

SPECIAL THANKSGIVING TO THE FATHER

NO. 319

A SERMON
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AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

“Giving thanks unto the Father, which has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.”
Colossians 1:12, 13.

THIS passage is a mine of riches. I can anticipate the difficulty in preaching and the regret in concluding we shall experience this evening because we are not able to dig out all the gold which lies in this precious vein. We lack the power to grasp and the time to expatiate upon that volume of truths which is here condensed into a few short sentences.

We are exhorted to “give thanks unto the Father.” This counsel is at once necessary and salutary. I think, my brothers and sisters, we scarcely need to be told to give thanks unto the Son. The remembrance of that bleeding body hanging upon the cross is always present to our faith. The nails and the spear, His griefs, the anguish of His soul, and His sweat of agony make such tender touching appeals to our gratitude—these will prevent us always from ceasing our songs and sometimes fire our hearts with rekindling rapture in praise of the *man*, Christ Jesus. Yes, we *will* bless You, dearest Lord; our souls are all on fire! As we survey the wondrous cross, we cannot but shout—

*“O for this love let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break,
And all harmonious human tongues
The Savior’s praises speak!”*

It is in a degree very much the same with the Holy Spirit. I think we are compelled to feel every day our dependence upon His constant influence. He abides with us as a present and personal Comforter and Counselor. We, therefore, do praise the Spirit of grace, who has made our heart His temple, and who works in us all that is gracious, virtuous and well-pleasing in the sight of God! If there is any one person in the Trinity whom we are more apt to forget than another in our praises, it is God the Father. In fact, there are some who even get a wrong idea of Him, a slanderous idea of that God whose name is LOVE! They imagine that love dwelt in Christ, rather than in the Father, and that our Salvation is rather due to the Son and the Holy Spirit, than to our Father God. Let us not be of the number of the ignorant, but let us receive this truth of God. We are as much indebted to the Father as to any other person of the Sacred Three. He as much and as truly loves us as any of the adorable Three persons. He is as truly worthy of our highest praise as either the Son or the Holy Spirit.

A remarkable fact, which we should always bear in mind, is this—in the Holy Scriptures most of the operations which are set down as being the works of the Spirit, are in other Scriptures ascribed to God the Father. Do we say it is God the Spirit who quickens the sinner who is dead in sin? It is true; but you will find in another passage it is said, “The Father quickens whom He wills.” Do we say that the Spirit is the sanctifier and that the sanctification of the soul is worked by the Holy Spirit? You will find a passage in the opening of the Epistle of Jude, in which it is said, “Sanctified by God the Father.” Now, how are we to account for this? I think it may be explained thus. God the Spirit comes from God the Father and, therefore, whatever acts are performed by the Spirit, are truly done by the Father, because He sends forth the Spirit. And again, the Spirit is often the *instrument*—though I say this not in any way to derogate from His glory—He is often the instrument with which the Father works. It is the Father who says to the dry bones, live. It is the Spirit who, going forth with the divine word, makes them live. The quickening is due as much to the word as to the influence that went with the word. And as the word came with all

the bounty of free grace and goodwill from the Father, the quickening is due to Him. It is true that the seal on our hearts is the Holy Spirit. He *is* the seal, but it is the Eternal Father's hand that stamps the seal. The Father communicates the Spirit to seal our adoption. The works of the Spirit are, many of them, I repeat it again, attributed to the Father, because He works *in, through, and by* the Spirit.

The works of the Son of God, I ought to observe, are, every one of them, in intimate connection with the Father. If the Son comes into the world, it is because the Father sends Him. If the Son calls His people, it is because His Father gave this people into His hands. If the Son redeems the chosen race, is not the Son, Himself, the Father's gift? And does not God send His Son into the world that we may live through Him? So that the Father, the great Ancient of Days, is always to be extolled, and we must never omit the full homage of our hearts to Him when we sing that sacred doxology—

“Praise Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”

In order to excite your gratitude to God the Father tonight, I propose to dilate a little upon this passage, as God the Holy Spirit shall enable me. If you will look at the text, you will see two blessings in it. The first has regard *to the future*. It is meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. The second blessing, which must go with the first, for indeed it is the cause of the first, the effective cause *has relation to the past*. Here we read of our deliverance from the power of darkness. Let us meditate a little upon each of these blessings and then, in the third place, I will endeavor to show *the relation which exists between the two*.

I. The first blessing introduced to our notice is this—“God the Father has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” It is a PRESENT BLESSING. Not a mercy laid up for us in the covenant, which we have not yet received—it is a blessing which every true believer already has in his hands. Those mercies in the covenant of which we now have the earnest while we wait for the full possession, are just as rich and just as certain as those which have been already, with abundant loving kindness bestowed on us—but still they are not as precious in our enjoyment. The mercy we have in store and in hand is, after all, the main source of our present comfort. And oh, what a blessing this is! “Made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.” The true believer is fit for heaven. He is meet to be a partaker of the inheritance—and that, now, at this very moment! What does this mean? Does it mean that the believer is perfect? That he is free from sin? No, my brothers and sisters, where shall you ever find such perfection in this world? If no man can be a believer but the perfect man, then what has the perfect man to believe? Could he not walk by sight? When he is perfect, he may cease to be a believer. No, brethren, it is not such perfection that is meant, although perfection is *implied* and assuredly will be given as the result! Far less does this mean that we have a right to eternal life from any doings of our own. We have a fitness for eternal life, meetness for it, but we have no desert of it. We deserve nothing of God even now, in ourselves, but His eternal wrath and His infinite displeasure. What, then, does it mean? Why, it means just this—we are so far meet that we are accepted in the beloved, adopted into the family and fitted by divine approbation to dwell with the saints in light. There is a woman chosen to be a bride. She is fitted to be married, fitted to enter into the honorable state and condition of matrimony; but at present she has not on the bridal garment, she is not like the bride adorned for her husband. You do not see her yet robed in her elegant attire, with her ornaments upon her—but you know she is fitted to be a bride; she is received and welcomed as such in the family of her destination. So Christ has chosen His church to be married to Him. She has not yet put on her bridal garment, the beautiful array in which she shall stand before the Father's throne, but there is such a fitness in her to be the bride of Christ, that when she shall have bathed herself for a little while and lain for a little while in the bed of spices—there is such a fitness in her character, such a grace-given adaptation in her to become the royal bride of her glorious Lord and to become a partaker of the enjoyments of bliss—that it may be said of the church as a whole, and of every member of it, that they are “meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.”

The Greek word, moreover, bears some such meaning as this though I cannot give the exact meaning; it is always difficult when a word is not used often. This word is only used twice that I am aware of, in the New Testament. The word may be employed for “suitable,” or, I think, “sufficient.” “He has made us meet”—sufficient—“to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” But I cannot give my idea without borrowing another figure. When a child is born, it is at once endowed with all the faculties

of humanity. If those powers are lacking at first, they will not come afterwards. It has eyes, it has hands, it has feet, and all its physical organs. These, of course, are as it were in embryo. The senses, though perfect at first, must be gradually developed and the understanding gradually matured. It can see but little, it cannot discern distances; it can hear, but it cannot hear distinctly enough, at first, to know from what direction the sound comes. But you never find a new leg, a new arm, a new eye, or a new ear growing on that child. Each of these powers will expand and enlarge, but still, there is the whole man there at first and the child is *sufficient* for a man. Let but God in His infinite providence cause it to feed and give it strength and increase, it has *sufficient* for manhood. It does not need arm or leg, nose or ear; you cannot make it grow a new member; nor does it require a new member, either. All are there. In like manner, the moment a man is regenerated, there is every faculty in his new creation that there shall be, even when he gets to heaven. It only needs to be developed and brought out—he will not have a new power, he will not have a new grace. He will have those which he had before, developed and brought out. Just as we are told by the careful observer, that in the acorn there is in embryo every root and every bough and every leaf of the future tree which only requires to be developed, and brought out in their fullness. So, in the true believer, there is a sufficiency or meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. All that he requires is—not that a new thing should be implanted—but that that which God has put there in the moment of regeneration shall be cherished and nurtured, and made to grow and increase, till it comes unto perfection and he enters into “the inheritance of the saints in light.” This is, as near as I can give it to you, the exact meaning and literal interpretation of the text as I understand it.

But you may say to me, “In what sense is this meetness or fitness for eternal life the work of God the Father? Are we already made meet for heaven? How is this the Father’s work?” Look at the text a moment and I will answer you in three ways.

What is heaven? We read it is an *inheritance*. Who are fit for an inheritance? Children. Who makes us children? “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” A son [or daughter] is fitted for an inheritance. The moment the son is born, he is fitted to be an heir. All that is needed is that he shall grow up and be capable of possession. But he is fit for an inheritance at first. If he were not a son, he could not inherit as an heir. Now, as soon as ever we become sons, we are meet to inherit. There is in us an adaptation, a power and possibility for us to have an inheritance. This is the prerogative of the Father, to adopt us into His family, and to “beget us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” And do you not see that as *adoption* is really the meetness for inheritance, it is the Father who has made us meet to be “partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light?”

Again—heaven is an inheritance; but whose inheritance is it? It is an inheritance of the *saints*. It is not an inheritance of sinners, but of saints—that is, of the holy ones—of those who have been made saints by being sanctified. Turn then, to the Epistle of Jude, and you will see at once who it is that sanctifies. You will observe the moment you fix your eyes upon the passage, that it is God the Father. In the first verse you read, “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them who are sanctified by God the Father.” It is an inheritance for saints—and who are saints? The moment a man believes in Christ, he may know himself to have been truly set apart in the covenant decree; and he finds that consecration, if I may so speak, verified in his own experience, for he has now become “a new creature in Christ Jesus,” separated from the rest of the world. And then, it is manifest and made known that God has taken him to be His son forever. The meetness which I must have in order to enjoy the inheritance of the saints in light is my becoming a son! God has made me, and all believers, sons, therefore, we are meet for the inheritance; so then, that meetness has come from the Father. How meet, therefore, does the Father claim our gratitude, our adoration, and our love!

You will however observe it is not merely said that heaven is the inheritance of the saints, but that it is “the inheritance of the saints in *light*.” So the saints dwell in light—the light of knowledge, the light of purity, the light of joy, the light of love—pure ineffable love, the light of everything that is glorious and ennobling! There they dwell and if I am to appear meet for that inheritance, what evidence must I have? I must have light shining into my soul. But where can I get it? Do I not read that “every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down”—yes, truly, but from whom? From the Spirit?

No—“from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” The preparation to enter into the inheritance in light is light; and light comes from the Father of lights. Therefore, my meetness, if I have light in myself, is the work of the Father and I must give Him praise. Do you see, then, that as there are three words used here—“the *inheritance* of the *saints in light*,” so we have a threefold meetness? We are adopted and made sons. God has sanctified us and set us apart. And then, again, He has put light into our hearts. All this, I say, is the work of the Father and in this sense, we are “meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”

A few general observations here: Brothers and sisters, I am persuaded that if an angel from heaven were to come tonight and single out any one believer from the crowd here assembled, there is not one believer who is unfit to be taken to heaven! You may not be ready to be taken to heaven now, that is to say, if I foresaw that you were going to live, I would tell you, you were unfit to die, in a certain sense. But were you to die, now, in your pew, if you believe in Christ, you are fit for heaven! You have a meetness even now which would take you there at once, without being committed to purgatory for a season—you are even now fit to be “partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” You have but to gasp out your last breath and you shall be in heaven and there shall not be one spirit in heaven more fit for heaven than you, nor one soul more adapted for the place than you are! You shall be just as fitted for its element as those who are nearest to the eternal throne.

Ah, this makes the heirs of glory think much of God the Father. When we reflect, my brothers and sisters, upon our state by nature, and how fit we are to be firebrands in the flames of hell—yet to think that we are, this night, at this very moment, if Jehovah willed it, fit to sweep the golden harps with joyful fingers, that this head is fit, this very night, to wear the everlasting crown, that these loins are fit to be girded with that fair white robe throughout eternity, I say, this makes us think gratefully of God the Father! This makes us clap our hands with joy and say, “Thanks be unto God the Father, who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” Do you not remember the penitent thief? It was but a few minutes before, that he had been cursing Christ. I doubt not that he had joined with the other, for it is said, “They that were crucified with Him, reviled Him.” Not one, but *both*. *They* did it! And then, a gleam of supernatural glory lit up the face of Christ and the thief saw and believed; and Jesus said unto him, “Verily I say unto you, *this day*,” though the sun is setting, “this day shall you be with Me in paradise.” No long preparation required; no sweltering in purifying fires. And so shall it be with us! We may have been in Christ Jesus to our own knowledge but three weeks, or we may have been in Him for 10 years, or threescore years and ten—the date of our conversion makes no difference in our meetness for heaven, in a certain sense. True, indeed, the older we grow, the more grace we have tasted, the riper we are becoming and the fitter to be housed in heaven; but that is in another sense of the word—the Spirit’s meetness which *He* gives. But with regard to that meetness which the Father gives, I repeat, the blade of corn, the blade of gracious wheat that has just appeared above the surface of conviction, is as fit to be carried up to heaven as the full-grown corn in the ear! The sanctification wherewith we are sanctified by God the Father is not progressive—it is complete at once—we are *now* adapted for heaven, *now* fitted for it and we shall enter into the joy of our Lord!

Into this subject I might have entered more fully; but I have not time. I am sure I have left some knots untied and you must untie them if you can yourselves; and let me recommend you to untie them *on your knees*—the mysteries of the kingdom of God are studied much the best when you are in prayer.

II. The second mercy is A MERCY THAT LOOKS BACK. We sometimes prefer the mercies that look forward, because they unfold such a bright prospect—

“Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood.”

But here is a mercy that looks backward—turns its back, as it were, on the heaven of our anticipation, and looks back on the gloomy past and the dangers from which we have escaped. Let us read the account of it—“Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.” This verse is an explanation of the preceding, as we shall have to show in a few minutes. But just now, let us survey this mercy by itself. Ah, my brothers and sisters, what a description we have here of what matter of men we used to be. We were under “the power of darkness.” Since I have been musing on this text, I have turned these words over and over in my mind—“the power of

darkness"! It seems to me one of the most awful expressions that man ever attempted to expound! I think I could deliver a discourse from it, if God the Spirit helped me, which might make every bone in your body shake. "The power of darkness"! We all know that there is a *moral* darkness which exercises its awful spell over the mind of the sinner. Where God is unacknowledged, the mind is void of judgment. Where God is not worshipped, the heart of man becomes a ruin. The chambers of that dilapidated heart are haunted by ghostly fears and degraded superstitions; the dark places of that reprobate mind are tenanted by vile lusts and noxious passions—like vermin and reptiles—from which in open daylight we turn with disgust! And even *natural* darkness is tremendous. In the solitary confinement, which is practiced in some of our penitentiaries, the very worst results would be produced if the treatment were prolonged. If one of you were to be taken tonight and led into some dark cavern and left there, I can imagine that for a moment, not knowing your fate, you might feel a child-like kind of interest about it—there might be, perhaps, a laugh as you found yourselves in the dark. There might for the moment, from the novelty of the position, be some kind of curiosity excited; there might, perhaps, be a flush of silly joy. In a little time you might endeavor to compose yourself to sleep—possibly you might sleep. But if you should awake and still find yourself down deep in the bowels of earth, where never a ray of sun or candle light could reach you—do you know the next feeling that would come over you? It would be a kind of idiotic thoughtlessness! You would find it impossible to control your desperate imagination; your heart would say, "O God I am alone, alone, alone, in this dark place." How would you cast your eyes all around and, never catching a gleam of light, your mind would begin to fail. Your next stage would be one of increasing terror. You would fancy that you saw something and then you would cry, "Ah, I wish I could see something, were it foe or friend!" You would feel the dark sides of your dungeon; you would begin to "scribble on the walls," like David before king Achish. Agitation would cease hold upon you, and if you were kept there much longer, delirium and death would be the consequence.

We have heard of many who have been taken from the penitentiary to the lunatic asylum; and the lunacy is produced partly by the solitary confinement and partly by the darkness in which they are placed. In a report lately written by the Chaplain of Newgate, there are some striking reflections upon the influence of darkness in a way of *discipline*. Its first effect is to shut the culprit up to his own reflections and make him realize his true position in the iron grasp of the outraged law. I think the man who has defied his keepers and comes in there cursing and swearing, when he has found himself alone in darkness, where he cannot even hear the rattling of carriages along the streets and can see no light whatever, is presently cowed. He gives in, he grows tame. "The power of darkness" literally is something awful. If I had time, I would enlarge upon this subject. We cannot properly describe what "the power of darkness" is, even in this world. The sinner is plunged into the darkness of his sins and he sees nothing, he knows nothing. Let him remain there a little longer, and that joy of curiosity, that hectic joy which he now has in the path of sin, will die away and there will come over him a spirit of slumber. Sin will make him drowsy, so that he will not hear the voice of the ministry crying to him to escape for his life! Let him continue in it, and it will, by-and-by, make him spiritually an idiot; he will become so in sin that common reason will be lost on him. All the arguments that a sensible man will receive, will be only wasted on him. Let him go on and he will proceed from bad to worse, till he acquires the raving mania of a desperado in sin. And let death step in and the darkness will have produced its full effect—he will come into the delirious madness of hell! Ah, it needs but the power of *sin* to make a man more truly hideous than human thought can realize, or language paint. Oh, "the power of darkness"!

Now, my brethren, all of us were under this power once. It is but a few months—a few weeks with some of you—since you were under the power of darkness and of sin. Some of you had only got as far as the curiosity of it—others had got as far as the sleepiness of it. A good many of you had got as far as the apathy of it. And I do not know, but some of you had got almost to the terror of it! You had so cursed and swore—so yelled out your blasphemies—that you seemed to be ripening for hell! But, praised and blessed be the name of the Father, He has "translated you from the power of darkness, into the kingdom of His dear Son."

Having thus explained this term, "the power of darkness," to show you what you were, let us take the next word, "and has translated us." What a singular word this is—"translated." I dare say you think it

means the process by which a word is interpreted, when the sense is retained, while the expression is rendered in another language. That is one meaning of the word, “translation,” but it is not the meaning here. The word is used by Josephus in this sense—the taking away of a people who have been dwelling in a certain country and planting them in another place. This is called a translation. We sometimes hear of a bishop being translated or removed from one see to another. Now, if you want to have the idea explained, give me your attention while I bring out an amazing instance of a great translation. The children of Israel were in Egypt under taskmasters that oppressed them very sorely and brought them into iron bondage. What did God do for these people? There were two millions of them. He did not temper the tyranny of the tyrant; He did not influence his mind, to give them a little more liberty; but He *translated* His people; He took the whole two millions bodily, with a high hand and outstretched arm, and led them through the wilderness and translated them into the kingdom of Canaan! And there they were settled. What an achievement was that, when, with their flocks and their herds and their little ones, the whole host of Israel went out of Egypt, crossed the Jordan and came into Canaan! My dear brothers and sisters, the whole of it was not equal to the achievement of God’s powerful grace when He brings *one poor sinner* out of the region of sin into the kingdom of holiness and peace! It was easier for God to bring Israel out of Egypt, to split the Red Sea, to make a highway through the pathless wilderness, to drop manna from heaven, to send the whirlwind to drive out the kings—it was easier for omnipotence to do all this—than to translate one man from the power of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son! This is the grandest achievement of omnipotence! The sustenance of the whole universe, I do believe, is even less than this—the changing of a bad heart, the subduing of an iron will! But thanks be unto the Father, He has done all that for you and for me! He has brought us out of darkness; He has translated us, taken up the old tree that has struck its roots ever so deep—taken it up, blessed be God, roots and all; and planted it in a goodly soil. He had to cut the top off, it is true—the high branches of our pride—but the tree has grown better in the new soil than it ever did before! Who ever heard of moving so huge a plant as a man who has grown 50 years old in sin? Oh, what wonders has our Father done for us! He has taken the wild leopard of the forest, tamed it into a lamb and purged away its spots! He has regenerated the poor sinner—oh, how black we were by nature—our blackness was more than skin deep; it went to the center of our hearts; but, blessed be His name, He has washed us white and is still carrying on the divine operation and He will yet completely deliver us from every taint of sin, and will finally bring us into the kingdom of His dear Son! Here, then, in the second mercy, we discern from what we were delivered and how we were delivered—God the Father has “translated” us.

But where are we now? Into what place is the believer brought, when he is brought out of the power of darkness? He is brought into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. Into what other kingdom would the Christian desire to be brought? Brethren, a republic may sound very well in theory, but in *spiritual* matters, the last thing we need is a republic! We need a *kingdom*. I love to have Christ an absolute monarch in the heart; I do not want to have a doubt about it. I want to give up all my liberty to Him, for I feel that I never shall be free till my self-control is all gone; that I shall never have my will truly free till it is bound in the golden fetters of His sweet love. We are brought into a kingdom—He is Lord and Sovereign, and He has made us “kings and priests unto our God,” and we shall reign with Him! The proof that we are in this kingdom must consist in our obedience to our King. Here, perhaps, we may raise many causes and questions, but surely we can say, after all, though we have offended our King many times, yet our heart is loyal to Him. “Oh, precious Jesus! We would obey You and yield submission to every one of Your laws. Our sins are not willful and beloved sins, and though we fall, we can truly say that we want to be holy as You are holy; our heart is true towards Your statutes. Lord, help us to run in the way of Your commandments.”

So, you see, this mercy which God the Father has given to us, this second of these present mercies, is, that He has “translated us out of the power of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son.” This is the Father’s work. Shall we not love God the Father from this day forth? Will we not give Him thanks, and sing our hymns to Him, and exalt and triumph in His great name?

III. Upon the third point, I shall be as brief as possible. It is to **SHOW THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TWO VERSES.**

When I get a passage of Scripture to meditate upon, I like, if I can, to see its drift; then I like to examine its various parts and see if I can understand each separate clause; and then I want to go back again and see what one clause has to do with another. I looked and looked again at this text and wondered what connection there could be between the two verses. “Giving thanks unto God the Father, who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” Well, that is right enough. We can see how this is the work of God the Father, to make us meet to go to heaven. But has the next verse, the 13th, anything to do with our meetness?—“Who has delivered us from the power of darkness and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.” Well, I looked it over and I said I will read it in this way. I see the 12th verse tells me that the inheritance of heaven is the inheritance of light. Is heaven light? Then I can see my meetness for it as described in the 13th verse—He has delivered me from the power of darkness. Is not that the same thing? If I am delivered from the power of darkness, is not that being made meet to dwell in light? If I am now brought out of darkness into light and am walking in the light, is not that the very meetness which is spoken of in the verse before? Then I read again. It says they are *saints*. Well, the saints are a people who obey the Son. Here is my meetness, then, in the 13th verse, where it says, “He has translated me from the power of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son,” so that I not only have the light, but the sonship, too, for I am in “the kingdom of His dear Son.” But how about the inheritance? Is there anything about that in the 13th verse? It is an inheritance; shall I find anything about meetness for it there? Yes, I find that I am in the kingdom of His dear Son. How came Christ to have a kingdom? Why, by inheritance. Then it seems I am in His inheritance; and if I am in His inheritance, here, then I am meet to be in it above, for I am in it already! I am even now part of it and partner of it, since I am in the kingdom which He inherits from His Father and, therefore, there is the meetness.

I do not know whether I have put this plainly enough before you. If you will be kind enough to look at your Bible, I will just recapitulate. You see, heaven is a place of light; when we are brought out of darkness, that, of course, is the meetness for light. It is a place for sons. When we are brought into the kingdom of God’s dear Son, we are, of course, made sons, so that there is the meetness for it. It is an inheritance, and when we are brought into the inherited kingdom of God’s dear Son, we enjoy the inheritance, now, and consequently are fitted to enjoy it forever!

Having thus shown the connection between these verses, I propose now to close with a few general observations. I like so to expound the Scripture that we can draw some practical inferences from it. Of course, the first inference is this—let us from this night forward never omit God the Father in our praises. I think I have said this already six times over in the sermon! Why I am repeating it so often is so that we may never forget it. Martin Luther said he preached upon justification by faith every day in the week, but the people still did not understand. There are some truths of God, I believe, that need to be said over and over again, either because our silly hearts will not receive, or our treacherous memories will not hold them. Sing, I beseech you, habitually, the praises of the Father in heaven, as you do the praises of the Son hanging upon the cross! Love as truly God, the ever-living God, as you love Jesus the God-man, the Savior who once died for you. That is the great inference.

Yet another inference arises. Brothers and sisters, are you conscious, tonight, that you are not, now, what you once were? Are you sure that the power of darkness does not now rest upon you, that you love divine knowledge, that you are panting after heavenly joys? Are you sure that you have been “translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son”? Then never be troubled about thoughts of death, because, come death whenever it may, you are meet to be a “partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.” Let no thought distress you about death’s coming to you at an unseasonable hour. Should it come tomorrow; should it come *now*—if your faith is fixed on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness—you shall see the face of God with acceptance! I have that consciousness in my soul, by the witness of the Holy Spirit, of my adoption into the family of God. I feel that though I should never preach again, but should lay down my body and my charge together, before I should reach my home and rest in my bed, “I know that my Redeemer lives.” And more, that I should be a “partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.” It is not always that one feels that, but I would have you never rest satisfied till you do—till you know your meetness, till you are conscious of it—until, moreover, you are panting to be gone, because

you feel that you have powers which never can be satisfied short of heaven—powers which only heaven can employ!

One more reflection lingers behind. There are some of you here that cannot be thought by the utmost charity of judgment, to be “meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.” Ah, if a wicked man should go to heaven without being converted, heaven would be no heaven to him! Heaven is not adapted for sinners; it is not a place for them. If you were to take an African who has long dwelt at the equator up to where the Eskimos are dwelling and tell him that you would show him the aurora and all the glories of the North Pole, the poor wretch could not appreciate them. He would say, “It is not the element for me. It is not the place where I could rest happy!” And if you were to take, on the other hand, some dwarfish dweller in the north, down to the region where trees grow to a stupendous height and where the spices give their balmy odors to the gale, and bid him live there under the torrid zone, he could enjoy nothing! He would say, “This is not the place for me, because it is not adapted to my nature.” Or if you were to take the vulture, that has never fed on anything but carrion, and put it into the noblest dwelling you could make for it, and feed it with the daintiest meals, it would not be happy because it is not the food that is adapted for it. And you, sinner, you are nothing but a carrion vulture! Nothing makes you happy but sin! You do not want too much psalm singing, do you? Sunday is a dull day to you; you like to get it over with. You do not care about your Bible; you would as soon there should be no Bible at all. You find that going to a meeting house or a church is very dull work, indeed! Oh, then you will not be troubled with that in eternity—do not agitate yourself! If you love not God and die as you are, you shall go to your own company; you shall go to your jolly mates, you shall go to your good fellows. Those who have been your mates on earth shall be your mates forever! And you shall go to the Prince of those good fellows, unless you repent and be converted. Where God is, you cannot come! It is not an element suited to you. As well place a bird at the bottom of the sea, or a fish in the air, as place an ungodly sinner in heaven!

What is to be done, then? You must have a new nature! I pray God to give it to you. Remember, if now you feel your need of a Savior, that is the beginning of the new nature. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.” Cast yourselves simply on Him, trust in nothing but His blood and then the new nature shall be expanded, and you shall be made meet by the Holy Spirit’s operations to be a “partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.” There is many a man who has come into this house of prayer, many a man is now present, who has come in here a rollicking fellow, fearing neither God nor devil. Many a man has come from the ale house up to this place. If he had died then, where would his soul have been? But the Lord that very night met him. There are trophies of that grace present here tonight! You can say, “Thanks be to the Father, who has brought us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.” And if God has done that for some, why can He not do it for others? Why need you despair, O poor sinner? If you are here tonight, the worst sinner out of hell, remember, the gate of mercy stands wide open and Jesus bids you come! Conscious of your guilt, flee, flee to Him! Look to His cross, and you shall find pardon in His veins, and life in His death!

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