountain of wondrous grace in his description of the way to heaven. and now he seems to have climbed to the top of them all, and to have transformed them into a kind of Tabor or Pisgah; and as he stands there, he exults in the Lord; he waves the palm-branch of triumph; he boasts with holy boasting; and he challenges all his enemies to attack him: "Who, shall lay any thing to the charges of God's elect? It is God that, justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ, that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

I. Here, first of all, is A Solemn Question, — a very solemn question if it were put by all here present:

"Who, is, he that condemneth?"

— for I am afraid that some of my hearers, if they asked that, question, might, have a speedy answer; — "It is your own conscience that condemns you; it is the Word of God that condemns you; it is Christ himself' who, condemns you; it is God the Judge of all who condemns you because, you have not. fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope, set before, you in the, gospel: you have not believed in Jesus." But Paul is speaking as a believer in Christ, and for him to put the question, or for any other believer to put, it, is a very different thing: for he, may say what others must not, "Who can lay anything to my charge? Who is he that can condemn

Now, beloved, one answer that might be, given to this question, "Who is he that condemneth?" is that, there are many who would if they could; for, probably, no believer in Christ. is without his enemies. There are few good men and women who are not slandered. The majority of God's people have been persecuted in some way or other, and some of them have had to lie in prison year after year. Many more have been condemned to die; and yet, inasmuch as slanderers and persecutors have no right to, condemn the man of God, he may challenge his slanderers and his persecutors, and say, "You may profess to condemn me if you please, but, I count your condemnation to be no more potent than the whistling of the wind. You would condemn me if you could, but you cannot really do, so." Satan, our arch-enemy, would condemn us if it were in his power. Only fancy him, for a moment,, sitting on the judgment-seat. If we had the devil to judge us, he would soon bring to our recollection our many faults, and follies, and failings, and condemn us for them. But, O thou fiend of hell, God has not made thee. the, judge, of his saints! Thou mayest cast foul insinuations

against them; but the Lord says to them concerning each one of them, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan! Is not this a brand plucked out, of the fire?" Satan has no right to, judge us, and no power to condemn us; so, when he speaks the worst he can about us, we laugh him to scorn, rejoicing that God will bruise him under our feet. shortly.

But, beloved, sometimes our own conscience condemns us. The best man here will, at times, have painful memories of the past; and to look at the past, except through the glass made red by our Savior's precious blood, is to look upon despair; for our past transgressions would drag us down to hell were it not for the stoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Ay, and we, need not look back far to have this sad view, for the sins of any one of the best, days we have ever lived might cause us to tremble,. The sins of our holy things are black enough to cause us great sorrow. Did you ever pray a prayer that you could not have wept over afterwards? Have you ever preached a sermon with which you could feel content? Is not, sin mixed with all that, we do? But, here is the mercy, that. our conscience is not. set, upon God's throne to judge and to condemn us, although we do well to listen to the voice of conscience, and to give heed to its admonitions. The apostle John reminds us that, "if our heart condemn us, God is greater than, our heart, and knoweth all things;" and that, "if any man sin, we have an advocate, with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." With all our imperfections, and our consciousness of guilt, we rejoice that, —

"There is a fountain fill'd with blood,

Drawn from Emmanuel's veins;

And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,

Lose all their guilty stains."

It looks a bold question for any man to put. so unreservedly, "Who is ha that, condemneth?" But there is really only One who can condemn. Out' characters may have been pulled to pieces by a thousand tittle-tattlers, but they could not condemn us. When a prisoner stands in the: dock, he need not be afraid of anybody except the judge and jury. It does not signify what, you or I may believe about him; nobody but, the twelve men in the box can give the verdict against him or in his favor. These are the persons before whom he has cause to tremble; but, before none besides. So, whoever may pretend to condemn us, there is only One who can really do so, and that is the Judge; and what. is his name? O Christian, what a comforting fact is this to you! Your Judge is your Savior; and it is not possible to. conceive that he, who died and rose, again, and entered into, heaven, and every day pleads for us, over can use his blessed lips to. pronounce con-detonation upon any one of his own people. "Oh! "say you, "but he must do it as he, is the Judge; he must not show any favor on the judgment-seat." That is a right remark, and I have been sorry whenever I have heard a preacher say that, it. is a consolation to think that the Judge will be our Friend. Why, beloved, we must not imagine that Jesus will judge partiallly, and give his verdict in our favor because we are his friends. No, but here is our comfort; he who is our Judge, beyond everybody else knows the whole, truth about us, and he would not, justify us at the last if we really ought to be condemned. Ah, no,! he is too just to do that; but he knows that every believer is so completely justified that he cannot be, condemned. He knows, as nobody else does, how the believer was justified:, what bleed it was that washed the believer white, and what righteousness it is that has made. the believer "accepted in the Beloved." He knows his own, and he knows the way in which he has justified his own; and, therefore, as an omniscient, infallibly just Judge, he knows that the sentence which will be passed upon the believer, which is a sentence of acquittal, is the only one that could be passed. "Who is he that condemneth? Christ that died." So the fact stands that, whatever there may be in store for others in connection with the coming day of final judgment, and the banishment of the condemned to hell, all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ will never be condemned. Under no possible or conceivable circumstances can they ever be condemned, for they who are once forgiven and justified always shalt be forgiven and justified in time and throughout eternity. There, is no condemnation now to them who are in Christ Jesus, and there never shall be.

II. Our second point, is, The, Ground Of This Holy Confidence.

It was holy confidence that, made Paul ask, "Who is he that. condemneth?" and he has, given us the reasons for his confidence; but I shall first, call your attention to, what he has not given as the ground of confidence.

He does not say, "Who is he that condemneth? — for we have never sinned." That would be a very good ground of confidence if it were true; for, if we had never sinned, nobody could condemn us. God is not unrighteous, so he does not, condemn an innocent man; but there is not one glorified person in heaven who, will ever dare to plead that he had never sinned, for "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." We have all gone astray from God like is sheep; every one of us has gone the downward road. By the works of the law we never can be justified, for the law only brings to us a knowledge, of sin, and proves to us that our fancied perfection can never be the ground of our confidence.

Neither does the apostle, ground his confidence on the fact of his repentance. Some people seem to have a notion that, although sin is a very evil thing, yet, if repentance be sincere and deep:, it will suffice to wash out the sin. But Paul does not say, "Who is he that

condemneth? — for I have felt the plague of sin, and hated it, and wept over it,, and turned from it,.” He, makes no mention whatever of his repentance as a ground of his. confidence. He had truly repented, yet. he never dreamed of relying upon his repentance as a reason for his justification in the sight of God.

Nor does he say that he, puts any dependence upon a long life of holiness. From the time of his conversion, Paul had been an example to all the flock, so that, he could even write, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ;” yet he does not say, “Who is he that condemneth? — for I have lived a blameless life among you all, and none can convince me of sin.” Not a word of that sort does he utter. I know that some of you seekers after salvation fancy that those good Christian people, whom you very much admire, must get a great deal of comfort out of the good lives that they lead; but I can assure you that this is not the case with any of them. They will all tell you that they have not, the, least. confidence in themselves, or in their own doings, but that their confidence is found in quite another direction.

Paul does not say that his confidence was based upon the fact that he had practiced great, self-denial, and had been a most devoted missionary of the, cross of Christ. It is true, that he had been beaten, and stoned, and shut, up. in prison, and that he had been quite willing to lay down his life for his Lord, but, he, makes no mention of all that as the reason why he felt that he could not, be, condemned. What, do you think was Paul’s opinion of all the good works he had ever done, and of all that he had suffered for the name of Christ? This is what he says, “I do count them but dung,” (he could hardly have, used a more opprobrious word than that,) “that I may win Christ,, and be, found in him.” A good man, when he. was dying, said that he was gathering all his good works and his bad works together in one bundle, and flinging them all overboard; in his estimation, the one, set, was about as good as the other as a ground of confidence in the sight, of God, and he meant to be rid of the whole, and to put his trust, somewhere else. And believe me, dear hearer, as I stand here before you, I know whom I have believed, and I have not only a hope of eternal life; but, I know that. I have, eternal life within my own soul. But, if you ask me. whether I ground my confidence of my salvation upon the fact that, these many years, I have preached the gospel of Jesus Christ, I tell you, “No, I place no reliance upon my own preaching as any ground of merit in the sight of God.” And if I am asked whether, having experienced much of the, grace of God, I build my confidence on my experience, I answer, “No, in no, wise. Infinitely better than anything within me or of me is the Rock upon which my soul rests; or else I should be resting upon a shifting quicksand which would be my destruction.” On Christ and what, he has done, my soul hangs for time, and eternity; and if your soul also hangs there, it will be saved as surely as mine shall be; and if you are lost trusting in Christ, whoever you may be, I will be lost with you, and I will go to hell with you; I must do so, for I have nothing else to rely upon but the fact that, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, lived, and died, and was buried, and rose again, and went up to heaven, and still lives and pleads for sinners at the right hand of God.

I have thus shown you that the apostle’s confidence was not founded upon anything of himself. Now I want, to explain to you the reasons why he knew that he was not condemned, and never should be’. He had four pillars to his confidence,.

And the first great massive pillar was this, — “It is Christ that died.” But,, Paul, you have broken God’s law, so he, must, punish you. He replies, “God cannot, punish me; he cannot, even condemn me.” But, Paul, you helped to put Stephen to death; your hands were red with the blood of the martyrs. You hunted the saints of God, and delighted to put them to death; and yet you say that God cannot, condemn you for that, and never will’. “Ay,” says the apostle, “he never will; he never can.” And why? “Because Christ died.” But, Paul, what has Christ’s death to do with your guilt? His answer is, “All my sins, however many or however black they may have been, were laid upon Christ, and he stood in my stead in the sight of God, and in my place he suffered that which has rendered full satisfaction to, the law of God for all my evil deeds, and thoughts, and words. The sufferings of Jesus were the sufferings of my Substitute,., He Bore, that I might never bear, the wrath of God on account of my sin.” Do, you see this, poor sin-burdened soul? If Jesus Christ died in your place, God cannot condemn you. If Jesus Christ did really suffer in your stead, as your Substitute, where would God’s honor and justice, be, if he should punish the sinner for whom Jesus had died as Substitute? That can never be.

The comfort, of the text lies here. Paul says, “It is Christ that died;” that is to say, it is the Son of God that died, and there must be infinite merit in the atonement which was presented by the sufferings of so august a person. Paul says, “It. is Christ that died.” That, word signifies “the anointed One,” — the Divine Person who was sent by the Father, and anointed by the Holy Spirit., and who himself undertook to suffer in the stead of his people, he did not do it of his own will alone; he was authorized to do it,, appointed and anointed to do it. God put, his Son into that place, as the prophet Isaiah saw. “All we like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the, iniquity of us all.” Now, see, if Christ was Substitute, and if God appointed him and anointed him as my only Substitute, to suffer in my room, and place, and stead, where, in the whole Universe can there be found any reason why God should first punish Christ, and then punish me? The only question is, — Did he so die in my room, and place, and stead? The answer to that. question is this, — If I believe in Christ, I am one of those for whom he died as Substitute. If I trust, him with my whole, heart, if I rely alone, upon him as my Substitute, and Savior, I have the mark and sign upon me that he suffered in my stead, that I offered a. full and complete atonement for my sin; and, known this, I dare to say, as confidently as the apostle Paul said it, that Christ died for me. Who can ever condemn the sinner for whom Christ died as Substitute, and Savior? Is not this a good foundation to have under my feet? May I not stand securely here; and, knowing that, Jesus died instead of me, may I not feel assured that I can never die, and that I can never be sent to hell, for Jesus, Christ has suffered all that I

ought to have suffered?

But the apostle had a second reason for feeling sure that he should not, be, condemned, and that was that Christ, had risen from the dead. "Yea rather," saith he, "is risen again." Near, if Christ had not risen from the dead, he would have been proved to be an impostor. If he had not risen from the dead, it would have been clear that he was not God, or the Son of God; but his rising from the dead proved that he was both God and the appointed and anointed Savior. Christ's death paid the debt that his people owed to divine justice; and when he came out of the prison of death in which he had been detained for a while, it was, so to speak, God's receipt, by which he said to the whole universe, "My Son has paid the debts of all his people; therefore I let him go free." Jesus was the Hostage for all his chosen ones; and until the last farthing of the tremendous price of their redemption had been paid, he must lie in the prison-house of the tomb. But when it had been certified by infallible, justice that, the great transaction was finished, and the redemption of his people, was fully accomplished, then Christ; was set free, and "he, rein again the third day according to the Scriptures." Now see, believer, what is the effect of this glorious truth. How can God ever condemn you after he has accepted Christ, as your Substitute, — after he has publicly accepted him by raising him from the dead in the presence of men and angels? God cannot so belie himself; it is not possible that, after he has accepted the Substitute, he should afterwards condemn those for whom that, Substitute bled and died.

Paul had those two pillars — the death and resurrection of Christ, — -but he added a third. He says that Christ is at the right hand of God. This is another weighty reason for our feeling that we never can be condemned, for the right hand of God is the place of power and the place of majesty. Christ at the right, hand of God is. there as King; and, as King, he is able, to defend his people against all their adversaries. False accusers, therefore, shall be driven away by the power of his omnipotent arm. While Christ is King, at the right hand of God, what accuser shall dare to impeach us in the courts of heaven? Christ's sitting at the right hand of God proves that his great redeeming work is done; if he had not completed it, he would not be sitting down. But, it is done; and done for ever. Finished in that matchless loom is the pro-foot robe. of righteousness that we are to wear for ever. The, last throw of the sacred shuttle of his untold agony has been made,. Dyed is: the wondrous garment that we are to wear, for it has been dipped in His precious blood; and when it was finished, the Divine, Worker "sat down on the right, hand of God; from. henceforth expecting till his enemies be made, his footstool." For Christ to. sit at the right hand of God is a continual certificate from the Father that he is satisfied with the substitution of his Son instead of us, and satisfied with us as we are represented in him. Every moment that Christ is at the right hand of God every believer is safe. For Christ to be in heaven, and for the people for whom he died to be in hell, is utterly impossible. For Christ to be there as our Representative, and yet for those whom he represents to be cast. out from the favor of God, would be a monstrosity, a blasphemy, which cannot be imagined for a single instant. The Head is glorified, so the members of his mystical body shall never be condemned. They must be eternally saved because he is at the, right hand of God. Look up, then, Christian! You looked down into the tomb, and saw him there paying your debts; you looked round to the garden whence he rose, and saw that your debts were all discharged; now look up to the heaven where he dwells with his Father, and see yourself "accepted in the Beloved."

The apostle had yet one more ground of confidence, for he says that Christ "also maketh intercession for us;" and if any doubt could linger until now, surely this must expel it. When Jesus pleads for his people, his pleas are omnipotent, and God will never deny to his Son the reward of his soul-travail. I suppose that, in heaven. Christ pleads for his people, vocally, but it is not at all needful that he should; for his very presence there is an irresistible plea. If someone were pleading before an earthly court, and if he had been an old soldier, and had rendered valiant service to his country, if he were to bare his breast, and show the scars of the wounds that he received in battle, he would not have to say much, for his scars would plead better than any words could; and Jesus in heaven lifts his hand and feet., and shows his pierced side. His scarred person, still adorned with the marks of his: passion and death, is an everlasting and overwhelming plea. If Jesus pleads for me, can his Father reject me? If so, he must also reject his Son, he must refuse: the authoritative; requests of his only-begotten and well-beloved Son. he must deny to Jesus that which he well deserves; and that he never can do. O believer, if you still have any doubts about your acceptance in Christ, let them fly before this fourth mighty plea, "who also maketh intercession for us."

I am not going to keep you here much longer, but, I want just to remind you that the main difficulty with some of you seems to be that, you do believe these great truths, but you do not fully realize what, is contained in them. I am, speaking now only to you who really do believe in Jesus. You are resting upon him. Mean; you know you axe. Unless you are awfully deceived, each one of you can say, —

"My hope is built on nothing less

Than Jesus' blood and righteousness."

Well, beloved, do not let me merely say this, and you simply hear it, but believe it, enjoy it, drink it in, live on it. You are not condemned by God; and, therefore, the opposite of that is true, you are accepted by God, you axe, beloved of God, you are dear to God; you are pure and precious in God's sight,. Let that blessed thought get into your brain; and, when it is there, pray to God to let

it. get, down, deeper, even into your heart and soul, and then say, as Paul did, “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;” and “there is therefore now no condemnation to them which, are in Christ, Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Why do I see you hang down your head, and look as gloomy as an owl? You might well look so if year were, condemned, or if there were any threat of your being condemned; but there is no. such fear if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I sometimes hear preachers say that we are in a state of probation, but I should like to know who is in such a state as that. Certainly, the sinner is not, for he is lost already; and the saint is not, for he is saved, and never can be, lost. The sinner is already condemned, and the saint, is already justified. We are not, waiting for the verdict., for it has already been given. It is recorded concerning every believer that, he is justified, and that, the claim he makes that he is a child of God is a, true one, and that all the glorious inheritance, in the land of the blessed is his, and he may claim it at once as his own, for it all belongs to him. So, up with you child of God! Up with you, bird of the, day! Eagle of God, will you sit, day after day, moping in the dark, when you might soar up, into the light, and gaze even at the, sun? Up with. you, son of the morning; up with you, child of light; away from all your gloomy doubts and fears! You have a million a year for spending-money, given to you by the God of grace, so will you go on spending a few pence, a day, like a beggar who. needs to be, careful even of his farthings? You are forgiven, man; then live as a forgiven man should. What, though God smites you every now and then with trouble? Can you not say, as one did long ago, “Smite, Lord, as hard as thou wilt, for there is no anger in thy blows now, and therefore I can bear them without complaining”? Are you suffering severe losses, and carrying heavy crosses? They ought to seem very light to you now. As long as you are forgiven, what does anything else matter? Go to a man in Newgate, condemned to die, and take him a free, pardon; tell him that, by the favor of his sovereigns, he is to, live: and do you think he will begin murmuring because some: little, thing is. Not just as he would like it? Oh, no! he will say, “It is enough for me that my life is spared.” Now, you are forgiven; you are God’s child; you are on the way to heaven; so, “fret not thyself because of evil-doers.” Murmur not against the Most High. Take thy harp down from the willows, and sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath wrought marvels of mercy for thee.

And then, in the light, of this wonderful love of God to you, so live, at home and abroad, that others shall ask, “What makes this man so happy? What makes this woman so glad?” I will not, say to you who are forgiven, — Sing with your voice all the day, though I would have you praise the Lord with joyful lips as much as you can.; but, let the bells of your hearts go on ringing all the day. Sometimes, when I think of what the Lord has done for me, I feel myself to be like a church steeple that I saw some fray months ago,. There had been a wedding in the place, and the bells were pealing out a merry chime; and, as they rang, I distinctly saw that steeple reel and roe-&, and the four pinnacles seemed to be tossing to and fro, and the whole tower seemed as though it must, come down as the, bells pealed out again and again. And sometimes. when my soul pulls the big bell, “Jesus loved thee, and gave himself for thee, and thou art accepted in him, thou art God’s own child, and on thy way to heaven, and a crown of eternal life is thine,,” I f. eel as if this crazy steeple of my body would rock and reel beneath the excess of joy, and be scarcely able to hold the ecstatic bliss which the love of God creates within my soul; and then do I sing, —

“In the heavenly Lamb, thrice happy I am,

And my heart it doth leap at the sound of his name.”

Oh, I would that every one of you had that joy! And, surely, everyone shall have it who will have it, in God’s way. If thou believest in Jesus Christ, thou shalt, be absolved from all thy guilt. If thou wilt but, entrust thyself to him, whoever thou art. he will take thy sin, and lift it off from thee, and cause thee to be accepted, as all his people are.

God give to all of you the, grace to believe in Jesus, and to go. or your way rejoicing, for his name’s sake! Amen.

Romans 10:10 Faith First, Confession Following

NO. 3011

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“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” — Romans 10:10 (note)

IN speaking of this important matter, — confessing with the mouth what we have believed with the heart, I call your attention, first of all, to the order of the two things. Believing with the heart must come first; confession with the mouth must and should come

afterwards. To confess with the mouth what I do not believe with the heart would be hypocrisy; instead of being an acceptable sacrifice, it would be an abomination in the sight of God. How dare I profess to have faith if I do not possess it? How dare I assume a form of godliness unless I have proved its power in my spirit? So first comes the heart's believing, and then follows the mouth's confession. Do not reverse the Scriptural order, but take care that you do all things in their due course. Among the last words of the Lord Jesus Christ to his disciples are these, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Note the order, — not baptism first, and believing afterwards; but he who first believes, and then is baptized upon profession of his faith, is the servant of Christ who obeys his Master's commands in their right order; and he it is who "shall be saved."

Having noted the order of faith and its confession, next, note the connection between them. Confessing with the mouth is to follow believing with the heart just as effect follows causes. We are to confess with the mouth because we believe with the heart. The heart's belief is to be so potent and energetic a thing that it constrains us to confess openly what we have received inwardly; no confession is worth anything unless it is the outcome of the grace by which we have received the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior.

There is a due order for faith and confession, and there is a clear connection between faith and confession.

Notice, also, the result of the two put together: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The result of faith and confession is salvation. I do not doubt that a man, who truly believes in Jesus, is saved even before he makes a confession of his faith; but it is very remarkable that the blessing of salvation is constantly connected with these two things rather than with either one of them alone, and we must not put asunder what God has joined together. The same truth is taught in the memorable sentence which I quoted to you just now: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." There is no saving efficacy in baptism, yet belief and baptism are joined together by our Lord Jesus Christ, and again I say, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." I would not like to attend to one duty, and neglect another, when I found my Master laying both upon me. The path of obedience is ever the path of happiness; and if any God-given command should ever seem to your imperfect apprehension to be less important than another, remember the wise words of the mother of Jesus to the servants at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, "Whatsoever HE saith unto you, do it; "and do it conscientiously, gladly, promptly, because he commanded it, even though you cannot see any other reason for doing it.

We have, on this occasion, to consider the lesser duty of the two, which is, nevertheless, most certainly enjoined upon all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. In talking of it, I still have to speak of four things: — first, what it is that we are to confess; secondly, when we are to confess it; thirdly, why we should confess it; and, fourthly, how, and in what spirit we should confess it.

I. First, then, as Believers In The Lord Jesus Christ, What Is It That We Are To Confess?

It is clear, from the text, that we are to confess with the mouth that which we believe with the heart. The same things which, through our faith in them, are the basis of our salvation, become the subject of our confession before God. That which we privately and personally rest upon for salvation, we are to publicly and emphatically avow to others as the ground of our confidence; and you know whom that is, beloved. It is neither more nor less than the person, work, character, and offices of our blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We build for eternity upon him. He is the foundation and the chief corner-stone of the invisible yet most substantial structure upon which all our confidence rests; and if any believer should ask, "What am I to confess?" the answer is plain enough, confess JESUS CHRIST.

First, we are to confess that we believe him to be the appointed Savior of sinners: — that we look upon him as being the long-promised Seed of the woman who came into this world to bruise the old serpent's head, and to recover his chosen people from among the terrible ruins of the Fall. We believe him to be the Son of God, equal with the Father and the ever-blessed Spirit; and we accept him, and confess him, as our Savior, in whom alone we have confidence, upon whose unique sacrifice we rely for pardon of all our sins, and upon whose constant intercession we depend for our preservation unto the end. We confess Christ before men as King of kings and Lord of lords, as "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession," the Messiah by whom alone can be fulfilled Gabriel's prophecy to Daniel, "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." We must confess Christ in all his offices and characters, and if we lay stress upon any part of his life, or any attribute of his character, it must be upon that which is most attacked in the age in which we live. The great point of controversy in Paul's day was the resurrection of Jesus; and hence, wherever he went, he preached the resurrection. He knew that this truth would excite the ridicule of the philosopher, and bring down upon him the fierce opposition of the Jew; but, nevertheless, this was always a prominent point in his preaching and writing, "Christ is risen from the dead." Sometimes, it has been the duty of Christians to make most prominent the Deity of Christ, because that truth has been the one most attacked just then. Some years ago, many insults were, cast upon the Godhead of our Lord, and then every genuine Christian was bound to expound and defend that master-doctrine that Jesus Christ "is over all, God blessed for ever." Whatever may be the point in the character of our Lord which is most debated and controverted, it is the duty of his true disciples to bear witness upon that point with especial distinctness and frequency. To confess Christ, is to say of him, "I have received him into my soul as my Savior, and he is my sole hope for time

and for eternity. I honor him as the Son of God, and I submit to his laws as those of the great King who is worthy to rule as he pleases; let others set up what lords they will, and be governed by what laws they choose, as for me, the crucified Man of Nazareth — who is none other than the ever-blessed Son of God, co-equal with the Father and the Spirit, — shall have the absolute control of all my powers and faculties. This, I take it, is the way in which “with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

But, in confessing Christ, we must take care that we confess all his words as well as himself. You recollect that solemn declaration of the Lord Jesus Christ, “Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” A Scriptural confession of Christ involves our profession of faith in that form of doctrine which is revealed in the divinely-inspired Scriptures, our union with that body of believers who most clearly comply with the requirements of our Master’s Word, our willing subjection to whatever we perceive to be according to the mind and will of Christ; and we are not faithful to our conscience altogether unless, in every point, as far as we receive the light, when we know our Master’s will, we do it. Oh, that all Christians would look upon this kind of confession as being one of the most important parts of the Christian’s business here below! Instead of that, it seems to be the view of some that you are to keep a great many truths in the background just because they happen to be inconvenient either to yourselves or to other people. But, brethren and sisters in Christ, the true ideal of a New Testament Christian Church is that of a company of believers witnessing to the whole of Christ’s truth, counting every fragment of the Word to be so precious that, if the entire Christian community should go to martyrdom in defense of that one truth, that priceless truth of revelation would be saved at a cheap rate even by so great a sacrifice. To stand firmly by God’s Word in everything, to conform to our Master’s will even to the jots and tittles, to savor the things that be of God, and not those that be of men; — this it is that every Christian should seek to do by the aid of the ever-blessed Spirit.

Further, dear friends, it is the duty of each Christian to confess his clear faith in Christ. You should avow before your fellow-men that you have believed in Jesus. I think the Scriptures teach us that this ought to be done early in our Christian career. We should not live as secret Christians, for years, as some do, as though they were ashamed of Jesus, and saying nothing to show that they have believed in him. Confess that, unless you are dreadfully deceived, you are saved by Christ, and are resting in him. Then confess what Christ has done for you, and do not be ashamed to confess the details of your case. Paul told Timothy that “before he was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious;” but he adds, “Howbeit for this cause I attained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.” Do not be ashamed to confess that there is a change in you, that you are not now what you once were, tell the story of your spiritual experience. Is it not written, concerning God’s deliverance of his people, “It shall be to the Lord for a name?” Do not rob God of the great name of Deliverer, to which he is so fully entitled. It is due to a physician, when he has been the means of curing some extraordinary disease, that you should tell of what he has done, so, tell to others what the great Physician has done for you.

If you have been, spiritually, raised from the dead by the Lord Jesus Christ, never cease to publish abroad what he has done for you; and as you grow older, and your experience increases, confess with your mouth the deeper truths that have been revealed to you. Tell to the young people around you what the Lord did for you in your times of trouble. Speak well of your Master; imitate the holy resolution of David: “I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad;” and when the time comes for you to die, mind that you bear a closing testimony to Christ then, if it is possible to you. Let those around your bed hear you tell, in your last moments, how real and true you find Christ to be to you when all else in the world seems like a dream, and your life melts away like a shadow.

This appears to me to be an accurate, though brief, summary of a Christian’s confession of faith, — what Christ is in himself, and what Christ has been to him and been for him. You can yourselves supply any deficiency that there may be in my summary, for the flight of time prevents me from dealing further with this part of the subject.

II. Now, secondly, let us enquire When Should One, Who Believes With The Heart, Make Confession With The Mouth?

Should he not make it as soon as he is converted? Is it not the most fitting time for making his last confession when he comes forward to unite himself with a Christian church? Many churches, nowadays I have given up the old-fashioned custom, which once prevailed in Baptist churches, of candidates coming before the church, and making a public avowal of their faith before; their fellow believers; and, through the abandonment of that Scriptural method, they have bred a race of cowardly good-for-nothings, who hardly dare to say that their souls are their own, who never know what their religious convictions are, but are turned this way and that, with every wind that blows, like so many weather-cocks. But you, my brethren, and my sisters too, though some of you once thought it a great ordeal and trial, have all testified before the church, “Yes, we do believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.” Some of you said it with very trembling lips, but, still, you all said, personally and individually, as your turn came, “Yes, we are on the Lord’s side,” It seems to me that this is an apostolical custom which ought never to be given up, and I scarcely count that to be a church which receives its members without any testimony of their faith being verbally given. We know that Paul himself, when he went up to Jerusalem,

“essayed to join himself to the disciples;” but they were afraid to receive him until they had heard how he had been converted to God, “and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.” Then they gladly received him, “and he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem;” Why it is that good Christian people are so frightened over the little matter of saying to their fellow-Christians, “We believe in Jesus,” utterly amazes me. If you have been, as Jeremiah says, wearied by running with the footmen, how can you contend with horses; and if, in these little billows of trouble through making your open avowal of faith to your own brothers and sisters in Christ, you get so frightened, what will you do in the dwellings of Jordan? You are afraid of going to see your minister about joining the church, are you? Yet you have to meet the devil, foot to foot, as Bunyan’s Christian had to meet Apollyon! Are you afraid of meeting a few of your fellow-Christians? Why, you have to meet death; you have to face a scorning, scoffing, frowning, jeering, persecuting world! If you are afraid of a company of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, who are only too glad to hear you say that you are on the Lord’s side if it is really true, and who will cheer, and comfort, and help you as far they possibly can, — if you are afraid of us, surely you cannot have the courage which ought to be the possession of all good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Then, next, the two ordinances of the Christian religion are both of them confessions of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It seems to me that the baptism of believers is a most impressive and instructive mode of confessing with the mouth what we have believed with the heart. Coming to the open pool, the believer says to you who look on, “I believe that Jesus Christ died, and was buried, and rose again on my behalf; in testimony to which I also am about to be buried in this liquid that, out of which I shall rise, as he rose from the grave. I believe that this flesh of mine is past improvement, and must die, I look for no perfection in my body, for I know that the perfection I am to receive is spiritual; as Paul wrote to the Romans, “If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness;” and I give up this body of mine to be buried, — the body of my flesh, these old corruptions, to be buried once for all; I avow, this day, that I am dead to the world, that my life is hid with Christ in God, and that the life which I henceforth live shall be a resurrection-life, a life in the power of the Holy Spirit, who hath quickened me, and raised me up from among the dead to live with Jesus Christ in newness of life.” I cannot conceive a more impressive and instructive form of confession with the mouth than that which our Master himself has enjoined upon us, not only by precept, but also by example when he bade John baptize him in the river Jordan, and said to him, “Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.”

And then, when we gather around the table of communion, in obedience to our Master’s command, “This do in remembrance of me,” we “do shew the Lord’s death till he come,” and there, in the breaking and eating of the bread, and the pouring out and drinking of the wine, we make another confession with the mouth that we have trusted in Jesus as our Savior, that he is “the living bread which came down from heaven,” upon which we live, and “the wine on the lees, well refined,” which is the choicest cordial our quickened spirits can enjoy.

So you see that both the ordinances are God’s own methods by which we are to confess our confidence in his Son, Jesus Christ.

More than this, every Christian is bound to avow his faith in Christ at all times when it is possible. We are not merely Christians on some special occasions, we are Christians always, and Christians evermore, if we are Christians at all. We are not only believers in Jesus when we meet each other at the communion table, or at a prayer-meeting; but we are believers in Jesus out of doors, at our work, in our business, or our daily occupation, whatever it may be. I utterly abhor that so-called “pity” which belongs only to places and to dates! Your “holy” places, and your “holy” dates, and your “holy” water, and so on are all alike anti-Christian and Popish. To the Christian, every day is alike holy, every place alike holy, and everything alike holy. He is a sanctified man, and all things that are round about him are sanctified to God’s service, and to his fellow-creatures’ good; and, to that end, he confesses Christ with his mouth at all times.

Still, there are certain special occasions when he should do this. For instance, it is our duty to confess Christ with the mouth when enquirers ask us for information about him. There are many persons, in the world, with a sufficiently candid spirit to want to know what Christianity really is; so, as the apostle Peter says, “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” Do not let such enquirers go away unsatisfied, even though it may be a very long and difficult matter to satisfy their enquiries.

Mind, also, that you are always ready to make confession of your faith to objectors, even though they should only ask questions and raise objections just for the sake of opposition. When a controversy is started, and someone else speaks on the wrong side, do not hesitate to put in a word for that which is right and true. I have heard of some people, who are of so gentle a spirit that, if they hear others engaged in controversy, they always walk away. Well, have you never heard of the soldier, who was so gentle spirited that, whenever there was any fighting to be done, he always hid away in a corner, or some other safe place? That was not very creditable on his part, and when he was discovered, he was shot; and that mode of skulking, which some people adopt whenever a religious controversy is on, is about as honorable to them. If you can say a word that will really help a good cause, do not keep it back; for, sometimes, even the simplest observation may come in just at the right time, and may overthrow the adversary of the truth. So, bear your personal testimony for the truth in times of controversy. And take care that you always confess Christ when you are likely to be ridiculed for doing so. This, indeed, will be a test of your sincerity. To confess Christ in summer weather, when religion, as it were,

walks in silver slippers, is what a hypocrite might do; but to take your place beside Christ when he stands in the pillory, and every man's hand is full of mud and filth to throw at him, this is what only a genuine Christian can do. Confess Christ when his followers are in rags; acknowledge him when his disciples are oppressed and persecuted. Remember what Paul mentions to the praise of Onesiphorus: "he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain." Do not any of you Christians be ashamed of Christ's chain; but count it your highest honor and glory, as Paul says, to "fill up that which is behind of the addictions of Christ," "for his body's sake, which is the Church."

Let me, having thus given you sufficient opportunity for making your confession of faith, urge upon those present, who have believed in Jesus, but have never yet confessed their faith, the duty of doing so at once. Be no longer backward, but say, "I also am on the Lord's side." I pray you, if you have, never done so, take the first opportunity you have of doing it; and, in some way, but especially in your Lord and Master's own way, come forward, and say, "He is my Savior, my King, my All-in-all; and I hereby avow him in the midst of this crooked and perverse generation."

III. Now, thirdly, let us ask, Why Should We Confess Our Faith In Christ?

I shall not spend many minutes over this point, for it, seems to me that every true Christian's heart can supply him with many reasons for acting thus. To confess God, in the person of his Son, Jesus Christ, is a part of true religious homage which is naturally due to the Most High. Our prayers and praises are rightly due to the great Being who created us, and who still preserves and provides for us; and our confession of Christ, if we have truly believed in him, is due to the One who has redeemed us from destruction with his own most-precious blood.

We should confess Christ with the mouth because he claims this from us. I repeat the solemn words I quoted to you a little while ago: "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." Tremble, lest you should incur the doom of those who are ashamed of Christ. There is another terrible passage in the 21st chapter of the Revelation, and the 8th verse: "But, the fearful, and unbelieving, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." "The fearful" — that is, those who are afraid to confess Christ; — not those who are fearful concerning their own salvation; not the Little-faiths and the Much-afraids; — but those cowards who are afraid to suffer for Christ's sake, and who therefore take the side of the world for the sake of their present ease and comfort; — these are they who shall be shut out of heaven, and have their everlasting portion with idolaters and liars in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. I implore you to tremble lest that should be your lot.

We should avow Jesus Christ, my brethren, if only for our own sake, for really it does a Christian great good to say openly, "I love the Lord." It gives happiness, comfort, satisfaction, rest of heart, and lasting joy to confess Christ before men. I have not the time to tell you of all the blessings that I personally received through publicly avowing that Christ was my Savior. One thing I may say, however; I believe that, up to that time, I was one of the most timid persons in the world; I never spoke to anybody, and never ventured to give an opinion upon anything without tears coming into my eyes. But, from that happy day when I walked into the water, at Isleham Ferry, to be baptized into the name of Christ, I have never been afraid of any man in the world, nor of the devil either, while engaged in the pursuit of the things of God. My baptism was a sort, of crossing of the Rubicon for me. I had burnt my boats, drawn my sword, and thrown away the scabbard, so there was no possibility of going back, and I never wished to do so; and I believe that, others, who are always timorous, and trembling, and afraid, would derive perpetual benefit from once for all boldly avowing themselves to be on the Lord's side.

And, brethren, we ought also to do this for the sake of others. Who knows what good you may do in your family by confessing Christ with the mouth if you have believed on him with your heart? There is another poor trembler in your home; if you come out for Christ first, that other one will soon come out too. Frequently, it is my happy lot to see a daughter come to join the church; and when I ask her if her parents are godly people, she says, "Oh, yes, I hope so, sir!" "Do they attend the Tabernacle?" "Oh, yes, sir!" "Then how is it that they have not joined us?" "Well, sir, I think it is because they are so timid;" and then, often, in about a month afterwards, the father and mother both come; they cannot let their daughter be in the church without them, so they also come and avow their faith in Christ. It is not the right order, you now, for the child to come first, but it often is so; and when one comes, others soon follow. I have known, many a time, the youngsters of the family to be the boldest in owning Christ as their Lord and Master; and then, when they have broken the ice, the other believers in the household have followed them, and made the heroic plunge. Confess Christ, therefore, because of the good you may do to others by so doing.

Further, by giving such public testimony to your faith, — that is, if you live up to it, — you help to let the world know that the old faith has not died out; and, though they may hate you for doing it, you will have borne your personal witness that there is a God, that there is a Savior, and the wicked world will not be able to sleep so soundly as it did before. Your confession will touch its guilty conscience, and cause it to have disquieting dreams; it may be that you will help to awaken it, and so be the means of bringing

some out of it whom Christ has bought with his precious blood, who also will boldly come out on the Lord's side.

Beloved brethren and sisters in Christ, if you will look through the history of the Church of Christ, you will find abundant reasons why every Christian should publicly own his Master. Look at those days of diabolical persecution under Diocletian and the other Roman emperors. Look all down the blood-red path of the noble army of martyrs. Where would the confessors of Christ have been if all Christians had let the knowledge of their faith to themselves? Where would the Church of Christ itself have been if every believer had done as some do now, namely choke the good seed within their own hearts by never giving expression to the faith that is in them. Why, when the fires of persecution were the hottest, Christians were the bravest, and multitudes of men and boys, matrons and maidens, were not ashamed to come to the Roman and other tribunals, and say "We are followers of Christ, we own the Man of Nazareth as our Lord and Savior." They did not hide themselves away; many of them even seemed to court grim Death, though he came dressed in his most terrifying garb. Torture, flaying alive, breaking on the wheel, dragging at the heels of wild horses, rotting in foul dungeons, burning at the stake, — none of these things could quench their courage. They knew whom they had believed, and were persuaded that he was able to keep that which they had committed unto him, and therefore they marched bravely to prison and to death. What then? Shall others fight to win the prize, and shall you, as a coward, abide by the stuff? God forbid! Instead thereof, the Lord help you to confess Christ in the day of his rejection that you may be honored with him in the day of his exaltation! God help you to take his part in the midst of the sinners of the world, that you may be with him when the acclamations of cherubim and seraphim, and the innumerable host redeemed by his blood, shall make all heaven ring and ring again with the music of his matchless name!

IV. And now, lastly, In What Spirit Should We Confess Christ?

We should confess Christ, first, with due self-examination. As it is with the Lord's supper, so it is with this important matter of confessing Christ with the mouth. "Let a man examine himself," says the apostle, and so say we; for, remember that confession with the mouth will be very dangerous unless you are sure that you have believed in Christ with your heart. I am greatly afraid for those of you who are not converted, but who have united yourselves with some Christian church. After the exercise of the best judgment on the part of church-officers, such a calamity will occasionally occur; but if, my friends, this is your case, you are in a most perilous position. You are not very likely to be converted now, for the preachers message to the sinner will pass on to somebody else when it, should be received by you. The fact of you losing in the church may be very much to your spiritual injury. Therefore do not confess with the mouth what you have not believe with the heart.

But, when you have believed with the heart, take care that you promptly and quickly confess Christ with the mouth. Do not need to be pressed to do it. Do not need that mother, or father, or friends should urge you to do it. Christ did not need any pressing to give himself to die for you, so you should not need any pressing to live for him. The best wine flows most freely from the grape, and the sweetest honey is that which drops unpressed from the comb. Let your soul freely drop with love to Christ, like, the droppings of the honeycomb. "Freely we have received, freely give" to him who freely gave his all for you.

Take care, too, that you also came forward very boldly. Do not be ashamed to confess Christ with the mouth in his own appointed way. What you are about to do has no shame connected with it. If you sincerely believe in Jesus, you have no more need to blush at being baptized than a king has when he comes forward to be crowned, or a knight where he kneels to receive the accolade from his sovereign. There is no sin in being a disciple of the Son of God, and no shame in confessing that I am his.

**"Ashamed of Jesus! that dear Friend,
On whom my hopes of heaven depend!
No, when I blush, to this my shame,
That no more revere his name."**

Further, confess Christ with the mouth very plainly. Do not own him in a mystical sort of way which nobody can understand, but bear your testimony by plain words and by still plainer actions. Remember that "actions speak more loudly than words;" and therefore make your confession most of all by the consistent Christian character of your daily life. "Let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ."

Then, make your confession with the mouth constantly. Do not retract at home what you say abroad; and, on the other hand, do not disown abroad what you acknowledge to be true at home. Do not be one thing in the church, and another thing in the world. Remember that you are always a Christian if you are ever a Christian; stand fast in the faith, therefore, at all times. Nail your colors to the mast if you have entered the service of the Lord High Admiral of the Galilean Lake.

Above all things, confess the Lord Jesus Christ sincerely. Let there be no hypocrisy about your confession in any way. Do not repeat

some other Christian's experience which is not your own. Do not borrow your confession of faith from the biography of some eminent Christian. Let your own experience be what you profess; say, with the apostle John, "that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you."

Also, make your confession modestly; — not as though you had anything to boast of in being a Christian, — not as though your Christianity was the result of any good thing in you. Take care to ascribe it all to sovereign grace. Do not blush at being a Christian; but, at the same time, do not boast about it. As Paul wrote to the Philippians, "Rejoice in Christ Jesus," but "have my confidence in the flesh."

Further, make your confession of Christ wisely; — not doing it so as to irritate others unnecessarily, — being willing to suffer for Christ if need be, but not making a martyr of yourself when there is no occasion for doing so. Boldly speak out for Christ whenever you can, but always blend the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove.

Finally, confess Christ, out of love to him, because you cannot help doing so. Let holy-zeal blaze and burn within you till the sparks fly out of your soul in the form of a burning confession of Christ. Let your feet be dipped in the holy oil of complete consecration to Christ, that you may leave a sacred unction behind you wherever you walk. That will to the beat confession of your faith that you can make. Still, do not dissociate the word of confession from the action, for it is to be confession with the mouth. Do say, and say it unmistakably, "I am a Christian." If Christians have any other nickname beside that of Christians, — for so it was given to them at the first, — do not be ashamed of that nickname. Do not be ashamed of the denomination to which you belong, even though some may denounce you as a sectarian. Remember that the genuine Christian is and must be a sectarian; that is to say, he is one who firmly holds the whole truth which he has learned from the Scriptures, through the teaching of the Holy Spirit; and, therefore, he is what the world calls "a sectarian." But as for latitudinarianism, which believes nothing, and counts no truth to be worth anything, the modern Diana of the Ephesians, — I pray you, make no shrines for that hideous idol, and pay no reverence to it; but, like honest men and women, read your Bibles, find out what is the revealed, and stand to it at all costs. If it brings an ugly name upon you, and you are called a sectarian, be willing to bear that name for Christ's sake; only take care that, in bearing it you have not the horrible spirit of some sectarians, who denounce all others because they do not see eye to eye with them, and who have no fellowship with them because they cannot, say "Shibboleth" exactly as the sectarians say it. Love the whole family of God but do not to ashamed of those distinctive truths which give you a name which makes you a separatist from the ungodly, and from those who do not follow the whole counsel of God. Stand out boldly for Christ and for his truth, so that, when he comes again, he may say to you, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

You, who have not yet believed on Jesus with the heart, must make no confession with the mouth; but I pray that you may be even now led to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. The way of salvation is simply this, — Trust Jesus Christ, that is believing with the heart. Depend upon his merits, rely upon his all-sufficient atoning sacrifice, rest in his perfect righteousness. If you do that, you are saved, and then, being saved, come forward, and avow your faith, and God bless you in so doing, for Christ's sake! Amen.

Romans 10:16 Disobedience to the Gospel

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"But they have not all obeyed the gospel."-Romans 10:16 (note)

EVEN concerning those who have heard the gospel, it can still be said, "They have not all obeyed the gospel." And this, dear friends, is one of the plainest proofs of the deep depravity of human nature. We might have expected that, if God, in the exercise of his marvelous mercy, should stay his hand, and not at once execute the sentence of justice upon the guilty;-if in his surprising grace, he should devise a way by which he could be just, and yet could justify the ungodly;-I say, we might have supposed that, the moment men heard the good news, they would immediately believe it. Seeing that they had offended God, and so had brought themselves into a state of condemnation, we might have thought that, as soon as ever the God of grace mentioned the possibility of forgiveness, they would have sought it at his hand. It could never have been imagined,-apart from the utter ruin of man's nature by the fall,-that we should have needed so many ministers, so much pleading, so many years of longsuffering on God's part, and, above all, that we should have needed the display of the almighty power of the Spirit of God himself, before sinners would be willing to obey the gospel. Yet so it is; and nothing that I know of, beneath high heaven, so clearly proves that man's heart is absolutely

estranged from all that is good, and that the sinner has really become demented through his sin,-as that man rejects the gospel of grace, refuses divine mercy, and often stops his ear to the voice of God's messengers; and, in every case, except where the Holy Spirit graciously renews the nature, tramples under foot the very blood of the Son of God. O man, thou who want at first like the sons of the morning;-nay, more than that, thou who wast made in the likeness of God,-thou whose place was in Eden, the garden of the Lord,-how low hast thou fallen, and into what a sad state of estrangement to thy God hast thou come through thy sin!

That, however, is not my subject at this time. I want, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to have a time of earnest pleading with those who have not obeyed the gospel. It is true of many who meet with us, in this house of prayer, as it is of those who assemble elsewhere, that, though they have often heard the gospel, yet" they have not all obeyed the gospel." Perhaps some of those, who hitherto have been disobedient, will now obey it. May the Spirit of God make it to be so!

I. My first observation upon the text will be this.

The Gospel Comes To Men With The Force Of A Command: "They have not all obeyed the gospel."

But you cannot speak of obeying anything, which has not the authority of a command; it is clear, therefore, that the gospel comes to men in the form of a command, and that it has the force of a command.

I shall not stay to quote the large number of texts, which I might easily bring to your recollection, and all of which, unless they are wrested from their true meaning in order to suit a certain form of theological teaching, prove that the gospel comes to men as a command. I will mention just one such passage: "The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." So it is not left optional to you whether you will accept the gospel or not; it is not said to you, "You may, if you will, accept it; or you may, if you please, reject it." You cannot reject it without incurring the guilt of disobedience to a divine command. The gospel does not come to you as an ordinary thing, which is of little or no importance to you. It is true that you may reject it; but not without frightful peril to your soul. It does not humbly crave an entrance into your heart; but it demands it,-claims it as a right. It comes not as a message from one of your fellow men; but, with divine authority, it comes to you from the mouth of God himself, directly through his Word, or indirectly through the faithful preaching of his servants. Therefore, if you reject it, you are disobedient to God himself, like those of old to whom he said, "All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." To reject the gospel of Christ, is to incur great sin. He himself said, concerning the Holy Spirit, "He will reprove (or, convince) the world of sin; and then, almost immediately, he added, "of sin, because they believe not on me;" as though it were the very head and front of sin,-the flower and crown of sin,-its virus,-its quintessence of guilt,-that men believe not on Christ.

And, further, the command to men to believe the gospel has the death penalty attached to disobedience. Let me remind you of the words of our Lord Jesus Christ upon this point: "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Remember, too, the solemn utterance of our Lord concerning the universal ministration of his Word: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." So, you see, the gospel is given to us as a command, and disobedience to it involves a direful penalty.

Now, beloved, possibly you will say to me, "How is it that the gospel-God's glad tidings to guilty man,-the gospel which is full of grace, which is, indeed, all of grace from top to bottom, comes in the shape of a command! Does it not tend to make your preaching legal?" My answer to that question is that, if it did have that effect, I could not help it. I am bound to preach what I find in God's Word. Whatever may be the consequences, I must not alter the form of my Master's message.

But it strikes me that the gospel is put in the form of a command, first of all, to encourage poor seekers 'when they are coming to Christ. Their question generally is, "May we come?" As a rule, they ask, "May we really believe in Jesus Christ? May we dare to do so?" Now, if there is a bare invitation, or if that invitation is limited to persons of a certain character, the eye of the sinner would be fixed upon that character, and he would look to see whether he was one of those invited. We do not want him to turn his eye toward himself, yet that is exactly what he usually does, and this keeps him from fixing his eye upon Christ, where alone salvation is to be found. This, I think, is one reason why the Lord has put the gospel message into the form of a command. You certainly may do what you are commanded by God to do. Even despair itself cannot raise a question about that matter. If I am commanded to keep the Sabbath holy, then I am, certainly, permitted to do so; and if I am commanded to worship God, I am, certainly, permitted to worship him. So, then, if I, as a sinner, am commanded to put my trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, I need not stay to look at what I am, or who I am, or to search for any goodness or preparation in myself; but I may be assured that I may believe in Jesus because I am commanded to do so.

I have sometimes tried to illustrate this truth by supposing that Queen Victoria were to send an order to some poor man, in the lowest slums of London, to go down to see her at Windsor Castle. Just imagine that this were possible, that the message ran

somewhat to this effect,-"that So-and-so, of such-and-such a place, is hereby commanded to come to our royal palace at Windsor, and he will stay away at his peril." Well, now, that man would probably feel that such a summons could hardly be true. He would turn it over, and look at the signature and the seal; but if it proved to be genuine, I fancy I see him starting off to get to Windsor as quickly as possible. If he spoke about his errand, and said, "I am going to see Her Majesty," everybody in the third-class carriage would laugh. "Ridiculous," they would say, "how can you be such a fool? It is absurd." "But," says he, "I am commanded by the Queen to go. Look, there are my orders in her own handwriting. What I am to do-such a poor, uneducated man as I am,

I do not know, but, you see, it says, 'he will stay away at his peril,' so I dare not stay away." You see, the very sternness of the expression-the strong form in which it was put-had in his eyes the force of law, and so really became an encouragement to him to go, and gave strength to him in going. In a similar manner, when the gospel commands the sinner to repent, it does, in effect, say to him, "Let your reasonings, and your questionings, and your doubtings, and your fearings, all be put to death by this sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, the Lord's own command being quite sufficient warrant for you to come to him." As he bids you come, you certainly may come. "Preach the gospel to every creature," is our Lord's command; you are a creature, so we preach it to you, and tell you, in Christ's name, that "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." It is put in that shape to encourage you, even by driving you, to come to Christ, and trust in him to save you.

I have no doubt, also, that the gospel is given to us in the form of a command, in order to embolden the proclaimer of it. I have often, when I have finished preaching, said to myself, "I have told the people the gospel, and I have pleaded with them to come to Christ, but I wonder whether I have quite done it as my Master would have me do it." You know that true preaching is done in the name of Jesus, and with his authority. It is a sort of miracle-working; for we have to tell the dead to live,-a most absurd thing to do, except that, God having told us to do it, we do it, and the dead live. We say, "Hear, ye deaf; and see, ye blind;"-things which look, to human reason, out of all order; yet, since we are bidden so to do, we do it, and God blesses it, and the deaf do hear, and the blind do see, and the dead are raised to life. Well, I have said to myself, "Have I, by divine authority, spoken to my hearers like that? Having this treasure in an earthen vessel, has the excellency of the power of God really shone forth?" Now, sinners, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, who is shortly to come again, to judge the quick and the dead, I deliver to you these commands in his name, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you;" "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved." These are no dogmas of the church; they are the plain truths that I find in the Scriptures; and, in the name of Jesus, I charge you to obey them. O Spirit of the living God, make the people obedient in this the day of thy power! So this is another reason why the gospel is put in this shape, that the minister of Christ may speak with confidence, commanding me; in his Master's name, to repent, and believe in Jesus.

But, dear friends, there is a further reason, and that is, to secure the honor of God. The gospel is not an offer from an equal to an equal. When the gospel saith, "Believe, and thou shalt live," it is not the voice of a man speaking to another man. I charge every sinner, who is trifling with the gospel, to beware what he is doing, for it is God his Maker, who also will be the Judge of the ungodly, who sends out the invitations to the great gospel wedding feast. If you refuse them, you are not refusing the invitations of a man, but the invitations of God, your Creator, and your Judge; you are really rejecting him who will shortly come, in the clouds of heaven, with great power and glory, to punish the disobedient by banishing them for ever from his presence. So it is most fitting that the gospel should not come like a common invitation, but that it should come with all the force at its back which a divine command can have.

Again, remember that, although the blessings of the gospel are all gifts of divine grace wherever they are found, they are, nevertheless,-I think I may say every one of them,-things which the law itself demands of men. For instance, the gospel comes to you in order that you may have new hearts, yet the ancient prophet proclaimed God's promise, "A new heart also will I give you." The gospel comes to you in order that you may be pure; but you ought to be pure apart from any gospel, you have no right to be impure. The gospel comes to you in order that it may put away your sin, but you have no right to have any sin. That sin of yours you have committed against God willfully and wickedly, and the guilt of it lies at your door. The gospel comes to you in order that you may be reconciled to God, but you ought never to have been his enemies; and, as long as you continue in enmity against God, you are sinning every moment. The gospel truly brings you the gifts of God's grace; but, at the same time, it brings you, to a large extent, that which should have been yours, and would have been yours, if you had not sinned against the righteous God, and broken his most holy law.

Moreover, the demands of the gospel upon you are, after all, only the duties, which rightly devolve upon you; for, to believe God, is the bounden duty of every one of those whom he has created for his praise; since, not to believe him, is to make him a liar. Some times, when I am talking to persons privately about their souls, I have peculiar power given to me by God the Holy Spirit in charging this great sin home upon their conscience. Very likely, the good sister is here who, last week, came a second time, and asked me to pray for her, and I told her that I would do nothing of the kind; and then I added, "I have set the gospel plainly before you; I have told you that, if you trust Christ, you shall be saved. What am I to pray for? Am I to ask God to make another gospel to suit your fancy, or to save you in some way apart from faith in his Son? I cannot and I will not do it. If you say that you cannot trust Christ, you practically make God a liar; and if you are determined to commit that crowning act of guilt, your blood will be upon your own head." It startled her when I set the truth before her in such a fashion as that; and then, when I again explained that this simple matter of

trusting in Jesus Christ and him crucified was the great stipulation of the gospel, I was delighted to find that the Lord led her at once to do it; and while she confessed her faith in Christ, there and then, light and liberty came to her soul which had been long in darkness and bondage.

It seems to me to be the most awful thing in the world for a man to say, "I cannot believe God." Many a time, when such a remark has been made to me, I have said, "Now, if you say to me, 'I cannot believe you,' I shall feel hurt by your want of confidence; but you may say it a thousand times to me rather than say it once concerning God, who cannot lie." O dear souls, you who are not yet believers in Christ, remember that it is nothing but God's right that he should be believed, and nothing but Christ's right that he should be trusted; and that, both in saint and in sinner, distrust of God is a sin that is not to be excused for a moment, and that, if it is not repented of and forsaken, it will have to be dealt with by the great Judge of all at the last dread assize!

Then, with regard to repentance, when a man has done wrong surely it is his bounden duty to repent of that wrong; and though he never will do so until the Spirit of God leads him, and all true repentance is, in every case, a spiritual gift, yet is it equally true that, in so far as a man is in the wrong, he ought at once, with all his heart and soul, to seek to get right,-to make such recompense as he can, or, if none can be made, certainly to confess his fault, and humbly to seek pardon for it. It seems to me that our own conscience tells us that this is true, and so confirms what we find plainly recorded in the Word of God.

As you all know, the gospel is set forth under the figure of a feast, and those who would not come to it were punished for not coming. It is also described as the prodigal's return to his father's house. The parable of the prodigal son does not mention everything connected with a sinner's repentance. For instance, there is nothing said in it about the Spirit of God leading the prodigal to resolve to go back. It looks as if he came of his own accord; but Christ did not attempt to teach all theology in that one parable. It must have been true that the prodigal was brought back by the secret working of the Spirit of God upon his heart. At the same time, it was always the prodigal's duty to come back, because he never ought to have gone away; and there never was a moment, from the time that he "took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living," that he was not wrong in so doing. There never was a moment, while he was feeding the swine, that he was not wrong in being there at all and if he had acted rightly,-only that sinful heart of his would not let him act rightly,-he would long before have said. "I will arise and go to my father."

So I think I have plainly proved to you that the gospel comes to men with the force of a command.

II. Now, in the second place, let us enquire,-What, Then, Are The Claims Of The Gospel To Obedience!

Any unconverted person here may say to me, "You tell me, sir, that I cannot hear the gospel preached, and then go away, and reject it, at my pleasure, without being guilty of a great sin." I do tell you that, and the reason is, that there is the authority of God himself at the back of the gospel message. When we lift up Christ in our preaching, as Moses lifted up the brazen serpent upon the pole, and cry to our hearers, "Look and live," we are not speaking our own words, we are uttering the words of God. To reject our words, would be a small matter; but to reject the testimony of God, is guilt of the deepest dye. My dear friend, give me your hand, and, as I press it, let me look you in the face and say, "When God himself sets forth Christ as the only propitiation for sin, will you turn your back upon him, and reject so great salvation?" God grants that you may no longer do so if you have done so until now! The gospel claims our obedience because it has the authority of God at the back of it.

Then, next to disobey the gospel is, evidently, to slight the motive, the wonderful love, of the God who sends it to us. Oh, what wondrous love is displayed by God in the gospel,-the love which made him give up his only-begotten Son to bleed and die,-the love which allowed our Lord Jesus to be nailed to the cross by his own voluntary act, that he might suffer in our stead! Oh, the amazing love of God, that he should proclaim a complete amnesty and oblivion for all our past transgressions;-that he should say to us, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool;"-that he should even entreat men to repent, and send to them such a message as this through his servant Isaiah, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon"! That God should do all this, and yet that man, with his proud heart, should throw it all aside as worthless, is to insult the love of God, and it does seem to me to be a cruel thing-a monstrous thing-for sinful men and women to do.

And, further, not to obey the gospel is to perpetrate a high affront to our Lord Jesus Christ. The Son of God himself died upon the cross at Calvary, and for me to say that I do not want his death,-that I regard it as a superfluity, for I am righteous enough without him, or else that, even if I am sinful, yet I care not that I am, and I will run the risk of divine anger, but I will not have this wondrous Christ to be my Savior;-this would be indeed awful. If ever angels could shiver with horror, and be astounded at the enormity of human guilt, it would be when they heard a man say, concerning Christ, by his actions, if not in so many words, "I will have nothing to do with him; neither do I care anything for him." Dear friends, again I wish I could get near to each one of you, instead of addressing you in a crowd at this long distance; and, if you have not obeyed the gospel, I should like to put to you this question,

"Can you, will you, still refuse to obey it when your disobedience is really a rejection of the dying Son of God, and an insult to the almighty love of his Father!"

Disobedience to the gospel is, also, an act that contains the concentrated essence of rebellion against God. Suppose a king promulgates a certain law, and one of his subjects violates every command of that law. The king summons the law-breaker into his presence, and says, "Friend, do you really mean not to obey my law? Do you regard it as harsh and severe?" The man replies that the law is harsh and severe "but," he adds, "that is not the main matter. I do not acknowledge' your authority over me, and I hate you." I can suppose it to be just possible that this gracious king might say to his rebellious subject, "Listen, friend; I am going to ask you to do something which is wholly for your own good; -not for my benefit, but for yours. I hear that you are in debt to the amount of £10,000; and I am willing to give you that sum of money, so that your debt may be discharged; will you accept it?" "No," says he, "I will not; I would rather go to prison, and die there." Do you not at once see what is the venom of this man's animosity against the king? Yet, alas! his conduct is constantly being imitated by rebellious sinners. Here is a man who positively says, by his actions, "I will sooner be damned than I will obey God's gospel; I will rather lie in hell for ever than accept his Son as my Savior. I would not obey his law; but, to show my desperate hatred to him, and everything that is his, I will not obey his gospel either." "Oh!" say you, "I do not mean that." Perhaps you do not, but that is the meaning that lies in the very center of your disobedience, just as a worm is sometimes hidden in the center of certain fruit. You have not perceived it yet, but it is there." "But," says another, "I have not definitely said that I never would obey the gospel." No, but you have continued definitely to disobey it up to this very moment, for you are still an unbeliever. "Oh!" say you, "but I am no skeptic; I believe that what the Bible says is all true." That admission only makes your case all the worse; for, if it be the truth, why do you not believe it? If Christ be indeed true, why do you not believe on him? This is most monstrous conduct, and it shows that you have made up your mind that you will not have the great King of kings to reign over you. I wish, however, that you would look that fact clearly in the face for I hope that, when you have done so, the Spirit of God will convince you of the sin in which you are living, for that would go a long way towards leading you to seek cleansing from that sin through the precious blood of Jesus.

Brethren beloved, pray that God will bless the message I am trying to deliver, in deep solemnity of soul, to poor sinners; ask him to send it home to their hearts by the effectual working of his Holy Spirit. Do you know, my dear unsaved hearer, what God's estimate of the gospel is? Do you not know that it has been the chief subject of his thoughts and acts from all eternity? He looks upon it as the grandest of all his works,-that marvelous scheme of redemption by the blood of his only-begotten Son,-that wonderful way of salvation by the sinner ceasing to trust in himself, and believing in Jesus Christ, God's Son. You cannot imagine that he has sent this gospel into the world to be a football for you to play with,-that you may give it a kick, as Felix did when he said to Paul," Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." You surely cannot believe that God sent his gospel into the world for you to make a toy of it, and to say, as Agrippa said to Paul, "Almost thou persuades me to be a Christian;" and then put away all thought of it out of your souls. You cannot even speak of it irreverently without committing a great sin. In my own heart, I often feel that I dare not think of that wondrous monument of infinite love-the gospel provided for guilty sinners-without, like Moses, putting off the shoes from my feet, because the place whereon I stand is holy ground. Do not, I pray you, make merry over the rejected gospel, for its blood will be required at your hands.

I appeal to your own consciences, if they are not drugged. Do you feel right,-you who have been my hearers for so many years,-do you feel right in remaining as you are,-hearers only, and not doers of the Word? Do you feel that, if Christ were to come at this moment, you could justify your position before him! If, instead of this pulpit being before you, the great white throne were set, and the books were opened, do you suppose that you could stand up, and say, "God, I am doing right in hearing the gospel, yet not believing it; I am doing right in sitting in this pew impenitent "? You know that you could not talk like that; you would be speechless then, like the man without the wedding garment. You know, too, that there is nobody to blame but yourself for your impenitence. I am clear of your blood, for I have faithfully warned you. Your own conscience will confirm what I say. Suppose you turn to any of the people of God now present, and ask them what they think of their unbelief in the days before they came to Christ. Ask them whether they consider that it was sinful; they will tell you that, when God the Holy Spirit quickened and awakened them, and brought them to trust in Jesus, they felt as if they could never forgive themselves for having so long refused the invitations of the gospel, and rejected the Lord Jesus Christ. They wept, and mourned, and sighed as they remembered how they had resisted the Spirit of God, and grieved him in a thousand ways,-checked conscience, stifled conviction, rushed into sin after sin in order to escape from the gospel if they could. They feel that all this was gross sin, and they are good judges in such matters, for the Lord has taught them by his Spirit, and you may depend upon it that it is indeed sinful. And God himself still says, as he did of old, "Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate!" If you do, think what the consequences must be. Does not everybody know that suicide is a terrible sin? Yet the suicide does, as it were, but kill his body; but what guilt must be his who sends his soul to hell by disobeying the gospel! To be a suicide, a man need not use a knife or a rope; he can starve himself to death if he pleases; and as for him who willfully refuses to eat the bread of heaven, and damns his soul by a suicidal rejection of Christ,-who shall pity him? Who among the angels, who among redeemed men in glory, can pity the man who chose his own delusions and follies, and would rather perish eternally than obey the simple command of the gospel, "Believe and live"? I pray you to lay these solemn truths to heart.

III. I come now to my third point, which is this,-What Is The Obedience Which Is Spoken Of In Our Text? "They have not all obeyed the gospel."

Do you ask, "What must we do to obey the gospel?" I will put the answer briefly and compactly. First, you are to hear it. God said of old, "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live;" and the reason for that command is that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." But, beloved, you must take heed how ye hear as well as what ye hear. You must not listen to the gospel as you would to a story or a song. "Hearken diligently unto me," saith the Lord, "and eat ye that which is good." There must be, in your listening, a deep, earnest desire to know the truth and to know the whole of the truth, especially that part which condemns you, and humbles you in the very dust. That is what you must specially seek to hear. O sinner, do not wish to be flattered with falsehood! I have no doubt that you would like it, but that is the very worst thing possible for you to hear. Avoid a sugared gospel as you would shun sugar of lead. Seek that gospel which rips up, and tears, and cuts, and wounds, and backs, and even kills, for that is the gospel that makes alive again; and when you have found it, give good heed to it. Let it enter into your inmost being. As the rain soaks into the ground, so pray the Lord to let his gospel soak into your soul. Open the windows of your heart; God help you to do so, by devout attention and prayerful meditation, that the blessed, perfumed gospel may come floating through, and penetrate into the deepest recesses of your soul.

But hearing the gospel is not enough; the plain command is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Now, to believe is to trust; it is the practical proof that we have rightly heard the gospel if we believe it. This is the gospel in brief. Christ died for sinners. He stood as the Substitute for all who trust him. I trust him, and so I know him to be my Substitute. God has punished him instead of me, and therefore he cannot also punish me, for that would be punishing the same offense twice, which the righteous God will never do. Christ has paid all the debts of all believers. Whosoever trusteth Christ is a believer, so his debts are paid, he is free from liability on account of them, and therefore he may well rejoice. The essence of obedience to the gospel lies in giving up all self-confidence, and all attempt to save yourself by your own merit, and a simple reliance upon Jesus Christ to save you. When you go to your banker, you take your gold, and give it into his charge, and he takes care of it for you. You do not go to him, five minutes afterwards, and say, "If you please, sir, I should like to see my money, to make sure that it is safe." If you did so, the banker would advise you to take it away, and not bother him any more. But you do not act so foolishly, for you have confidence that the banker will keep your money safely; and you must act in the same way with your soul. Come, now, may the Spirit of God help you to do so!-and make Christ your Banker, deposit your soul with him, and then say, with the apostle Paul, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." That act, which is a continuous one throughout the entire life, is the act that saves the soul.

says one, "but then repentance is also required." Just so, and he who trusts his soul with Christ is sure to repent, for true repentance makes a man talk thus:-"Has Christ really saved my soul? Has he been so loving and gracious to me as to make me his forever? Oh, then, I am ashamed that I did not love him before! My mind is changed towards him now; yet, oh, how I wish that I had not acted as I have done! I grieve to think how I have sinned against God; and now he has forgiven me. I pray him to help me henceforth to be his faithful servant, to do his will, and not my own." Genuine repentance is a complete change of mind towards all things through knowing the love of God shed abroad in the heart by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Remember, next, that the Lord Jesus Christ requires that, henceforth, you should own him as your Master, your Teacher, your King, your Leader, your All-in-all. You are to come forward, and confess that you belong to him, and that you have given yourself up wholly to him; and he has ordained the way in which he would have you do it outwardly that others may see, namely, by being buried with him in baptism unto death;-not that this will save you, for you have no right to observe this ordinance till you are saved; but when you have believed in Jesus, you are to make the Scriptural confession of your faith, avowing that you are Christ's by being dead, and buried, and then raised up again in the very significant type and symbol which our Lord has ordained. You are to be obedient to what Christ has commanded, and to follow the example he has set before you; and I, for my part, will never, while this tongue can speak, leave out any part of my Master's gospel; for, though I have sometimes almost wished that there were no outward ordinances, because, in these days, they are so grossly perverted, put out of their proper place and order, and exaggerated,-yet, God forbid that we should ever attempt to alter his Word! It is written, in the Scriptures, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Our Lord Jesus said, as I have often reminded you, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." So, then, it seems to me that Christ requires of you a whole-hearted faith, which will make you give yourself up to him to be his for ever, and to-be obedient to each one of his commands as the Spirit of God shall enlighten you concerning them.

Now, young man, here I stand, as a recruiting sergeant, and I would to God that I could enlist you beneath the banner of the Lord Jesus Christ. I cannot come, and ask you, each one personally, whether you will enlist or not; but I trust that my Master's power is going with his Word, and that he will constrain you to enroll yourself amongst his followers; but again I remind you that it is not a matter of option with you; you are bound to do it; you ought to do it. "Well," saith one, "I am willing to enlist; how am I to do it?" How

does any soldier enlist? He takes the shilling, does he not? This is the way to become a Christian; take Christ. You have not to give anything, you have to take, and to take Christ; and as soon as ever, by that act of faith, you have received Christ, you are a soldier of the cross. The soldiers of God, however, are not "short-service men." They are in for life, and for eternity. When we take Christ, we take him as the husband takes his wife, for better or worse, for richer or poorer, for life or for death. Ay; but our union to Christ goes further than that; death comes in, and breaks the conjugal tie; but, with us,-

"Once in Christ, in Christ for ever;

Nothing from his love can sever."

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." I hope that there are some here who' are saying, "I see what the gospel commands, and I am willing to obey; but I have not the strength that is required." My dear friend, if you had any strength, it would be a hindrance to you. It is your weakness that Christ wants, not your strength. "But, sir, I am not fit to come to Christ," cries another. You are the very man he wants; your fitness would be in the way; it is your unfitness that Christ wants,-not your fitness. "Oh, but I have nothing good about me!" You are another man whom Christ wants; your goodness would stand in his way; it is your sin he died to put away, that is what he wants you to believe; so, without any goodness, without any fitness, all unholy and vile as you are, I pray you to follow these lines which I will repeat, and see if you can truly say them to Christ from your heart,-

"A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,

On thy kind arms I fall;

Be thou my strength and righteousness,

My Jesus, and my all."

Do you say that? Do you also say, "I trust myself wholly to him, and desire him to save me from sin, and make me holy. I wish to be his faithful servant and subject as long as I live. Only let him save me, and I will love him for ever and ever"? If your heart has really said that, you are a saved man, as surely as you live. Sister, if you also said that, go in peace; thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven. If thou didst say that, my son, then, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee. Take up thy bed, and walk, thou poor lame soul; this night hast thou found salvation. Free, full, irreversible, eternal salvation is thine, for thou hast obeyed the command of the gospel, which has come, I trust, with power into thy heart. O brother, now be true to Christ! Begin at once to confess him, and never be backward to own him as your Lord. If he has saved thee, tell it out, It is a shame for any Christian soldier not to wear his regimentals. Christ is such a Lord that he is worth living for, and worth dying for; ay, if our whole lives could be spent and the fires of martyrdom, Christ deserves that none of us should flinch from such a trial for his dear sake. Be an out-and-out Christian, young man, if you are a Christian at all. God help you so to do, giving your whole self up to Christ to be his for ever and ever! So may God grant it, for Jesus' sake! Amen.