

DEPTHS AND HEIGHTS NO. 2635

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, AUGUST 13, 1899.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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“His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had, by Himself, purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”
Hebrews 1:2.

I HAVE nothing to do tonight but to preach Jesus Christ. This was the old subject of the first Christian ministers—“Daily in the temple and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.” When Philip went down to the city of Samaria, he “preached Christ unto them.” When he sat with the Ethiopian eunuch in his chariot, he, “preached unto him, Jesus.” As soon as Paul was converted, “straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues.” For once we count the venerableness of our subject well worthy of mentioning, we shall not be ashamed to preach what the apostles preached and what martyrs and confessors preached! We hope to proclaim this glorious gospel of the blessed God as long as we live! And we hope that when this generation of preachers shall have passed away, unless the Lord shall come, there will always be found a succession of men who shall determine to preach nothing “save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”

For, after all, this is the subject which men most of all need. They may have cravings after other things, but nothing can satisfy the deep real need of their nature but Jesus Christ and salvation by His precious blood! He is the bread of life which came down from heaven! He is the water of life of which, if a man drinks, he shall never thirst again! Hence, it becomes us to be often dwelling upon this theme, for it is most necessary to the sons of men. This is the subject which God the Holy Spirit delights to bless. I am sure that, other things being equal, He honors preaching in proportion to the savor of Christ that is in it! I may preach a great deal about the Church, but the Holy Spirit does not take of the things of Christ to glorify the Church. I may preach doctrine or practice apart from Christ—that would be giving the husk without the kernel—but where Jesus Christ sweetens all and savors all, there will the Holy Spirit delight to rest upon the ministry and make it quick and powerful to the conversion of men! And I am sure, dear friends, that the preaching of Christ is always sweet in the ears of His own people. “Your name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love You.” And this theme is most pleasing to God the Father, who loves to hear His Son extolled and exalted. He delights in His Son—and those who delight in Him are friends of God. When Jesus Christ is lifted up, it is as God the Father would have it! It is as the Holy Spirit would have it and, where this is the case, we may expect to have seals to our ministry and souls for our hire!

I want, at this time, as it were, to let Jesus Christ speak for Himself. I cannot speak for Him as He can speak for Himself. Shall I hold my candle to the sun, as if it needed it in order to reveal its light? No, certainly not! And, therefore, I shall, with studied plainness, try to set the text, itself, before you and so to speak of it that you may not so much remember what I have said of it as that you may remember the Subject, Himself. My theme is to be the Savior—the only Savior—the Savior who must save you or else you must perish, “for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” I am about to speak of Him and I think that all who are aware of the necessity of being saved will only want to hear about Him—and to know how they may get to Him and how He may be made their Savior. And if they can but be told this, they will be only too glad to listen!

So, first, I shall speak of *who the Savior is*. Let me read the text to you again. “His Son”—God’s Son—“whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the

brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power.” That is who Jesus is! Then, in the second place, I shall speak of *what Jesus did*. “When He had by Himself purged our sins.” Then, thirdly, I want to tell you *what He enjoys*. After He had finished His great work of salvation, He “sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

I. It is not possible that any language can fully express WHO JESUS IS. Yet, by the Holy Spirit’s gracious teaching, I must tell you what I know of Him.

First, *Jesus is God’s own Son*. What do I know about that wondrous truth of God? If I were to try to explain it and to talk about the eternal Sonship, I should but conduct you where I should soon be entirely out of my depth and, very likely, I would drown all that I could tell you in floods of words. Deity is not to be explained, but to be adored—and the Sonship of Christ is to be accepted as a truth of Revelation and to be apprehended by faith, though it cannot be comprehended by the understanding. There have been many attempts made by the fathers of the Church to explain the relationship between the two divine persons, the Father and the Son. But the explanations had better never have been given, for the figures used are liable to lead into mistakes. Suffice it for us to say that in the most appropriate language of the Nicene Creed, Christ is “God of God, light of light, very God of very God.” He is co-equal with the Father, though how that is, we know not. He stands in the nearest possible relationship to the Father—a relationship of intense love and delight, so that the Father says of Him, “This is My beloved Son.” Yes, He is One with the Father, so that there is no separating them, as He, Himself, said, in reply to Philip’s request, “Show us the Father,” “Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me.”

Let me pause here and say to everyone who is seeking salvation—what a comfort it should be to you that He, who is come to save men, is divine! Therefore, nothing can be impossible to Him. No, I do not say merely that He is divine—I will go further and say that He is the Deity itself! Christ Jesus is God and, being God, there can be no impossibilities or even difficulties with Him. He is able to save you, whoever you may be! Though you have gone to the very verge of eternal ruin, you cannot have gone beyond the range of omnipotence—and omnipotence is inherent in the Godhead. O dear friends, rejoice in this wondrous truth of God—He that was a babe at Bethlehem, was God incarnate! He that, being weary, sat on the well at Sychar, was God incarnate! He that had no where to lay His head was God incarnate. And it is He who has undertaken the stupendous labor of the salvation of men and, therefore, men may hope and trust in Him! We need not wonder that when angels heard of Christ’s coming to earth, they sang, “glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men,” for God had taken upon Himself human flesh that He might save the sons of men. So, the first words in our text—“His Son”—are full of good cheer!

Now notice, in the next place, that *Jesus Christ is the “heir of all things.”* Of which nature of Christ does the apostle speak in this sentence, “whom He has appointed heir of all things”? I do not think that Paul, here, separates the two natures, so as to speak with absolute reference to either one or the other, but he speaks of the person of Christ, and in that person there is God, and in that same person there is most surely and most truly, man. But we must take this description of Jesus Christ as appointed “heir of all things” in His person as man and as God and man combined, for, as God, alone, Christ is necessarily, “heir of all things” without any appointment. But in His complex person as God and man conjoined, the Father has appointed Him to be “heir of all things.”

Now, what does this mean but that Christ possesses all things as an heir possesses his inheritance—that Christ is Lord of all things, as an heir becomes lord and ruler among his brethren? This appointment is to be fully carried into effect by-and-by, for, “now we see not yet all things put under Him.” Christ is Lord of all the angels—not a seraph spreads his wings except at the bidding of the “heir of all things.” There are no bright spirits, unknown to us, that are beyond the control of the God-man, Christ Jesus. And the fallen angels, too, are obliged to bow before His omnipotence. As for all things here below, material substances, men regenerate or unregenerate, God has given Him power over all flesh that He should give eternal life to as many as His Father has given Him. He has put all things under His feet, “and the government shall be upon His shoulders.” He is Heir, or Master, and Possessor of all things—let me say, of all sorts of blessings and all forms of grace, for, “it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.” And, as surely as time revolves and you mark the fleeting minutes upon the dial’s face, the hour is coming when Christ shall be universally acknowledged as King of kings and Lord of lords! Already I seem to hear the shouts go up from every part of the habitable globe and from all heaven and all space, “Hallelujah! For the Lord God, omnipotent, reigns.” All must willingly, or else unwillingly, submit to His sway, for His Father has appointed Him “Heir of all things.”

To my mind, this is another wondrous encouragement to anyone who is seeking salvation. Christ has everything in His hand that is needed in order that He may save you, poor sinner! Sometimes, when a physician has a sick man before him—suppose it is on board ship—he may have to say to him, “I think I could cure your disease if I could get such-and-such a medicine, but, unfortunately, I have not the drug within my reach.” Or the doctor might have to say to the sufferer, “I believe an operation would effect a cure, but I have not the instruments necessary for it.” Never will the great Physician of souls have to talk like that, for the Father has committed *all things into His hand*. Oh, have we not beheld Him as the glory of the Father, full of grace and truth? You great sinner, you black sinner, Christ is not lacking in power to save you! And if you come and trust yourself in His hands, He will never have to look about to find the balm for your wounds, or the ointments or liniments with which to bind up those putrefying sores of yours! No, He is “heir of all things.” So again I say, “Hallelujah!” as I preach Him to you as the blessed Savior of sinners, the Son of God, the “heir of all things.”

Notice, next, that *Jesus Christ is the Creator* “by whom also He made the worlds.” However many worlds there are, we know not. It may be true that all those majestic orbs that stud the midnight sky are worlds filled with intelligent beings. And it is much more easy to believe that they are than that they are not, for, surely, God has not built all those magnificent mansions and left them untenanted! It were irrational to conceive of those myriads of stupendous worlds, vastly bigger than this poor little speck in God’s great universe, all left without inhabitants. But it matters not how many worlds there are—God made them all by Jesus Christ—“All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made.” I see Him standing, as it were, at the anvil of omnipotence, hammering out the worlds that fly off, like sparks, on every side at each stroke of His majestic arm. It was Christ who was there—“the wisdom of God and the power of God,” as Paul calls Him—creating all things! I love to think that He who created all things is also our Savior, for then He can create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me. And if I need a complete new creation—as I certainly do—He is equal to the task! Man cannot create the tiniest gnat that ever danced in the summer evening’s ray. Man cannot create even a single grain of dust, but Christ created all worlds, so He can make us new creatures by the wondrous power of His grace. O sinners, see what a mighty Savior has been provided for you and never say that you cannot trust Him! I agree with good Mr. Hyatt who, when he was asked on his deathbed, “Can you trust Christ with your soul?” answered, “If I had a million souls, I could trust them all with Him!” And so may you! If you had as many souls as God has ever created and if you had heaped upon you all the sins that men have ever committed, you might still trust in Him who is the Son of God, “whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds.”

Now go a little further and see what Christ is next called—*the brightness of His Father’s glory*. Shade your eyes, for you cannot look upon this wondrous sight without being dazzled by it! The Revised Version renders it, “the effulgence of His glory,” but I do not see much more in that expression than in the word, “brightness.” Some commentators say—and it is not a bad figure, yet we must not push any figure too far—that, as light is to the sun, so is Jesus to the glory of God. He is the brightness of that glory, that is to say, there is not any glory in God but what is also in Christ. And when that glory reaches its climax, when God the Ever-glorious is most glorious, that greatest glory is in Christ. Oh, this wondrous Word of God—the very climax of the Godhead—the gathering up of every blessed attribute in all its infinity of glory—you shall find all this in the person of the God-man, Christ Jesus! There is a whole sermon in those words, “the brightness of His glory,” but I cannot preach it tonight because then I should not get through the rest of my text.

So let us pass on to the next clause. “*And the express image of His person.*” I said, a minute ago, “Shade your eyes,” but I might now say, “Shut them,” as I think of the excessive brilliance described by these words—“the express image of His person.” Whatever God is, Christ is—the very likeness of God, the very Godhead of Godhead, the very Deity of Deity is in Christ Jesus—“the express image of His person.” Dr. John Owen, who loves to explain the spiritual meaning in the Epistle to the Hebrews by the types in the Old Testament, which is evidently what Paul, himself, was doing, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit—explains the brightness of the Father’s glory by a reference to the Shekinah over the mercy seat, which was the only visible token of the presence of God there. An extraordinary brightness is said to have shone forth from between the cherubim. Now, Christ is God manifesting Himself in His brightness. But, on his forehead, the High Priest wore a golden plate, upon which was deeply engraved in Hebrew letters, the inscription, “Holiness to [or of,] Jehovah.” Dr. Owen thinks there is a reference in this “express image of His person”—this cut-out inscription of God, as it were—to that which was on the forehead of the High Priest, and which represented the glorious wholeness or holiness of Jehovah, which

is His great glory. Well, whether the apostle referred to this or not, it is for you and me to take off our shoes in the presence of Christ, “the brightness of His Father’s glory, and the express image of His person.” To me, these words are like the bush in which God dwelt, yet which was not consumed—they are all on fire—what more shall I say of them?

Now, Christ being all this that Paul describes, who will dare to turn his back on Him? If this is the Shepherd who has come to seek the lost sheep—O poor lost sheep, will you not be found of Him? If this is God’s Ambassador who comes clothed in the crimson robe of His own blood to redeem the sons of men—who will refuse the peace He brings?

Note yet, once again, what Christ is as I mention the sixth point in the apostle’s description—“*upholding all things by the word of His power,*” Just think of it! This great world of ours is upheld by Christ’s word! If He did not speak it into continued existence, it would go back into the nothingness from which it sprang. There exists not a being who is independent of the Mediator, save only the ever-blessed Father and the Spirit. “By Him all things consist,” that is, continue to hold together. Just as these pillars uphold these galleries, or as the foundations uphold a house, so does Jesus Christ “uphold all things by the word of His power.” Only think of it! Those innumerable worlds of light that make illimitable space to look as though it were sprinkled over with golden dust would all die out like so many expiring sparks, and cease to be if the Christ who died on Calvary did not will that they should continue to exist! I cannot bring out of my text all the wondrous truths of God that it contains, I only wish I could. But, surely, if Christ upholds all things, He can uphold me. If the word of His power upholds earth and heaven, surely, that same word can uphold you, poor trembling heart, if you will trust Him! There need be no fear about that matter—come and prove it for yourself. May His blessed Spirit enable you to do so even now!

Where there is so much room, I might well tarry, but I must hasten on to the next point.

II. Follow me with all your ears and hearts while I now speak to you about WHAT JESUS DID.

He who is all that I have tried to describe, did what? First, *He effectually purged our sins*—“when He had, by Himself, purged our sins.” Listen to those wondrous words! There was never such a task as that since time began. The old fable speaks of the Augean stable, foul enough to have poisoned a nation, which Hercules cleansed, but our sins were fouler than that! Dunghills are sweet compared with these abominations! What a degrading task it seems for Christ to undertake—the purging of our sins! The sweepers of the streets, the dishwashers of the kitchen, and the cleansers of the sewers have honorable work compared with this of purging sin! Yet the holy Christ, incapable of sin, stooped to purge our sins! I want you to meditate upon that wondrous work, and to remember that He did it before He went back to heaven. Is it not a wonderful thing that Christ purged our sins even before we had committed them? There they stood, before the sight of God, as already existent in all their hideousness—but Christ came, and purged them. This, surely, ought to make us sing the Song of Songs! Before I sinned, He purged my sins away—amazing and strange as it is, yet it is so!

Then, further, the apostle says that *Christ purged our sins by Himself*. That is, by offering Himself as our Substitute. There was no purging away of sin except by Christ bearing the burden of it, and He did bear it. He bore all that was due to guilty man on account of his violation of the law of God, and God accepted His sacrifice as a full equivalent, and so He purged our sins. He did not come to do something by which our sins *might be purged*, but He purged them *effectually, actually, really, completely*. How did He do it? By His preaching? By His doctrine? By His Spirit? No, “By Himself.” Oh, that is a blessed word! The Revised Version has left it out, but the doctrine is taught in the Bible over and over again. “Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” “By His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” He gave Himself for us! Not only His blood, but all that constituted Himself—His Godhead and His manhood. All that He had and all that He was, He gave as the ransom price for us! Can any of you estimate the value of that price? The acts of One, Divine as He is, are Divine actions, and there is a weight and force about them that there could not be about the deeds of the best of men or even of all the holy angels! “He by Himself purged our sins.”

Now, let every believer, if he wants to see his sins, stand on tiptoe and look up—will he see them there? No. If he looks down, will he see them there? No. If he looks around, will he see them there? No. If he looks within, will he see them there? No. Where shall he look, then? Where he likes, for he will never see them, again, according to that ancient promise, “In those days, and in that time, says the Lord,

the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none. And the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found, for I will pardon them whom I reserve.” Shall I tell you where your sins are? Christ purged them, and God said, “I will cast all their sins behind My back.” Where is that? All things are before God. I do not know where *behind* God’s back can be! It is nowhere, for God is everywhere present, seeing everything. So that is where my sins have gone—I speak with the utmost reverence when I say that they have gone where Jehovah, Himself, can never see them! Christ has so purged them that they have ceased to be! The Messiah came to finish transgression and to make an end of sin—and He has done it.

O believer, if He has made an end of it, [sin] then there is an end to it, and what more can there be of it? Here is a blessed text for you. I love to meditate on it often when I am alone—“As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.” This He did on Calvary’s cross—there effectually, finally, totally, completely, eternally, He purged all His people from their sin by taking it upon Himself, bearing all its dreadful consequences, cancelling and blotting it out, casting it into the depths of the sea and putting it away forever! And all this He did, “by Himself.” It was, indeed, amazing love that made Him stoop to this purgation, this expiation, this atonement for sin! But, because He was who and what He was, He did it thoroughly and perfectly! He said, “It is finished,” and I believe Him! I do not—I cannot—for a moment admit that there is anything to be done by us to complete that work—or anything required of us to make the annihilation of our sins complete! Those for whom Christ died are cleansed from all their guilt—and they may go their way in peace. He was made a curse for us, and there is nothing but blessing left for us to enjoy!

III. Now, lastly, I have to speak of WHAT CHRIST NOW ENJOYS. “When He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” Here again I shall have to say that I am quite out of my depth. I have waters to swim in, but I am not a good swimmer in such blessed deeps as these.

There is an allusion here, no doubt, to the high priest who, on the great Day of Atonement, when the sacrifice had been offered, presents himself before God. Now Christ, our great High Priest, having, once and for all, offered Himself as the sacrifice for sin, has now gone into the most holy place and there He sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Notice, first, that *this implies rest*. When the high priest went within the veil, he did not sit down. He stood, with holy trembling, bearing the sacrificial blood, before the blazing mercy seat. But our Savior now sits at His Father’s right hand. The high priest of old had not finished his work—the next year another atoning sacrifice would be needed! But our Lord has completed His atonement, and now, “there remains no more sacrifice for sin,” for there remains no more sin to be purged. “But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified.” There He sits, and I am sure He would not be sitting if He had not finished the salvation of His people! Isaiah long before had been inspired to record what the Messiah would say, “For Zion’s sake will I not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest until the righteousness thereof goes forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burns.” But Christ is now resting! My eyes, by faith, can see Him sitting there, so I know that—

*“Love’s redeeming work is done!
Fought the fight, the battle won.”*

Notice, next, that *Christ sits in the place of honor*—“on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” Of course we are talking figuratively, now, and you must not interpret this literally. Jesus sits at the right hand of His Father, He dwells in the highest conceivable honor and dignity. All the angels worship Him and all the blood-washed host adore Him day without night. The Father delights to honor Him—

*“The highest place that heaven affords
Is His, is His by right,
The King of kings, and Lord of lords,
And heaven’s eternal light.”*

Not only does Jesus sit in the place of honor, but *He occupies the place of safety*. None can hurt Him, now! None can stop His purposes, or defeat His will. He is at the powerful right hand of God! In heaven above and on the earth beneath, and in the waters under the earth, and on every star He is supreme Lord and Master. And they that will not yield to Him shall be broken with a rod of iron! He shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel. So His cause is safe, His kingdom is secure, for He is at the right hand of power.

And, last of all, Christ at the right hand of God signifies *the eternal certainty of His reward*. It is not possible that He should be robbed of the purchase of His blood. I tremble when I hear some people talk about the disappointed Christ—or about His having died at a chance to accomplish He knew not what—dying for something which the will of man might give Him if it would, but it might possibly be denied Him! I buy nothing on such terms as that! I expect to have what I purchase and Christ will have what He bought with His own blood—especially as He lives again to claim His purchase! He shall never be a defeated and disappointed Savior! “He loved the church and gave Himself for it.” He has redeemed His loved ones from among men, and He shall have all those whom He has purchased. “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.” Therefore, let us again say, “Hallelujah!” and fall down and worship Him!

It does seem to me that there is no proof of men’s natural blindness that is as conclusive as this—that men will not go and trust in Jesus. O sinners, if sin had left you sane in heart, you would come at once and fall down at His feet! There is all power laid up in Jesus and there is all the Father’s love concentrated in Jesus, so come and trust Him! If you will but trust Him, you will prove that He has given Himself for you! That simple trust is the secret mark that distinguishes His people from all others. “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” To those who rejected Him when He was upon the earth, our Lord said, “You believe not because you are not of My sheep, as I said unto you.” O poor souls, do you mean to wear forever the damning mark of unbelief? If you die with that brand upon your soul, you will be lost forever! Oh, may you have, instead, that blessed mark of faith which is the token of the Lord’s people! May you even now hang out the scarlet line as Rahab hung it out of her window—the scarlet line of confidence in the crimson blood of Jesus! And while Jericho falls—while all the earth shall crumble in one common ruin—your house, though built upon the wall, shall stand securely and not one who is within its shelter shall be touched by the devouring sword, for all who are in Christ are in everlasting safety! How can they be otherwise, since He has purged their sins? God give to every one of you a part and lot among this blessed company, for His dear name’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *EPHESIANS I.*

We frequently read this chapter and the whole of this Epistle because it has been well remarked that the Epistle to the Ephesians is a body of divinity in miniature. Here all the great doctrines of the gospel are discussed. Here all the great precepts are laid down for the guidance of believers. He who would understand the theology of Christ Jesus should read the Epistle to the Ephesians with great care.

Verses 1, 2. *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father.*

There must be “grace” first. “Peace” comes afterwards. They seek heavenly blessings in the wrong order who try to gain peace, first, and then grace. “There is no peace, says my God to the wicked.” And he who has a peace which does not acknowledge grace for its parent has a false peace—a peace where there is no peace! But let us first have grace in our souls, then shall our peace be “as a river, and our righteousness as the waves of the sea.” Note here, as Luther has said on a corresponding verse in the Epistle to the Galatians, the apostle says, “Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father”—and lest that terrible name should frighten us, he has joined there the name of God the Son and sweetly put in—

2. *And from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

We can have nothing to do with an absolute God. It is *God in Christ* whom we love—whom we adore—who alone is our Savior!

3, 4. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.*

The apostle commences by laying down the great doctrine of predestinating love. There is little gospel preached where election is denied. We marvel that some of us should be regarded as in error because we preach the doctrine of God’s divine sovereignty in giving grace to men whereas, in former times, the opponents of that glorious system would have been reckoned as the heretics! Turn to all the great creeds that are preserved and you shall find that truth of God mentioned. Above all, we can scarcely conceive that any person who is a member or a minister of the Established Church, and finding divine election in his own Church’s articles, can, in the least degree, deny it! It is the glory of that Church [the Church of England] that it has a Calvinistic creed, and it is so far in harmony with the Scriptures!

5, 6. *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the beloved.*

Adoption follows predestination. We were chosen of God before time began, and the result of that choice is that He puts us into His family. In the fifth verse, the apostle declares that the only reason for our adoption, or for our election, rests in the good pleasure of God Almighty. There is nothing in man which can merit God's regard, and when we enter heaven, we shall even there sing—

*“What was there in me that could merit esteem,
Or give the Creator delight?
'Twas even so, Father,’ I must always sing,
Because it seemed good in Your sight.”*

Mark here the channel through which all God's mercies run! Jesus Christ is the channel through which grace flows to us. We are chosen in Him, we are adopted by Jesus Christ to Himself and we are “accepted in the beloved.” It is said of that eminently holy man, Harington Evans, that, when near death, he asked his friends to give this message to his church. “Tell them,” he said, “I am accepted in the beloved.” Can we say, my brothers and sisters, that we are accepted in the beloved? Can we put our hand upon our heart and, each one, say, “I may not be accepted by my fellow creatures. I may not be acknowledged by them, and certainly, before my God, I can never be accepted in myself. But in the Beloved, clothed with His righteousness, and standing in His person, as a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, I am ‘accepted in the Beloved’”?

7-10. *In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace; wherein He has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He has purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him.*

The main purpose of the gospel is to exalt Christ and to glorify God. We forget God's great design if we look only to humanity. If we regard salvation as a means of only lifting up our race from its fall, and putting it among the princes, we have made a mistake. We must remember that God's glory is a greater objective, even, than man's salvation! Not so much to save us did God give His Son, as to honor Himself and to glorify that Son of His! And we must always remember that the gospel has for its chief aim the glory of all the attributes of the Divine Being. He has determined to gather together, at last, all things in Christ that are in heaven and in earth. Some foolish persons have wrested this text to prove the absurd doctrine of the final restitution of the lost. They have said that even the fallen spirits in hell are to be restored! We find it not in this text—we have it particularly said, “things in heaven and things on earth.” But there is no mention made of those concerning whom it was long ago said, “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.” I have often thought that these words of the angel are conclusive with regard to the eternity of future punishment. Once dead, immutability is stamped upon our state—once let us die, and our destiny can never be changed—

*“There are no acts of pardon passed
In the cold grave to which we haste.
But darkness, death, and long despair,
Reign in eternal silence there.”*

But “things which are in heaven, and which are on earth” are, “in the dispensation of the fullness of times,” to be gathered together in one, “even in Him.”

11-14. *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will: that we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom you also trusted, after that you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.*

I cannot help remarking how continually the apostle uses such expressions as, “in Christ,” “in whom,” “in Him.” He will not have a doctrine apart from Christ! He will not mention a single blessing, or a single mercy, without Christ! I believe there is no way of preaching gospel doctrines truly apart from the Master. In Christ's own days, if you had asked one of His followers what he believed, he would not have been long telling you! He would not have pointed to 50 doctrines, but he would have pointed to Christ and said, “I believe in Him.” You might have asked him, 50 times, “But what do you believe?”

and he would have replied, “I believe in Him! He is, in Himself, the great embodiment of my faith! His person carries within it all the great doctrines which I receive from Him. He is the truth! I believe Him and I believe *in* Him.” Let us learn, then, always to trace our mercies to Christ Jesus, to look upon every blessing as being the purchase of His blood and never to ask for any mercy, nor endeavor to obtain any blessing, except entirely in connection with Him. Let us say to Him—

*“You are the Way, the Truth, the Life!
Grant us that Way to know,
That Truth to keep, that Life to win,
Whose joys eternal flow.”*

15. “Therefore I, also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints.”

Whether they live at Ephesus or elsewhere, whether they exactly agree with your opinion or not—

16-23. *Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that fills all in all.*

Calvin has a striking remark upon this verse, “the Church is the fullness of Christ.” “This is the highest honor of the Church that, until Christ is united to us, the Son of God reckons Himself, in some measure, imperfect.” And so He is, for what would a king be without his subjects? A mockery! Yes, and all the members of Christ’s mystical body—the Church—are necessary to make a whole Christ! If the very least believer shall be absent at the last, Christ will not be complete. Even the Almighty Son of God will feel a lack within Himself, or He would, if it were possible that one of those whom His Father had given Him should not at last be found at His right hand! All the sheep of the Good Shepherd will be gathered into the heavenly fold! We rejoice to know that there is such a connection as this between ourselves and Christ! Here is our glory and our boast—and here is our trust! We believe that—

*“His honor is engaged to save
The meanest of His sheep.
All that His heavenly Father gave
His hands securely keep.
Not death, nor hell, shall ever remove
His favorites from His breast!
In the dear bosom of His love
They must forever rest.”*

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—414, 586, 387.

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