

JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF

NO. 1388

A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Jesus Christ Himself.”
Ephesians 2:20.

“Jesus Christ Himself” is to occupy all our thoughts this morning. What an ocean opens up before me! Here is room in the sea for the largest ship! In which direction shall I turn your thoughts? I am embarrassed with riches. I know not where to begin; and when I once begin, where shall I end? Assuredly we need not go abroad for joys this morning, for we have a feast at home! The words are few, but the meaning vast—“Jesus Christ Himself.”

Beloved, the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ contains in it nothing as wonderful as Himself. It is a mass of marvels, but He is THE miracle of it! The wonder of wonders is “The Wonderful” Himself! If proof is asked of the truths of God which He proclaimed, we point men to Jesus Christ Himself. His character is unique. We defy unbelievers to imagine another like He. He is God and yet man, and we challenge them to compose a narrative in which the two apparently incongruous characters shall be so harmoniously blended—in which the human and divine shall be so marvelously apparent without the one overshadowing the other! They question the authenticity of the four gospels; will they try and write a fifth? Will they even *attempt* to add a few incidents to the life which shall be worthy of the sacred biography, and congruous with those facts which are already described? If it is all a forgery, will they be so good as to show us how it is done? Will they find a novelist who will write another biography of a man of any century they choose, of any nationality, or of any degree of experience, or any rank or station, and let us see if they can describe, in that imaginary life, a devotion, a self-sacrifice, a truthfulness, a completeness of character at all comparable to that of Jesus Christ Himself? Can they invent another perfect character even if the divine element is left out? They must fail, for there is none like Jesus!

The character of Jesus has commanded respect even from those who have abhorred His teaching. It has been a stumbling block to all objectors who have preserved a shade of candor. They could refute Jesus' doctrine, they say; and they boast they could improve His precepts. They claim His system is narrow and outworn; but what can they do with *Him*? They must admire Him even if they will not adore Him—and having done so, they have admired a person who must be divine; or else He willfully left His disciples to believe a lie. How do they surmount this difficulty? They cannot do so by railing at Him, for they have no material for accusation. Jesus Christ Himself silences their criticism! This is a file at which these asps bite, but break their teeth. Beyond all argument or miracle, Jesus Christ Himself is the proof of His own gospel.

And as He is the proof of it, so, beloved, He is the marrow and essence of it. When the Apostle Paul meant that the gospel was preached, He said, “*Christ* is preached,” for the gospel is Christ Himself! If you want to know what Jesus taught, know Him! He is the incarnation of that truth of God which by Him, and in Him is revealed to the sons of men. Did He not, Himself say, “I am the way, the truth, and the life”? You have not to take down innumerable books, nor to pore over mysterious sentences of double meaning in order to know what our great teacher has revealed. You have but to turn and gaze upon His countenance, behold His actions, and note His spirit and you know His teaching. He lived what He taught. If we wish to know Him, we may hear His gentle voice saying, “Come and see.” Study His wounds, and you understand His innermost philosophy. “To know Him and the power of His resurrection” is the highest degree of spiritual learning. He is the end of the law, and the soul of the gospel; and when we have preached His word to the fullest, we may close by saying, “Now, of the

things which we have spoken, this is the sum; for we have an High Priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens.”

Nor is He alone the proof of His gospel, and the substance of it, but He is the power and force by which it spreads. When a heart is truly broken of sin, it is by Him that it is bound up. If a man is converted, it is by Christ, the power of God. If we enter into peace and salvation, it is by the gracious manifestation of Jesus Himself. If men have enthusiastically loved Christianity, it is because, first of all, they loved Christ! Apostles labored for Him, and for Him confessors were brave; for Him saints have suffered the loss of all things, and for Him martyrs have died. The power which creates heroic consecration is “Jesus Christ Himself.” The memories stirred by His name have more influence over men’s hearts than all things else in earth or heaven. The enthusiasm which is the very life of our holy cause comes from Him. They who know not Jesus know not the life of truth, but those who dwell in Him are filled with power and overflow so that out of the midst of them streams forth living water! Nor is it only so, beloved; for the power which propagates the gospel is Jesus Himself. In heaven He pleads, and therefore does His kingdom come. “The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.” It is from heaven that He rules all things so as to promote the advance of the truth of God. All power is given unto Him in heaven, and in earth, and therefore are we to proclaim His life-giving word with full assurance of success. He causes the wheels of providence to revolve in such a manner as to help His cause. He abridges the power of tyrants, overrules the scourges of war, establishes liberty in nations, opens the mysteries of continents long unknown, breaks down systems of error, and guides the current of human thought. He works by a thousand means preparing the way of the Lord. It is from heaven that He shall shortly come, and when He comes, when Christ Himself shall put forth all His might, then shall the wildernesses rejoice, and the solitary places be glad! The reserve force of the gospel is Christ Jesus Himself. The latent power which shall at last break every bond, and win universal dominion is the energy, the life, the omnipotence of Jesus Himself! He sleeps in the vessel now, but when He arises and chides the storm, there will be a deep calm. He now, for a while, conceals Himself in the ivory palaces of glory, but when He is manifested; *in that day His chariot wheels shall bring victory to His church militant.*

If these things are so, I have a theme before me which I cannot compass! I give up the impossible task, and I shall but briefly note some few apparent matters which lie upon the surface of the subject.

Brethren, “Jesus Christ Himself” should always be the prominent thought of our minds as Christians! Our theology should be framed upon the fact that He is the Center and Head of all. We must remember that “in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” Some of our brothers are mainly taken up with the doctrines of the gospel, and are somewhat bitter in their narrow orthodoxy. We are to love every word of our Lord Jesus and His apostles, and are to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints, but yet it is always well to hold the truth of God in connection with Jesus, and not as in itself, alone, the sum of all things. Truth isolated from the person of Jesus grows hard and cold. We know some in whom the slightest variation from their system arouses their indignation even though they admit that the brother is full of the Spirit of Christ. It is with them doctrine, doctrine, doctrine—whereas with us, I trust, it is *Christ Himself!* True doctrine is to us priceless as a throne for our living Lord; but our chief delight is not in the vacant throne, but in the King’s presence! Give me not His *garments*, though I prize every thread, but the blessed wearer whose sacred energy made even the hem to heal with a touch!

There are others of our brethren who delight above measure in what they call *experimental preaching* which sets forth the inner life of the believer; both the rage of depravity, and the triumph of grace. This is well in due proportion, according to the analogy of faith, but still, Jesus Himself should be more conspicuous than our experiences and feelings, doubts and fears, struggles and victories! We may get to study the action of our own hearts so much that we fall into despondency and despair. “Looking unto Jesus” is better than looking unto our own progress! Self-examination has its necessary uses, but to have done with self, and live by faith in Jesus Christ Himself is the best course for a Christian!

Then, there are others who rightly admire the precepts of the gospel, and are never as happy as when they are hearing them enforced, as, indeed, they ought to be. But after all, the commands of our Lord are not our Lord Himself, and they derive their value to us, and their power over our obedience from the fact that they are *His words*, and that He said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” We know the

truth of His declaration, “If a man loves Me, he will keep My sayings,” but there must be the personal love to begin with! Brothers and sisters, all the benefits of these three schools will be ours if we live upon Jesus Himself! They each gather a flower, but our divine “plant of renown” has all the beauty and all the fragrance of all that they can gather; and without the thorns which are so apt to grow on their peculiar roses. Jesus Christ Himself is to us precept, for He is the way; He is to us doctrine, for He is the truth; He is to us experience, for He is the life. Let us make Him the pole star of our religious life in all things! Let Him be first, last, and middle! Yes, let us say, “He is all my salvation, and all my desire.” And yet do not, I beseech you, disdain the doctrine, lest marring the doctrine you should be guilty of insult to Jesus Himself. To trifle with the truth of God is to despise Jesus as our Prophet. Do not, for a moment, underrate experience, lest in neglecting the inner self, you also despise your Lord Himself as your cleansing Priest! And never for a moment forget His commandments, lest if you break them you transgress against Jesus Himself as your King! All things which touch upon His kingdom are to be treated reverently by us for His sake. His Bible, His day, His church, His ordinances must all be precious to us, because they have to do with Him. But in the forefront of all must always stand “Jesus Christ Himself,” the personal, living, loving Jesus! Christ *in* us the hope of glory. Christ *for* us our full redemption. Christ *with* us our guide, and our solace; and Christ *above* us pleading and preparing our place in heaven. Jesus Christ Himself is our Captain, our armor, our strength and our victory! We inscribe His name upon our banner, for it is hell’s terror, heaven’s delight, and earth’s hope. We bear this upon our hearts in the heat of the conflict, for this is our breastplate and coat of mail.

I shall not endeavor to say anything this morning which will strike you as beautiful in language, for to endeavor to decorate the altogether Lovely One would be blasphemy. To hang flowers upon the cross is ridiculous, and to endeavor to adorn Him whose head is as the finest gold, and whose person is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires would be profane. I shall but tell you simple things in simple language—yet are these the most precious and soul-satisfying of the truths of revelation.

I. With Jesus Christ Himself we begin by saying, first, that Jesus Himself is THE ESSENCE OF HIS OWN WORK, and therefore how readily we ought to trust Him. Jesus Himself is the soul of His own salvation. How does the apostle describe it? “He loved me, and gave *Himself* for me.” He gave His crown, His throne, and His joys in heaven for us, but that was not all—He gave Himself! He gave His life on earth, and renounced all the comforts of existence. He bore all its woes. He gave His body, He gave His agony, He gave His heart’s blood; but the summary of it is He gave Himself for me. “Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it.” “Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” No proxy service here! No sacrifice which runs as far as His own person, and there stops! There was no limit to the grief of Jesus like that set upon the suffering of Job—“Only on himself lay not your hand,” or, “Only spare his life.” No, every reserve was taken down, for He gave *Himself*. “He saved others, Himself He could not save,” because He Himself was the very essence of His own sacrifice on our behalf. It is because He is what He is that He was able to redeem us! The dignity of His person imparted efficacy to His atonement. He is divine, God over all, blessed forever, and therefore infinite virtue is found in Him. He is human and perfect in that humanity, and therefore capable of obedience and suffering in man’s place. He is able to save us because He is Immanuel—“God with us.”

If it were conceivable that an angel could have suffered the same agonies, and have performed the same labors as our Lord, yet it is not conceivable that the same result would have followed. The pre-eminence of His person imparted weight to His work. Always think, then, when you view the atonement, that it is Jesus Himself who is the soul of it. Indeed the efficacy of His sacrifice lies there. Therefore the apostle, in Hebrews, speaks of Him as having “by Himself purged our sins.” This purging was worked by His sacrifice, but the sacrifice was Himself! Paul says, “He offered up Himself.” He stood as a Priest at the altar offering a bloody sacrifice, but the offering was neither bullock, nor ram, nor turtle dove—it was Himself! “Once in the end of the world has He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” The sole reason why we are well-pleasing with God is because of Him, for He is our sweet-smelling offering. And the only cause for the putting away of our sin is found in Him because He is our sin-offering. The cleansing by the blood, and the washing by the water are the result, not of the blood and the water in and of themselves, and separate from Him, but because they were the essentials of Himself. You see this, I am persuaded, without my enlarging upon it.

Now, *because of this, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the Object of our faith.* Is He not always so described in Scripture? “Look unto Me, and be you saved, all you ends of the earth”—not, “Look to My cross,” nor, “Look to My life,” nor, “to My death,” much less, “to My sacraments, or to My servants,” but, “Look to ME.” From His own lips the words sound forth, “Come *unto Me* all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” In fact, it is the Christian’s life motto, “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.” May I not go farther and say how very simple, and how very easy and natural ought faith to be from now on? I might be puzzled with various theories of the atonement, but I can believe in Jesus Himself! I might be staggered by the many different mysteries which concern theology, and overpower even masterminds, but I can confide in Jesus Himself! He is one whom it is difficult to distrust; His goodness, gentleness, and truth command our confidence. We can and do trust in Jesus Himself! If He is proposed to me as my Savior, and if faith in Him is that which saves me, then at His dear feet I cast myself unreservedly, and feel myself secure while He looks down on me! He who bled that sinners might be saved cannot be doubted any more! “Lord, I believe; help You my unbelief.” Now you who have been looking to your *faith*, I want you to look to Jesus Himself rather than at your poor feeble faith! Now you who have been studying the results of faith in yourselves, and are dissatisfied, I beseech you turn your eyes away from yourselves, and look to Jesus Himself! Now you who cannot understand this, and cannot understand that, give up wanting to understand for a while, and come and look at Jesus Christ Himself, “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.” The Lord grant us grace to view Jesus Christ Himself in the matter of our salvation as all in all, so that we may have personal dealings with Him, and no longer think of Him as a mere idea, or as an historical personage, but as a personal Savior standing in the midst of us, and bidding us enter into peace through Him!

II. “Jesus Christ Himself” is, as we have said, THE SUBSTANCE OF THE GOSPEL, *and therefore how closely should we study Him.* While He was here He taught His disciples, and the object of His teaching was that they might know Him, and through Him might know the Father. They did not learn very fast, but you see what He meant them to learn by the observation He made to Philip, “Have I been so long a time with you, and yet have you not known Me, Philip?” He meant them to know Himself—and when He had risen from the dead the same objective was still before Him. As He walked with the two disciples to Emmaus, they had a wide choice of subjects for conversation, but He chose the old theme, and “beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” No topic was half as important or profitable! No mere *man* may come to teach himself, but this divine One can have nothing better to reveal, for He Himself, the incarnate God, is the chief of all the truths of God! Therefore our Lord was concerned to be known to His people, and therefore again and again we read that, “Jesus showed Himself unto His disciples.” Whatever else they may be ignorant of, it is essential to disciples that they know their Lord, His nature, His character, His mind, His Spirit, His objective, His power—in a word, we must know Jesus Himself.

This also, beloved, is the work of the Holy Spirit. “He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Me, and shall show it unto you.” The Holy Spirit reveals Christ to us and in us. Whatever things Christ has spoken while He was here, the Holy Spirit opens to the mind and to the understanding. Thus by speaking of Christ within us, He carries on the work which our Lord began when here below. The Comforter is the instructor, and Jesus is the lesson. I dare say you long to know a thousand things, but the main point of knowledge to be desired is Jesus Himself. This was His teaching, and this is the Holy Spirit’s teaching—and this is the end and objective of the Bible! Moses, Isaiah, and all the prophets spoke of Him—and the things which are recorded in this Book were written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that believing you might have life through His name. Precious is this Book, but its main preciousness lies in its revealing Jesus Himself! It is the field which contains the pearl of great price, the case which encloses heaven’s brightest jewel. We have missed our way in the Bible if its silken clue has not led us to the central chamber where we see Jesus Himself! We have never been truly taught of the Holy Spirit, and we have missed the teaching of the life of Christ unless we have come to abide in Jesus Himself. To know Him is our beginning of wisdom, and our crown of wisdom. To know Him is our first lesson on repentance, and our last attainment as we enter heaven. Our ambition is that we may know the love of Christ by which passes knowledge. Here is our life study, and we have good in it, for these things the angels desire to look into. May the Lord grant that the eyes of your understanding may be

enlightened so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.

Beloved, because Jesus is the sum of the gospel, *He must be our constant theme*. “God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.” So spoke men of old, and so say we. When we have done preaching Christ we had better have done preaching—when you have done teaching in your classes Jesus Christ Himself, give up Sunday school work, for nothing else is worthy of your pains! Put out the sun, and light is gone, life is gone; all is gone. When Jesus is pushed into the background, or left out of a minister’s teaching, the darkness is darkness that might be felt, and the people escape from it into gospel light as soon as they can. A sermon without Jesus in it is savorless and worthless to God’s tried saints—they soon seek other food! The more of Christ in our testimony, the more of light, and life, and power to save. Some preachers are guilty of the weariest tautology, but this is not laid to their charge when their theme is Jesus! I have heard hearers declare that their minister appeared to have bought a barrel organ on which he could grind five or six tunes and no more; and these he ground out forever and ever, amen! They have been weary, very weary, of such vain repetitions. But to this day I never heard of anybody against whom the complaint was urged that he preached Christ too much, too often, too earnestly, or too joyfully! I never recollect seeing a single Christian coming out of a congregation with a sorrowful face saying, “He extolled the Redeemer too highly. He grossly exaggerated the praises of our Savior.” I do not remember ever meeting with a case in which the sick upon the bed of languishing have complained that thoughts of Jesus were burdensome to them. I never recollect that a single book has been denounced by earnest Christians because it spoke too highly of the Lord, and made Him too prominent. No, my brethren, He who is the study of the saints must be the daily theme of ministers if they would feed the flock of God! No theme so moves the heart, so awakens the conscience, so satisfies the desires, and so calms the fears. God forbid we should ever fail to preach Jesus Himself! There is no fear of exhausting the subject, nor of our driving away our hearers, for His words are still true, “I, if I am lifted up, will draw all men unto Me.”

III. Jesus Christ Himself is THE OBJECT OF OUR LOVE, and *how dear He should be*. We can, all of us who are really saved, declare that, “We love Him because He first loved us.” We have an intense affection for His blessed person, as well as gratitude for His salvation. The personality of Christ is a fact always to be kept prominently in our thoughts. The love of a truth is all very well, but the love of a person has far more power in it. We have heard of men dying for an idea, but it is infinitely easier to awaken enthusiasm for a *person*. When an idea becomes embodied in a man, it has a force which in its abstract form is never wielded. Jesus Christ is loved by us as the embodiment of everything that is lovely, true, pure, and of good report. He Himself is incarnate perfection inspired by love. We love His offices, we love the types which describe Him, we love the ordinances by which He is set forth; but we love Him best of all. He Himself is our beloved; our heart rests only in Him.

Because we love Him we love His people, and through Him we enter into union with them. Our text is taken from a verse which says, “Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.” He is the binder at the corner, joining Jew and Gentile in one temple! In Jesus those ancient differences cease, for He “has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us; to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace.” We are at one with every man who is at one with Christ! Only let our Lord say, “I love that man,” and we love him at once. Let us only hope that our friend can say, “I love Jesus,” and we hasten to respond, “And I love you for Jesus’ sake.” So warm is the fire of our love to Jesus that all His friends may sit at it, and welcome! Our circle of affection comprehends all who in any shape or form have truly to do with Jesus Himself.

Because we love Him we delight to render service to Him. Whatever service we do for His church, and for His truth, we do for His sake. Even if we can only render it to the least of His brethren, we do it unto Him. The woman with the alabaster box of precious ointment is a type which we greatly prize, for she would only break the precious box for *Him*; and every drop of its delicious contents must be poured only upon His head. The bystanders complained of waste, but there can be no waste in anything that is done for Jesus! If the whole world, the heavens, and the heaven of heavens were all one great alabaster box, and if all the sweets which can be conceived were hidden within it, we would wish to see the whole broken, that every drop of the sweetness might be poured out for Jesus Christ Himself.

*“Jesus is worthy to receive
Honor and power divine.
And blessings more than we can give
Be, Lord, forever Thine.”*

Oh our Beloved, if we can do anything for You, we are charmed at possessing such a privilege! If we are allowed to wash Your disciples' feet, or to care for the poorest of Your poor, or the least lamb of Your flock, we accept the office as a high honor, for we love You with all our hearts! Our love to Jesus should be as much a matter of fact as our affection for our husband, wife, or child; and it should be far more influential upon our lives! Love to our Lord is, I trust, moving all of you to personal service. You might have paid a subscription, and allowed others to work, but you cannot do it when you see that Jesus gave Himself for you. Jesus Himself demands that I, myself, should be consecrated to His praise. Personal service is due to a personal Christ who personally loved, and personally died for us! When nothing moves us to zeal, the jaded spirit cannot follow up its industries unless Jesus Himself appears, and straightway our passions are all on fire, and the fiery spirit compels the flesh to warm to its work. We even glory in infirmity when Jesus is near! And we venture upon works which otherwise had seemed impossible! We can do anything and everything for “Jesus Christ Himself.”

IV. Fourthly, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself is THE SOURCE OF ALL OUR JOY. *We ought to rejoice when we have such a springing well of blessedness!* In times of sorrow our solace is Jesus Himself. It is no small ground of comfort to a mourner that Jesus Himself is a man. How cheering to read, “For as much as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He, also, took part of the same.” The humanity of Christ has a charm about it which only the quietly sorrowful discover. I have known what it is to gaze upon the incarnation with calm repose of heart when my brain has seemed to be on fire with anguish. If Jesus is, indeed, my brother, there is hope at all times! This is better balm than that of Gilead, “He Himself took our infirmities, and bore our sicknesses.” “For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able, also, to succor them that are tempted.” Pain, hunger, thirst, desertion, scorn, and agony Jesus Himself has borne! Tempted in all like as we are, though without sin, He has become the Comforter of the sorrowful. Many and many a sufferer in the lone watches of the night has thought of Him, and felt his strength renewed. Our patience revives when we see the Man of Sorrows silent before His accusers. Who can refuse to drink of His cup, and to be baptized with His baptism?—

*“His way was much rougher and darker than mine.
Did Christ, my Lord, suffer, and shall I repine?”*

The darkness of Gethsemane has been light to many an agonized soul, and the passion, even unto death, has made the dying sing for joy of heart. Jesus Himself is the solace of our soul in sorrow; and when we emerge from the storm of distress into the deep calm of peace, as we often do, blessed be His name, He is our peace! He left us peace by legacy, and peace He creates in us. We never know deep peace of heart until we know the Lord Jesus Himself. Do you remember that sweet word when the disciples were met together, the doors being shut for fear of the Jews—“Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said, Peace be unto you”? Jesus Himself, you see, brought the message, for nothing but His presence could make it effectual! When we see Him, our spirit smells a sweet savor of rest. Where can an aching head find such another pillow as His bosom?

On high days and holidays our spirits soar beyond rest—we ascend into the heaven of joy and exultation—but it is our Lord's joy which is in us making our joy full. “Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord,” and then are we, also, glad! By faith we see Jesus Himself enthroned, and this has filled us with delight, for His glorification is our satisfaction. “Him, also, has God highly exalted, and given Him a name which is above every name.” I care not what becomes of me so long as He is glorified! The soldier dies happy when the shout of victory salutes his ear, and his failing sight beholds his prince triumphant. What a joy to think that Jesus is risen; risen to die no more! The joy of resurrection is superlative! What bliss to know that He has ascended, leading captivity captive! That He sits, now, enthroned in a happy state, and that He will come in all the glory of the Father to break His enemies in pieces, as with a rod of iron! Here lies the grandest joy of His expectant church. She has in reserve a mighty thunder of hosannas for that auspicious day!

If there is any joy to be had, O Christian, that is both safe and sweet, a joy of which none can know too much, it is to be found in Him whom as yet you see not, but in whom believing you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory!

We must tear ourselves away from that thought to turn to another, but assuredly it is rich in happy memories, and in blessed expectations.

V. Fifthly, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF IS THE MODEL OF OUR LIFE, and therefore *how blessed it is to be like He*. As to our *rule* for life, we are like the disciples on the mount of transfiguration when Moses and Elijah had vanished, for we see “no man save Jesus only.” Every virtue found in other men we find in Him in greater perfection! We admire the grace of God in them, but Jesus Himself is our pattern. It was once said of Henry VIII, by a severe critic, that if the characteristics of all the tyrants that had ever lived had been forgotten, they might all have been seen come to life in that one king. We may more truly say of Jesus, if all graces, virtues, and sweetnesses which have ever been seen in good men could all be forgotten, you might find them all in Him—for in Him dwells all that is good and great! We, , desire to copy His character, and put our feet into His footprints. Be it ours to follow the Lamb wherever He goes! What says our Lord Himself? “Follow Me,” and again, “Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls.” Not Christ’s apostle, but Christ Himself is our guide! We may not take a secondary model, but must imitate Jesus Himself. By the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and His gracious operations, we are developing into the image of Christ till Christ is formed in us. And we thus develop because the heavenly life in us is His own life! “I in them,” said He. And again, “I am the life.” For “we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God.” “He that has the Son has life, and he that has not the Son has not life.” It is not passing through baptism, nor bearing the name of Christ; it is having Jesus Himself in our hearts that makes us Christians! And in proportion as He is formed in us, and the new life grows, we become more and more like He; and this is our prospect for eternity, that we are to be with Him, and like He, for “when He shall appear, we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is.”

Think of Him, you that mourn your imperfectness today—think of Jesus Christ Himself—and then be assured that you are to be like He is! What a picture! Come, artist, bring your best skill! What can you do? All pencils fail to depict Him. It needs a poet’s eye as well as an artist’s hand to picture the Lovely One. But what can the poet do? Ah, you, also, fail. You cannot sing Him any more than your friend can paint Him. Fruitful conception, and soaring imagination may come to your aid, but they cannot prevent your failure! He is too beautiful to be described—He must be *seen*! Yet here comes the marvel—“We shall be like He is”—like Jesus Christ Himself! O saint, when you are risen from the dead, how lovely you will be! Will you know yourself? Today you are wrinkled with old age, scarred with the marks of disease and pain. Perhaps you are deformed by accident, or blanched with consumption; but none of these shall blemish you then! You will be without spot or wrinkle, faultless before the throne—

*“O glorious hour! O blessed abode!
I shall be near and like my God!”*

And not only in bodily form shall we be like He is whose eyes are as the eyes of doves, and whose cheeks are as beds of spices—but in spirit, and in soul shall we be perfectly conformed to the Well-Beloved! We shall be holy, even as He is holy, and happy as He is happy! We shall enter into the joy of our Lord—the joy of Jesus Himself! I don’t say that we can be divine—that cannot be—but still, brothers and sisters, we shall be very near the throne. O what rapture to know that my next of kin lives, and when He shall stand in the last day, upon the earth, I shall not only see God in this, my flesh, but I shall be like He is, for I shall see Him as He is! Christ Himself, then, becomes to us unspeakably precious, as the model of our present life, and the image of the perfection towards which the Holy Spirit is working us.

VI. Lastly, HE IS THE LORD OF OUR SOUL. *How sweet it will be to with Him*. We find, today, that His beloved company makes us move pleasantly whether we run in the way of His commands, or the valley of the shadow of death. Saints have lain in dungeons, and yet they have walked at liberty when He has been there! They have been stretched on the rack, and even called it a bed of roses when He has stood by! One lay on a gridiron, with the hot fires beneath him, but amidst the flames he challenged his tormentors to do their worst! He laughed them to scorn, for his Lord was there! Martyrs

have been seen to clap their hands when every finger burned like a lighted candle, and they have been heard to cry,” Christ is all,” “Christ is all!” When the Fourth, like unto the Son of God, walks in the furnace, all the fire can do is but snap their bonds, and set the sufferers free! Oh, brothers and sisters, I am sure your only happiness that has been worth having has been found in knowing that He loved you, and was near you! If you have ever rejoiced in the abundance of your corn and wine and oil, it has been a sorry joy—it has soon palled upon your taste; for it never touched the great deeps of your spirit, and soon it has gone and left you sorely wearied in heart. If you have rejoiced in your children, your kinsfolk, and your bodily health, how readily has God sent a blight upon them all. But when you have rejoiced in Jesus, you have heard a voice bidding you proceed to further delights! That voice has cried, “Drink, O friends, yes, drink abundantly, O beloved.” To be inebriated with such joy as this is to come to the best condition of mind, and to fix the soul where it should be! We are never right till we come out of ourselves, and into Jesus; but when the ecstatic state comes, and we stand right out of self, and stand in Him so that whether in the body or out of the body we can scarcely tell, God knows! Then are we getting back to where God meant man to have been when He walked with him in Eden—getting near to where God means we shall be when we shall see Him face to face!

Brethren, what must the unveiled vision be! If the sight of Him, here, is so sweet, what must it be to see Him hereafter! It may be we shall not live till He comes, for the Master may tarry. But if He does not come, and we are called to pass through the gate of death, we need not fear! I should not wonder if when we pass under the veil, and come out in the disembodied state, one of our astonishments will be to find Jesus Himself there waiting to receive us! The soul hoped that a convoy of ministering angels would be near the bed, and would escort it across the stream, and up the mountains to the Celestial City—but no, instead thereof, our spirit will be saluted by the Lord Himself! Will it be amazed and cry, “It is He, even He, my best Beloved, Jesus Himself! He has come to meet me! Heaven might have been too great a surprise. Even my disembodied spirit might have swooned away, but it is He, the man Christ Jesus whom I trusted down below, and who was the dear companion of my dying hours! I have changed my place and state, but I have not changed my friend, nor changed my joy, for here He is.” What a glance of love will that be which He will give to us, and which we shall return to Him! Shall we ever take our eyes away from Him? Shall we ever wish to do so? Will not the poet’s words be true—

*“Millions of years my wondering eyes,
Shall over Your beauties rove.
And endless ages I’ll adore
The glories of Your love.”*

Within a week it may be our meeting with Jesus Himself may take place! Perhaps within an hour! A poor girl lying in the hospital was told by the doctor or the nurse that she could only live another hour. She waited patiently, and when there remained only one quarter of an hour more, she exclaimed, “One more quarter of an hour and then”—she could not say what! Neither can I—but Jesus Himself has said, “Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory.” And as He has prayed, so shall it be, and so let it be! Amen and Amen!

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