

ACCEPTED OF THE GREAT FATHER

NO. 1731

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JULY 15, 1883,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“He has made us accepted in the Beloved.”
Ephesians 1:6.

A FEW Sabbath mornings ago I spoke to you upon those memorable words of the great Father, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” [*The Voice from the Cloud and the Voice of the Beloved—Sermon #1727.*] We now go a step farther, and see how the love of God to His beloved Son overflows, and runs like a river of life to all those who are in Christ Jesus. To Him He says, “This is My beloved Son,” and then He turns to all who are in union with Him and says, “These, also, are My beloved for His sake.” As believers we are assured by the text that we are “accepted *in the Beloved*,” to the praise of the glory of God’s grace. Why is that peculiar title used here? It might have been said, we are accepted in Christ, or accepted in the Mediator. There must be some motive for giving Him this special name in this place. The motive is declared to be that we may praise the glory of divine grace. God did not want for a beloved when He made us His beloved. His heart was not pining for an object. His affections were not lonely and desolate. His only-begotten Son was His delight, and there was room enough in Him for all the Father’s love. It was *we* that needed to be loved, and so the Beloved is mentioned that we may remember the unselfishness of divine grace. He makes us His beloved, but He had a Beloved before.

We are also reminded that we are “accepted in the Beloved” to let us know that God has not shifted His love—His first Beloved is His Beloved still. We have not supplanted His dear Son, nor even diverted a beam of love from Him. The Lord has called us beloved who were not so, and made us a people who were not a people. But He has not withdrawn a grain of love from Jesus, whom He still calls, “My elect, in whom My soul delights.” All the infinite love of God still flows to Jesus, and then to us in Him. It pleased the Father that to Him a fullness of love should be given, that out of it, we might each one receive. God’s love to us is His love to His Son flowing in a hundred channels. For His sake He makes the wedding feast, and we are the happy guests who sit at the table. Not for our sakes is this done, but for Jesus’ sake, that so it might be all of grace. His perpetual acceptance with God is our acceptance, that nothing legal, nothing of which we might boast, might be mingled with the work of sovereign grace.

We are “accepted in the Beloved.” Do you not love that sweet title? Is it not the highest quality of the acceptance that it comes through such a One? He is beloved in the highest conceivable degree by the Father, and in this you imitate the great God, for to you also the Lord Jesus is altogether lovely. He is your Beloved as well as God’s Beloved, and this is one proof that you are accepted, for all who truly love the Son are approved by the Father. Thus says the Scripture, “Because he has set His love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high because he has known My name.” Is Christ your Beloved? Then, as He is the Father’s Beloved, you and the Father have evidently come to a sweet agreement. You have come to look at things from the same standpoint as the glorious Jehovah. The Lord and you evidently have a mutual interest in one common person—the incarnate God. Your recognition of Christ as your Beloved is thus a sure proof that you are accepted in the Beloved. Don’t you see this? It is because He is the Father’s Beloved that the Father loves you in Him. And because He is your Beloved, therefore you have evidence within yourself that you have come to an agreement with the Father, and so to an acceptance by Him. I delight in being *accepted* all the more because therein I am still further linked with Him who joins God and man in one, grand, affection.

God's love of His dear Son covers all believers, as a canopy covers all who come beneath it. As a hen covers her chickens with her wings, so God's love to Christ, covers all the children of promise. As the sun shining forth from the gates of the morning gilds all the earth with golden splendor, so this great love of God to the Well-beloved, streaming forth to Him enlightens all who are in Him. God is so boundlessly pleased with Jesus that in Him He is altogether well pleased with us. Oh, the joy of this blending of our interests with those of the Well-beloved! I scarcely know where I am borne, even by a single word of my precious text.

Let this stand for our preface, and now let us come close to our subject, upon which I do not desire so much to preach myself, as to lead you individually to meditate, and personally to feed. I would much rather put the text into your mouths as a sweet fruit from the garden of the Lord, most mellow and ripe, than be judged myself to handle it well. I seek not to exhibit my own skill in words, but I long that you may be refreshed with the marrow and fatness of this choice word. I desire that you may this morning experientially enjoy the precious drop of honey from the rock Christ Jesus, which is contained in the four words—"Accepted in the Beloved." Oh that the Holy Spirit may make you enter into the treasures which they contain!

I. I will begin by treating the text by way of CONTRAST. Brethren and sisters, the grace of God has made us to be this day "accepted in the Beloved." But it was not always so. As many of us as have, through grace, believed in Christ, we are now, to a certainty, at this very moment "accepted in the Beloved," but in times past it was very different. It is not a matter of question, nor of imagination, nor of sentiment, but a matter of fact, declared by the Holy Spirit Himself, that the Lord has "made us accepted in the Beloved." But it was far otherwise a little while ago. What a contrast is our present condition of acceptance to our position under the law through Adam's fall. By actual sin we made ourselves to be the very reverse of accepted, for we were utterly refused. It might have been said of us, "Reprobate silver shall men call them, because God has rejected them." Our way was contrary to God's way. Our thoughts were not His thoughts, and our hearts were not according to His heart. Oh, if He had dealt with us then, according to our sins what would have become of us? At that time we were condemned, "condemned already," because we had not believed on the Son of God. We had no acceptableness before God. He could take no complacency in us. His pure and holy eyes could not look upon us; we were so full of everything that provoked Him to jealousy. But now we are, (oh, let me pronounce it like music!), "Accepted in the Beloved." The criminal is now a child, the enemy is now a friend, the condemned one is now justified. Mark, it is not said that we are "acceptable," though that were a very great thing, but we are actually accepted. It has become not a thing possible that God might accept us, but He has accepted us in Christ. Lay this to your soul, and may it fill you with delight. The Lord has chosen you. He has received you to Himself, and set His love upon you, and His delight is now in you now. What a contrast from what you were a season ago in your own consciousness, in your own judgment. Refresh your memories a little. If you passed through the same state of mind as I did, you loathed your very selves in the sight of God. You felt that God must abhor you, for you abhorred yourselves. You saw sin to be exceedingly sinful, and that sinful thing was permeating your entire being, saturating your thoughts, putrefying your aims, making you to be corrupt and offensive in the sight of the Most High. I know I felt that if the Lord swept me away with the broom of destruction, and cast me into the lowest hell, I well deserved it. But now that condemnation is no more to be dreaded. We receive not the spirit of bondage, but the spirit of adoption. Lift up your eyes out of the thick darkness, and behold the light. You, who in your own judgment were cast away forever, you, who thought that the Lord would never be favorable to you, nor blot out your sins, are this day accepted, "accepted in the Beloved." No contrast could be more sharp and clear, and no reflections could be more joyful than this contrast suggests to the heart.

Think, again, of the contrast between what you are now and what you would have been had not grace stepped in. Left out of Christ as we then were, we might at this time have been going from sin to sin, reveling and rioting in it, as so many do. We might at this moment have been sinning with a high hand, finding even in the Sabbath Day a special opportunity for double transgression. In our daring re-

bellion we might have been crying, “The better the day the better the deed,” and so might have shown how completely we had thrown off the yoke of allegiance to the great King. Yes, by this we might have been dead, as the result of our own sins. The measure of our iniquity might have been full, and we might have been in hell. Be startled, my soul, at this thought, that nothing but infinite long-suffering has kept you out of the pit that is bottomless, “where their worm dies not, and their fire is not quenched.” But, brothers and sisters, we are not in hell, and what is more, we never shall be, for those iron gates can never close upon a soul that is “accepted in the Beloved,” and that is our condition now. We have fled for refuge to the hope set before us, and now no more need we be in terror of the great white throne and the righteous Judge, and the stern sentence, “Depart, you cursed.” Clinging to the cross, and beholding ourselves covered with the righteousness of Christ, we know that we are saved, and what is far more, we are *accepted*. This blessed fact is true of those who might have been among the damned. Our laments might have been going up today amidst the wailings of the wretched who are eternally cast away from hope. And now, instead thereof, we lift the joyful song of praise unto our God, and bless and magnify His name in whom this day we are accepted this day. Oh, my soul, sing your own song to your Beloved—

*“Just as You are—how wondrous fair,
Lord Jesus, are all Your members!
A life divine to them is given—
A long inheritance in heaven.
Just as I was I came to You,
An heir of wrath and misery!
Just as You are before the throne,
I stand in righteousness Your own.
Just as You are—nor doubt, nor fear,
Can with Your spotlessness appear;
Oh timeless love! As You, I’m seen,
The righteousness of God in Him.”*

One more point I cannot quite pass over, and that is, the contrast between what we now are and all we ever could have been in the most favorable circumstances apart from the Beloved. If it had been possible for us out of Christ to have had desires after righteousness, yet those desires would all have run in a wrong direction. We should have had zeal of God, but not according to knowledge, and so, going about to establish our own righteousness, we would not have submitted ourselves to the righteousness of God. We would have been weaving a righteousness of our own with heavy labor, which would have proved no better when completed, than a cobweb that could never conceal our nakedness. At this moment the prayers we offered would never have been received at the throne. The praises we presented would have been unsavory unto God. All that we could have aimed to accomplish in the matter of good works, had we striven to our utmost, would have been done in willfulness and pride, and so must necessarily have fallen short of acceptance. We should have heard the voice of the Eternal saying, “Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto Me,” for out of Christ our righteousness is as unacceptable as our unrighteousness, and all our attempts to merit acceptance increase our unworthiness. Oh, strive as you will, you self-righteous, labor as you may after a righteousness of your own, what can come of it but confusion? Why is it that the people labor as in the very fire? This shall they have at the Lord’s hands—they shall lie down in sorrow. The bed is shorter than a man may stretch himself on it, and the covering is narrower than what a man may wrap himself in it. Woe unto the man who is out of Christ, wherever he may be. In any case the wrath of God abides on him. But we are not out of Christ, we are not striving in vain, we are not spending our strength for nothing, for here is the blessed contrast, we are “accepted in the Beloved.”

A touch of the black pencil brings out the bright lights, and therefore I have laid on these shades. Such were some of you, but now you are washed; now you are sanctified; now you are justified; now you are “accepted in the Beloved.” All glory be unto the grace by which we have received this heavenly benefit.

II. Secondly, we will say a little by way of EXPLANATION, that the text may sink yet deeper into your hearts, and afford you richer enjoyment. Remember, brethren, that once, we were pitied of God as poor, lost, self-destroyed creatures that were in a degree hopeful. We were chosen of God while in that pitiable condition, and although forlorn, wretched, and ruined, yet were we marked by His electing love—this was still more encouraging. Then came a time of dealing with us, and we were pardoned, our transgressions were put away, we were renewed in the spirit of our minds by the Holy Spirit. The righteousness of Christ was imputed to us, and at length burst forth the light of this word, “He has made us accepted in the Beloved.” Much went before this, but, oh, what a morning without clouds rose upon us when we knew our acceptance and were assured of it. Acceptance was the watchword, and had troops of angels met us, we should have rejoiced that we were as blest as they.

Understand that this acceptance comes to us entirely as a work of God—“He *has made* us accepted in the Beloved.” We never made ourselves acceptable, nor could we have done so, but He that made us first in creation, has now made us new by His grace, and so has made us accepted in the Beloved.

That this was an act of pure grace there can be no doubt, for the verse runs thus, “*Wherein* He has made us accepted in the Beloved”—that is, in His grace. There was no reason in ourselves why we should have been put into Christ, and so accepted. The reason lay in the heart of the Eternal Father Himself. He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and by this will we were saved. To the great First Cause we must always trace the motive for our acceptance. Grace reigns supreme. It is a gracious acceptance of those who but for grace had been rejected. Notice this, and dwell upon the truth, glorifying God therein. Again, our acceptance is “*in the Beloved.*” It is only as we are in Christ that we are accepted. Let no man steal out of Christ, and then say, “God has accepted me.” Nothing of the kind, if the Lord views you apart from Christ, whoever you may be, you are a thing to be consumed and not to be accepted. “In the Beloved,” that is, as it were, within the gates of the city of refuge. You must abide within that wall of fire of which the cross is the center, or else you are not accepted. You must remain within the arms of the Well-beloved, living in the very heart of Christ, and then you shall know yourself to be “accepted in the Beloved.” For Christ’s sake, and because you are a part of Him, you shall be approved of the Father. He has taken you into covenant union so that you can say with the favored apostle, “Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” Therefore the Father accepts you, because He cannot dissociate you from His Son or His Son from you, nor think of Christ without you or of you without Christ. Therefore it is you are, “accepted in the Beloved.” That explains the words.

The following remarks may make the sense somewhat more transparent. No man, my brethren, can be accepted of God while he is guilty of sin, so that our acceptance in the Beloved involves the fact that our sin at this moment is forever put away. Our unrighteousness is covered, and therefore we are free from condemnation, and we are accepted. Realize this truth. It does not require any oratory to set it forth. It needs only that your faith should fully apprehend it. Realize that you are forgiven today. With your eyes upon the wounds of Christ, say unto your soul by the Spirit, “I am without spot or wrinkle in the sight of God, for Christ has washed me whiter than driven snow.” He has said of His people, “You are clean every whit.” Rejoice in this. You could not be accepted if He had not made you clean, for the filthy are not accepted of the Lord.

Neither could God accept a man devoid of righteousness. A mere colorless person, whose sin was forgiven, but who had no righteousness, could not be acceptable with Him. I cannot suppose the existence of such a being. But if there were such, he would be like one who was neither cold nor hot, and must be spued out of God’s mouth. He that is accepted with God must be positively righteous. Very well, then, if He has made believers “accepted in the Beloved,” they that believe in Christ are righteous in the sight of God. Mark you they are not righteous with a sham righteousness, an imaginary, fictitious righteousness. No, the righteousness which is of faith is the most real righteousness under heaven. The righteousness of works may be questioned, but the righteousness of faith cannot be, for it is the righteousness of God Himself. Now drink that in. Do not let me hold it up, and show you what a draught it is,

but drink it up for yourselves. You are righteous in Christ, or else you could not be accepted. Sin is gone, and righteousness is positively yours.

Now to come back again; if we are indeed “accepted *in the Beloved*,” does it not show how close, how real our union with the Beloved must be? Do we even share in Christ’s acceptance with God? Then we are one with Him in everything. Here is a father who has no particular interest in such-and-such a woman, but his son takes to himself that woman to be his wife, and now the loving father says, “That woman is my daughter,” and so she is received into his love for his son’s sake. He says to her, “You are my dear son’s wife; therefore you are my daughter, and dear to me, and welcome to my house at any time.” Thus it is with the great God. He says to us, whom Christ has espoused unto Himself, that we may be His bride in blessed conjugal union forever and ever. “Come to My heart, My children, for He is My Son and I love you for His sake; I accept you in Him.” Is not that a wonderful union, closer than the marriage bond, which causes us to share in Christ’s righteousness, so that the holy God can say to us who are sinful by nature, “You are acceptable to Me because of your connection with My Son”? If a woman of base character were married to the best of men, it would not make her acceptable. A father would scarcely know what to do with such a daughter-in-law. We would try and carry out our relationship as far as we could with all kindness, but we could hardly say that such a person brought into our family by marriage would be acceptable to us. But, oh, the Lord sees His people so wrapped up in Christ that He must accept them in Him. If I accept a man, I cannot quarrel with his little finger. If I accept a man, I accept his whole body, and so, since the Father accepts Christ, He accepts every member of His mystical body. If I am one with Christ, though I am but as it were only the sole of His foot, and exposed often to the mire of the streets, yet, because the glorious Head is accepted, the meanest member joined in living union to that Head is accepted, too. Is not this glorious? Can you get a firm hold of it? Unless you intelligently grasp its full significance you will not heartily enjoy this unspeakable privilege. But if your faith receives and welcomes it, you will not need any further explanation. “You are accepted in the Beloved,” and it is clear that there is a blessed union between you and Christ. The acceptance which the Father gives to Christ, He gives to you. Now, see if you can measure it. How acceptable is Christ to God? Must it not be an infinite acceptance? For it is an infinite Being infinitely accepting an infinitely holy and well-pleasing One, and then accepting us who are in Him with the same acceptance. Oh, how acceptable is every believer to the eternal Father in Christ Jesus!

III. Can we go a step farther? Will the Holy Spirit help us while I say a few words by way of ENLARGEMENT? If we are “accepted in the Beloved,” then, first, our persons are accepted. We ourselves are well-pleasing to Him. God now looks upon us with pleasure. Once He said of men that it repented Him that He had made them, but now when He looks at His people, He never repents that He made us. He is glad He made us. He takes delight in us. Look at your own children. Sometimes they grieve you, but still you are pleased with them. It is a pleasure to have them near you, and if they are long out of your sight, you grow anxious about them. They are coming home for their holidays soon. They are glad to return home, and I am sure their mothers are glad at the thought of seeing them again. Our Father is as truly pleased with us. Our very persons are accepted of God. He delights in us individually. He thinks of us with joy, and when we are near to Him, it gives pleasure to His great heart.

Being ourselves accepted, the right of access to Him is given us. When a person is accepted with God, he may come to God when he chooses. He is one of those sheep who may go in and out and find pasture. He is one of those courtiers who may come even to the royal throne and meet with no rebuff. No chamber of our great Father’s house is closed against us. No blessing of the covenant is withheld from us. No sweet smile of the Father’s face is refused us. He that accepted us gives us access into all blessings. “See, I have accepted you concerning this thing also.” You remember the story of King Ahasuerus and his poor trembling spouse Esther, how she ventured in at peril of her life, for if her royal lord and master did not stretch out the golden scepter, the guards that stood about the throne would cut her down. The queen, royal though she was, dared to come unbidden into the despot’s presence, but today, when you and I come to God, we have no fear of that kind because we are accepted first. He has already

stretched out to us the golden scepter, and He bids us come boldly. All is well between us and Him. We have access with boldness into this grace in which we stand.

And being accepted ourselves, our prayers are also accepted. Children of God, can you sincerely believe this? Do you not sometimes pray as if you were beggars in the street, pleading with unwilling persons to give you a gratuity of coppers? I believe many children of God do so, but when we know we are "accepted in the Beloved," we speak to God with a sweet confidence, expecting Him to answer us. To us it is no surprise that our heavenly Father should hear our prayers. He does it so often and so generously that we expect Him to do so always. It is a way of His to hear the prayers of the Well-beloved. When unaccepted men pray, they pray unaccepted prayers. But when accepted men plead with God, He says, "In an acceptable time have I heard you, and in a day of salvation have I succored you." When God delights in men, He gives them the desires of their hearts. Oh, the splendor of that man's position who is "accepted in the Beloved!" To him the Lord seems to say, "Ask what you will and it shall be given you, not only to the half of My kingdom, but My kingdom itself shall be yours, you shall sit with Me upon My throne." Oh, the blessedness of being "accepted in the Beloved," because the acceptance makes our prayers to be as sweet incense before the Lord!

It follows then, as a pleasant sequence, that our gifts are accepted, for those who are accepted with God find a great delight in giving of their substance to the glory of His name. I know that when money is needed for the church of God and one of the brethren goes round to collect the offerings, the subjects of the kingdom are apt to say, "Here comes the tax-gatherer again." Yes, that is what the subjects say. Oh, but when the children are about, they cry, "Here is another opportunity of presenting an offering to our Father, a welcome occasion of proving that our love to Him is pure, without greed or grudging." They clap their hands to think that they may come before the Lord with their sacrifices. Their only question is, "Will He accept it? Oh, what would I not give if I did but know that He would accept it?" Many a poor woman will take her two mites, and not more stealthily than joyfully cast them into the treasury, as she says, "Will He really accept them when dropped into the offering box? Will He even know about them?" And some of God's children get schemes into their heads of doing great things for God, but they say, "May I not after all be working for myself? May it not be that pride and vain-glory so leaven my labors that 'the odor of a sweet smell,' like to that 'acceptable sacrifice' which the Philippians presented, will be all a-wanting." No, my friends, my helpers in every good work, you need not ask that question if He has accepted you, for the accepted man brings an accepted offering. It is wonderful how God sees good things in His people where we cannot see them. He saw in Abijah some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel when, perhaps, no one else saw it. Mistress Sarah once made a rather naughty speech, yet there was one good word in it. I doubt very much if any one of us would have been quick enough to discern it. Yet the Holy Spirit picked out that one word, and put it into the New Testament to her praise. She spoke unbelievably as to her bearing a child at her advanced age, though the promise was announced that she should bring forth a son. She said, "Shall it be, I being old, my lord being old also?" This was a bad speech, but we are somewhat startled to read in the New Testament, "As Sarah also obeyed her husband, calling him lord." If God can find a speck of good in us, He will. Then let us try what we can do for Him. Here is a great lump of quartz, but if the Lord can see a grain of gold, He will save the quartz for the sake of it. He says, "Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it." I do not mean that the Lord deals thus with all men. It is only for accepted men that He has this kind way of accepting their gifts. Had you seen me, when a young man, and an usher, walking through the streets with rolls of drawings from a boys' school, you would have guessed that I considered them of no value and fit only to be consigned to the fire. But I always took a great interest in the drawings of my own boy, and I still think them rather remarkable. You smile, I dare say, but I do so think, and my judgment is as good as yours. I value them because they are his, and I think I see budding genius in every touch. But you do not see it because you are so blind. I see it since love has opened my eyes. God can see in His people's gifts to Him and their works for Him a beauty which no eyes but His can perceive. Oh, if He so treats our poor service, what shouldn't we do for Him? What zeal, what cheerfulness should stimulate us! If we are ac-

cepted, our sacrifices shall be acceptable. The Almighty will permit us to be called His servants, and we shall find His blessing resting on all that we do. If the tree is good, the fruit is good. As is the man so is his strength, and as is his prestige, so is his power. “Accepted in the Beloved” has for its accompaniment, “God has accepted your works.”

IV. We have thus pursued our train of thought in a contrast, an explanation, and an enlargement. Let us now indulge in a few REFLECTIONS.

“Accepted in the Beloved.” May not each believer talk thus with himself—I have my sorrows and grief, I have my aches and pains, and weaknesses, but I must not repine, for God accepts me. Ah me! How one can laugh at griefs when this sweet word comes in, “accepted in the Beloved.” I may be blind, but I am “accepted in the Beloved.” I may be lame, I may be poor, I may be despised, I may be persecuted, I may have much to put up with in many ways, but really these troubles of the flesh count for little or nothing to me since I am “accepted in the beloved.”

I have to mourn over a multitude of infirmities and imperfections, and there is never a day but what when night comes on I have repenting work to do, and feel compelled to fly to the precious blood again for a renewed sense of pardon. Yes, but I am “accepted in the Beloved.” Ah me, I have been struggling with this evil and that, and I hope I have got the victory, though I have had many a wound in the battle. Yes, but I am “accepted in the Beloved.” I have just now been blaming myself for my shortcomings, and mourning over my many slips and failures, yes, but I am “accepted in the Beloved.” I am speaking for you, or at least I am trying to interpret your meditations. I want you to let this blessed fact go down sweetly with you, that whatever may be the trials of life, whatever the burdens that oppress you, whatever the difficulties of the way, whatever the infirmities of the body, whatever the frailties of the mind, yet still, as being “in the Beloved” you are accepted. Oh, will you not be accepted when you stand where golden harps ring out perpetual hallelujahs? Where every robe is spotless, and every heart is sinless? Yes, but you will not be a jot more accepted, *then*, than you are now, in all this noise, strife and turmoil of everyday life, you are, “accepted in the Beloved” *now*. Is not this present grace in the highest perfection? What more can you have till you behold the unveiled face of infinite Love. Drink down that truth, I pray you.

Let a further reflection be added also to the sweetness of your enjoyment. Think of whom it is that accepts you. It is no common person who admits us to his favor. It is the God whose name is Jehovah, The jealous God. “Holy, holy, holy,” cry the seraphim unceasingly, and nothing that is defiled can ever enter His palace gates, nor can His heart endure the thought of iniquity, and yet it is He that has accepted you. Did your brethren cast you out? Did your friend condemn you? Did your own heart accuse you? Did the devil roar against you? What does it matter, for He has accepted you? “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns?” He has made us “accepted in the Beloved,” and if that is so, we need not fear what men can do to us.

Now, just think again, He has made you “accepted in the Beloved.” He that is God has accepted you in Christ. Would you have liked any other way of acceptance one half as well? For my part, I had infinitely rather receive everything through Christ than reach it from myself. Mercy seems so much sweeter and better from the fact that it all comes from the dear, pierced hand. If I were this day accepted in myself, I should fear that I might lose my acceptance, for I am a poor, changeable being. But if I am “accepted in the Beloved,” then the Beloved will never change, and I always must and shall be accepted, come what may. Is not this a word to die with? We will meet death and face his open jaws with this word, “Accepted in the Beloved.” Will not this be a word to rise with amidst the blaze of the great judgment day? You wake up from your tomb, lift up your eyes, and before you gaze upon the terrors of that tremendous hour, you say, “I am accepted in the Beloved,” what can fill you with alarm? Forever and ever, as the cycles of eternity revolve, will not this be the core and center of heaven’s most supreme bliss, that we are still “accepted in the Beloved”? I hear strange theories nowadays of what may happen to the saints. They tell us sinners will die out, or be restored, or something else, for they are not content with the Scripture’s teaching of eternity, but they must invent strange notions about the punishment of

the ungodly. Then they begin to picture new destiny for saints too, and the heaven of our fathers has sad doubts cast on it. I care not for their dreams, for I am “accepted in the Beloved.” It matters nothing what all the eternities can reveal. He that is accepted in Christ, and eternally one with Him, has nothing before him at which he need tremble.

My time is gone. I heard the warning bell just now, and so I must forbear to amplify on the many reflections that spontaneously flow out of our text, all fitted to stifle anxious care, to sweeten mortal life, and to set our souls a-longing for the home which is above where so hearty a welcome awaits us.

V. And now I wish to finish with this one PRACTICAL USE. If it is so that we are “accepted in the Beloved,” then let us go forth and tell poor sinners how they can be accepted too. Are you, today, though unconverted, anxious to be found right at last? Listen, friend, if you want to be accepted, you must accept. “And what,” do you ask, “must I accept?” You must accept Christ as the free gift of God. You must accept Christ as God’s way of accepting you, for if you get into Christ you are accepted. The guiltiest of the guilty *may* be accepted in Christ, no matter how great and grievous their transgressions may have been, the atoning sacrifice can take all their guilt away, and the perfect righteousness can justify the most heinous sinner before God. You may be accepted. Listen. If you come to Christ now and trust Him you *will be* accepted. Never did one come to Christ to be rejected. You shall not be the first. Try it, and though you came into this house condemned, you shall go out accepted, if you come now and hide in those dear wounds of His as doves hide in the clefts of the rocks. Listen again. It is not only that *you may be* accepted. It is rather that *you will be* accepted. *You cannot but be* accepted in Christ. There is no sort of fear, or possibility that you shall come to Christ and be cast out. Christ must change, truth must change, God must change towards His Well-beloved, He must cease to love Him before He could refrain from loving a soul that is in Him. Guilty as you are, come to Christ this morning, come; despise not the exhortation, for you will be accepted. It cannot but be that you will be accepted if you come. And you shall be accepted *at once*. If at this moment you are as vile as vile can be, if while I speak you know that you are black as hell’s dark night, yet the moment that you come to Christ you are “accepted in the Beloved.” Trust Him, trust Him. Have you done so? Your sin is gone. Righteousness is imputed. You are saved.

And then, to close, if you get into Christ you shall be accepted as long as you are in Christ, and as the grace of God will never let you go out of Christ you shall be accepted forever, “accepted in the Beloved” world without end. If that is the verdict of this day it shall be the verdict of every day till days shall be no more. The hope for you dying, the song for your rising again, the verdict which shall be given out when the great judgment shall sit, and you shall be tried for your life for the last time, they that sit in judgment shall say, “Let that man go; he is accepted in the Beloved.” If you believe in Jesus it shall be so. It is so. It shall be so forever and ever. God bless you all by His good Spirit, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—EPHESIANS 1.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—427, 551, 397.**

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