

LIFE MORE ABUNDANT NO. 1150

A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."
John 10:10.*

"THE thief comes not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy." False teachers, whatever their professions seriously injure and endanger the souls of men and in the end cause their destruction; their selfish ends can only be answered by the ruin of their dupes. The Lord Jesus, the true Teacher of men, causes injury to none, and brings death to no man's door. His teaching is full of goodness, kindness, and love, and it works most effectually for human happiness and benefit. Error is deadly; the truth of God is life-giving. The coming of the old serpent worked our death; the advent of the woman's seed has brought us life.

We shall omit all preface, and ask you to note that, according to the text, Jesus Christ is come, first, *that His people may have life*; and, secondly, *that where life is already given it may be enjoyed more abundantly*.

I. The first truth is that JESUS CHRIST HAS COME THAT MEN MAY HAVE LIFE.

I will not dwell upon the thought that even the prolonged natural life of the sinner is due, in a large measure, to the coming of Christ; that barren tree would not stand so long in the garden of life if it were not that the dresser of the vineyard intercedes, and cries, "Spare it yet another year, until I dig about it and fertilize it." The interposition of the Mediator accounts for the lengthened lives of gross offenders whose crimes tax the long-suffering of heaven. If the prayers of our great intercessor should cease for a single hour, the ungodly among mankind would, perhaps, sink down quickly into hell, as Korah, Dathan, and Abiram did when the Lord's anger broke forth upon them!

That, however, is not the drift of the text. Life, in the sense of pardon and deliverance from the death penalty, is a great result of Christ's coming. All men in their natural condition are under sentence of death, for they have sinned, and they must be shortly taken to the place of execution, there to suffer the full penalty of the second death. If any of us are delivered at this time from the sentence of death, and have now the promise of the crown of life, we owe the change to the coming of the Redeemer to be a sacrifice for our sins. Every man among us must go down to the endless death unless, through Him who came to earth, and hung upon the tree as the sinner's substitute, we obtain full remission for all offenses—and the verdict of *life* instead of *death*! There is life in a look at Jesus, but apart from Him, the sons of Adam are under sentence of death.

Moreover, we are all, by nature, "dead in trespasses and sins." In the day when our first parents broke the law, they died spiritually, and all of us died in them. And now, today, apart from Christ, we are all dead to spiritual things, being devoid of that living Spirit which enables us to have communion with God, and to understand and enjoy *spiritual* things. All men are by nature without the Spirit which quickens to the highest form of life; unregenerate men have physical life and mental life, but they do not have *spiritual life*—nor will they *ever* have it except as Jesus gives it to them! The Spirit of God goes forth according to the divine will and implants in us a living and incorruptible seed which is akin to the divine nature. He confers on us a new life, by virtue of which we live in the realm of spiritual things, comprehend spiritual teachings, seek spiritual objects, and are alive unto God, who is a Spirit. No one among us has any life of this kind by birth; neither can it be bestowed upon us by ceremonial rites, nor obtained by human merit. The dead cannot rise to life except by miracle—neither can man rise to spiritual life except by the working of the Spirit of God upon him, for it is He, alone, who can quicken us.

Christ Jesus has come to call us from the graves of sin; many have already heard His voice and live. This spiritual life is the same life which will be continued and perfected in heaven; we shall not, when we rise again from the grave, obtain a life which we do not possess on earth—we must be alive unto God here, or take our places among those whose worm dies not, and whose fire is not quenched. There beats within the believer's heart this day the same life which shall enjoy the fullness of joy in the divine presence. If you have only looked to Jesus a few minutes ago, yet there is now in your heart the blessed life; the incorruptible seed is sown in you which lives and abides forever! The heavenly life is within you, and this Jesus Christ came to bestow upon us. The truth that Jesus is the life-giver is clear enough in the text and it leads to the following practical reflection—life for your soul is only to be had in Jesus. If, then, you are, this day, seeking salvation, you are instructed as to the only source of it! Spiritual life is not the result of working—how can the dead *work* for life? Must they not be quickened, first, and then will they not rather work *from* life, than *for* life? Life is a *gift*, and its bestowal upon any man must be the act of God. The gospel preaches life by Jesus Christ. Sinner, see where you must look! You are wholly dependent upon the quickening voice of Him who is the resurrection and the life. “This,” says one, “is very discouraging to us.” It is intended to be! It is kindness to discourage men when they are acting upon wrong principles; as long as you think that your salvation can be effected by your own efforts, or merits, or anything else that can arise out of *yourself*, you are on the wrong track—and it is our *duty* to discourage you!

The way to life lies in the opposite direction. You must look right away from yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ! You must rely upon what He has done, and not upon what you can do; and you must have respect not to what you can work in yourself, but to what He can work in you. Remember that God's declaration is that, “Whoever believes in Jesus *has* everlasting life.” If, therefore, you are enabled to come and cast yourselves upon the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, you have that eternal life immediately—which all your prayers, tears, repentance, church-going, chapel-going, and sacraments could never bring to you! Jesus can give it to you freely at this moment, but you cannot work it in yourself. You may imitate it, and deceive yourself; you may garnish the corpse, and make it seem as though it were alive; and you can galvanize it into a spasmodic motion, but life is a divine fire, and you cannot steal the flame, or kindle it for yourself! It belongs to God, alone, to make alive, and therefore I charge you look alone to God in Christ Jesus! Christ has come that we may have life! If we could have obtained life without His coming, why did He need to come? If life could come to sinners apart from the cross, why nail the Lord of Glory to the shameful tree? Why Your bleeding wounds, Immanuel, if life could come by some other door?

Yet, further, why did the Spirit of God descend at Pentecost, and why does He still abide among men if they can be quickened without Him? If life is to be obtained apart from the Holy Spirit, to what end does He work in the human heart? The bleeding Savior, and the indwelling Spirit are convincing proofs that our life is not from ourselves, but from above! Away, then, from yourself, O trembler! Seek not the living among the dead! Search not in the sepulcher of self for the divine life! The life of men is in yonder Savior, and whoever believes in Him shall never die!

II. But we intend to spend the most of our time at this time upon the second truth of God, namely, that JESUS HAS COME THAT THOSE TO WHOM HE HAS GIVEN LIFE MAY HAVE IT MORE ABUNDANTLY. Life is a matter of degrees. Some have life, but it flickers like a dying candle, and is indistinct as the fire in the smoking flax. Others are full of life, and are bright and vehement, like the fire upon the blacksmith's forge when the bellows are in full blast. Christ has come that His people may have life in all its fullness! Increase of life may be seen in several ways. It may be seen in healing. A man lies sick upon his bed—he is alive, but he can hardly move a limb, and he is helplessly dependent upon those around him. His life is in him, but how little is its power! Now, if that man recovers, rises from his bed, and takes his place in the world's battle, it is evident that he has life more abundantly than in his illness! Even thus there are sick Christians of whom we need to say, “Strengthen you the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.” Their *spiritual* constitution is weak; they do but little; when the Lord Jesus restores them, strengthens their faith, brightens their hope, and makes them healthy, then they not only have *life*, but they have it yet more abundantly!

Our Lord desires to have us in spiritual health. He has for that end become the physician of our souls; He heals all our diseases, and is the health of our countenance. A person may, however, be in health and yet you may desire he had more life. Yonder little child, for instance, is in perfect health, but as yet it cannot run alone. Put it upon the ground, it totters a little way, and is ready to fall; those bones must harden, those muscles must gather strength. When the boy becomes a man, he will have life more abundantly than when he was a baby. We grow in divine grace; we advance in knowledge, in experience, in confidence, and in conformity to the image of our Lord. From babes in Christ Jesus we advance to young men, and from young men we become fathers in the church. Jesus would have us grow; this is one of the designs of His coming, and thus do we possess life more abundantly. A person might, however, have both health and growth, and yet enjoy a stunted measure of life. Suppose he is confined as a prisoner in a narrow cell where chains and granite walls perpetually bound his motions—can you call his existence, *life*? Might it not be accurate to speak of him as dead while he lives, and to describe his dungeon as a living tomb? Can that be life which is forbidden pure air which is the poorest man's estate; denied the sun which shines for all that breathe? He lives, for he consumes that piece of dry bread, and empties the pitcher placed daily upon the stone floor, but in the truest sense he is shut out from life, for he is denied liberty! When the poor prisoner once more climbs the hill, crosses the ocean's wave, and wanders where he will, he will gratefully know what it is to have life more abundantly.

Now, mark well that if the Son of God shall make you free, you shall be free, indeed, and in that freedom find life sparkling, flashing, and overflowing like the streams of a fountain! To be under bondage through fear of death is scarcely life; to be continually fretted with mistrusts, and receive the spirit of bondage, again, to fear, genders unto death! But it is truly life to be able to cry, "You have loosed my bonds!" Yet I can suppose a man at liberty and in health who might have still *more* abundant life! He is extremely poor; he may wander where he wills, it is true, but no foot of ground can he call his own; he may live where he chooses, if he can live, but he has scarcely bread for his body, covering for his limbs, or shelter from the night; he is extremely poor. The poor man works from before the sun proclaims the morning till far into the night to earn a miserable pittance. This toil is exacting to the last degree, and his remuneration barely sufficient to provide necessities; he can scarcely keep body and soul together. Is this life? It is almost sarcasm to name it so! When we have met with persons compelled to sleep upon the bare floor, or who have for many hours been without a morsel to eat, we have said, "These poor creatures exist, but they do not live." This saying is true; and so, sometimes, there are believers who rather exist than live. They are starving; they do not feed upon the promises of God; they do not enjoy the rich things which Christ has stored up in the covenant of grace. But when the Lord Jesus enables them to partake of the "fat things full of marrow," and the wines on the lees well-refined, then they not only have life, but they have it "more abundantly"!

I can still suppose a person who is free, in health, and in the enjoyment of abundance, needing more life. He is mean and despised—a pariah and a castaway; he has none to love him or look up to him with respect; he does not even respect himself! He slinks along as if the mark of Cain were upon him; he has forgotten hope and bid farewell to love. You pity such a man every time you think of him. To possess the love and esteem of our fellows is necessary if we would live. When under conviction of sin, a man has felt himself to be less than nothing, a sinner unworthy to lift his eyes to heaven, a leper fit to be shut up among the unclean, or as a dead man, forgotten and out of mind—then, I tell you by experience—he finds it a mighty addition to his life when the Lord Jesus lifts him up from the dunghill and puts him among princes, even the princes of His people! Brothers and sisters, to know that you are no longer a slave, but a son, an heir of heaven, a joint-heir with Jesus Christ for whom the saints are companions, and to whom the angels are servitors—this is to have life more abundantly! Is it not?

I have thus hastily hinted at some of the points in which increased life reveals itself. I will now set forth the same subject in another way. I would lie before you seven particulars in which Christians should seek after more abundant life. First, let them desire more *stamina*. An embankment is to be thrown up, or a cutting to be dug out; you need laborers. Here are your spades, your picks, and your wheelbarrows—only men are required! Look, a number of persons offer themselves for hire; they are very thin, they have singularly bright eyes, sunken cheeks, and hollow churchyard coughs—they are a choice company from the consumptive hospital! Will you hire them? Why do you look so dubious?

These men have life. “Oh, yes,” you say, “but I wish they had it more abundantly—they cannot do such work as I have to offer them.” We must send these poor men away; they must go to the doctor and be taken care of. Look yonder—another band of rough, stalwart fellows! These men will suit your purpose; look at their ruddy faces, their broad shoulders, their mighty limbs—hand them the picks and the spades, and the barrows, and you will see what British workers can do! What is the difference between the two sets of men—these laborers and those consumptives? Why the difference lies in the presence or absence of stamina in their constitutions! There is a *something*—we cannot exactly say what it is, perhaps the physician himself cannot put his finger upon it—but the one set of men without it are weak, and the others with it are full of force! Our Lord Jesus has come that, in a *spiritual* sense, we may have stamina, may have a well-founded, well-furnished, well-established, confirmed and vigorous life so that we may be capable of arduous service and powerful action! He would have us walk without weariness, and run without fainting; He would have us quit ourselves like men and be strong!

Beloved, do you not see how great a difference there is between some Christians and others? Are not some of them spiritual invalids? They believe, but their favorite prayer is, “Lord, help our unbelief!” They hope, but fear is almost as fully in possession of their hearts; they have love to Christ, but they often sing—

*“Do I love the Lord or not?
Am I His or am I not?”*

They need medicine and nursing! Give them any work to do for the Lord, and how soon they grow weary! Discourage them a little, and they are in despair! Oh that the Spirit of God would give them life more abundantly! I am afraid that a very large proportion of Christians in this day are on the sick list; they are in a decline from need of deep-seated principle and sound vitality of godliness, which is what I mean by stamina. It is sad to see how some professing Christians are led astray by any error which is plausibly put before them. If all Christians were alike, then Popery might easily become the universal religion of the country, for they have no Protestant principle, no grounding in doctrine, and no firmness in the faith! They believe, but they know not why or what, and cannot give a reason for the hope which is in them! It is to be feared that they do not profess the truth of God because others go this way and that, and some eloquent preacher wins their affection, and becomes their oracle. They have not the stuff in them of which martyrs are made; they have no grit in their nature, no decision, no tenacity of belief, no firmness of grip! Consequently, whenever persecuting times come over this land, they will be our weakness. We shall have to look after such puny camp followers, and put them in the rear, or the enemy will make sad havoc among them.

Those who have life more abundantly are good soldiers of Jesus Christ. They have learned to stand fast in the truth, and by the blessing of God they are more than a match for the teachers of error, for they know what they know, and are able to put to silence the fair speeches of deceivers! They are not carried away with every wind of doctrine, but abide in the truth of God as they have been taught. They cry, “O God, my heart is fixed!” They are “strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” I pray that every member of this church may be a person of inward stamina—not one of those spiritual babies whom we have to be looking after every day, and feeding with spiritual spoon victuals every Sunday—but men and women who, by the blessing of God, have got something in them which they know the value of, and which they could not give up if all the world should tempt or threaten them! I compared such strong believers to navigators, and I shall not withdraw the comparison, for we need Christians who can say to the mountains, “Be you removed,” and to the valleys, “Be you exalted.” It is by such agents that the Lord will make straight in the wilderness a highway for His march of mercy!

In a second sense we have life more abundantly by the *enlargement of the sphere of our life*. To some forms of human life the range is very narrow. Wordsworth’s farmer had no great abundance of life, for—

*“The primrose by the river’s brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And nothing more!”*

To plow and sow, and reap and mow was his philosophy; the seasons preached no sacred homilies to him; the birds sang, but he would have been as much pleased if they had been silent; the hills were a

weariness to climb, and the view from their summit he thought nothing of; his soul was inside his smock frock and his corduroys, and he never wished to go beyond them. Nor in the fields, alone, are there such beings! Our streets swarm with men in broadcloth of the same race, to whom “the music of the spheres” means the clink of sovereigns—and whose choice quotations relate to the price of stocks, and changes of the market! Over the Exchange we read, “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof,” but they read it, “This earth is our God, and the fullness thereof is our all.” The souls of such men live like squirrels in cages, and each day their wheel revolves—it is the only world they know! Jesus Christ has come to give His people a wider, broader life than this!

True, there are many men upon whom Christ has never looked, whose life traverses wider areas than those which content the baser sort. Such men map out the stars, and fathom the sea—they read the mysterious story of the rocks and of the ages past; they are deep in philosophy, and force their way into the secret chambers where the immature principles of things are nestling; they have a life which is bounded only by time and space. But, beloved, when Jesus comes, He enlarges the sphere of the most capacious mind, and makes the greatest intellect to feel that it was but “cabined, cribbed, confined,” until He set it free! Beyond time and space does Jesus lead us! The life which He has given us has been tossed upon the stormy sea of sin, and has descended into the deeps of the tremendous ocean of terror; we have been like Jonah at the bottom of the mountains, where the earth with her bars seemed about us forever! The grace of our pardoning God has now set us on a rock, and given us to behold the paradise of pardon! What a blessed thing it is to be forgiven, to be dear to the Father’s heart, and to feel the Father’s kiss! This is a new world to us—to live as they live who live at home with God—to see His smile, and feast upon His love! This is a life of no mean dimensions, for we dwell in God, and are in fellowship with the infinite! We are no longer shut up to self, but we hold conversation with the spirits before the throne of God and commune with all the saints redeemed by blood!

Now we have seen those mysteries which were before hidden from our eyes! The path which the eagle’s eyes have not seen, we have gazed upon, and the way which the lion’s whelp has not trod, we have traversed! We have entered into the mysteries of the invisible, and have stood within the veil! We were as little birds within their shells, but the Lord has broken our prison, and His Spirit has led us into all truth, and shown us that which was hid from ages and from generations. In this sense we have life more abundantly.

Thirdly, our life in Christ becomes more abundant as *our powers are brought into exercise*. I suppose all the powers of the man are in the child, but many of them are dormant, and will only be exercised when life is more abundant. None of us know what we may be when we are but in our infancy. Christ has come to give us a fuller life than we have yet attained. Look at the apostles! Before Pentecost they were mere junior scholars, only fit to occupy the lower forms; they were often ambitious and contentious among themselves; but when Jesus had given them the Spirit, what different men they were! Would you believe that the Peter of the gospels could be the same person as the Peter of the acts? Yet he was the same man! Pentecost had developed in him new powers. When I hear him saying, “I know not the man,” and a few weeks after see him standing up in the midst of the Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, boldly preaching Christ, I ask, “What has happened to this man?” And the reply is, Christ has given him life more abundantly, and he has developed in himself powers which were concealed before! Beloved, you pray, yes, but if God gives you more life, you will pray as prevalently as Elijah! Even now you seek after holiness, but if you have life more abundantly, you will walk before the Lord in glorious uprightness as Abraham did! I know that you praise the Lord, but if the more abundant life fills you, you will rival the angels in their songs! I repeat what I have already said to you—we do not know what we may become.

Gladly would I fire you with a holy ambition! Pray to Jesus to make you all you can be; say to Him, “Lord, nurture in me all the graces, powers, and faculties by which I can glorify You to the fullness of my manhood; use me! Send a full stream of life upon me, that all my soul may wake up and all that is within me may magnify You! Get all out of me that can possibly come out of such a poor thing as I am; let Your Spirit work in me to the praise of the glory of Your grace.” I desire, brothers and sisters, for myself and you, that we may be alive all over, for some professors appear to be more dead than alive! life has only reached a fraction of their manhood; life is in their hearts, blessed be God for that—but is

only partially in their heads—for they do not study the gospel nor use their brains to understand its truths. Life has not touched their silent tongues, or their idle hands, or their frost-bitten pockets; their house is on fire, but it is only at one corner, and the devil is doing his best to put out the flame! They remind me of a picture I once saw in which the artist had labored to depict Ezekiel's vision of the dead bodies in course of resurrection. The bones were coming together, and flesh gradually clothing them—and he represents one body in which the head is perfectly formed, but the body is a skeleton—while in another place the body is well covered, but the arms and legs remain bare bones. Some Christians, I say, are much in the same state—they are alive only in parts; and in some it must be some very hidden part which is quickened, for little or nothing is to be seen of practical love or zeal. Oh for men who are alive from head to feet! Whose entire existence is full of consecration to Jesus and zeal for the divine glory—these truly have life “more abundantly.”

Fourthly, *an increased degree of energy* is intended in the text. We may have the powers, but may not exercise them, and no doubt many have great spiritual capacities, but they lie still for lack of intensity of purpose. Now, when is a man most alive? Some are so alive when they are in determined pursuit of a favorite purpose; they have formed a resolution and they mean to carry it out! You can see their whole man pressing forward upon the track, all aroused and full of eagerness. Now, the Lord Jesus has furnished us with a purpose which is sure to stimulate us to energetic life, for “the love of Christ compels us.” He has given us a motive and an impulse which we cannot resist, and we are in covenant with Him that we will glorify His name as long as we live. We are solemnly resolved, and earnestly set to seek His honor; this gives intensity to life which increases its abundance by awakening it all. A man is said to be full of life when he is worked up into excitement, and livid with passion. Enthusiasm is life effervescing, life in volcanic eruption; where there is determined resolve, if you awaken the man by opposition, you will see his whole life come into action! He was quiet enough before, but you have awakened the lion in him! His life was slumbering at ebb—now it is dashing up at flood! The man is carried right away! In his look and speech he is all alive, and in his actions he is energetic to the last degree.

Our divine Master has awakened the flame of our life by inspiring us with the glorious passion of love to Him; this provides us with stimulus and impetus; a heart which is wholly surrendered to the love of Jesus is capable of thoughts and deeds to which colder souls must forever be strangers! Energetic, forceful, triumphant life belongs to souls enamored with the cross, and espoused in ardent love to the heavenly Bridegroom! Abundance of a kind of life is painfully manifest in insane persons. The demoniac in the Scripture burst the chains with which he was bound, for he had unusual strength when the sudden outburst of his rage was on him. Now, if possession by an evil spirit awakens men to an unusual force of life, how much more shall possession by the divine Spirit gird a man with extraordinary energy? It is not possible for us to tell how potent for good any man among us may become; as the man who was feeble enough before, when he became possessed with an evil spirit refused to be held in bondage, so the man possessed by the divine Spirit becomes supernaturally strong and refuses to be the captive of sin or Satan!

Look at Martin Luther! Could you have believed that such a poor monk would shake the Vatican? And yet in his zeal for the truth of God, and hatred of error he did it! Look at other men in other times who have been raised up of God for a special purpose—what abundant life their holy ardor gave them! They were like Samson of old. Go up to Samson, feel his flesh, look at his bones—he is no larger than another man! Though his thighs indicate enormous strength, yet he does not seem so surprisingly superior to others; but wait till the Spirit of God moves him in the camp of Dan, and then woe to the thousands of the Philistines! Look how he piles them heaps upon heaps, while hip and thigh he smites them! See how he takes the pillars of their temple, and rocks them to and fro, and brings the edifice down upon their heads! The Spirit of God is on the man, and He works wondrously! If the Spirit of God shall come upon you, it will make you do greater things than these, and achieve loftier victories. Only believe it, and come to Christ, for abundant life is yet to be had.

We will change the line of our thought, and, coming to the fifth point, we will say that abundance of life is often seen in *the overflow of enjoyment*. On a spring morning, when you walk in the field, and see the lambs frisking so merrily, you have said, “There is life for you.” You see a company of little children, all in excellent health—how they amuse themselves, and what pranks they play! You say, “What

life there is in those children!" Catch one of the little urchins, and see if he does not wriggle out of your arms, and you say, "Why, he is all life." Just so, and therefore his happiness! In youth there is much life and overflow of spirits. When Israel came out of Egypt, she was young Israel, and how merrily did she smite her timbrels, and dance before Jehovah! When churches are revived, what life there is in them, and then what singing! Never has a revival of religion come without a revival of singing! As soon as Luther's Reformation comes, the psalms are translated and sung in all languages! And when Whitefield and Wesley are preaching, then Charles Wesley and Toplady must be making hymns for the people to sing, for they must show their joy, a joy born of life! When the Lord gives you, dear friend, more life, you also will have more joy; you will no more go moping about the house, or be thought melancholy and dull when the Lord gives you life more abundantly! I should not wonder but what you will get into the habit of singing at work, and humming tunes in your walks! I should not wonder if people ask, "What makes So-and-So so happy? What makes his eyes twinkle as with some strange delight? He is poor; he is sick, but how blissful he appears to be!" This will be seen, brothers and sisters, when you not only have life, but when you have it more abundantly!

Now, sixthly, this is a somewhat peculiar fact, but I think it should not be omitted. The abundance of life will be seen in *delicacy of feeling*. No doubt there is a very great deal of difference as to the amount of pain which persons suffer under the same operation; there are persons so constituted that you might cut off an arm and they would scarcely feel more than another person would suffer during the drawing of a tooth! There are some, on the other hand, to whom the slightest pain involves a thrill of horror, they are so sensitive. Whether it is an advantage or a disadvantage I cannot tell, but it has certainly been observed by skillful physicians that those persons who have strong mental constitutions—who use their brains a lot, and have a fine mental organization—are usually those who suffer most when subjected to pain. There is more life in them of a certain sort, and they are more sensitive for that reason. Now, when the Lord Jesus Christ gives His people life in its higher forms, they become more capable of pain! The same sin will pain them a hundred times more than it used to do—and they will shrink from it with greater anxiety to avoid it! If you are only just a Christian, you may do wrong, and you will be penitent, but if you have much life and you do wrong, ah, then your heart will be wrung with anguish, and you will loathe yourself before God! The man full of delicate life will not only suffer more, but he has probably more pleasure—he is sensitive to joys unknown to others, and his whole constitution thrills with a pleasure which another but faintly perceives.

The name of Jesus is inexpressibly sweet to those who have abundant life! It is precious if you only have life, but it is beyond all value to those who have very tender hearts which swell with exuberant life! I have met with some Christians who say they cannot understand Solomon's Song, and I have often wondered at it, myself. That is a test book for sensitive souls—and when men have much of the life of love—that sacred canticle suits their feelings better than any other book in the Bible, because it is a tender book of sacred love, and glows like altar coals! Oh, I pray you; have much of the tenderness of the intense life! Nor is this all I mean by delicacy. I mean this. There is a delicacy of hands which a man may acquire by long practice which renders that wonderful member a great worker of feats. The fingers and palms are all life, and can execute manipulations of a most surprising kind. Even so, the hands of educated faith can not only grasp, but handle the good Word of life. When gifted with this faculty, we pry into the mysteries of the heart of Jesus as others cannot! The lips, also, can become sensitive. Laura Bridgman learned to read with her lips, the raised letters; blind persons very generally have a wonderful life in the ends of their fingers which others of us have not yet developed. So the Lord would have His people enjoy a sensitively discerning life which shall reveal to them what they would never have felt and known! Oh, when your soul is blest with holy delicacy; when every part of your nature has become full and brimming over with intense sensitiveness; when you have an educated sensitiveness to the divine mind and will, *then* are you getting where Christ would have you to be!

Once more, this delicacy shows itself in a marvelous apprehensiveness and keenness of perception which had not been there before. The Indian will put his ear to the ground and say, "There is an enemy on the way," while you cannot hear a sound; when he comes to a turn in the forest, "There is the trail," he says, "to the right," though you cannot see that a stick has been moved, or that a single blade of grass has been bent! His faculties are full of life, and therefore he has a better ear and a better eye than you.

Remember the story of the Siege of Lucknow? When the Highland woman said, “Dinna you hear it?—dinna you hear it?” She could hear the sound of the Highland music when it was far away. I do not doubt she heard it, though others did not, but her ear was quicker than theirs. Jesus would have us quick of understanding in the fear of the Lord so that we shall say, “He is coming—He is coming! I can hear His footsteps!” And the world will say, “You are mad! Let us eat, and drink, and be married and given in marriage.” We want to be able to say, “I can hear the Bridegroom’s voice,” when others will say, “Not so, it is mere imagination.” We need eyes which will see the land which is very far off so that the golden gates of our heavenly home shall be visible to us! Thus shall we have life “more abundantly.”

The seventh point is this—life, when it is in abundance, becomes *supreme*. Some races of men have physical life, but have it not abundantly. For instance, the Red Indian and the Australian races have life, but after awhile they perish and die from off the face of the earth, while other races of more vigorous life battle with their surroundings and survive. Christians should have such abundant life that their circumstances should not be able to overcome them—such abundant life that in poverty they are rich, in sickness they are in spiritual health, in contempt they are full of triumph, and in death full of glory! Glorious is that life which defies circumstances! Christ has given to us, brothers and sisters, a supreme life, supreme in its tenacity—it cannot be destroyed, none can cut its thread. “Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?” Neither things present, nor things to come shall ever avail to do this. We have life so abundantly that it triumphs over all! What I desire for us, beyond everything is to have this life so abundant that it may be supreme over our entire selves. There is death within us, and that death struggles with our life, but our life has dashed death down, and holds it beneath its feet—but tremendous is the struggle of death to rise again and get the mastery!

Brethren, we must hold death down; we must grip him as with bands of iron; we must hold him down, and plant the knee of prayer upon his bosom, and press him to the earth! We must not allow sin to have dominion over us, but life more abundant must, through divine grace, triumph over inward corruption! There is yet much beyond you, Christian brethren, but that much is attainable. You are not to sit down and say, “We must always be captives to the flesh, to yield it obedience.” Beloved, you may overcome! God’s grace being in you, you may overcome! You shall not, this side of the grave congratulate yourselves upon *perfection*—such boasting be far from you! But in the strength of God, the life of God which is in you may be increased, and *shall* be increased; for Christ has come to increase it, till death shall be trod down, and you shall be more than conquerors through Him Who has loved you!

My time has gone; the subject is too large for me. Only this I conclude with—if you need life, you must get it from Christ. If you need *more* life, you must go to the same place. Do not look to Christ for the beginnings, and then somewhere else for the ending! Christ has come that you might have more life. Come to Him by faith; do not look to ceremonies or outward services or anything else for growth in grace, apart from Jesus, but fly to Him, and He will give it to you—and you shall be rich to all intents of bliss! God grant that all the members of this church may have this great blessing for Christ’s sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—JOHN 10.

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