

THE GLORY, UNITY AND TRIUMPH OF THE CHURCH NO. 1472

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MAY 4, 1879,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“And the Glory which You gave Me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are One:
I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the
world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them,
as You have loved Me.”
John 17:22-3.*

SOME words serve many uses and have many meanings. We are very apt to make mistakes if we give the same sense in all places to the same word. The word, “world,” throughout Scripture is used with a very remarkable variety of meaning and one had need to have his wits about him and to read carefully in order to know what is the precise force of the term in each place where it occurs. In the text before us it is evident that Christ had a view to the world—He desired that the world might know that the Father had sent Him and might know, also, that God had loved His people even as He had loved His Son. From the somewhat altered expression in the 21st verse, we feel convinced that our Lord did not limit His desires for the world to its having a bare knowledge of these facts, but wished that it should also *believe* them, for thus runs the verse—“That the world may *believe* that You have sent Me.”

He wished, then, that this “world” might do exactly what He elsewhere says His own disciples had already done—“O righteous Father, the world has not known You: but I have known You, and these have known that You have sent Me.” Certainly there is a world for which Jesus did not pray, for He said, “I pray for them: I pray not for the world,” yet here there is a world for which, if He does not actually pray, He yet prays that certain gracious events may occur in order that certain results may be produced upon the world.

I say again, the word, “world,” therefore, has many shades of meaning ranging from that jet black meaning in which the, “world lies in the Wicked One” and, that other, “love not the world, neither the things that are in the world,” upward to the milder senses in John 1:10, “He was in the world and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.” And yet higher to the brighter meaning, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.” It is not in the worst sense that our text speaks of the world, but in the same manner as we find it used in such passages as these, “The Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.” “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” And again in 1 John 2, “And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”

It is certain that, “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” and we cannot suppose that the great Redeemer would refuse to pray for those for whom He was given. I understand in this particular place by the word, “world,” the whole mass of mankind upon the face of the earth who are not as yet converted. Among them there is an elect part, for our Lord speaks of some men who shall yet believe on Him through the word of His servants, but these, at this present moment, are undistinguished from the rest. I understand here by the word, “world,” all as yet unrenewed out of the whole living family of man—and on account of *these* our Lord would have His believing people brought into that admirable condition which we shall now attempt to describe.

For the sake of the world He would have the Church in a high state of holy beauty and strength. May His gracious prayer be answered in all of us by the working of the Holy Spirit! I trust that I may say of all of you, my Beloved in Christ, that you are living with this objective. At any rate, I know that you desire to live for the Glory of our Lord Jesus and the salvation of men. We would make all men see what is the fellowship of this mystery, for we would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the Truth of God. Our wish is to bring multitudes to the Savior and to conquer

province after province of this revolted world for King Jesus. “Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory” is a prayer which we *cannot, dare not, would not* fail to pray!

Half the world would be a poor reward for the Redeemer’s travail. “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof.” Even here, where He was despised and rejected of men, our Lord must reign with fullness of Glory, having dominion from sea to sea and from the river even to the ends of the earth! This is the consummation towards which we are tending, by the Grace of God. We are striving earnestly for it, according to His working, which works in us mightily. Daily we labor to bring others into subjection to that blessed Sovereignty under which we delight to dwell!

In this place our Lord tells us that this desirable end is to be brought about by a marvelous unity which, described in our text, is a unity of men with Christ, a unity of these men in Christ with one another and the unity of Christ Himself with the eternal Father. “I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one.” Let us speak about this unity this morning, always keeping in mind the drift, end and objective of it, namely, that the world may believe that God has sent the Lord Jesus.

First, then, let us think upon *the great means of that unity* And then, secondly, upon *the unity itself*. Lastly, let us more fully consider *the effect to be produced by it*.

I. First, then, let us reflect upon THE GREAT MEANS OF THE UNITY which Christ proposes here. It lies, in a nutshell, “The Glory which you gave Me I have given them,” with this objective, “that they may be one, even as We are One.” Here our blessed Lord does not speak of what He will give to His disciples, though there is a Glory which is laid up for them which the faithful shall receive at the last—but He mentions a Glory which He has *already* given them. This could not be the incommunicable Glory of His Godhead, for that was His by Nature and not by the Father’s gift. He speaks throughout the whole of His prayer in the capacity of the Mediator who is both God and Man in one Person and the Glory which He says He had given to His people is a Glory which the Father had given to Him in His complex Person as Incarnate God.

We are to regard, therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ as speaking here as Immanuel, God With Us, who, though He counted it no robbery to be equal with God, had made Himself of no reputation and taken upon Himself the form of a Servant. He appeared on earth as the Son of Man, the Son of God—but even in that condescending capacity He was surrounded with a Glory of which John speaks in his first chapter, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth.” As the Word made flesh, the Father has given our Lord exceeding Glory. The explanations of the words before us are as many as the words themselves and I suppose there is a measure of truth in each of them. I do not think it possible in one sermon, perhaps not in a hundred, nor even in a thousand, to bring out all that is intended here! Therefore I shall not attempt any such a task, but shall only follow one narrow track of practical thought, even as one passes through a field of corn along a narrow pathway gathering a few ears as he moves along.

It seems to me that a main part of the Glory of our Lord, when on earth, lay in the moral and spiritual Glory of His Character. He was, indeed, glorious in holiness and this is evidently the Glory which He transfers to us. See the second Epistle to the Corinthians, the third chapter and 18th verse, “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” To the same effect are Peter’s words in his first Epistle, “If you are reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you, for the Spirit of Glory and of God rests upon you.” The essence and cause of the Glory which the Father gave the Son was, first of all, that He endowed Him with the Holy Spirit. “God gives not the Spirit by measure unto Him; the Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand” (John 3:34, 35).

The Holy Spirit descended upon our Lord in His Baptism and abode upon Him so that in the power of the indwelling Spirit He lived, spoke, acted and in all that He did, the Spirit of God was manifest! In Him was fulfilled the Word of the Lord by the Prophet Isaiah, “And there shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of His roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord.” In this Spirit there is Glory, for the Prophet further says, “His rest shall be glorious.”

Now this Glory, our Lord Jesus has given to all His disciples. Upon each true disciple, the Spirit of God rests according to his measure. If we have not the anointing to the fullest, it is either from lack of capacity or by reason of our

own sin, for the Spirit of God is given to the saints—He dwells with us and shall be in us always. My Brothers and Sisters, I would to God we realized this, that the Glory of the Holy Spirit which was given to Christ is also given to us, so that it is ours to think, to feel, to speak, to act under His guiding influence and supernatural power! What are we apart from the Holy Spirit? How can we hope to convince even one man, much less the *world*, that God has sent His Son unless the Holy Spirit is with us?

But if He will come and I trust He *has* come upon many of us—if He will take possession of every faculty and rule and reign in us in all the splendor of His holiness—then we shall, indeed, become a power for the conversion of mankind! Behold the Lord Jesus has given us this Spirit and in that power let us forever live. Owing to this endowment of the Holy Spirit, there rested upon Jesus Christ a wondrous Glory in many respects. One of His first Glories was that as Man He knew the name and Character of God. He knew what no man knows unless it is revealed to him by the Holy Spirit, namely, the Nature, attributes and mind of God. “The pure in heart shall see God,” and those pure eyes of His had seen God to the fullest!

Has He not given us that same vision of the Father? Yes, for He tells us, “He that has seen Me, has seen the Father.” And again in the sixth verse, “I have manifested Your name unto the men which You gave me out of the world.” Our eyes have been opened by the blessed Spirit of God to see the invisible and our understandings have been strengthened to know the incomprehensible! Now, according to the language of the Apostle, we, “know God, or rather are known of God.” “No man has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.” Not to the fullest have we beheld the Father, but still, according as we have received this Glory which rested upon Christ we have been made to know the Father! And now we have access to the heavenly; we are familiar with the Divine; we speak with the Most High and delight ourselves in the Lord!

As we gaze into the unspeakable Glory, we discern something of the holiness, the justice and the wisdom of Jehovah and we behold yet more of His great mercy and abounding love. We were once blinded, but now it is our Glory that we see and know the Lord our God! Henceforth we become like our Lord in another beam of His Glory, for we, also, begin to manifest the Divine name unto the sons of men who dwell around us! The Church, like the moon, reflects the Glory of the great Father of Lights and so is glorious with the borrowed splendor which her Lord puts upon her. Christ’s knowledge of the Father is given to us and we endeavor to make it known to others. If men would see God, let them look at Jesus, for there is He to be seen! And, with bated breath, we add—let them look at Christ’s *people*, for there, also, is God revealed! It is the Glory of the saints that they are the mirrors of the Divine Character! And when they wear the Glory which Jesus has given them, they manifest the eternal name unto those whom the Lord has ordained to bless by their means!

The Glory of our Lord consisted, next, in the power of the Spirit in His receiving, keeping and giving forth the Word of God. Our Lord Jesus was a full Revelation of the mind of God. “The Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ.” He knew the plan of God—that blessed method of infinite love—and He imparted it to His followers. “I have given unto them the Words which You gave Me; and they have received them.” The depository of the Divine Word was Christ—and this was greatly to His Glory. Is not the logos, THE WORD, one of the brightest of His titles? But now, this day, He has given to *us* the Word, speaking it into our souls and, from now on we are to hold forth the Word of Life in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

Would you know the mind of God? It is not merely in a book—it is still incarnated in men in whom the Spirit of the Lord is present! Still does the Lord make known His mind and will by the earnest, fervent teaching, pleading and lives of those in whom the Spirit of God dwells! Do you think this to be a small Glory? Why, my Beloved, the Glory of possessing the Spirit of God; the Glory of knowing the eternal God; the Glory of having received His Word is such as distinguishes the *chosen man* above his fellows infinitely more than all the crowns, titles and decorations which monarchs can bestow! Tell me not of your stars and garters, your ribbons and your crosses—to be made partakers of the Holy Spirit and guardians of the Truth of God is a greater Glory than the princes of this world can so much as imagine!

This Glory of the Lord Jesus also lay in the sanctification of His blessed Person. He said, “For their sakes I sanctify Myself.” Look at how consecrated to God He was from His childhood till He said, “It is finished!” What holiness shone upon His very brow where a guileless soul unveiled itself in brave sincerity! You could not have been with Him at a funeral or at a marriage banquet, in a sick chamber or in the midst of a crowd, in the presence of carping adversaries or

in the bosom of His family of 12 without being charmed by that Divine Holiness which hedged Him round about! There was about Him a sweetness of unspeakable affection and a majesty of unsullied purity which made Him glorious above all the sons of men! His enemies spat upon Him, but that very spit was the unconscious homage which malignant evil pays to conquering goodness!

The ungodly crucified Him, but even in that very act there was a sort of confession that they were baffled and confused and could not stand before Him! They cried, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” because His perfect purity rendered their own wickedness inexcusable and lashed their conscience with reflections which could not be borne. Our Lord’s moral Glory was great, for He was the pattern and paragon of everything that is lovely and of good repute—and He was wholly sanctified unto God! This is the Glory which He gives to us! His prayer is, “Sanctify them through Your Truth: Your Word is Truth.”

His disciples live unto holiness and are known as a people zealous of good works. I have to speak as I find matters laid down in the Word of God and if you do not find them to be so in yourselves, my Brothers and Sisters, then you must judge yourselves by the Word of God so that you are not judged at the last and condemned! So it is that those who have truly received Christ become a special, marked and separated people. They are as much consecrated to God as the priests were under the old dispensation and, therefore, they live for God, they live unto God and their whole being is subjected to the mind of God! This is a high state of Grace, but nothing less than this ought to content any Christian!

Well, then, our great Master gives us, next, the Glory of His own mission. “As You have sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.” It is the Glory of Jesus that He is the Messiah, the Sent One—and now, behold, He sends all His servants to be messiahs or *missionaries* to mankind! Christ Jesus was sent to reveal the Father, sent to reclaim the wandering souls of men, sent to seek and to save the lost—and this is *exactly* what every true Christian is sent into the world to do—he is commissioned to reveal God in his every act and word! He is commissioned to win back rebellious hearts! He is commissioned to save the sons of men and bring them up out of the horrible pit into which their sins have cast them!

This is a Glory, indeed, for they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever. What a promise is that, “And saviors shall come up on mount Zion, and the kingdom shall be the Lord’s.” Every Christian man, according to his measure, becomes among his race what Jesus was when He was here below, the Friend of men, the Seeker of the lost. Again, I trust your glad hearts appreciate this Glory, for let me say it is such a Glory that if it involves much strict living and much self-denial—if it involves much disgrace, misrepresentation, reproach—and even should it involve death by martyrdom, blessed is the man upon whom all these things come because the spirit of Glory and of Christ rests upon him!

The true glory of any man is the man himself, the character he bears and not the estate which he possesses. My Brothers and Sisters, can I hope that you have a resplendent spiritual character? Dare I hope to win the same myself? Let us look again at this Glory of the Son of God! Christ Jesus was the Man of men, the model Man, the most manly Man in all respects and yet He was, of all men, the most fully subordinated to the Divine Law and the most obedient in all things to the Father’s will! See your calling, my Brethren! You, too, are not to be common men, nor to belong to the herd that run foolishly after their own lusts—but you are to be model men, manly and brave, yet always submissive to the great Father of your spirits. We are to be such men that those who look upon us may wish that there were such as we are.

Jesus was especially a model in His perfect self-abnegation. What did He seek for Himself? A kingdom? Yes, but a kingdom whose crown was made of thorns—a kingdom of *suffering* love. What did He live for? That He might be glorified? Yes, but that He might be glorified by saving others while refusing to save Himself! His crowning Glory is that He humbled Himself and made Himself of no reputation and became obedient to death, even the death of the Cross! Such shall you and I be if we have the Glory of Christ resting upon us—we shall give up, forever, all self-seeking, all desire to shine, all wish to be great, all craving to be rich—and we shall live not unto ourselves, but unto Him that died for us!

We are to live for God’s Glory and for Christ’s purpose in the conviction of the world and if we do, the Spirit of Glory will be resting upon us. The matchless Man of Nazareth had this Glory—that He was one with God. The objectives, aims and thoughts of God were His objectives, aims and thoughts. His life ran parallel with the path of the Most High. This Man was accepted of God—the love of God ever rested upon Him—He had access to God, He could speak with the Father when He would and answers out of the excellent Glory were vouchsafed Him. He was prevalent

with God, for His prayers brought down and *still* bring down countless blessings upon the sons of men! He was the Son of God and He overcame the world in the power of His sonship.

Now, this Glory which the Father gave Him, He has given us, that we, too, may be accepted; that we, too, may have access; that we, too, may have prevalence in prayer; that we, too, may have the Spirit of adoption and that we, too, may trample upon sin and overcome the hosts of darkness. This is the Glory which rests upon *all* the faithful! Mark well that wherever this Glory is seen, true unity is developed. Suppose I were to find a man living in the likeness of Christ with this spiritual Glory conspicuous upon him? It may be that he is poor and illiterate, but what of that? Suppose he is a coal heaver—the Glory of his character will be, none the less, more conspicuous than the dust! Then let us find another man on whom the same spiritual Glory rests and we will suppose that he is an earl, a supposition which, thank God, is not an impossible one!

The Glory will be none the more dim because of the good man's honors. There, then, are the two—coal heaver and coroneted. And does it need half an eye to see that the Glory of each is one? The holy consecration in each case is the same and the degrees of rank do not affect the essential beauty of either! Is it not the same *life* which dwells in all saintly bosoms and the same *love* which prompts each holy deed? In a princess or in a dairyman's daughter; in a scholar or in a peasant, the glory of a high character is one. If you found among a savage tribe a single convert, truly consecrated to Christ and living unto God according to the measure of his light, his manners might be rude and his knowledge slender, but there would be upon him the same kind of Glory which you would mark as adorning a polished, educated Christian lady who, in the midst of her circle, spends a lovely life for Jesus.

Should the untutored convert die by the spear of the savage whose soul he sought to bless, he is written in the same roll of martyrs as that which bears the names of bishops and Apostles. Holiness is everywhere most precious! Unselfishness is in *any* instance beyond all price! Let us see love to God and love to men and they are everywhere alike and reveal a oneness of inward life! In fact, oneness with Him who is the true life of men! If you bring a company of common Christians together and they begin discoursing and discussing, I dare say they will jangle and debate world without end! But if you could select a number of those upon whom the Glory rests which the Father gave to His Son, I will guarantee you this, that within a short time they will be all on their knees together, or singing together, or engaged in some form of loving fellowship!

The people who are not one with each other are those who are not one with Christ! But once filled with His Spirit, we are one of necessity. You cannot help it, it is scarcely a matter of duty—it becomes a matter of necessity that you who have the love of Christ within you should love the Brothers and Sisters! Spiritual men are so essentially one, that like two drops which close together, they have an increasing tendency to unite. Spiritual men may wear different denominational names and may differ in their conscientious convictions on some matters, but these things do not hinder *union*—they rather give a zest to it! If the Glory which the Father gave to Christ is resting upon these, they have discerned the mystical unity which encompasses them all and they are delighted to acknowledge it by deeds of brotherly love rendered with spontaneous cheerfulness, blessing him who performs them and those who receive the benefits!

Beloved, those in whom Christ lives are *not uniform, but one*. Uniformity may be found in death, but this unity is life! Those who are quite uniform may yet have no love to each other, while those who differ widely may still be truly and intensely one. Our children are not uniform, but they make one family. Sons born at the same birth may exhibit a remarkable difference of character and yet the father may be seen in both and they may be equally one in the family circle and in all the love which makes home the abode of happiness. So it is with all Believers—born of the same everlasting Father, they are one in spirit, one in character, one in objective, one in aim—yes, one in the fullest sense.

At this moment, despite apparent differences, the whole host of the spiritual are one and they press forward as with the tramp of one man against the common foe. I speak not of *professors*. I speak not of the *external* church. I speak not of the mixed multitude that come up out of Egypt and debase the character of our Israel! I speak of those of whom Christ could say to His Father, “The Glory which You have given Me I have given them”—*these* are one as the Father and the Son are One, but mere *professors* are not!

II. Time flies too rapidly, alas, and therefore we must, with great brevity, think upon the second point, namely, THE UNITY ITSELF. As I have remarked, it is *not* uniformity. This our Lord says nothing of. Though we *are* one body in Him, yet all the members have not the same office—the eye is very different from the ear—and the foot has not the same

form as the hand. Neither does He speak of any formal organization by which unity is to be secured. How many have tried to create a mechanical union and have made confusion worse confusion! Their eagerness for unity has threatened to dash everything to shivers! The very first step towards a visible unity of the Church is, with most men, that *they* shall fix a standard of what the Church ought to be and cut off everybody who will not conform to their idea!

See how certain Brothers, to show how they hate sectarianism, invent a new sect and diligently earn from their fellow-Believers the character of being more bitter and bigoted than any other professors! The oddities of non-sectarians are the scandal of the age! They have talked of union and scattered the saints right and left. Let us follow practical methods and we shall find them in the unity which the text describes.

First, it is written—"I in them." Christ lives in His people and we are to act so, in the power of the Holy Spirit, that onlookers shall say, "Surely Christ lives again in that man, for he acts out the precepts of Jesus. Did you notice how he bore the insult? Did you notice how he laid himself out to oblige and to serve? Did you observe how, without introducing religious talk, he gradually steered the conversation towards that which is to edification? Do you see how, if he stays in a hotel, or if he sojourns in a family, or if he sits in a workroom, his presence is soon felt by the pleasure which he diffuses, the confidence which he inspires?" He is everyone's friend when he is needed—the servant of all, the example of all. His voice is always for peace and if he does, now and then, speak upbraidingly, men's consciences admit that he is just. Such a man honors his Lord by reminding men of Him.

Our first consideration should not be, "Now I am here, how can I be comfortable?" but, "I am here, how can I please others for their good? How can I relieve the distressed, help the weary, or cheer the sad?" It is a grand thing to do good in little ways. It is a glory to be the sweetener of life at home, the self-forgetting friend of all around. The world, before long, confesses that Christ is in such a man! The true Christian is Jesus come to life! His name implies this—how is he a Christian who is not like Christ? We commonly say that the oil upon the head runs down to the skirts of the garment—is it so? Is the love of Jesus, the generosity of Jesus, the zeal of Jesus, the gentleness of Jesus, the consecration of Jesus to be seen in us? If so, the Glory of Jesus rests on us! But if not, we have need to begin again and do our first works.

The next point of the union is. "You in Me." That is, God is in Christ. This is manifestly true, for you cannot read the life of Christ without seeing God in Him. "Come, now," said one to an unbeliever, "what do you think of the life of Christ?" "I am free to confess," said the other, "that it seems to me to be a very marvelous life and in every way worthy of praise." "You do not, however, think Jesus Christ to be God?" "No, I do not." "But suppose," said the Christian, "that God had been here among men in human form—could He have acted more purely or more benevolently?" "No," said the other, "If I admit the possibility of such a thing, I am not able to conceive of anything more divinely good." "Why, then," said the Christian, "do you not see that in very deed God was in Christ Jesus and He was One with God?" So we believe and we rejoice greatly to hear our Lord say, "I and my Father are One." See, then, the unity of Christ in us and God in Christ Jesus!

This brings about the union of Believers with the Father—being one with Christ and Christ being One with the Father. The point is reached for which our Lord prayed, "That they all may be one; as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that You have sent Me." Couple this with Believers being one with each other and you get the being, "made perfect in one," of which our text speaks. If you and I are one in Christ and one *with* Christ, then we are one with God, seeing Christ is One with God—and thus not in some few characteristics are we alike and one in name, but in life, in aim and in desire!

Brothers and Sisters, if you and I are living for the same design which our Lord lived for and if the very life which quickens us is the life of Jesus, then, since Jesus lives always for the same thing which God purposes and works out, then surely there is a grand unity—the likes of which is not found in the universe! This has great depths in it, which is grounded upon a mystical, spiritual union, but I leave the depths of doctrine, just now, to speak upon the experimental and practical Truths of God which grow out of the matter of fact.

Moved by the same love of holiness; inspired by the same spirit of love, tenderness and kindness, the eternal Father's will is the will of the Son and the Spirit works in us to will and to do according to the good pleasure of the Lord. According to the measure of Grace, the members of the body feel and move in union with the Head, who also is in union with the Father. "Your kingdom come" is God's will thrilling through all the members of the body of Christ. Death to sin, destruction of strife, the end of injustice, the chasing away of every form of error—these are the common objectives

of the Father and of all those whom He has begotten. The propagation of the Truth of God, the increase of love, the reign of gentleness and peace among men—these are the mind of God, the mind of Christ and the mind of all the saints—and so are we one with each other by ties spiritual and Divine!

III. I could not enlarge upon that subject though I wished to do so, for I must now notice THE EFFECT WHICH THIS PRODUCES according to our Lord's prophecy and prayer. First, it will convict the world of the Truth of Christ's mission—"That the world may know that You have sent Me." How will they know it? Why, when they see such characters as I have so feebly tried to paint! When they see men who are no longer selfish, hard and ungenerous—when they see men no longer governed by their passions, no longer earth-bound—when they see loving men, men who desire that which is holy, just and good! When they see men living for God, the world will say, "Their Master must have been sent of God."

Such men as these, alas, are so uncommon. And they are so precious when we find them that if the Lord Jesus has created such by His teaching and His Spirit, by their fruits may we know them, even as we know His people and He is manifestly sent of God. And then, Brothers and Sisters, not only will their characters convince the world, but their unity will convince it because the ungodly world will say, "We see the glory of Christianity in the poor man and we see the same in the rich man. We see a glory about a Christian prince and we see the same glory about a Christian needle woman! And we observe that when these people meet each other there is a Divine union among them, for they are one. Surely their Master must be sent of God."

Christian people have things to talk about which others do not understand and they pursue one common objective which others disregard. Whether they have little or much, they yield their all to one common cause and objective. Whether possessed of little ability or great ability, they are alike consecrated. One spirit breathes in them! See how they love one another! Even the world can see that while its great ones are always contending, these dwell in love! The world can easily see that while common men emulate each other and strive as to who shall be the greatest, these only strive to serve the common cause, to help each other and to stoop for their fellows' good! The world cannot help perceiving the divinity of the mission of Christ which has produced this perfect love and union among His followers. Then do they say, "assuredly God must have sent their Leader, Christ Jesus, or He could not have produced such results."

Do you ask me where we see this? I reply that it is far too little seen, but when we *shall* see it in the whole Church, then will the world be convinced! Oh, my Brethren, only fancy a Church of the size of this, put down in this south of London, made up of holy men and holy women like Christ, who, with all their imperfections, as to the general bent and current of their lives are living unto God and for the Glory of Christ and for the good of their fellow men! Picture such a Church in perfect unity and I tell you it would present an argument for Christianity which would infinitely surpass all the books of analogy and evidence which have ever been written! This would be a nut which the adversary could not crack! It would baffle all his criticisms and syllogisms!

One individual Christian has often presented to the most desperate unbeliever a difficulty which has staggered him. "I could be altogether an atheist," said one, "if it were not for my aged mother. While I see her peace of mind, her holy living, her gentle, quiet temper, I cannot but believe that there is a power in religion which I cannot understand." If we would convince the world, my Brothers and Sisters, it must be by the Glory which God has given to His Son resting upon each and all of us and so compacting us together, fusing us into one mass of living union! Only in the foundation of unity in Christ can the battle be won!

But the world is also to be convinced of the Father's *love* to us—"And have loved them as You have loved Me." Shall we ever convince them of that? Yes, when the world sees bodies of truly consecrated men and women living together in holy love, then they will also see much joy, much peace, much mutual consolation—and they will perceive that the very stars in Heaven fight for them, that the Providence of God makes all things work together for their good—and that the Lord has a special care over them as a shepherd has over his flock. Then they will say, "These are the people that God has blessed. Look how He loves them!" They perceive, however, that they have to suffer and that they are afflicted and despised—and so they come to say, "God seems to love them just as He loved His Son, whom He did not spare from suffering, pain and grief, but whom He upheld under all"—and so they learn that God has the same special regard for those Christ-like ones that He has for their Master and Lord. They shall be made to see this! It will be forced upon them!

Moreover, as these men and women grow more and more like Jesus the world will conclude that since God loved Jesus, He must love those who are like Christ! Why, do not even the ungodly, though they would be loath to confess it, take a kind of delight in a high and noble character? They have an admiration for it and their conscience tells them that God admires those in whom His Christ has produced it. They cannot avoid the feeling that God loves holy and loving people—and that it is great love on His part to make them what they are. So far the world becomes convinced.

But somebody may say, “What does our Lord mean by the world’s knowing and believing this?” I answer that, doubtless, a part of the world will be convinced that Christ was sent of God. And part will be convinced that God loves His people. And yet they will stand out in obstinacy against God, for to the end even the Gospel, itself, will be a savor of death unto death to some!

Well, you and I have answered the purpose of God even upon such characters when it comes to pass that they are without excuse. But it is evident from this chapter that there is another part of the world who will not only know and believe historically, but will do this *spiritually*—that part of the world comprehended in our Lord’s prayer—“Neither pray I for those alone, but for them, also, who shall believe on Me through their word.” And I take it, Brothers and Sisters, that when the day shall come that Christians are Christians, then we shall see great masses of the world convinced of the Truth of Christianity and large numbers of the world suppliant at Jesus’ feet!

The Christianity which is presented to the public gaze I would not be unduly censorious, but I fear it is often a Christianity which the world does well to despise. When the Jew went to Rome and asked for Christianity, he saw the Christians, so called, worshipping the Virgin Mary and images of saints and relics and bones and I know not what. And he justly said, “The Lord has said to Israel, ‘The Lord your God is one God,’ and, ‘You shall not make unto yourself any graven image, nor the likeness of anything that is in Heaven above nor in the earth beneath. You shall not bow down to them nor worship them.’” On the strength of such revelation the Jew rejected the Christianity of Rome and he did well. Don’t you agree?

Now, here comes another Christianity which has lately displayed itself to many heathen nations. It comes with the Bible in its knapsack and the Martini-Henry rifle in its hand. Is not this a fine combination for conversion? Jesus comes before the Zulu riding upon a Gatling gun! Of course, these poor heathen know nothing about our political combinations, but if they suppose that Christians are invading their land, will they, therefore, love Christ? Missionaries, here is a difficulty for you to explain—how will you deal with it? You come from a Christian nation, a nation which enjoys the unspeakable privilege of a national Church, a nation which salutes the savages in Christ’s name with shot and shell!

Will they receive Christianity coming in such guise? If they do not, small blame can we pour upon them—they will be only acting according to the light of reason and common sense! If there shall ever come a Christianity which suffers long, is kind, does no evil but seeks good to its neighbor; which teaches love to God and love to man; which seeks not its own, but lays itself out for others, then I do not say that an ungodly world will be enamored of it if left to itself, but I do believe that the Spirit of God will go forth with it and will convict men of sin and of righteousness and of judgment—and then shall the scattered family of Adam accept the one true faith and enter into a league of amity with each other—and there shall be Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will towards men! Love conquers all. Love is the logic which convinces!

Notice two passages of Scripture with which I finish. One thing you want the world to know is that you are the Disciples of Christ. “By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one to another.” Does our Lord wish the world to be convinced? How does He, Himself, act? Hear Him! “But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.” Love, you see again, proves the unity of the Son with the Father! And here again, in this second text, it is the love of the Father to the chosen which is to be the sign unto the world. Therefore, let love abound. Let it be all the weapons of our war!

I know I have preached very feebly to you this morning upon such a theme. The subject is a great deal too much for my limited capacity, but it is good for us to feel how little we are, how low we are. It is good to look above our struggling selves to something much beyond our present attainments. I lie prostrate on my face before the Lord and confess that I have not yet attained all that I have set forth to you and, I suspect, that your confession is very like my own. Let us not be discouraged, for by Grace we are on the way and we will not rest till we reach the goal! O for Grace so to live unto God in Christ Jesus that the world shall never be able to answer the argument of our lives! Help us, O Spirit of the Lord! Amen.

Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.