

THE INTEREST OF CHRIST AND HIS PEOPLE IN EACH OTHER

NO. 374

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 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“My Beloved is mine and I am His.”
Song of Solomon 2:16.

THE Church says concerning her Lord, “My Beloved is mine and I am His.” No “ifs,” no “buts.” The two sentences are solemn assertions. Not, “I hope, I trust, I think.” But, “my Beloved *is* mine and I *am* His.” “Yes,” but you will say, “the Church must then have been gazing upon her husband’s face. It must have been a season of peculiar enjoyment with Him, when she could speak thus.” No, Brethren, no. The Church when she thus spoke, was in darkness, for in the very next verse she cries—“Until the day break and the shadows flee away, turn, my Beloved and be You like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.”

I say, Brethren, this solemn certainty, this double assertion of her interest in Christ and Christ’s interest in her, is the utterance of the Church even in her darkness, in the cheerless season of His absence. So then, you and I, if we believe in Christ, ought, even when we do not see His face, still to cultivate full assurance of faith and never be satisfied unless we can say, “My Beloved is mine and I am His.” When you cannot say this, my Hearer, give no sleep to your eyes nor slumber to your eyelids. Be not happy—take no solace—find no comfort as long as there is any doubt about your union with the Beloved—His possession of you and your possession of Him.

We will now, having thus prefaced the text, come at once to it. There are two members, you perceive, to the sentence, “My Beloved is mine and I am His.” These two things come in a strange order, you will say, “Surely we are first Christ’s, before Christ is ours.” A right thought of yours. We shall take the text, then, this evening two ways. We shall first speak of it *as it would be in the order of time*. “I am my Beloved’s and my Beloved is mine.” We shall afterwards speak *in the order of the text, which is the order of experience*. The words as Solomon penned them are not the order of fact as far as God is concerned, but the order in which we find out God’s great doings.

You know God’s first things are our second things and our second things are God’s first things. “Make your calling and election sure.” Calling is your first thing—election is the second. But election is God’s first thing and calling is the next. You are not elected because you are called. And yet, at the same time, you shall never know your election until first you have made your calling and election sure. The order of the text is the order of *experience*. We shall take the members of the sentence as they would be if they spoke in the order of fact.

I. To begin, then I AM MY BELOVED’S, AND BELOVED IS THEREFORE MINE.

1. “*I am my Beloved’s.*” Glorious assertion! I am His *by His Father’s gift*. Long before suns and moons were made and stars twinkled in the midnight darkness, God the eternal Father had given the chosen to Christ, to be His heritage and marriage dowry. If God, then, has given my soul to Christ, I am my Beloved’s. Who shall dispute the right of God to give, or who shall take from Christ that which His Father has given to be His heritage? Fiends of Hell! Legions of the pit! When God gives, can you take back the gift? If He puts the souls of the chosen into the hands of Christ, can you pluck them from Him? If *He* makes them Christ’s sheep, can you pluck them out of His fold and make them your own? God forbid we should indulge the blasphemous thought, that any can dispute the ownership which Christ has in His people, derived from His Father’s gift.

But I am my Beloved’s, if I am a Believer, because of *Jesus Christ’s purchase* of me. We were bought not with corruptible things, as with silver and gold but with the precious blood of Christ. Christ has an absolute right to all that He bought with blood. I do not believe in that dreamy atonement, by which Christ redeems and purchases and yet the purchase is a fiction and the redemption a metaphor. All that Christ bought with blood He will have. If a man buys with gold and silver of an honest man, he gets his own, nor will he be content until he does. But when Christ ransoms with

blood and buys of God Himself and redeems His own people, it is not possible that He should be frustrated of His purpose or denied the object of His death.

I am my Beloved's then, because He has paid the full price for me, counted down the purple drops and positively and surely has as much bought me with His money as ever Abraham of old bought flocks of sheep and oxen, or as ever of old Jacob served for Rachel and for Leah. No title deeds ever made estate more truly the property of the purchaser, than did the resurrection guarantee the rights of Christ in the "purchased possession."

"I am my Beloved's," by a double tie—by the Father's gift and by the Son's Divine purchase. These two things are not easily reconcilable to some minds. But let it be carried in your hearts as a matter of fact that there is as much grace in the Father's giving the elect to Christ as if no price were paid. And secondly, that there was as full and true a price paid to the Father as though the Father had been Justice only and not love. The grace of God and His justice are both of them full-orbed, they are never eclipsed. They are never made to you with divided luster—He is as gracious as though He were not just. He is as awfully severe as though there were no grace in His nature.

But more than this, "I am my Beloved's," for I am His *by conquest*. He fought for me and He won me, let Him possess me. He went alone to that great battle. He defied all the hosts which had made me their prey, encountered first my sins and slew them with His blood. He encountered next Satan himself and bruised the serpent's head, encountered Death and slew him by "destroying him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." O Christ! You deserved to have those for whom You did wrestle and agonize even unto blood and who by your strong hand you brought out of the land of their captivity. Never could a conqueror claim a subject so justly as Christ claims His people. They were not only His, eternally His, by the purchase of His blood, but they are His because He has taken them by overwhelming might, having delivered them out of the hand of him who was stronger than they. That word which He gird upon His thigh, is both the right by which He claims and the might by which He keeps His ransomed.

Besides this, every true Believer can add, "I am my Beloved's," by a *gracious surrender*. With full consent I give myself to You." This is your language, Brothers and Sisters. It is mine. "I am my Beloved's." If I were never His before, I do desire to give myself up to Him now. His love shall be the fetters in which I, a happy captive, will walk at His triumphant chariot wheels. His grace shall bind me with its golden chains so that I will be free and yet His bondman forever. The mercies of each hour shall be fresh links and the benefits of each day and night shall be new rivets to the chain.

No Christian man would like to be his own. To be one's own is to be lost. But to be Christ's is to be saved. To be one's own is to be a wandering sheep. To be Christ's is to return to the great bishop and shepherd of our souls. Do you not remember, many of you, the night when you first surrendered to Christ? He stood at the door and knocked—the door was overgrown with brambles, the hinges had rusted from long disuse. The key was lost. The keyhole of the lock was welded together with filth and rust. Yes, from within the door was bolted fast.

He knocked—at first a gentle knock, enough to let you know who it was. You laughed. He knocked again. You heeded not. You heard His voice as he cried, "Open to Me, open to Me. My hair is wet with dew and My locks with the drops of the night." But you had a thousand frivolous excuses and you would not open to Him. Oh, do you remember when at last He put in his hand by the hole of the lock and your heart was moved for Him? "Jesus, Savior! I yield, I yield! I can hold out no longer, my heart melts. My cruel soul relents. Come in! Come in! Please pardon me that I have kept You out so long, resisted so long the wooings of Your heavenly love." Well, you will say tonight and set your solemn hand and seal to it, that you are Christ's because you do once again, voluntarily and freely, surrender yourself to Him.

I think tonight would be a very proper occasion for each of us to renew our dedication vows. We are many of us Believers. Let us go to our chamber and say thus—"O God! You have heard our prayers as a Church. We have entered into Your house. We have seen it filled to the full. By this, the answer which You have given to our prayers we rededicate ourselves to You, desiring to say with the spouse more fully than heretofore, 'I am my Beloved's.'"

Let us pause here an instant. We have seen how we came to be our Beloved's, let us enquire in what sense we are so now. We are His, first of all, by a *near affinity* that never can be divided. Christ is the Head. We are His members. There is nothing which my Head possesses so truly as my hand and my heart. Your head could not say that its helmet and plume are so truly its own as the neck, the sinews, the veins, which are joined thereunto. The head manifestly has a distinct and peculiar property in every member. "I am my Beloved's," then, even as my hand and foot are mine. "I am my Beloved's"—if He loses me, I will be mutilated.

“I am my Beloved’s,” if I am cut away, or even wounded, He will feel the pain. The Head *must* suffer, when the members are tempted and tried. There is nothing so true and real, in the sense of property, as this. I would that you who doubt the perseverance of the saints would take these few words to heart. If once Christ should lose His people, He would be a head without a body. That would be a ghastly sight. No, if He lost one of His people He would be the head of a mutilated body—that would not be a glorious sight. If you imagine the loss of one mystical member of Christ, you must suppose an imperfect Christ—one whose fullness is not full, whose glory is not glorious, whose completeness is not complete. Now I am sure you would reject that idea. And it will be joy for you to say, “as the members belong to the Head, so am I my Beloved’s.”

Further than this—we are our Beloved’s by a most *affectionate relationship*. He is the Husband, Believers are the spouse. There is nothing that a man has that is so much his property as his own wife, except it be his very life. A man’s wealth may melt by losses, a man’s estate may be sold to pay his debts. But a man’s wife, as long as she lives, is his absolute property. She can say, “He is mine.” He can say, “She is mine.” Now Christ says of all His people, “You are mine, I am married to you. I have taken you unto Myself and betrothed you unto Me in faithfulness.” What do you say? Will you deny the celestial marriage bond? God forbid. Will you not say to your Lord tonight, “Yes, I am my Beloved’s”? Ah, there is no divorce court in Heaven, there is no division, no separation bill possible for He “hates divorce.” If chosen, He will not reject, if once embraced, He will never cast out. His she is and His she shall be evermore. In this sense, then, “I am my Beloved’s.”

Yet once more—“I am my Beloved’s” by an *indissoluble connection*, just as a child is the property of his father. The father calls his child his own. Who denies it? What law is so inhuman as to allow another to rend away the offspring of his heart from the parent? There is no such law among civilized men. Among the aboriginal savages of the Southern States of America such a thing may exist. But among civilized men there never can be any dispute but that the father’s right to his child is supreme and that no master and no owner can override the rights of the parents to his son.

Come, then—even so are we His. “He shall see *His* seed.” “He shall see of the travail of His soul.” If He could lose His glories, if He could be driven from His kingdom, if He could be despoiled of His crown, if His Throne could totter, if all His might could melt away as the snow wreath melts before the summer’s sun—yet at least His seed would be His own. No law, human or Divine, could unchild the believing child, or unfather Christ, the everlasting Father. So then, it is a great joy to know that each Believer may say, in the highest sense—“I am my Beloved’s. I am His child and He is my Parent.”

I half wish that instead of my preaching now, we could stand up, each of us who feel the force of this sweet sentiment and say, “’Tis true, great God, by eternal donation, by complete purchase, by a full surrender, by a mighty conquest, I am my Beloved’s. He is my Head, my Husband, my Father and my All.”

2. The second sentence in order of time is, “My Beloved is mine.” Ah, you very poor men and women, you who could not call one foot of land your own and probably never will till you get the space where you lie down to sleep the sleep of death! If you can say, “My Beloved is mine,” you have greater wealth than Croesus ever knew, or than a miser ever dreamed. If my soul can claim Christ, the eternal God and the perfect Man, as being my own personal property then my soul is rich to all the intents of bliss—even if the body walk in rags, or should the lips know hunger, or the mouth be parched with thirst!

But how is my Beloved mine? He is mine, because *He gave Himself to me of old*. Long before I knew it, or had a being, He covenanted to bestow Himself on me—on all His chosen. When He said, “Lo, I come. In the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Your will, O God,” He did in fact become My Substitute, giving Himself to do my work and bear my sorrow. Mine He is because *that covenant has been fulfilled in the actual gift*. For me (I speak in the first person, because I want you each to speak in the first person, too), for you, my Soul, He laid aside His robes of glory to become a Man. For you He was swaddled in the weakness of infancy and lay in the poverty of the manger. For you, my Soul, He bore the infant body, the childish form and the human flesh and blood.

For you the poverty which made Him cry, “Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but I, the Son of Man, have not where to lay My head.” For you, my Soul, for you that shame and spitting, that agony and bloody sweat, that Cross, that crown of thorns, those expiring agonies, that dying groan. “My Beloved,” in all this, “is mine.” Yes, yours the burial. Yours the resurrection and its mystic meaning. Yours the ascension and its triumphant shouts. Yours

the session at the right hand of God. Yours and by holy daring we avow it, He who sits today, “God over all, blessed forever,” is ours in the splendor of His majesty, in the invincibility of His might, in the omnipresence of His power, in all the glory of His future advent. Our Beloved is ours, because He has given Himself to us, just as He is.

But besides that, our Beloved is not only ours by His own gift, which is the reality of it all, but He is ours by a *graciously completed union*. What a wonderful thing is the doctrine of union with Christ. “We are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.” Christ and His Church are one—one as the stones are one with the foundation. One, as the branches are one with the vine—as the wife is one with the husband. One, as the members are one with the Head—as the soul is one with the body—no, if there can be conceived a union closer still and there is but one, we are one with Christ, even as Christ is one with His Father.

“I in them and You in Me.” For thus the union stands. Now, as soon as ever we are one with Christ, you see at once that Christ must be ours. There is a common property between Christ and His people. All theirs belongs to Him—His belongs to them. They have not two stocks, they have but one. He has cast in His wealth, they have cast in their poverty—from that day they have common funds. They have but one purse—they have all things in common. All He is and all He has is theirs and all they are or can be belong to Him.

I might add, but this is a high point and needs to be experienced rather than preached upon, Christ is ours *by His indwelling*. Ignatius used to call himself the God-bearer and when some wondered at the title he said—“I carry God about within me. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit.” That is an awful text, awful in the splendor of its meaning. Does the Holy Spirit dwell in a man? Yes, that He does. Not in this temple, “not in tabernacles made with hands.” That is to say of man’s *building*, but within this soul and in your soul and in the souls of all His called ones, He dwells. “Abide in Me,” said He, “and I in you.” Christ *must* be in you, the hope of glory. Christ must be formed in you, as He was in Mary, or you have not come yet to know to the full the Divine meaning of the spouse, when she said—“My Beloved is mine and I am His.”

Now, tonight, I wish that we could get practical good, to our comfort, out of the thought that Christ is ours, if we are Believers. Hear me, then, a moment or two, while I dilate upon that thought. Christ is surely yours. It is not a questionable property, a matter to be put into dispute with Heaven’s chancery. Beyond question Christ is the *property*—the rightful *heritage*—of every elect and called one.

Again—Christ *is ours personally*. We sometimes speak of severally and jointly. Well then, Christ is ours jointly. But, blessed be His name, He is ours severally, too. Christ is as much yours tonight, however mean you may be, as though He did not belong to another man living. The whole of Christ is yours. He is not part mine and part yours and part another man’s. He is all mine, all yours—*personally* mine, *personally* yours. Oh that we could realize this fact!

And then, again—Christ *is always* ours. He is never more ours at one time and less ours at another. The moment we believe in Him we may know our perfect and invariable right to Christ—a right which depends not upon the changes of the hour, or upon the temperature of our frames and feelings, but upon those two immutable things wherein it is impossible for God to lie. Christ is ours tonight. And, glory be to His name for it, if we believe, He is ours forever—

***“This sacred bond shall never break,
Though earth’s old columns bow
The strong, the feeble and the weak
Can claim their Savior now.”***

And this they shall do, perhaps with greater joy, but not with greater *right* when they stand before the Throne of God.

I cannot, tonight, in a place to which I am so little accustomed, bring all my thoughts together as I would. But, methinks if I could but put this Truth before you, or rather, if the Spirit of God would put it so that you could feel Christ to be yours, it would make you spring from your pew with ecstasy. Why, it is enough to thrill every chord in a man! And if a man may be compared to a harp, make every string in him pour forth an ocean of music. Christ *mine*—*myself* Christ’s—there cannot be a more joyous or more heavenly theme beneath the skies.

II. I have thus completed the first work of this evening—taking the sentences of the text in the order of *time*. I shall now take the text IN THE ORDER IN WHICH IT IS GIVEN TO US, WHICH IS THE ORDER OF OUR EXPERIENCE.

Do you not see, that to a man's experience, God's order is reversed? We begin thus—"My Beloved is mine." I go to Him, take Him up in the arms of my faith, as Simeon took up the little child in the temple and pressing Him to my heart, I say—"Jesus, You are mine. All unholy and unclean, I nevertheless obey Your command. I believe You, I take You at Your word. I touch the hem of Your garment. I trust my soul wholly with You. You are mine and my soul can never part with You." What next? Why then, the soul afterwards says—"Now I am Yours, tell me what You would have me to do. Jesus, let me abide with You. Lord, I would follow You wherever You go, put me on any service, dictate to me any Commandment, tell me what You would have me do to glorify You"—

*"Through floods, through flames, if Jesus lead,
I'll follow where He goes."*

I am His. Christ is mine—this is faith. I am His—this is good works. Christ is mine—that is the simple way in which the soul is saved. I am Christ's—that is the equally simple method by which salvation displays itself in its practical fruits. I am afraid some of you have never carried out the last sentence, "I am Christ's." I know some, for instance, who believe (mark, I am not speaking to those who do not) who believe it to be the duty of every Christian to profess his faith in baptism, but nevertheless are not baptized. They say they are Baptists in principle. They are Baptists without any principle at all. They are men who know their Master's will and do it not and they shall surely be beaten with many stripes.

In other men it becomes a sin of ignorance, but with such men it is willful. They reply, "It is a non-essential." Things non-essential to salvation are nevertheless essential to *obedience*. As I said a few Sabbaths ago, you would not like a servant who only did what he liked to do and told you that some of your commands were non-essential. I am quite certain that if a soldier did not load his gun, or stand in rank, or shoulder arms at the word of command, the court martial would never listen for an instant to the plea of non-essential. God's commands require *obedience* and it is *essential* that every servant be found faithful. I say, it is exceedingly *essential* to a Christian to do what he is told to do. Whatever Jesus bids us do, if it save us from nothing, at any rate the fulfillment of it will save us from the sin of being disobedient to Him.

Now will you try, my dear Friends, not in the one command only, which lies at the threshold of the house, but in all others, to feel that you are not your own? "Ah," says one man, "I am not my own, I have so much to do for my family." Another says, "I am not my own, I belong to a political party." Another, "I am not my own, I belong to a firm." Just so—all these are ways in which men are kept from saying, "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine." Oh that we could, by any means whatever, feel that we were all Christ's! I, though I had a drop of blood in my veins that was not His, I would seek to have it let out. And if there were a single power I have, mental, physical, or spiritual which could not and would not serve God, though it might impair my comfort, I would devoutly pray that this Jonah might be thrown into the sea, this Achan stoned with stones, this Haman hanged on the gallows.

This cankered thing, it is a deadly thing—this damnable thing must be cut away once and for all, for, "better to enter into Heaven halt and maimed, than having two eyes and two arms to be cast into Hell-fire." We must have a single eye. We must feel that we are all Christ's and live as if we were all Christ's. For we have no right to say, "My Beloved is mine," unless we can add, "And I am His." Why look, Sirs, look at the great multitude of professors. How few there are that ever live as if they belonged to Christ! They act independently of Him. They buy, they sell on their own account—they that are stewards never penetrates their thick brains. That all they have is not their own, but His, never seems to have come into their heart, though they have sung it with their lips—

*"And if I might make some reserve,
And duty did not call,
I love my God with zeal so great,
That I would give Him all."*

Many a man has sung that, with his thumb-nail going round a coin in his purse, to find out whether it was a four penny or a three penny bit. He says he would give Christ all. But then he means that the bill is to be drawn at a very long credit and he will pay when he dies—he will give up what he cannot take away with him and when he leaves his rotten carcass he will leave his rotten wealth. Oh that we could all feel that we were all Christ's! Why, the Church of God would not be penned and shut up within the narrow bounds of England and America long, if once we felt we were Christ's. At this very moment China is open to Christian enterprise. The leader of the so-called "rebels" turns out to be, after all, a man who is exceedingly enlightened in the things of God.

He has said to Mr. Roberts, the missionary, “I open today eighteen chapels in Nankin—write to your friends and tell them to come over and preach and we will be glad to hear them. I give you a passport, that no man may touch you and any man who will preach Christ’s Gospel shall go unharmed through my dominions.” And he actually issued, but a few days before the coming of the last mail, a proclamation by which all idolatry is abolished throughout his dominions and witchcraft and fortune-telling are made crimes and he invites and prays his Brethren in England especially to send over the Word of Life, that they may have it among the people.

Now I do honestly avow, if this place had not been built and I had had nothing beyond the narrow bounds of the place in which I have lately preached, I should have felt in my conscience bound to go to learn the language and preach the Word there. But I now know what to do. I *must* here abide, for this is my place. But I would to God some were found in the Church, some in London, who have not such a gracious tie as this to keep them in their own land, to say, “Here am I, send me. I am Christ’s man. There is Christ’s field. Let me go and reap it, for the harvest is ripe. Help me, O God and I will seek to ingather it for Your honor.” “My Beloved is mine and I am His.”

That last “I am His” would make life cheap and blood like water and heroism a common thing and daring but an every-day duty and self-sacrifice the very spirit of the Christian life. Learn well, then, the meaning of that sentence, “*I am His.*” But will you please to notice once again—(I fear lest I shall weary you and therefore will be brief)—“My Beloved is mine”—that is my calling. He calls me to Him. He gives Himself to me. He is mine. I am His—that is my *election*. I was His before I knew Him *to be mine*. But I learned my calling first and my election *afterwards*. We have scores of people who will not come to Christ because they cannot understand election. Meet a boy in the street and invite him to go to a two-penny school. “No,” says the boy, “I don’t feel fit to go to a national school to learn to read and write—for, to tell you the truth, I don’t understand the Hebrew language.”

You would reply, “But, my good lad, you will learn Hebrew afterwards, if you can—but that is no reason, at any rate, why you should not learn English first. Come first to the little school. You shall go afterwards to the grammar school. If you get on, you shall go to the University, take your B.A. degree and perhaps come out as a Master of Arts.” But here we have poor souls that want to be have their M.A. before they have gone to the penny school. They want to read the tomes before they will read the horn-book. They are not content to spell A, B, C—“I am a sinner, Christ is a Savior”—but they long to turn over the book of decrees and find out the deep things of God.

You shall find them out afterwards—you shall go step by step, while the Master shall say to you each time, “Friend, come up higher.” But if you *begin* with election, you will have to come *down* again—for there will be a more honorable man than you who will come in and you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. I have seen plenty of high-flying Christians who began at the top of the tree. They were the men—wisdom would die with them the judges, the dictators, the very consuls, the cardinals, the popes—they knew everything. And whenever such men are gracious men, the Lord always puts the lancet into them and makes them grow smaller and smaller and smaller, till at last they say, “Woe is me, for I am undone.” And they cry, “My soul is even as a weaned child.”

Begin at the bottom and grow *up*. But do not begin at the top and come down. *That* is hard work—but going up is pleasant work, joyous work. Begin by saying, “My Beloved is mine.” You shall come to know your election by-and-by and say, “I am His.”

And now I do not think I will preach any longer about my text, but just come down upon my Hearers for a few minutes, with all my might. How many among us can dare to say this tonight? Hundreds of you can! Thousands of you can! If this were the Day of Judgment—if tonight you stood, fresh risen from your graves—if *now* you heard the trumpet sound—if now you saw the King in His beauty sitting upon the great white Throne, I know that many of you would say, “My Beloved is mine and I am His.”

If this day the millennial reign of Christ had begun—if the vials had been opened, the plagues poured out and if now Christ were come—that the wicked might be driven out and that his saints might reign—I am sure there are many of you who would say, “Welcome, welcome, Son of God—my Beloved is mine and I am His.” And there are many of you, too, who if the angel of death should pass the pew and flap his black wing into your face and the cold air of death should smite you, would say, “ ‘Tis well, for my Beloved is mine and I am His.” You could shut your eyes and your ears to the joys and to the music of earth and you could open them to the splendors and melodies of Heaven.

To be fearless of death should always be the mark of the Christian. Sometimes a sudden alarm may rob us of our presence of mind. But no believer is in a healthy state if he is not ready to meet death at any hour and at any moment. To walk bravely into the jaws of the dragon—to go through the iron gates and to feel no terror—to be ready to shake hand with the skeleton king, to look on him as a *friend* and no more a foe—this should be the habitual spirit and the constant practice of the heir of Heaven. Oh, if this is written on my soul, “My Beloved is mine and I am His!” Come, welcome death—

*“Come, death and some celestial band,
I’ll gladly go with you.”*

But—and a solemn “but”—pass the question round these galleries and in this area and how many among you must say, “I never thought of that. I never thought whether I was Christ’s, or Christ mine.” I will not rebuke you tonight. I will not thunder at you. God’s grace to me forbids that *this* should be a day of thunder. Let it be a day of feasting to everyone and of sorrow to none. What shall I say to you, then, but this? O that Christ *may* be yours. When He was here on earth He chose to go among sinners—sinners of the blackest hue. And now He is in Heaven. Up yonder He loves sinners as much as ever He did. He is as willing to receive you tonight as to receive the thief. It will give as much joy to His heart to hear your cry tonight, as when He thanked God that these things were revealed unto babes.

It is to His honor that you should be His. It is to His joy that He should be yours. Sinner! If you will have Christ—if now the spirit of God makes you willing—there is no bar on God’s part when the bar is taken away on your part. If you are willing, by His grace, He is more willing than you are. If the gate of your heart is on the latch, the gate of Heaven is wide open. If your soul does but yearn after Christ His heart has long yearned after you. If you have but a spark of love to Christ, He has a furnace of love to you. And if you have none at all—no love, no faith—oh I pray you have it now! “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” You! You! You!

Did you come here out of curiosity? Zaccheus heard Christ out of curiosity. But he was saved. Did you come for a worse purpose? God bless you, anyhow, for whatever reason you came. And may He bring you to Himself tonight! Trust Christ now and you are saved. My life for yours—if you perish trusting in Christ I will perish, too. Even should I have an ear listening to me which belongs to a harlot, to a thief, to a murderer, yet “he that believes in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved.” And if you believe in Him and you are lost I will be lost with you. And the whole Church of Christ must be lost, too. For there is the same way to Heaven for the best as for the worst—for the most vile as for the most righteous. “No man comes unto the Father but by Christ.”

Nothing can damn a man but his own righteousness. Nothing can save him but the righteousness of Christ. All your sin—your past sin—shall not destroy you—if you now believe in Jesus. It shall be cast into the sea forever and you shall begin again as though you had never sinned. His grace shall keep you for the future and you shall hold on your way an honor to Christ’s grace and a joy to your own soul. But if you are disobedient and will not eat of the good of the land, then will I say, as Isaiah said of old, “I am found of them that sought Me not, but all day long have I stretched out my hands to an ungodly and gain-saying generation.” God *has* stretched out His hands. Oh that you were wise and would run into His arms tonight!

I know I am speaking to some self-righteous men—some who say, “It is a shame to tell men they are depraved. *I am not.*” Well, we think if their lives were written it might be proved they were. “It is a shame,” they say, “to tell men that they cannot get to Heaven by their good works, because then they will be wicked.” It is an odd thing, though, that the more this Truth is preached, the better people are. Preaching good works as the way to Heaven always makes drunkards and thieves, but preaching faith in Christ always produces the best effects. Dr. Chalmers, who was no fanatic, says, “When I preached mere morality I preached sobriety till they were all drunkards. I preached chastity till it was not known anywhere. I preached honesty till men grew to be thieves. But,” he says, “as soon as ever I preached Christ there was such a change in the village as never was known.”

Well, we believe that self-righteousness will destroy you, my Friend, and we therefore tell you, honestly and plainly that you might as well hope to get to Heaven by flying up in a balloon as to get there by your good works. You may as soon sail to India in a sieve as get to Glory by your own goodness. You might as well go to court in cobwebs as seek to go to Heaven in your own righteousness. Away with your rags, your filthy, rotten rags! They are only a harbor for the parasites of unbelief and pride. Away with your rotten righteousness, your counterfeit gold, your forged wealth! It is of no worth whatever in the sight of God. Come to Him empty, poor, naked! It grates on your proud ear does it? Better, I say, to lose your pride than to lose your soul!

Why be damned for pride's sake? Why carry your head so high that it must be cut off? Why feed your pride on your soul's blood? Surely there is cheaper stuff than that for pride to drink! Why let it suck the very marrow out of your bones? Be wise! Bow, stoop, stoop to be saved.

And now, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, the Man, the God, I do command you, as His messenger and His servant—and at your peril reject the command—“Believe, repent and be baptized, every one of you.” “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved,” “for he that believes and is baptized shall be saved. He that believes not shall be damned.”

God add His blessing, for His name's sake. Amen.

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