

THE SAVIOR RESTING IN HIS LOVE NO. 2720

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, MARCH 31, 1901.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON.
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK,
ON A THURSDAY EVENING, EARLY IN THE YEAR 1859.

*“He will rest in His love.”
Zephaniah 3:17.*

ONE of our sweetest hymns commences with this verse —

*“How firm a foundation, you saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He has said,
You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?”*

Well might the poet have put that question if he had risen up from reading this third chapter of the prophecy of Zephaniah! O people of God, open your ears and your hearts while Jehovah thus speaks to you by the mouth of His ancient prophet, “Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord has taken away your judgments, He has cast out your enemy: the King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of you: you shall not see evil anymore. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear you not: and to Zion, Let not your hands be slack. The Lord your God in the midst of you is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over you with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over you with singing.” The words are very simple, but the promises they convey are so weighty that the verses roll along like the triumphant periods of a jubilant poem! The truth of God, even when told in the simplest words, is very much akin to the loftiest poetry and I might, without the slightest hesitation, declare that there never was any poem composed by human intellect which could match for a moment, in the sweetness of its notes, the succession of precious promises which God here proclaims in the ears of His chosen ones!

We cannot, on the present occasion, enter into the wondrous depths of the promises here revealed. We would need, indeed, a long period of time before we would be able to explain them and, possibly, the whole of life will scarcely be sufficient for us to fully realize these great truths of God in our own experience. We will, therefore, at once turn to the few words I have chosen as my text, “He will rest in His love,” and we shall consider these words as referring to the Lord Jesus Christ and as relating to His divine and matchless love which He has manifested toward His people in the wondrous works of grace which He has accomplished for them and in them.

“He will rest in His love.” This short sentence is capable of several interpretations, and each view we take of it has in it something extremely delightful.

I. Here is, first of all, THE DOCTRINE THAT CHRIST WILL ALWAYS STAY FAITHFUL TO THOSE UPON WHOM HE HAS SET HIS HEART'S AFFECTION.

The love of human beings is a fitful and flickering flame. It may be set, for a season, with apparent constancy upon a certain object, but you can never tell how long it will remain steadfast. However firm, however true and however fervent it may seem to be—and even may *really* be—yet trust it not so implicitly as to come under that ancient sentence, “Cursed is the man who trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the Lord.” Trust not too much to any friend whom you may have! Put not all your confidence in any man, for the best of men are but men at the best, and the firmest of men are subject to the infirmities and the frailties of their race! But God's love is no flickering flame! It does not flare up for a little while, like the crackling of thorns under a pot, and then die out in darkness. It is not to be set forth by the image of a fool's mirth which lasts but for a little season. It begins, it waxes vehement, it diminishes not, but it grows from strength to strength till what seemed at first to be but a single spark, becomes a mighty flame—and what was a flame becomes like the beacon lights of war, and what was but as a beacon becomes as the sun itself, in the fierceness of its heat and in the majesty of its goings!

There are some who teach that Christ's love may be set upon a man and yet that it may afterwards be removed from him. Where, then, remains the comfort of God's people if *their* teaching is true? But, thank God, it is *not* true, for the promise of the text is that Jesus "will rest in His love." If their doctrine is according to the Scriptures, where is the value of Christ's affection at all? In what respects can He be said to stick closer than a brother? How can it be true that many waters cannot quench His love, neither can the floods drown it? If these men are right, must not the apostle Paul have been wrong when he declared that he was persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in the whole of creation should ever be able to separate the saints from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus their Lord? Shall we imagine that the apostle was mistaken and suppose that this erroneous teaching is the truth of God? Shall we turn away from the positive testimony of Holy Scripture, and believe the lies of men in its place, especially when that Scripture is itself so full of consolation to God's people that if it can ever be proved to be untrue, they may put their hands upon their loins in agony of woe, and go to their graves full of misery and despair?

But, beloved, you know right well that Jesus Christ's love, when once it has engraved your name upon His hand and His heart, will never allow that name to be erased! You believe and you believe aright, that he who has a portion in the heart of God has an eternal portion! He who can claim for himself a share of the Father's love, of the Son's redemption, and of the Spirit's care, need never be afraid that all the thievish hosts of hell shall rob him of his divine inheritance. For look here, brothers and sisters, what is there to separate you and me from Jesus Christ's love, which has not been already tried?

Can sin ever make Jesus cease to love me? If so, He would have ceased to love me long ago. If there is any iniquity that I can commit that would divide me from Christ's love, I think that I would have been separated from Him long before this, for, in looking back upon my own life, I am compelled, with shame and confusion of face, to fall upon my knees and confess that He has had a thousand reasons for thrusting me out of doors if He had chosen to do so, and He might have framed millions of excuses if He had resolved to blot my name out of the book of life. He might have said, "You are unworthy of Me, and, therefore, I will be unmindful of you."

Further, if Christ had intended to cast us away because of our sins, why did He ever take us on? Did He not know, beforehand, that we would be rebellious, and did not His omniscient eyes see all our sins and detect all our follies? Are we ungrateful? He knew that we would be. Are our sins extremely heinous? He knew how heinous they would be. He could foresee all—every spot that was to be upon us, was upon us before His omniscient eyes when He chose us. Every fault that we would commit was already committed in His estimation. He foreknew and foresaw all, yet He chose us just as we were. If He had intended to abandon us and cast us away, would He ever have accepted us at all? If Jesus meant to divorce His bride, foreknowing all her faults, would He ever have married her? If He determined to cast away His adopted child, since He knew that child's unfaithfulness, would He ever have adopted him? Oh, think not, beloved, that Christ would have done all that He has done for nothing, that He would have come from heaven to earth, and have even gone from the cross to the grave, and allowed His spirit to descend into the shades of Hades on a bootless errand! Would He not have started back, and said, "I know My bride will prove to be unworthy, therefore I will not marry her"? But since He *has* married her, and has put the red ring of His own atonement on her finger, and has been faithful to her, what shall ever cause Him to divorce her? What can ever induce Him to cast from His bosom her whom He died to save? It must be true that, "He will rest in His love," for He has hitherto rested in it, though He has had much to mourn over in His chosen ones.

Our sin, then, has not divided and, we believe, never shall divide us from the Savior's love. What remains? *Will sorrow ever separate us from our Savior?* Can tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword separate us from the love of Christ? No, for all these things do but make the Savior manifest His love to us the more. If Christ loves His people well in prosperity, He never loves them any less in their adversities. Do you believe that Christ loves His children when they are arrayed in purple, and that He will forsake them when they wander about in sheepskins and goat-skins, destitute, afflicted, and tormented? If so, you know not the heart of Jesus. He loves His people well enough everyday—but if He sees them stretched upon the rack and about to die for His sake, if it is possible, the infinity of His love must then surpass itself! Well said the apostle, when he had mentioned all these sufferings and pains, "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

Sin and sorrow, therefore, are perfectly incapable of tearing us from the heart of Christ, for He must, "He will rest in His love." And this truth of God will seem all the more plain and clear if we just pause a

moment and think of *our relationship to God the Father, and to God the Son*. Is not every Christian, God's child? And did you ever know a true father who hated his own child? You may have known such a father, but it was not fatherly for him to hate his own son. Have you known a father who has cursed his son and driven him from his home—and declared that he was not his child? You may have known some men of that kind, or you may have heard of such unnatural creatures, but, mark you, the father's curse could not make his child not his child—he was still his father's son, even when he was cursed by him. Not even the foulest words that ever came from the most embittered heart could ever take away that child's right to call that man his father—a child is a child forever if he is once a child—and a father is a father forever if he is once a father.

Now, beloved, in the usual course of nature, we find that men will do anything for their children that they possibly can. Here is a poor creature, born into the world nearly an idiot—it has not its right senses—it is nearly blind and deaf, and its parents know that even if they can bring it up, it will always be a trouble to them. Yet you see with what studious care the father and mother endeavor to save the poor child's life. While others say, "If it were to die, it would be a happy release," both father and mother feel that they would be losers by its death. "Ah," said one good old divine, "if a father could have a child that had lost eyes and ears, and feet and hands and though he could not breathe in a natural fashion, though he could not feed without some extraordinary means for the digestion of his food—even then his father would do his best to keep him alive—and so surely shall it be with that great Father who, when He speaks of Himself, and of us, always puts His Fatherhood far higher than ours, as Christ did when He said, 'If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?' And I may truly say if an earthly father does not wish to lose his child—if he would endeavor to save his child's life though it was loaded with ten thousand diseases—how much more shall our Father who is in heaven see to it that none of His little ones shall perish, but that every one of them shall be preserved?" Do you not see that because we are God's sons, we are, therefore, Jesus Christ's brothers, and, "He *will* rest in His love"?

But there is yet another thought, for we also have a relationship to Christ and, therefore, "He will rest in His love." We have never yet heard of a man who hated his own flesh. Strangely wicked as it is, we have heard of men who have hated their flesh in the mystic sense of the marriage tie and who have driven their wives from them with all manner of brutality and cruelty. She whom the husband promised to cherish and to nourish, he has driven away, yet he has never thus treated his own flesh. The man may have become cruel and unnatural towards her who is his own flesh by marriage, but not towards his own literal flesh. Now, Jesus Christ has taken His people into such a connection with Himself that they are nearer to Him even than the wife is to the husband—they are as near to Him as our own flesh and blood are to our own head. What will not a man do to save his hand, or the least member of his body? Would he ever cease to care for even the feeblest portion of his frame? No, men are generally careful enough of their own flesh and blood—much more, therefore, will our Lord Jesus Christ protect the members of His mystical body, for we are His fullness, the fullness of Him that fills all in all. And will Christ lose His own fullness? Shall His body be dismembered? Shall the head become a bleeding head, and the trunk become a corpse? Shall any one member be left to die, to burn, to be destroyed? Oh, no! As surely as we are brought into this relationship with Christ, so surely are we saved beyond any danger! This is one meaning of the text and most consolatory to the tried, tempest-tossed child of God.

II. I think, however, that there is another very sweet meaning to it—that is, CHRIST HAS LABORED IN HIS LOVE, AND HE NOW RESTS IN IT.

Let me draw a picture for you. Here is a man who loves his hearth, his home, his country, and his Queen. The sound of battle is heard in the land, so he girds his sword upon his thigh and marches forth to defend all that is dear to him. He fights, he struggles—his garments are stained with blood—and he is wounded. It is love—love of his own safety, of his family and of his country that has made him fight so bravely. And now that the deed is done, he comes back to his home. The foe has been swept from the white cliffs of Albion and the land of liberty is still free—Britons are not slaves. The man retires to his house and you see how quietly he sleeps, how joyously he sits down under his own vine and fig tree, none daring to make him afraid. With what joy does he now look upon the faces of those whom he has defended and upon the home for which he has fought! What satisfaction does it give him to know that the honor of his country is still unstained and his land is still the home of the free! Now he rests in his love—that which made him fight, now gives him joy—that which impelled him in the day of battle to do great deeds of heroism is its own sweet reward! Now he rests because the battle is fought, the victory is won and he, therefore, rejoices in the very love which once caused him to labor.

Now see the Lord Jesus Christ laboring in His love. Love fetched Him from His throne in heaven. Love disrobed Him of His glories. Love laid Him in Bethlehem's manger. Love led Him through this weary world for 33 years. Love took Him to Gethsemane. Love oppressed Him till He sweat great drops of blood. Love made Him the great Standard-bearer in the fight. Love made Him stand erect, the focus of the war, when the storm gathered round His brow, and every arrow of the foeman found a target in His heart. Love made Him—

*“Calm ‘mid the bewildering cry,
Confident of victory.”*

Love made Him bow His head, and give up the ghost, that He might redeem His people from their sins. Now He is more than conqueror—He rises to heaven, and He rests in His love! Oh, what a wondrous rest that is! If rest is sweet to the laboring man, how much sweeter to the bleeding Man, the dying Man, the crucified Man, the risen Man? If rest is sweet after toil, how sweet must be the rest of Jesus after all the toils of life and death, the cross, and the grave! If victory makes the soldier's return joyous, how joyous must have been the return of that conquering Hero who has led captivity captive, and received gifts for men! Truly does our Lord Jesus “rest in His love.”

Do you not see that the very thing that drove Him to labor now makes a pillow for His head? That which made Him strong in the day of battle makes Him joyous in the hour of victory? And that is the love which He bears to His people, for, lo, as He sits down in heaven, He thinks within Himself, “I have done it, I have finished the work of My people's redemption. Not one of them shall ever perish. No drop of the hail of God's vengeance can fall on them, for it has all fallen on Me. I have been smitten, I have borne the curse, and now they cannot be cursed, they are delivered.” And then His holy mind roves on in meditation, “I have taken away the curse, and I have given them the blessing. I have brought many of them to know and love Me, and in due season, I will bring all the rest. They shall come that are ready to perish, for I must have every one of my blood-bought sheep with Me forever. They shall be blessed on earth, and, by-and-by, I shall have them where I am, and they shall feed in these rich pastures. They shall lie down where the wolf cannot come, and where desolation cannot enter. The time shall come when I shall have their very bones resuscitated, when their flesh that has lain in the dust, shall live again to be with Me—and so shall they all, every one of them, body, soul and spirit regain all the inheritance that they had lost, and with all that double portion which I have gained for them, share the spoil, and wave the palm, and be more than conquerors through what I have done for them.” This thought gives sweet rest to the Savior who once labored here below, and who, now, in heaven, “rests in His love.”

III. I find that Dr. Gill gives this as one of the meanings of the text, for he is always noted for giving a great variety of meanings to a text. And, sometimes, nobody knows which is the true one. When he is going to explain a passage of Scripture, he says, “It does not mean this, it does not mean that, and it does not mean the other.” Probably nobody ever thought it did mean anything of the kind! After he has mentioned several things which it does *not* mean, he mentions some that it *may* mean, and then, last of all, he tells us what it actually does mean! He says our text means, “HE SHALL SOLACE HIMSELF IN HIS LOVE.”

There is something very sweet in love. Whether it is sweeter to be loved or to love, I know not, but, certainly, when the two experiences meet together, they are like two noble rivers which have flowed through a rich and fertile country and then combined to make some great lake, or inland sea—then are they broad waters indeed. Now Christ sees our love—the love which He has put into us meets the love which He has poured out towards us—and in both of these He finds a sweet solace. He solaces Himself in love—this cheers and comforts Him. Some men, when they would be cheered on earth, drink the wine which stirs their blood. Some men find comfort in company and the noisy, thoughtless talker makes them glad. Others, when they would be solaced, turn to books—these are their joys. Others, when they would be satisfied, rattle their gold, look over their mortgages, their estates, their bonds, and things of that kind. And there are some men who in this world have nothing sweeter for solace than the love of those who are near and dear to them. The man who loves his home, and his family, and finds his little earthly heaven around his own hearth is one of the happiest men I know. Treasure that thought for a moment—and think of Christ as taking delight in His family.

I never yet heard that Christ rests in His *power*. He has great power—look what He has done. He has built the heavens. He has stretched out the earth, and He upholds the clouds with His might. But He never rests there. I know, too, that He has great wisdom—He knows all things in the ages past, in the time present, and in the centuries yet to come. He can unravel mysteries and foretell all things, yet I never heard that He rested in His wisdom. There is a great crowd of angelic spirits, always waiting in His courts above and He, as King, sits in the very center of them all. And before Him principalities and

powers cast their crowns—but I never heard that He rested even in their homage. No, our Lord Jesus Christ is like the man who loves his family—He rests in the midst of His own beloved ones—His spouse’s bosom, the place where He hears His children cry, where He listens to their prayers, the door at which He receives their thanksgiving and bestows His blessing, the house where they wait on Him, and He waits on them, where they commune with Him, and He communes with them—that is the place where He rests! He rests in His love, in the midst of the objects of His love—there it is that He finds His own eternal satisfaction, the solace of His heart.

Is not that a sweet thought? It has ravished my soul, while turning it over, to think that Jesus Christ should ever find His rest among the poor sons of men! Long ago it was said of Him, “His delights were with the sons of men,” and now that is His rest, too. Oh, how pleasant it is for us to know that our Lord will not sleep anywhere but in the house of His beloved, and beneath no other tree will He recline but beneath the trees of His own right-hand planting! It is very easy for me to say of Christ, “As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the sons,” but it is surprising that He should ever say the same of me! I can say of Him, “I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste.” But it is amazing for Him to say the same of me, or to turn to some poor saint and say to him, “O soul, you are weary, but you are My rest, and I am your rest. You are sick, but you are My health, and I am your health. You are sad, but you are My joy, and I am your joy. You are poor, but you are My treasure, and I am your treasure. You are nothing, and yet you are My fullness, and I am your fullness!” Oh, what a host of precious thoughts we can meditate upon here! We have started a whole covey of sweet things, and we might profitably stand still and admire them. It is not merely one sweet thought, but many that are included in this one precious truth of God, “He will rest in His love.” He never rested till He found that all His love was given to us, and He will never completely rest till all our love is given to Him!

IV. The Hebrew conveys to us yet another idea. In the margin we read, “HE WILL BE SILENT IN HIS LOVE.”

Why is this? What can silence have to do with love? One old divine thinks that Christ means, by this expression, to say that His love is so vast that it can be better heard by His saying nothing than by His attempting to express it. What a great deal Christ has said, in the Scriptures, about His love, and yet listen, O spouse of Christ, the love that He has not spoken is ten times more than anything He has yet said! Oh, yes, there is much love which He has brought out of the treasure house and given to you, but He has much more like it in that divine heart of His. Some drops of His love you have already received, but those bright clouds on high, those storehouses of His grace contain treasures of which you have never yet even dreamed! When you read one of the promises, you say, “Ah, this is indeed precious!” Yet, remember that what our Lord has revealed in His Word is not a tenth of what He has not said! He has said many rich things, but there are still richer things. He has not said them, He cannot say them because they are not sayable, they are unutterable, and they cannot be declared— at least, not at present. When you get to heaven, you will hear them, but you cannot hear them here.

You know that the apostle Paul said, when he was caught up to the third heaven, he heard words which it was not lawful for men to utter. Perhaps he then heard more of the Savior’s love, as though Christ said to him, “I tell you this, but you must not tell it to anyone else—it is not lawful to utter it down below. I have made you a great vessel and you can hold this revelation, but as for the rest, they are only little vessels—do not tell them anymore, it would burst them. Do not expose them to too great a heat of love, it would consume them—they would die if they knew more—they cannot understand more. I have told them so much of My love that if they only understood all I have told them, they would not be able to live on earth—their hearts would burst for joy, and they would be obliged to flee to Me above. Therefore I tell them no more, for they cannot bear it.” So that, you see, there is great preciousness in this rendering, “He will be silent in His love,” as if He could not say it, therefore He would not try to say it. He would just leave it alone. One poet, after praising God with all his might, finds that he can go no further and winds up thus— “Come, then, expressive silence, tell His praise.” That is just the meaning of the text, as if Christ would say, “I have said a great deal, but My people cannot understand. I will say no more. I shall only now say, ‘Come, then, expressive silence, tell My love.’”

There is, however, a meaning that is, perhaps, even more correct. “He will be silent in His love,” may mean that He will be silent about His people’s faults. From the connection of the text, it looks like this. “The Lord has taken away your judgments, He has cast out your enemy: the King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of you: you shall not see evil any more.” It looks as if He meant to say He would be silent about their sins. There stands Christ in heaven today, pleading for His people. Listen! He says nothing to accuse them. Satan may accuse, but Christ never will. The good that His people do is magni-

fied, multiplied, perfected, and then presented before the throne of God—but as for the sins of His people, He has cast them behind His back, and all He says concerning those sins is this, “I behold no sin in Jacob, neither iniquity in Israel; My anger is turned away from them; I have blotted out like a cloud their iniquities, and, like a thick cloud, their sins.” Sometimes love makes a man silent. If you hear anything said against one whom you love, and you are asked, “Is it not so?” you say, “Well, I am not compelled to bear witness against one whom I love, and I will not do so.” You know that our law does not demand of a wife that she shall give evidence against her husband. And, certainly, the Lord Jesus Christ will never give any evidence against His spouse—“He will be silent in His love.” If He were called upon and asked, “Has Your spouse sinned?” His declaration would be, “I am the Sin-offering on her behalf. I am her Substitute. I have been punished in her place. I can say, ‘You are all fair, My love, there is no spot in you.’” There will not be a word of accusation from Him! She says of herself, “I am all black.” He will not deny it, but He will not affirm it. He says, “There is no spot in you” and He goes on to say that she is all fair in His sight.

O glorious silence! “He will be silent in His love.” So I am inclined to believe it will be at the last great day, when the books shall be opened. Christ will read out the sins of the wicked recorded against them, but, as for the sins of His people, “He will be silent in His love.” I sometimes think that it will be so, though I cannot speak with authority. “No,” He will say, “upon you be the curse—you who lived and died without washing in My blood in the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. But as for these, My people, they have had their sins blotted out, and I will not read what is obliterated. I will be silent in My love.”

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: *LUKE 24.*

Verses 1-4. *Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments.*

Brothers and sisters, they might have been much more perplexed if they had found the body of Jesus there, for then His promises would not have been fulfilled and all their hopes would have been blighted forever! Unbelief is often the mother of needless perplexity. The resurrection of Christ is plain enough to us now, but to those who had seen Him die and whose faith was so very weak, it was a cause for perplexity that they could not find His dead body. They meant to embalm it. They had brought sweet spices with them for that purpose. It was well that it was in their heart, although it was an unwise and needless project. Yet I doubt not that the Lord thought those spices were very sweet and that He accepted them because of the love they represented and, sometimes, you and I, in our ignorance, have tried to do for Christ what He would not wish to have us do, but He has understood our motive and accepted our intention, albeit that there was a mistake lurking behind it.

5-8. *And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek you the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how He spoke to you when He was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered His words.*

It is well to know Christ’s words, even though we often forget them, because we could not remember them if we had not once known them. Even though our leaky memory lets so much run through, there will be enough remaining in the soul to come back with great sweetness, by-and-by, in some time of special need. Thus, those holy women, who had often ministered to Christ, “remembered His words.”

9-12. *And returned from the sepulcher, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary, the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. Then arose Peter, and ran to the sepulcher.*

He must go and see for himself, impetuous spirit that he was. So he “ran to the sepulcher.”

12. *And stooping down, he beheld the linen cloths laid by themselves and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.*

Thus that notable day wore on. Christ had risen, but His people had not risen to full belief in Him—they were still in the grave of distress and doubt, though their Master had left the grave of death.

13-15. *And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that while they communed together, and reasoned, Jesus Himself drew near, and went with them.*

Where two, whose hearts are right, and whose talk is heavenly, keep company with one another, Christ is very likely to make a third! Sometimes, when He does not come to one, He reveals Himself to two, as He said to His disciples, “If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.” And often, when two believers agree in communion, there is a sweet magnetic force about their fellowship which brings the Savior to them, and retains Him in their company.

16. *But their eyes were restrained that they should not know Him.*

Oh, these eyes of ours! They let us see a great deal that we had better not see, but there are some things which we might almost die to see, which we see not. I doubt not that often, spiritual beings are about us, but we do not discern them, and, certainly, the Master Himself oftentimes draws near, yet our eyes are restrained, and we do not see Him. This may even happen at the communion table—we may see the signs and symbols, but see not Christ, the signified and symbolized One. It is ill when it is so.

17-25. *And He said unto them, What manner of communications are these that you have one to another, as you walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said to Him, Are You only a stranger in Jerusalem, and have not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And He said unto them, What things? And they said unto Him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and have crucified Him. But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yes, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher; and when they found not His body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that He was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulcher, and found it even so as the women had said: but Him they saw not. Then He said unto them, O fools.*

I feel sure that He said that word very gently—not as you and I might say it, in a pet. Yet, truly, as we read the story, we cannot help feeling that they were very foolish and stupid. Their own tale convicts them. So no wonder Christ said unto them, “O fools”—

25, 26. *And slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses—*

At the very Pentateuch—

27. *And all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*

We may well wish that we might have been there. What a privilege it was for those two disciples—a walk and a talk combined! But what heavenly talk—all concerning Himself! I know that you, dear friends, never relish a discourse unless Christ is foremost in it, but when Christ is the only subject, and even Scripture itself is made subordinate to the display of Christ, then are you well content!

28. *And they drew near unto the village, where they went.*

And sorry, I have no doubt, they were to do so. One would like to walk on to all eternity with Christ thus talking by the way!

28-30. *And He made as though He would have gone further. But they constrained Him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And He went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to them.*

That was the old sign, well known to them and to Him—that blessing and breaking of the bread.

31. *And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him; and He vanished out of their sight.*

It is sometimes so with us—we have just recognized our Lord, and, lo, He is gone!

32. *And they said, one to another, Did not our heart burn within us—*

Oh, blessed heartburn!

32, 33. *While He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures? And they rose up the same hour—*

They could not stay away from their fellow disciples—they must tell such glorious tidings as they had, so “they rose up the same hour.”

33-36. *And returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen, indeed, and has appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how He was known of them in breaking of bread. And as they thus spoke, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them.*

That is usually His way—while we are talking about manifestations of Christ in the past, He often comes again among us, and gives us a new revelation of Himself.

36-41. *And said unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And He said unto them, Why are you troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I, Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see I have. And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet. And while they yet believed not for joy—*

That is a singular combination. At first, they believed not for grief—but now the pendulum swings the other way—and they believe not for joy! There is a kind of unbelief that is begotten of excessive delight. We know something to be true, and yet there comes the recoil and the doubt, “Surely it is too good to be true; can it really be so?” See how Jesus convinced them that He was not a spirit—“while they yet believed not for joy.”

41. *And wondered, He said unto them, Have you here any meat?*

“Anything to eat?”

42, 43. *And they gave Him a piece of broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And He took it, and did eat before them.*

That was proof positive that He was still composed of flesh and bones—a real person—and no phantom.

44-51. *And He said unto them, These are the words which I spoke unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry you in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high. And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.*

He went away in the act of blessing, and He has never left off blessing His people from that day to this!

52, 53. *And they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.*

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