

CHRIST PRECIOUS TO BELIEVERS

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A SERMON
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“Unto you therefore which believe He is precious.”
1 Peter 2:7.

THIS text calls to my remembrance the opening of my ministry. It is about eight years since as a lad of sixteen, I stood up for the first time in my life, to preach the gospel in a cottage to a handful of poor people, who had come together for worship. I felt my own inability to preach, but I ventured to take this text, “Unto you therefore which believe He is precious.” I do not think I could have said anything upon any other text, but Christ was precious to my soul and I was in the flush of my youthful love and I could not be silent when a precious Jesus was the subject. I had but just escaped from the bondage of Egypt—I had not forgotten the broken fetter. Still did I remember those flames which seemed to burn about my path and that devouring gulf which opened its mouth as if ready to devour me! With all these things fresh in my youthful heart, I could speak of His preciousness who had been my Savior and had plucked me as a brand from the burning and set me upon a rock and put a new song in my mouth and established my goings! And now, at this time what shall I say? “What has God worked?” How has the little one become a thousand and the small one a great people? And what shall I say concerning this text, but that if the Lord Jesus was precious, then, He is as precious now? And if I could declare, then, that Jesus was the objective of my soul’s desire; that for Him I hoped to live and for Him I would be prepared to die, can I not say, God being my witness, that He is more precious to me this day than ever He was? In the remembrance of His unparalleled mercy towards the chief of sinners, I must anew devote myself to Him and afresh surrender my heart to Him who is Lord and King!

This remark is uttered by way of introduction; it may seem egotistical, but that I cannot help. I must give glory to God in the midst of the great congregation and pay my vows to the Lord now in the midst of all His saints, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem!

My text states a positive fact, namely, that *Christ is precious to believers*. This shall be the first part of our discourse. Then in the second we will try to answer the question, *why is Jesus Christ so precious to His believing people?* And we will conclude by declaring the test whereby you may try yourselves whether you are believers or not, for if you are believers in Christ, then Christ is precious to you! But if you think little of Him, then rest assured you have not a true and saving faith in Him!

I. First, this is a positive fact that UNTO BELIEVERS JESUS CHRIST IS PRECIOUS. In Himself He is of inestimable preciousness, for He is very God of very God! He is moreover, perfect man without sin. The precious gopher wood of His humanity is overlaid with the pure gold of His divinity. He is a mine of jewels and a mountain of gems. He is altogether lovely, but, alas, this blind world sees not His beauty! The painted harlotries of that witch, Madam Bubble, the world can see and all men wonder after her. This life, its joy, its lust, its gains, its honors—these have beauty in the eyes of the unregenerate man—but in Christ he sees nothing which he can admire. He hears His name as a common word and looks upon His cross as a thing in which he has no interest; neglects His gospel; despises His Word and, perhaps, vents fierce spite upon His people! But not so the believer; the man who has been brought to know that Christ is the only foundation upon which the soul can build its eternal home—he who has been taught that Jesus Christ is the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega, the author and the finisher of faith—thinks not lightly of Christ! He calls Him all his salvation and all his desire—the only glorious and lovely one!

Now, this is a fact which has been proved in all ages of the world. Look at the beginning of Christ’s appearance upon earth. No, we might go farther back and mark how Christ was precious in prospect to

those who lived before His incarnation. But, I say, since He has come into the world, what abundant proofs have we that He is precious to His people! There were men found who were not unwilling to part with houses and lands and wife and children and country and reputation and honor and wealth, no, with life, itself, for Christ's sake! Such was the charm that Christ had for ancient Christians, that if they must renounce their patrimony and their earthly wealth for His sake, they did it cheerfully and without a murmur. No, they could say that what things were gain they counted but loss for Christ's sake and did esteem them but as dross and dung if they could win Christ and be found in Him!

We talk lightly of these things, but these were no mean sacrifices, for a man to leave the partner of his bosom; to be despised by her who ought to honor him; to be spit upon by his own children; to be driven out by his countrymen and have his name mentioned as a hissing and a reproach and a byword—this is no easy matter to bear! And yet, the Christians in the first ages took up this cross and not only carried it patiently, but carried it joyfully—rejoicing in tribulations, if those tribulations fell upon them for Christ's sake and the gospel! No, more than this—Satan has been permitted to put forth his hand and touch Christ's people, not only in their goods and in their families—but in their bones and in their flesh. And mark how Christ's disciples have reckoned nothing to be a loss, so that they might win Christ! Stretched upon the rack, their strained nerves have only made them sing the louder, as though they were harp strings only put in tune when they were drawn out to their extreme length! They have been tortured with hot irons and with the pincers. Their backs have been plowed with scourges, but when have you found any of the true followers of Christ flinch in the hour of pain? They have borne all this and challenged their persecutors to do more and invent fresh arts and devices, fresh cruelties to try them! Christ was so precious, that all the pain of the body could not make them deny Him; and when at last they have been taken forth to a shameful death—let the axe and the block; let the cross of crucifixion; let the spear; let the fire and the stake; let the wild horse and the desert testify that the believer has always been a man or woman who would suffer all this and vastly more—but who would never renounce their confidence in Christ! Look at Polycarp before the lions, when he is brought into the midst of the assembly, and it is demanded of him that he will deny his God. Thousands of savage eyes look down upon him and there he stands—a feeble man alone in the arena—but he tells them that “he has known his Lord these many years and he never did Him a displeasure, and he will not deny Him at the last.” “To the lions!” they cry, “to the lions!” And the lions rush upon him and he is speedily devoured; but all this he would have borne at the mouths of a thousand lions if he had a thousand lives, rather than he would have thought anything amiss against the Majesty of Jesus of Nazareth! The whole history of the ancient church of Christ proves that Jesus has been an object of His peoples' highest veneration. They set nothing in rivalry with Him, but cheerfully and readily without a murmur, or a thought, gave up all for Jesus Christ and rejoiced to do so!

And this is just as true today as it was then. If tomorrow the stake could be set in Smithfield, Christian people are prepared to be fuel for the flames! If once more the block were fixed on Tower Hill and the axe were brought forth from its hiding place, the heads of Christ's people would be cheerfully given if they might but crown the head of Jesus and vindicate His cause! Those who declare that the ancient valor of the church is departed, know not what they say. The professing church may have lost its masculine vigor; the professors of this day may be but effeminate dwarfs, the offspring of glorious fathers—but the true church, the elect out of the professing church; the remnant whom God has chosen—are as much in love with Jesus as His saints of yore and are as ready to suffer and to die! We challenge hell and its incarnate representative, old Rome herself! Let her build her dungeons; let her revive her inquisitions; let her once more get power in the state to cut and mangle and burn—we are still able to possess our souls in patience! We sometimes feel it were a good thing if persecuting days would come, again, to try the church once more and drive away her chaff and make her like a goodly heap of wheat, all pure and clean! The rotten branches of the forest may tremble at the hurricane, for they shall be swept away, but those that have sap within them tremble not. Our roots are intertwined with the Rock of Ages, and the sap of Christ flows within us and we are branches of the living vine, and nothing shall sever us from Him! We know that persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword shall divide us from

the love of Christ, for in all these things, by God's grace, we shall be as the church has been—more than conquerors through Him who loved us!

Does anyone think that I exaggerate? Mark, then—if what I have said is not true, then Christ has no church at all, for the church that is not prepared to suffer and bleed and die for Christ is not Christ's church! What does He say? "He who loves father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that takes not his cross and follows after Me is not worthy of Me" (Matt 10:37-38). Albeit that Christ may not put us fully to the test, yet if we are true, we must be ready for the ordeal. And if we are sincere, though we may tremble at the thought of it, we shall not tremble in the endurance of it! Many a man who says in his heart, "I have not a martyr's faith," has really that noble virtue. And let him but once come to the push and the world shall see the divine grace that has been hidden rising like a giant from his slumbers. The faith which endures the relaxing of the world's sunshine, would endure the cutting frost of the world's persecution! We need not fear—if we are true today—we shall always be true!

This is not mere fiction! Many are the proofs that Christ is still precious. Shall I tell you of the silent sufferers for Christ, who at this day suffer a martyrdom of which we hear not, but which is true and real? How many a young girl there is who follows Christ in the midst of an ungodly family—her father upbraids her; laughs at her; makes a scoff of her holiness and pierces her through the heart with his sarcasm! Her brothers and her sisters call her, "Puritan," "Methodist" and the like—and she is annoyed day by day with what the apostle calls, "Trial of cruel mockings." But she bears all this and though the tears are sometimes forced by it from her eyes, yet though she should weep blood, she would "resist unto blood, striving against sin." These sufferers are unrecorded; they are not put into a Book of Martyrs. We have no Fox to write their martyrology. They have not the flesh-contenting knowledge that they shall be publicly honored—they suffer alone and unheard of, still praying for those who laugh at them—bowing themselves before God on their knees in agony, not on account of the persecution, but in agony of soul for the persecutors, themselves, that they may be saved! How many there are of such young men in workshops, employed in large establishments who bend their knee at night by the bedside in a large room where there are many scoffers! Some of us have known this in our youthful days and have had to endure it. But Christ is precious to the silent sufferings of His people. These unhonored martyrdoms prove that His church has not ceased to love Him, or to esteem Him precious!

How many there are, too—how many thousands of unseen and unknown laborers for Christ whose names cannot be here declared. They toil from morning till night all through the week and the Sabbath should be a day of rest to them. But they work more on the Sabbath than on any other day! They are visiting the beds of the sick. Their feet are weary and nature says rest, but they go into the lowest dens and haunts of the city to speak to the ignorant and endeavor to spread the name and honor of Jesus where it has not been known. There are many such who are working hard for Christ, though the church scarcely knows of it. And how many, too, there are who prove that they love Christ by the continual generosity of their offerings! Many are the poor people I have discovered who have denied themselves of this and that, because they would serve Christ's cause. And many there are, too—every now and then we find them out—in the middle ranks of society who give a hundred times as much to the cause of Christ as many of the rich and wealthy! And if you knew to what little trials they are put; to what shifts they are driven in order to serve Christ, you would say, "The man, who can, proves clearly that Christ is precious to him." And mark this, the reason why the church is not more laborious, not more generous in its gifts to the offertory of the Savior is just this—because the church of the day is not the church of Christ in its mass and bulk! There is a church of Christ within it, but the visible church, as it stands before you, is not to be considered the church of Christ. We must pass it through the fire and bring the third part through the flame, for this is the day when the dross is mingled with gold! How has the much fine gold become dim! How has the glory departed! Zion is under a cloud. But mark, though you see it not, there is a church, a hidden church—an unmoving center amidst the growing of profession—there is a life within this outward fungus of a growing Christianity! There is a life that is within and to that hidden host, that chosen company, Christ is precious—they are proving it every day by their patient sufferings, by their laborious efforts, by their constant offerings to the church of Christ. "Unto you therefore who believe, He is precious."

I will tell you one thing that proves—proves without a doubt, that Christ is still precious to His people and it is this—send one of Christ’s people to hear the most noted preacher of the age, whoever he may be. He preaches a very learned sermon, very fine and magnificent, but there is not a word about Christ in that sermon. Suppose that to be the case and the Christian will go out and say, “I did not care a farthing for that man’s discourse.” Why? “Because they have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him! I heard nothing about Christ.” Send that man on the Sabbath morning to hear some hedge and ditch preacher—someone who cuts the king’s English about ever so badly, but who preaches Jesus Christ—you will see the tears rolling down that man’s face and when he comes out he will say, “I do not like that man’s bad grammar. I do not like the many mistakes he has made, but oh, it has done my heart good, for he spoke about Christ!” That, after all, is the main thing for the Christian! He needs to hear about his Lord and if he hears Him magnified, he will overlook a hundred faults! In fact, you will find that Christians are all agreed that the best sermon is that which is fullest of Christ. They never like to hear a sermon unless there is something of Christ in it. A Welsh minister who was preaching last Sabbath at the chapel of my dear brother, Jonathan George, was saying that Christ was the sum and substance of the gospel, and he broke out into this story—A young man had been preaching in the presence of a venerable divine, and after he was done he went to the old minister and said, “What did you think of my sermon?” “A very poor sermon, indeed,” he said. “A poor sermon?” said the young man, “it took me a long time to study it.” “Yes, no doubt of it.” “Did you not think my explanation of the text a very good one?” “Oh yes,” said the old preacher, “very good, indeed.” “Well, then, why do you say it is a poor sermon? Didn’t you think the metaphors were appropriate, and the arguments conclusive?” “Yes, they were very good as far as that goes, but still it was a very poor sermon.” “Will you tell me why you think it a poor sermon?” “Because,” he said, “there was no Christ in it.” “Well,” said the young man, “Christ was not in the *text*; we are not to be preaching Christ always—we must preach what is in the text.” So the old man said, “Don’t you know, young man, that from every town and every village and every little hamlet in England, wherever it may be, there is a road to London?” “Yes,” said the young man. “Ah,” said the old divine, “and so from every text in Scripture there is a road to the metropolis of the Scriptures that is Christ. And, my dear brother, your business is when you get to a text, to say, ‘Now where is the road to Christ?’ and then preach a sermon running along the road towards the great metropolis—Christ. And,” he said “I have never yet found a text that had not a road to Christ in it—and if I ever do find one that has not a road to Christ in it, I will make one! I will go over hedge and ditch but I would get at my Master, for the sermon cannot do any good unless there is a savor of Christ in it.” Now since you say amen to that, and declare that what you need to hear is Jesus Christ, the text is proved—“Unto you therefore who believe, He is precious.”

But if you want to try this again and prove it, go and see some of our sick and dying friends. Go and talk to them about the Reform Bill and they will look you in the face and say, “Oh, I am going from this time state. It is a very small matter to me whether the Reform Bill will be carried or not.” You will not find them much interested in that matter. Well then, sit down and talk to them about the weather and how the crops are getting on—“Well, it is a good prospect for wheat this year.” They will say, “Ah, my harvest is ripening in glory.” Introduce the most interesting topic you can and a believer who is lying on the verge of eternity, will find nothing precious in it! But sit down by the bedside of this man and he may be very near gone—almost unconscious—and begin to talk about Jesus; mention that precious soul-reviving, soul-strengthening name, Jesus, and you will see his eye glisten and the white cheeks will be flushed once more! “Ah,” he will say, “Precious Jesus! That is the name which calms my fears and bids my sorrows cease.” You will see that you have given the man a strong tonic and that his whole frame is braced up for the moment! Even when he dies, the thought of Jesus Christ and the prospect of seeing Him shall make him living in the midst of death; strong in the midst of weakness and fearless in the midst of trembling! And this proves, by the experience of God’s people, that with those who believe in Him, Christ is and always will be a precious Christ!

II. The second thing is WHY IS CHRIST PRECIOUS TO THE BELIEVER? I observe—and I shall run over the particulars very briefly, though they would be worthy of a long, long sermon—Jesus Christ is precious to the believer because He is intrinsically precious! But here let me take you through an ex-

ercise in grammar—here is an adjective—let us go through it. He is positively precious. He is more precious than anything comparatively. He is most precious of all things and most precious even if all things were rolled into one and put into competition with Him! He is thus precious superlatively. Now, there are few things you can thus deal with. You say a man is a good man—he is positively good and you say he is a great deal better than many other people. He is good comparatively—but you can never truly say to any man that he is *superlatively* good, because even there he would still be found short of perfection. But Christ is positively, comparatively and superlatively good!

1. Is he not *positively* good? Election is a good thing; to be chosen of God and precious. But we are elect in Christ Jesus. Adoption is a good thing—to be adopted into the family of God is a good thing—ah, but we are adopted in Christ Jesus and made joint-heirs with Him! Pardon is a good thing—who will not say so?—yes, but we are pardoned through the precious blood of Jesus! Justification—is not that a noble thing to be robbed about with a perfect righteousness?—yes, but we are justified in Jesus! To be preserved—is not that a precious thing?—yes, but we are preserved in Christ Jesus and kept by His power even to the end! Perfection—who shall say that this is not precious? Well, but we are perfect in Christ Jesus! Resurrection, is not that glorious? We are risen with Him! To ascend up on high, is not that precious? But He has raised us up and made us sit together with Him in heavenly places in Jesus Christ—so that Christ must be positively good, for He is all the best things in one! And if all these are good, surely He must be good in whom and by whom and to whom and through whom are all these precious things!

And Christ is good *comparatively*. Bring anything here and compare with Him. One of the brightest jewels we can have is liberty. If I am not free, let me die. Put the halter to my neck, but put not the fetter to my wrist—a free man I must be while I live. Will not the patriot say that he would give his blood to buy liberty and think it a cheap price? Yes, but put liberty side by side with Christ and I would wear the fetter for Christ and rejoice in the chains! The apostle Paul himself could say, “I would that you were altogether such as I am”—and he might add, “Except these bonds,” but though he excepted bonds for others, he did not except them for himself—for he rejoiced in the chains and counted them a mark of honor! Besides liberty, what a precious thing is life! “Skin for skin; yes, all that a man has will he give for his life.” But let a Christian—a true Christian once have the choice between life and Christ—“No,” he says, “I can die, but I cannot deny; I can burn, but I cannot turn; I confess Christ, and perish in the flame! I cannot deny Christ even though you exalt me to a throne.” There would be no choice between the two. And then whatever earthly good there may be in comparison with Christ, the believer’s testimony goes to prove that Christ is precious comparatively, for there is nothing that can be matched with Christ.

And then to go still higher—Christ is superlatively good. The superlative of all things is heaven and if it could be possible to put Christ in competition with heaven, the Christian would not hesitate a moment in his choice! He would sooner be on earth with Christ than be in heaven without Him. No, I do not know whether he would not go almost as far as Rutherford who said, “Lord, I would sooner be in hell with You than in heaven without You, for if I were in heaven without You it would be a hell to me. And if I were in hell with You it would be a heaven to me.” We may put it so and every Christian will subscribe to it. Now, come you messengers of the world and take on your shoulders all its treasures! Caesar, pour out your gold in one glittering pile. Caesar, lay down your honors here in one gaudy heap. Here, Tiberius, bring all the joys of Capri’s lust and vice! Solomon, bring here all the treasures of wisdom. Alexander, bring all your triumphs. Napoleon, bring your wide-spread empire and your fame—put them all here—all that earth calls good. And now come, You bleeding Lamb of God, You marred and matchless Savior; come here and tread these beneath Your feet, for what are all these compared with You? I pour contempt on them all! Now am I dead to all the world and all the world is dead to me. The whole realm of nature is small in comparison with You—as a drop in the bucket when compared with a boundless ocean! Jesus Christ, then, is superlatively precious.

2. What more can we say? Still to answer this question again—why is Christ precious to the believer more than to any other man? What is it the believers need that makes Christ precious to them? We have been having a small shower of rain lately and I dare say there are very few of you who felt grateful for

it—since it gave you a little wetting coming here. But suppose that shower of rain could have fallen on the desert of Arabia? What a precious thing it would have been. Yes, every raindrop would have been worth a pearl. And as for the shower, though it had rained gold dust, the rich deposit would not have been comparable to the flood when it descended from on high. But what is the reason that water is so precious there? Simply because it is so rare! Suppose I am in England—there is abundance of water and I cannot sell it—water is so common and therefore so cheap. But put a man in the desert, and let the water-skin be dried up; let him come to the well wherein he expected to find water, and it has failed him—can you not conceive that that small drop of water might be worth a king's ransom? And the man might hoard it up, and conceal it from all his comrades because on that small drop of water his life depended. The way to prize water is to value it with a tongue like a firebrand and with a mouth like an oven! Then can I estimate its value when I know the need. So with Christ! The worldling does not care for Christ because he has never hungered and thirsted after Him. But the Christian is athirst for Christ. He is in a dry and thirsty land where no water is and his heart and his flesh pant after God, yes, for the living God! And as the thirsty soul dying, cries out, "Water! Water! Water!" so the Christian cries out, "Christ! Christ! Christ!" This is the one thing necessary for me and if I have it not, this thirst will destroy me!

Mark, too, that the believer may be found in many aspects and you will always find that his needs will endear Christ to him. Here is a man about to be tried for his life. Before he had committed the wrong, he used to say, "Lawyers, attorneys, pleaders—away with them—what is the good of them?" Now he is in prison he thinks very differently! He says, "I wish I could get a good special pleader to plead my cause." And he runs over the roll to see the best man to plead for him. At last he says, "Here is a man—if he could plead my cause I might hope to escape—but I have no money with which to engage him." And he says to his wife—"Wife, we must sell our house." Or, "We must get money somehow, for I am on trial for my life, and I must have an advocate." And what will not a woman do to get an advocate for her husband? Why, she will pledge the last rag she has to get one! Now, does not the believer feel himself to be in just such a position? He is a poor sinner on trial for his life, and he desperately needs an advocate. And every time he looks on Christ pleading his cause before the Father's throne, he says, "O what a precious Christ He is to a poor sin-destroyed sinner, for He pleads his cause before the throne."

But suppose another case; that of a man drawn for a soldier. In such times men always look out for substitutes. I remember when the ballot was coming for the militia, how every man joined a substitute club in order that if he were drawn he might not go, himself. Now suppose a man had been drawn—how valuable would a substitute be? No man in his senses likes to be food for powder—he would rather a man without brains go and do such work as that—but as for him, he estimates himself at too high a price! But suppose he is not only drawn for a soldier, but condemned to die? See yon poor wretch coming up the gallows stairs! Someone whispers to him, "What would you give for a substitute? What would you give for someone to come and bear this punishment?" See his eyes roll madness at the thought! "A substitute," he says, "I could not buy one for the whole world! Who would be a substitute for me—to swing into eternity amidst the yelling of a crowd?" But suppose—and we are only supposing what has actually occurred—suppose this man saw not only the gallows and the drop, but hell fire before him, and it were said to him, "You must burn in that forever unless you find a substitute"—would not that be a precious one? Now, mark—that is just our position! The Christian feels that hell is before him if it were not that he has a glorious substitute. Jesus came forward and said, "I will bear that punishment; pour hell on Me, My Father; let Me drink damnation dry." And He did it. He endured all those pains, or an equivalent for them. He suffered in the rebel's place. And now, through Him, the substitute, we are absolved and free! Oh, must not He be a precious Christ?

But think of Christ again and then think of the believer's needs. I will try and run over a number of them. The believer is a silly sheep. What a precious thing is a shepherd and how precious are green pastures and still waters! The believer is like a desolate woman. What a precious thing is a husband who shall provide for her, and shall console and cherish her. The believer is a pilgrim and the hot sun beats on him. What a precious thing is the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. The believer is a bond-slave by nature. What a precious thing is the trumpet of jubilee and the ransom price that sets him free.

The believer, by nature, is a sinking, drowning man. How precious to him is that plank of free grace, the cross of Christ, on which he puts his poor trembling hands and secures glory! But what more shall I say? Time would fail me to tell of all the needs of the believer and of the all-abounding and ever-flowing streams of love that flow from Christ, the fountain who fills the believer to the brim! O say, you children of God, is He not while you are in these lowlands of need and suffering, inconceivably, unutterably, superlatively precious to you?

3. But once more. Look at the believer not only in his needs, but in his highest earthly state. The believer is a man who was once blind and now sees. And what a precious thing is light to a man that sees. If I, as a believer, have eyes, how much I need the sun to shine. If I have no light, my eye becomes a torture and I might as well have been blind. And when Christ gives sight to the blind, He makes His people a seeing people. It is then that they find what a precious thing is sight and how pleasant a thing it is for a man to behold the sun. The believer is a man who is quickened. A dead corpse needs no clothing, for it feels no cold. Let a man once be quickened and he finds himself naked and needs clothing. From the very fact that the Christian is quickened, he values the robe of righteousness that is put about him. Christ touches His people's ears and opens them. But it were better for man to be deaf, than to hear forever doleful groans and hissings! And such he would have been, always hearing it, if it were not for Christ playing sweet music to him every day and pouring streams of melody into his ears through His promises. Yes, I say the very newborn powers of the Christian would be very channels for misery if it were not for Christ! Even in his highest estate the Christian must feel that Christ is necessary to him and then he must conclude that Christ is precious to him!

But believer, how precious is Christ to you in the hour of conviction of sin when He says, "Your sins which are many, are all forgiven you"? How precious to you in the hour of sickness when He comes to you and says, "I will make all your bed in your sickness"? How precious to you in the day of trial when He says, "All things work together for your good"? How precious when friends are buried, for He says, "I am the resurrection and the life"? How precious in your gray old age, "Even in old age I am with you and to hoary hairs will I carry you"? How precious in the lone chamber of death, for, "I will fear no evil, You are with me, Your rod and Your staff comfort me"? And last of all, how precious will Christ be when we see Him as He is? All we know of Christ here is as nothing compared with what we shall know hereafter! Believer, when you see Christ's face, now, you only see it through a veil—Christ is so glorious, that like Moses He is compelled to put a veil upon His face for His poor people, while they are here, are so feeble that they could not behold Him face to face. And if He is lovely, here, when He is marred and spit upon, how lovely must He be when He is adored and worshipped? If He is precious on His cross, how much more precious when He sits on His throne! If I can weep before Him and love Him and live to Him, when I see Him as the despised man of Nazareth, oh, how shall my spirit be knit to Him; how shall my heart be absorbed with love to Him when I see His face and behold His crown of glory; when I mark the harpings of the never-ceasing harpers who harp His praise? Wait awhile, Christian! If He is precious to the believer now, when faith is turned to sight He will be more precious still! Go out of this hall and cry, "O Lord Jesus, I *must* love You! I *must* serve You better! I *must* live for You! I *must* be ready to die for You—for

*'You are precious to my soul,
My transport and my trust.'*"

This brings me to conclude—and here I need your solemn and earnest attention, while each one for himself shall answer this question—my hearer, is Christ precious to *you*? My young brothers and sisters, you of the same age as myself, is Jesus precious to you in your youth? How shall a young person cleanse his way? Only by taking heed thereto according to Christ's words, and by walking in His footsteps! You men and women of middle age, is Christ precious to *you*? Remember that this world is but a dream and if you have not something more satisfactory than that, you will die disappointed even though you succeed beyond your highest wishes! And you gray-headed men and women who are going tottering to your graves—whose life is like a candle-snuff, almost expiring; like a lamp whose oil is spent—is Christ precious to *you*, you with the bald heads and with the hoary locks, is Jesus precious to your soul? Remember, on your answer to this question depends your condition. You believe, if He is precious to you,

but if He is not precious, then you are not believers, and you are condemned already because you believe not on the Son of God! Now, which is it? Oh, I think some of you feel as if you could spring from your seats and say, “Yes, He is precious to me; I cannot deny it!” Once there was a good minister who was catechizing his class, and he said to the young people, “The question which I am about to ask is such that I want none of you to answer, but those who can answer from your heart.” The congregation was gathered together, and he put this question to them concerning Christ—“Suppose Christ was here and should say, ‘Do you love Me?’ what would be your reply?” He looked around and glanced upon all the young men and the young women, and said, “Jesus speaks to you the first time and says, ‘Do you love Me?’ He speaks a second time and he says, ‘Do you love Me?’” There was a solemn pause and no one answered. And the congregation looked at the class, and at last the minister said once more, “Jesus speaks by me a third time, and says, ‘Do you love Me?’” Up rose a young woman who could keep her seat no longer, and bursting into tears, said, “Yes, Lord, You know all things. You know that I love you!” Now, how many are there here who could say that? Could not you now, if this were the time—although you might be bashful in the midst of so many—could you not, if Christ asked you the question—could you not boldly say, though in the midst of enemies—“Yes, Lord, You know all things. You know that I love You”? Well, if you can give such an answer as that, go home and pray that *others* may be brought to love Him, for you yourselves are saved! But if you are compelled to be silent to such a question as that, O may God lead you to seek Christ—may you, too, be driven to the cross—may you there see His dear bleeding wounds; may you behold His open side—and falling at His feet, may you say, “I trust You. I rely upon You. I depend upon You.” And He will say, “I have saved you.” And then will you spring to your feet and say, “Lord I love You because You have first loved me!” May such be the end of this sermon, and to God be all the glory.

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