

“LO, I COME”—EXPOSITION
NO. 2202

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING. APRIL 26, 1891,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I have come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.”
Psalms 40:6-8.

Explained to us by the apostle Paul in Hebrews 10:5-7—

“Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then I said, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.”

WE have, in the use made of the passage by the inspired apostle, sufficient authority for applying the quotation from the fortieth psalm to our divine Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. With such a commentary, we are sure of our way and our whereabouts. We might have been perplexed as to its meaning had it not have been for this, although I think, even without the guidance of the New Testament passage, those who are familiar with Holy Writ would have felt that the words could not be fulfilled in David, but must belong to a greater than he, even to the divine Messiah, who, in the fullness of time, would come into the world.

We rejoice that the Lord Jesus Himself here speaks of Himself. Who but He can declare His own generation? Here He is both the subject of the words and of the speaker also. The word is from Himself and of Himself, and so we have double reason for devout attention. He tells us what He said long ago. He declares, “Then I said, Lo, I come.” Because He has come to us, we gladly come to Him, and now we reverently wait upon Him to hear what our Lord shall speak, for, doubtless, He will speak peace to us, and will cause us to learn, through His Spirit, the meaning of His words. O Savior, say to each of our hearts, “Lo, I come”.

I. Without further preface, I call upon you to notice, first, THE SWEEPING AWAY OF THE SHADOW. “Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire...burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.”

When the Son of God is born into the world, there is an end of all types by which He was formerly prefigured. The symbols end when the truth itself is made fully manifest. The sacrifices of the law had their times and place, their teaching and their influence. Blessed were those in Israel whose spiritual minds saw beneath the outward sign and discerned the inward truth. To them the sacrifices of the holy place were a standing means of fellowship with God.

Day after day they saw the Great Propitiation as they beheld the morning and the evening lamb—so often as they looked upon a sacrifice, they beheld the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world. In the Paschal supper they were instructed by the slaying of the unblemished victim, the roasting with fire, the sprinkling of the blood upon the door without, and the feasting upon the sacrifice within.

Spiritual men could have found in the rites and ceremonies of the old law a very library of Gospel literature. But alas. the people were carnal, sensual, and unbelieving, and therefore they often forgot

even to celebrate the appointed sacrifices. The Passover itself ceased for long periods and when the festivals were maintained, there was no life or reality in them.

After they had been chastened for their neglect and made to wander in exile because of the wandering of their hearts after their idols, they were restored from captivity and were led to keep the ceremonial law, but they did it as a heartless, meaningless formality, and thus missed all spiritual benefit. With the unlighted candle in their hand they blindly groped in the dark. They slew the sacrifices and presented their peace offerings, but the soul had gone out of the service, and at last their God grew weary of their formal worship and said, “Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me.”

We read, “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?” When once the life is gone out of the best symbolism, the Lord abhors the carcass, and even a divinely ordained ritual becomes a species of idolatry. When the heart is gone out of the externals of worship, they are as shells without the kernel. Habitations without living tenants soon become desolations, and so do forms and ceremonies without their spiritual meaning.

Toward the time of our Lord’s coming, the outward worship of Judaism became more and more dead—it was time that it was buried. It had decayed and waxed old and was ready to vanish away, and vanish away it did—for our Lord set aside the first, or old, that He might establish the second, or new. The stars were no longer seen with their twinklings, for the sun had risen.

The removal of these things was wholesale. We have four sorts of sacrifice mentioned here, but I need not go into details. Sacrifices in which blood was shed were abolished when the Son of God offered Himself without spot unto God. Bloodless offerings, such as fine flour, and wine, and oil, and sweet cane bought with money, and precious incense—which were tokens of gratitude and consecration—these also were no longer laid upon the altar.

Both sacrifice and offering were not desired. And burnt offerings, which signified the delight of God in the great Sacrifice, were ended by the Lord’s actual acceptance of that Sacrifice itself. Even the sin offering, which was burned without the camp as a thing accursed, altogether ceased. It represented sin laid upon the victim and the victim’s being made a curse on that account. It might have seemed always useful as a reminder, for they were always sinning and always needing a sin offering, but even this was not required.

Nothing of the old ceremonial law was spared. Now we have no ark of the covenant, with its shekinah light between the wings of the cherubim. Now we have no brazen laver, no table of showbread, no brazen altar, and no sacred veil—the holy of holies itself is gone. Tabernacle and temple are both removed. “Neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, shall men worship the Father.” But the time is come when “they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

A clean sweep has been made of all the ancient rites, from circumcision up to the garment with its fringe of blue. These were for the childhood of the church, the pictures of her first schoolbooks. But we are no longer minors and we have grace given us to read with opened eyes that everlasting classic of “the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” Now has the brightness of the former dispensation been quite eclipsed by the glory which excels.

As these outward things vanish, they go away with God’s mark of non-esteem upon them—*they are such things as He did not desire.* “Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire.” The Lord God had no desire for matters so trivial and unsatisfactory. They were good for the people, to instruct them, if they had been willing to learn, but they fulfilled no desire of the heart of God. He says, “Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?” By the prophet Micah, He asks, “Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil.”

These furnish no delight for the great Spirit and give no pleasure to the thrice holy JEHOVAH. The formal worshipper supposed that his offerings were, in and of themselves, pleasing to God and therefore

brought his “burnt offerings, with calves of a year old.” So far as they believingly understood the meaning of a sacrifice and presented it in faith, their offerings were acceptable, but in themselves considered, these were far from being what the Lord desired.

He that fills heaven and earth says, “I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, to have been continually before me. I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goats out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fullness thereof.” The spiritual, the infinite, the almighty JEHOVAH could not desire merely outward ritual, however it might appear glorious to men. The sweetest music is not for His ear, nor the most splendid robes of priests for His eye. He desired something infinitely more precious than these, and He puts them away with this note of dissatisfaction.

And more, these sacrifices passed away with the mark upon them that *they were not what God required*. “Burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.” What did God require of man? Obedience. He said by Samuel, “To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.” He says in another place, “He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” The requirement of the law was love to God and love to men.

This has always been God’s great requirement. He seeks spiritual worship, obedient thought, holy living, grateful praise, devout prayer—these are the requirements of the Creator and Benefactor of men. Ritualistic matters were so far required as they might minister to the good of the people, and while they stood they could not neglect them without loss. But they were not the grand requirement of a just and holy God, and therefore men might fulfill these without stint or omission, and yet God would not have of them what He required.

“Yea,” He asks, “who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?” To see His law magnified, His justice vindicated, His sovereignty acknowledged, and His holiness imitated, is more to His mind. Absolute conformity to the standard of moral and spiritual rectitude which He has set up is His demand, and He can be content with nothing less. These things are not found in sacrifice and offering, neither do they always go therewith, and therefore the outward sacrifice was not what God required.

They were so to be put away as never to be followed by the same kind of things. Shadows are not replaced by other shadows. The ceremonials of Aaron are not to be followed by another set of carnal ordinances. There are some who seem to think that they are to be so. Instead of Aaron, whom God ordained, we have a so-called priesthood among us at this day, claiming an apostolic succession, which is impossible if they are priests, since no apostle was a priest.

Instead of rites which God has ordained, we have rites of man’s invention. The blessed ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ, such as baptism and the Lord’s Supper, have been prostituted from their instructive and memorial intent into a kind of witchcraft, so that by what is called baptism children are said to be born again, and made members of Christ and children of God. While in the second, or what they call Holy Communion the sacrifice of Christ is profanely said to be repeated or continued, even in the unbloody sacrifice of the mass.

Ah, friends. Our Lord did not put away that grand, magnificent system of Mosaic rites to introduce the masquerade in which Rome delights, which certain Anglicans would set up among us. No, no, we have done with the symbolic system and have now but the two outward ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, which are meant only for believers who know what it is to be buried with Christ and to feed on Him.

You have no right to bring in your own forms and ceremonies, and place them in the church of Christ. Beyond what God has ordained, we may not dare to go—and even in those things we may not rest as though there were anything in them of their own operation, apart from their sacred teaching. These are instructive to you if you have a mind to be instructed, and if you know the truths which they

set forth. But do not imagine that men have come under another kind of ceremonialism, another system of ritual and rubric, for it is not so. The rites appropriate to priests are abolished with the Aaronic priesthood and can never be restored—“He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.” When He comes into the world, these carnal ordinances must go out of the world. Sacrifice and offering, burnt offering and sin offering, and all other patterns of heavenly things, are swept away when the heavenly things themselves appear.

II. Thus much upon the shadows being swept away. And now, secondly, let us view THE REVELATION OF THE SUBSTANCE.

We find the Son of God Himself appearing. We read here and we hear Him say—“Mine ears hast thou opened.” The Lord Himself comes, even He who is all that these things foreshadowed.

When He comes, He has a prepared ear. The margin has it, “Mine ears hast thou digged.” Our ears often need digging, for they are blocked up by sin. The passage to the heart seems to be sealed in the case of fallen man. But when the Savior came, His ear was not as ours, but were attentive to the divine voice. He says, “He wakeneth mine ear to hear as they that are taught. The LORD God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious.” Our Lord was quick of understanding in the fear of the Lord. He knew what the will of the Lord was and He could say, “I do always the thing that pleases him.” As man, He had a divine instinct of holiness, which made Him to know and love the Father’s will, and caused Him always to translate that will into His own life.

You see he came with an opened ear, and some think that we have here an allusion to the boring of the ear in the case of the servant who had a right to liberty, but refused to quit his servitude, because he loved his master and wished to remain with him forever. It is not certain that there is any such reference, but it is certain that our Lord was bound forever to the service which He had undertaken for His Father, and that He would not go back from it. He pledged Himself to redeem us and He set His face like a flint to do it. He loved His Father and He loved His chosen so much that He vowed to execute the Father’s work, even to what I might call, “the bitter end,” if I did not know that it was a sweet and blessed end to Him. His ear was prepared for His service.

But *our Lord came also with a prepared body.* Hence, the apostle Paul, when He quoted this passage, probably taking the words from the Septuagint translation, writes, “A body hast thou prepared me.” You will wonder how, in one passage, it should speak of the ear and the next should speak of the body, and yet there is small difference in the sense. We do not think of an ear without a body—that would be a sorry business. The reading in the Hebrews is involved in the text as it stands in the psalm. If the ear is there, a body is there—you cannot even dream of an ear hearing if separate from the rest of the body.

The apostle gives us the sense of the text rather than the words and at the same time, dealing as He was with Jews by whom the Septuagint was prized, He quoted from the version which they would be sure to acknowledge—and very properly and wisely so—because that version was perfectly accurate as to the meaning of the Hebrew. Anyway, he was inspired to read it—“A body hast thou prepared me.” There was fashioned by the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the blessed Virgin, a body fit to embody the Son of God. Wrought mysteriously, by means into which we must not inquire—for what God has veiled must remain covered—that body was suited to set forth the great mystery, “God manifest in the flesh.”

The whole body of Christ was prepared for Him and for His great work. To begin with, it was a sinless body, without taint of original sin, else God could not have dwelt therein. It was a body made highly vital and sensitive, probably far beyond what ours are, for sin has a blunting and hardening effect even upon flesh, and His flesh, though it was in the “likeness of sinful flesh,” was not sinful flesh, but flesh which yielded prompt obedience to His spirit, even as His whole human nature was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

His body was capable of great endurance, so as to know the griefs and agonies and unspeakable sorrows of a delicate, holy, and tender kind which it was necessary for Him to bear. “A body hast thou prepared me.” In the fullness of time He cometh into that body, which was admirably adapted to

enshrine the Godhead. Wondrous mystery, that the infant of Bethlehem should be linked with the Infinite. And that the weary man by the shores of Galilee should be very God of very God, revealed in a body prepared for Him! “A body hast thou prepared me”—He had a prepared ear and a prepared body.

He who assumed that body was existent before that body was prepared. He says, “A body hast thou prepared me. Lo, I come.” He from old eternity dwelt with God—the Word was in the beginning with God, and the Word was God. We could not any one of us have said that a body was prepared for us and therefore we would come to it, for we had had no existence before our bodies were fashioned. From everlasting to everlasting our Lord is God and He comes out of eternity into time—the Father bringing Him into the world. He was before all worlds and was before he came into the world to dwell in His prepared body.

Beloved, *the human nature of Christ was taken on Him in order that He might be able to do for us that which God desired and required.* God desired to see an obedient man, a man who would keep His law to the fullest—and He sees Him in Christ. God desired to see one who would vindicate the eternal justice and show that sin is no trifle. And behold our Lord, the eternal Son of God, entering into that prepared body, was ready to do all this mighty work, by rendering to the law a full recompense for our dishonor of it!

An absolutely perfect righteousness He renders unto God—as the second Adam, He presents it for all whom He represents. He bows His head, a victim beneath JEHOVAH’s sword, that the truth, justice, and honor of God might suffer no detriment. His body was prepared to this end. Incarnation is a means to atonement. Only a man could vindicate the law and therefore the Son of God became a man. This is a wonderful being, this God in our nature. “Emmanuel” is a glorious word. Surely, for the incarnation and the atonement the world was made from the first.

Was this the reason why the morning stars sang together when they saw the cornerstone of the world, because they had an inkling that here God would be manifest as nowhere else beside, and the Creator would be wedded to the creature? That God might be manifested in the Christ, it may even be that sin was permitted. Assuredly, there could have been no sacrifice on Calvary if there had not first of all been sin in Eden. The whole scheme, the whole of God’s decrees and acts, worked up to an atoning Savior.

Of the pyramid of creation and of providence, Christ is the apex—He is the flower of all that God has made. His divine nature in strange union with humanity constitutes a peerless personage, such as never was before, and can never be again. God in our nature one Being, and yet wearing two natures, is altogether unique. He says, “A body hast thou prepared me. Lo, I come.” Think of this—it is a truth fitter for meditation than for sermonizing. The Lord give us to know it well by faith!

III. But now, thirdly, I call your attention to THE DECLARATION OF THE CHRIST made in the text—“Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire. Then said I, Lo, I come.”

Observe *when* He says this. *It is in the time of failure.* All the sacrifices had failed. The candle flickered and was dying out, and then the great light arose, even the eternal light, and like a trumpet the words rung out, “Lo, I come.” All this has been of no avail; now I come. It is in the time of failure that Christ always appears. The last of man is the first of God, and when we have come to the end of all our power and hope, then the eternal power and Godhead appears with its, “Lo, I come.”

When our Lord comes, *it is with the view of filling up the vacuum* which had now been sorrowfully seen. God does not desire these things. God does not require these things, but He does desire and He does require something better, and lo, the Christ has come to bring that something. That awful gap which was seen in human hope when Moses had passed away, and the Aaronic priesthood and all the ordinances of it were gone, Christ was born to fill. It looked as if the light of ages had been quenched, and God’s glorious revelation had been forever withdrawn. And then, in the dark hour, Jesus cries, “Lo, I come.” He fills the blank abyss. He gives to man in reality what he had lost in the shadow.

When He appears, it is as the personal Lord. Lay the stress upon the pronoun, “Lo, I come.” The infinite *Ego* appears. “Lo, I come.” No mere man could talk thus, and be sane. No servant or prophet of

God would ever say, “Lo, I come.” Sainly men talk not so. God’s prophets and apostles have a modest sense of their true position—they never magnify themselves, though they magnify their office. It is for God to say, “Lo, I come.” He who says it takes the body prepared for Him and comes in His own proper personality as the I AM. “In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”

He comes forth from the ivory palaces to inhabit the tents of manhood. He takes upon Himself the body prepared for Him of the Lord God and He stands forth in His matchless personality ready to do the will of God. “It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell.” Everything is stored up in His blessed person and we are complete in Him.

Observe the joyful avowal that He makes—“Lo, I come.” This is no dirge. I think I hear a silver trumpet ring out—“Lo, I come.” Here is a joyful alacrity and intense eagerness. The coming of the Savior was to Him a thing of exceeding willingness. “For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame.”

He comes with a word calling attention to it, for He is not ashamed to be made partaker of our flesh. “Lo,” says He, “I come. Behold, behold, I come.” This is no clandestine union. He bids heaven behold Him come into our nature. Earth is bidden to gaze upon it. O you sinners, listen to this inviting, “Lo!” Others have cried to you, “Lo, here! and, Lo, there.” But Jesus looks on you and cries, “Lo, I come.” Look hither—turn all your thoughts this way and behold your God in your nature ready to save you.

Verily, the incarnate God is a subject meet for the loftiest thoughts of sages and for the lowliest thoughts of children. Blessed are the children of grace who can sit at the feet of the incarnate God and look up, forgetting all the wisdom of the Greeks and all the sign-seeking of the Jews in the satisfaction which they find in Jesus.

I think, too, *I hear in this declaration of the coming One a note of finality.* He takes away the sacrifice from Aaron’s altar, but He says, “Lo, I come.” There is the end of it. “Lo, I come.” Is there anything after this? Can anything supersede this—“Lo, I come”? “Lo, I come” has been the perpetual music of the ages. Read it, “Lo, I am come”—for it is in the present tense and how sweet the sound! Christ is come and joy with Him.

Read it as well in the future, if you will, “Lo, I come,” for He comes “the second time without sin unto salvation”—here is our chief hope! “Lo, I come.” He Himself is the last word of God. “In the beginning was the Word” and so He was God’s first word. But He is the end as well as the beginning—God’s last word to man—Christ is God’s ultimatum. Look for no new revelation—“Lo, I am come,” shines on forever. Do not ask, “Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?” He has come. Look for no other.

Behold, he cometh to give what God desires, what God requires—what would you more? Let Him be all your salvation and all your desire. Let Him be “the desire of all nations.” He is the fulfillment of all the requirements of the human race as well as the full amount of what God requires.

IV. Next, I beg you to note THE REFERENCE TO PRECEDING WRITINGS.

He says, “Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me.” If I preached from the passage in the epistle to the Hebrews, I might fairly declare that in *the whole volume of Holy Scripture* much is written of our Lord and prescribed for Him as Messiah. The page of inspiration is fragrant with the name of Jesus. He is the top line of the entire volume and in the Greek word I see a half allusion to this. He is the headline of contents to every chapter of Scripture. He is of all Scripture the Sum. “In the beginning was the Word.” Everything speaks of Him. The Pentateuch and the books of the prophets, and the Psalms, and the Gospels, and the epistles all speak of Him. “In the volume of the book it is written of me.”

Preaching as I am from the Psalms, I cannot take so long a range. I must look back and find what was written in David’s day and within *the Pentateuch certainly*. And where do I find it written concerning His coming? The Pentateuch drips with prophecies of Christ as a honeycomb overflowing with its honey. Chiefly is He to be found in the head and front of the book—as early as the opening chapters of the book of Genesis, when Adam and Eve had sinned and we were lost—behold, He is

spoken of in the volume of the book in these terms, “The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.” So early was it written that the Redeemer would be born in our nature to vanquish our foe.

But I confess I do not feel shut out from another interpretation. I conceive that our Lord here refers to another book, *the book of the divine purposes*, the volume of the eternal covenant. There was a time before all time, when there was no day but the Ancient of Days, when all that existed was the Lord, who is all in all. Then the sacred Three entered into covenant, in mutual agreement, for a sublime end. Man sinning, the Son of God shall be the Surety. Christ shall bear the result of man’s offense. He shall vindicate the law of God and make JEHOVAH’s name more glorious than ever it has been. The second person of the divine Unity was pledged to come and take up the nature of men, and so become the firstborn among many brethren to lift up a fallen race, and to save a number that no man can number, elect of God the Father, and given to the Son to be His heritage, His portion, His bride.

Then did the Well-Beloved strike hands with the eternal God and enter into covenant engagements on our behalf—“In the volume of the book it is written.” That sealed book, upon whose secrets no angel’s eye has looked, a book written by the finger of God long before He wrote the book of the law upon tables of stone, that book of God may be spoken of in the psalm, “And in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.”

Our Lord came to carry out all His suretyship engagements—His work is the exact fulfillment of His engagements recorded in the eternal covenant, “ordered in all things and sure.” He acts out every mysterious line and syllable, even to the full. Then He said, “A body hast thou prepared me. Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me.” It is ever a pleasing study to see our Lord, both in the written Word, and in the eternal covenant of grace.

V. I must close with the fifth point, THE DELIGHT OF HIM THAT COMES. He said, “Lo, I come.”

As I have already told you, there is wonderful delight in that exclamation—“Lo, I come.” But lest we should mistake our Lord, He adds, “I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.” There can be no denial of His joy in His service.

Note well that *He cometh in compete subservience to His Father, God*. “I delight to do”—what? “Thy will.” His own will was absorbed in the divine will. His pleasure it was to say, “Not as I will, but as thou wilt.” It was His meat and His drink to do the will of Him that sent Him and to finish His work. Though He was Lord and God, He became a lowly servant for our sakes. Though high as the highest, He stooped low as the lowest. The King of kings was the servant of servants, that He might save His people. He took upon Him the form of a servant, girded Himself and stood obediently at His Father’s call.

He had a prospective delight as to His work. Before he came, He delighted in the thought of His incarnation. The Supreme Wisdom says, “My delights were with the sons of men.” Happy in His Father’s courts, He yet looked forward to an access of happiness in becoming man. “Can that be?” says one. Could the Son of God be happier than He was? As God, He was infinitely blessed, but He knew nothing by experience of the life of man, and into that sphere He desired to enter.

To the Godhead there can be no enlargement, for it is infinite, but still, there can be an addition—our Lord was to add the nature of man to that of God. He would live as man, suffer as man, and triumph as man, and yet remain God. And to this He looked forward with a strange delight, inexplicable except upon the knowledge of the great love He bore to us. He had given His heart so entirely to His dear bride, whom He saw in the glass of predestination, that for her He would endure all things—

*“Yea, saith the Lord, for her I’ll go
Through all the depths of care and woe,
And on the cross will even dare
The bitter pangs of death to bear.”*

It was wondrous love. Our Lord’s love surpasses all language and even thought. I am talking prodigies and miracles at every word I utter. It was delightful to our Lord to come hither.

“What did He delight in?” asks one. Evidently He delighted in God’s *law*. “Thy law is within my heart.” He resolved that the beauties of the law of the Lord should be displayed by being embodied in His own life and that its claims should be vindicated by His own death. To achieve this, He delighted to come and keep it and honor it by an obedience both active and passive.

He delighted in God’s *will* also and that is somewhat more, for law is the expression of will and this may be altered. But the will of the great King never changes. Our Lord delighted to carry out all the purposes and desires of the Most High God. He so delighted in the will of God that he came to do it, and to bear it, “by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

He delighted also in *God*. He took an intense delight in glorifying the Father. He came to reveal the Father and make Him to be beloved of men. He did all things to please God. Moreover, He took a delight in *us*, and here, though the object of His love is less, the love, itself, is heightened by the conspicuous condescension.

The Lord Jesus took a deep delight in His people, whose names were written on His heart, and graven on the palms of His hands. His heart was fixed on their redemption and therefore He would present Himself as a sacrifice on their behalf. The people whom the Father gave Him from before the foundation of the world lay on His very soul—for them He had a baptism to be baptized with, and He was straitened till it was accomplished. He gave Himself no rest till He had left both joy and rest to ransom His own.

May I go a step further and say that *He had an actual delight in His coming among men?* “I delight to do thy will, O my God”—not merely to think of doing it. When our Lord was here, He was the most blessed of men. Do you start? Do you remind me that He was “a man of sorrows”? I grant you that none was more afflicted, but I still stand to it, that within Him dwelt a joy of the highest order. To Him it was joy to be in sorrow, and honor to be put to shame.

Do you think that lightens our estimate of His self-denial and unselfishness? No, it adds weight to it. Some people fancy that there is no credit in doing a thing unless you are miserable in doing it. Nay, brethren, that is the very reverse. Obedience which is unwillingly offered and causes no joy in the soul is not acceptable. We must serve God with our heart, or we do not serve Him. Obedience rendered without delight in rendering it is only half obedience.

You shall say what you will about the greatness of my Lord’s agonies. You shall never go too far in your estimate of His unfathomable griefs, but going with you to the full in it all, I shall take liberty still to say that He had within Himself a fountain of joy which enabled Him to endure the cross and even to despise the shame. Blessed among men was He, even when He was made a curse for us. With delight He gave Himself for us and made a cheerful surrender of Himself, that He might be the ransom for many. The text is express upon that fact.

And all this because *our Lord came with such intense heartiness*. He says, “Yea, thy law is within my heart.” Our Lord is most thorough in all that He does. His work is never slovenly, nor in a half-hearted way. He does not even sit on the well and talk to a poor woman, but what His heart is there. He does not go into a fisherman’s hut, but what His heart is there, and He heals the sick one. He does not sit down to supper with His followers, but what His heart is there and He reveals His love.

I wish we were always at home when the Lord calls for us! Sometimes we are all abroad and our heart is away from the service of our Father—but He loved the Lord with all His heart, and mind, and strength. For us He gave His whole being, rejoicing to redeem us. He was always intense. Whether He preached or practiced, Jesus was all there and always there. Hence His delight, for what a man does with his heart he delights to do. These two sentences are melodious of joy to my ear. “I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.”

Hear this one other word. It is all done now. Jesus has fulfilled the Father’s will in the salvation in the midst of His ransomed ones. And shall I tell you, need I tell you, what must be the delight, *the heavenly joy of our Lord, now that the work is finished?* He is now the focus, the center, the source of bliss. What must be His own delight? We often say of the angels that they rejoice over one sinner that repents. I doubt not that they do, but the Bible does not say so. The Bible says, “There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” What means the presence of the angels? Why, that the angels see the joy of Christ when sinners repent.

Hear them say to one another, “Behold the Father’s face! How He rejoices! Gaze on the countenance of the Son! What a heaven of delight shines in those eyes of His! Jesus wept for these sinners, but now He rejoices over them. How resplendent are the nail-prints today, for the redeemed of the Lord’s death are believing and repenting! That blessed countenance which is always as a sun, shines in the fullness of its strength now that He sees of the travail of His soul.” He who suffered feels a joy unsearchable,

*“The first-born sons of light
Desire in vain its depths to see:
They cannot read the mystery—
The length, the breadth, the height.”*

Oh, the joy of triumphant love! The joy of the crucified, whose prepared body is the body of His glory as once it was the body of His humiliation! In that manhood He still rejoices and delights to do the will of the Father.

My time has fled and yet I am expected to say something about missions. What shall I say? My brothers, sisters, all of you, do you know anything about the truths I have spoken? Then go and tell the heathen that the Lord is come. Here is a message worth the telling. Mary Magdalene and the other Marys hasten to tell the disciples that the Lord had risen—will you not go and tell them that He has come down to save? “Lo, I come,” says He.

Will you not take up His words and go to the people who have never heard of Him and say, “Lo, He has come”? Tell the Ethiopians, the Chinese, the Hindus, and all the islands of the sea, that God has come here to save men and has taken a prepared body, that He might give to God all He required and all that He desired, that sinful men might be accepted in the Beloved, with whom God the Father is well pleased.

Go, and take to the heathen this sacred Book. “In the volume of the book it is written of Him.” Do not begin to doubt the Book yourself. Why should you send missionaries to teach them about a book in which you do not yourself believe? Tell the nations that, “In the volume of the book it is written of him.” Believe this Book and spread it. Help Bible Societies and all such efforts. And aid Missionary Societies which carry the Book and proclaim the Savior. The men of the Book of God are the men of God such as the world needs. Bid such men go and open the Book of God and teach the nations its blessed news.

Go, dear friends, and assure the heathen that there is happiness in obedience to God. So the Savior found it. He delighted in God’s will, even to the death, and they will also know delight, as in their measures they bow before the authority of the Word and the will of the one living and true God, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. JEHOVAH, the I AM, must be worshipped, for beside Him there is none else. Give glory unto God, whom our Lord Jesus has come to glorify. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—PSALM 40

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—383, 271, 229

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. 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.