

HEAVENLY LOVE-SICKNESS!

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A SERMON

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved,
that you tell him that I am sick of love.”*

Song of Solomon 5:8.

SICK! That is a sad thing. It moves your pity. “Sick of love”—love-sick! That stirs up other emotions which we shall presently attempt to explain. No doubt certain sicknesses are peculiar to the saints—the ungodly are never visited with them. Strange to say, these sicknesses, to which the refined sensibilities of the children of God render them peculiarly liable, are signs of vigorous health.

Who but the beloved of the Lord ever experience that *sin-sickness* in which the soul loathes the very name of transgression, is unmoved by the enchantments of the tempter, finds no sweetness in its besetting sins, but turns with detestation and abhorrence from the very thought of iniquity? No less is it for these, and these alone, to feel that *self-sickness* whereby the heart revolts from all creature confidence and strength, having been made sick of self, self-seeking, self-exalting, self-reliance, and self of every sort. The Lord afflicts us more and more with such self-sickness till we are dead to self, its puny conceits, its lofty aims, and its unsanctified desires.

Then, there is a *twofold love-sickness*. Of the one kind is that love-sickness which comes upon the Christian when he is transported with the full enjoyment of Jesus, even as the bride elated by the favor, melted by the tenderness of her Lord, says in the fifth verse of the second chapter of the Song, “Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love.” The soul overjoyed with the divine communications of happiness and bliss which came from Christ, the body scarcely able to bear the excessive delirium of delight which the soul possessed, she was so glad to be in the embraces of her Lord, that she needed to be stayed under her overpowering weight of joy.

Another kind of love-sickness, widely different from the first, is that in which the soul is sick, not because it has too much of Christ’s love, but because it has not enough present consciousness of it. Sick, not of the enjoyment, but of the longing for it. Sick, not because of excess of delight, but because of sorrow for an absent lover. It is to this sickness we call your attention, this morning.

This love-sickness breaks out in two ways and may be viewed in two lights. It is, first of all, the soul *longing for a view of Jesus Christ in grace*. And then again, it is the same soul *possessing the view of grace and longing for a sight of Jesus Christ in glory*. In both these senses we, as accurately as the spouse, may adopt the languishing words, “If you find my beloved, tell him that I am sick of love.”

I. First, then, let us consider our text as the language of a soul LONGING FOR THE VIEW OF JESUS CHRIST IN GRACE.

1. Do you ask me concerning *the sickness itself*—What is it? It is the sickness of a soul panting after communion with Christ. The man is a believer. He is not longing after salvation as a penitent sinner under conviction, for he is saved. Moreover, he has love to Christ and knows it. He does not doubt his evidence as to the reality of his affection for his Lord, for you see the word used is, “My Beloved,” which would not be applicable if the person speaking had any doubt about her interest.

Nor did she doubt her love, for she calls the spouse, “My Beloved.” It is the longing of a soul, then, not for salvation, and not even for the certainty of salvation, but for the enjoyment of present fellowship with Him who is her soul’s life, her soul’s all. The heart is panting to be brought once more under the apple tree. To feel once again His “left hand under her head, while his right hand does embrace her.”

She has known, in days past, what it is to be brought into His banqueting house, and to see the banner of love waved over her, and she, therefore cries to have love visits renewed. It is a panting after communion. Gracious souls, my dear friends, are never perfectly at ease except they are in a state of nearness to Christ. For mark you, when they are not near to Christ, they lose their *peace*. The nearer to Jesus, the nearer to the perfect calm of heaven, and the further from Jesus, the nearer to that troubled sea which images the continual unrest of the wicked.

There is no peace to the man who does not dwell constantly under the shadow of the cross. For Jesus is our peace, and if He be absent, our peace is absent too. I know that being justified we have peace with God, but it is “through our Lord Jesus Christ.” So that the justified man himself cannot reap the fruit of justification, except by abiding in Christ Jesus, who is the Lord and Giver of peace. The Christian without fellowship with Christ loses all his *life* and energy. He is like a dead thing. Though saved, he lies like a lumpish log—

*“His soul can neither fly nor go
To reach eternal joys.”*

He is without vivacity, yea, more, he is without animation till Jesus comes. But when the Lord sensibly sheds abroad His love in our hearts, then *His* love kindles ours. Then our blood leaps in our veins for joy, like the Baptist in the womb of Elizabeth. The heart when near to Jesus has strong pulsations, for since Jesus is in that heart, it is full of life, of vigor, and of strength. Peace, liveliness, vigor—all depend upon the constant enjoyment of communion with Christ Jesus. The soul of a Christian never knows what *joy* means in its true solidity, except when she sits like Mary at Jesus’ feet.

Beloved, all the joys of life are nothing to us. We have melted them all down in our crucible and found them to be dross. You and I have tried earth’s vanities and they cannot satisfy us. Nay, they do not give a morsel of meat to satiate our hunger. Being in a state of dissatisfaction with all mortal things, we have learned through divine grace that none but Jesus, none but Jesus can make our souls glad.

“Philosophers are happy without music,” said one of old. So Christians are happy without the world’s good. Christians, with the world’s good are sure to bemoan themselves as naked, poor, and miserable, unless their Savior is with them. You who have ever tasted communion with Christ will soon know why it is that a soul longs after Him. What the sun is to the day, what the moon is to the night, what the dew is to the flower, such is Jesus Christ to us. What bread is to the hungry, clothes to the naked, the shadow of a great rock to the traveler in a weary land, such is Jesus Christ to us. What the turtle is to her mate, what the husband is to his spouse, what the head is to the body, such is Jesus Christ to us. And therefore if we have Him not, nay, if we are not conscious of having Him, if we are not one with Him, nay, if we are not consciously one with Him, little marvel if our spirit cries in the words of the Song, “I charge you, O you daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, tell him that I am sick of love.”

Such is the character of this love-sickness. We may say of it, however, before we leave this point, that it is *a sickness which has a blessing attending it*, “Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness.” And therefore supremely blessed are they who thirst after the Righteous One—after Him who in the highest perfection embodies pure, immaculate, spotless righteousness. Blessed is that hunger, for it comes from God. It bears a blessing within it. For if I may not have the blessedness in full bloom of being filled, the next best thing is the same blessedness in sweet bud of being empty till I am filled with Christ. If I may not feed on Jesus, it shall be next door to heaven to be allowed to hunger and thirst after Him.

There is a hallowedness about that hunger, since it sparkles among the beatitudes of our Lord. Yet it is a sickness, dear friends, which, despite the blessing, *causes much pain*. The man who is sick after Jesus will be dissatisfied with everything else. He will find that dainties have lost their sweetness, and music its melody, and light its brightness, and life itself will be darkened with the shadow of death to him, till he finds his Lord and can rejoice in Him.

Beloved, you shall find that this thirsting, this sickness, if it ever gets hold upon you, is *attended with great vehemence*. The desire is vehement as coals of juniper. You have heard of hunger that breaks through stone walls, but stone walls are no prison to a soul that desires Christ. Stone walls, nay, the strongest natural barriers, cannot keep a love-sick heart from Jesus. I will venture to say that the temptation of heaven itself, if it could be offered to the believer without his Christ, would be as less than nothing. And the pains of hell, if they could be endured, would be gladly ventured upon by a love-sick soul, if he might but find Christ.

As lovers sometimes talk of doing impossibilities for their fair ones, so certainly a spirit that is set on Christ will laugh at impossibility, and say, "It shall be done." It will venture upon the hardest task, go cheerfully to prison and joyfully to death, if it may but find its Beloved and have its love-sickness satisfied with His presence. Perhaps this may suffice for a description of the sickness here intended.

2. You may inquire concerning the *cause* of this love-sickness. What makes a man's soul so sick after Christ? Understand that it is the *absence* of Christ which makes this sickness in a mind that really understands the preciousness of His presence.

The spouse had been very willful and wayward. She had taken off her garments, had gone to her rest, her sluggish slothful rest, when her beloved knocked at the door. He said, "Open to me, my beloved; for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." She was too slothful to wake up to let him in. She urged excuses, "I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?"

The beloved stood waiting, but since she opened not, he put in his hand by the hole of the lock, and then were her heart moved towards him. She went to the door to open it, and to her surprise, her hands dropped with myrrh, and her fingers with sweet smelling myrrh upon the handles of the lock. There was the token that he had been there, but he was gone. Now she began to bestir herself and seek after him. She sought him through the city, but she found him not.

Her soul failed her. She called after him, but he gave her no answer, and the watchmen, who ought to have helped her in the search, smote her, and took away her veil from her. Therefore, it is that now she is seeking, because she has lost her beloved. She should have held him fast and not have permitted him to go. He is absent and she is sick till she finds him.

Mingled with the sense of absence is *a consciousness of wrong-doing*. Something in her seemed to say, "How could you drive him away? That heavenly bridegroom who knocked and pleaded hard, how could you keep him longer there amidst the cold dews of night? O unkind heart! What if your feet had been made to bleed by your rising? What if all your body had seen chilled by the cold wind, when you were treading the floor? What had it been compared with His love to you?" And so she is sick to see him, that she may weep out her love and tell him how vexed she is with herself that she should have held to him so loosely and permitted him so readily to depart.

So, too, mixed with this, was *great wretchedness* because he was gone. She had been for a little time easy in his absence. That downy bed, that warm coverlet, had given her a peace, a false, cruel, and a wicked peace, but she has risen now, the watchmen have smitten her, her veil is gone, and without a friend, the princess, deserted in the midst of Jerusalem's streets, has her soul melted for heaviness and she pours out her heart within her as she pines after her lord. "No love but my love, no lord but my lord," she says, with sobbing tongue and weeping eyes. For none else can gratify her heart or appease her anxiety.

Beloved, have you never been in such a state, when your faith has begun to droop, and your heart and spirits have fled from you? Even then your soul was sick for Him. You could do without Him when Mr. Carnal-security was in the house and feasted you, but when he and his house have both been burned with fire, the old love-sickness came back and you needed Christ, nor could you be satisfied till you found Him once again. There was *true love* in all this and this is the very essence of all love-sickness.

Had not she loved, absence would not have made her sick, nor would her repentance have made her grieve. Had she not loved, there would have been no pain because of absence, and no sinking of spirits,

but she did love, thence all this sickness. It is a delightful thing to be able to know when we have lost Christ's company, that we do love Him, "'Yea, Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.' I did deny You, yea, in the moment of Your sorrow, I said, 'I know not the man.' I did curse and swear that men might think I was no follower of Yours, but still You know all things. You know that I love You." When you can feel this, dear friends, the consciousness that you love will soon work in you a *heart-burning*, so that your soul will not be satisfied till you can tell out that love in the Master's presence, and He shall say unto you, as a token of forgiveness, "Feed my sheep."

I do not doubt that in this sickness there had been *some degree of fear*. Sorrowful woman! She was half afraid she might never find him again. She had been about the city—where could he be? She had sought him on the walls and on the ramparts, but he was not there. In every ordinance, in every means of divine grace, in secret and in public prayer, in the Lord's Supper, and in the reading of the Word, she had looked after Him—but He was not there. And now, she was half afraid that though He might give His presence to others, yet never to her, and when she speaks, you notice there is fear in her voice.

She would not have asked others to tell him if she had any assuring hope that she would meet him herself, "If you find Him," she seems to say, "O you true converts, you that are the real grace-born daughters of Jerusalem, if He reveals Himself to you, though He never may to me, do me this kindness, tell him that I am sick of love."

There is half a fear here and yet there is *some* hope. She feels that he must still love her, or else why send a message at all? She would surely never send this sweet message to a flinty, adamant heart, "Tell him I am sick of love," and she remembered when the glancings of her eyes had ravished him. She remembered when a motion from her hand had made his heart melt, and when one tear of her eyes had opened all his wounds afresh. She thinks, "Perhaps he loves me still as He loved me then, and my moanings will enchain him. My groans will constrain him, and lead him to my help." So she sends the message to him, "Tell him, tell him I am sick of love."

To gather up the causes of this love-sickness in a few words, does not the whole matter spring from *relationship*? She is His spouse. Can the spouse be happy without her beloved lord? It springs from union. She is part of himself. Can the hand be happy and healthy if the life-floods stream not from the heart and from the head? Fondly realizing her *dependence*, she feels that she owes all to him, and gets her all from him. If then the fountain is cut off, if the streams are dried, if the great source of all is taken from her, how can she but be sick?

And there is, besides this, *a life and a nature* in her which makes her sick. There is a life like the life of Christ, nay, her life is in Christ, it is hid with Christ in God. Her nature is a part of the divine nature. She is a partaker of the divine nature. Moreover she is in *union* with Jesus, and this piece divided, as it were, from the body, wriggles like a worm cut asunder and pants to get back to where it came from. These are the causes of it. You will not understand my sermon, this morning, but think me raving, unless you are spiritual men. "But the spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is judged of no man."

3. What endeavors such love-sick souls will put forth. Those who are sick for Christ will first send their *desires* to Him. Men use pigeons sometimes to send their messages. Why, what sort of carrier pigeons do they use? The pigeon is of no use to send anywhere but to the place from which it came, and my desires after Christ came from Him, and so they will always go back to the place from which they came. They know the way to their own dovecot, so I will send Him my sighs and my groans, my tears and my moans. Go, go, sweet doves, with swift and clipping wings, and tell him I am love-sick.

Then she would send her *prayers*. Ah! I think she would say of her desires, "They will never reach him. They know the way, but their wings are broken, and they will fall to the ground and never reach him." Yet she will send them whether they reach him or not. As for her prayers, they are like arrows. Sometimes messages have been sent into besieged towns bound to an arrow, so she binds her desires upon the arrow of her prayers, and then shoots them forth from the bow of her faith. She is afraid they will never reach him, for her bow is slack, and she knows not how to draw it with her feeble hands which hang down.

So what does she do? She has traversed the streets. She has used *the means*. She has done everything. She has sighed her heart out and emptied her soul out in prayers. She is all wounds till he heals her. She is all a hungry mouth till he fills her. She is all an empty brook till he replenishes her once again, and so now, she *goes to her companions* and she says, “If you find my beloved, tell him I am sick of love.”

This is using the intercession of *the saints*. It is unbelief that makes her use it, and yet there is a little faith mixed in her unbelief. It was an unbelief, but not a misbelief. There *is* efficacy in the intercession of saints. Not of dead saints—they have enough to do to be singing God’s praises in heaven without praying for us—but saints on earth can take up our case.

The king has his favorites. He has his cupbearers. He has some who are admitted into great familiarity with Him—give me a share in a good man’s prayers. I attribute under God the success the Lord has given me to the number of souls in every quarter of the earth who pray for me—not you alone, but in every land there are some who forget me not when they draw near in their supplications. Oh! we are so rich when we have the prayers of saints.

When it is well with you, speak for me to the Captain of the host, and if He should say to you, “What was his message?” I have no other message but that of the spouse, “Tell Him I am sick of love.” Any of you who have close familiarity with Jesus, be the messengers, be the heavenly tale-bearers between love-sick souls and their divine Lord. Tell Him, tell him we are sick of love. And you that cannot thus go to Him, seek the help and aid of others. But after all, as I have said, this is unbelief though it is not misbelief, for how much better it would have been for her to *tell him herself*.

“But” you say, “she could not find him.” Nay, but if she had had faith she would have known that her prayers could. For our prayers know where Christ is when we do not know, or rather, Christ knows where our prayers are—and when we cannot see Him, they reach Him nevertheless. A man who fires a cannon is not expected to see all the way where the shot goes. If he has his cannon rightly sighted and fires it, there may come on a thick fog, but the shot will reach the place. And if you have your hearts sighted by divine grace after Christ, you may depend upon it, however thick the fog, the hot-shot of your prayer will reach the gates of heaven though you cannot tell how or where.

Be satisfied to go to Christ yourself. If your brethren will go, well and good, but I think their proper answer to your question would be in the language of the women in the sixth chapter, the first verse, “Where is your beloved gone, O you fairest among women? Whither is your beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with you.” They will not seek Him *for* us they say, but they can seek Him *with* us. Sometimes when there are six pair of eyes, they will see better than one. And so, if five or six Christians seek the Lord in company, in the prayer meeting or at His table, they are more likely to find Him. “We will seek him with you.”

4. Blessed love-sickness. We have seen its character and its cause, and the endeavors of the soul under it. Let us just notice *the comforts which belong to such a state as this*. Briefly they are these—you *shall be filled*. It is impossible for Christ to set you longing after Him without intending to give Himself to you. It is as when a great man prepares a feast. He first puts plates upon the table, and then afterwards there comes the meat.

Your longings and desires are the empty plates to hold the meat. Is it likely that Christ means to mock you? Would He have put the dishes there if He did not intend to fill them with His oxen and with His fatlings? He makes you long—He will certainly satisfy your longings. Remember, again, that He will give you Himself *all the sooner for the bitterness of your longings*. The more pained your heart is at His absence, the shorter will the absence be. If you have a grain of contentment without Christ, that will keep you longer tarrying.

But when your soul is sick till your heart is ready to break, till you cry, “Why tarry he? why are his chariots so long in coming?” When your soul faints until your Beloved speaks to you, and you are ready to die from your youth up, then shortly, He will lift the veil from His dear face, and your sun shall rise with healing beneath His wings. Let that console you.

Then, again, when He does come, as come He will, oh, *how sweet it will be!* I think I have the flavor in my mouth now and the fullness of the feast is yet to come. There is such a delight about the very thought that He will come, that the thought itself is the prelude, the foretaste of the happy greeting. What! Will He once again speak comfortably to me? Shall I again walk the bed of spices with Him? Shall I ramble with Him amongst the groves while the flowers give forth their sweet perfume—I shall! I shall!

And even now, my spirit feels His presence by anticipation, “Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadab.” You know how sweet it was in the past. Beloved, what times we have had, some of us. Oh, whether in the body or out of the body, we cannot tell—God knows. What mountings! Talk of eagles’ wings—they are earthly pinions, and may not be compared with the wings with which He carried us up from earth. Speak of mounting beyond clouds and stars!—they were left far, far behind.

We entered into the unseen, beheld the invisible, lived in the immortal, drank in the ineffable, and were blessed with the fullness of God in Christ Jesus, being made to sit together in heavenly places in Him. Well, all this is to come again, “I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice.” “A little while and you shall not see me: and again, a little while and you shall see me.” “In a little wrath I hid my face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on you, says the LORD your redeemer.”

Think of this. Why, we have comfort even in this sickness of love. Our heart, though sick, is still whole, while we are panting and pining after the Lord Jesus.

*“O love divine, how sweet Thou art,
When shall I find my willing heart
all taken up with Thee?
I thirst, I faint, I die to prove
The fullness of redeeming love—
The love of Christ to me.”*

II. And now, secondly, with as great brevity as we can, this love-sickness may be seen in A SOUL LONGING FOR A VIEW OF JESUS IN HIS GLORY.

1. And here, we will consider *the complaint* itself for a moment. This ailment is not merely a longing after communion with Christ on earth—that has been enjoyed and generally this sickness follows that—

*“When I have tasted of the grapes,
I sometimes long to go
Where my dear Lord the vineyard keeps
And all the clusters grow.”*

It is the enjoyment of Eshcol’s first fruits which makes us desire to sit under our own vine and our own fig tree before the throne of God in the blessed land.

Beloved, this sickness is characterized by certain marked symptoms. I will tell you what they are. There is a loving and a longing, a loathing and a languishing. Happy soul that understands these things by experience. There is *a loving* in which the heart cleaves to Jesus—

*“Do not I love Thee from my soul?
Then let me nothing love—
Dead be my heart to every joy
When Jesus cannot move.”*

A sense of His beauty! An admiration of His charms! A consciousness of His infinite perfection! Yea, greatness, goodness, and loveliness, in one resplendent ray combine to enchant the soul till it is so ravished after Him that it cries with the spouse, “Yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O you daughters of Jerusalem.” Sweet loving is this—a love which binds the heart with chains of more than silken softness, and yet than adamant more firm.

Then, there is a *longing*. She loves Him so that she cannot endure to be absent from Him. She pants and pines. You know it has been so with saints in all ages—whenever they have begun to love, they have always begun to long after Christ. John, the most loving of spirits, is the author of those words which he so frequently uses, “Come quickly, even so, come quickly.” “Come quickly,” is sure to be the fruit of earnest love.

See how the spouse puts it, “O that you were as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! when I should find you without, I would kiss you; yea, I should not be despised.” She longs to get hold of him. She cannot conclude her song without saying, “Make haste, my beloved, and be you like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of spices.” There is a longing to be with Christ. I would not give much for your religion if you do not long to be with the object of your heart’s affections.

Then, comes a *loathing*. When a man is sick with the first love-sickness, then he does not loathe—it is, “Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples.” When a man has Christ, he can enjoy other things. But when a man is longing after Christ and seeking after Christ, he loathes everything else—he cannot bear anything besides.

Here is my message to Jesus, “Tell Him”—what? Do I want crowns and diadems? Crowns and diadems are nothing to me. Do I want wealth, and health, and strength? They are all very well in their way. No, “Tell Him, tell the Beloved of my soul that I grieve after Himself—His gifts are good—I ought to be more grateful for them than I am, but let me see His face. Let me hear His voice. I am sick of love and nothing but that can satisfy me, everything else is distasteful to me.”

And then there is a *languishing*. Since she cannot get the society of Christ—cannot as yet behold Him on His throne, nor worship Him face to face, she is sick until she can. For a heart so set on Christ will walk about traversing highway and by-way, resting nowhere till it finds Him. As the needle once magnetized will never be easy until it finds the pole, so the heart once Christianized never will be satisfied until it rests on Christ—rests on Him, too, in the fullness of the beatific vision before the throne of God. This is the character of the love-sickness.

2. *As to its object*—what is that? “Tell him that I am sick of love.” But what is the sickness for? Brethren, when you and I want to go to heaven, I hope it is the true love-sickness. I catch myself sometimes wanting to die and be in heaven for the sake of rest. But is not that a lazy desire? There is a sluggish wish that makes me long for rest.

Perhaps we long for the happiness of heaven—the harps and crowns. There is a little selfishness in that, is there? Allowable, I grant you, but is not there a little like selfishness? Perhaps, we long to see dear children, beloved friends that have gone before, but there is a little of the earthy there. The soul may be as sick as it will, without rebuke, when it is sick to be with Jesus. You may carry this to its utmost extent without either sin or folly.

What am I sick with love for? For the pearly gates?—No. But for the pearls that are in His wounds. What am I sick for? For the streets of gold?—No. But for His Head which is as much fine gold. For the melody of the harps and angelic songs?—No. But for the melodious notes that come from His dear mouth. What am I sick for? For the nectar that angels drink?—No. But for the kisses of His lips. What am I sick for? For the manna on which heavenly souls feed?—No. But for Himself, who is the meat and drink of His saints. Himself. Himself—my soul pines to see Him.

Oh, what a heaven to gaze upon! What bliss to talk with the man, the God, crucified for me. To weep my heart out before Him. To tell him how I love Him, for He loved me and gave Himself for me. To read my name written on His hands and on His side—yea, and to let Him see that His name is written on my heart in indelible lines. To embrace Him, oh! what an embrace when the creature shall embrace his

God—to be forever so close to Him that not a doubt, nor a fear, nor a wandering thought can come between my soul and Him forever.—

*“Forever to behold Him shine,
Forevermore to call Him mine,
And see Him still before me.
Forever on His Face to gaze,
And meet His full assembled rays,
While all the Father He displays
To all the saints in glory.”*

What else can there be that our spirit longs for? This seems an empty thing to worldlings, but to the Christian this is heaven summed up in a word, “To be with Christ, which is far better,” than all the joys of earth. This is the object then of this love-sickness.

3. Ask you yet again what are *the excitements of this sickness*? What is it that makes the Christian long to be at home with Jesus? There are many things. There are sometimes some very little things that set a Christian longing to be at home. You know the old story of Swiss soldiers, that when they have enlisted into foreign service, they never will permit the band to play the “*Ranz des Vaches*”—*The Song of the Cows*, because as soon as ever the Swiss hear *The Song of the Cows*, they think of their own dear Alps, and the bells upon the cows’ necks, and the strange calls of the herd-boys, as they sing to one another from the mountain peaks. And he grows sick and ill with home-sickness.

So if you were banished, if you were taken prisoner or a slave, why, to hear some note of one of old England’s songs would set your spirit pining for home, and I do confess, when I hear you sing sometimes—

*“Jerusalem! My happy home!
Name ever dear to me.
When shall my labors have an end,
In joy and peace and thee?”*

It makes me say, “You daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, tell him, that I am sick of love.” It is the song of home that brings home-sickness. We remember what He used to be to us, what sweet visits we have had from Him, then we get sick to be always with Him.

And best of all, when we are in His presence, when our soul is overjoyed with His delights, when the great deep sea of His love has rolled over the mast-head of our highest thoughts, and the ship of our spirit has gone right down, foundering at sea in the midst of an ocean of delights—ah, then its highest, its deepest thought is, “O that I may always be with Him, in Him, where He is, that I might behold His glory—the glory which His Father gave Him, and which He has given me, that I may be one with Him, world without end.”

I do believe, brethren, that all the bitters and all the sweets make a Christian when he is in a healthy state, sick after Christ—the sweets make his mouth water for more sweets, and the bitters make him pant for the time when the last dregs of bitterness shall be over. Wearying temptations, as well as rapt enjoyments, all set the spirit on the wing after Jesus.

4. Well now, friends, *what is the cure of this love-sickness*? Is it a sickness for which there is any specific remedy? There is only one cure that I know of, but there are some palliatives. A man that is sick after Christ, longs to be with Him, and pants for the better land singing as we did just now—

*“Father, I long, I faint to see
The place of Thine abode.”*

He must have the desire realized, before the thirst of his fever will be relieved. There are some palliatives, and I will recommend them to you.

Such, for example, is a strong faith that realizes the day of the Lord and the presence of Christ, as Moses beheld the promised land and the goodly heritage, when he stood on the top of Pisgah. If you do not get heaven when you want it, you may attain to that which is next door to heaven, and this may bear you up for a little season.

If you cannot get to behold Christ face to face, it is a blessed make-shift for the time to see Him in the Scriptures, and to look at Him through the glass of the Word. These are reliefs, but I warn you, I warn you of them. I do not mean to keep you from them—use them as much as ever you can—but I warn you from expecting that it will cure that love-sickness. It will give you ease, but it will make you more sick still, for he who lives on Christ gets more hungry after Christ. As for a man being satisfied and wanting no more when he gets Christ—why he wants nothing but Christ it is true, and in that sense, he will never thirst. But he wants more, and more, and more, and more of Christ. To live on Christ is like drinking seawater—the more you drink the more thirsty you grow.

There is something very satisfying in Christ's flesh—you will never hunger except for that—but the more you eat of it the more you may. And he who is the heartiest feaster, and has eaten the most, has the best appetite for more. Oh, strange is this, but so it is. That which we would think would remove the love-sickness, and is the best stay to the soul under it, is just that which brings it on more and more.

But there is a cure, there is a cure, and you shall have it soon—a black draught and in it a pearl—a black draught called Death. You shall drink it, but you shall not know it is bitter, for you shall swallow it up in victory. There is a pearl, too, in it—melted in it. Jesus died as well as you, and as you drink it, that pearl shall take away all ill effect from the tremendous draught. You shall say, “O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?”

When you have once drank that black draught, you are secure against that love-sickness forever. For where are you? No pilgrimage, no weary flight through cold ether, you are with Him in paradise. Do you hear that, soul? You are with Him in paradise, never to be separated, not for an instant. Never to have a wandering thought, not one. Never to find your love waning or growing cold again. Never to doubt His love to you anymore. Never more to be vexed and tempted by sighing after what you cannot view. You shall be with Him, where He is—

*“Far from a world of grief and sin,
With God eternally shut in.”*

Till then beloved, let us strive to live near the cross. Those two mountains, Calvary and Zion, stand right opposite one another. The eye of faith can sometimes almost span the interval. And the loving heart, by some deep mystery of which we can offer you no solution, will often have its sweetest rapture of joy in the fellowship of His griefs. So have I found a satisfaction in the wounds of a crucified Jesus, which can only be excelled by the satisfaction I have yet to find in the sparkling eyes of the same Jesus glorified.

Yes, the same Jesus! Well spoke the angels on Mount Olivet, “*This same Jesus*, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as you have seen him go into heaven.” This same Jesus! My soul dotes on the words. My lips are fond of repeating them. This same Jesus!

*“If in my soul such joy abounds,
While weeping faith explores His wounds,
How glorious will those scars appear,
When perfect bliss forbids a tear!*

*Think, O my soul, if 'tis so sweet
On earth to sit at Jesus' feet,*

***What must it be to wear a crown
And sit with Him upon His throne?"***

Would to God you all had this love-sickness! I am afraid many of you have it not. May He give it to you. But oh! if there be a soul here that wants Jesus, he is welcome. If there is one heart here that says, "Give me Christ," you shall have your desire. Trust Jesus Christ, and He is yours. Rely upon Him, you are His. God save you and make you sick *of* vanities, sick *after* verities—pining even unto sickness for Jesus Christ, the Beloved of my soul, the sum of all my hope, the sinner's only refuge, and the praise of all His saints, to whom be everlasting glory. Amen.

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.