

“THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS”

NO. 1020

**A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 12, 1871,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

“In them has He set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.”

Psalm 19:4, 5, 6.

*“The Sun of righteousness.”
Malachi 4:2.*

WE should feel quite justified in applying the language of the 19th Psalm to our Lord Jesus Christ from the simple fact that He is so frequently compared to the sun; and especially in the passage which we have given you as our second text, wherein He is called “The Sun of Righteousness.” But we have a higher justification for such a reading of the passage, for it will be in your memories that in the 10th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, the apostle Paul, slightly altering the words of this Psalm, applies them to the gospel, and the preachers thereof. “Have they not heard?” he said, “Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.” So that what was here spoken of the sun by David, is referred by Paul to the gospel, which is the light streaming from Jesus Christ, “The Sun of Righteousness.” We can never err if we allow the New Testament to interpret the Old—comparing spiritual things with spiritual is a good mental and spiritual exercise for us, and I feel, therefore, that we shall not be guilty of straining the text at all when we take the language of David in relation to the sun, and use it in reference to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Do not your hearts often say, “What shall we do, or what shall we say to render honor unto our Redeemer?” Have you not often felt confounded as to what offering you should bring to Him? If you had been possessor of all the worlds, you would have laid them at His feet; if the universe had been your heritage, you would cheerfully have resigned it to Him, and felt happy in stripping yourself of everything, that He might be rendered the more glorious by your sacrifice. Since you have not all this wealth, have you not again and again asked of your soul—

*“Oh what shall I do,
My Savior to praise?”*

I would write the best of poems if so I could extol Him, but the faculty is not in me; I would sing the sweetest of songs, and compose the most melting music, if I could, and count art, and wit, and music exalted by being handmaidens to Him, but how shall I adore Him, before whom the best music on earth must be but discord? And how shall I set Him forth, the very skirts of whose garments are bright with insufferable light? At such times you have looked the whole world through to find metaphors to heap upon Him; you have culled all the fair flowers of nature, and made them into garlands to cast at His feet, and you have gathered all earth’s gems and precious things to crown His head, but you have been disappointed with the result, and have cried out with our poet—

*“The whole creation can afford
But some faint shadows of my Lord!
Nature, to make His beauties known,
Must mingle colors not her own.”*

At such times, while ransacking land, and sea, and sky for metaphors, you have probably looked upon the sun, and have said—“This great orb, the lord of light, and lamp of day is like my Savior; it is the faint image of His excellent glory whose countenance shines as the sun in its strength.” You have done well to seize on such a figure; what Milton calls the golden-tressed sun is the most glorious object in creation, and in Jesus the fullness of glory dwells! The sun is at the same time the most influential of existences, acting upon the whole world, and truly our Lord is, in the deepest sense, “of this great world both eye and soul.” He, “with benignant ray sheds beauty, life, and joyance from above.” The sun is,

moreover, the most abiding of creatures, and therein it is also a type of Him who remains from generation to generation, and is the same yesterday, today, and forever. The king of day is so vast and so bright that the human eye cannot bear to gaze upon him; we delight in his beams, but we would be blinded should we continue to peer into his face! Even yet more brilliant is our Lord, for as God He is a consuming fire; but He deigns to smile upon us with milder beams as our brother and Redeemer. Jesus, like the sun, is the center and soul of all things, the fullness of all good, the lamp that lights us, the fire that warms us, the magnet that guides and controls us; He is the source and fountain of all life, beauty, fruitfulness, and strength; He is the fosterer of tender herbs of penitence, the quickener of the vital sap of grace, the ripener of fruits of holiness, and the life of everything that grows within the garden of the Lord. Whereas to adore the sun would be idolatry—it were treason not to worship ardently the divine Sun of Righteousness!

Jesus Christ is the Great, the Glorious, the infinitely blessed; even the sun fails to set Him forth; but as it is one of the best figures we can find, it is ours to use this day! We will think of Jesus as the Sun this morning—first *as in the text*; secondly, *as He is to us*; and then, thirdly, for a few minutes *we will bask in His beams*.

I. First, then, we will contemplate Jesus AS THE SUN IN THE TEXT.

Note how the passage begins—“In them has He set a tabernacle for the sun.” Kings were accustomed in their pompous progresses through their dominions to have canopies of splendor borne aloft over them so that marching in the midst of their glittering soldiery; they were, themselves, the main attraction of the gorgeous pageant. Our Lord Jesus Christ in His Church is, as it were, traversing the heavens in a majestic tabernacle, and, like the sun, scattering His beams among men! The Redeemer is canopied by the adoration of His saints, for He “inhabits the praises of Israel.” He is, from day to day, advancing in His glorious march through the universe, conquering and to conquer, and He will journey onward till the dispensation shall terminate, and the gospel age shall be closed by His Second Advent. When the text says that there is a tabernacle set for the sun in the firmament, we are reminded of Christ as dwelling in the highest heavens; He is not alone the Christ of ancient history, but He is the Christ of today! Think not always of Him as the lowly man despised and rejected, as nailed to the cross, or buried in the tomb; He is not here, for He is risen, but He still exists, not as a dream or phantom, but as the real Christ! Doubt it not, for up yonder, in the seventh heaven, the Lord has set a tabernacle for the Sun of Righteousness; there Jesus abides in inconceivable splendor, the joy and glory of all those blessed spirits who, having believed in Him on the earth, have come to behold Him in the heavens—

*“Bright, like a sun, the Savior sits,
And spreads eternal noon.
No evenings there, nor gloomy nights,
To want the feeble moon.”*

That Jesus lives is a deep well of consolation to the saints, and did we always remember it, our hearts would not be troubled; if we always remembered that Jesus both lives and reigns, our joys would never wither. We worship Him, it is true, as one who was slain, and has redeemed us unto God by His blood, but we also extol Him as one who is “alive forever more, and has the keys of death and of hell.”

Let your faith today behold Jesus sitting at the right hand of God, even the Father; He sits there because His atoning work is done, and He is receiving the infinite reward which His Father promised Him; He is exalted as a King upon His throne until His enemies are made His footstool; He dwells within His tabernacle of praise, adored and admired by angels and glorified spirits; He sits there, not as a weary one, feeble and exhausted, but with the keys of universal monarchy at His belt, for “the government is upon His shoulder, and His name is called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God.” I want you to fully grasp the thought of the living Savior—of the Sun in His tabernacle in the highest heavens, for this must be the fulcrum upon which we shall work this morning. We shall get our leverage here—the living Savior, the mighty Savior, the reigning Savior; He is the Church’s joy and hope in the present and for all years to come!

The text proceeds to speak of Jesus as the Sun, and describes Him, first, as *a bridegroom coming out of His chamber*. A beautiful description, indeed, of the sun when he rises in the early morning he comes forth from the vast obscure, as from within a secret chamber; he withdraws the veil of night, and floods the earth with fluid gold. From curtains of purple and vermillion, he looks forth, and scatters orient pearl around him clad with a blaze of glory, he begins the race of day. Thus our Lord Jesus Christ, when He

rose from the dead, was as the sun unveiling itself; He came forth from the sepulcher as a bridegroom from his chamber. Observe that dear name of bridegroom: the Lord of heaven and earth, between whom and us there was an infinite distance, has deigned to take our humanity into union with Himself of the most intimate kind! Among men there is no surer mode of making peace between two contending parties than for a marriage to be established between them; it has often been done so, and thus wars have been ended, and alliances have been established. The Prince of Peace on heaven’s side condescends to be married to our nature that from now on heaven and earth may be as one! Our Lord came as the bridegroom of His Church out of His chamber when He was born of the virgin, and was revealed to the shepherds and the wise men of the East; yet, in a certain sense, He still continued in His chamber as a bridegroom all His life, for He was hidden and veiled.

The Jewish world knew not their King, though He spoke openly in their streets and sought not mystery; yet He was unknown, they did not discern Him, and in some respects He did not, then, desire to be discerned, for He often bade His disciples to tell no man what was done. That was the time when the bridegroom was in His chamber, being made perfect through suffering, and perfectly conformed unto His Church, bearing her sicknesses and her sorrows, suffering her needs, enduring her shame, and thus completing the marriage union between the two. To this end He actually descended by dark steps of anguish into the silent inner room of the grave, and there He slept in His chamber, perfectly wedded to His Church. Come and look at Him, you who admire the lover of your souls; He stooped to death and the sepulcher because manhood had fallen under their yoke. His Church was subject to death, and He must die. She deserved to suffer the penalty due to God’s insulted law, and therefore Jesus bowed His head to the stroke—

*“Yes, said the Son, with her I’ll go
Through all the depths of sin and woe;
And on the cross will even dare
The bitter pains of death to bear.”*

And He did bear them, and in the darksome chamber of the tomb He proved how true a bridegroom He was to His Church. Before His great race began, of which we are soon to speak, it behooved our mighty champion to descend into the lowest parts of the earth and sleep among the dead. Before every day there is a night where darkness seems to triumph; it behooved Christ to suffer, and then to rise again; His descent was necessary to His ascent—His sojourn in the chamber to His race and victory.

Thus I have introduced to you the prelude of the race—the bridegroom in His chamber. Now observe *the coming out of it*. The sun comes forth at the appointed hour, from the gates of day, and begins to gladden the earth. Even so on the third day, early in the morning, Jesus, our Lord, arose from His sleep, and there was a great earthquake, for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven and rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulcher. Then did the Sun of Righteousness arise! Then did the great bridegroom come forth from His chamber and begin His joyful race! It must have been a ravishing sight to have beheld the risen Savior—well might the disciples hold Him by the feet and worship Him. I think if ever angels sung more sweetly at one time than another, it must have been on that first Easter Morning when they saw the divine champion break His bonds of death asunder, and rise into the glorious Resurrection Life! Then was He revealed to the sons of men, and no longer hidden, He began to tell His disciples the meaning of those enigmas which had been dark to them. Things which they had not understood; which seemed inexplicable, were all opened up by Him, for now was His time to come out of His chamber! His words, though plain enough, had aforesaid hidden Him even from those who loved Him, but now He speaks no more in proverbs, but shows them openly concerning Himself and the Father. He has laid aside the incognito in which He traversed the earth as a stranger, and He is now divinely familiar with His friends, bidding them even touch His hands and His side. In His death the veil was rent, and in His Resurrection the High Priest came forth in His robes of glory and beauty! In a little while He was gone away, but He returned from the secret chambers of the ivory palaces, and showed Himself unto His disciples; blessed were the eyes that saw Him in that day!

Though during the 40 days in which our Lord lingered among His followers upon earth, we may truly say that He had come out of His chamber, we perceive that He more fully did so when, after the 40 days had been accomplished, He took His disciples to the top of Olivet, and there ascended into heaven, out of their sight. Then had the Sun, indeed, ascended above the horizon to make His glories stream along the heavens! See you not the angelic bands poising themselves upon the wing in mid-air, waiting

until He shall return all glowing with the victory after the long and deadly fight? Mark you well that matchless spectacle as He is “seen of angels.”—

*“The helmed cherubim
And sworded seraphim
Are seen in glittering ranks,
With wings displayed.”*

They have hastened to meet the Prince of Glory, and attend Him to His ancient patrimony! Right glad are the entire heavenly band to welcome back the Captain of the Lord’s host, and therefore they harp in loud and solemn choir to heaven’s triumphant Heir. As for the glorified of mortal race, redeemed of old by His blood which in the fullness of time was shed, they hail Him with most glad hymn, and lift up their sweetest symphonies to extol Him who finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness! Then the Bridegroom came out of His chamber with fit marriage music. His beauties hidden for a while in the chamber, where He was regarded as without form or comeliness; He blazed forth with renewed splendor, such as confounded both sun and moon.

In another respect, Christ came out of His chamber at His ascension, because when He ascended on high, leading captivity captive, He received and gave gifts for men; the gifts were intended for the manifestation of Him. His Church, which is His body, was by His own command sitting, still, in the chamber, tarrying till power was given, but, on a sudden the Bridegroom’s power was felt, for there was heard the sound as of a rushing mighty wind which filled all the place, and then descending upon each favored head came the cloven tongue, and straightway you could see that the Bridegroom had come out of His chamber, for the multitude in the street began to hear His voice; it was Peter who spoke, we say, but far rather was it Christ, the Bridegroom, who spoke by Peter; it was the Sun, from the chambers of the East, bursting through the clouds, and beginning to shine on Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and Rome, and Egypt, and making the multitudes in far-off lands to see the day which prophets and kings had waited for, but which had never visited their eyes! Do you hear the joyful motion among the people—the joy mingled with the sorrows of repentance? This is the singing of birds, and these the dewdrops which hail the rising sun! The people cry, “What must we do to be saved?” The shadows are fleeing; they believe in Jesus, and are baptized into His name—the true light of God is shining! Three thousand souls are added in one day to the Church, for truly the Bridegroom is awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouts by reason of wine (Psa 78:65)! Then was the gospel race commenced with a glorious burst of strength, such as only our champion could have displayed.

Meditate at your leisure upon this first general manifestation of our Lord to the general multitude. He had not gone out of Israel before. “I am not sent,” said He, “save to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.” Palestine was His chamber; He went to the windows of it, and looked forth on Tyre and Sidon wistfully, but He had not come forth of His chamber till that day when the gospel began to be preached to the Gentiles, also. And in fulfillment of the gift of Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured out upon all flesh, the apostles went everywhere preaching the Word of God. When even we, the dwellers in the far off northern isles, received the gospel, then, indeed, had the Bridegroom come forth out of His chamber! But enough of this, or time will fail me. After the coming forth, we have to consider in the text *His course*; the course of Jesus has been as that of the sun, or like that of a mighty champion girded for running.

Notice, under this head, *His continuance*; our Lord’s gospel has been no meteor that flashed for a while and then passed away, but it has remained as the sun in the heavens. What systems of philosophy have come and gone since on Calvary the Christ of God was lifted up? What speculations, what lo-heres and lo-theres have shone forth, have dazzled fools, and have been quenched in the night since He left the chamber of His marriage? Yet He continues still the same! Nor, brothers and sisters are there any marks of decrepitude either in Him or in His gospel; they tell us that the idolatry of Hindustan is evidently crumbling—it falls not yet, but it is worm-eaten through and through. Equally sure is it that the false prophet holds but a feeble swath among his followers, and we can all see that though popery makes desperate efforts, and its extremities are vigorous, yet it is paralyzed at its heart, and the Vatican is made to feel that its time of power is short. As for the gospel, it wears the dew of its youth after 18 centuries of struggles; and it predominates most in those young nations which have evidently a history before them. The old systems are now most favored by those nations which are left behind in the race of

civilization, but the peoples whom God has made alive by nature are those to whom He has given to be receptive of His grace. There are grand days coming for the Church of God! Voltaire said that he lived in the twilight of Christianity, and so he did, but it was the twilight of the morning—not the twilight of the evening! Glory be unto God, the little cloud the size of a man’s hand is spreading! It begins to cover the heavens, and the day is not far distant when the sound of abundance of rain shall be heard. Christ was not a strong man who bounded forth at a leap, and then put forth no more strength; He rejoiced to continue His work, and to run His race; He was not a shooting star that sparkles for a moment, but a sun that shall shine throughout the livelong day!

Note next in this metaphor *the unity of our Lord’s course*, for it is clear in the text—“Rejoicing as a strong man to run the race.” A race is one thing; there is the one goal, and the man gathers up his strength to reach it. He has nothing else to think of; they may throw the golden apples in his road, but he does not observe them; they may sound harp and sackbut to the right, and breathe the lute or sweeter instruments of music to the left, but he is deaf to all; he has a race to run, and he throws his whole strength into it. This is a fit image of our Lord! He has never turned aside; He has never been compelled to retrace His steps, to revise His doctrine, to amend His system, or change His tactics. On, on, on has the course of Jesus been, shining more and more unto the perfect day!

A certain people, nowadays, who yet dare to call themselves Christians are always hankering after something new, pining for novelties, and boasting of their fresh discoveries, though, indeed, their fresh things are only fragments of broken images of heresies which our fathers dashed to shivers centuries ago. The great thinkers of the present day are nothing more than mere translators; you know the London meaning of that word—buyers of old shoes who patch them up, and send them forth again as if they were something new. Old shoes and clothes are common enough among those Gibeonites who would deceive Israel, and whose boast is that they have come from far, and bring us treasures of wisdom from remote regions. Sirs, we need not your new things, for our Lord’s race is the same as of old, and as He continues in one course, so also will we; to spread righteousness, and in so doing, to save sinners, and to glorify God—this is the one purpose of Christ—from it He will never cease, and nothing shall ever tempt Him from the pursuit of it! Look, I pray you, with pleasure, and see how our Lord, from His first coming out of His chamber until now has continued still in the gospel to shine forth with rays of glory, without variableness or shadow of a turning. Though *we* believe not, He abides faithful; He cannot deny Himself; He changes not in work or way. For Zion’s sake He works up to now, and the pleasure of the Lord prospers in His hand.

But now, observe next, the notable idea of *strength* which the text conveys to us. “Rejoicing as a strong man to run his race.” It is no drudgery for the ascended Lord to carry on His cause—

***“The baffled prince of hell
In vain new efforts tries,
Truth’s empire to repel
By cruelty and lies.
The infernal gates shall rage in vain
Conquest awaits the Lamb once slain!”***

There is a race to be run, and Jesus is strong enough for it. He does not come panting up to the starting place, and from there go creeping on, but like a strong man He surveys the course; He knows that He is equal to it, and therefore He delights in it. When He began His race, He was opposed, but the opposition only made Him triumph the more readily, for “they who were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word.” When our Lord arose like the sun, the clouds were thick and heavy, but He painted their fleecy skirts with gold! Persecution hung over the eastern horizon, but He turned it into the imperial purple of His sovereignty! As He pursued His course, the ice of centuries melted, the dense gloom of ages disappeared; no chains could bind Him, and no bonds could hold Him; He dashed on with undiminished energy, and the gates of hell could not prevail. As no cloud has ever stayed the sun as he has “whirled his car along the ethereal plain,” so no difficulties impeded the onward course of the gospel in the days of its dawning! To the first days of the Church, Thomson’s lines to the sun are fully applicable—

***“Now, flaming up the heavens, the potent sun
Melts into limpid air the high-raised clouds,
And morning fogs, that hovered round the hills,
In party-colored bands, till wide, unveiled,***

*The face of nature shines, from where earth seems
Far stretched around, to meet the bending sphere.”*

The gospel soon shed its light in every land, and all nations felt its benign power; men ceased to persecute, and bowed before the cross.

Soon fresh clouds arose, and the church passed through them. Errors and heresies multiplied; filthy dreamers led away a huge apostasy; Rome became the mother of harlots and abominations, but the true church, and the true Christ within her, went right on. The church was not less triumphant in her second trial than in her first. Papal Rome was overcome as surely as pagan Rome; Popes were no more her conquerors than bloody emperors had been of yore. To the thoughtful eye, the Sun of Christ is not less bright over the valleys of Piedmont than over the waves of the sea which bore Paul and his fellow apostles. The champion’s race was as eager and as triumphant as before. Since then, dense banks of spiritual deadness and false teaching have barred the visible heavens, and have appeared to mortal sight an ebony wall impenetrable as steel, but the Lord reigns! He that sits in the heavens does laugh—the Lord does have them in derision; strong is His right hand, and His enemies shall be broken. On goes the Sun of Righteousness—nothing impedes Him; His tabernacle is above them all. He rides on the heavens; yes, He rides on the wings of the wind! Trust in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength; Christ has failed in nothing; the decrees have been executed; the eternal purposes have been fulfilled; the elect have been saved; His kingdom is established, and shall continue as long as the sun! Who shall stay His hand? Who shall resist His will?

Observe, therefore, how the force is coupled with *joy*. Weakness brings sorrow, but strength begets joy. Christ is always glad, and He would have His people rejoice, for His cause goes right on, and He shall not fail nor be discouraged; He rejoices as He divides the spoil with the strong. When a man has a task to do which is easy to him, and which he can readily perform, he sings at his work, and so this day does Christ rejoice over His Church with joy, and triumph over her with singing! His cause goes on in spite of foes, and His strength is so great that even the battle fills Him with delight! I remember to have heard a Welsh preacher make use of the following simile; he was speaking of the joy of Christ in heaven, and he said, “You tell me that the church is sorrowful on earth, and I tell you that Christ is joyous in heaven; and then you ask me how this can be? You see yonder mother with her babe, and she is washing the child. Its face is foul, and she desires to see it shine with brightness; she would see it white as the marble mingled with the redness of the rose. Therefore she washes it; but the child cries; it is fretful, and knows not what is good for it—so it whines and struggles. The mother does not cry, or share its sorrow; she keeps on singing because she knows that all is right, and that her darling will smile like a cherub when all is over; she sees the good results coming, while the babe only feels the present discomfort, so she sings her song and never stops, let the child cry as it may.” And so the Lord Jesus has pleasure in His work; He is purifying His Church, and making her fit to be presented to Himself, and though she winces and laments, it is the flesh that makes her do so! The Lord sings still joyously because He sees the end from the beginning! Earth may be swathed in mist, but the Sun is never so, He shines gloriously evermore.

The text mentions one other fact connected with Jesus as the Sun—“*There is nothing hid from the heat thereof,*” by which is meant nothing is able to escape the powerful influence of Christ Jesus. His own chosen people must, in due season, feel His power to save. They may wander as they do, and sin as they may, but when the time appointed comes; they shall be redeemed out of the land of the enemy! The sun’s power is felt in the dark and deepest mines; that there is a sun still shining might be discoverable even in the heart of the earth! And so, in the dark haunts of sin, God’s elect shall be made to feel the sovereign power and omnipotent grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. When you and I shall die, and when we shall be buried in the grave, we shall not there be hid from the heat of this Sun of Righteousness; by-and-by He shall kindle life within our bones again! He shall create a soul within the ribs of death, and we shall spring upward as the grass, and as the willows by the watercourses when the sun renews the year; our dry bones shall live, and in our flesh we shall we see God! Meanwhile, while the gracious operations of Christ thus fall on all His elect, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof, other operations are at work on all the sons of men. He rules in providence over all people, whether they believe in Him or not, and if men do not accept the gospel, yet they are affected by it in some way or other. Even the dark parts of the world feel something of the presence of the Christ of God; responsibility is heaped on those who hear of Him and reject Him; He becomes a savor of death unto

death where He is not a savor of life unto life! There is nothing hid from the heat thereof; oh, how this ought to encourage you Christian people to work! The Lord has gone before you—there is nothing hid from the heat of His presence. Jesus is King of the dark settlements of the heathen, and He reigns in the lowest haunts of London’s vice; go there, for you are not intruders; you have a right to go anywhere in your Master’s dominions, and the earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof! Be not afraid to face the vilest blasphemer, or the most foul-mouthed infidel, for Christ is Master; and if you bring the gospel before His enemy, he will be made to feel its power, either so as to yield to it a willing submission, or else to be condemned by it! In either case, you shall have done your part, and uttered your testimony, and freed your head of his blood.

In these thoughts combined, we see Christ Jesus, the risen Savior, pursuing His ever glorious course till He shall descend again the second time to take His people to Himself to reign with Him.

II. Very briefly, indeed, in the second place, let us think for a moment of JESUS AS A SUN TO US. Worship and bless our Savior! It is always meet and right to do so; let Him be extolled and be very high. Some would give Him a secondary place; let it never be so with us. As the sun is the center, so is Christ; as the sun is the great motor, the first source of motive power, so is Christ to His people; as the sun is the fountain from which light, life, and heat perpetually flow, so is the Savior! As the sun is the fructifier by which fruits multiply and ripen, so is Christ, and as the sun is the regulator and rules the day, and marks the seasons, even so is Jesus acknowledged as Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Think these thoughts over in the following respects. When you take the *Bible*, remember that Christ is the center of the Scriptures. Do not put *election* in the center; some do, and they make a one-sided system. Do not put *man* in the center; some do, and they fall into grievous errors. Christ is the center of the entire system of the gospel, and all will be seen to move with regularity when you perceive that He is the chief fixed point! You cannot be right in the rest unless you think rightly of Him; He is the center and King of all truth. He is the center of the church, too. Not the pastor; not the church itself; not any rule or government; no bishop; no priest; and no “Pope” can be our center—Christ alone is our central Sun! We follow as planets where He leads the way—around Him we revolve, but we acknowledge no other Lord. Let it be so in *the world* that even there Christ governs, and is the center of all history. You will understand history better when you know this, for this is the key of the world’s story, the reason for the rise and fall of empires. You shall understand all things when you know Immanuel, God With Us! And let Him have this place in *your hearts*! There enthrone Him! Establish Him as the central Sun, and let Him rule your entire being, enlightening your understanding, warming your hearts, filling all your powers, passions, and faculties with the fullness of His presence! To have Christ in us, the hope of glory—oh, what blessedness! But let us take care that it is so, for we know not Christ aright unless we give Him such a place in our hearts as the sun occupies in God’s world.

III. But time fails me, and we must now pass on to the last point, and let us for a minute or two BASK IN HIS BEAMS. How shall we do it?

First, we must *realize that He Is*. Sinner, saint, Christ lives; He who trod the wave of Galilee lives on! He who was marked with the nails rules on! Oh, sinner, does not that comfort you? The Savior lives! The Redeemer lives! He who forgives sins still lives! Saint, does not this comfort you? The man of the tender heart still lives, with a bosom still to be leaned upon, and with lips still ready to speak endearing words. There is a tabernacle for the Sun; He is not extinct. He shines still, He blesses still. Bask in His beams, then, by realizing that He Is.

Then come and *lay your souls beneath His divine influence*. O my soul, if you are guilty, come and rest in His atonement; if you are unrighteous, come and take His righteousness; if you are feeble, lay hold upon His strength; if you cannot pray, accept Him as your Intercessor; if you are in yourself nothing, take Him to be your all in all. Some creatures delight to warm themselves in the sun, but oh, what a pleasure it is to sun oneself in the presence of Christ! Never mind how little I am, how nothing I am, how vile I am, how foul I am; all I am He has taken to Himself, and all He has belongs to me! I sin, but He has taken all my sin; He is righteous, and all His righteousness is mine! I am feeble, He is mighty—His mightiness is mine; I wrap myself in His omnipotence. Christ is all and Christ is *mine*! Why, I utterly fail when trying to talk about such things as these—talking is but stuttering on such a theme! Faith must enjoy rather than express her delight. Come, plunge, all of you, into this sea of sweetness—dive deep into this abyss of happiness—Christ Jesus is yours forever and forever! The sun is very great, but it is all for me, and Christ is very bright and glorious, and He is all my own!

Then next, if you would sun yourself in His beams, *imbibe the joy of His* strength. He is like a bridegroom rejoicing to run his race. Now, brothers and sisters, I am often afraid, lest in serving God we should grow dispirited and downcast, and think that things are not going on as they should. Remember, the joy of the Lord is your strength. If you begin to say, “Our cause is very feeble; the gospel will not prevail among us,” you will slacken your efforts. Do not so, but remember that Jesus Christ does not fret or sadden Himself about His kingdom. He runs with full strength and rejoices as He runs, and I bid you, in the power of the Holy Spirit, do the same! Cast away your doubts and fears; the kingdom is the Lord’s, and He will deliver His adversaries into your hands. I fret and worry myself, sometimes, about these inventors of new doctrines, and those ritualists who bring up the old rates and stale tallow of the past ages. Let us fret no more, but think that these are only like the clouds to the great Sun! The gospel will still proceed in its career; let us laugh the enemies of God to scorn and defy them to their faces; they defy the Lord God of Israel as did the Philistine of old, but God Himself is mightier than they, and the victory is sure to the true church, and to the gospel of His Son. Be very courageous! Be not alarmed with sudden fear! Trust in Jehovah, for the Lord will surely give unto His own servants the victory in the day of battle.

And brothers and sisters, if you would sun yourselves in Christ’s beams, let me bid you *reflect His* light whenever you receive it. He is the Sun, and you are the planet, but every planet shines, shines with borrowed light. It conceals no light, but sends back to other worlds what the sun has given to it. Cast back on men the light which Jesus gives you! Triumph in Christ’s circuit, that it is so broad as to comprehend the world and compass all time. Enlarge your own hearts, and let your light shine far and wide, believing that the power of God which gives you His light will go with the light which you reflect! Comfort your hearts! “Be you steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” Who shall stop the Christ of God in His race? Let him first go pluck the sun from his sphere! Who shall stay the Champion of God who has girt Himself for His race? Whoever comes in His way, woe unto him, for if Samson smote a thousand men hip and thigh, what shall our immortal Samson do? Let all the armies of “Pope” and devil come against Him, He will utterly defy them, and drive them like chaff before the wind! Sing you unto His name, for He has triumphed gloriously! Begin the everlasting song, for He is the Lord and God, and to the uttermost ages shall He reign! Yes, forever and ever is He priest and King! God bless you, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—PSALM 19.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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