

ALPHA AND OMEGA NO. 546

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 27, 1863,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.”
Revelation 22:13.*

EVERY Sunday school child knows that there is no great mystery hidden in the words, “Alpha and Omega.” We have here the names of the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, so that the sense would be, “I am A and great O,” in the Greek, or in plain English, “I am A and Z.” “Jesus is the Alpha and Omega—A and Z—the beginning and the end, the first and the last.”

Our text demands no preface. Indeed, I do not know how I could venture to put a single letter before Alpha. Let us therefore come to our subject at once.

In three ways I shall talk of the text. First, I shall *bring certain doctrines to it*; secondly, *we will look at the doctrines which are really in it*; and then thirdly, *at the lessons which naturally flow from it*.

I. At the outset, WE SHALL BRING CERTAIN TRUTHS OF GOD TO THE TEXT.

This is a much too common method of preaching and, one which I am very far from admiring as a custom. When some preachers get a text, the inquiry is not what truth is in the passage, but what sense shall they thrust upon it? Full often the poor text is served as a cook treats a bird; it is first killed, and then stuffed with any kind of fancies that the preacher may have chopped up ready to hand. By frankly stating that my first observations are not in the verse before us, I shall avoid sanctioning such methods of abusing God’s Word. The thoughts to which I now give utterance have been suggested by many commentators, and certainly, if they are not the legitimate offspring of the text, are closely connected with it.

1. Of things which we may fairly bring to the text, let us notice first that *our Lord may well be described as the Alpha and Omega in the sense of rank*. He is *Alpha, the first*, the chief, the foremost, the first-born of every creature, the Eternal God. Man, by nature is not the first even among creatures, for angels excel him by far; nor are angels the chief, for our glorious Lord infinitely transcends them. He who made is greater than they who are made; and He who sends is greater than those who are sent. Jesus Christ stands Alpha in honorable degree; no angel can vie with Him. “Being made so much better than the angels; as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.” “For unto which of the angels said He at any time, you are My Son, this day have I begotten you?...And again, when He brings in the first-begotten into the world, He said, And let all the angels of God worship Him.” As for the Son, He has appointed Him heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds, but of the angels it is asked—“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”

Alpha was frequently used by the Hebrews to signify the best, just as we are accustomed to use the letter A. We say of a ship, for instance, that it is, “A 1.” So Jesus Christ may truly be said to be the Alpha, the first in this sense. Call Him by whatever title Scripture has affixed to Him, and He is the first in it. Is He a prophet? Then all the prophets follow at a humble distance, bearing witness of Him. Is He a priest? Then He is the Great High Priest of our profession; He is the fulfillment of all that which the priest did but typically set forth. Let Him mount His throne as King, then He is King of kings and Lord of lords. “His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation.” If He is the builder of His Church, He is the wise Master-builder; if a shepherd, He is the Great Shepherd who shall appear; if the cornerstone, He is the chief cornerstone—in fact, it matters not what title, or which character He bears, He is in all these respects the Alpha, as much surpassing all things that may be compared to Him, as the sun excels the stars, or as the sea exceeds the drops of the dew!

But, beloved, though our blessed Lord is thus Alpha—the first—He was once in His condescension made *Omega, the last*. How shall I describe the mighty descent of the Great Savior? Down from the loft-

iness of His Father's glory, and from the grandeur of His own divine estate, He stooped to become man! There is a vast distance from the Alpha of Deity, down to that letter which stands for manhood; but to this He came, He was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death. But this is not enough; He stoops lower than man, yes, there is a verse in which He seems to put Himself on a level with the least of all creatures that have life—He says, "I am a worm, and no man, a reproach of men and despised of the people." His Father forsook Him—the wrath of heaven rolled over Him. He was so utterly crushed and broken, that He was poured out like water, and brought into the dust of death. Marshal the creatures of God in their order, in the dread day when Jesus hangs upon the Cross, and you must put Him for misery, for weakness, for shame as the last—the Omega! How marvelous is this tremendous sweep of His humiliation, that from the highest throne in glory He should descend into the lowest depths of the tomb! Death brings the creature to its very lowest degradation, and makes it as though it were nothing. Jesus died, and as I see the incorruptible body lying in Joseph's sepulcher, I can but marvel that ever the great Alpha should come so low as to yield up the ghost, being subjugated beneath the power of the last adversary.

Now, this is not in the text, but it may be fairly brought to it, I think, and, without any compulsion, it may shake hands with the passage as being near of kin to it.

2. We will make another observation which is not in the text, but which is still a very precious truth of God, namely, that Jesus Christ is Alpha and Omega *in the Book of holy Scripture*. Open the first page, and a discerning eye will see Jesus Christ in Genesis. We know that the worlds were made by Him, and as we hear that majestic sentence, "Let *Us* make man in Our own image after Our Likeness," we at once discern Him as one of the sacred Trinity. We go onward to the fall, and at the gates of Eden the promise of the woman's seed consoles us; we advance to the days of Noah and lo, we see the Savior typified in the ark, which bears a chosen company out of the old world of death into the new world of life; we walk with Abraham, as he sees Messiah's day, we dwell in the tents of Isaac and Jacob, feeding upon the gracious promise. We leave the venerable Israel talking of Shiloh on his deathbed; we see his seed brought out of Egypt, and eating the Lamb of God's passover; we reach the age of the law, and here the types crowd in upon us; but time permits not even a glance—suffice it to say, in brief, that we view the face of Jesus in almost every page and behold His Character painted to the life in nearly every book! Prophets and kings, priests and preachers, all look one way—they all stand as the cherubs did, over the ark, desiring to look within, and to read the mystery of God's great propitiation! In the New Testament we find our Lord the one constant theme of every page. It is not an ingot here and there, or dust of gold thinly scattered—but here you stand upon a solid floor of gold—for the whole substance of the New Testament is Jesus crucified. What would be left of the evangelists if you could remove Christ from them? What are Paul's Epistles if Jesus is taken away? The whole of the Pauline literature sinks in a moment if Jesus is withdrawn. And what have Peter, James, Jude, or John to write upon but the same subject? Is it not still Jesus? Do not shut the book too hastily, for see its closing sentence is bejeweled with the Redeemer's name. "Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." Brothers and sisters, we should always read Scripture in this light; we should consider the Word to be as a mirror into which Christ looks down from heaven; and then, looking into it, we see His face reflected as in a glass—darkly, it is true, but still in such a way as to be a blessed preparation for seeing Him as we shall see Him face to face!

This volume contains Jesus Christ's letters to us, perfumed by His love. These pages are the garments of our King, and they all smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia. Scripture is the golden chariot in which Jesus rides, and it is paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem. The Scriptures are the swaddling bands of the holy Child, Jesus—unroll them and you find your Savior! Talk not to us of bodies of divinity—the only body of divinity is the person of Christ! As for theology, Christ is the true theology—the incarnate Word of God; and if you can comprehend Him you have grasped all truth! He is made unto us wisdom; getting Him you have the wisdom of the Scriptures. The quintessence of the Word of God is Christ! Distill the book—reach its essential quality and you have discovered Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, and the King of the Jews! He is the Alpha and Omega of Holy Scripture.

3. Another fact is also sweetly true, although not, perhaps, in our text. Jesus Christ is *the Alpha and Omega of the great law of God*. Beloved, the law of God finds not a single letter in human nature to meet its demands. You and I are neither Alpha nor Omega to the law, for we have broken it altogether.

We have not even learned its first letter—"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart," and certain I am we know but very little of the next—"your neighbor as yourself." Even though renewed by divine grace, we are very slow to learn the holiness and spirituality of the law; we are so staggered by the letter that we often miss its spirit altogether. But, beloved, if you would see the law fulfilled, look to the person of our blessed Lord and Master. What love to God is there! O brothers and sisters, where shall we find anything to be compared to it? "The zeal of Your house has eaten Me up." "Know you not that I must be about My Father's business?" "My meat and My drink is to do the will of Him who sent Me." What love to man you find in Him. Talk not of the good Samaritan; here is One who is better than he—the Samaritan did but give his wine and his oil, and his two-pence. Jesus gives Himself—gives His heart's blood instead of wine, and the anointing of the Holy Spirit instead of oil, while for food He gives His own flesh and blood for poor humanity to feed upon! Jesus loved in such a way that, as we said on Thursday night, all the love that ever gleamed in human bosoms, if it could be gathered together, would be but as a spark, while His great love to man would be as a flaming furnace heated seven times hotter than human imagination can conceive! Do not, beloved friends, if you are in Christ Jesus, permit legal fears to distress you at the remembrance of your failures in obedience, as though they would destroy your soul. Seek after holiness, but never make holiness your *trust*. Seek after virtue; pant for it; but when you see your own imperfections, do not despair. Your saving righteousness is the righteousness of Christ—that in which God accepts you is Christ's perfect obedience; and we say of that again, in the words of the text, Jesus Christ is, "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." There is not a precept which He has not fulfilled in its widest sense. As for the spirit of the law, it breathes through His whole life of holiness and service; and as for the letter of the law, He has carried it out to its extremity. The commandment may be exceedingly broad, but not broader than the life of Christ; the law may ask perfection, but it could not ask, and could not have a greater perfection than is found in the person of Him whose name is "The Lord our righteousness."

Brothers and sisters, these three matters I cannot affirm to be in the text, but can you blame me for bringing them forward? They stand in such a near connection with the exact sense of the passage, that they cannot well be omitted. May the Lord bless them to you.

II. Now we will take the text itself. And show what ARE THE TRUTHS WHICH WE ASSUREDLY BELIEVE TO BE IN IT.

1. Our Lord Jesus is Alpha and Omega in the great *alphabet of being*. Reckon existences in their order, and you begin—"In the beginning was the Word." Proceed to the conclusion, suppose that all the universe has melted like the hoarfrost of the morning—imagine that all worlds are extinguished as the sparks from the forge—conceive that, as a painted bubble passes away forever, so the whole creation has departed—What then? What is the Omega? Why assuredly Jesus Christ would still be "God over all, blessed forever. Amen." This we are quite sure is in the text, because the expression, "Alpha and Omega," is only used four times in Scripture, and on the second occasion we find it in the 11th verse of the first chapter of the Book of the Revelation, in a connection which leads us to conclude that it must relate to the eternity and self-existence of our Lord; for the 17th verse explains the 11th thus, "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He who lives and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." Those expressions manifestly refer to the eternity of Christ; to His self-existence, His having life in Himself; to the fact that death did by no means destroy His self-existence, and that now since His resurrection, He lives forevermore, death has no more dominion over Him.

Beloved, this is a great theme. When we begin to talk of the eternity of the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are overwhelmed by the glory of our subject. We need the eagle eyes, and the eagle wings of John to see and soar into heavenly things. I read the other day a word by an ancient author, and in the chapter upon the eternity of God I could not help noticing that there was hardly a word of more than one or two syllables—sure sign of the sublimity of the theme, and of the inability of man to see more than its most simple outline. Will you go back 6,000 years, when the world has newly emerged from darkness? Will you fly on, if you can, through all the ages of the geological periods, if such there were? Can you journey back millions of years? Can you, can you? Can you reach in spirit the time when as yet cherubim were not born, when the solemnity of silence had never been disturbed by song of seraph, when the unnavigated ether had never been stirred by the wings of angels? There is no world, no sun, no stars—space alone exists. Can you go further back till space is gone? You cannot. It is impossible; you are lost;

for you can only think of space and time. But if you could by any stretch of imagination multiply the millions of years of which we dreamed just now, by another million times, and that a million, million, million times more—and those on still as far as ever human arithmetic can go—yes, and beyond the possibilities of angelic computation, yet even then you have not begun to fathom the eternity in which God has dwelt alone! Certainly there was an age in which God was dwelling alone, not in solitude, for, as the fathers very rightly say, you must not use the term “solitude” in reference to God, since the three divine persons everlastingly delighted in each other, and so knew no *solitude*—yet there was and is an aloneness in our God, since He is before all things.

Can your thoughts attain to that age of God in lonely glory—in that eternity we know that Jesus was? He, whom though we have not seen His face, unceasingly we do adore, was then the eternal Son! The Word was God. Jesus was Alpha. To fly as far in the other direction—when the little river of time shall have been absorbed into the deep ocean of eternity, when all the world shall have departed even as the particles which dance in the sunbeam are seen no more when the sunbeam is gone—still Jesus shall be the Omega! It has been well observed by Dr. Gill, that no doubt the words, “Alpha and Omega,” are comprehensive—they take in all the letters between. Certainly God comprehends all creatures. God is that without whom there is nothing, and in whom are all things. Philo, the Jew, compares the great God to a tree and all creatures to the leaves and fruits which are all in the tree; but the metaphor is not complete because you may remove fruit from the tree, but there can be no creature out of the power and will of God by which alone it can exist at all. If you remove the fruit from the tree, the tree has at least lost something, but if all creatures were destroyed, yet still the Lord would be as infinitely God as He is now! If the creatures were multiplied, God were no more—and if diminished, He were no less. The creatures may be likened to the waves, and God to the great sea; the waves cannot exist apart from the sea, nor the creatures apart from God—but no earthly figure of the divine can be complete, for the waves are a portion of the sea, but the creatures are not God, nor do they contribute to His essence or attributes. The sea would be diminished if the waves were gone; but if you could take all creatures away, God would be neither less God nor less infinite than He is now. In fact, the moment we begin to talk of infiniteness, we know nothing of diminishing or of increasing! O brothers and sisters, we must leave this subject in the silence of reverent humility, for my little boat is already out of sight of shore, and I must not venture further on this great and wide sea—

***“Great God, how infinite are Thee!
What worthless worms are we!
Let the whole race of creatures bow,
And pay their praise to Thee.”***

A deaf and dumb man in one of the institutions in Paris was asked to write upon the slate his idea of God’s eternity, and he wrote the following forcible lines—“It is *duration* without beginning or end; *existence* without bounds or dimensions; *present* without past or future. His eternity is youth without infancy or old age, life without birth or death, today without yesterday or tomorrow.” “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.”

2. Another truth of God is most certainly in the text, namely, that *Jesus Christ is Alpha and Omega in the alphabet of creating operations*. Who was it that began to make? Not an angel, for the angel must first be *made*. Did matter create itself? Was there an effect without a cause? It is contrary to our experience and our reason to believe any such thing. The first cause stands first, and the first cause is God in the divine Trinity, the Son being one person of that Trinity. He is Alpha because His hand first of all winged angelic spirits, and made His ministers a flame of fire. He first made all things out of nothing. He molded the clay from which man was made; all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that is made. As He alone began, so His power maintains the fabric of creation; all things consist by Him. Christ is the great iron pillar of the universe, and the creatures twine about Him as the vine does about its prop. These things are not, they vanish like a dream if Jesus withdraws His power. He upholds all things by the word of His power. Brothers and sisters, there may be creations going on at the present moment—fresh globes may even now be fashioned between the hands of Omnipotence; if so, in every one of these Immanuel has a share! At this very moment new comets may be launched like thunderbolts upon their fiery way, but not without the Son of God! Human souls issue from the womb of creation every hour, but in their sustenance and sending forth, the mighty God is ever present. On, on, on, as the works of God shall be enlarged and extended, as the universe shall grow on every side, Christ

shall still be there—His Father’s delight, with whom He takes counsel—His equal, bearing with Him the name of Alpha and Omega! If this world shall be rolled up like a worn-out vesture, *He* shall roll it up; if the stars shall wither, it shall be at Jesus’ bidding—if the sun shall be quenched, His breath shall blow out its coal; and if the moon shall be black as sackcloth of hair, Christ’s hand shall extinguish the lamp. He shall do it all, even until the end shall come, for He is Omega as well as Alpha.

3. So again, beyond a doubt, our text intends that Christ is Alpha and Omega in *all covenant transactions*. Beloved, here is a theme worthy of many discourses from the most eminent divines. The thoughts of God, the eternal decrees, the inscrutable purposes of Jehovah—these are deep things—but we know this concerning them, that from first to last they all have a relation to Christ. Concerning our race and the elect out of it, the whole matter is encompassed in the person of the Redeemer. Do you speak of election? “Mine elect in whom My soul delights,” is Christ’s name! We are chosen in Him from before the foundation of the world. Speak of our being predestinated to be sons—we are only made so in Him who stands as the elder brother. Every separate individual of the chosen tribe stands only by virtue of a union which was established from of old, between his person and the person of the Redeemer! Search for the celestial fountain from which divine streams of divine grace have flowed to us, and you find Jesus Christ as the wellspring of covenant love! If your eyes shall ever see the covenant roll, if you shall ever be permitted in a future state to see the whole plan of redemption as it was mapped out in the chambers of eternity, you shall see the blood-red line of atoning sacrifice running along the margin of every page, and you shall see that from beginning to end one objective was always aimed at—the glory of the Son of God! The Father begins with exalting Jesus, and concludes with glorifying Him with the glory which He had with Him before the world was!

How I do love the doctrines of grace, when they are taken in connection with Christ! Some people preach the Calvinistic points without Jesus; but what hard, dry, marrow preaching it is. Oh, dear friends, the letter kills; it breeds in men a controversial, quarrelsome spirit; but when you preach the doctrines of grace as they are in Christ, as Dr. Hawker would have preached them, when you talk of them as Rutherford would have talked of them—oh, then a holy unction rests upon them, and they become inestimably precious! And let every believer remember he does not get these doctrines as he should get them unless he receives them *in Christ*. Everywhere the Lord Jesus is to be considered! Not as the friend of a day, or our Savior only in His life on earth—but as the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world—anointed Mediator set up from everlasting days. By faith I see Him as the eternal Son of God; I see Him standing in the purpose of the Father as the covenant head of the elect; I see Him in due time born of a woman, but I do not forget that His goings forth are of old from everlasting, and that before the daystar knew its place, His delights were with the sons of men. I see Him; He cries, “It is finished!” He bows His head. I do not, however, forget that He is not dead, but that when the world shall die, and time shall conclude its reign, then He who is the Ancient of Days shall live, and shall flourish in immortal youth. Alpha and Omega is Jesus Christ, then, in the eternal purposes, and in the covenant transactions of God.

4. Jesus Christ is certainly Alpha and Omega in *all salvation-work as it becomes apparent in act and deed*. That this is the meaning of the text I am clear, because in the first passage where the Alpha and Omega occurs—namely, in the first chapter of the Revelation, 8th verse—you will see that all the works of salvation are ascribed to our Lord. Read the 5th verse, “Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first-born of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Behold, He comes with clouds. And every eye shall see Him . . . I am Alpha and Omega.” Now, we have here a summary of the great transactions of saving grace! You have here that *He loved us*—loved us before the world was, with an everlasting love; you have next, that *He washed us* from our sins in His own blood, in which you have His redemption, and our consequent pardon, justification, and sanctification, all of which come to us through Him. As for our glory, it is the result of His second advent, therefore, “Behold, He comes,” makes Him the Omega, as the, “Unto Him who loved us,” made Him the Alpha! I need not repeat to you who know so well that, “There is none other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved,” and that in no part or portion of that salvation can any other name be admitted into partnership with His. Jesus must begin. Jesus must conclude.

It is very striking to observe the commencement and the perfection of the spiritual life both laid at Jesus' door in the 6th verse of the 21st chapter—"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him who is thirsty of the fountain of the water of life freely." So then, if you have any thirst, you must come to Jesus Christ at the beginning to get the water of life. If you have been led to know your own emptiness—if you have received from His Spirit a hungering and a thirsting after righteousness, go not to the law—look not within—but come to the Alpha, drink and be satisfied. If, on the other hand, life is near its close—if you have been preserved in holiness, if you have been kept in righteousness—remember still to trust in the Omega; for these words follow, "He that overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son." So that the inheriting of all things, the final overcoming of all spiritual foes comes through Jesus, just as did the first drink of living water! The first breath which heaves the spiritual lungs, the first light which greets the newly-opened eyes, comes from Jesus who is the beginning; and the last shout of faith, the last shout of holy joy which shall admit the saints into the paradise of God shall proceed from Him who is the end. Beloved, lay back upon Christ with all your strength—lean on Him with all your weight! He who began will finish—He never was Alpha yet without being Omega, too! Nothing shall change His purpose—neither heaven, nor earth, nor hell can provide a motive to turn Him from His way of love! "He is of one mind, and who can turn Him? What His soul desires, even that He does."

5. There is one more truth of God which I conceive to be in the text. Jesus is Alpha and Omega not only in the individual salvation of every saint, *but in the whole chain of the Church's history*. Where shall I say that the Church began? Why, very speedily after there was a seed of the serpent, there was also a seed of the woman! Surely the line of demarcation began hard by the gates of Eden; there we see Abel worshipping God in faith, and Cain who was of the wicked one and slew his brother. Do we not, thus early see in Abel's sacrifice, the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world? Follow the Church through all her varied fortunes, and you will find her always bearing the banner of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah at her forefront. No matter if she wanders about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, afflicted, tormented, Christ is still the daystar of her comfort! In her victories, His name is the loudest note—others may have slain their thousands, but the Son of David his ten thousands! No name wakes up the songsters of Israel like the name of Messiah, the coming one! Nothing can move the feet of Zion's maidens so joyously in the sacred dance, nothing can make the daughters of Jerusalem smite their timbrels to a more joyful strain than this—"He comes; He comes who shall judge the world in righteousness, and His people with truth." Since the first advent of our Lord, has not the Church always carried Jesus as her standard? Where will you find the Church without Christ? Jesus is yonder, among the snowy mountains of Switzerland, and His Church is with Him though her sons bear the names of heretics, schismatics, traitors, and worse. The Church of Rome has forgotten her first husband, and played the harlot, committing fornication with the kings of the earth; but there was a faithful bride found for the Son among the Albigenses and the Waldenses, in whose homes Jesus dwelt! What was their battle cry? What was the note they chanted around the family hearth? What was the name they pressed to their bosom when they dared not sing for fear the foe should fall upon them? Was it not the name of Jesus? And when the dark ages passed away, what light do I see gleaming yonder? What does Luther proclaim? What does Calvin teach? It is the great name of Jesus which is their common theme! What do you say, brothers and sisters? Do you not join hands in solemn covenant, and say today, "His name shall endure forever! His name shall be remembered as long as the sun!"? Do you not long for the time when, "all nations shall be blessed in Him, all people shall call Him blessed"? Surely you yourselves will help to fulfill the promise, "one generation shall praise His name to another, and shall declare His mighty acts."

But the end comes; Jehovah's banner will soon be furled—His sword shall be sheathed forever—the unsuffering kingdom shall be proclaimed; swords shall be broken; and spears shall be snapped; the sun shall look upon no battlefield, but shall greet the reign of universal peace! What then? Jesus' name shall then be known everywhere; men shall talk of Him, and think of Him by day and by night. Prayer, also, shall be made for Him continually, and daily shall He be praised. They who dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him, and His enemies shall lick the dust. Then comes the end. The judgment throne is set. The wicked are summoned. The righteous on the right hand have received their rewards—from whose hands? From the hands of the Omega who closes the chapter with His benediction, "Come, you blessed of My Father." Here are the wicked; hell is gaping for them; the tongues of flames lick up the multitudes

as the lion devours his prey. Who is this that pronounces the thundering sentence, “Depart, you cursed”? It is the Omega! That same face which once was bedewed with tears, is now brighter than the sun with flashes of lightning; the voice which said, “Come to Me, you weary,” now says, “Depart, you cursed.” He began—He ends—the Alpha is the Omega. But it is an end without end. Long, long through the ages of eternity, amid heaven’s perfect inhabitants, His name shall be the perpetual theme of song. Down there, amidst the howls of the damned, they shall, against their will, declare His awful justice—they shall proclaim, in their eternal moans, the power of the pierced feet which shall tread them as clusters in the winepress until their blood flows forth to the horses’ bridles in eternity! Heaven and earth and hell shall adore Jesus as Alpha and Omega. Hallelujah, hallelujah! Jesus Christ reigns still as the Lord God omnipotent—Alpha and Omega!

III. By your patience we will notice A FEW THINGS WHICH FLOW OUT OF THE TEXT.

1. The first is this—Sinner, saint, *let Jesus be Alpha and Omega to you today in your trust.* Poor soul, are you willing to be saved? But do you say, “I have not *this* qualification, or *that* recommendation?” Ah, do not begin with *yourself* as the Alpha! Come to Jesus as you are, and let Him be Alpha to you. Are you black with sin? Let Him wash you. Is your heart hard? Let Him soften it. Are you a dead good-for-nothing soul? Are you ragged and wretched? Are you lost, ruined and undone? Do not stop to write Alpha first; do not stop to begin your own salvation. Sinner, remember there is no preparation needed for Christ. Just lean upon Him wholly; take Him to begin with—no, let Him take you to begin with! Drop into His arms now, repose upon Him *now*. You will never get true salvation unless the first letter in it is Christ, for He is the Alpha! It will all have to begin over again if you begin with humblings, with repentings, with convictions, or with anything but Christ! It must all be done over again, I say, unless you begin with Jesus! There He is! His wounds are flowing, His heart is breaking, His soul is in anguish—there is the Alpha of your salvation. Look and live! “Look unto Me, and be you saved all you ends of the earth.” Child of God let Him be the Omega of your salvation. If you have begun with Him, do not now confide in yourself. Shall I say to you as Paul did to the Galatians, “Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect in the *flesh*?” “As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.” Your first hope was through looking to Jesus, will you now look to your sanctifications, to your prayers, to your evidences, to your humbling, to your communing? Away with all these if they pretend to be the ground of your soul’s comfort! Remember, child of God, that to the end of the chapter it must be as it was in the beginning—

*“None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good.”*

Up in that chamber of yours, with strong crying and tears you turned to God, and you never had any comfort till you looked to Jesus only, and in that other chamber where you shall lie dying with the dampness of death heavy on your brow—you shall have no comfort but Jesus only! You passed through the river of conviction, and Jesus forbade your drowning; you shall go through the stream of death, and He shall still keep your head above the waves. Alpha and Omega should Christ be to every one of us as our trust this morning.

2. Beloved, if we have trusted Him, *let Him be Alpha and Omega in our love.* Oh, give Him the first place in your love. Young woman, may the Holy Spirit win your young heart for my Lord and Savior. Let the flower of your heart be offered to Him in the bud. O you, young children, who are your mother’s delight, and your father’s care—I pray that your first dawning days may be consecrated to the Savior! Let him be Alpha with you. I trust He is Alpha to some of us and has been so for years. We can use the words of the Psalmist, “I was cast upon You from the womb. You have been my God from my youth up. Truly I am Your servant, and the son of Your handmaid.” You who are growing old and gray-headed, let Him have the Omega of your love! As you lean upon your staff, bending downward as if to salute your grave, bear loving recollection of all the years of His patience, and the days of His faithfulness to you. Breathe the prayer, “Now, also, when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not.” See to it that you forsake Him not, but clasp Him with an expiring grasp as the Omega of your soul’s delight!

3. But, surely, brothers and sisters, our Lord should be the Alpha and Omega *of our life’s end and aim.* What is there worth living for but Christ? Oh, what is there in the whole earth that is worth a thought but Jesus? Well did an old writer say, “If God is the only eternal, then all the rest is but a puff of smoke, and shall I live to heap up puffs of smoke? And shall I toil and slave merely to aggrandize my-

self with smoky treasures that the wind of death shall dissipate forever?” No, beloved let us live for eternal things, and what is there of eternal things that can be chosen but our Lord? O let us give Him next year the Alpha of our labor! Let us begin the year by working in His vineyard! Toiling in His harvest field this year is almost over; there is another day or two left—let us serve Him till the year is ended, going forward with double haste because the days are now so few. “Lord teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” Let your time and your talents, your substance and your energies all be given to my Master, who is worthy to be your soul’s Alpha and Omega!

4. Lastly, Jesus crucified should be the Alpha and Omega of *all our preaching and teaching*. Woe to the man who makes anything else the main subject of his ministry! “God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” Do not tell me you preach sound doctrine—you preach rotten doctrine, if you do not preach Christ—preach nothing up but Christ, and nothing down but sin! Preach Christ! Lift Him up high on the pole of the gospel, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, and you will accomplish your life’s end. Preach orthodoxy, or any form of doxy; if you have left out Christ, there is no manna from heaven, no water from the rock, no refuge from the storm, no healing for the sick, no life for the dead! If you leave out Christ, you have left the sun out of the day, and the moon out of the night; you have left the waters out of the sea, and the floods out of the river; you have left the harvest out of the year, the soul out of the body—you have left joy out of heaven—yes, you have robbed all of its All! There is no gospel worth thinking of, much less worth proclaiming in Jehovah’s name, if Jesus is forgotten! We must have Jesus, then, as Alpha and Omega in all our ministrations among the sons of men!

And now I am very conscious, this morning, that I have only plowed the surface. I wish I could drive into the subsoil of such a glorious text as this, but I suppose that the plowman who can do this had need to have been caught up to the third heaven, and even then would fail. Who shall know anything of God but those who have seen Him, and have beheld His glory in heaven? As for us, our eyes are lacking. We have Jesus among us, but we perceive not His excellent glory. Like Peter, and James, and John, we sleep while Jesus is transfigured! The theme is far too high for me. Who can know God but God? Who can reveal Him but the only-begotten? And who can comprehend the fullness of Him who is the beginning and the end, the first and the last? It is enough if we have a saving acquaintance with the Redeemer, enough for our peace and joy, but gracious Lord, by Your grace, teach us more! Amen.

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END OF VOLUME 9.