

COVENANT BLESSINGS

NO. 2681

A SERMON

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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON

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“He hath given meat unto them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant.”

Psalms 111:5

THIS verse occurs in one of the Hallelujah Psalms, that is, those commencing with “Praise ye the LORD.” We often find the psalmist praising and extolling God, let us imitate his example. Let us do so, because we shall find it very pleasant and profitable, and because also, it is our bounden duty. One of the highest exercises of the new life is praising God. Our doubts and fears are indications of life, for the dead man neither doubts nor fears. But our songs of praise are far higher demonstrations of the life within, and are more worthy fruits of a soil which has been the subject of God’s husbandry, which has been ploughed by the agonies of the Savior, and made fertile through His precious blood.

My brethren, our life should be one continuous psalm, with here and there a note descending very deep. Yet we should always seek to sing as we live. The stars sing as they shine, and they sing by shining. Let us sing whilst we live, and live by singing, and let our life be singing one great psalm perpetually.

There are many ways of praising God. We should do it with the lip, and grateful is the voice of song in the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth. We should do it by our daily conversation, let our acts be acts of praise, as well as our words be words of praise. We should do it even by the very look of our eyes, and by the appearance of our countenance. Let not your face be sad, let your countenance be joyous. Sing wherever you go, yea, when you are laden with trouble, let no man see it. “Thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face.”

Be you ever glad, for it is God’s commandment, through His servant, the apostle Paul, “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.” And yet once more he saith, “Rejoice evermore.” That we may have themes for song, David has in this psalm mentioned many subjects. Let us attend to the subjects of the text—the subject, I might have said, for it is all one. This verse is the voice of experience. It is not the voice of hope saying, “He *will* give,” but the voice of experience, “He *hath* given meat unto them that fear him,” and the voice of faith, “He will ever be mindful of his covenant.”

We shall notice first of all, *the gift*, “He hath given meat unto them that fear him,” then we shall notice *the covenant*, “He will ever be mindful of his covenant,” and then lastly, *the character of the persons here spoken of*, “He hath given meat unto them that fear him.”

I. Let us first consider THE GIFT, “He hath given meat.”

We are to understand this expression, of course in a twofold sense, of our necessities, the first, temporal, the other, spiritual.

First, we are to understand this expression *in a temporal sense*. Our bodies need meat, we cannot keep this mortal fabric in repair without continually providing it with food. God’s children are not, by the fact of their being spiritual men, prevented from feeling natural wants, they hunger and they thirst even as do others. Sometimes too, they are even called to suffer poverty, and know not where their next morsel of meat shall come from. Blessed be God—

*“He that has made our heaven secure
Will here all good provide,”—*

and God's covenant relates not merely to the great and marvelous things that we need spiritually, but it is a covenant which includes in the catalog of its gifts mercies that are food for the body, mercies for our immediate and pressing wants, "He hath given meat unto them that fear Him."

God has never suffered His people to starve. "The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing." The promise is as true under the new covenant as under the old, that our bread shall be given us, and our water shall be sure.

The Lord, who feeds the ravens, will not be less careful of His people, He who supplies every insect with its food, and feeds the prowling lion in his majesty, will not suffer His own home born children, those who are nearest His heart, to perish for lack of nutriment. "The cattle on a thousand hills are his," so He will not allow His children to lack for their meat. He it is to whom the earth belongs, and the fullness thereof, He will not then, suffer His children to go without necessary supplies, "He hath given meat unto them that fear him."

Some of us are qualified to speak from experience upon this point. We may truly say that God has always given us our meat, indeed we have not lacked anything. Hitherto, the road has been to us like that of the Israelites when they came to the camp of the Syrians, and found the way strewn with gold, and silver, and garments. God has provided for our wants even before they have come, He has anticipated our necessities.

But there are others of you who have been brought so low by poverty and affliction that you are qualified to speak in a still more emphatic fashion. You have sometimes gone with a hungry stomach to an empty cupboard, you have wondered where your supplies would come from, you may even have been houseless and homeless.

But ah, children of the living God, has He failed you utterly? Though He has reduced you very low, so that the last morsel was eaten from the wallet, has He not ultimately supplied your wants, and that too, by means not miraculous, but almost so? Has He not in providence sent you things which you needed, and which you scarcely expected to receive? In answer to prayer, has He not delivered you out of your deepest tribulations? And when you were well-nigh famished, has He not spread your board with plenty when you have bent your knees before Him?

Yes, you tried ones, you have tested this text, and have proved it true. You sons of poverty and toil, you have had to rest the whole weight of your daily maintenance on the promise of God, without anything to look to save that, and have you ever found Him fail? No, you will unanimously bear witness that this is a great truth, "He hath given meat unto them that fear him."

But it is surprising sometimes, how God has done it. Many a story have I heard, from the poor amongst my own flock, of how God has delivered them—strange stories, at which some of you would laugh if I were to repeat them. There are some of them who could write, "Banks of Faith" that would be as wonderful as that of William Huntington. Some of you laugh at that book, and do not believe it, but it is only because there are so many things of the same sort all put together that they seem to be incredible through their number.

But there are many of the Lord's servants who could easily compose a "Bank of Faith" like Huntington's, for they have had their necessities most deep and their sorrows most poignant, and they have had their reliefs well-nigh miraculous, so that if God had thrust His hand out of the clouds, and handed down bread and clothing for them, their deliverance would not have been more apparently from His hand than it has been in the way whereby His providence has supplied their wants. They can say that He has done it, and He has done it marvelously, and constantly too, "He hath given meat unto them that fear Him."

Why, if the child of God were in such a position that the earth could not yield him bread, God would open the windows of heaven, and rain manna from there again. If a Christian could be placed in such a position that the common course of providence could not serve his end, God would change the nature of everything rather than break His promise, He would reverse all the seasons, and unloose the very bonds

of creation itself, and let the laws of nature run riot, rather than suffer one of His promises to fail, or one of His children to lack. “He hath given meat”—and He will always do so—“unto them that fear him.”

But we are to understand this expression chiefly *in a spiritual sense*. God’s people need spiritual meat. I was talking the other day to a minister, who certainly is not noted for his great soundness in the faith. He was making a joke to me about certain people in his congregation, who said they could not feed under him. “There is Mrs. So-and-so,” he said, “who tells me that she cannot get a bit of food out of my ministry. I do not know how it is,” he continued, jocularly, “for I do not think you say half as many good things as I do, but yet the old woman cannot feed upon my sermons.” He laughed at the idea of feeding under a ministry, but there is a good deal more in the expression than many think, there is much meant by it that cannot be expressed by any other word.

It is only the true Christian who can understand its meaning. He hears a very eloquent discourse delivered, “but,” says he, “I have got no food out of it.” Or he hears a very learned discourse, “but,” he says, “I cannot feed under that.” There is a peculiar style of preaching, and a peculiar style of hearing, which can only be described as a “feeding preaching” and a “feeding hearing,” in which the child of God feels that, though he may have learned little that is fresh, yet still his soul has been receiving spiritual food, and he can go on his way rejoicing.

And my brethren, the house of God is one of the principal places where He feeds His people, and those to whom He has committed the solemn work of the ministry should be very careful that there is something in what they say that the child of God can feed on. The child of God can never feed under a ministry unless he hears the doctrines of grace, and listens to the things of the kingdom of God.

“Our minister preached a fine metaphysical sermon the other day,” says one, “I never heard such a clear distinction as he made between that point and the other.” But the child of God goes out and says, “Well, I don’t want any of his metaphysics, there was no food in the sermon for my soul. I went there to hear about the Lord Jesus Christ, I went to be taught something for my soul’s welfare, something about the heaven that is to come, or the hell that is to be shunned, I wanted to hear something about communion with Christ, something about the eternal covenant, but there was nothing of the kind in the whole discourse.”

Sermons need to be instructive, there should be real teaching in them concerning the things of the kingdom. “Why,” said a good writer once, “if you were to hear six lectures by a geologist, he would be the poorest geologist in the world if he did not give you some clear ideas concerning geology, but you may hear sixty sermons from many preachers without getting any notion of their system of divinity.”

It is the glory of the men of this age that they have no system of divinity, they have cast creeds to the wind, they have no forms in which they can state systematically the truths which they believe. The reason is, because they have nothing to state. No man will avoid having a system when he has certain definite principles. It is impossible for a man to believe the truths in God’s Word without insensibly to himself forming a creed of some sort or other.

It is the fashion to talk about giving up creeds, but creeds are only the orderly way of stating God’s truth. If we hold the truths themselves, we shall always be able to set them out in some fashion, and to communicate our knowledge to others, so that in a given number of discourses, our hearers will be pretty tolerably acquainted with our ideas of the truth of God. “He hath given meat unto them that fear him” under the ministry.

Sometimes God gives your minister such a gift of utterance, that if he were to preach for a week, you would listen to him. There are periods when your own minister gives no food to you, though he does to others, because he has to care for different members of God’s family. But there are other periods when the Lord seems to have given him such bountiful gifts that he has let fall handfuls to be gathered by the gleaners as did the man Boaz, and you pick them up and feast thereon, and are satisfied.

There is another way in which God gives food unto His children, that is, in the Bible. This precious volume is the greatest granary of spiritual food for God’s people. Would to God you read it more! With your magazines, and newspapers, and tracts on this, that, and the other subject, you have too much

covered up this ancient Bible, this grand old Book, this emporium of all wisdom, this sum of all knowledge.

Ay, Christian, if you want spiritual meat, study a chapter of God's Word. If you want to have food for your souls, give up for a little while reading the works of even the best of men, and take a psalm for the theme of your study—or if not a whole psalm, take one verse of it, take it for your daily meditation, masticate and digest it all day long, and so you will find meat for “them that fear him.”

Let me just say a word or two of caution to you on this point. When you read the Bible, do not think that you will get spiritual food out of it simply by reading. I know some people who make a point of reading two chapters of the Bible every day. They do so as a sort of mental exercise, they simply run their eyes down the page, and after all, do not know a word they have been reading. That is not the way to feed upon God's Word, we cannot truly feed unless we understand and believe what we read.

In reading the Scripture, do as Luther advised. He says, “When I get a promise, I treat it as if it were a tree in my garden. I know there is rich fruit on it, and if I cannot at once get it, I shake the tree backwards and forwards by prayer and meditation, until at last the fruit drops into my hand.” Do you the same. Read a short portion of Scripture, turn it over and over again in your meditation all day long, and then, if you cannot get anything out of it, I will tell you a way whereby you will be sure to get something.

Go down on your knees before the passage and say, “O Lord, open this passage to me, give me something out of it, teach me to understand it,” and it will not be long before God refreshes you with dainty portions from the tables of paradise, and makes your soul glad with choice morsels of royal dainties, wherewith He feeds His own chosen ones.

But there is another way of getting spiritual meat, even when we have not our Bible with us. The Lord sometimes gives meat “unto them that fear him,” by bringing Jesus Christ home to them, without the use of the Word, simply in meditation and communion. You know, beloved, after all, that what a child of God feeds upon is Jesus Christ.

When the Jews went to the temple, they did not eat the tongs and fire shovels, they did not eat the garments of the priests, and the bells and the pomegranates, they valued all these things, for they were made according to God's orders, and therefore they thought them precious. But they did, at the appointed season, eat the paschal lamb. So the Christian does not eat the doctrines of the Word, he feeds on Christ. He loves the truth, he loves the ordinances, he loves everything in the Bible for Christ's sake, but his food is the Lamb Himself.

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, is the real food for all the Lord's chosen. And are there not most sweet and happy moments, when the spirit is carried aloft in blessed communion, when Jesus Christ seems very present and very precious, when we lean our head on His bosom, when we seem to feel the very beating of His heart, and to realize His love for us, when we lose ourselves in Him, and almost forget that we have a separate existence, being—

*“Plunged in His Godhead's deepest sea,
And lost in His immensity”?*

I was much struck the other evening at a prayer meeting, by the prayer of one of our brethren, which came home to my heart. When he prayed, he said, “O Lord, give me Mary's place—

*“Oh that I could for ever sit
With Mary at the Master's feet;
Be this my happy choice:
My only care, delight, and bliss,
My joy, my heaven on earth, be this,
To hear the Bridegroom's voice.”*

He prayed that he might have Mary's part, and always sit at the feet of Jesus. But by and by, the good man's fervor increased, and in his prayer he said, "No, my Master, I have not asked enough of You. Mary's place is too low for me, if I may have a better one. Lift me up higher, Lord, give me John's place.

*“Oh! that I might with favored John,
Forever lean my head upon
The bosom of my Lord.”*

As he pleaded for that higher degree of communion between his soul and Christ, I thought, "Surely, now you have asked enough." But suddenly rising another flight on the wings of communion, like the eagle taking its last soar into the skies, he said, "No, Lord, John's place does not suffice me. You have lifted me from Your feet to Your bosom, now lift me from Your bosom to Your lips." Then, quoting the words of the spouse, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine," he sweetly paraphrased it thus, "Let the lip of my petitioning meet the lip of Your benediction, let the lip of my praise meet the lips of Your acceptance, so shall the kiss of love be consummated, and my joy be complete."

Ay, and when we also are favored to go through these various stages of fellowship with Christ, to go from the foot to the bosom, and from the bosom to the lip, to go from the mere learner, and to be a friend and companion, and then to go higher still—to be lifted up, and to feel our fellowship with Christ, by standing as high as He does, and our lips being on His lips, it is there that the child of God almost insensibly receives strength, and like Elijah smitten by the angel, he rises up, and finds his meat baked upon the coals, and eats thereof, and lives upon it for forty days. This is indeed a most precious mode of feeding for our souls.

But somehow or other, God does give meat to His children, and will never leave them to be famished. You have often noticed, I daresay, that when one means of feeding fails for God's children, others become available and effective. You are sick, and cannot be fed by the public ministry, you cannot go out to hear sermons, so God's Word becomes more precious to you. Or you have nobody to read to you, and your sight has failed, generally then, communion becomes more precious. One way or other, God will have His children fed.

II. We will now consider THE COVENANT, "He will ever be mindful of his covenant."

God has made many covenants at divers times, and none of these covenants has He ever broken. Let me briefly mention these covenants. There was the covenant with Adam, the covenant of works: "Obey Me, and you shall live, disobey Me, and you shall die." That covenant God did not break. He did not subject Adam to pain or misery until he had first broken the covenant, and so became the inevitable heir of suffering.

God made a covenant with Noah that the waters should no more go over the earth, and the rainbow, the sign of that covenant, has lit up the sky ever since at various intervals, and the earth has not been drowned with a flood a second time.

He made a covenant with Abraham, that he would give the land of Canaan to be the heritage of his seed, and that covenant has He kept, neither has He altered the thing that went out of His lips. He made a covenant with David that his seed should sit upon his throne, and that covenant He kept.

But the covenant here referred to is a better covenant than all these, it is the covenant of grace. That is a sweet subject to preach upon. Suffer me to go back to the time when this covenant was made. It is older than the oldest things that man has ever seen, the covenant of grace is more ancient than the everlasting hills. It was made by God with Christ for us before all worlds were created. God had foreseen that man would be a sinner. Jesus Christ and His Father were determined to save him, and therefore a covenant was made between them.

God the Son on His part stipulated that He would suffer all the punishment which all the elect deserved to suffer, that He would offer a perfect righteousness on their behalf, and pay all the demands

of God's justice. God the Father on His part covenanted that all the elect, being redeemed by the blood of Christ, should most certainly be accepted and saved. That is the covenant of which God is ever mindful.

Some people believe in a rickety kind of covenant, which I never could find in the Bible, a covenant that has conditions in it which you and I are to fulfill. If there were such a covenant as that, it would not be a covenant of grace, but of works. If the covenant of grace were made with men—with those that should be saved, on condition of their believing—it would be as impossible for any man to be saved on that condition as it would be on the condition of obeying, since faith is no more possible to unaided man than is perfect obedience.

Faith in Christ is as difficult a thing to a man dead in trespasses and sins, as is perfect obedience to every command of God. The covenant of grace is a covenant without any conditions on our part whatever, of any sort, in any shape, in any form, or any fashion. The covenant, in fact, is not made between us and God, it is made between God and Christ, our Representative. All the conditions of that covenant are fulfilled, so that there are none left for us to fulfill.

The conditions were that Christ should suffer, and He has suffered; that Christ should obey, and He has obeyed. All that is done, and all that is now standing is the unconditional covenant, that God will give to all His elect, though dead in sin, power to live; that He will give to them, though black, perfect cleansing in the fountain filled with blood; that He will give to them, though naked, a robe of perfect righteousness; that He will ultimately accept them to dwell with Him forever in glory everlasting. This covenant, on which our hopes are built, this glorious covenant, is—

*“Signed, and sealed, and ratified,
In all things ordered well.”*

Will God ever forget it? No, “He will ever be mindful of his covenant,” in everything that it guarantees, and towards every person who is interested in it. God will not suffer one single promise of the covenant to be unfulfilled, nor one single blessing of the covenant to be kept back. Every iota, and jot, and tittle of the covenanted purpose of God shall be fulfilled, and everything which He has promised to His people in the covenant, and which Christ has bought for His people through the covenant, shall most infallibly be received by His people.

As for the persons interested therein, not one of them shall be forgotten. If in the covenant, they shall most assuredly be saved, despite every attack of the devil, and all their own wickedness, and any causality, so-called, of providence, or whatsoever may happen, all who are in the covenant must and shall be gathered in.

The Arminian says there are some in the covenant who tumble out of it, that God has chosen some men—that He justifies them, that He accepts them, and then turns them out of His family. The Arminian holds the unnatural, cruel, barbarous idea, that a man may be God's child, and then God may unchild him because he does not behave himself. The idea is revolting even to human sensibility. If our children sin, they are our children still, though chastened and punished, yet never do they cease to be numbered among our family.

There are many of God's children who have gone astray from Him, and been chastened for it, but it were an idea too barbarous to suppose that God would unchild His child for any sin he does commit. He keeps fast His covenant, He loves them, sinners though they be. He keeps them from running riotously into sin, and when sometimes they go astray, as the best of them will, still His loving heart towards them is unchangeably the same. I do not serve the god of the Arminians at all, I have nothing to do with him, and I do not bow down before the Baal they have set up, he is not my god, nor shall he ever be, I fear him not, nor tremble at his presence. A mutable god may be the god for them, he is not the god for me.

My JEHOVAH changes not. The god that says today, and denies tomorrow, that justifies today, and condemns the next, the god that has children of his own one day, and lets them be the children of the

devil the next, is no relation to my God in the least degree. He may be the relation of Ashtaroth or Baal, but JEHOVAH never was nor can be his name.

JEHOVAH changes not, He knows no shadow of turning. If He has set His heart upon a man, He will love him to the end. If He has chosen him, He has not chosen him for any merit of his own, therefore He will never cast him away for any demerit of his own. If He has begotten him unto a lively hope, He will not suffer him to fall away and perish. That were a breaking of every promise, and an abrogation of the covenant. If one dear child of God might fall away, then might all. If one of those for whom the Savior died might be damned, then the Savior's blood would be utterly void and vain. If one of those whom He has called according to His purpose might perish, then would His purpose be null and void. But children of God, you may lay your heads upon the covenant and say with Dr. Watts—

*“Then should the earth's old pillars shake,
And all the wheels of nature break,
Our steady souls should fear no more
Than solid rocks when billows roar.”*

III. Now I close by noticing THE CHARACTER OF THE PERSONS HERE REFERRED TO, “them that fear him.” Those who fear the Lord are in the covenant of His grace.

The anxious inquirer or the young convert oftentimes says to the minister, “Sir, how can I know that I am elect?” And the usual answer is, “You have nothing to do with that, you may think of that matter by and by.” Begging the gentleman's pardon, that is not true. A sinner has everything to do with it. Instead of having nothing to do with election, he has everything in the world to do with it. But it is said that he need not trouble his mind about it. Perhaps he should not, but he will, and it is no source of comfort to tell him that he ought not.

If I have a toothache, it is poor comfort for a physician to tell me that I ought not to have it. So when a sinner is troubled about the doctrine of election, it is poor comfort to tell him he ought not to be troubled. The best way is to go fairly through the whole question and say to him, “Do you fear the Lord? Then, so sure as you are a living man, you are elect. You have the fear of the Lord before your eyes, then you need have no doubt but that your name is in the covenant.”

None have feared the Lord who were not first loved by the Lord. Never did one come, and cast himself at the feet of Jesus simply because he feared the penalty of sin, and none ever came to embrace the loving skirts of the Redeemer because he feared lest he should go astray, without having been first called, and chosen, and made faithful. No, the fear of God in the heart is the proof of being God's elect one. If we fear Him, we may believe that He will always give meat to us, and that He will always keep His covenant towards us which He has made for us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

“But,” says one, “how am I to know whether I am elect?” Beloved, you cannot know it by any outward profession. You may be of any church in the world or of no church, and yet be one of God's elect. Nor can you know it even by the sentiments which you receive as being true, for you may know truth, and yet not have truth in your soul, you may be orthodox in your head, and heterodox in your heart, you may believe everything, and yet be cast away at last.

The only way whereby you can judge yourself is this, do you fear the Lord? Do you reverence His name and His Sabbath? Have you trembled at His Word? Have you cast away your self-righteousness at His command? And have you come to Him, and taken Christ to be your All in all? I do not ask you whether you fear hell, many fear hell who fear not God. Do you fear to offend a loving Father? Do you fear lest you should go astray from God's commandments? Do you cry to Him,—

“Savior, keep me lest I wander?”

Do you ask Him to preserve you? And can you honestly say that, if you could be perfect, you would be, that you desire to be freed from sin, that you hate every false way? And is it your dally groaning to be set free from guilt, and to be wholly surrendered to the Crucified? Lastly, can you say this after me,—

*“A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On Christ’s kind arms I fall:
He is my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus and my all”?*

Then you are elect, then you are justified, then you are accepted, and you have no more reason to doubt your acceptance and your election than you will have when you stand before the throne of God, amid the blazing luster of eternal glory. You are elect, and you always were elect. God has chosen you, your fearing Him is the evidence of it, and your believing in Christ, without any righteousness of your own, is proof positive that you were chosen of God before the foundation of the world.

Now what shall I say in conclusion? There are some of you who fear not God. Alas, for you, my brethren, that you should be in a state so utterly miserable and pitiable, without the fear of God before your eyes! Oh, that God would teach you to fear Him! Oh, that He would break your hearts, and so make you feel your ruined state as to bring you to His feet to receive the perfect righteousness of Christ, then would you fear Him, and then might you rejoice that He would give you meat and keep you in His covenant.

I think I hear one say, “I am a great sinner, I am in the very front rank of the army of guilt. I have truly transgressed and gone astray from the Most High. Tell me, did Jesus die for me? Did He die—not as some say He died, for all men—but in that special sense which ensures salvation?” I will answer you. Can you say, “I am a sinner,” not as a kind of idle compliment that most men pass when they say they are sinners, and do not mean what the word implies, for they no more mean that they are sinners than that they are horses, but do you really believe that you are sinners deserving God’s wrath and the fire of hell forever? Then the Lord Jesus died for you, and “this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”

If the word is to be understood in the sense in which Hart uses it when he says—

*“A sinner is a sacred thing,
The Holy Ghost hath made him so;”—*

if you feel you are a sinner in that sense, Christ died for you. But you say, “I wish He had set my name down in the book, that I might read it.” Why, my friend, if He had done so, you would believe it was intended for somebody else! If the book contained the name of Smith, on such a street, Smith would declare that there were so many Smiths, that it could not be meant for himself, and if you could read your name, you would still doubt that it could by any possibility, be a description of you, since another person might bear the same title.

But since it says “sinners,” Satan himself cannot beat you out of that. God has taught you what the term “sinner” means, and Satan cannot unteach you that. Are you then, a sinner, fully, wholly, in all the black sense of the word? Then Christ died for you. Cast yourself upon that truth, Christ died for sinners.

“But,” say you, “Sir, if I were a little better, I might believe that He died for me.” I should not, for He died for sinners. Or you say, “If I were a saint, I might believe that He died for me.” I should not, for he died for sinners. Only prove yourself a sinner, and you have proved that Christ died for you, only be you sure that you are a sinner, that you have revolted from God, and that you know it, only confess with your heart your transgressions, and take this title to yourself, and you may believe that Jesus died for you.

Let me give you a lesson in logic,—not from Whateley or Watts, but from the logic of Faith. It is extraordinary how different are the conclusions of Faith from those of Reason. Once Reason came

along, and heard a man cry, "I am guilty, guilty." She stopped and said, "The man is guilty, God condemns the guilty, therefore this man will be condemned." She went away, and left the man condemned, and ruined, and quivering with fear.

Faith came, and heard the selfsame cry, rendered more bitter by the cruel syllogism of Reason. Faith stopped, she said, "The man is guilty, but Christ died for the guilty, therefore the man will be saved," and her logic was right, the man lifted up his head and rejoiced.

Reason came one day, and saw a man naked, and she said, "He has not on a wedding garment, can naked souls appear before the bar of God? Should they have a place at the supper of the Lamb? The man is naked, he must be cast out, for naked ones cannot enter heaven!"

Then Faith came by and said, "The man is naked, Christ wrought a robe of righteousness, He must have made it for the naked, He would not have made it for those who have a robe of their own. That robe is for the naked man, and he shall stand in it before God." And her logic was right and just. The other might seem strictly according to rule, but this was better still.

Reason one day heard a man say that he was very good and righteous. She saw him go up to the temple, and heard him pray, "Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men," and Reason said, "That man is better than others, and he will be accepted." But she argued wrongly, for lo, he went out, and a poor sinner by his side, who could only say, "God be merciful to me a sinner," went down to his house justified, while the proud Pharisee went on his way disregarded. The logic of Faith is to argue white from black, whereas the logic of Reason argues white from white.

Luther says, "Once upon a time, the devil came to me and said, 'Martin Luther, you are a great sinner, and you will be damned.' 'Stop, stop,' said I, 'one thing at a time, I am a great sinner, it is true, though you have no right to tell me of it. I confess it, what next?' 'Therefore you will be damned.' 'That is not good reasoning. It is true I am a great sinner, but it is written, 'Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,' therefore I shall be saved. Now go your way.' So I drove off the devil with his own sword, and he went away mourning because he could not cast me down by calling me a sinner." I have a right to believe that Jesus Christ died for me, and I cast myself wholly upon Him.

Do you the same, poor disconsolate one, for you have nothing of your own to depend upon, but you, O great, and good, and rich man, I have naught to say to you!

***"Not the righteous,
Sinners, Jesus came to save."***

While you have a rag of your own, you shall never have Christ's robe. Go your way, your righteousness shall prove like the shirt of Hercules, when it burnt him, and did eat his flesh away, though you glory in it, it shall be the winding sheet of your soul forever. But if you have nothing, and are poor, and penniless, and miserable, reduced to utter spiritual destitution and poverty, in God's name I preach to you the Gospel, Christ died for you, and you shall not perish. God will not punish Christ for us, and then punish us afterwards. He will not demand the payment first at His hands, and then again at ours. He is not unjust to punish first the Scapegoat, the Surety, the Substitute, and then to punish you.

Christ was your Substitute, He bore your guilt, He carried your iniquities upon His head, your sins were numbered upon Him, and your punishment was laid upon Him. Go your way, you can never be punished. Your sins, which are many, are all forgiven. Rejoice in pardon bought with blood, be glad, be satisfied, be happy, even till you die, and then you shall be happy forever.

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