# THE RIGHTEOUS FATHER KNOWN AND LOVED

## NO. 1378

**A SERMON**
**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 14, 1877**
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**AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON**

***"O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee,***
***and these have known that thou hast sent me.***
***And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it;***
***that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."***
***John 17:25-26***

THESE are the last sentences of our Lord's most wonderful prayer. May they not be regarded as the flower and crown of the whole intercession? Minds usually burn and glow and reach their highest fervor as they proceed, and it will not be wrong to conceive of the Savior as having here reached the climax of His pleading, the summit of His supplication. He has kept the best wine until now, and brings forth His richest sentences last.

How, then, shall our slender ability attain to "the height of this great argument"? It is far beyond our little skill to draw forth all the sweets which lie within these words like ointment in a box of alabaster. For their full consideration, a lifetime would be too brief, and the mind of the most grace-taught believer too feeble.

Here are great deeps which neither reason nor thought can fathom, nor experience fully know. Only the scholars of the New Jerusalem, who have for ages studied the manifold wisdom of God in the glorious work of redemption, and perhaps not even they would be able to tell all that the Savior meant by these most simple, but yet most pregnant words.

John's Gospel is always easy for the child to read, but it is always hard for the man to understand. And these two verses, which are almost entirely made up of words of one syllable, contain mysteries which baffle the most enlightened understanding. When I consider what they veil, I am constrained to cry out, "O the depths!"

I can only hope to present to you a few grains of gold which have been washed down by the streams of meditation, but I cannot take you to the secret mines from which the treasures have been borne. It shall need your own experience, and the personal teaching of the Holy Ghost for you to know the height and depth of the truths here spoken of, and it shall even with these require death and resurrection, and a sight of the eternal glory to qualify you wholly to comprehend them.

There are two things in the text manifest to every careful reader. There is, first, *a knowledge which is exceedingly peculiar and inestimably precious*, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me." In connection with this knowledge, you will observe that there is *a great teacher*, who first knows for Himself that which He teaches, "I have known thee"—and then He communicates His knowledge, "And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it."

That fruitful theme shall furnish the first topic of our meditation. May the Holy Ghost lead us into it. The second part of the text is not knowledge, it is that to which all divine knowledge is intended to lead, namely, love. The twenty-sixth verse speaks of wonderful discoveries of *a love of infinite excellence*, "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them."

And you notice that in order to bring that love home to us there is *a divine indweller*, who goes with it, and without whom it could not be. As a teacher is required to bring us the choice knowledge, so an

indweller is needful to infuse into us the infinite love, "And I in them." Jesus must teach us or we shall not know the Father. He must dwell in us or we shall not rejoice in His love.

Thus, our first subject is divine knowledge and the divine instructor, and our second subject is indwelling love and the indwelling Lord. The two are one. The blessed person of our Lord Jesus is so connected with both, and so unites both, that the subject is one.

To know God in Christ Jesus is to love Him, and to be loved of Him is the cause of our being made to know Him. When Jesus declares the Father's name, we both know and love, and when we see the Father in the Son we are filled both with instruction and affection.

**I.** Our text speaks of A KNOWLEDGE OF INFINITE VALUE AND ITS TEACHER.

What is that knowledge? Jesus tells us in verse twenty-six, "I have declared unto them *thy name*." God has made man, and naturally man ought to know his Maker. The creature should acquaint itself with its Creator. The subject should know the name of his King. But by reason of the blindness of our heart, through the depravity engendered by the Fall, and also by reason of each man's personal sin, there is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God.

Whatever else fallen man desires to know (and by nature he is ever ready to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil), yet he desires not to know his God, but says unto Him, "Depart from us; we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Yet it is evident that a man can never be in a proper state till he knows his God, and is at peace with Him.

A man who is totally ignorant of God must be in a dark state of mind, and since he loves that darkness, it is plain that his mind is biased against good. His willful ignorance of God proves his enmity to Him. While man is opposed to God, he cannot be happy, holy, or safe. How can he be, when he fights against One who is perfect holiness and love?

Our Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, in coming to save us, makes it a part of His office to reveal the Father to us. He brings us the knowledge of the glory of God, for it shines in His own face. "God was manifest in the flesh." Man must know God in order to be saved, and therefore the Lord Jesus of old promised in the twenty-second Psalm, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren," and here in our text He confesses, "I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it."

By the term "*name*," He means the existence of God, the nature of God, the character of God, the work of God, the revelation of God, for the word "name" is a peculiarly expressive word in Scripture, and comprehends all that by which a person is properly described. In this case, it comprehends the whole of God, and our Lord Jesus Christ has come to make God known to us to the full.

He says, "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also." This should suggest to each of us a searching question, Do I know the Lord? If you do not, it is quite certain that our Lord's words apply to you, "Ye must be born again."

Without a knowledge of God, you bear evidence that you are still in nature's darkness, and in the natural alienation of your spirit. You belong to that world which lies in the wicked one, of which our Lord said, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee." O that by the teaching of the Holy Ghost you may yet know the Father.

In verse twenty-five, there is a testing name given to God, a name by which we may decide whether we know the name of the Lord or no. What is that? I call your particular attention to it, for my whole subject turns upon it. It is this, "*O righteous Father*." I know not that in any other place in Scripture where God is called by that name.

In this prayer, Jesus had not addressed His Father by that title before. He had spoken of Him as "Father," and also as, "Holy Father," but here alone it is, "O righteous Father." Now I say that the knowledge of this name may serve as a test as to whether you do truly and spiritually know God, or have only a notional and outward idea of Him.

If you know Him aright, you know and understand what is comprehended under those two simple words, which are so remarkable when found in combination, "righteous Father.'' He is "righteous''—having the attributes of a Judge and Ruler—just, impartial, by no means sparing the guilty.

He is "Father"—near of kin, loving, tender, forgiving. In His character and in His dealings with His people, He blends the two as they were never combined before. How can the judge and the father be found in one? When guilty men are concerned, how can both characters be carried out to the full? How is it possible?

There is but one answer, and that is found in the sacrifice of Jesus which has joined the two in one. In the atonement of our Lord Jesus, "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." In the sacred substitution, we see declared how God is "righteous," and yet, "Father"—in the sublime transactions of Calvary, He manifests all the love of a tender Father's heart, and all the justice of an impartial Ruler's sword.

This is the knowledge which our Lord has come to declare among the men whom He has chosen out of the world, and He assures us, first, that this is *peculiar knowledge*. "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee." The heathen world knew nothing of a righteous Father—it scarcely knew God as Father, though here and there a line of a heathen poet might speak of men as the offspring of God, the true idea of divine Fatherhood was unknown to sages and philosophers.

As to the righteousness of God, they had but clouded notions, a future judgment, and a system of rewards and punishments they saw by the light of natural conscience, but true righteousness in the governing of the universe they had not spelled out—they knew not because they did not wish to know. Their gods were generally monsters of iniquity.

As to righteousness and love being combined, they imagined no such thing. The idea of a god who should be at once sternly righteous, and yet infinitely tender, had not occurred to them. How could it? Being themselves unrighteous, they sought not after a righteous God. He was not at all in their thoughts. Being themselves cruel and loveless, they could not discover a deity whose name is love. All the wisdom of antiquity went to fabricate gods of quite another kind. The world by wisdom knew not the God who is called "righteous Father."

It is more humbling to have to add that the *Christian* world does not know God as a "righteous Father," but persists in forsaking this grand, glorious, and scriptural view of Him. Mark you, I draw a very grave distinction between the Christian church and the Christian world.

The Christian world is a conglomeration of good and evil—the embodiment of the unreal and unspiritual, which nevertheless desires to bear the Christian name. It is the world pretending to be the friend of Christ, and you know how hollow is the pretense. The Christian church, made up of the men taught of God and born of the Spirit, is another matter. Therein we have something very different, for these know the righteous Father.

Skeptics labeled as "thinkers" reject the evangelical idea of God, and the atonement which that idea involves. Worldly wisdom talks of "the universal fatherhood of God," and babbles forever about that mere dream, that fiction of folly against which the Bible is a plain and pointed protest. Universal Fatherhood, indeed, when our Lord Jesus said, "If God were your Father you would love me, for I proceeded forth and came from God. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do."

Is it not described as a special wonder of love that we should be called the sons of God? (1Jo 3:1) Did not the Holy Ghost say by His servant John, "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."

The philosophic Christian world knows an effeminate, indiscriminate fatherhood, but not "the righteous Father." It will not bow before the majesty of His justice. According to the tenor of its teaching, sin is a misfortune, transgression a mere trifle, and the souls that suffer for willful guilt are objects to be pitied, rather than to be blamed.

The world's "thinkers" are continually drawing upon our feelings to make us pity those who are punished, but they have little to say in order to make us hate the evil which deserved the doom. Sin according to them does not of itself demand punishment, but penalties are to be exacted or remitted for

the general good, if indeed they are to be executed at all. All necessary and inevitable connection between guilt and its punishment is denied.

They dare to call justice revenge, and speak of atonement as if were a solatium for private pique. The Christian world does not seem to have learned the truth that "a God all mercy were a God unjust," and that a God unjust would soon be discovered to be a God without love—in fact, no God whatever.

"Righteous Father!" This is the peculiar revelation which is received by those who have been taught of the Holy Spirit, and to this day Jesus Christ may say, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee." Men kick against the doctrine of the atonement, they quarrel with substitution, they are fierce in their sarcasms against the mention of the precious blood of Christ, and sneer superciliously at those who hold fast the old truth.

They stumble at this stumbling stone, and strive evermore to overthrow this rock of truth. And yet depend upon it, this is the test question by which we shall know whether a man knows God aright or knows Him not.

There is much in this knowledge which renders it very *distinctive*, for it reveals the condition of the mind which receives it. A man who knows God as "righteous Father" shows that he has some knowledge of himself. He has perceived the sin within his nature, and it has burdened him. The righteousness of God has appeared to him in its threatening form, and he had been bowed before it under a sense of his guilt.

You can see, too, that the man also knows something of his Savior. He has evidently seen the Son, or else he would not know the Father, for of old Jesus said, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." He has seen God's great gift to man, and learned His boundless love. His knowledge of the "*righteous* Father" shows that his heart has submitted itself to the justice of God.

He has been in the place where David stood when he said, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight; that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." He has evidently bared his back to the lash of punishment, and felt that he deserved all the blows which it could lay upon him.

Inasmuch as it knows the Lord as a "righteous *Father*," you can see that the heart has learned to trust God, for no man calls Him Father in spirit and in truth till first he possesses a living faith, and some kindlings of divine love. Submission and trust compose a condition of character which is peculiar to a renewed soul, but will surely be found in a man if he be indeed saved, for it is the mark of being saved from self-justification, and from the hatred bred by despair.

When we see in a man an unconditional submission to the justice of God, and yet a trustful hopefulness in His boundless love, we may be sure that he is a renewed man. He cries, "You are righteous, O my God, and if You destroy me, I can say no less. But Father, You will not destroy me, for I perceive that you are love. Though I see You grasp Your sword of fire, yet do I trust You, for I believe You to be gracious and loving still."

The knowledge described in the text is not only peculiar to those who are taught of God, but it reveals peculiarities in them which grace has implanted there. They believe because they are Christ's sheep and know His voice. The life within them receives the living truth. They would not have come to know the "righteous Father" unless there had been a change in their character wrought by the Spirit of God. But that once done, they know Him as of necessity.

I would next say that this knowledge is *eminently consolatory*. It is but little that I know, but I feel that I would cheerfully part with it all so long as I may be allowed to retain the knowledge contained in these two words, "righteous Father." This is my life, my light, my love, my delight, my heaven. If all the productions of wit and wisdom throughout all past ages could be as effectually consumed as the Alexandrian library when it was burned to ashes, if man did but retain the knowledge of these two words, "righteous Father," he might be content to see the whole mass pass away in smoke.

To know the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent, is the climax, the essence, the sum total of wisdom. I said that it was consolatory, and so it is to the last degree. For a man to know that God

is his Father is delightful beyond measure, to feel that God forgives him as the father forgave the prodigal, that He has received him into His heart and home, as the father did his once lost boy, is unspeakably delightful.

But when we further learn that all this is done without the violation of justice, that all this deed of grace is done righteously, and so done that even justice demands it should be done, then are we full of wondering love. Beloved, God is as just in loving His sinful people as He could have been in manifesting His displeasure towards them—as just in forgiving as He could have been in punishing—and this is the glory of the whole matter.

This being known, we see our position in Christ Jesus to be unassailable. We see that justice cannot punish us, for Jesus has borne our penalty. It cannot demand more at our hand, for our great Substitute has rendered to it the full tale of obedience. In Christ Jesus, God is just and yet our justifier. We are so safe that we begin to challenge opposition and cry, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"

We take up a triumphant note and sing with exceeding joy, "If God be for us, who can be against us!" If God be righteous, and yet my Father, then am I saved, and saved in such a way that the attributes of God are glorified by my salvation, and therefore I am most securely and certainly saved. Why should I not rejoice?

One more fact about this knowledge of God as a "righteous Father," it is a knowledge which *causes its possessor to enjoy much fellowship with Jesus*. Notice how our Lord puts it. "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: *but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.*" "I have known thee."

Ah, yes, of old the Son of God knew the glorious character of the Godhead. Being Himself God, He knew that justice was an essential attribute of deity, which never, never could be tarnished or made to yield a hair's breadth. And He knew also that God is love, and that His love would never cease to be His special glory and delight.

He knew of old that, speaking after the manner of men, these two attributes were each resolved to suffer no eclipse. He knew that each of them must keep its place. God must be just, and must be a Father, consequently, when dealing with sinners, He must smite and He must spare. Our Lord saw how these two necessities stood, like the eternal hills, and how our doom seemed to roll between, and it was He who condescended for our sakes to bring these two together by His own endurance of justice and manifestation of love.

He determined to take upon Himself our nature, and bear our sin, which was the cause of the quarrel. And then, by enduring the chastisement of our peace, He magnified justice, and to an equal degree glorified love. He came, He saw, and solved the difficulty, and now the judge is as righteous as if He were not love, and the Father is as loving as if righteousness had never been offended.

This grand character of God as "righteous Father" was so dear to our Lord, and so much admired by Him, that He died to maintain and vindicate it, and when you and I come to know it, I am sure we so much delight in it that we feel we would sooner die than give up the truth. This great revelation of God is not a dogma that may or may not be accepted—it must be so.

I do in my soul believe this truth to be an article of a standing or of a falling church. If you put away the doctrine of the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, you have disemboweled the Gospel, and torn from it its very heart. Nor longer need angels sing glory to God in the highest and peace on earth, if it be not true the union of the divine glory and human salvation is found in Jesus.

The glad news dwindles down very lamentably if the atonement is denied. But it cannot be disproved—God is just and yet the justifier of him that believes. Christ has died that this truth may be clear, and His people live to declare it, and feel that it were worth a thousand martyrdoms to maintain it. Herein we have fellowship with Christ, for He knows the "righteous Father," and rejoices in Him—and we know the "righteous Father" too in Christ, and love and bless Him, and wonder at Him every day more and more.

Thus I have to the best of my power described the invaluable knowledge. May we all be taught of the Lord, and all know Him, from the least to the greatest.

Now, this knowledge comes to us by a *teacher*. That teacher is spoken of in verse twenty-six. "I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it." Our beloved Lord has most fitly declared to us this name of "righteous Father," for He Himself knows it as none other can know it. And He here confesses this intimate knowledge, saying, "but I have known thee."

"No man knows the Father save the Son," and the Son knows the rectitude of the Father's government, and the love of the Father's heart beyond all others. Is He not Himself "very God of very God"? And does He not perceive this wondrous union of the two ranges of attributes in the person of the Father with a clearness of vision which no one else possesses? Fit is it, therefore, that He should declare to us what He has seen and known of the Father.

He declared the "righteous Father" in His life, for in His life He incarnated truth and grace. Jesus Christ on earth was righteous—in thought, in word, and in deed. Point me to a sin He ever committed, inculcated, or excused. Righteousness was about Him as the atmosphere which He breathed. Well did the psalmist say of Him, "Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness."

And yet what love there was in Him, and pity for the wandering sheep! He mingled with sinners, and yet was separate from sinners. He touched their diseases and healed them, and yet was not defiled by their impurities. He took their infirmities upon Himself, and yet in Him personally there was no trace of sin.

Our Lord was so righteous that you perceived at once that He was not of this world, and yet He was so lovingly human that He was altogether a man among men, and not at all separated from them in the way in which John the Baptist was, who "came neither eating nor drinking," nor divided from His fellows, as many a man of genius has been, by eccentric modes of thought. He was man's brother and his physician, his friend and his Savior. When you want to know the Father's righteousness and love, read the history of Jesus Christ—nay, know the Lord Jesus Himself, and you know the Father.

His death, however, most gloriously illustrated this beyond everything else. Behold, He dies that the "righteous Father" may be seen. He has taken upon Himself man's sin, and He is brought to the place where man must answer for his sin. He is silent before His accusers. He is condemned and numbered with the transgressors.

Now He must die the sinner's death. See, He is nailed to the cross, and now God Himself forsakes Him, for He has laid the guilt of man upon Him, and therefore cannot be present to make His spirit glad. The deserted Savior cries, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and well He might, when His own Father in righteousness turned His face from Him.

Beloved, when Jesus Christ died there was a grander display of the righteousness and the fatherhood of God than could have been possible by any other means. Then the mystery was made plain, and the depth opened up to its very bottom. O Lord our God, what an abyss of adorable goodness have You thus laid bare before us!

***"How our hearts tremble at Thy love immense!***
***In love immense, inviolably just!***
***Thou, rather than Thy justice should be stained,***
***Didst stain the cross with blood of Thine own Son."***

And now today it is the business of our Lord to continue to reveal the righteous fatherhood of God, and He does so by the work of His Holy Spirit. Do you not remember when He revealed it to you? When you were bowed down with grief on account of sin? When you longed to be reconciled to God but could not see how. Then the Spirit of God came to you, and pointed you to the full atonement made, to the utmost ransom paid, and you clapped your hands for very joy as you perceived that God could be your Father, and receive you as His child, and yet His righteousness need not suffer the slightest diminution.

That Spirit of God working on the behalf of Christ is still declaring this among the nations, as the years roll on, opening the eyes of the blind, and bringing His own chosen, one by one, to behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and to say, "O righteous Father, I know You and rejoice in You."

To each one of us who are saved, Jesus is declaring this "righteous Father" more and more. I hope I know more of this than I did twenty years ago. Brother, do not you? Sister, do not you? I trust that every day we see a little more of the righteous fatherhood of God, and shall continue to do so, world without end.

We shall as we grow in grace look further and further into the wondrous mystery of the justice which was satisfied, and the love which furnished the satisfaction. Beloved, it shall be a part of our Lord's joy even in eternity to still declare unto us the name of God, the "righteous Father."

Will it not be our joy to sit at His feet and learn of Him? Is He not a blessed Teacher? Has He not been very patient with us? Blessed be His name for all His care and travail towards us. He has taught us much, and means to teach us more. Let us bend a listening ear, and bow a willing heart, while from day to day He shall continue to declare unto us the "righteous Father."

Now, if at any time I should seem to preach the doctrine of the substitution of Christ too often, and if you should say, "He is harping upon the old string," I shall not hesitate to quote my Master's words, and say, "I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it."

This truth is one that needs continual declaration. It should be sounded often in the Christian's ears to keep alive His sense of obligation to the wisdom which devised, and the love which carried out, the plan of our salvation to the glory of the "righteous Father."

**II.** But now, secondly, this heavenly knowledge is not given to us for its own sake alone. Even the high and blessed revelation of the "righteous Father" is not made to us that we may know it and end in knowing, but our Lord says, "I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, *that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*" The object of the knowledge bestowed upon us is the infusion of a LOVE UNRIVALLED IN VALUE, and extraordinary to the last degree. Let us speak upon it.

First notice that this discovery of love which is spoken of in the twenty-sixth verse is *an inward discovery* of it, "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be *in them*." It was always *on* them, for the Father has always loved His people. But here it is spoken of as "*in them.*" What does that mean?

I apprehend it means that they may know it, be persuaded of it, believe it, and enjoy it—that they through knowing the righteous name may come to perceive the love of God towards them. Do you not see the connection? Jesus Christ our Lord dies for us that God may be righteous and yet may save us.

Is it not clear as a pikestaff to you that God loves His people with a very wonderful love when He gives His own Son to die and satisfy justice on their behalf? Nothing can prove that love so clearly, nothing can bring it home so forcibly as the sacrificial death of the Only Begotten.

Therefore does Christ declare the blessed name of the "righteous Father" in order that it may come home to you with an unconquerable power that the Father loves you, and loves you beyond conception, seeing that not even His dear Son was so loved as to be spared, but He must die that you might live, and that the justice of God might be satisfied on your account.

There is no way of knowing the love of God like knowing the "righteous Father," and the atonement which that character necessitated. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us."

You may say, "I see His love in every flower that blooms and every breeze that blows." It is true, but it is the same love after all which He has towards a horse or a cow—for do not flowers bloom and breezes blow for them?

"We see the love of God," say some, "in giving us meat to eat and raiment to put on." So do I, but this also is the same love which He bears to ravens and to lilies, for does He not feed the one and clothe the other? I want something more by way of love than this.

"I see God's love," says one, "in Christ's coming to teach us and make us better." No doubt you do, and so do I, but I do not feel it one half so forcibly as when I gaze upon Calvary and see the innocent Victim bleeding for my crimes. "Herein is love!" When the divine Father gives up His best Beloved for guilty man, we may well say, "Behold how He loved him!"

Come and see this spectacle of love. It is none other than the Lord of heaven who must die to vindicate the jealous purity of the divine government. Is He God's only begotten Son, and must He bear man's guilt? Miracle of miracles! Must the spotless Son bear human guilt? He must! He did! Tell it, and let heaven be astonished still, though it has heard the wonder near two thousand years.

Upon Him who never sinned the Lord has laid our iniquities. Bearing that guilt, must He suffer? He must. If God loves His people, His Son must suffer in their stead, must suffer shame, must suffer desertion, must suffer death. What, die? Incarnate Deity be put to death? A felon's death? Can this be? It has been! It is finished.

Such was the love of God that, "He spared not his only begotten Son, but freely delivered him up for us all." Be astonished, O heavens, forever and ever that love could accomplish such a feat as this. Now, then, Christ has come on purpose to declare the name of God that the love of God may be perceived by us, its power felt, its glory recognized, its greatness wondered at, its infinitude delighted in.

But now notice, and here is the very heart of our subject, that *this love was of a most extraordinary kind*. "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them." What is the love wherewith God loved His Son? Come, you philosophers and divines, come, you who have learned to blend imagination with cool judgment—come and think this over—the love wherewith the Father loved His Son.

Believer, He loves you as He loves His best Beloved. He is His only begotten Son—Son in a very mysterious manner—for we comprehend not that divine filiation in which the Father is eternal and the Son eternal also. He loves you as He loves such a Son. There is more than sonship, there is natural unity of essence, for the Father and Son are one God.

And how the one God loves, how the Father loves the Son, I know not, except that I know there can be no limit to such love. It must be altogether boundless and unspeakable. Now, if you fully know the righteous fatherhood of God, as Christ would have you know it, you will learn that God loved you as He loved His Son. Do you not see that it is so?

If He had not loved you as He loved the Son, He would have spared His Son. Is not that clear? If He had not loved you as He loved His Son, He would have said to His Son, "Son, You shall never leave heaven for that polluted planet. You shall never descend to poverty and suffering. You shall never have Your hands and feet pierced. You shall never be despised and spit upon, and put to a cruel death."

But because He loved us as He loved His Son, He gave His Son. Will not that fact warm your hearts? Will it not burn like coals of juniper within your bosoms? "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!"

Nay, that is not all. We learn from the verse which precedes our text that the Father loved our Lord eternally, "For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." Perceive, then, that God has also loved you, dear child of His, from before the foundation of the world. Or ever you had a being, His prescient eye foresaw your existence, and you were the object of His love. Why or wherefore I cannot tell you, but He loved you, and He loves you still as He loves His Son. May the power of that love be felt in your heart now.

It was a love of *satisfaction and delight*. Remember those words of the Lord which He spake concerning His Son in the day of His baptism, and at two other occasions when the heavens opened, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Always draw a distinction between the love of benevolence, with which God loves all His creatures, and the love of satisfaction, which is reserved for His own. He calls His church His Hephzibah, "My delight is in her." He says not so of the world.

God never said concerning any wicked man, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased," for He is not pleased with him every day, but concerning all those who know the "righteous Father," it is

the prayer of Christ that the love wherewith the Father loves Him may be in them, and by that He means that they may feel that the Lord has in them a father's content.

Do try if you can to realize this high privilege. It is true, O believer, that God the infinite Father takes pleasure in you! It is true, but it is very surprising! Often have I turned over that word in the Song where the Bridegroom says to the bride, "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee." How can this be? Why, we are all spots.

Yet does the Eternal Father view us in Christ, and in Him He takes delight in us as a father does in his children. "My delights were with the sons of men." "He shall rest in his love, he shall rejoice over thee with singing."

When you know God as "righteous," and yet "Father," then shall you see that, inasmuch as the righteous way of salvation has put away all sin by laying it upon Christ, there is no reason why the Lord should be angry with us. And inasmuch as the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, there is a legal reason why He should be satisfied with His people. And inasmuch as we have become one with Christ, there is good cause why He should take a delight in us, even for His Son's sake.

God the Father loves His Son infinitely. How could He do less? Without beginning has He loved Him, and without an end will He love Him, and also without change, without limit, and without degree. In the same way does He love His people, whose hope is fixed in Him as the "righteous Father."

This love wherever it reigns in the heart creates a return love to God. You cannot really know all this, and enjoy it without feeling, "My God, I love You in return." And that high and noble passion works to the cleansing of the soul, and the purging out of sin, and so it becomes a sanctifying influence by which a Christian is made to be "holiness unto the LORD."

To close, this love within the soul *comes through an indweller*. Observe the last words of the text, "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, *and I in them.*" What does this mean? I cannot tell you all it means. Let us skim the surface just for a minute. It means this. The Holy Spirit is the representative of Christ now upon earth, and if ever the love of God the Father is to be known by any one of us, *the Lord Jesus by the Spirit must be in us*.

Without the Spirit of God actually resident in us, we cannot know the righteous Father. We are as blind and dead men until He quickens and illuminates us, and all the letter-teaching in the world will benefit us nothing. We must be born again.

My dear hearers, there may be some of you to whom all my talk this morning must seem very strange. You cannot see anything in it. Let the fact cause you to suspect that you must be in the dark. When even the love of God to His people becomes a dry theme to you, it looks suspicious. Surely you have no part nor lot in it, or else you would relish a discourse upon it.

The reason why you do not comprehend it is because you have not the Spirit of Christ, and if you have not the Spirit of Christ, you are none of His. May this convince you of your condition, and may you be led to seek Christ and find everlasting life.

But when the text says that Christ is in His people, it means, besides the indwelling of the Spirit, that *Christ is in us by faith*, for we have taken Christ Jesus as the great atoning sacrifice to be our sole and only confidence, and hence He is in us, trusted and loved, fed upon and believed in. If He be so, then it is quite clear that we know the "righteous Father." And when we know the "righteous Father," then it follows that we must have some discoveries of His great love to us.

Are you trusting Christ? Is Jesus in you the hope of glory? Do you trust in Him alone? If so, go and drink to the full the sweetness of the text, and let no man say you nay.

Christ is in you moreover *by a real and vital union with you*. You are in Him as a branch is in the vine, and He is in you as the sap is in the branch. You are in Him as a member is in the body, and He is in you as the life is in all the members. We know that Jesus quickens us, and because He lives, we live also.

Henceforth we are one with Christ. It must be so, because if God did not see us in Christ He could not regard us with satisfaction, or in other words, love us as He loves His Son. If He did not, in looking

upon a man, see the love and the nature of His Only Begotten in him, how could He love him? He views us as part and parcel of His own dear Son, and so His delight is in us.

Beloved, the Lord sees in addition to all this *something of a likeness to Christ in us*, wrought by His Spirit, for if Jesus be indeed in us, we shall grow to be like Him, and shall manifest somewhat of His spirit and nature. The more we have of likeness to Jesus, the more will it be evident that the love of God is in us, and is working in us "to will and to do of his own good pleasure."

May God grant that what I have spoken so feebly may, nevertheless, be sweetly enjoyed by you, for I am persuaded that in the text there lies many a banquet for saints that hunger and thirst after righteousness, and a depth of mystical teaching which it shall be well for you to search into with all your powers.

God bless you, my beloved, for Christ's sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—JOHN 17**

**HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—425, 226, 728**

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Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.