

CHRIST CRUCIFIED:
BOTH POWER AND WISDOM.

BEING
ADDRESSES DELIVERED IN LONDON

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THE POWER OF THE GLAD TIDINGS.

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THIS is one of the most comprehensive statements of the Spirit of God with respect to the glad tidings, and the apostle, observe, beloved brethren, gives this as his reason for not being "ashamed of the gospel." The expression, "of Christ," is not in the original, the statement really is, "I am not ashamed of the gospel." I need not say that it is the gospel of Christ in one sense, and it is the gospel of God in another sense; but he is speaking of it here simply without reference to its being either of Christ as through Him, or of God as from Him, it is simply the gospel in itself, the good news: "I am not ashamed of the good news." Now some people are ashamed of it. Are you? A great many people are ashamed of it, and for different reasons, but still they are ashamed of it. Are you ashamed of it? Why are you ashamed of it? It will uncover all your filth, and your wretchedness, and your nakedness, and your destitution, and your misery, and your

ruin. It will do that for this reason—that it is God's great extrication for sinners out of that condition, His extricating power for them. And the deplorable part of the matter is, that people are in that plight and are not conscious of it; they are not alive to the sense of it, their souls and consciences are not moved by the deep danger that they are in. Men and women who are unconverted, who are living away from God in their sins and lost estate, unforgiven and guilty, are hanging over the precipice of hell, unconsciously. If a man finds any one walking over a precipice like that, and goes with rather a rude grasp and lays his hand on the shoulder of the person that is in danger, and roughly, it may be, seeks to awake him out of his sleep, you will say it is rough, but oh! beloved friends, how kind, what marvellous mercy to be arrested ere it is too late. And it is just that kind of thing that you find so frequently in the minds and hearts of people, that they shrink back from this, they are averse to it, they are positively ashamed of the gospel. It is said that the only person that really is ashamed of his God and his religion, is the person who at least made a profession of the true God and the true religion. The worshipper of false gods, he is not ashamed of his religion or his god. What a strange thing to think, that the professing

Christian is the only person that is really ashamed of his religion. The Mahommedan, or the Turk, or the heathen, is not ashamed of his religion, nay, rather he glories in it ; but the professor of Christ is ashamed. Now the apostle says, "I am not ashamed." He gloried in it, as we know ; it was that of which he made his boast ; he exulted in it.

Now let me for a moment or two seek to interest your hearts and consciences in the thought of what the gospel really is. And if you look a little further back in this chapter, you will find a divine definition of it, a most precious unfolding of what the gospel is in its own nature. The apostle says he was "a servant"—a bondman, "of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle"—a called apostle, an apostle by calling—"separated unto the gospel of God"—he was set apart to it. What a sense it gives the heart and conscience of what the gospel is in that way, when God conceived it of such preciousness and value in His eyes that He said, There is a man whom I will separate unto that very thing, I separate him to the service of that gospel ; and go where he will all this wide world over, whether he makes tents (for he was a tent-maker) or whether he is engaged in any other trade, still, there he was, he was Christ's bondservant, and he was separated to the gospel, and his making the tents did not

in the slightest degree take away from the fact, that he was separated unto God's gospel ; that for him was *the* great thing ; whether he made few or many tents the gospel was that to which he was called out, separated to it and sent out for it, "separated unto the gospel of God." Now mark, what the Spirit tells us this gospel is—"which he had promised before by his prophets in holy writings." It was never, beloved friends, a thing known in former days ; it was promised, but I need not say that a promise and the accomplishment are not the same thing. A promise of God is equal to an accomplishment *as to the certainty of the thing being brought about* ; but there is a vast difference between a thing coming out in full blown accomplishment into plain light and a thing being *promised*.

Now God had promised to Israel a deliverer, one who was to deliver that people, and there were promises in the Old Testament scriptures of glory and blessing, even unto Gentiles, in the coming days. But now we are come down into accomplishment ; and what God delights to do is to take things out of pattern. God put them into pattern, and God takes them out of pattern ; and you and I are living in the days when they are taken out of pattern ; we have come to the day of accomplishment, when the promise is made good. But it was promised in holy writings.

And now look at the promise, and then you will find what the gospel is—"Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection out from among the dead." Now there you have the gospel. And the gospel in that way is summed up in two things, that is to say, there is the Person of the One who gives all its blessedness, and substance, and preciousness to the glad tidings, there is the Person of the Deliverer, namely, "Jesus Christ our Lord, made of David's seed according to the flesh." Here we have the Person, even the Saviour.

What is the good of telling me about a salvation that has not in it all the value and preciousness, and all the divine stamp of *the* One who alone was competent to work out such a salvation, suitable to God and suitable for sinners? Because the more you tell me of the vastness of the salvation, and you do not tell me of the Saviour, there is an aching void and want in my heart. Oh, be assured, the more you tell of the nature of the work and the fulness of it, the more poor hearts will crave to know, Who is competent to do it? where was the Person who could give effect to that? where was the One who could accomplish that? where was the One who could

hold up one hand to the throne of God in the heavens, and stretch another down to the deep need of a poor wretched creature like me in his sins and misery? Where, for instance, was the One who could meet the earnest longings of the heart of a Job when he said, "Neither is there any daysman betwixt us that might lay his hand upon us both?" Where was the One who could span the eternal throne in the heavens and stoop down to pick up a poor, wretched, guilty, lost, miserable, hell-deserving sinner like myself in this world? That is what I want, and therefore the first part of this wonderful glad tidings concerns itself with the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is "concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord," this blessed Person, the Deliverer, the One who was competent to accomplish a divine work. And more than that, as you will find in Hebrews i. creation is attributed to this blessed One as Son. God rolled these worlds into existence by His Son, made everything by the Son; "By him were all things created." Look at creation, who could do that? Who could bring worlds into existence? No one but a divine Person; the Son made the worlds, "by whom he made the worlds." Now mark this. That same One who made the worlds, who, as the God of providence, upholds everything by the word of His power, by whom everything was created and made here, became the

purger of sins. It was just as much a divine work to do that on the cross, on the ground of which you and I, as poor, wretched, guilty creatures, could get the forgiveness of our sins, as it was to roll this world into existence, and the One who could do the one was the only One who could do the other. No one but a divine Person could come down here into this world, and become a man, in order that He might make purgation of sins. It was none else than He who made the worlds, who upholds them by the word of His power, who by Himself, having made purgation of our sins, took His seat, and took it as of title, at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, He was entitled to sit down there in virtue of His work, so that we may say He sat down in wondrous right in heaven. The very One who came down here, and emptied Himself, and became a man, and bore the judgment of the cross, and accomplished it all perfectly and fully to the infinite satisfaction of Him who sent Him. He, when He had done it all, and finished it all, and perfected it all, leaving not one single thing that had not stamped upon it the divine mark of the perfection of Him that could impart perfection to His work, as soon as ever He had done it, He took His seat in right there. What a joy to look at Christ seated in right in heaven, not by permission, but in right! And in the right of His

saving work, in all the right and efficacy and completeness, measured by the eye of God, as God alone would measure it, Christ has taken His seat at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens.

How blessed to find those two things so intimately connected with the Person of the One who came down here to be the Deliverer and to be the Saviour! We first of all see in Him the very Person we need for our hearts; who could do this? None but Christ. And what a rest is that to my poor wretched heart in all its misery. There are my circumstances of guilt and ruin, and here is my poor heart broken within me when I am brought into the sense of it, and I long to know, Is there any one who can take pity upon me? Yes; Christ. And it is not helpless pity, but it is mighty pity, it is powerful pity; it is divine power and divine compassion. The One who came down here as the Saviour came to give my poor, wretched heart a sense that He who was in heaven, He who ever was God and with God, the brightness of His glory and the expression of His substance, He Himself came down into this world to give us the sense that there was One, even He, who could feel for us in our wretchedness, look upon us and pity us in our misery and lost estate, and work deliverance and extrication in His marvellous grace

for such poor, vile, hell-deserving sinners; that there was not a single motive outside His mercy and the sovereign goodness that was in His heart, to reach a hand of help and extend pity and compassion to poor things like us.

Now this is what you get, beloved friends, in that blessed Person. And it is a wonderful thing when the heart gets personally acquainted with Him in that way in its misery and wretchedness, and says, That is my Saviour. You can understand well how the apostle, though he was the vessel of inspiration, and God was moving this vessel to communicate His own mind in the various writings that are brought out—yet how suited the vessel was for the special work that God had called him to. For this very one, Saul of Tarsus, was the man to whom that blessed One had spoken on the road to Damascus, a persecutor, an injurious person, a blasphemer, a man that wasted and made havoc of the saints of God, who hated Jesus, who hated Christ in glory, to think of him being arrested by that blessed One, addressed by Him, called by name, that Saul had heard his own name on the lips of that blessed Jesus, you may understand what a vessel he was to bring out the glories of His Person and the perfections of His Saviourship, if I may use the word, to bring out the mercy and compassion of the heart of Christ, as he was divinely inspired

to communicate these things; so he says it was "concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, made of the seed of David according to the flesh"—his own nation, for he was a Jew—"but declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection out from among the dead."

Now this is the first thing in the glad tidings. It concerns Christ. It concerns the work, but it concerns the Person who did this work, and all the blessedness of it. And then the work itself, that work which has perfectly glorified God according to all His own holy, righteous nature, and met the deep needs of the sinner.

Now that is what the apostle says he is not ashamed of; he is not ashamed of the gospel.

And now he tells you why he is not ashamed of it. I am not ashamed of the gospel for this reason—it is God's power. Now this is a day in which every kind of contrivance is put into force to benefit and ameliorate the condition men are found in; but man cannot do it. You have got every kind of thing developed, but what are they being developed into? Every conceivable kind of moral corruption. Is the condition of things better, the moral state of society better? The circumstances of men, are they better? Let us fairly and fearlessly look at it. You have an age of invention, science extended, marvellous

manifestations of man's reason and powers, education advancing, making vast strides on every hand, discovery after discovery; but look at the condition of man morally, is man better? Are his social relationships better? Is man himself better? Beloved friends, it is a development that is almost too black to look at, a development into every sort of wickedness as marked as it was in the days of the flood. And those days immediately preceding the flood, though they were not of course up to and equal to the progress of the present day, yet they were remarkable days, days of discovery, though they were infantine days, "there were giants in the earth in those days." But what was the earth when God looked at it? Filled with violence and filled with corruption. The two great principles that overlapped each other on this earth, which necessitated the divine bringing in of the first great judgment that swept that generation away from God's eye, they are just the principles you find abroad in the world to-day—violence and corruption. That is what the earth witnessed in those days, and that is what the world witnesses in this day—violence and corruption.

Well now, you may try and bring in every kind of remedial measure—and I do not question the social good for a moment, the social advantage resulting from certain machinery and

certain expedients that have been put in force, but you cannot reach the root of the disease which is there. God has but one thing for fallen man, and that is His gospel, that is all. You cannot change the condition of fallen man as such, you may lop off one vice and another, but you have not changed the root principle which is there. Thank God for all the civilisation and government of the world, though the foundations are being fast loosened at present, still there is the principle of government accepted and owned by the world as such. And hence, evil doers, lawless men, are shut up in prisons and reformatories, which is right enough in government, but this does not change the nature of the man that is thus sentenced. A man undergoes a sentence of imprisonment because of crime, and he is shut up for life it may be, or for a term of years, but unless God intervene in His grace, that man comes out in principle and root as he went in. The occasions for the manifestation of sin are taken away from him, he has not in prison the opportunity to sin; if he had, he would sin as before; he comes out unchanged, unaltered; shut up it may be for years, if the occasion comes in his way, that which he is, declares itself, he is unchanged in nature: "that which is born of the flesh, is flesh."

Now the gospel is God's power; and a power

is not a remedy. There are no words that I more dislike in my very inmost heart than to speak of the gospel as a remedy. A remedy? I hold it to be a miserable word to apply to God's gospel. Remedy? No, beloved friends, but *power*; it is the power of God. And what is the power of God? The gospel. And what is the gospel? The gospel is concerning His Son Jesus Christ; first of all as to His Person, and secondly as to His work.

Now look at one scripture for a moment in connection with that work of His, where you find the same thought presented by the Spirit of God, and mark the words of the Holy Ghost in these verses (1 Cor. i. 18)—“For the preaching of the cross”—which has to do with the work of the Lord Jesus Christ —“is to them that perish foolishness.” Is it foolishness to any one of you here this evening? Do you consider it a foolish thing? Do you look at it as a vain thing for a man to stand up and speak of these things? Then you are perishing; God says you are perishing; “the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness.” How solemn the word of God is, how it finds us out, how it detects us as to where we are. “To them that perish foolishness, but unto us who are saved it is the power of God.” “The preaching of the cross,” the shameful part of the death of the Lord Jesus

Christ, that part that man gave Him, for man nailed Him on that tree, man nailed Him on a gibbet between two thieves, the very shame and opprobrium connected with that cross; "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us who are saved it is the power of God." And mark, more than that, beloved friends; because he says in verse 22, "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified; to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness, but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." The gospel is the power of God, the preaching of the cross is the power of God, Christ is the power of God. Here you get the gospel, the subject of the gospel, and that part of it too, the cross, the shame of it, the opprobrium of it, everything that could make it contemptible in the eyes of man, all linked up with God's power. Says the apostle, I am not ashamed of the gospel, it is the power of God to extricate poor, wretched, ruined, lost, hell-deserving sinners from their misery and their guilt; and God can reach them in this estate by that gospel concerning His Son Jesus Christ and His finished work on that cross.

But more, beloved brethren; it is the power of God unto what? Because there will be a power

of God in judgment. There is a day coming when the power of God will be manifested in destruction. There is a day coming for this world when God will judge it in righteousness; He is saving sinners in grace out of it now. But I tell you to-night, sinner, the day of judgment is *appointed*, and the judge is *ordained*. "He has appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." That day is coming, and that day will be the witness, the marvellous witness, of the power of God to destruction, when the besom of judgment shall sweep this earth of those who have rejected Christ and refused God's great salvation, and there will not be a solitary ray of mercy in that blackness, not a solitary ray of light in that darkness. That day is coming. And oh! if that day should overtake you, sinner, in your sins, if that day should find you an unwashed and unforgiven criminal in your sins, if it shall find you out of Christ in your sins, and out of Christ, as the result of having refused, despised, rejected, neglected God's great salvation! What then? How solemn to think of these things! God has appointed the day; He has ordained the judge. And who is the judge? That Jesus whom you, sinner, are rejecting this night; that Jesus whom you refuse, it may be, in your heart of hearts this moment, that Saviour in whose

face you see no beauty to desire Him, a root out of a dry ground, without form or comeliness, despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; you hide your face from Him; He was despised and you esteemed Him not, though He was the bearer of our griefs and our sorrows. And it will be He, it will be that same Jesus. Oh think of that, beloved friends. There will be the power of God in destruction, the power of God in judgment.

This world has often seen the power of God in judgment. Was it not so in the deluge? Was it not so when the springs of the earth beneath and the windows of heaven above were opened, death had no mandate to stay its force, but reigned triumphant round and round the world. Was not that the power of God to destruction? And the coming day will be His power in destruction and in judgment; but now, blessed be His name, and thank God for it, in the marvels of His grace, now He is sending forth through the silver trumpet of His gospel, the tidings of the power of God to what? The power of God to Salvation. I do long to interest your hearts in it. We find here power connected with salvation—the Lord be praised for it. We could all connect power with judgment, with destruction, but how blessed to connect it with salvation. “It is the power of God unto salvation,” the power of

God to set a poor, wretched, hell-bound slave of Satan free from his sins and misery, the power of God to wash your soul, sinner, from all its crimson stains to-night, the power of God unto salvation to extricate you, to deliver you, to take you out of that bondage, to set you free from that thralldom, to take away the slavery from off your conscience, to take away the fear of death. Yes, there is upon the hearts of men, if they are exercised in conscience, the fear of death. I remember well myself when I was afraid of death, when I could not look at death. And I know right well it is so, for I see strong men who are afraid to look at death, they do not like to see death, would go any distance rather than see a man dead, rather than see all that is left when the last great enemy has done his awful work. I know people cannot bear to look at it; they shrink from it. Why? What is the reason? There is a terror and fear no doubt, but why? To look into sightless eyes, to see a cold marble brow, and a tongue silenced for ever, what is there in that? Nothing in the mere physical part of it; but it is this—“*after death the judgment.*” And men and women in their consciences know that. You know perfectly well, however the devil may try to steel that poor heart of yours, however he may try to rock you to sleep in his awful cradle, you know there is a here-

after, you know there is a day of reckoning, you know the moment is coming when everything will be brought to light, every secret thing brought out, when God will hold high inquest. Oh! you know that. There are lucid moments of conscience in the hearts of men, and they fear and quake as they think of eternity. Yes, this is true, even though they go to what just suits their will, and their passion, and their pleasure, and their lusts, they give themselves over to the devil to lull them with his soporifics and drug them with his drams; they give themselves over to the devil because they wish to have the world and its pleasures and the lusts of their own heart, but for all that, they have wretched moments, moments of misery—may God grant such may come upon some of your consciences here to-night, these waking moments.

There are waking moments, when man suddenly, as it were, wakes up to this; yes, eternity, hereafter; there is a hereafter, there is a day of reckoning coming, there is a moment at hand when God will have something to say, when I shall have to give account of myself to God, when I shall have to stand before God. "As I live, saith Jehovah, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." Such are the thoughts of these moments, friends. These are the lucid intervals in the moral mad-

ness that men are found in, lucid intervals when conscience asserts its prerogatives in men. Oh, how solemn to think of it; as one looks at the stream of human beings passing along, where, oh where, are they going? I confess to you, I never walk the streets of this great city without feeling a heavy depression over my heart as the multitude passes before my eyes, the millions of this great London with its sins and sorrows. Where are they all going to? What is to be the end, the issue of it all? What will eternity be for all these men and women? What road are they travelling? What will be the goal of all this? Where will they be found? Ah! beloved friends, it is very easy to trifle, but I do not believe that any person in his sound, calm mind as men even—I do not believe for one moment that any man is such a fool as to believe that when a man dies, he just dies like a brute-beast, that he dies like a dog, and there is the end of him.

I know perfectly well people may adopt such views, in order to steel their hearts, and in order to get over the uneasy convictions of conscience, but I believe there is in the bosom of man a conviction which is implanted there, and which asserts itself. There is a day of reckoning coming, there is another time at hand, there is a day of judgment impending, a day of assize, when

God will bring everything into light, the secrets of hearts, the counsels of hearts, the things that are hidden there in your hearts, men and women, the secret things you have buried, as you think, deep down there, that you think nobody knows ; God will bring every secret thing out, He will make manifest all the hidden things of darkness.

But now, beloved friends, thank God that while that day still tarries, there is at this present moment a power of God unto salvation, and that the gospel is God's power to set persons free from their sins, to give them the knowledge of the forgiveness of their sins, and to know this as a present reality, the purging of their consciences from every spot and stain of sin now, so that they can have and enjoy the forgiveness of their sins, have peace with God now in their souls, and have heaven begun now on earth. The gospel is indeed "the power of God unto salvation."

Now mark this other word a moment here. To whom is it the power of God ? Who are they for whom this gospel is intended ? Is not that a very interesting subject for all our hearts ? Who, again let me inquire ? How can I get it ? says one. I would give everything to get it, says another. You cannot get it for anything. The wealth of empires, the wealth of worlds, would not buy it. No money on earth could purchase

it, it is priceless, as far as value is concerned, nothing in that way can secure it. I know very well God is pleased to raise that question in hearts, Whom is this for? how does this reach a sinner? You say to me, You have told us of God's power to salvation, you have told us God has got but one power to reach poor, wretched, lost men, one power, and that is His gospel; that His gospel can come down to where we are in our misery and ruin and lost estate, and reach us there, and take us out of it, but how are we to get this? Now listen to the word a moment, a deeply interesting and most precious word it is. "It is the power of God unto salvation"—to whom?

I remember when I was young I was taught, and I suppose most people here to-night were taught in their youth, beloved friends, that which I know I found clinging very hard to my poor, wretched heart many a day afterward; I was indoctrinated, trained, taught, educated in the idea, that if I conducted myself properly, if I was a good child, God would love me. There never was a more thorough denial of the gospel of the grace of God than that. And, beloved friends, look at the form that has taken. It may seem a very small thing in the nursery to have been taught at one's mother's knee and to have been trained up in that kind

of thing, but the strength of early impressions is marvellous, it is wonderful what a hold they have over the heart, and how long they last. In proof look at the religious shape, the theological shape, that doctrine has taken, look what that simple instruction, false as it is in root and principle, has developed into in theology and religion and so-called christian teaching, that a poor sinner is so to comport himself, so to carry himself in his conduct and in his ways, as to secure the love and goodness of God. And that idea, beloved friends, is spread abroad on every hand, and it is that which a great many people are really affected by, so that they refer to their conduct for their acceptance and for their interest in Christ. And I feel assured there are some here to-night who are in that condition.

A person told me not many days ago, whom I believe to be really safe, through the precious blood of Christ, that they were very happy in the knowledge of Christ's salvation when they were walking well, but that they were exceedingly uncertain about their soul's salvation when they were walking badly. Well now, if they had said they were very happy in communion and fellowship with God when they were walking well, and that they had lost communion and lost the sense of His presence when they were walking

ill, they would have said what was quite true and right. But to say they had lost the sense of their acceptance, that they were not sure that their souls were saved when they were walking badly, but they were sure their souls were saved when they were walking well, was to attribute the salvation of their souls in some wise to their conduct. Now this is utterly false, beloved friends, and a perversion of God's gospel, it is a destructive denial of the truth of God, and I will say, never was there a more destructive denial than this.

Observe how the truth is here in a nutshell. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, not to every one that merits it, not to every one that makes good a title to it, but "to every one that believeth." Is there any priority in order? There is; and most precious and beautiful is the priority in order—"to the Jew first," and then to the Greek, but the principle of blessing is the same for both. The ground upon which a Jew receives eternal life through the Lord Jesus Christ and forgiveness of his sins to-day, is the same as that upon which the Gentile receives eternal life and the forgiveness of his sins. There is not one way of salvation for the Jew and another for the Gentile. The testimony goes to the Jew first, and rightly, because that was the order of God's ways; the Jew first in the order

of testimony, and the Gentile afterwards; but the ground or basis of blessing is the same. And in this epistle the apostle brings home the great double ground upon which this dealing of God with men, whether Jews or Gentiles, in this world, takes place, he looks at all men in the same common plight, all guilty sinners before God, guilty and alive in their sins before God, short of the glory of God, covered all over with filth and corruption, and he says, There is "no difference." He looks at the Jew, and he says, as it were, You belong to the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, your nationality is all right, it is true Jewish blood you have in your veins, like Saul of Tarsus it may be, a Jew both on father's and mother's side, we might say not a drop of Gentile blood in your veins; and then he, as it were, looks at the Gentile, and he says, "There is no difference," all are alike before God; "They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no not one." Though the Jew has marvellous privileges as belonging to that ancient people, beloved for the fathers' sakes, still, morally before God, there is no difference between Jew and Gentile. And, beloved friends, how blessed this is. There is this wonderful "no difference" principle—both guilty, both in their sins.

Now look at the other for a moment. In

chapter x., when he speaks again of Jew and Gentile, there is a magnificent unfolding of God's grace. He says there is no difference in their own estate between Jew and Gentile, they are both guilty and both polluted in their sins; but he goes to the divine side, and says, There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. Oh, how blessed to think of Him carrying that "no difference" principle up to the heart of God! He carries it down to my corruption, and He carries it up to the throne of God in the heavens. He brings that "no difference" principle to put us all in one common plight of guilt; and He brings that "no difference" principle to wake up our hearts in confidence; "The same Lord over all is rich"—it is not a little bit of mercy, a little bit of salvation, a little trickling bit of love and forgiveness, but "rich" (oh that you might get the sense of it); "the same Lord over all is *rich* unto all that call upon him"—how simple that is—"for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Have you ever called upon Him? Have you ever shut yourself up in your own room, in the dire distress of your heart, with the thought of the judgment day that is coming, with the thought of your sins, both staring you in the face, and you having to meet God, have

you ever thus shut yourself up to call upon that name ? “ Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” “ Whosoever,” high or low, rich or poor, black or white, good or bad, great sinner or little sinner, “ whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Oh, beloved friends, how blessed that gospel is which comes down like that to where we are ? How blessed is the power of God unto salvation that meets us just as we are ! It is God’s power unto salvation to every one that believeth ; and you know calling upon the name of the Lord is believing. “ How shall they call on him of whom they have not heard ? and how shall they hear without a preacher ? and how shall they preach except they be sent ?” And, thank God, He has sent and does send out preachers of His grace. Thank God, He also says of those He sends, “ How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace ;” they are as beautiful, says God, in my eyes as the Messiah’s ; for it is the very passage that is referred to Messiah in Isaiah ; in chapter lii., speaking of Him as the introducer of blessing to His people Israel, it says, “ How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace ; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation ; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth.” And in the New

Testament, These very words that are applied to that blessed One are applied to the ones whom He has sent as the messengers of His heart and His love to a world lying steeped in its iniquity and in its sins, to bless them by His gospel, "which is his power unto salvation unto every one that believeth." Oh, beloved friends, may the Lord in wonderful grace give your hearts to seize hold of the preciousness of this rich and great salvation of God to-night. Have you found it? that is the question. Do you desire to have it? Should you like to have the forgiveness of your sins? Should you like to have that weight from off your conscience and that burden from off your soul? You may say, I do not know how to get it; but should you like to have it? Oh, believe me, that is the way God puts it; the devil tries to get you to connect it with *power* in you, but God has connected it with *will*. Think of the Lord, how He wept over the city; oh, how touching! Bear with me a moment, if I am importunate with earnestness of heart, beloved friends. I look at the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Missionary, Servant and Prophet in the midst of Israel, the Messiah of that people, beloved for the fathers' sakes; when He was down here upon earth, and came to the city, it is said, "When he beheld the city, he wept over it." To look upon it thus, that city as it were, broke the heart of Jesus. "He

wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy day"—and this may be just "thy day," sinner, to-night—"the things that belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes." Oh, how solemn those words! Ah! says the Saviour, it is too late now, the day is past, the hours are fled, too late now; oh, if thou hadst only known in thy day! Think of it, beloved friends, His heart as it were broken, when He surveyed the condition of His people, the state of the nation. "If thou hadst known"—known what? "The things that belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes."

Beloved friends, I would plead with you earnestly to-night: I would plead with you affectionately. You have to-night; you have this moment. Do you desire to be saved? If you are not saved, will you come and be saved to-night? Come and trust that living, loving, precious Saviour to-night. Come and cast yourself upon the fulness of that redeeming love to night; come now. Yea, come and listen to His own words. Hearken, He pleads with you as He entreats you to come, as He says to you, "Come." How often those words were upon His lips! How often He said, "Come;" as He stood in the highways and byeways of this world: "Come, come." And ere the books of this precious scripture were closed, ere the last

words of revelation and inspiration passed from the vessels, you remember well what expression that word gives to that loving longing in the heart of Jesus when you read those precious words in Revelation xxi., "The Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come;" and then, because the church always has the heart of Christ, though, alas! some of His people have not, but the bride has the heart of the Bridegroom, she turns in the affection of the Bridegroom's heart to a poor, thirsty, dying, starving, perishing world, and she says, as it were, Is there one thirsty soul here, let him come, "let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Will you be that one to-night? Come now; if you have never come before, come to-night; come and trust Him; come and be a receiver at His hands; come and hear the words of life from His own lips this night; come and cast yourself upon that precious Saviour and that finished work. I plead with you earnestly and affectionately. It may be the last opportunity you may ever have; you may never hear it again. Before another Lord's day, before another morn comes round, before another hour, it may be all passed away, and the life that now beats within your breast may be fled; therefore I plead with you earnestly, affectionately, and urgently, and entreat you to

32 THE POWER OF THE GLAD TIDINGS.

come ; come now ; come this night ; through
Jesus Christ our Lord.

“ Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream ;
All the fitness He requireth
Is that you have need of Him.”



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PILATE'S THREE QUESTIONS.

MATTHEW XXVII. 21-23.



THE chapter from which these verses are taken records the details of the blessed Lord's trial before Pilate. Who was this Pilate? First, he was the Roman governor of Judea, said to be a man that exercised excessive cruelty during all the time of his administration; this seems to be borne out by Luke xiii. 1. Next, this Pilate was a man who had no *special* or *peculiar* animosity to the blessed Lord; on the contrary, he had a very distinct sense of his innocence, and sought to give effect to it by releasing Him. According to Pilate's wife, the Lord Jesus was "that just man;" according to Pilate himself, Jesus was not only "this just person," but was declared to be One in whom no fault was found. But Pilate had a large stake in the world of his day, and besides he was Cæsar's friend; if he could have secured the one and maintained the other, he would have let the blessed One free; but, failing this, he casts in his lot with the rejecters and murderers of Jesus. What a picture of many a

one in the present day ! Friends, is it a picture of you ? It is impossible to take sides with Christ and the world. " No man can serve two masters." Which is your master, Christ or the world ?

The three solemn questions which he puts to the Jews respecting Jesus, are :—

1. " Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you ?"

2. " What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ ?"

3. " What evil hath he done ?"

Now with respect to the first question, it may be well to state that it was, we believe, a custom among the Jews at the time of the passover to have a prisoner set free, in token or commemoration of the great deliverance which Jehovah had wrought for them. Pilate, knowing this, seized the opportunity as a door of escape for himself in his miserable dilemma. Alas ! what is man not capable of ? But if his question exposes himself, and the agonies of a conscience in its unrest, it also fully manifests the state of Israel and that of all men morally. It brought out into the full blaze of light *man's choice*. Mark it well, the Jews have set before them the murderer Barabbas, and the spotless, holy Jesus ; Barabbas means son of Abba ! Was the devil mocking them with the name ? This man was the display of satanic power in a twofold way : first, as a

murderer (see John viii. 44), and next as a rebel against the very authority that Pilate was appointed to vindicate and uphold. The Jews loved Barabbas as they hated Jesus. They choose Barabbas—"Not this man but Barabbas." Here, then, is the solemn representation of the world's choice: a rejected Saviour tests all men. Men and brethren, suffer me to appeal to you as to where you stand with respect to this solemn test. What is Christ to you? Have you bowed in your sins and misery and owned Him as your Saviour and your Lord? Have you found in the blood of His cross a *discharge from all the guilt of your sins*, and the condemnation you are exposed to in consequence? Have you seen, further, in that blood, His blood, your *peace with God*, made once and for ever? Be assured that *pardon* and *peace* are both to be found there, and *only there*. He is the peace, He made the peace, He preached peace. Men and brethren, have you got it?

Further, this question of Pilate, which manifested the condition of Israel, sets forth, as it were, in type the *moral state of man*—man's choice of sin and Satan, rather than good and Christ. Deeply solemn is the fact that man, as such, has no heart for God, he prefers his lust, his vanity, his pleasure even, to the Christ of God. "When we shall see him, there is *no beauty that we should desire him*. He is *despised* and *rejected* of men." "Away with this man, and

release unto us Barabbas." These are the prophetic and historic declarations of God as to this fact, that the one thing that is strong in the world, and in man's heart, is *enmity against Christ*.

Further, observe, friends, how this choice was "*their will*." (Luke xxiii. 35.) Oh what words! Sinner, in your sins and nature, guilty and away from God this night, behold here the picture of yourself, your *will* against Christ, your *choice* made, anything or any one but Him. Hearken, I beseech of you, to the words of the Lord Jesus in respect of all this, as recorded in the Gospel of Luke, He says to the women who followed Him with bewailing and lamentation, the fruit merely of natural feeling excited by affecting circumstances: "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." Deeply solemn words! And why weep? Because days of weeping were coming, when it should be said to the mountains, "Fall on us, and to the hills, Cover us!" Oh think of this! "Where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?" How truly has it been said, that man rejects the green tree, and God rejects the dry!

For Israel *then* life was there in very truth, in the Person of Jesus the Son of God, and they refused it, and are given up in consequence; but *now* all is found, and *only* found, in a dead and risen Christ. Oh, may God give you to weigh

and ponder these momentous realities in His presence, as I once more put the question to your conscience, What is *your* choice?

Second question. Having made their choice, Pilate again inquires of them with respect to the One whom they had rejected; "What shall I do with Jesus, which is called Christ?" It suggests to the mind the thought of the blessed One being, as it were, in the way. How can He be got rid of? How disposed of? Harken to their cry: "Let him be crucified!" They thus constitute themselves the "murderers" of the "Just One;" and when the actual moment had arrived, He was nailed to the cross by wicked hands. The cross is thus the expression of the world's united hatred of the Christ of God. "The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against Jehovah, and against his Christ." All classes and conditions of men were represented in this: the debauched and bloody Herod; the cunning, world-loving Pilate; the idolatrous Gentiles; the religious people of Israel. Men and brethren, you and I were represented there, we have a nature and hearts of like stuff with those who nailed the Saviour on the tree; in that motley confederacy, we can easily see ourselves; the same blood is ours, the same wicked hearts and hands, the same alienation and enmity and pride; and, in that awful cry which man howled out in the hatred of all that

was and because it was good, "Crucify him, crucify him," our voices joined. How solemn to reflect on this, ponder it well, oh sinner! you that still and *now reject* and refuse God's great salvation. Think, oh think, of that day that is coming, when God will demand of the world, What have you done with my Son? If you die in your sins, unsaved, what answer will you give to that question? If the Lord Jesus comes for His own, and you are left behind, what will you do, where shall you appear?

But observe this, beloved friends, that whilst man with wicked hands nailed the Saviour to the cross; we can, through grace, announce to you the blessed news, that there, too, we, through faith, can see *nailed* by God every demand and claim that was "against us"—that was "contrary to us" (Col. ii. 14); there, too, the whole array of principalities and powers was spoiled, a shew made of them openly, the blessed One triumphing over them; there, too, faith can see the end of man judicially before God: verily, it would be impossible to overrate the magnitude of the cross, looked at from either the divine or human side.

Now we come to Pilate's third question: namely, "What evil hath he done?" Oh think of all the value of this monosyllable "He"! The brightness of the Father's glory and the expression of His substance! It is of Him, in the

blessedness of His Person, in the grace and goodness of all His ways, that all scripture testifies; His name runs like a golden thread throughout the divine record: we may, by faith, hear the whisper of that name in Eden; see, by faith, its revelation in promise, and its type in sacrifice; hear again the harp of prophecy, as it sweetly wafts along the ages the preciousness of that name! Men and brethren, what think ye of Christ? How do you meet the challenge of the Roman governor? How did the men of that day meet it? Why, with more clamorous demands, with louder voice, "they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified!" And Pilate, conscience-blunted, worldly-minded, unrighteous Pilate, in the presence of the tumult of those who hated Jesus for His goodness, delivered to be crucified Him whom he there and then confessed to be "this just person." Be assured of it, the test of every one and everything is Christ. The solemn word of "all the people," the terrible, awful words, "His blood be upon us and upon our children," made them guilty of the blood of Jesus; and they are to this day the abiding witnesses of their sin and hatred of Him who was nothing but goodness.

Then the soldiers, in derision, and with all that brutal violence which became them as heathens, and common, heartless executioners, do that which shall be rendered to Him in glory by the

Gentiles in praise and worship—and Jesus, patient, spotless One, goes through it all in meek submission, bears it all in perfect obedience to His Father. He felt it all, while enduring it all ; but there was a far deeper and a more terrible anguish than all the malice of God-hating men. It is characteristic of the Gospel of Matthew to bring out into the foreground the dishonour heaped upon the Lord, as well as the insults offered to Him ; while Mark gives prominence to the forsaking of God. It is this last none can fathom, as another has most tenderly and blessedly expressed it : “ *His heart, His soul—the vessel of a divine love—could alone go deeper than the bottom of that abyss which sin had opened for man, to bring up those who lay there, after He had endured its pain in His own soul. A heart that had been ever faithful was forsaken of God. Where sin had brought man, love brought the Lord ; but with a nature and an apprehension in which there was no distance, no separation, so that it should be felt in all its fulness. No one but He who was in that place could fathom or feel it. It is too wonderful a spectacle to see the one righteous man in the world declare at the end of His life He was forsaken of God. But thus it was He glorified Him as none else could have done it, and where none but He could have done it—made sin, in the presence of God as such, with no veil to hide, no mercy to cover or bear it*”

with 'a worm and no man' before the eyes of men, He had to bear the forsaking of the God in whom He trusted."

Oh friends, men and brethren, what think ye of this? Here is solid resting ground for sinners, guilty and lost. Here, where hatred against love in God was manifested, the perfect love of God, doing for him that hated both God and Christ that which condemned the hatred, and blotted out for ever the sin which was the expression of it. Here, where every attribute of God was vindicated and upheld, the soul believing finds peace and rest.

Let me intreat of you this night to look to Jesus, Jesus who *was crucified*, who *is risen and glorified*, and having in His Person, as a Man in heaven, the marks He received in His body on the tree; in whose once marred visage now shines all the glory of God. The united voice of all time says, Look to Jesus! Earth, with its sins and sorrows, says, Look to Jesus! The ever-opening grave says, Look to Jesus! Hell, with its miseries, and heaven, with its glories, both say, Look to Jesus! He is coming—coming quickly! Soon His voice of mercy shall be heard no more. Oh! then, to-day, while it is called to-day, harden not your hearts; hear His voice now in all its blessedness and in all its love, sounding it may be for the last time in your ears—"Look unto me and be ye saved, all

the ends of the earth, for I am God and none else." But if you still refuse and still reject, I warn you a time may be at hand when, in the solitary hour of death, no human voice shall be heard, this proffered grace of God in His preached gospel will be revived in your memory and sound in your soul with the terrible, awful conviction—Too late ! Too late !



THE FINISHED WORK.

“I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”—JOHN xvii. 4.

“It is finished.”—JOHN xix. 30.

BOTH these expressions, beloved friends, relate to the same transcendent subject. There is just this difference between them, that in chapter xvii., the blessed One is anticipating the completeness of all that was about to be accomplished. He is looking forward to the work of the cross, the bearing of the judgment, the drinking of the cup of wrath, the enduring of the forsaking of God, the bearing of His people's sins in His own body on the tree; He looks at it all as having been passed through by Himself, ere it actually was done; He looks at it as done, as He was entitled to do, for He knew what was before Him, what He had undertaken; He is standing, as it were, in resurrection, and looking back, and He utters these precious, blessed words into His Father's ears; verily there was no other ear that could appreciate that utterance, it was only God that

could measure all that was conveyed in these precious words of Jesus, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." And then, when the *history* of this great reality had come out in all its solemnity, and the anticipation of it had passed into the literality of the fact, even when He was on the cross, as soon as He had drunken that dreadful cup that no one could drink but Himself, when He had passed through everything in order that no part of scripture should be unfulfilled, not merely that all the will of God might be done, but that the whole word of God might be maintained and fulfilled to the very letter; He said, "I thirst," and they took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it to His lips, and when He had received the vinegar, He said, "It is finished." So that what He had anticipated in chapter xvii. passes into actual fact in chapter xix., "It is finished." He used one word in the language in which He spoke, translated into three words in our Bibles, but one word passed from His blessed lips; oh, how expressive of everything (and that is the comfort of it for our souls to-night) that establishes God's glory, and lays the basis for our everlasting security and blessing.

Now let me try and interest your hearts in all those things that lie around these utterances of our Lord Jesus Christ. And, first of all, observe

that in John xvii., the history of man as a responsible being down here upon earth is regarded as very nearly over: that history of responsibility, with all its failure, all its shortcomings, all its utter unsuitability to God, was drawing to a close, there had been really but one man, Adam, and he could never be made suitable to God. Do you believe that, beloved friends? It was impossible to make the first man suitable to God, he had been tried, let me say; Who tried him? God tried him. There is one great piece of intense ignorance and folly that men's minds are willing to hold fast to, and that is that men are being tried now. It is all false, beloved friends. God is not testing man now, He is not trying man now. As long as God was dealing with him as a responsible being down here in the world, God was testing him. It was not a question then of salvation. The salvation of perishing sinners and the trial of responsible men are two distinct subjects, which you can never make one and the same thing; there is no identity between the two; more than that, the salvation of perishing sinners according to God's own mind and heart was after the trial of responsible man. It was when man had been tested, as he was tested, in every conceivable shape and form, under every kind of administration and dealing of God. There had

been no kind of testing that God had not subjected the creature to. Everything had been put in requisition by God Himself, so as to bring out the effect of the test. The last trial that man was subjected to was this, that God in lowly grace, in the Person of Jesus, was here amongst men. And though, thank God, there is no subject that is more precious to the heart of the Christian than to think of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ upon earth, to trace those precious footsteps in all their ways of mercy, and goodness, and love, the footprints which He has left, as it were, upon the desert sands of this poor world, to trace the mercy that was imprinted upon this howling wilderness in every footfall of that blessed One, yet remember this, that Christ, as down here in the world in all His grace, and preciousness, and goodness, and mercy, and tenderness, and kindness, only brought out the vileness and reprobate nature of men as represented by that one Adam, the first Adam; for there had been only one man before God as a representative, and that was Adam. And the very mercy, goodness, grace and kindness of Jesus as man down here, God revealed in lowly grace, only elicited this, that there was not the smallest appreciation of the goodness that was not in any human heart, but which was presented so blessedly in the path of Jesus. And that is what makes the life of Christ

on earth the most solemn test of man in every part of his life.

I was speaking last Lord's day evening how that came out in Pilate's questions. His own conscience was uneasy, Pilate would have given worlds to have let Jesus go free ; if he could have kept his position in the world, he would have liberated that blessed man : see how Pilate was tested ; what tested him ? Jesus. What tested the Jews ? Jesus. It was He who tested every class of men. There never had been such a test as He. It has been said, and said truly, that a living Christ on earth is a testing Christ. Oh, beloved friends, we cannot have that pressed too much upon our thoughts. They spat upon Him, they rejected Him, they refused Him, they hated Him, they scorned Him, they cast Him out, they nailed Him up to a gibbet ; you did it, I did it, all classes of men did it ; we were all represented there. Around the cross were the representatives of all classes of man ; there you and I were, there our ruthless hands nailed that precious One ; we spat in His face, we said, "Not this man, but Barabbas ;" we refused Him. And that was what Christ brought out and elicited by His perfections. I do not know anything more solemn than to think that the goodness, the absolute perfectness of Jesus, called out the vileness of man's heart. "For my love," He says, "they

gave me hatred ;” “ they hated me without a cause ;” you will find amongst men, that taking man with man, there is some sort of appreciation, even in men who have not got goodness themselves, of goodness when they see it in another ; but men did not appreciate the goodness that shone in Jesus.

Now if you look at John xvii., there is a little word there that seems very simple, but how much is conveyed in it ! Observe the attitude of the Lord Jesus in John xvii. ? “ He lifted up his eyes to heaven.” Do you think that is a meaningless expression ? What did it mean ? All is over here on earth ; it is all over with man as man ; man is ruined ; the first man Adam involved the whole race in the ruin of his fall, and involves the inheritance that was set under him vanity as the result of his fall. And look abroad upon the whole face of the earth at this present moment, and what do you find ? A groaning creation. What is the reason of it ; why should this earth groan ? It was subjected as an inheritance under the headship of the first Adam. If I look at the cross, I see the utter alienation of man’s heart from God ; and if I look over the face of this whole world, there is not a groan that goes out of it (and God knows it is a place out of which groans are continually going, and on which tears are continually falling) which

does not distinctly declare man's ruin. Jesus is not insensible to the groans of a groaning creation, and in that coming day,

“He'll bid the whole creation smile,
And hush its groan.”

Do you think Christ is insensible to its groaning now? Think of what it was to Him as His eyes looked over the whole thing. There was not in it a single bright spot. “He lifted up his eyes to heaven,” as much as to say, All hope must come from there now; all here is closed, the inheritance defiled; man a ruin. Some way or another, there is something attractive to people about ruins; they like to look at ruins; but think of this ruin! And look at the attitude of Jesus; “He lifted up his eyes to heaven,” and anticipating the work He was about to finish, He says, “I have glorified thee;” that is the first thing. He says to the Father, You were outraged in the scene of your own creation; man, the creature of your hand, the noblest structure of your creative power, outraged you in the scene that was rolled from the Creator's hands; I have glorified you, I have vindicated you in every righteous, holy claim on the earth, “I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”

Now look for a moment at two or three things in connection with Jesus taking this place here,

because it is most precious for our souls as we have to do with Him as a Saviour. First of all, speaking of Him now as a man down here upon earth, He was the only one that perfectly met the whole heart of God. What a wonderful thing for our souls to think that all the purposes, all the thoughts, all the desires, all the longings of the heart of God in a man were perfectly met by Jesus. There was one Man, very God, but very man, as truly a man as He was verily "God over all, blessed for ever," this blessed One as man down here upon earth, perfectly met every thought, every desire, every longing of the heart of God. I am not speaking of the relationship in which He was as the eternal Son ever in the Father's bosom, but of His having become a man. You remember that wonderful, beauteous anthem which was sung by the angels when He was born as a babe, and touched our nature, so to speak, in its very weakest point; He did not come out like Adam, a full-grown man from the hand of God, but He passed through all the stages of human life here, He was born a babe, and wrapped in swaddling clothes, laid in a manger in all the lowliness and all the weakness of the circumstances in which men were found down here. And you remember what that anthem was, those notes which reached up to heaven, "Glory to God in the highest." "I have glorified thee on

the earth," connect the beginning of His life with the end of it, if you please here. "Glory to God in the highest," said the heavenly host, "and on earth peace, good pleasure in men." Why? Because His Son had become a man; the complacency of God in the poor race as expressed by that blessed One becoming a man down here "good pleasure in man." And although peace was not made good at that moment, and it awaited the cross to give it a foundation, yet how precious it is to see that the state of blessing was born in the birth of the wonderful child, that wonderful child, wonderful God, wonderful man! Though the making it good awaited the cross, yet there was the whole thing presented in His own blessed Person who was to give it accomplishment in the fulness of time, so much so, that it could be said, "Glory to God in the highest"—on earth, poor earth, the scene of carnage and war and bloodshed—"on earth peace, good pleasure in man." Christ perfectly met every thought of the heart of God.

But there is another thing. He Himself, the source of all the blessing, was tested and tried. I think it is an immense comfort to be able to say to people, Do you know that the Saviour who came from heaven, who came as the sent One of God, as the expression of the Father's heart for poor, wretched, perishing sinners in

this world, was tried here by everything. Tell me one single thing that Jesus was not tried by. You remember how in that beautiful prophecy of Isaiah, God says to Israel, "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a *tried* stone." He was tried by men, tried by His disciples, tried by the circumstances of the world; Satan tried Him, He was tested in every conceivable way. Now just think of those things, and I will shew you the preciousness of that when we come to look at the completeness of the work. The One who did the work was the One that met the heart of God. And the One that met the heart of God was tested Himself in every conceivable shape and form, to bring out the perfectness that was found in Him. Just as when Adam was tested it brought out his ruin; when Jesus was tested it brought out His perfectness. He was the second Man, because He was to displace the first. He was both the second Man and the last Adam. Looking back, He was the second Man, for He was about to displace the history of the first. Looking forward, He was the last Adam, for there was to be no other form of man but that Man in His blessed, victorious, glorious character. That is the new pattern of man and the new place of man when Jesus rose from the dead, and in that sense He is the last Adam. He was the second Man in order to sweep out in

judgment (and through bearing it Himself), and to remove from the holy eye of God, the first man, the author of ruin and misery. And mark, beloved brethren, in order to shew you the completeness of His work, He was about to remove that offending thing from that holy eye. Think of the holy eye of God! Think of the completeness of the work that met the holy eye of God. He was about to remove in righteousness that offending thing that had been tested and brought out in all its ruin, He was about to remove that completely from God's holy eye in righteousness, through bearing the judgment.

There was another thing. In the glory of His Person, He had divine rights. Did not everything belong to Him here? Have you ever thought of that little word they said when He was born? It is wonderful how the preciousness of the words of scripture escape our thoughts. "Where is he that is *born king of the Jews?*" What is the meaning of that? That that glory pertained to Him in right of His Person. I quite admit it was an earthly glory, pertaining to Israel as an earthly people. It was the very title that was put upon His cross in the three great languages of the then known world, Greek, Hebrew and Latin. But when the inquiry was made about Him at His birth, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews?" why everything

belonged to Him in virtue of His divine rights, and Person, and glories; it was all His, He was the true Messiah.

But mark, when He came here, He was entirely dependent upon God for everything, and entirely subject to God in everything, He trusted God in everything; and more than that, He surrendered everything; it was all His, and He gave it all up. Look at these precious characteristics of Him who came to be the Saviour. See what was displayed in His Person before you come to the work at all. Because that work, precious and full as it is, blessed and substantial ground and foundation for our souls before God, that work I say has all the permanence, and all the blessedness and all the preciousness, and all the value of the Person that did it. I cannot separate His work from the Person that did it; I cannot separate that Person from His work. He was competent to meet the heart of God; He was tested here before men, and His perfectness came out; He owned everything, and He gave it all up; in the world that His own hands had made He was the dependent Man; cast upon God in everything, perfect in subjection, perfect in trust, and perfect in surrender; but not a single creature did He bring by that life of perfectness to stand in that position before God, not one. On the contrary, the whole state and condition of man's

heart was only brought out in all its native distance, and alienation, and darkness before God. The very goodness of Jesus displayed, and manifested, and exposed the vileness of man.

And then, when we come to the cross (for I pass over the intervening part of that precious life), and when we look at this utterance in John xix., which declares the history of the finished work, just think of all that is summed up in that. You get the sufferings of Jesus brought out in the other gospels: His sufferings as man in Luke, His sufferings as the victim in Matthew, and all the enmity and hatred of the Jewish people towards Him right on to His death. But John does not throw into prominence the sufferings of the Man, nor the hatred of His own people and all their opposition to Him, but what John delights to shew us is how the One that was his beloved, carried Himself in all the terrible moments of pressure through which He passed. Truly it is a divine Person who is presented all through the gospel, yet also John lingers in affection as he presents to faith the conduct, the mind, the character of that blessed One who was dear to his heart. And look at it here. He took the vinegar, and when He had taken the vinegar, everything being accomplished, the whole thing gone through, the cup of wrath having been drained to its dregs, He said, "It is

finished." Now allow me to ask you, Have you ever sat down before God in the quietness of your own room and put the question to your own heart, What is the meaning of that, "It is finished"? It is a word we frequently hear; people speak of the finished work of Jesus, the finished work of the cross, what does it mean? Let us look simply at those words. What is the meaning of "it"? "It"—what?

First of all, God's glory is secured. Oh, what a thing for your heart as a poor sinner! Because, when the iron of conviction gets into your soul, you know you have to do with God, and there is a moment coming when every man (mark the word) shall give an account of himself to God. Whom did you sin against? Whose laws have you trampled on? Whose word have you cast behind your back? Whose name have you refused, and perhaps blasphemed and despised? Whom have you offended? Men? No; God. O sinner, unforgiven sinner, you that are not ready to meet God, it is God you have to meet. It is not death; no, nor even is it judgment. I believe the heart of man is of that stuff that the devil can even steel it in its blindness and darkness against death and judgment. A story is told of one who was notorious in the annals of crime, and who was a perfect terror in his day, a fearless man himself, but dreaded and feared by every

one else; this man was tried and condemned for murder, and as he lay in his condemned cell awaiting the moment of execution, there was no apparent sense of the condition he was in till the night previous to his execution. But that night he walked his cell with a restless step, up and down, as the hours flew by as it were with lightning wings, and for the first time in his life that man seemed to be awaked to something like the sense of fear. And when the warders said to him, "You afraid? Why, we thought you feared nothing, neither man, nor devil, nor hell, nor judgment, nor eternity, nor anything, that you were steeled against it all; what are you afraid of now?" He replied, "It is not death I am afraid of; do not think that; but at eight o'clock to-morrow morning I have to meet God." Oh, beloved hearers, it is that God you have to meet; it is to God you will have to give an account of yourself; it is God you will have to stand before; it is to God you will have to bow your knee? "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then," says the Holy Ghost in the New Testament, "every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

And oh! beloved, think how blessed it is that just as that is the responsibility of the sinner, just as that is the thing that presses upon the

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sinner, so here, when I look upon this precious finished work of Jesus, there is what I get in that little word "it"—simple word, but oh how comprehensive, how full, how perfect!—I get the claims of a holy God met, the One that was outraged by man's sin glorified, God glorified, and so glorified as He never could have been, even if the whole race of mankind were consigned to the depths of an undying hell, which was the rightful due of men—God glorified on that cross, glorified by the sinless One, glorified by His bearing the judgment, even that man who never did anything wrong, glorified by the spotless man there. As that poor thief said, he who was so vile, he who was so bad that the world was getting rid of him, a malefactor, even he turns to Jesus and says, There is perfection, you have done nothing amiss, despised by men, but you are a king, mocked now with a crown of thorns and a purple robe, nailed to a gibbet like a malefactor in the place of shame and scorn, but you have a kingdom, and you have a crown, and the moment is coming when you will be king; Lord, let me wrap myself in the eternal perfections of the spotless Man hanging upon that cross. And, beloved friends, there is what God's salvation is—a poor thief in the very moment of death, at the very extremity of human life, turns to that spotless One who was bearing the judgment of a holy God due to

sin, and says, as it were, of Jesus, *There is perfection*, let me wrap myself in the folds of that eternal perfection. And mark the answer of Jesus to that. What did He say to that poor, wretched creature? unintelligent as he was, not the faintest ray of human hope shining on that poor, wretched man's soul, but Christ was everything to him; he did not know much about Christ, but he clung to Christ, he trusted Christ, he leaned on Christ; he could say nothing good of himself, nay, rather he condemned himself, but he was all right in confidence and trust; his soul clings to that mighty Saviour. And how does Jesus answer him? "Verily I say unto thee, This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." That is the meaning of the cross; that is the meaning of those words, "It is finished;" that is what "It is finished" can do for a poor, wretched, vile sinner. "This day," says the blessed Lord, not the future thing, not the day that is coming when I shall have the crown, but "this day shalt thou be with me in paradise." On what ground? how? Because Jesus finished that work for him, Jesus glorified God about that poor, wretched man's sin, gave to God in righteousness a full equivalent for all the sins, all the transgressions of that poor thief down here, for the vileness and misery of that man, and He could take that man into paradise that very day, because

He bore his sins there in His own body on the tree.

And mark, more than this. He says not only "It" as involving the glory of God, and the bearing of sins, and the meeting of God's holy, righteous claims, but He says more, "It is"—not that it will be, He does not look on to the future, He brings it into one great eternal now, "It is finished," once and for all, there and then, the whole work, the whole ground of God's glory and the sinner's everlasting salvation.

I shall never forget, for they left a deep impression on my heart never to be effaced while life lasts, the words of the one whom God used many years ago to awaken me to a sense of my need of Christ as a Saviour, a distinguished, earnest, beloved servant of God, a devoted minister of Christ, who preached Christ faithfully for many years as the sinner's Saviour; when my beloved friend and father came to die, I shall never forget the words that passed from his lips. He said, "When I saw how this illness of mine would turn, I put my foot down on the platform that God had graciously set me upon through the finished work of Christ, years and years ago, and I found that platform was perfectly safe." Oh, beloved brethren, think of that! When he came to die, he did not begin to think about himself; it was not himself, it was not his life. Another

who was present said to him, "Just think of your devoted life; think of how you have preached Christ." The dying man lifted up his hand, and said, "Hush; not a word now but Christ, nothing now but Christ and His blood."

Now, beloved friends, there is what it is to trust in Jesus; that work is a platform, a divine superstructure God puts under your feet, that is as immovable as Christ's cross could make it, as eternal in its stability as the blood of Jesus could make it. I often hear people say, "I wonder very much whether it will be all right with me; I wonder whether the root of the matter is in me." Well, I tell you for your comfort it is not; but thank God it is in Christ; the root of the matter is there, the perfection and completeness of the work is there. Never mind about yourself; but mark this: Your best, your only qualification for the salvation that the Christ has accomplished is just this, vileness, good-for-nothingness, hell-deservingness, emptiness, not a single reason, neither root nor branch, in you, a poor, wretched, vile, miserable sinner, but everything perfect and blessed in Jesus. And that is what God brings together, emptiness in the sinner and completeness in the salvation, fulness in the work and complete undeservingness in the person that wants it. Wonderful combination! barrenness and misery in me, fulness and completeness in

the work that was accomplished on the cross 1,800 years ago, and has never lost its power, and never will lose it. We have often sung those sweet words,

“ Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransom'd church of God
Be saved to sin no more.”

There it is, perfect, permanent and complete.

But there is another thing in these words, not merely God's glory, and the perfection of that which can wash our souls from every spot and stain of sin, but Satan's head was there bruised. And may I speak a word for a moment to God's own dear people, because I know there are many here to-night, and it is a cheer to see those who have tasted the preciousness of Christ, and to know that the same Saviour is dear to them who is dear to one's self. Beloved, what an immense comfort this is for the soul of a poor, timid, trembling child of God, the devil is a beaten foe, the devil's head has been bruised ; the death of Jesus bruised that head, according to the promise that was made, not to Adam, but to the seed of the woman, “It shall bruise thy head.” That is the announcement God made in Satan's ears, the woman's seed who should come to do this work, shall bruise thy head ; and thou shalt bruise his

heel; that is, the Lord should go into death, really the power that Satan had acquired through man's sin, he was to bruise the Saviour's heel. The Lord Jesus became subject to death, but by death He bruised Satan's head; or as it is expressed in that hymn—He was

“Death of death, and hell's destruction.”

Through death He annulled him that had the power of death; He submitted to go down in His grace under the waves of death, that through death He might annul him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and now mark these words, “and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Are you afraid of death? I remember the time that I would not look at a corpse for worlds, a terror passed through my heart at the sight; and it was not that I was afraid of hell, I knew the blood of Jesus secured my soul against the flames of hell, but I trembled at death. Why? My soul was not in the full victory of Christ's triumph, in the full effects of the completeness of those precious words I am speaking about, I did not see the magnificent extent of “It is finished;” I did not take into my soul the area of blessing which such words cover; God's glory secured, sin purged, Satan's head bruised in death, so that the

devil is now a beaten foe. And that is the reason why he works in wiles now ; he did not always. When did he resort to that mode of warfare, when did he begin his wiles ? After the victory of Jesus. Look at the beautiful type of it in that wonderful fifth chapter of Joshua. When the Jordan was passed, and God had brought the people over, and dried up the waters of the river, which is a picture of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished for His people, and the drying up of the power of death, it is said that when the Canaanites, the people of the land, " heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more."

Thank God, it is the victory of the cross that has taken the spirit out of the foe, and brought in fear into the enemy. Why should you have fear ? It is the enemies of the cross that ought to have the fear, and not those that are trusting in that blessed One. What becomes us in the presence of " It is finished " ? Trust and confidence ; I can trust when I see that it is done, I know the way people talk ; they say, " I wonder whether it is all done for me." Well, if it is not, it will never be done at all. Did Jesus say that part of it had been done, and part of it

has to be done? No; He said it is done, all finished, perfected, settled for ever. When? Eighteen hundred years ago. On that cross, where He was alone, forsaken, He completed that work, bowed His blessed head in death, and dismissed His spirit as a divine Person who had a right over it, finished the whole work, made peace, glorified God and His Father, completed His work, bruised Satan's head, and did it for every sinner here who will simply come and trust that blessed One, and trust that finished work. Have you come? That is the question. If you were called upon to-night to pass through death (you may be, God only knows), are you ready? you may be the tree of the forest that is marked for death, just as you may see a woodman pass through a forest and mark a certain tree with an axe, it may be a towering tree, beautiful leaves and branches and blossoms, but the axe will be at the root of that tree soon, the mark is there; and you may be that tree to-night; even though you are saying to yourself, "I am not going to die, there is no faintness in my heart, no quivering in my frame, I have a long life before me yet;" ah! but you may be marked for death, and the question I put to you to-night is, Are you ready? If the word were to come to you now, as it came to Hezekiah, "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live," are you ready? Are you

ready to meet God ? And remember, if you do not die, sinner, Christ is coming. He came and finished that work, and yet there you are, still unconverted and unhappy ; do not tell me you are not unhappy, you have not got a real bit of true happiness in your bosom ; how could you with that dread uncertainty before you, that leap in the dark ? You are not happy. There is many a miserable and broken heart under a gay and smiling face. Most deceitful are the looks of people ; oh, how many hearts there are with the gnawings of hell there, uncertainty, doubt, mis-giving, and blackness over the future ! And you, dear unconverted people, that is where you are to-night. But I preach to you the peace that Jesus made by the blood of His cross ; He made peace ; mark that, it does not say that He is making peace in the heavens, but He made it by the blood of His cross. He Himself in heaven is the evidence that He made it, He is our peace ; and when He came back after death into this world He preached it. He is the peace, He made the peace, and He preached the peace. And will you tell me, if that is the case, that I am not to have it, that I cannot have it ? What was the sense of His making it if a poor, wretched sinner like myself could not have it ? What did He make it for ? He made it for me to have it, and thank God I have it, and because I know what

it is I preach it to you. "We speak that we do know and testify that we have seen."

I was called once, many years ago, to visit in the fever sheds of one of the large hospitals of a city, a poor girl that had been brought in there in the very last stage of malignant typhus, with but very little of her senses left. Thank God, she was saved, she was washed from her sins in the precious blood of Christ, and she allayed all my anxiety about her state by what were very nearly her last words on earth, and precious words they are in my memory : she just repeated into my ear in broken sentences, with her life as it were ebbing away, these two passages, "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour;" "We have known and believed the love that God hath unto us." O friends, what a precious testimony to leave the world with, just to go out of it in the confidence of the love of which Christ was the expression, and in confidence of heart in that Saviour that was entitled to that confidence.

May the Lord grant that you may rest in that work for yourselves; the Lord grant that you may take that stand as poor sinners to receive it simply from Him. And do not be troubling yourselves, as people often do, "I do not know whether I have got the right sort of faith, the right kind of belief." Never mind about that.

It reminds me of what I read lately about a poor man in the street who was dying of hunger, and some one met him and put into his hands a great deal more than could supply his needs at that moment. Some one saw him afterwards, and said, "What has made the change with you? You seem quite different." "Oh!" he said, "I met a gentleman in the street, and he has put into my hand the very thing that meets all my need." "How do you know?" He replied, "He put it into my hand." "But how do you know that you have the right kind of hand?" He replied, "I don't care what kind of hand I have, but I have the right kind of money."

You talk about the right faith or the wrong faith, but faith is faith. Now remember as to peace—Jesus made it, Jesus is it, Jesus preached it; and now you may have it.

The Lord grant you may put out the empty hand of faith to-night, and take the fulness of that salvation and that peace through Jesus Christ.

THE FRUITS OF CHRIST'S VICTORY.

MATTHEW XXVII. 45-54; 1 THESSALONIANS IV. 14, 15.

IT is impossible, beloved friends, really to disconnect this closing scene from that which gives it all its foundation, that on which it rests, that which gives title to all that will be in that transcendent moment, as we believe so near at hand, the moment of Christ's own joy. For just as surely as His crown rests upon His cross, so His joy rests upon His sorrow. Put the two together for a moment: that cry, that marvellous cry, that cry of conscious abandonment that the souls that have trusted Him know but very little of, even the blessedness of those wonderful words, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" You could never answer that question, beloved friends. No heart could conceive the answer, and no tongue could convey it, it is unanswerable; and there it remains unanswerable to this moment, excepting this, that it is, blessed be His name, the alone ground of the peace, the joy, the rest, the satisfaction, the present salvation of all who simply believe. Thank God, that is, in some sense, a wonderful answer; that is, shall I say? for poor sinners, a divine answer; that is the answer that meets the heart of God, who gave that blessed

One for us, and that is the answer that meets the heart of Him who, though once the Man of sorrows, is now the Man of patience, and will be the Man of joy in that day when He has all His own, not one absent, not a solitary one missing in that great roll-call which is described so blessedly and consolingly in 1 Thessalonians iv., when the shout will reach all who have trusted in the blood of the cross. I always, in my own heart, connect the two things together; that cry, with "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout," an utterance of relationship it is, the expression of it between the One that calls and those that will rise to answer to it. All who have trusted and rested in Him, and found their salvation in His death, shall, in that morning so near, answer to that shout.

Now what I desire to set before you briefly and simply this evening, are some of the results, some of the consequences of the victory of Jesus. I mean the victory of the cross. We have been looking at His resurrection on week-night evenings, but I want you to look at two or three of the effects of His victory, the victory of the cross, as they are set forth in this chapter in Matthew.

And the first is, after those three hours of darkness had been passed through and were over, and the Lord had cried with a loud voice, shewing that it was not that He was exhausted, as man

has been vile enough to say, in order to degrade Him, and to tarnish His glory ; it was not that worn-out nature sought its repose in death ; it was the cry of a Conqueror, it was not a feeble weak man who had given up the Ghost, vanquished by death, like any other man, it proved He had *laid down* His life. He gave up the ghost, but He had given it up in full vigour, so that it could not be said for a moment that it was the simple result of nature having run its course, of the terrible death He had suffered, that awful crucifixion, for there never was, I suppose, a death of such frightful torture and agony of body, yet it could not be said that it was that.

There man's wicked hands set Him, but that was all man could do. Man could nail Him to that cross, but they could not take away His life from Him. What a comfort for you and me that is. "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself." There is a great difference between a person laying down his life and his life being taken from him. When man nailed Jesus to the cross, that was the extent of his power and wickedness, though it was not the extent of his will. He had will enough to have gone to any amount of wickedness, but he could do no more. All that he could do he did do. But when it was all passed and over, when the Lord had gone through that dreadful moment, and

borne the judgment, and met God about the question of sin, and borne His people's sins, and He, in very truth had (in His grace) done both ; sin as an offence against God had received its full equivalent in righteousness in the death of Jesus, wonderful thing for our souls to know that ! It is not a question of His people's sins now for a moment, because if we speak of our sins, one speaks of believers, but I speak now in the widest sense of the word—the whole question of sin as a question between God and Christ, and as that which shut God in in His holiness, and barred man out in misery, because that is what it was ; that question was settled in the death of Jesus. God was glorified : I do not object to say that the debt was paid, but I object very much to limiting it to the debt being paid, because that is my side of it ; God was glorified, “ I have glorified thee on the earth,” where every other man had come short of God's glory, and where, as far as man was concerned, God had been outraged.

Now look at the answer to this for a moment, because it synchronized with His death ; observe, I say, how it occurred at the same moment as His death. As soon as ever the Lord had borne the judgment, passed through those hours of anguish, had known what it was in His own perfectness and spotlessness, to be forsaken of God,

absolutely and perfectly forsaken too, when it was all closed and gone through, and He had cried in all the vigour and power of His strength, undiminished in any way, and when He yielded up the ghost, at that moment the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. There is the first great fruit of the death of Jesus. And what, beloved friends, did that mean? If you read Exodus xxvi., you will find a description of that veil, and such a description as connects it at once in type with the body of the Lord Jesus Christ; it was a picture, in that sense of it, of His body, and hence the apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews, says, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through *the veil, that is to say, his flesh.*" In Exodus xxvi. and the Epistle to the Hebrews put together, you have the true meaning of it.

Now this veil was a symbol of two things. It set forth in figure the precious body of the Lord Jesus Christ, but it also set forth, that whilst that literal veil of the temple was still hanging between the holy and most holy place, God's relations with men were such that God could not come out because of His holiness, and man could not go in because of his sin. That was what the veil of the temple meant in reality; it shut man

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out from God, and it shut God in from man. The veil signified the whole order of that dispensation, no man could come to God, there was no way to God ; a sinner could not come to God, the way was not open. How foolish people are when they speak of persons coming to God before the death of Christ ! why, there was no way. God in wonderful mercy passed over the sins of those who believed in former times—not that they looked on to the sacrifice, there was no such thing, but God looked on ; there is a great difference. Forbearance, observe, was the principle of God's dealing in those days ; there was no way to God, God had not been vindicated as to His righteousness in passing over those sins ; there never had been one whose sins God had passed over in olden times ; that God, so to speak, had not to wait for the declaration of His righteousness in having done so. But now, it is not *forbearance*, it is *accomplished righteousness* ; God is glorified, and hence He is just, and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus. But it is not that Old Testament saints looked on to the sacrifices, it is all a mistake ; God looked on, that is the point, and God looking on to that which was yet to be, passed over the sins of those who believed. He did so on the principle of forbearance. We are not standing on the principle of forbearance now ; thank God, we are not. It

is wonderfully blessed to see that God had a way in those days before the death of Christ, on the ground of which He could act in consistency with His own character; but the public declaration and manifestation that God was just and yet the justifier of him that believes in Jesus, awaited the death of Jesus. You must have the cross and redemption accomplished before you get the whole thing brought out in manifestation.

Now mark how significant this is. Synchronizing with His death, occurring at the same moment as the death of the spotless One, God as it were says, all that order and principle of things is over now; it is no longer a veil between God and man. And mark you (there is nothing new in it, but still it has to be pressed upon people), it was rent in twain from God's side, from the top to the bottom. It was not rent in twain from man's side up to God, not from the bottom to the top, but from the top to the bottom, from the side that set forth how it was from God down to our side. And it was not removed. There is a great difference between the veil being *removed* and the veil being *rent*. If it had been removed it would indicate that it was simply a temporary respite of the distance it set forth, and that the barrier might yet be set up again. But it was rent, as much as to say, That order of things is at an end; those relationships

are closed. Oh, what a wonderful mercy to think there is now a way to God for sinners. Suppose I were speaking to-night (God alone knows it may be so) to the very worst character in London, even if there were in this company the vilest character that could be found in this great city, I can go to that man or that woman and say to each, There is a way to God for you ; will you come ? You say, What do you mean ? I mean this, that Jesus has presented His blood to God, and God has accepted that blood as a complete and full discharge, and equivalent in righteousness for all His holy claims, a vindication of all His character and a sustainment of all His glory, so that now, in virtue of that, He can receive and accept the vilest sinner. And it is not only that He can receive the vilest sinner in love, but He can receive him in perfect righteousness.

I remember how long that passage tried my heart, for I never could understand it, because I did not understand the fulness of redemption, I mean the scripture where the apostle says, speaking to Christians, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." Now I never could understand how faithfulness and justice were connected with forgiveness. I could understand how love and mercy, or kindness and long-suffering, were connected with it, but I never could understand how His being

faithful and just were connected with it. God faithful to forgive me? God just to forgive me? I could not understand it. And why? Because I did not see that in the cross every attribute of God was harmonised. As Psalm lxxxv. says, that beautiful and precious psalm which ought to be and which is a familiar psalm to many a heart here to-night, "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." That did not refer to the birth of the Lord Jesus in Bethlehem; incarnation never witnessed to that. Wonderful and blessed as it is to see Jesus coming down here to become a man, and do all this work for God's glory, I do not see mercy and truth meeting together, nor righteousness and peace kissing each other in the manger at Bethlehem. No; but at Calvary I do; on the cross I do. Was there ever such love, was there ever such righteousness, was there ever such mercy, was there ever such truth? I see it all witnessed to. I see the most intense righteousness with reference to sin; I see the most unbounded love of God to sinners. I see all the hatred of men; I see the full flow of the affection of God there. And therefore now, thank God, I can connect His justice with forgiveness, and I can say, He is just to forgive the believing sinner. And why? Because Christ gave to God in righteousness a full

equivalent for all His holy claims. And there I can stand and rest, because that was for me, a poor sinner. Now look what a wonderful thing that is, that you can go to a poor, wretched, vile sinner, and say to him, Christ has presented His blood to God, and there is a way through the rent veil, the flesh of Jesus, through His death, there is a way to God for you as a sinner; will you come ?

And another thing I would say affectionately to you. People have their "isms," and that is what is so destructive to souls as well as of the truth of God ; but scripture puts the responsibility where God will have the responsibility, even on man. It is not a question of faith, as to whether it is strong enough or not, this is only the devil seeking to deceive and blind ; be assured no man in hell shall ever be able to open his mouth and say to God, There was no salvation for me. No ; Christ has glorified God about sin, presented His blood to God, and God has accepted that blood, and there is a way to God for sinners, for all who will come. It is for you if you come. Will you come ? Thus you can see how the responsibility is not connected with power, but with will ; the devil will persuade you if he can to the contrary. The devil comes and says to a poor sinner, You know you cannot come, you have not the power to come. And why does he do that ? Because

by it he is concealing the truth, that the will of the man is so opposed that he will not come. Behind it all, the will of the man is not to come, and that is what Satan is keeping in the background, and hence he raises the question of the power. There is no question of power at all, it is a question of will. Will you come, that is the point? There is the way, there is the road open to God for sinners—will you come?

But there is another side in it as well, and this ought to be a comfort to any poor trembling heart here, and it is also one of the fruits of His cross; not only was the veil rent, shewing that there was a way to God through the death of Jesus, and that God could come out now in all the love of His heart righteously to sinners, and accept sinners, but all His people's sins, every one of them, were there borne by Him. There was a perfect transfer of all the sins and all the guilt of all His own to that blessed One on the cross. Now look at this a moment—it matters not how feeble and weak a person may be in their faith—it is sad to think that faith is preached as if it was the meritorious cause of our salvation, and until there is scarcely any faith left in people, what is the preaching which meets souls? No doubt it is Christ, *that* ministers to faith, here is something that will feed faith, otherwise they do not know what to believe.

But now, take a person that is ever so trembling (and I suppose that there are not many here that are strangers to what that is, yes, even to tremble) —I know what it is to have trembled, and had fears many a day, and yet it was not a question of my sins being forgiven ; I knew they were, but I was not in the full complete victory of the cross. And it was not that my faith was weak ; no, but I had not the fulness of that victory before my eyes. People always like to refer the thing to something in them. What gives you the strength is the thing that has been accomplished between God and Christ ; it is not a question of your faith at all ; it is a question of the magnificence of that victory, the fulness and perfection of that victory. Now take a poor, trembling, weak, timid, feeble thing, and I know such, here is their language, “I am not altogether comfortable about myself, I am not altogether sure ; sometimes I have got quietness, at other times I get all disturbed, and I do not know how it is ; I think I am happy about my sins when I was unconverted, but since I have been converted I have committed sins, and I am not altogether comfortable about them.” The devil harasses poor hearts in that way ; Satan is behind that kind of thing ; he knows he has got no capital to work on, he knows they are out of his power, and so he will give them no rest. If they

belonged to him, he would give them rest : “ When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace.” When they are out of his power, he says, as it were, I will never give them a moment's ease if I can effect it ; I will never leave off to worry if I can accomplish it. If you belonged to him, he would cater for you, and minister to you, and take care that no sound should reach you to disturb you, as far as he could ; but when you are out of his reach, he says, I hate Christ, and I hate you because you are Christ's and therefore I will worry you, and tempt you, and try you, and harass you. But now see what meets all this, what a simple thing it is. All our sins were laid upon Him, think of that.

I am speaking now to Christians. And observe, it is not as we used to sing in that beautiful little hymn,

“ I lay my sins on Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God ;”

for it is God who laid them on Him. And, beloved friends, God did not leave one ; God's memory did not fail with regard to those sins, and with regard to their imputation, and that memory is cleared, He will remember them no more. He remembered them to Jesus on the cross, but He will never remember them any more. “ Their sins,” says God, in virtue of this, “ and iniquities will I remember no more.” Think of that,

beloved friends, you that have fears and misgivings, and are not sure about the sins you have committed since you were converted, and are harassed, because the devil plagues you about them, God says, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more;" just put the two things together which are so precious for our hearts, there is the *no more remembrance of our sins*, but there is *the eternal remembrance of ourselves*. Think of that. And hence He says, "Can a mother forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the babe of her womb?" There is no love like a mother's love; none. I have often said to people, You never can lose a mother but once. No love in nature, no love in this poor, wretched, selfish world like a mother's love; and therefore the blessed God, in signifying His affection for Israel, takes up the strongest known affection amongst men, and says, "Can a mother forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the babe of her womb? Yea, they may forget"—even nature may break down in its most intense tenderness—"yet will not I forget thee." God says it to Jerusalem, and in order to bring out the intensity of His remembrance of those that belong to Him, He says, "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me."

Now I love those passages, and I will tell you why. There is no need, beloved friends, to put at the top of the Bible what the beloved old translators of this precious scripture that our hearts love have put there; this dear old Book that so many of God's beloved people have lived and died upon; there is no need I say to put upon the top of it "the blessings and promises of the church," it is not true; but I will tell you what is true, the divine principles of God's nature remain the same in changing times and dispensations—that is true. Souls may be in different relationships, as no doubt they are, totally different, but God's nature is the same, God's heart is the same, God's affections are the same, though expressed in different ways. And so it is now, just as it was to Israel in that day. Now if there is one whose sins were laid on Jesus, a poor, trembling, feeble, weak believer (and God knows how many there are in this world, and that there is a kind of confederacy between the world and the devil to keep them in darkness, and ignorant of the true extent of the cross of Christ), now I say, if there be such a poor, worried, tried and tormented heart like that, what a comfort to be able to come and to say to such an one, Every one of your sins were all laid on Jesus; "God who knew them laid them on him;" and they were all borne, and they are

all gone, and they are in God's forgetfulness, and God cannot remember them any more ; they will never come up again ; no trumpet blast of resurrection shall ever blow over those sins, they are buried in the everlasting oblivion of His forgetfulness. And why ? Because Christ bore them on that cross ; He suffered infinitely, as no one else could suffer but Himself, His was infinite suffering there, and all the sins imputed to Him are all gone. What a comfort that is.

Now let us look at one or two more fruits of His death here. I have spoken to you of two : first of all, that God was glorified so that He could come out ; before He was hidden behind the veil, now He can come out in all the full righteousness of His nature and love of His heart to sinners, and a way is made to God for sinners ; secondly, that all His people's sins were by one stroke for ever put away. But now there is something more than that. There is a third victory of Jesus in Matthew xxvii. There was not a sphere that was not made to express—and visibly too—how that victory operated on all sides. Hence we read here of a quaking earth, rending rocks, and open graves ; earth, heaven, the grave, all felt the touch of victory. Think of that. God as it were in righteousness demanded of the grave a giving up. The grave, that up to this moment held and contained man as part of the

sentence of God due to sin, the grave feels the victory of Jesus. And now, beloved, how blessed it is for us that know Him and trust Him, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon Him as our hope, and who have really clung to Him as our Saviour, what a blessed thing to be able to stand (there is no place that one's heart delights in more than to stand, as far as that is concerned) beside an open grave of one of God's people; there is not any spot that brings the victory of Jesus before our souls like that, to be able to stand and put your foot upon the clod, and say, "O grave, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" Oh how blessed! Here is that which puts that note of triumph into our mouths, that confidence into our hearts, who trust in Christ. It is all the result of the cross, the victory of Christ.

If you see a child of God dying, and you see that person perfectly confident and restful in death, if you say, "What strong faith that person has," that is a deception, do not say that; but say, "Oh, what a blessed triumph was the cross of Jesus! what a marvellous victory was the victory of Jesus!" That is what does it. Faith avails itself of that, no doubt, but what is faith? A poor, empty, trembling, timid hand that takes hold of the victory, that is all. And as I said last Sunday evening,

it does not matter whether it is the right hand or the left hand, as people talk about strong faith and weak faith; do not trouble your mind about that. If you have got the victory, do not mind the hand you have got it in. It is the victory you have got, and it is that which takes the fear out of your heart, and enables you to sing that song at an open grave, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin" (Jesus bore it), "and the strength of sin is the law" (I have died to it in the death of Christ); "but thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore," the apostle says, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable"—there is nothing to move you or disturb you, you are standing upon a foundation against which the waves of time and the waters of eternity may roar, and beat, and swell, but it is immovable; nothing can affect it; the pillars of God's temple were made fast in the cross of Jesus, where God was satisfied and salvation was accomplished. Think of those two things, salvation was accomplished where God was satisfied. Would you like to have it in any other connection? I should not. Thank God for it. When grace awoke my conscience to a sense of my position as a sinner, this is what came to me, You have offended God, you have

outraged God, it is God that has to be satisfied, it is God that has to be met, it is God that has to be glorified, it is God's holy, righteous claims that must be discharged. It would be a very easy thing to discharge what I thought was necessary, for I know all our thoughts of sin are very poor, very shallow indeed, compared with the reality of it according to God, but is God satisfied? that is the point, Is He glorified? Thank God He is satisfied. Has He received a full equivalent? Yes, a full equivalent. Now when I see that God has been satisfied, that God has been glorified, I say, That will do for me, there I rest, I can rest where God has received His fullest claims.

There is one thing more here, though I need not dwell upon that, because we had it before us in speaking of resurrection, and that is, that "the bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of their graves after his resurrection, and appeared unto many;" that is to say, as soon as ever the Lord Jesus was in the circumstances of the firstfruits, for He was "the firstfruits of them that slept," He must be first in His resurrection of glory, and victory, and triumph, when He arose, then the harvest of which He was the wave-sheaf arose with Him.

But there is one other point I would like to call your attention to here. There was this poor

Gentile Roman centurion watching Jesus ; he was a heathen, the commander of the guard that watched the scene of the crucifixion. And when he witnessed all those things, heathen and Gentile though he was, how beautiful, how blessed to see that God would give testimony there of the far-reaching desire of His heart for Gentiles as well as Jews now. This poor Gentile says, Well, truly this is the Son of God. And that connects itself exactly with that beautiful scripture in John xii., "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." A lifted up Saviour, lifted up between the heavens and the earth, became the centre of attraction to draw poor hearts to Himself. Here you get this very truth coming out.

O beloved friends, no heart could e'er conceive, or tongue tell the magnificence of these victories of the Lord Jesus. I commend the fruits of it to you to-night ; I commend that blessed work which that blessed One there once and for all accomplished on that cross, I commend it to you. You will find there that which will sustain your soul, that which will uphold your soul, and that not merely in prospect of dissolution, not merely in prospect of the breaking up of everything down here. And mark this, there is not anything on this earth which is not breaking up. Everything is shaking, everything is rocking to its very basis. There is a sort of

universal dread, uncertainty hanging about every atmosphere in this world, around the political atmosphere, around the commercial atmosphere, around the domestic atmosphere. Thank God, here is something that never changes, that remains in all its intense immovability. And how blessed to think of this, that though thousands and thousands of sinners have here rested, it will bear the weight of thousands more. I often think of that little hymn that we sing together, that when the Lord shall come,

“ *Rising millions* shall proclaim,
Blessings on the Saviour's name.”

We shall see, beloved, in that scene of glory, thousands and thousands of people whom we never expected to see there, blessed be His name, and the greatest of all wonders, save for His grace, will be that we shall see ourselves there. Whenever the heart gets a sense of its own vileness, and wretchedness, and ruin, and misery, its own complete thorough badness and ruin before God, then we know that nothing but the blood of Jesus could wash away its sin. Thank God, that can, thank God, that does, now and for ever. The moment the blood is applied to my conscience, that blood that has met the claims of a holy God, glorified Him about sin down to the very lowest depths where that blessed One went, and He could not go lower than He went, I say when that

blood is applied to the conscience, it is purged from every spot and every stain of sin. And I have it now, and that is what I preach to you to-night—a present salvation, a personal salvation and a permanent salvation. We preach salvation through this cross of Jesus in these three characters—a present salvation for any sinner here to-night that will simply trust in that blessed One ; a personal salvation for the sinner that will come ; and a permanent salvation, for nothing can undo it ; all in virtue of the completeness, the fulness, and the perfection of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on that cross 1800 years ago. Will you have it now ? Have you got it ? That is the question. If you have not got it, what have you got ? You might have all the dignities, all the wealth, all the honour, all the glory that this poor wretched world could ever heap upon a poor worm, yet what would it be, beloved friends ? Just so much to pile up as a funeral pile ; you would have to leave it all then. Just so much to freight your heart with ; just so much to sink you down into misery and wretchedness. I never met a man in this world yet that had enough. “Much would have more,” as the saying is ; and that is the principle of this world. Increase it, and you increase the desire for more. But oh ! thank God, this is what can satisfy, and nothing else can.

It is a miserable thing to me to go about and see the dissatisfied countenances of God's people. You will bear with me for saying it, but nothing is so grievous I think as to look into the countenance of those that ought to be satisfied and see the elements there of dissatisfaction; it is simply heart-breaking. I am not at all surprised to see a person in the world unsatisfied. I say that person is entitled to have a miserable face, he has no right to be happy. There you are to-night, dear unsaved one, unconverted and unhappy. Do not tell me you are happy; you are unconverted and you are miserable. And your so-called religion is exactly on the principle of insurance; you are paying so many premiums against a certain day—unhappy, uncertain, miserable, nothing settled, afraid, no peace, no rest, no satisfaction.

O, beloved friends, come to-night and taste the blessedness of this salvation of God. Harken to the words of the blessed God Himself in His gracious pleadings (I think it is so wonderful to see how He pleads), "Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not." Think of the goodness of God to come down and plead with poor wretched beings like you and me. Your money and your labour are all being expended for what is not bread and what does

not satisfy. "Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." That is what suits a poor bankrupt sinner, that is what suits you, that is what suited me in my spiritual bankruptcy and ruin, and salvation for nothing on my side, but a salvation that was infinite in its cost on God's side. Taste it to-night, "O taste and see that the Lord is good." Come and taste the positive pleasure of trusting in one that is worthy of being trusted, one that invites your trust, one that invites your confidence. Come; if you have never come before, come to-night. The Lord bless you, the Lord meet you here in this very place as you sit upon those seats. Come and trust that blessed One. I was going to say venture, but I cannot say venture, because there is no venture in it. We used to sing,

"Venture on Him, venture wholly,"

but I cannot sing that now. It is no venture, it is a positive certainty. Come and trust Him, and enjoy that certainty this night, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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