

“CHRIST IS ALL”

NO. 2888

A SERMON

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*“Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised,
Barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is All and in all.”
Colossians 3:11.*

PAUL is writing concerning the new creation and he says that, in it, “There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, Barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is All.” The new creation is a very different thing from the old one. Blessed are all they who have both seen the Kingdom of Heaven and entered into it. In the first creation, we are born of the flesh—and that which is born of the flesh is, even at the best, nothing but flesh and can never be anything better. But in the new creation, we are born of the Spirit and so we become spiritual and understand spiritual things. The new life in Christ Jesus is an eternal life and it links all those who possess it with the eternal realities at the right hand of God above.

In some respects the new creation is so like the old one that a parallel might be drawn between them, but, in far more respects, it is not at all like the old creation. Many things are absent from the new creation which were found in the old one—and many things which were accounted of great value in the first creation are of little or no worth in the new—while many distinctions which were greatly prized in the old creation are treated as mere insignificant trifles in the new creation. The all-important thing is for each one of us to put to himself or herself the question, “Do I know what it is to have been renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who creates anew? Do I know what it is to have been born twice, to have been born-again—born from above by the effectual working of God, the Holy Spirit? Do I understand what it is to have spiritually entered a new world wherein dwells righteousness?” It is concerning this great Truth of God that I am going to speak and, first, I shall say something upon *what is obliterated in the new creation*. And, secondly, upon *what stands in its place*.

I. First, as to WHAT IS OBLITERATED IN THE NEW CREATION. “There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, Barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free.”

That is to say, first, in the Kingdom of Christ *there is an obliteration of all national distinctions*. I suppose there will always be national distinctions in the world until Christ comes, even if they should then be all terminated. The mischief was worked when men tried to build the city and tower, in the plain of Shinar, and so brought Babel, or confusion into the world. The one family became transformed into many—a necessary evil to prevent a still greater one. The unity at Babel would have been far worse than the confusion has ever been, just as the spiritual union of Babylon, that is, Rome, the Papal system, has been infinitely more mischievous to the Church and to the world, than the division of Christians into various sects and parties could ever have been. Babel has not been an altogether unmitigated evil. It has, no doubt, worked a certain amount of good and prevented colossal streams of evil from reaching a still more awful culmination.

Still, the separation is, in itself, an evil and it is, therefore, in the Lord’s own time and way to be done away with. And *spiritually* it is already abolished. In the Church of Christ, wherever there is real union of heart among Believers, nationality is no hindrance to true Christian fellowship. I feel just as much love toward any Brother or Sister in Christ who is not of our British race as I do toward our own Christian countrymen and countrywomen. Indeed, I sometimes think I feel even more the force of the spiritual union when I catch the Swiss tone, or the French, or the German breaking

out in the midst of the English, as we often do here, thank God. I seem to feel all the more interest in these beloved Brothers and Sisters because of the little difference in nationality that there is between us. Certainly, Beloved, in any part of the true Church of Christ, all national distinctions are swept away and we “are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God.”

Under the Christian dispensation, the distinction or division of nationality has gone from us in this sense. We once had our national heroes—each nation still glories in its great men of the heroic age, or in its mythical heroes—but the one Champion and Hero of Christianity is our Lord Jesus Christ who has slain our dragon foes, routed all our adversaries, broken down the massive fortress of our great enemy and set the captives free! We sing no longer of the valiant deeds of our national heroes—St. George, St. Andrew, St. Patrick, St. Denis and the other so-called “saints” who were either only legendary, or else anything but “saints” as we understand the term! We sing the prowess of the King of all saints, the mighty Son of David who is worthy of our loftiest praises! King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table we are quite willing to forget when we think of “another King, one Jesus,” and of another Table, where they who sit are not merely good knights of Jesus Christ, but are made kings and priests unto Him who sits at the head of the festal board. Barbarian, Scythian, Greek, Jew—these distinctions are all gone as far as we are concerned—for we are all one in Christ Jesus. We boast not of our national or natural descent, or of the heroes whose blood may be in our veins. It is enough for us that Christ has lived, Christ has died and Christ has “spoiled principalities and powers” and trampled down sin, death and Hell even as He fell amid the agonies of Calvary.

Away, too, has gone all our national history, so far as there may have been any desire to exalt it for the purpose of angering Christian Brothers and Sisters of another race. I wish that even the names of wars and famous battlefields could be altogether forgotten, but if they do remain in the memories of those of us who are Christians, we will not boast as he did who said, “But ‘twas a famous victory.” Nor will we proudly sing of—

*“The flag that braved a thousand years
The battle and the breeze.”*

As Christians, our true history begins—no, I must correct myself, for it had no beginning except in that dateless eternity when the Divine Trinity in Unity conceived the wondrous plan of Predestinating Grace, electing love, the Substitutional Sacrifice of the Son of God for the sins of His chosen people, the full and free justification of all who believe and the eternal glory of the whole redeemed family of God! This is our past, present and future history! We who are Christians take down the Volume of the Book wherein these things are written and we make our boast in the Lord—and thus the boasting is not sinful.

As to laws and customs, of which each nation has its own, it is not wrong for a Christian to take delight in a good custom which has been long established, or earnestly to contend for the maintenance of ancient laws which have preserved inviolate the liberty of the people age after age. But, still, the customs of Christians are learned from the example of Christ—and the laws of Believers are the precepts laid down by Him. When we are dealing with matters relating to the Church of Christ, we have no English customs, or French customs, or American customs, or German customs. Or, if we have, we should let them go and have only Christian customs henceforth. Did our Lord Jesus Christ command anything? Then, let it be done! Did He forbid anything? Then away with it! Would He smile upon a certain action? Then perform it at once! Would He frown upon it? Then mind that you do the same! Blessed is the Believer who has realized that the laws and customs for the people of God to observe are plainly written out in the life of Christ and that He has become to us, now, “All and in all.”

Christ, by giving liberty to all His people, has also obliterated the distinctions of nationality which we once located in various countries. One remembers, with interest, the old declaration, “*Romanus sum*,” (“I am a Roman”), for a citizen of Rome, wherever he might go, felt that he was a free man whom none would dare to hurt, else Roman legions would ask the reason why! And an Englishman, in any country wherever he may be, still feels that he is one who was born free and who would sooner die than become a slave, or hold another man or woman in slavery. But, Brothers and Sisters, there is a higher liberty than this—the liberty with which Christ has made His people free! And when we come into the Church of God, we talk about *that* liberty and we believe that Christians—even if they have not the civil and religious rights which *we* possess—should still be as free in Christ as we are. There are still many in various parts of the world who

do not enjoy the liberties that we have, who, notwithstanding their bonds, are spiritually free, for, as the Son has made them free, they are free, indeed!

Christ also takes from us all inclination or power to boast of our national prestige. To me it is prestige enough to be a Christian—to bear the cross Christ gives me to carry and to follow in the footsteps of the great Cross-Bearer. What is the power, in which some boast, of sending soldiers and cannon to a distant shore, compared with the Almighty Power with which Christ guards the weakest of us who dares to trust Him? What reason is there for a man to be lifted up with conceit just because he happens to have been born in this or that highly-favored country? What is such a privilege compared with the glories which appertain to the man who is born-again from above—who is an heir of Heaven, a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ—and who can truthfully say, “All things are mine, and I am Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.”

What is the wondrous internationalism that levels all these various nationalities in the Church of Christ and makes us all one in Him? Spiritually we have all been born in one country—the New Jerusalem is the mother of us all. It is not my boast that I am a citizen of this or that earthly city or town. It is my joy that I am one of the citizens of “a city which has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.” Christ has fired all of us who are His people with a common enthusiasm. He has revealed Himself to each one of us as He does not unto the world and, in the happy remembrance that we belong to Him, we forget that we are called by this or that national name and only remember that He is our Lord and that we are to follow where He leads the way! He has pointed us to Heaven as the leader of the Goths and Huns pointed his followers to Italy and said, “There is the country whence come the luscious wines of which you have tasted. Go and take the vineyards and grow the vines for yourselves.” And so they forgot that they belonged to various tribes and they all united under the one commander who promised to lead them on to the conquest of the rich land for which they panted. And now we who are in Christ Jesus, having tasted of the Eshcol clusters which grow in the heavenly Canaan, follow our glorious Leader and Commander as the Israelites followed Joshua, forgetting that we belong to so many different tribes, but knowing that there is an inheritance reserved in Heaven for all who follow where Jehovah-Jesus leads the way!

The next thing to be observed in our text is that *ceremonial distinctions are obliterated*. When Paul says that “there is neither circumcised nor uncircumcised,” he recalls the fact that, under the Law, there were some who were peculiarly the children of promise to whom were committed the oracles of God. But there is no such thing as that now. Then there were others who stood outside the pale of the law—the sinners of the Gentiles, who were left in darkness until their time for receiving the Light of God should come. But Christ has fused these two into one and now, in His Church, “there is neither Greek nor Jew.” I marvel at the insanity of those who try to prove that we are Jews—the lost ten tribes, forsooth! I grant you that the business transactions of a great many citizens of London afford some support to the theory, but it is only a theory—and a very crazy one, too! But suppose they were able to prove that we are of the seed of Abraham after the flesh? It would not make any difference to us, for we are expressly told that “there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised”—for all Believers are one in Christ Jesus!

The all-important consideration is—Are we Christians? Do we really believe in Jesus Christ to the salvation of our souls? The Apostle truly says, “Christ is All,” for He has done away with all the distinctions that formerly existed between Jews and Gentiles. He has leveled down and He has leveled up. First He has leveled down the Jews and made them stand in the same class as the Gentiles, shutting them up under the custody of the very Law in which they gloried—and making them see that they can never come out of that bondage except by using the key of faith in Christ. So our Lord Jesus has stopped the mouths of both Jews and Gentiles and made them stand equally guilty before God, for, on the other hand, He has leveled up the outcast and despised Gentiles and has admitted us to all the privileges of His ancient Covenant, making us to be heirs of Abraham in a *spiritual* sense, “though Abraham is ignorant of us and Israel acknowledge us not.” He has given to us all the blessings which belong to Abraham’s seed because we, too, possess like precious faith as the father of the faithful had. So, “now in Christ Jesus we who sometimes were far off are made near by the blood of Christ. For He is our Peace, who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of two, one new man, so making peace.” Oh, what a blessing it is that all national and ceremonial distinctions are gone forever and that “Christ is All” to all who believe in Him!

A more difficult point, perhaps, is that of *social distinctions*. But that also has gone from the Church of Christ. “There is neither slave nor free,” says the Apostle. Well, blessed be God, slavery has almost ceased to exist! Among Christians it has become a by-word and a proverb, though there was a time when some of them pleaded for it as a Divinely-ordained institution. But, oh, may the last vestige of it speedily disappear and may every man see it to be both his duty and his privilege to yield to his brother man his God-given rights and liberties! Yet, even in such a free country as ours happily is, there are still distinctions between one class and another and I expect there always will be. I do not suppose there can ever be in this world, any system, even if we could have the most profound philosophers to invent it, in which everybody will be equal. Or, if they ever should be all equal, they would not remain so for more than five minutes. We are not all equal in our form, shape, capacity and ability—and we never shall be! We could not have the various members of our body all equal—if we had such an arrangement as that, our body would be a monstrosity! There are some members of the body which must have a more honorable office and function than others have—but all the members are in the body and necessary to its due proportion.

So it is in the Church of Christ which is His mystical body. Yet, Brothers and Sisters, how very, very minute are the distinctions between the various members of that body! You, my Brother, are rich, as the world reckons riches. Well, do not boast of your wealth, for riches are very apt to take to themselves wings and fly away! Probably more of you are poor, as far as worldly wealth is concerned. Well, then, do not murmur, for “all things are yours” if you are Christ’s! And soon you will be where you will know nothing of poverty again forever and ever! True Christianity practically wipes out all these distinctions by saying, “This man, as one of Christ’s stewards, has more of his Lord’s money entrusted to him than others have, so he is bound to do more with it than they do with their portion—he must give away more than they do.” This other man has far less than his rich brother, but Christ says that he is responsible for the right use of what he has—not for what he has not. As the poor widow’s two mites drop into the treasury of the Lord, He receives her gift with as sweet a smile as that which He accorded to the lavish gifts of David and Solomon. In His Church, Christ teaches us that if we have more than others, we simply hold it in trust for those who have less than we have—and I believe that some of the Lord’s children are poor in order that there may be an opportunity for their fellow Christians to minister to them out of their abundance.

We could not prove our devotion to Christ, in practical service such as He loves best, if there were not needy ones whom we could succor and support. Our Lord has told us how He will say in the Great Day of Account, “I was hungry and you gave Me meat,” but that could not be the case if there were not one of the least of His brethren who was hungry and whom we could feed for His sake. “I was thirsty and you gave Me drink.” But He could not say that if none of His poor brethren were thirsty. “I was sick and you visited Me.” So there must be sick saints to be visited and cases of distress, of various kinds, to be relieved, otherwise there could not be the opportunity of practically proving our love to our Lord. In the Church of Christ it ought always to be so, Brothers and Sisters—we should love each other fervently with a pure heart, we should bear each other’s burdens and so fulfill the Law of Christ—and we should care for one another and seek, as far as we can, to supply one another’s needs. The rich brother must not exalt himself above the poor one, nor must the poor Christian envy his richer Brothers and Sisters in Christ, for in Him all these distinctions are obliterated and we sit down, at His Table, as members of the one family of which He is the glorious and ever-living Head—and we dwell together in unity, praising Him that national, ceremonial and social distinctions have, for us, all passed away and that “Christ is All and in all.”

II. Possibly I have taken up too much of our time in describing what is obliterated from the old creation, so, now I will try more briefly to show you WHAT TAKES ITS PLACE IN THE CREATION—“Christ is All and in all.”

First, Christ *is all our culture*. Has Christianity wiped out that grand name, “Greek”? Yes, in the old meaning of it and, in some senses, it is a great pity that it is gone, for the Greek was a cultured man. The Greek’s every movement was elegance itself. The Greek was the standard of classic beauty and eloquence, but Christianity has wiped all that out and written, in its place, “Christ is All.” And, Brothers and Sisters, the culture, the gracefulness, the beauty, the comeliness, the eloquence—in the sight of the best Judge of all those things, namely, God, the Ever-Blessed—which Christ gives to the true Christian, is better than all that Greek art or civilization ever produced! So we may cheerfully let it all go and say, “Christ is All.”

Next, *Christ is all our Revelation*. There was the “Jew”—he was a fine fellow and there is still much to admire in him. The Semitic race seems to have been specially constituted by God for devout worship and the Jew, the descendant of believing Abraham, is still a firm Believer in one part of God’s Word. He is, spiritually, a staunch Conservative in that matter, the very backbone of the world’s belief. Alas, that his faith is so incomplete and that there is mingled with it so much tradition received from his fathers! Will you wipe out that name, “Jew”? Yes, because we who believe in Jesus glory in Him even as the Jew gloried in having received the oracles of God. Christ is “the Word of God” Incarnate—and all the Divine Revelation is centered in Him—and we hold fast the eternal Truths of God which have been committed unto us because of the power of Christ that rests upon us.

Then, next, *Christ is all our ritual*. There is not a circumcision now. That was the special mark of those who were separated from all the rest of mankind. They bore in their body undoubted indications that they were set apart to be the Lord’s peculiar possession. Someone asks, “Will you do away with that distinguishing rite?” Yes, we will, for, in Christ every true Christian is set apart unto God—marked as Jesus Christ’s special separated one by the circumcision made without hands!

Further, *Christ is all our simplicity*. Here is a man who says that “uncircumcision” is his distinguishing mark and adds, “I am not separated or set apart from others, as the so-called ‘priest’ is. I am a man among my fellow men. Wherever I go, I can mingle with others and feel that they are my brethren. I belong to the ‘uncircumcision.’ Will you rule that out?” Yes, we will, because we have, in Christ, all that uncircumcision means, for he who becomes a real Christian is the truest of all men—he is the most free from that spirit which says, “Stand by yourself, come not near me for I am holier than you.” He is the true philanthropist, the real lover of men, even as Christ was! He was no separatist, in the sense in which some use that word. He went to a wedding feast. He ate bread in the house of a publican. And a woman of the city who was a sinner was permitted to wash His feet with her tears. He mingled with the rest of mankind and “the common people heard Him gladly.” And He would have us to be as He was—the true Man among men, the great Lover of our race.

Once more, *Christ is all our natural traditions and our unconquerableness and liberty*. Here is “the rude barbarian,” as the poet calls him. He says, “I shall never give up the free, manly life that I have lived so long. By my unshorn beard,” (for that is the meaning of the term, Barbarian), “I swear it shall be so.” “By the wild steppes and wide plains over which I roam unconquerable,” says the Scythian, “I will never bend to the conventionalities of civilization and be the slave of your modern luxuries.” Well, it is almost a pity to have done with Barbarians and Scythians, in this sense, for there is a good deal about them to be commended—but we must wipe them all out. If they come into the Church of Christ, He must be “All, and in all,” because everything that is manly, everything that is natural, everything that is free, everything that is bold, everything that is unconquerable will be put into them if “Christ is All” to them. They will get all the excellences that are in that freedom—without the faults appertaining to it!

Further, “*Christ is All, as our Master, if we are a ‘slave.’*” I think I see, in the great assembly at Colosse which Paul addressed, one who said, “But I am a slave! A man bought me at the auction mart and here, on my back, are the marks of the slave-holder’s lash.” And I think I hear him add, “I wish that disgrace could be wiped out.” But Paul says, “Brother, it *is* wiped out! You are no slave, really, for Christ has made you free.” Then the great Apostle of the Gentiles comes and sits down by his side and says to him, “The Church of Christ has absorbed you, Brother, by making us all like you—for we are all servants of one Master. And look,” says Paul, as he bares his own back and shows the scars from his repeated scourging, “from henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.” “And so,” he says, laying his hand on the poor Christian slave, “I, Paul, the slave of Jesus Christ, share your servitude and with me you are Christ’s free man.”

Lastly, *Christ is our Magna Charta. Yes, our liberty itself if we are ‘free.’* Here comes the free man who was born free. Shall that clause stand, “neither slave nor free”? Oh, yes, let it stand! But not so stand that we glory in our national freedom, for Christ has given us a higher freedom! I may slightly alter the familiar couplet and say—

***“He is the free man whom
The Lord makes free,
And all are slaves beside.”***

Oh, what multitudes of people in London are slaves—miserable slaves to the opinions of their neighbors—slaves to the caprice of Mrs. Grundy—slaves to “respectability!” Some of you dare not do a thing that you know to be right because somebody might make a remark about it. What are you but slaves? Yes, and there are slaves in the pulpit, every Sunday, who dare not speak the Truth of God for fear somebody will be offended! And there are also slaves in the pews and slaves in the shops and slaves all around. What a wretched life a slave lives! Yet, till you become a Christian and know what it is to wear Christ’s bonds about your willing wrists, you will always feel the galling fetters of society and the bonds of custom, fashion, or this or that! But Jesus makes us free with a higher freedom, so we wipe out the mere terrestrial freedom which is too often only a sham—and we write, “Christ is ALL.”

So, to conclude, remember that if you have Christ as your Savior, you do not need anybody else to save you. I see an old gentleman, over there in Rome, with a triple crown on his head. We do not want him, for “Christ is All.” He says that he is the vicegerent of God. That is not true, but if it were, it would not matter, for “Christ is All,” so we can do without the Pope! Then I see another gentleman with an all-round dog collar of the Roman kennel type—he tells me that if I will confess my sins to him as the priest of the parish, he can give me absolution—but, seeing that “Christ is All,” we can do without that gentleman as well as the other one, for anything that is over and above “all” must be a superfluity, if nothing worse. So is it with everything that is beside or beyond Christ—faith can get to Christ without Pope or priest! Everything that is outside Christ is a lie, for “Christ is All.” All that is true must be inside Him, so we can do without all others in the matter of our soul’s salvation.

But supposing that we have not received Christ as our Savior? Then how unspeakably poor we are! If we have not grasped Christ by faith, we have not laid hold of anything, for “Christ is All!” And if we have not Him who is All, we have nothing at all. “Oh,” says one, “I go to chapel regularly.” Yes, so far, so good. But if you have not Christ, you have nothing, for “Christ is All.” “But I have been baptized,” says another. Ah, but if you have not savingly trusted in Christ, your Baptism is only another sin added to all your others! “But I go to communion,” says another. So much the worse for you if you have not trusted in Christ as your Savior. I wish I could put this thought into the heart of everyone here who is without Christ—no, I pray the Holy Spirit to impress this thought upon your heart—if you are without Christ, you are without everything that is worth having, for “Christ is All.”

But, Christians, I would like to make your hearts dance by reminding you that if you have Christ as your Savior, you are rich to all the intents of bliss, for you have “all” that your heart can wish to have! Nobody else can say as much as that! The richest man in the world has only got something, though the something may be very great. Alexander conquered one world but you, Believer, in getting Christ as yours, have this world and also that which is to come—life and death, time and eternity! Oh, revel in the thought that, as Christ is yours, you are rich to an infinity of riches, for “Christ is All.”

Now, if Christ really is yours and as Christ is All, then love Him, honor Him and praise Him! Mother, what were you doing this afternoon? Pressing that dear child of yours to your bosom and saying, “She is my all”? Take back those words, for they are not true! If you love Christ, *He* is your All and you cannot have another “all.” Someone else has one who is very near and very dear. If you are that someone else and you have said in your heart, “He is my all,” or, “She is my all,” you have done wrong, for nothing and no one but Christ must be your “all.” You will be an idolater and you will grieve the Holy Spirit if anything, or anyone except Christ becomes your “all.” You who have lately lost your loved ones and you who have been brought low by recent losses in business—are you fretting over your losses? If so, remember that you have not lost your “all.” You still have Christ and He is “All.” Then what have you lost? I know that you have something to grieve over, but, after all, your “light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for you a far more exceedingly and eternal weight of glory.” Therefore, comfort yourself with this thought—“I have not really lost anything, for I still have All.” When you have all things, find Christ in All and when you have lost all things, then find all things in Christ. I do not know, but I think that the latter is the better of the two!

Now, if Christ is all, then, beloved Brothers and Sisters, let us live for Him! If He is All, let us spend our strength and be ready to lay down the last particle of it that we have and to die for Him—and then let us, whenever we need anything, go to Him for it, for “Christ is All.” Let us draw upon this bank, for its resources are infinite—we shall never exhaust them!

Lastly, and chiefly, let us send our hearts right on to where He is. Where our treasure is, there should our hearts be, also. Come, my Heart, up and away! What have you here that can fill you? What have you here that can satisfy you? Plume your wings and be up and away, for there is your roosting-place! There is the Tree of Life which can never be felled. Up and away and build there forever! The Lord help each one of you to do so, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
ISAIAH 43:1-25.

Verse 1. *But now thus says the LORD that created you, O Jacob, and He that formed you, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed you, I have called you by your name; you are Mine.* I cannot pause to comment upon each of the precious sentences here, but every word is full of marrow and fatness. Ask the Lord to enable you to feed upon each sentence as it passes before your mind.

2-5. *When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not flow over you: when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior: I gave Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for you. Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honorable, and I have loved you: therefore will I give men for you, and people for your life. Fear not: for I am with you.* That always seems to me to be the master-consolation—“I am with you.” What more does the most troubled heart need than God's Presence?

5. *I will bring your seed from the east, and gather you from the west.* O Church of God, your elect members shall all, in due time, be fetched in—however far they may have wandered!

6, 7. *I will say to the north, Give up; and to the South, keep not back: bring My sons from far, and My daughters from the ends of the earth; even everyone that is called by My name: for I have created him for My glory, I have formed him; yes, I have made him.* And that in a double sense, for God's people are twice made—made first in creation, but marred by the Fall—and then new-made as “new creatures in Christ Jesus.”

8. *Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears.* There are plenty of them, for our proverb is true, “There are none so blind as those that will not see, and none so deaf as those that will not hear.” But even to such people as these God makes His appeal.

9. *Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and show us former things? Let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth.* God challenges all the false gods and their worshippers to produce a single fulfilled prophecy—to show one instance in which they have truly and correctly foretold any event or a chain of events! But all Jehovah's prophecies have been fulfilled, or will be in due season.

10-13. *You are My witnesses, says the LORD, and My servant whom I have chosen: that you may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He: before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside Me there is no Savior. I have declared, and have saved, and I have showed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore you are My witnesses, says the LORD, that I am God. Yes, before the day was, I am He and there are none that can deliver out of My hand: I will work, and who shall reverse it?* It is a great blessing to know that the Lord is God—and not merely to know that as a matter of fact, but to feel it, to realize it—and to trust in God and act towards Him conscious that He, and He alone, is the living and true God.

14-17. *Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships. I am the LORD, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King. Thus says the LORD, which makes a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters; who brings forth the chariot and horse, the army and the power; they shall lie down together, they shall not rise: they are extinct, they are quenched as a wick.* You know what happened to the army of Sennacherib when it came against Jerusalem. Horses and chariots were there in vast numbers and all the pomp and pageantry of a vast host of armed men. But they slept their last sleep—from which they never rose—when the Angel of the Lord flew through their ranks. So was it with Babylon itself. When the set time came, that long-established empire with its colossal power, was swept away like a vision

of the night! It blazed like a wick and then was quenched forever. What cannot God do for His people when He lifts up His almighty arm?

18. *Remember not the former things, neither consider the things of old.* For something better is going to be done in the future than all that God has done in the past! He will eclipse all His previous achievements and outdo the mightiest of His own miracles!

19, 20. *Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. The beast of the field shall honor Me.* As it slakes its thirst at an unknown spring.

20. *The dragons and the owls.* Alarmed and startled, as God’s people pass by on their way to the land which God would give them.

20-22. *Because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to My people, My chosen. This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise. But you have not called upon Me, O Jacob.* Have any of you restrained prayer of late? Has your path to the Mercy Seat been but little trodden? Then listen to God’s gentle rebuke—“You have not called upon Me, O Jacob.”

22. *But you have been weary of Me, O Israel.* Weary of God? Have any of us grown weary of fellowship with Him? Weary of His Truth? Weary of His Day? Weary of His service? Oh, what strange ingratitude this is on our part!

23. *You have not brought Me the small cattle of your burnt offerings; neither have you honored Me with your sacrifices.* There are some of God’s people, at any rate, who forget to offer their sacrifices to God. If they do love Christ at all, their love is not practical, not self-sacrificing—it does not lead them to bring love-gifts to Him.

23. *I have not caused you to serve with an offering, nor wearied you with incense.* “I have made no irksome tax of it. I have not demanded anything of you. I have left it to your own free will to give according as your love suggests.”

24. *You have bought Me no sweet cane with money, neither have you filled Me with the fat of your sacrifices: but—* Alas, instead of good, there has been evil!

24. *You have made Me to serve with your sins.* What? Made God our servant when we ought to have served Him? Alas, I fear it is often so even with some of His own people!

24. *You have wearied Me with your iniquities.* O Sirs, how sad it is when God’s people are weary of Him and He is weary of them! What shall we read after this? Surely the next sentence will be a thunder-clap and a lightning flash will blaze out of the sacred page! Listen—and be amazed at the mercy of the Lord!

25. *I, even I, am He that blots out your transgressions for My own sake, and will not remember your sins.* What a blessed God to deal so graciously with His ungrateful erring people!

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