

CHRIST IS ALL NO. 1006

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 20, 1871,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Christ is all in all.”
Colossians 3:11.*

THE apostle was arguing for holiness. He was earnestly contending against sin and for the maintenance of Christian graces, but he did not, as some do who would like to be thought preachers of the gospel, resort to reasons inconsistent with the gospel of free grace. He did not bring forward a single legal argument; he did not say, “This do, and you shall merit reward”; or, “This do not, and you shall cease to be the beloved of the Lord.” He knew that he was writing to believers who are not under the law but under grace, and he therefore used arguments fetched from grace, and suitable to the character and condition of “the elect of God, holy and beloved.” He fed the flame of their love with suitable fuel, and fanned their zeal with appropriate appliances.

Observe in this chapter that he begins by reminding the saints of their having risen with Christ; if they indeed have risen with Him, he argues that they should leave the grave of iniquity, and the grave clothes of their sins behind, and act as those who are endowed with that superior life which accounts sin to be death and corruption. He then goes on to declare that the believer's life is in Christ, “for you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” He also infers holiness from this; shall those who have Christ for their life defile themselves with guilt? Is it not inevitable that if the Holy One of Israel is in them as their life, their life should be fraught with everything that is virtuous and good? And then he brings forward the third argument that in the Christian Church, Christ is the only distinguishing mark. In the new birth we are created in the image of Jesus, the Second Adam, and in consequence all the distinctions that appertain to the old creation are rendered valueless. “There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all”—the argument from this fact being that since the only abiding distinction in the new creation is Christ, we should take care that His image is most clearly stamped upon us so that we may not only confess with our tongues that we are Christians, but our conversation and our entire character shall bespeak us to be such. As you may recognize the Jew by his facial features, the Greek by his gracefulness, and the barbarian by his uncouthness, so should the Christian be known by his Christ-likeness; by the light, love, and life of Christ streaming forth from him! This is the seal of God which is set upon the forehead of the faithful, and this is the mark of election which is in due season engraved on the right hand of all the elect.

Now, as the only distinction which marks the Christian from other men, and the only essential distinction in the new world of grace, is Christ, we are led to see beneath this fact a great underlying doctrine. In the realm of grace, things are what they seem; Christ is apparently all because he is actually all. The fact of a man's possessing Christ is all in all in the church because in very deed Christ is all in all. All that is real in the Christian all that is holy, heavenly, pure, abiding, and saving is of the Lord Jesus. This great granite fact lies at the basis of the whole Christian system; Christ is really and truly all in all in His Church, and in each individual member of it.

We shall, this morning, in trying to open up this precious subject, by the help of the divine Spirit, first, notice *by whom this truth of God is recognized*; secondly we shall consider *what this truth includes*; thirdly, *what it involves*, and fourthly, *what it requires of us*—for if you observe, the text is followed by a “Therefore.” There is a conclusion logically drawn from it.

I. First, then, BY WHOM IS THIS TRUTH RECOGNIZED? Paul does not say that Christ is all in all to all men, but he tells us that there is a new creation in which the man is “renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created him,” where all national and ceremonial distinctions cease, and Christ is all and in all. It is not to every man that Christ is all and in all; alas, there are many in this world to whom Christ is nothing; He scarcely enters into their thoughts; some of the baser sort only use His name

to curse by; and as to many others, if they have a religion, it is a proud presumption which excludes a Savior. The creed of the self-righteous has no room in it for the sinner's Savior; the justifier of the ungodly is nothing to them; the worldly, the frivolous, the unchaste, the licentious—these do not permit themselves to think of the Holy Redeemer. Perhaps some such are now present, and though they will hear about Him this morning, and of nothing else but Him, they will say, "what a weariness it is," and be glad when the discourse is ended. Jesus is a root out of a dry ground to multitudes; to them He has neither form nor comeliness, and in Him they see no beauty that they should desire Him. Ah, what will they do when He is revealed in the glory of His power? They thought it nothing to them as they passed by His cross, but they will not be able to despise Him as they stand convicted before His throne! O you, who make Jesus nothing, kiss the Son lest He be angry, and you perish from the Way when His wrath is kindled but a little! Without Christ you are today without peace, and will be forever without hope! Nothing remains for Christless souls at the last but a fearful looking for of judgment, and of fiery indignation. I could well pause here, and say let us pray for those who are unbelievers, and so are living without a Savior, that they may not remain any longer in this state of condemnation.

There are others in this world to whom Christ is *something*, but not much. They are anxious to save themselves, but since they must confess some imperfections, they use the merits of Christ as a sort of makeweight for their slight deficiencies. Their robe is almost long enough, and by adding a little fringe of the Redeemer's grace, it becomes all they can wish. They say prayers; they go to church to take the sacrament, to observe Good Friday—these are the main reliances of many a religionist, and then if the carriage sticks a little in a deeper rut than usual, they call in the help of the Lord Jesus, and hope that He will put His shoulder to the wheel. They commonly say, "Well, we must do our best; then Christ will be our Savior, and God is very merciful." They allow the blessed and all-sufficient work and sacrifice of the Savior to fill up their failures, and they imagine that they are extremely humble in allowing so much as that! Jesus is to them a stopgap, and nothing more; I know not whether the condition of such people is one whit more desirable than that of those to whom Jesus is nothing at all, for this is a vile contempt and despising of Christ indeed, to think that He came to help you to save yourselves; to dream that He is a part Savior, and will divide the world and honor of salvation with the sinner! Those who yoke the sinner and the Savior together as each doing a part rob Christ of all His glory; and this is robbery indeed to pilfer from the bleeding Lamb of God the due reward of His agonies! "He trod the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Him." In the work of salvation Jesus stands alone; salvation is of the Lord; if Christ is not all to you, He is nothing to you; He will never go into partnership as a part Savior of men. If He is something, He must be everything, and if He is not everything, He is nothing to you.

There are many who unconsciously think Jesus Christ to be much, but yet they do not understand that He is all in all. I allude to many seeking souls who say, "I would put my trust in Jesus this morning, but I do not feel as I ought." I see—you think that there is at least a little of your *feeling* to be *added* to the Savior's work before it can avail for you! "But I am not as penitent as I should be, and therefore I cannot rest in Jesus." I see, your penitence is to add the topstone to the Savior's yet unfinished work! Perhaps it is one of the hardest works in the world, so hard as to be impossible except to the Holy Spirit Himself, to drive a man away from the idea that he is to *do* something, or to *be* something, in order to his own salvation. Sinner, you are the emptiness, and Christ the fullness! You are the filthiness, and He the cleansing! You are nothing, and he is all in all, and the sooner you consent to this, the better! Have done with saying, "I would come to the Savior if this, and if that," for this quibbling will delude, delay, and destroy you! Come as you are, just now, even at this moment—for Christ is not *almost* all—He is ALL IN ALL!

There are some, too, who think that Christ is all in some things, but they have not yet seen the full teaching of the text, for it says "Christ is all, and in all." "He is all, say they, in justification; He it is who pardons all our sins, and covers us with His righteousness, but as to our *sanctification*, surely we are to effect *that* ourselves! And as to our final perseverance, it must depend wholly upon our own watchfulness! Are we not in jeopardy still? Are there not some points which depend upon our own virtue and goodness?" Beloved, God forbid I should say a word against the most earnest watchfulness, against the most diligent endeavors, but I beseech you do not place them in a wrong position, or speak as though the ultimate salvation of the believer was based upon such shifting sand! We are *saved* in Christ; we are *complete* in Him; we are *sanctified* in Christ Jesus—"And He is made of God unto us wisdom, right-

eousness, sanctification, and redemption.” Christ is ALL, not in my justification only, but in my sanctification, too. He is ALL, not only in the first steps of my faith, but in the last. “He is Alpha and Omega; He is the beginning and the ending, says the Lord.” There is no point between the gates of hell and the gates of heaven where a believer shall have to say, “Christ fails me here, and I must rely upon my own endeavors.” From the dunghill of our corruption up to the throne of our perfection there is no point left to chance, or set aside for us to supply; our salvation has Christ to *begin* with, Christ to *go* on with, and Christ to *finish* with, and that in all points, at all times, for every man of woman born that ever shall be saved. There is no point in which the creature comes in to claim merit, or to bring strength, or to make up for that which was lacking. “Christ is all, and in all.” The saints are “perfect in Christ Jesus.” He said, “It is finished,” and finished it is! He is not the author of our faith only, but the finisher of it, too; He is all in all, and man is nothing at all!

This is a truth of God which every believer has recognized. There are a great many differences among believers, but there can be no difference as to this essential point. Unhappily, the Christian Church has been divided into sections, but those divisions do not affect our agreement upon this one point, that Christ is all! It is no unkindness if I say that the man who does not accept this is no Christian, nor is it too wide a liberality to affirm that every man who is sound in heart upon this point is most certainly a believer. He who trusts alone in Christ, who submits to Him as his only Teacher, King, and Savior is already a saved man; but he who gives not Christ the glory, though he should speak with the tongues of men and of angels; though he should have the gift of prophecy and all knowledge; and though he should have all faith, and could remove mountains; and though he should appear to have all virtue, yet he is no Christian if Christ is held in light esteem by him, or is anything less than all in all! In the new creation this one thing stands as the mark of the newly created, that “Christ is all, and in all” to them, whatever He may be to others.

II. Having thus shown where this truth is recognized, we pass on to notice WHAT THIS TRUTH INCLUDES.

It was the advice of an aged tutor to a young student not to take too magnificent a text. I have sounded that warning in my own ears this morning. This little text is yet one of the greatest in the whole Bible, and I feel lost in its boundless expanse; it is like one of those rare gems which are little to look upon, and yet he who carries them bears the price of empires in his hand! It would not be within the compass of arithmetic to set down the value of this sapphire test; I might as soon hope to carry the world in my hands as to grasp all that is contained in these few words; I cannot navigate so huge a sea, my skiff is too small, I can only coast along the shore. Who can compress “all things” into a sermon? I will guarantee you that my discourse this morning will be more remarkable for its omissions than for what it contains, and I shall hope indeed that every Christian here will be remarking upon what I do *not* say, for then I shall have done much good in exciting meditations and reflections. If I were to try to tell you all the meaning of this boundless text, I would require all time and eternity, and even then all tongues, human and angelic, could not avail me to compass the whole! We will swim in this sea though we cannot fathom it, and feast at this table though we cannot reckon up its costliness!

1. According to the context, Christ is all by way of *national distinction, subject for glorying, and ground for custom*. Observe, “there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free,” in the new creation, but “Christ is all, and in all.” In the New Jerusalem there is no difference between Jew and Gentile; barbarian simplicity and Greek cultivation are as nothing. I suppose as long as we are in the flesh we shall set some store by our nationality, and like Paul shall somewhat glory that we were born free—but surely the less of this the better! Within the gates of the Christian Church we are cosmopolitan; or rather we are citizens of the New Jerusalem only. As a man, I rejoice that I am an Englishman, but not with the same holy joy which fills me when I remember that I am a Christian! When I meet another man who fears God, I do not want him to think me an Englishman, nor do I desire to regard him as an American, a Frenchman, or a Dutchman; we are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens. If any man is a Christian and a foreigner after the flesh, he is yet in spirit 10,000 times more allied to me than if he were an Englishman and an unbeliever. Greatly is it to be deplored whenever the convulsions of nations drag Christians into opposition to one another on the ground of politics. One part of the body of Christ cannot be at war with another; it is a shameful thing whenever we allow our earthly nationality to dominate over our heavenly citizenship! Queen Vic-

toria and President Grant are well enough in their places, but King Jesus is Lord of all! We are above all things subjects of His Imperial Highness, the Prince of Peace! Nobody comes into the Church as a Jew or a Gentile, nor does he remain there as a Greek or a Scythian—whatever he may have been before. When he becomes a Christian, Christ is all; earthly distinctions of rank, if they still exist, as they must while we are in this world, are brought to a minimum within the church; they are almost obliterated, and what remains is sanctified to sacred ends.

Christ is all in the church by way of glorying. The Greek said, “The Hellenes are a race of heroes; remember Sparta and Athens; are we not foremost in civilization, and were we not chief in war? Who set bounds to the Persian tyrant, and bade the boastful monarch bite the dust? We hold our heads erect when we think of Marathon and Salamis.” But when the Greek joined the Christian Church, he forgot his national boasting, and from then on gloried only in the cross of Him whose single arm defeated the hosts of Satan, and led captivity captive! The Jew, when despised, returned scorn for scorn, and said to Greek and Roman, “You may speak of Marathon, but I sing of the Red Sea; you may boast of broken Persia, but I tell of vanquished Egypt! Mine are the glories of the Lord of hosts in the far off ages; we were a people when you were as yet unknown, and we are the chosen favorites of Jehovah.” The moment the Jew sat down at the gospel supper, he laid aside his hereditary pride and bigotry, and recognized the fact that the Greek was as much a brother as the believing Hebrew at his side! So the Scythian, when he came into the Christian Church, was no longer a Barbarian—he spoke the language of Canaan as correctly as his Grecian fellow Christian! The slave no sooner breathed the air of the Christian Church than his shackles fell from him; he might be a slave at home with his master, but he was no slave there, while the freeman, though he had been born free, or with a great price had obtained his freedom, never in the Christian Church looked down upon the slave. Bond and free were one in Christ Jesus! Nobody had any personal ground for glory—neither race, nor pedigree, nor rank, nor position were of any account—but Christ was all. “*Christianus sum*,” I am a Christian, was and is the universal glorying of all saints!

This at the same time obliterated all their sinful national customs. The Greek said originally, “I may certainly indulge in this vice because the Lacedaemonians have always observed this custom.” And the Jew perhaps, might have said, “I will eat nothing common or unclean; neither will I consort with Gentiles, because our fathers did not do so.” The Barbarian said, “I cannot submit to the laws of civilized life; my father ranged the desert.” And the Scythian said, “I shall rob, and pillage, and kill, for I am a wild man. Why shouldn’t I? Did not my fathers do so from generation to generation?” When the various tribes came into the Christian Church, down went all separating and evil customs at once! What has Christ said? What has Christ done? What has He bid us? These are law to us, and nothing else. Thus the distinctions of race, the glorying of nationality, and the habits and customs of various nations all sank into nothing, for Jesus Christ in the Christian Church became all in all. That, I doubt not, is the meaning of the text in its context: Christ all and in all by way of distinction.

2. Secondly, Christ is all in all to us in another three-fold way—to God, before our enemies, within ourselves. Happy are you, O child of God, that in all your relationships to the great Judge of all the earth, Christ is all in all to you! You need a Mediator to stand between you and God—Christ is He. You need a High Priest to present with His own sacrifice, your prayers and praises—Christ is He. You need a representative to stand at all times before God; an intercessor to plead for you; one who shall be a daysman akin to you, and akin to God who can put His hand upon both—Christ is that to you. Whenever God looks upon you *in* Christ, He sees in you all that ought to be there. Did He look upon you apart from Christ, He would see in you nothing He could commend, but you are “accepted in the Beloved.” Even the omniscient eye of God detects nothing for which to condemn the soul which is covered with the righteousness of Christ! “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God who justifies.” Without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, is the entire church as seen in the person of Christ Jesus, her representative and head; Christ is all for us before the throne of God! But alas, we need someone to stand between us and our enemies. There is Satan—how shall I meet him; he will accuse me; who shall plead my case? Christ is all in all for that. Whatever fiery darts Satan may shoot, Christ is the shield that can quench those darts; if Satan tempts me, Christ shall plead for me before the temptation comes; whenever I have to contend with Satan, this is the weapon with which I should arm myself. If I reason with him, if I bring forward any strength of my own to oppose him, he may well say to me—

“Jesus I know, but who are you?” But if I bring *Jesus* into the conflict, and wield the merit of His blood, and the faithfulness of His promise, Satan cannot overcome the sprinkled blood! We overcome through the blood of the Lamb. Christ Jesus is both shield and sword to us, armor and weapons of war!

So in our conflict with the world, whatever trials you have, my dear brothers and sisters Christ is all in all to meet them. Are you poor? He will make you rich in your poverty by His consoling presence. Are you sick? He will make your bed in your sickness, and will so make your sickbed better than the walks of health. Are you persecuted? Be it for His sake, and you may even leap for joy! Are you oppressed? Remember how He also was oppressed and afflicted, and you will have fellowship with Him in His sufferings. Amidst all the vicissitudes of this present life, Christ is all the believer needs to bear him up, and bear him through. No wave can sink the man who clings to this life Buoy. He shall swim to glory on it!

So, too, *within myself* Christ is all. If I look into the chambers of my inner nature, I see all manner of deficiencies and deformities, and I may well be filled with dismay; but when I see Christ there, my heart is comforted, for He will both destroy the works of the devil, and perfect that which He has begun in me! I am a sinner, but my heart rests on its Savior; I am burdened with this body of sin and death, but behold, my Savior is formed in me the hope of glory; I am by nature an heir of wrath, even as others, but I am born into the Second Adam’s household, and therefore I am beloved of the Most High, and a joint-heir with Christ! Is there Christ in your heart, beloved? Then everything that is there that would make you sorrow may also suggest to you a topic for joy! The saint is grieved to think that he has sin to confess, but he is glad to think that he is enabled to confess sin; the saint is vexed that he should have so much infirmity, yet he glories in infirmity because the power of Christ does rest upon him! He is grieved day by day to observe his wanderings, but he is also rejoiced to see how the Good Shepherd follows him and restores his soul! all the evils and shortcomings in me which make me weep, also make me glad when Jesus is seen within, for all I see within myself lacking or sinful, I see a sufficient remedy in Christ who is all in all.

Thus I have given you a second way of meditating upon our text. Christ is not only all by way of distinction, but He is all to God, all between us and our enemies, and all within ourselves.

3. We may see another phase of the same meaning if we take a third division. Christ is all *for* us, He is all *to* us, He is all *in* us.

Christ is all *for* us, the Surety, the Substitute in our place to bear our guilt—“For the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” “The chastisement of our peace was upon Him.” “He has made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” He is also the worker standing in our place to fulfill all righteousness for us. He is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. All that God requires us to be, Christ is for us; He has not presented to God a part of what was done, but has to the utmost farthing paid all that His people owed. Acting as our forerunner in heaven, He has taken possession of our inheritance, and as our surety He secures to us our entrance there. *For* us all Jesus is all, and this day He is all *to* us. We trust wholly in Him. I often question myself upon many Christian graces, but there is one thing I never can doubt about, and that is I know I have no other hope but in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. If a soul can perish relying with all its power upon the finished work of the Savior, then I shall perish; but if saving faith is an entire reliance upon Him whom God has sent forth to be propitiation for sin, then I can never perish until God’s Word is broken! Can you not say that, dear brothers and sisters, and will it not yield you comfort? Have you anything else you could trust? Have you *one good work* that you could rely upon? Is there a prayer you have ever offered, an emotion you have ever felt that you would dare to use as a buttress, or as in some degree a prop to your hope of salvation? I know you reply, “I have nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing! Christ my Savior is all my salvation and all my desire, and I abhor the very idea of putting anything side by side with Him as a ground of my dependence before God.” Oh then, assuredly you have the mark of Christ’s sheep, for to all of them Christ is all.

I said also that Christ is all *in* us, and so He is. Whatever there is in us that is not of Christ and the work of His Spirit will have to come out of us, and blessed be the day in which it is ejected. If I am growing and advancing, but it is a growth in the flesh, and an advance in self, it is a spurious fungus growth, and like Jonah’s gourd, it will perish in a night. Wood, hay, stubble are quick building, but they are also quick burning—only that which belongs to “Christ formed in me the hope of glory,” will prove

to be gold, silver, precious stones. These may seem slow building, but they will abide the fire. O Christian, pray much and labor much to have Christ in you, for He is all that is worth having in you! He is only the husk of a Christian who has not the precious kernel of Christ in his heart! Christ *on the cross* saves us by becoming Christ *in the heart*. Jesus is indeed all for us, all to us, all in us!

4. Shift the kaleidoscope, and take the same truth of God in another way—*Christ is the channel of all, the pledge of all, and the sum of all!*

The *channel* of all: all love and mercy flow from God through Christ the Mediator. We get nothing apart from Him. “No man comes unto the Father but by Me.” Other conduits are dry, but this channel is always full. “He is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.” Christ is the *pledge* of all. When God gave us Christ, He did as much as say, “I have given you all things.” “He that spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” He is a covenant to us, the title deeds of the promised rest. And indeed Christ is not only the Channel of all, and the Pledge of all, but the Apostle says He is all—so I take it He is *the Sum* of all. If you are going to travel on the Continent, you need not carry a bed with you, or a house, or a table, or medicine, or food. If you only have gold in your purse, you have these condensed! Gold is the representative of everything it can buy—it is a kind of universal charm, producing what its owner wishes; I have never yet met with a person in any country who did not understand its meaning. “Money answers all things,” says the wise man, and this is true in a limited sense. But he who has Christ, has indeed all things—he has the essence, the substance of all good. I have only to plead the name of Jesus before the Father’s throne, and nothing desirable shall be denied me. If Christ is yours, all things are yours! God, who gave you Christ, has in that one Gift summed up the total of all you will need for time and for eternity, to obliterate the sin of the past, to fulfill the needs of the present, and to perfect you for all the work and bliss of the future.

5. Once more let us view our text in another light. *Christ is all we need, all we desire, and all of good that we can conceive.* He is all I need. Jesus is the Living Water to quench my thirst, the heavenly bread to satisfy my hunger, the snow-white robe to cover me, the sure refuge, the happy home of my soul, my meat and my medicine, my solace and my song, my light and my delight.

He is all I *desire*, and when most covetous, I only covet more of His presence; when most ambitious, it is my ambition to be like He; when most insatiable in desire, I only long to be with Him where He is. He is all I can *conceive* of good. When my imagination stretches all her wings to take a flight into realms beyond where the eagle’s wing has been, yet even then she reaches not the height of the glory which Christ Jesus has promised her; she cannot conceive with her most expanded powers of anything more rich and precious than Christ, her Christ, herself Christ’s, and Christ all her own! Oh, if you want to know what heaven is, know what Christ is, for the way to spell heaven is with those five letters that make up the word JESUS. When you get Him, He shall be all to you that your glorified body shall need, and all your glorified spirit can conceive. O precious Christ, You are all in all!

III. I have shown you then, in a very hurried way, what it is that this truth includes; now, with greater brevity still, WHAT DOES THIS TRUTH INVOLVE? It involves a great many things. First, it involves the glory and excellence of Christ. Of whom else could it be said that He is all in all? There are many things in this world that are good, but there is nothing that is good for everything. Some plants may be a good medicine, but not a good cordial. The plant of renown is good every way. Good clothing is not able to stay your hunger, but Christ, the bread of heaven, is also the Father’s best robe. You cannot expect any finite thing to be good for all things, but Christ is Infinite Goodness. This Tree of life bears all manner of fruits, and the leaves are for the healing of the nations. He is strength and beauty, safety and sanctity, peace and plenty, healing and help, comfort and conquest, life here, and life forever! Glory be to the Lord Jesus Christ! What can He be less than God, if He is all? “All.” Is it not a synonym for God? We say there cannot be two Gods, because the one God is everywhere, and fills all space. And who, then, can He be who is called “all in all,” but “very God of very God”? Worship Him, my brothers and sisters, with all your hearts! Rejoice in Him! Bless Him from day to day! Let not the world think you poor who are so rich in Him; never allow men to think you unhappy, who have perfect happiness in the ever blessed Immanuel!

See, in the next place, the safety and the blessedness of the believer. Christ is all. But the believer can add, “And Christ is mine.” Then the believer has all things—all that he *will* need, as well as all he

does need. No emperor who has not Christ is half as rich as he who has Christ and is a beggar! He who has Christ, being a pauper, has all things, and he who has not Christ, possessing a thousand worlds, possesses nothing for real happiness and joy. Oh, the blessedness of the man who can say, "Christ is mine." On the other hand, see the wretchedness of the man who has not the Savior, for if Christ is all, you who believe not on Him are devoid of all, in being destitute of Christ. But you say, "I try my best; I attend public worship; I do a great deal that is good." You have nothing if you have not Christ! Do not flatter yourself that you are getting on and adding goods to goods in spiritual things; if you have not a Savior you are naked and poor and miserable. You are without all if you are without Christ, who is all! The Christian, then, is rich, but everyone who is destitute of Christ is poor to the extreme of poverty.

See, too, in the truth of God before us a rebuke for the doubts of many seekers. They will say, "I have not this, I have not that." Suppose you have it not—Christ has it—if it is good for anything. "I would gladly cast myself upon the mercy of God in Christ this day, but"—Ah, away with your "buts." What do you need? "I need true belief," says one. Come to Christ for it, then. "I need a broken heart," says another. If you cannot come *with* a broken heart to Christ, come *for* a broken heart—

*"True belief, and true repentance
Every grace that brings us near,
Without money
Come to Jesus Christ and buy."*

We have an old proverb about the folly of taking coals to Newcastle, but what folly must that be which makes a man think that he can take *something* to Christ, when Christ is all? Come, come, come, come to Him, poor sinner, and let Him be all in all to you! Simply rely upon Him and be at peace.

How this again rebukes the coldness of saints. If Christ is all in all, then how is it we love Him so little? If He is so precious, how is it we prize Him so little? Oh, my dull, dead, cold heart, what are you doing? Are you harder than adamant, and baser than brutish, that you are not much more moved with ardor and fervent affection towards such a Lord as this? Christ is all, my beloved, yet look how little we offer to Him of our substance; how scant a portion of our time; how slender a part of our talents! God stir us to holy fervency, that if Christ is all for us, we may be all for Christ! May we lay ourselves out without reservation to the utmost stretch of our power, asking fresh strength from Him that we may do all that can be done by mortal men! And by His grace may all be done with us by God that He shall see it to be compatible with His glory to do!

Again, by our text another lesson is furnished us. We learn here how to measure young converts. We ought not to expect them to be philosophers or divines—Christ is all. If they know Christ, and are resting in Him, we are bound to say, "Come, and welcome." Be they poor, be they unlettered, if Jesus Christ is formed in their hearts, even though we can see Him there only as a dim outline, we are to open wide the gate, and receive *them* as Jesus received *us*.

Here is a measure, too, by which to measure *ministers*. The fashion of the world is to admire him most who shall speak most rhetorically. Accursed be the day in which oratory was tolerated in the Christian pulpit; it has been the ruin and plague of the Church of God! This labor after flowery speech; this seeking after polished periods and gaudy sentences; what is it but a pandering to the world, and a prostitution of the ministry of reconciliation? Had men learned what the Apostle meant when he said, "I, brethren, came not with excellence of speech or of wisdom," they would have preached far otherwise than they have done. We should strive to speak the gospel simply from our hearts, and then men's hearts will be impressed with the truth of God. Alas, this toying with fair words, and seeking after pleasing expressions; this dressing up of the truth of God in the flaunting finery of falsehood degrades rather than adorns the gospel! And it has done incalculable damage to souls, and to the advance of truth. Measure ministers by this—what is there of Christ about them? That ministry which has no savor of Christ in it, be it what it may, is a ministry which the Lord will not acknowledge, and that *you* ought not to either! It is not God-sent, and ought not to be received by you; give me Christ Jesus, though the speech in which He is set forth is of the most uncouth kind, rather than the choicest inventions of the most ingenious thinkers, from which Jesus Christ is absent, or in which He is not exalted.

Brothers and sisters, this will also help you to estimate your own devotions. You came to the communion table the other day, but you did not enter into fellowship with Christ. Ah, then there was a lost opportunity! You were in your closet this morning in prayer, but you did not plead the name of Jesus. Ah, then again there was a lost season of devotion! You are a Bible reader, and your eyes glance over

the holy words but you do not see Jesus in each page—then your reading has failed! You have been giving to the poor of late, but have you done it for Christ’s sake? You have sought to win souls—have you done it in Christ’s Strength? If Jesus is absent, you have offered a sacrifice from which the heart is gone, and among the Romans, no omen was supposed to be as damaging as the absence of the heart from the sacrifice! No Christ, then there can be no acceptance! But a fullness of Christ proves a fullness of acceptance with God.

IV. There are many other things which I could have said, but time has failed me, and therefore I must close by noticing **WHAT THIS TRUTH REQUIRES OF US.** Christ is all in all! Therefore “put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, heart of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering.” The exhibition of the Christ-life in the saints is the legitimate inference from the fact that Christ is all to them. If Christ is all, and yet I, being a Christian, am not like Christ, my Christianity is a transparent sham; I am nothing but a base pretender, and my outward religiousness is a pompous pagantry for my soul to be carried to hell in; nothing more! It is a gilded coffin for a lifeless spirit. I shall perish with a double destruction if I have dared to profane the name of Christ by taking it upon me when I have not the essence of the Christian religion within me! Orthodoxy, though it is of the most assured sort, is vanity of vanities, unless there is with it orthodoxy of *life*. And experience, whatever man may say about it, is but a dream, a fiction of his own imagining if it does not display itself in shaking off the sins of the flesh, and putting on the adornments of holiness. O brothers and sisters, these are searching things to every one of us. Who among us lives as he should at home? Could you bear that the angel who visits your house should publish before the great cloud of witnesses, all that he has seen there? In your shops, in your businesses; you professors—are you always upright and straightforward as Christians should be? You merchants on the Exchange, are not some of you who profess to be Christians as greedy and as overreaching as others? I charge you, if you have any respect for Christ, lay down His name! If you will not endeavor to honor it, you will be lost! You covetous money-grubbers, you earth-scrappers who live only for this world, you will be lost! You need not doubt of that, you will be lost sure enough, but why need you make the assurance of your condemnation doubly sure by the base imposture of calling yourselves Christians? Meanwhile, let the Ethiopian call himself white if he will; let the leopard declare that he has no spots; these things shall not matter, but the lies of a man who lives without Christ, while calling himself a Christian, brings such dishonor upon Him who was nailed to the tree, and whose religion is that of holiness, that I beseech you, by the living God, give up your profession if you do not endeavor to make it true! If you are not living as you should, do not pretend to be what you are not! Seek you unto God, that the life of Christ being in you, you may manifest it in your conversation.

Without Christ you are nothing, though you are baptized, though you are members of churches, though you are highly esteemed as deacons, elders, pastors. Oh, then, have Christ everywhere in all things, and compel men to say of you, “To that man Christ is all in all; I have marked him; he has been with Jesus, he has learned of Him, for he acts as Jesus did!

God grant a blessing on these words, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—COLOSSIANS 3; 4:1-6.

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