

Christ All in All

Christ All in All

What Christ Is Made to Believers

Philip Henry



Soli Deo Gloria Publications
. . . for instruction in righteousness . . .

Christ All in All: What Christ Is Made to Believers
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BIOGRAPHICAL PREFACE

Philip Henry

Philip Henry (1631–1696) grew up in the English royal court and then served as a minister in the Church of England until ejected under the Act of Uniformity.¹ He was born at Whitehall, Westminster, on August 24, 1631, to John and Magdalen Henry, the fourth of eight children. His father, John (1590–1652), of Welsh descent, settled in England early in life. He kept the orchards at the royal palace and later was Page of the Back Stairs, a court attendant, to the Duke of York (James Stuart, the second son of the king). His mother, Magdalen Rochdale (c. 1599–1645), was a godly woman who catechized her son, prayed with him daily, and taught him from William Perkins’s *Foundation of Christian Religion in Six Principles*. As a

1. I am indebted in this preface to J. B. Williams, ed., *The Lives of Philip and Matthew Henry* (1825; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1974); Matthew Henry Lee, ed., *Diaries and Letters of Philip Henry* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Co., 1882); Matthew Henry, *An Account of the Life and Death of Mr. Philip Henry*, in *The Miscellaneous Works of the Rev. Matthew Henry* (London: Joseph Ogle Robinson, 1830), 9–150; Alexander Gordon, “Henry, Philip,” *Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (repr., London: Oxford, 1921), 9:575–77; Richard L. Greaves, “Henry, Philip,” *Oxford DNB*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 26:587–91; Joel R. Beeke and Randall J. Pederson, *Meet the Puritans, with a Guide to Modern Reprints* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2006), 334–38.

child, Philip played with Prince Charles (later King Charles I) and Prince James (later King James II). He later thanked God for delivering him from the temptations of riches and power, in part through the disruption of the court by the tragic civil war in 1642.

Henry received an early education in Latin at St. Martin-in-the-Field and went in 1643, at about twelve years of age, to Westminster School, where he first studied under Thomas Vincent (1634–1678). As an upperclassman, he studied under the Greek and Latin scholar Richard Busby (1606–1695), a devout Puritan, who regarded Henry as his favorite student and asked him to assist him in collecting material for a Greek grammar.

Henry's mother saw to it that her son attended the lectures (weekday sermons) at Westminster Abbey, hearing Puritans such as Stephen Marshall and Philip Nye. She died on March 6, 1645, saying shortly before her passing, "My head is in heaven and my heart is in heaven, 'tis but one step more and I shall be there too."² By April 1647, Henry's heart was in heaven too, for he records of that time that "the Lord was graciously pleased to bring me home effectually to himself by the means of my school-master, Mr. Richard Busby, at the time of the solemn preparation for the Communion then observed."³

On December 15, 1647, Henry entered Christ Church College at Oxford with the support of his godfather, the Earl of Pembroke. When visiting his father in Whitehall in January of 1649, Henry grieved to see the beheading of King Charles I. Henry received his bachelor's degree from Christ Church in 1651 and his master's degree in 1652. John Owen, then dean of Christ Church, arranged for him to serve as a tutor in the

2. Henry, *Diaries and Letters*, 9.

3. Henry, *Diaries and Letters*, 10.

college. His father's death in 1652 left the family in financial distress, which was relieved by the occasional gifts of friends.

Henry delivered his first sermon at South Hinksey, Oxfordshire, on January 9, 1653. For several months he tutored the sons of Judge John Paleston, of Emral Hall, Flintshire, while he also began preaching in the prosperous Worthenbury Chapel in the parish of Bangor-Is-Coed, Wales. He received Presbyterian ordination at Prees, Shropshire, on September 16, 1657, which he called "a day never to be forgotten,"⁴ and was settled at Worthenbury, where he remained for several years.

He made a strong Calvinistic confession, although he did not support the Presbyterian system of church government. In 1658, he helped organize a North Wales association of clergymen consisting of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Independents. He authored the section of the association's agreement that dealt with worship.

In 1660 Henry had married Katherine Matthews (1629–1707), only daughter and heir of Daniel Matthews of Broad Oak and Bronington, Flintshire. The marriage would be blessed with six children—two sons, John and Matthew (the famous commentator), and four daughters, Sarah, Katherine, Eleanor, and Ann, all of whom professed salvation in Christ alone. Uncommonly for that time, Philip and Katherine Henry lost no children in infancy and lived to witness the marriages of all six of their children.

Though Henry welcomed the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, he refused to conform to the usages of the Book of Common Prayer and would not receive ordination by the episcopacy. Consequently, he was repeatedly cited to appear before the authorities and finally ejected from his curacy at Worthenbury in October of 1661. On the one hand, Henry

4. Henry, *Diaries and Letters*, 58.

had strong royalist sympathies and rejected separation from the national church; on the other hand, he held to Puritan convictions against ceremonies that he deemed “popish,” such as making the sign of the cross in baptism. He was forced to leave Worthenbury in 1662 and moved to Broad Oak, Maelor Saesneg, just across the Welsh border from Whitchurch, Shropshire.

Henry’s years at Worthenbury yielded numerous conversions. His ministry was earnest and loving. His son Matthew Henry wrote:

He adapted his method and style to the capacities of his hearers, fetching his similitudes for illustration from those things which were familiar to them. He did not shoot the arrow of the word over their heads in high notions, or the flourishes of affected rhetoric; nor under their feet by blunt and homely expressions; but to their hearts in close and lively applications. His delivery was very graceful and agreeable, neither noisy and precipitate on the one hand, nor dull and slow on the other. His doctrine dropped as the dew, and distilled as the soaking rain, and came with a charming, pleasing power, such as many bore witness to, that have wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.⁵

When the Act of Uniformity took effect on St. Bartholomew’s Day, August 24, 1662, Henry was silenced as a minister. “Our sins have made Bartholomew-day, in the year 1662, the saddest day for England since the death of Edward the Sixth, but even this [is] for good,” he wrote.⁶ He gave up his house and left Worthenbury, moving his family to a property

5. Henry, *Account of the Life and Death of Mr. Philip Henry*, in *Miscellaneous Works*, 39.

6. Henry, *Diaries and Letters*, 119.

inherited by his wife at Broad Oak, Flintshire. With some brief intervals, Henry remained there for the last thirty-four years of his life, during which he taught theological students in his home.

Despite submitting for the most part to being silenced as a preacher, Henry was often harassed, arrested, fined, and even imprisoned for alleged breaches of the laws known as the Clarendon Code. In October 1663, Henry and thirteen other preachers were imprisoned for four days at Hanmer, Flintshire, on suspicion of fomenting insurrection. In March 1665, Henry was summoned to Malpas, Cheshire, for baptizing one of his own children. At the end of the month, he was treated as a layman and made sub-collector of taxes for the township of Iscoyd. The Five Mile Act of 1665 placed him in a quandary, for Broad Oak was only four miles away from Worthenbury. Henry thus moved to Whitchurch, Shropshire, where he regularly attended the local churches. In February 1668, he preached in the parish church of Betley, Staffordshire; distorted accounts of that event were reported to the House of Commons, and Henry had to wait until 1672 before he was licensed to preach in his home as a Presbyterian, though he continued to favor participation for orthodox nonconformists in the parish system. Although the royal declaration of indulgence was soon withdrawn, the local authorities allowed Henry to continue preaching without interference until 1681, when he was fined for holding unauthorized meetings for worship called “conventicles.”

Henry was publicly vocal on contemporary issues. In 1682, he engaged in public discussion with Quakers at Llanfyllin, Montgomeryshire. He participated in a debate on ordination at Oswestry, Shropshire, with William Lloyd, then bishop of St. Asaph, and Henry Dodwell. At the time of the Monmouth Rebellion in 1685, Henry was incarcerated in Chester Castle for

three weeks under a general order from the lord-lieutenant. He added his name to a cautiously worded address to James II in September 1687.

With the accession of William and Mary and the passing of the Act of Toleration in 1689, Henry was able to preach more openly to large congregations at Broad Oak and in neighboring towns, though continuing to worship at the Church of England chapel at Whitewell (Iscoyd), Maelor Saesneg. He accepted the terms of the Act of Toleration, but he would have preferred toleration without subscription.

Henry did not accept another pastoral call. He continued to work hard, but his health was declining. He succumbed to colic at Broad Oak on June 24, 1696. His last words were, "O death, where is thy [sting]?"⁷ He was buried in Whitchurch, where a marble tablet was erected in his memory. He was survived by his wife, Katherine, who outlived him by eleven years, as well as by several children and grandchildren.

Henry was noted for his exemplary, Christ-centered worship and godly conduct. "See your need of Christ more and more," he once wrote to his son, "and live upon Him. No life like it; so sweet, so safe. My Savior is mine in all things. We cannot be discharged from the guilt of any evil we do, without His merit to satisfy; we cannot move in the performance of any good required, without His Spirit and grace to assist and enable for it; and when we have done all, that all is nothing, without His mediation and intercession to make it acceptable, so that every day in everything He is all in all."⁸

Henry was deeply committed to seeking peace among his brethren at all personal cost. His entire demeanor breathed catholicity and love, even when he disagreed with others. His

7. Philip Henry, *Christ All in All* (repr., Swengel, Pa.: Reiner, 1970), ix.

8. Henry, *Diaries and Letters*, 345.

teaching and preaching displayed the reasonableness and pleasantness of vital Christianity. He was a truly happy man, despite being persecuted much in his life for upholding Christ's name. He loved biblical truth, taught and preached it ably, and died in the assurance of it. His own more famous son, Matthew Henry, was a great beneficiary of his father's profound influence. At his father's funeral, Matthew Henry said:

Those that have any sense of justice and gratitude, cannot but honour and respect a *father* that has been the instrument of their *being*; especially, if a kind and loving one;—cannot but respect a tutor, that has been the instrument of their learning; especially if a skilful and faithful one;—cannot but respect a minister that hath been a spiritual father, that hath been the instrument of their regeneration; especially, if continuing a tender and faithful overseer. Now, if any one of these three relations challenge such a profound regard, what may justly be expected when these meet in one and the same person? Surely, I ought to reckon such a one worthy of double, nay, treble honour.⁹

Shortly after his father's funeral, Matthew Henry wrote: "I bless God that I ever had such a father, whose temper was so very happy, and his gifts and graces so very bright; one that recommended religion, and the power of godliness, by a cheerful and endearing conversation...to that grace be the glory of all the benefit that my father was to me, and the comfort I was to him."¹⁰

Though not as prolific an author as his son Matthew, Philip Henry did do considerable writing. During his lifetime he published no books, but left a number of manuscripts with his

9. Williams, *Philip and Matthew Henry*, 291.

10. Williams, *Philip and Matthew Henry*, 65–66.

family, including sermons, an exposition of Genesis 1–11, and many volumes of his diaries. In his will, he bequeathed several of these handwritten manuscripts to his children, each of whom was to select one to be “transcribed into their hearts and lives.” In the nineteenth century, John B. Williams published several volumes from Henry’s manuscripts, including *Eighteen Sermons* (1816), *Skeletons of Sermons* (1834), *Expositions upon Genesis* (1839), *Remains* (1848), and *Diaries and Letters* (1882).

Christ All in All, reprinted several times in the last two centuries, has become Philip Henry’s best-known work. His daughter Sarah Savage (1664–1752) treasured its forty-one sermons from his manuscripts, then titled “What Christ Is Made of God to True Believers in Forty Particulars” (based on Colossians 3:11, “Christ is all and in all”). Savage wrote in her diary that the “sweet wholesome truths” of this book are “food for my poor soul. He being ‘dead yet speaketh.’ And what is it he says, but that which his heart was always full of? Christ. Christ. Christ. Methinks I hear him still: Oh, make Christ your all!”¹¹

Though not published until 1830 as an appendix to the second volume of the *Miscellaneous Works* of Matthew Henry, Henry’s forty-one sermons on the names and benefits of Christ soon appeared in both England and United States as a book published as *Christ All in All*. The new title was taken from the last two sermons on Colossians 3:11, which Henry named, “Christ is Our All.”

In this classic work of practical Christology, Henry expounds the riches of Christ in forty benefits that meet a believer’s every need: the foundation, food, root, raiment, head, hope, refuge, righteousness, light, life, peace, Passover,

11. J. B. Williams, ed., *Memoirs of the Life and Character of Mrs. Sarah Savage* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1845), 185; cf. Henry, *Christ All in All*, xi.

portion, propitiation, freedom, fountain, wisdom, way, ensign, example, door, dew, sun, shield, strength, song, horn, honor, sanctification, supply, resurrection, redemption, lesson, ladder, truth, treasure, temple, ark, altar, and all. The whole treatise makes for a compelling work on Christ's all-sufficiency.

The chapters are edifying and warmly experiential. Each chapter is based on the notes of a sermon; hence, incomplete sentences abound. The original wording is retained throughout. Bracketed subheadings and bracketed words are added occasionally for the sake of clarity. Obscure words or words that have changed in meaning are footnoted accordingly. All Scripture quotations are in the King James Version, with the abbreviations and references to the texts cited updated according to the standard style. Capitalization, spelling, and punctuation have been modernized for ease of reading. Archaic pronouns and verb forms have also been updated, except those directly addressing deity. Many thanks to Ryan Hurd for doing the bulk of the editorial work; it was easy to follow in his footsteps as the final editor. Many thanks too to our proofreading/typesetting couple, Gary and Linda den Hollander.

May God richly bless the reading of this volume for the glory of His precious name, the salvation of the lost, and the edification of His saints, so that they may grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ Jesus.

—Joel R. Beeke

CHAPTER 1

Christ Is the Foundation, and Believers Are the Building

*For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which
is Jesus Christ.*

—1 CORINTHIANS 3[:11]

It is not here alone but in many other scriptures both of the Old and New Testament that our Lord Jesus Christ is held forth to us under the notion of a foundation, and believers, the church of the firstborn, under the notion of a great building, reared upon that foundation. The explaining and applying of this will be our present work.

Doctrine: That our Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation, and believers are the building reared upon that foundation.

There is a like union and relation between Him and them as there is between a foundation and a building. Now that relation and union is very near and close. The closer the better. Such is that between Christ and His church. They that are joined to the Lord are one with Him (1 Cor. 6:17). “For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one,” of one piece (Heb. 2:11).

It is also very necessary and useful. The building cannot stand without it. A foundation may stand long enough without a building on it, but no building can stand without a foundation

under it—and they must be joined, united. So Christ might have been without us, but we cannot be without Him.

But are not the apostles and prophets the foundation (Eph. 2:20; cf. Matt. 16:18)?

I answer: It is not said, the foundation, the apostles, but the foundation of the apostles—that is, the foundation which they themselves rested on. Had the apostles and prophets been asked, one by one, Who is your foundation? On whom do you build for life and happiness? they would have said, “Jesus Christ.” He was their all in all and therefore should be ours.

Christ was the foundation which they reported and preached of to others. Paul says here, “I laid the foundation” ([1 Cor. 3:]10). Whom? Himself? No, no foundation but Christ (v. 11). The prophets prophesied of Him as to come. The apostles pointed at Him as already come. “Behold the Lamb of God,” said John the Baptist.

As for that place in Matthew [16:18], by “this rock” is not meant the person of Peter. A poor rock for the church to be built on. A rock shaking immediately (v. 22) and worse afterward (ch. 26). But it is the confession of Peter that is intended: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (16:16). “Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” [v. 18].

But is it not said that Jesus Christ is the cornerstone? The cornerstone is not the foundation!

I answer: His being the cornerstone does not hinder His being the foundation also. He is both in different respects. “Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste” (Isa. 28:16). The use of a cornerstone is to unite the sides of the building, yea, and of the foundation too. That Christ does by making Jew and Gentile one. “But now in Christ Jesus ye

who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us” (Eph. 2:13–14). He that could join those two distant sides and make them one can certainly (and we hope will in His own due time) reconcile lesser differences. The corner post is reckoned very material¹ in a timber fabric, and so the cornerstone. “The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner” (Ps. 118:22).

[Christ as a Foundation]

Show the properties of Christ as a foundation [and] what kind of foundation He is.

1. A laid foundation (Isa. 28:16). “I lay”—that is, God the Father, one that knew well enough how to do it, a God of infinite wisdom and power. The Lord Jesus did not take to Himself this honor of being a mediator. He was called to it, appointed of God for such a purpose. And this is our comfort and joy. He that could best tell what would best serve to satisfy His offended justice here fixed on His Son for that purpose: “Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom” (Job 33:24). “I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people” (Ps. 89:19).

2. A low foundation. Foundations are wont² to be laid low—the lower the surer. So here, the Lord Jesus Christ was laid very low that He might be a meet³ foundation for us (Phil. 2:8). He humbled Himself.

There were several steps of His humiliation:

-
1. *Material*: essential.
 2. *Wont*: accustomed to.
 3. *Meet*: fitting.

Into the human nature, to be made a man. That was a long step downward. That the Word should become flesh was more than if a star should turn into a clod.

Into subjection under the law. “When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Gal. 4:4)—the moral law, nay, the ceremonial law to be circumcised, presented in the temple, redeemed and ransomed with two turtles, bound to go up to all the feasts.

Into poverty and persecution, contempt and contradiction, to be spurned and trampled on.

To death itself, even the death of the cross, painful, shameful. It is called lifting up, but it was humiliation.

To the grave. When He was buried, He was, as other foundations, laid under the ground.

And there was a necessity for all this—without it, no atonement, no reconciliation.

3. A foundation of stone (Isa. 28:16). A stone is the most fit of all other things to make foundations of because [it is] hard and firm and yet easily hewn. Now Jesus Christ is a stone foundation, a rock. The Israelites “did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ” (1 Cor. 10:4).

4. A foundation out of sight. All foundations are so. We see the building, but we do not see the foundation. Now such a foundation is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is out of sight. Not below us, as He once was, under the earth, but above in glory.

His person is out of sight. Yet we love Him (1 Peter 1:8).

His presence is invisible. He is with us everywhere, especially in His ordinances, but it is in an invisible way. We feel it; we do not see it. “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20).

“Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” ([28:]20).

His proceedings are invisible—the proceedings of His grace within, the proceedings of His providence without. “Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron” (Ps. 77:20).

5. A precious foundation (Isa. 28:16). Though all stones in their places are useful, yet they are not all precious stones. Few buildings are built on precious stones, but the church is. Christ is precious in Himself. He is of great worth, the fairest of ten thousands. He is precious in their account and esteem (1 Peter 2:7). To others, He is a stone of stumbling, but, to them that believe, He is precious.

6. A permanent foundation (Isa. 26:4), the Rock of ages, from everlasting to everlasting. The saints have been building on Him from the beginning and will be to the end of time. “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb. 13:8). His righteousness is everlasting righteousness. His promises, unchangeable promises.

7. An elect, chosen foundation (Isa. 28:16), chosen of God and precious.

8. An experienced, tried foundation. He was tried by God, who laid a load on Him; by men and devils, who did their best against Him, yet all to no purpose; by the saints, who have had occasion to make use of Him, and He never failed them

[Our Duty to This Foundation]

Show what is our duty in reference to this foundation.

1. To believe all this concerning Him: that God has laid Him purposely for a foundation, anointed and appointed Him to

be a prince and savior, given Him to the world that “whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” [John 3:16].

2. To behold and see our need of Him. There is no rearing a building without a foundation. We have each of us a building to rear, and what foundation have we? None in ourselves—no righteousness of our own to commend us to God, no strength or ability to anything that is good.

3. To renounce all other foundations. They are all but sand. He that builds on the sand, his building will fall. “Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it” (Matt. 7:24[–27]).

4. To repair to Him in the way of faithful and fervent prayer. Tell Him you are sensible of your need of Him, [and] you are undone without Him.

5. To build on Him. In the great business of justification, to roll and rest your soul by faith on His meritorious righteousness—none but Christ, none but Christ. In all our perils and dangers, personal or public, to fly to Him, to trust in Him, to rely on Him. Faithful is He that has promised. “Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defense; I shall not be

greatly moved” (Ps. 62:1–2; cf. 56:1). “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (46:1).

6. To beware what we build on this foundation in opinion, in practice. “Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward” (1 Cor. 3:12–14). If you build loose, vain, careless walking, your hopes built will be accordingly wood, hay, stubble.

[What Kind of Building This Is]

“Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. 2:20–22). “Ye are built,” says the apostle—you believing Ephesians, Christians, saints.

Show what kind of building the church is; what are the properties of it. There is a great deal of difference in buildings. The church is a none-such⁴ building.

1. It is a spiritual building. Other buildings are made of wood and stone and such like materials. But this building is made of men and women: “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5). What our Lord Jesus says of His kingdom is true of His building, that

4. *None-such*: something without equal [N.B., variously spelled throughout Henry’s work].

it is not of this world—in it, but not of it (John 15:19). It is a building of souls. Souls united to Him by faith are those that make up this building.

2. It is a spacious building; a building of large and vast extent; a great house, nay, a great city, nay, a great kingdom from the rising of the sun to the setting of the same—east, west, north, and south (Matt. 8:11). It is true, in comparison with the Devil's building, it is but small, a remnant, a little, little flock. But in itself considered, it is exceedingly wide and comprehensive. "I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands" (Rev. 7:9).

3. It is a high building. Though part of it be here below, yet the top of it is as high as heaven. There it is that the glorious angels are and the spirits of just men made perfect—all of this building. And then for those that belong to it that are below, their aims and desires are high. Their hopes and expectations are high. Their affections and conversations are above. "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20). They trample on the great things of the world as dirt, as Moses did. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter" (Heb. 11:24).

4. It is a holy building (Eph. 2:21). "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16). Every building is not a temple. The church is God's temple. The temple was a place set apart for God—from all other uses for holy uses. So "the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself" [Ps. 4:3]. And it is our duty to set ourselves apart to be for Him, wholly, solely. This temple

is called a house of prayer (Isa. 56:7). Holiness to the Lord is written on the front of this building. It is the house that He dwells in. "His foundation is in the holy mountains. The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob" (Ps. 87:1–2). "For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it" (132:13–14).

5. It is a living building. No other is so. The same who are quickened are "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Eph. 2:20). The foundation is a living foundation, and the superstructure is a living superstructure (1 Peter 1:4–5). All the materials in this building are men and women made spiritually alive—quickened with divine quickenings, such as once were dead in trespasses and sins but are now otherwise, alive to God. Oh, make this sure to yourselves.

6. It is a light building. This is one thing that makes a building pleasant and comfortable: many and large windows. All the world besides is in darkness. It is the church only that has the true light. As Egypt and Goshen: "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" [Eph. 5:8].

There are many things about which men are in the dark till they are in this building—as, about God, His glorious excellences and perfections; about the Lord Jesus, who He is, and what He is in Himself and to us; about the corruption of nature; about the evil of sin, the vanity of the creature; and [about] the reality of invisible things, heaven, hell. In all these grace enlightens. The Devil's building is a dark building, called the kingdom of darkness (Col. 1:13).

7. It is a secure, a safe building. Other buildings are exposed to wind and weather and water, to fire, to assaults and batteries,

but this is safe from all peril and danger (Matt. 16:18). Men in all ages and generations have been heaving at the church of God and seeking to overthrow it, but it has hitherto been in vain and to no purpose, and will be so still (Psalm 2). The church of God is such a building as the ark was (1 Peter 3:20–21).

8. It is a spreading, growing building. “All the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord” [Eph. 2:21]. It grows larger by the addition of those to it who will be saved. It grows better as to light and knowledge, as to gifts and graces. Amen! The Lord increase it more and more. It increases slowly—church work is slow work—but sure, though amid much opposition, as in Ezra’s time.

In some places, where a while ago there were but two or three houses, there is now a great town. And is it not so (and would to the Lord it were so more and more) as to the growth and progress of religion? In many towns and families whose ignorance and profaneness ruled a few years since, now God is worshipped and Christ, and His truths and ways are owned and professed.

[Our Duty to This Building]

Show what is our duty in reference to this building.

1. To see that we have a secure place and standing in it. As it is a great privilege to be of that body and tree whereof Christ is the head and root, so it is a great privilege to be of that building whereof Christ is the foundation.

It is certain [that] all that adhere to it in an outward, visible profession are not of it. The moss and the ivy cleave close to the walls of a house, but they are not on the foundation. So the hypocrite. There is a great deal of difference between such a one and the true stones (1 John 2:19).

All the true stones in this building are living stones (1 Peter 2:5). What life have you? They are a habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. 2:22). Are you so? Rather, does not the unclean spirit dwell in you and rule in you (Luke 11:21–26)?

But, how may it be done?

I answer: We must be sure we are fetched out of the quarry of a natural condition by regenerating grace. There is much to do in this work—the dust flies in the face of him that hews, but it must be done. There is no other way.

We must by faith receive Christ Jesus the Lord, make Him our foundation, rest and rely on Him for righteousness, acceptance, and salvation, cleaving to Him with full purpose of heart.

Having done so, we must build up ourselves in our most holy faith, growing in grace, adding to faith, virtue. If we grow into Christ more and more, we are certainly in Him (Jude 20–21).

2. To seek as much as in us lies the good of the building. If we can do nothing else, we can pray for it (Ps. 122:3, 6), for “the peace of Jerusalem.” Peace within itself, that differences may be healed. The cement or mortar is love. It is said that all the stones in Solomon’s temple were so ordered that they looked like one stone. Peace from enemies, open, secret, covered, uncovered.

Our prayers must be seconded with our endeavors. Can we do nothing toward its enlargement, its establishment, its repair?

CHAPTER 2

Christ Is Our Food, and All True Believers Feed on Him and Are Fed with Him

I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

—JOHN 6:51

There are several things to be learned out of these words:

- I. That Jesus Christ is bread.
- II. That this bread has sundry¹ special properties which belong to it and to no other.
- III. That it is our duty to eat of this bread.
- IV. That they that truly eat of this bread will live forever.

Jesus Christ Is Bread

There are several things by which He is set forth in the Scriptures, and among the rest, [as] bread. Those who heard Him say that He was bread and that they must eat Him were offended. It was a hard saying, and they could not hear it (v. 60). The reason was they understood it carnally, and they should have understood it spiritually—just as the papists do by another of His sayings, “This is My body.” He says also, “I am

1. *Sundry*: various.

the vine,” [and,] “I am the door”—and must these be understood literally? It cannot be. He is the head of a great body and the foundation of a great house. Literally? No, spiritually. So He is bread. He Himself says so.

You know bread is some kind of corn, rye, or wheat or barley, or the like, thrashed and ground, kneaded and baked, and then it is food for us. We eat it and are nourished by it. So Christ: He is spiritual bread.

He was thrashed and ground in His suffering and dying, and that was necessary in order to Him being made bread for us: “I give my flesh.” “It behooved Christ to suffer” (Luke 24:46). It was necessary it should be so, in order to the satisfying of God’s justice, without which we could have no nourishment, no comfort to our souls. Without blood, no remission. There was death in the threatening, and therefore His heel must be bruised, or the serpent’s head would not have been broken. Therefore, it concerns us all to be acquainted with Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2). This was Paul’s chief study, and it should be ours.

The sufferings and death of Christ are the food of our souls. Everything that has life must have food to support that life. It cannot live without food. So it is with our souls. They can no more live without food than our bodies can. Take the food away, and you take the life away. Adam in innocency had all the trees in the garden given him, save one, that the fruit thereof might be food to him, that is, to his body. And as for his soul, God Himself immediately was the life and strength and maintenance of it. But when we find he fell from God, all supplies of that kind were forever cut off, and he must have perished everlastingly if some new nourishment had not been provided for him. Now that new nourishment was the seed of the woman bruised, and therefore God revealed it to him immediately, even before He pronounced sentence (Genesis 3).

[The Properties of the Bread]

Notice the properties of the bread:

1. It is the bread of God. “The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world” ([John 6:]33). Not the bread which God feeds on Himself, and yet in a sense He is so (Matt. 3:17; 17:5). He is satisfied in Him and with Him. But He is the bread which He has provided for us to feed on, as the Lamb of God (John 1:29). He knew we could never have thought of such a way of nourishment for ourselves. No, not if we had all the angels in heaven to help us, and therefore He did it (Gen. 22:13–14; Job 33:24; Ps. 89:10). As He is a foundation of God’s laying, so He is bread of God’s providing.

Was the bread made of corn for our bodies our own contrivance? No. Who could have devised such a thing? It is the appointment of our heavenly Father, and a wise and gracious appointment it is (Gen. 1:29). So Christ, the bread of life, is of God’s providing.

2. It is given bread. Given by God the Father—“My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven” ([John 6:]32). The same that contrived [also] gave freely and of His own accord, without our asking or seeking. It was a choice gift (John 3:16). It was the unspeakable gift (2 Cor. 9:15). Oh, be sensible of this love and give thanks. Forget not this above all His benefits! “Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” [Ps. 8:4].

This bread is given by the Son Himself. It was His own act and deed to give Himself to be bread for us. “My flesh which I will give for the life of the world.” It was a wonder He should ever yield to such a motion when it was made to Him, but He did it readily, at the first word. “Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart” [40:7–8]. Such love He had for us

and for our redemption and salvation (Eph. 5:2). And should not we then readily and cheerfully give ourselves to Him—all we are, have, or can do? Can we bestow ourselves better?

3. It is living bread. “I am the living bread that came down from heaven.” All other bread is a dead thing, but this bread lives. It was dead, but it is alive and lives forevermore (Rev. 1:18). And it is well for us that it is so, for He ever lives to make intercession for us. That is the work and business of His life (Heb. 7:25).

4. It is the bread of life ([John 6:]48). Not only living itself, but giving life to us. No other bread does so. Other bread maintains life, but where is the bread that gives life? This bread gives life. It makes those to live that were dead. It is no sooner received by a hand of faith but the man is alive—alive to God, which is the best life we can live in this world.

5. It is manna. Manna was the bread which God gave the Israelites from heaven, fresh every morning; and dainty bread it was. It came down in a dew. It was small, round, and white, and the time of gathering it was the morning.

This manna was a type of Christ, the true manna. As that came down from heaven, so did He; that in a dew, He in the dew of the gospel. As that was little, round, and white, so is He: little, in His humiliation; round, in His eternity, without beginning of days or end of life; white, in His spotless innocence. As the time for gathering that was in the morning, so of this: “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth” [Eccl. 12:1]. As that fed the Israelites while in the wilderness, so this feeds our souls while we are in the wilderness of this world. It ceases in Canaan.

6. It is meat indeed ([John 6:]55). It is solid and substantial meat. Not the shadow of meat, but true bread (v. 32). All the things in this world are, to a soul, like the picture of the world with which the Devil tempted our Lord Jesus—delusive and unsatisfactory. “Wherefore,” then, “do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.” Mix faith with this and labor accordingly (John 6:27).

It is suitable meat. It is no meat if it be not suitable. Every creature is maintained with food suited to it (Gen. 3:14). Now nothing is suitable food to our souls but Jesus Christ. Nothing else is suitable to their nature. Spiritual beings must have spiritual food. All things under the sun are carnal. He was a fool that bid his soul feast on what was in his barn (Luke 12:16). Nor is anything else suited to the necessities of our souls. Two things our souls have need of—righteousness and strength. And where are these to be had, but with Him (Isa. 45:24)? We have need of food that will be physic² too, and such food is Christ (Ezek. 47:12). Sweet meat (Song 2:3), the fruit of His death, resurrection, ascension (1 Peter 2:3), gracious, or sweet. Everything in Christ is sweet to a believing soul: His promises, pardons, offices, ordinances, comforts, communion. His word is sweeter than honey (Ps. 119:103). His love is sweeter than wine (Song 1:2). His presence is sweeter than marrow (Ps. 63:5). In a word, His mouth is sweetness, and all He is delights (Song 5:16).

[It is] satisfying meat. A man may surfeit³ with the world, but he can never be satisfied with the world. A man may be satisfied with Christ, but he can never be surfeited with Christ.

2. *Physic*: medicine.

3. *Surfeit*: be indulged.

Compare Isaiah 55:2 with Psalm 36:8—abundantly satisfied, satisfied and oversatisfied, satisfied and satisfied again. This is the excellency of spiritual dainties, that the more a man feeds on them, the more he would have, and yet he has a kind of satisfaction in what he has, such as causes him to say, “Return unto thy rest, O my soul” (Ps. 116:7). He has union with Christ, yet he would have more and nearer union. He longs to be with Him.

Now all this is said to draw out your desires and to provoke your appetite to this meat. And does it not prevail? Do you not feel your need of Christ? Are you not hungering and thirsting after righteousness? If you are, blessed are you, for you will be filled. If not, you will be sent away empty (Matt. 5:6; Luke 1:53).

[The Duty to Eat the Bread]

It is our duty to eat of this rare bread. “If any man eat”—implying, if we do not eat of it, we are like to be never the better for it. It will do us no good to hear of it only. We have heard a great deal of Christ, but what will that avail us, except we believe what we hear? It will do us no good to look on it only. Will looking on meat nourish us? No, we must eat if we will be nourished. Will looking on Christ and seeing others feed on Him feed and nourish you? No, though it is the best fare in the world.

What is meant by eating? I answer: believing ([John 6:]35). Of all the comparisons by which believing is set forth in Scripture, none is like this of eating Christ and feeding on Christ.

Before we eat, we feel a need of meat and have a desire toward it—an earnest desire [that] we must have it. Give a man what else you will, “No,” says he, “I must have meat.” As the Egyptians parted with all for bread, so it is with the soul. It sees its lost and undone condition in itself by reason of guilt,

and not sees it only but feels it, and thereupon must have Christ, as the prodigal (Luke 15).

As in eating there is the taking of the meat, putting it into the mouth, and chewing and digesting it whereby it is made my own and turned into blood and spirits in my body, so in believing there is a particular application made of Christ and His merit and righteousness (Gal. 2:21). We may see and hear and smell at a distance, but that which we eat must be near us; that which nourishes must be made one with us. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts" (Eph. 3:17).

As after eating there is strength and vigor (Ps. 104:15, the staff of life), the desire satisfied, the body recruited, made able for work and burden, so on believing there follows spiritual strength, peace, comfort, joy, ability for duty, walking with God, working for God, which they that do not believe have not.

How is it proved to be the duty thus to do? I answer:

1. From the many calls and invitations to it both in the Old Testament and in the New (Isa. 55:1; Matt. 11:28; John 7:37). If His mind were not [that] we should come and eat, He would not in this manner invite and call. See Mark 10:49. He calls; therefore, we may come.

2. From the many commands and injunctions to it, absolutely requiring it of us. He commands; therefore, we must come. We are under guilt, the greatest guilt of all other, if we do not (1 John 3:23). Oh, bethink yourself, and do as He commands. You have broken other commands; in this be obedient. It is to eat of the best meat that ever was prepared. When the serpent (namely, the Devil) assailed Eve, that which gave him advantage was that the thing he moved her to was only to eat, and the fruit was such as was pleasant. Yet all the persuasions of heaven and earth will not prevail with some people to eat of this fruit—not forbidden, but commanded fruit; not meat

that will poison, but meat that will save them. Oh, then take and eat. Receive Christ Jesus the Lord and believe in Him. Think [that] you hear Him saying to you, “Eat, oh friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved” (Song 5:1). Shall I inquire what bread do you live on? Bread of idleness, deceit, violence, carnal pleasure, your own duties and performances! It will be gravel (Prov. 20:17).

[The Profit of Eating This Bread]

They that truly eat of this bread will live forever. What more likely motive could possibly be used to prevail with us: eat, and live. Eat, and live forever! Everlasting life will certainly be the portion of all those that by a true and a lively faith receive Christ Jesus the Lord, who eat His flesh and drink His blood, feed on Him. But who says so? He that will certainly make it good—the Amen, the faithful and true Witness. It is repeated often ([John 6:]35, 46, 47) with a solemn asseveration. He has it. It is as surely His as if now in glory. Now, do you know what this living forever is, what it means? It is to be saved, delivered from the second death in hell and made eternally happy in heaven. And will not this allure us? God said to Adam, “In the day you eat, you will die the death, surely die.” Christ says to us, “In the day you eat, living you will live. You will surely live.” Eating ruined us; eating saves us.

Inference

1. Then the bread spoken of in this chapter is not sacramental bread nor the eating here spoken of sacramental eating, as the papists would have it, to prove transubstantiation. For the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper was not yet instituted when Christ spoke this. And, therefore, it had been impossible for His hearers to understand what He meant.

Many do eat the sacramental bread that do not live forever, as 1 Corinthians 10:4.

Many do live forever that never eat sacramental bread, as, besides all elect infants dying in infancy or childhood, the converted thief on the cross, and many another. Yet to eat the sacramental bread is certainly duty: "Do this." And for any that are adult to live in the neglect of it when they have a call to it and opportunity for it is a great sin and must be reckoned for. Nay, it is comfortable, sweet, profitable, gainful duty. It is a feast, and that is the reason our Lord Jesus has appointed the outward elements to be bread and wine, that by eating and drinking them by faith, might be sealed to us pardon of sin, peace with God, right and title to heaven.

2. Then see the reason why multitudes perish eternally. They will not eat of this bread. Their mouths are out of taste to it. They are filled with worldly trash. If he that eats lives eternally, he that does not eat dies eternally. This is gospel (Mark 16:16).

3. Then you that have eaten in God's name, take the comfort of it. (I mean, that are true believers.) Eternal life is yours.

4. Then be exhorted all of you to eat of this bread. We must eat often, daily.

CHAPTER 3

Christ Is the Root, and Believers Are the Branches

I am the vine, ye are the branches.

—JOHN 15:5

These are the words of our Lord Jesus which He spoke to His disciples, wherein He says concerning Himself, “I am the vine,” and concerning them, “Ye are the branches.” “I am the vine”—namely, the root of the vine. Christ and true believers are a great tree. And, among all other trees, He has pitched on two to set forth Himself and them, a vine here and an olive tree in Romans 11. Both of them are choice trees and of great use, bearing excellent fruit. Now, the root is Christ, and believers are the branches of that tree. These two, the root and the branches, make the tree as the head and members do the body (see 1 Cor. 12:12).

Doctrine: Jesus Christ and true believers make one great tree, whereof He is the root and they are the branches.

I waive at present that it is a vine, having had occasion lately to speak of the church under that notion from Isaiah 27:2–3, and therefore I only say it is a tree, a great tree, whereof He is the root, [and] believers are the branches.

[The Branches Are True Believers]

Show that they that are in this relation are true believers. Are not hypocrites branches? Does not baptism engraft all that come under that ordinance into Christ? In a sense it does, into His visible body. Many grafts are grafted that come to nothing, never knit, never fasten, and so wither and die. Yet the stock remains alive and good and breaks forth again. So it is here. Only true believers, such as are called and chosen and faithful, are the true branches.

1. They, and none but they, have communion with Christ. Elect persons not yet called may be said to have a remote potential union, being in the decree. External visible professors have a kind of seeming union, such as a sprig or branch which is tied to a tree with a string or with¹, only may be said to have—which is another sort of union than that of the true branches. The true branches are so in it as to be of it, but so is not such a branch (1 John 2:19). Judas was constantly with Christ as the rest of the apostles were, tied both to Him and them by an external tie; yet all the while he was a limb of the Devil, a branch of the cursed root, not of Christ the true root.

Oh, then, see to this, that besides the outward there be an inward engrafting by a true act of faith.

2. They, and none but they, have spiritual life in them. We are all by nature dead in trespasses and sins, dead in law, dead in state. There is no spiritual life in us, none of the life of God (Eph. 4:13). We are alienated from it. We have natural life and live as men, but not otherwise. Just as in a tree, you may see it plainly in yonder great oak how many dead branches are there—branches, but dead. Such are all hypocrites in the tree

1. *With*: a slender flexible branch or twig, especially one used as a band or line.

Christ. They have none of Christ's Spirit dwelling in them, and therefore they have no life. It is the Spirit that quickens (1 Cor. 15:45). They have not the Son [and] therefore no life. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12).

It concerns us all to inquire, "What life have I? Am I alive to God?" The prodigal son was alive during his ramble, but not to his father. He was dead to him. Inquire what signs of life you have. Do you possess sense, motion, appetite?

3. They, and none but they, do bring forth fruit in Him. See verse 2: "Every branch in me that brings not forth fruit." To bring forth fruit is to do that which is for the matter of it good, either toward men in works of justice, mercy, charity, or toward God in praying, hearing, sanctifying the Sabbath. Now all this a hypocrite may do. Nay, he may do more than many a true Christian, but nothing of it in Christ. Here they part. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17). They do it by virtue of strength received from Him (John 15:5; 2 Cor. 2:5).

They bring forth fruit, aiming with a single eye at pleasing Him, to show forth His virtues and praises (1 Peter 2:9). And also, it is done trusting to His merit and mediation alone for acceptance (Philippians 3; 1 Peter 2:5). Now does any hypocrite do this? Can he say, as Paul, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21)?

4. They, and none but they, have heartily and unfeignedly consented to Him. This is it that makes Christ ours and us His: when we receive Him to ourselves (John 1:12) and give ourselves to Him (2 Cor. 8:5) on gospel terms. This puts us into Him. Now no hypocrite does this. He may profess to do it in word and tongue, but that is all.

5. They, and none but they, are owned by Him as true branches. To others He says, "Depart from Me. I know you not." "What, not know us? We have prophesied, eaten, and drank in Thy name" (Matt. 7:22–23; Luke 13:25–30). Though you have, yet, if workers of iniquity, depart.

Aye, but He calls the honest, upright, obedient, fruitful people His friends, His children, His brethren (John 15:7).

[What the Root Is to the Branches]

Show what kind of root Christ is to these branches:

1. A universal root. To all of them, Jew or Gentile, of whatever kindred or country or nation or language they be.

[1] To Old Testament saints. He was Abraham's root and David's root—a branch from them as man and yet a root to them as God-man. They were all in Him, all saved by Him.

[2] To New Testament saints. He was Peter's root and Paul's root, and your root and my root if we be true believers.

There are two universal roots, and these are the two Adams. The first man, Adam, was a common root to us all as men and women. God planted him a noble vine, but he degenerated and became to all his posterity a root of bitterness, bearing gall and wormwood, sin and wrath. When he fell, we all fell. But God was pleased to appoint us a second Adam, another root—Jesus Christ—that whosoever believes in Him might not perish (1 Cor. 15:22).

2. An unseen root. The root of a tree lies invisible, out of sight. We see it not. The tree we see, but not the root. So it is with Christ that saves us (1 Peter 1:8). He was visible many years when being made flesh He dwelt among us, but now we see Him no more with bodily eyes, though by an eye of faith we do see Him, as it is said of Moses (Heb. 11:27). The root of other trees is out of sight below. This root is out of sight above.

The church is a great tree inverted. Its root is in heaven; its branches, here on earth, multitudes of them. It is true there are branches in heaven with their root.

3. An unsightly root. In the root of a tree there is no kind of beauty or comeliness—no greenness as there is in the branches or fruit, nothing to commend it to the eye. It is a despicable thing. So was Christ our root in His humiliation (Isa. 53:2). View Him in His birth in the stable; in His life, not having [any]where to lay His head; but especially in His death, hanging on the tree. Would anyone think Him to be the Son of God and Savior of the world? Allude to 1 Samuel 10:27.

4. A strong root. This is one excellency of a root, that it be firm and stable, sufficient to bear the weight and burden of the tree and branches that grow on it (Rom. 11:18). Our Lord Jesus is a strong savior (Ps. 89:19; Jer. 50:34; Heb. 7:25). We have need of such a one:

[First,] to satisfy the justice of God for the sins we are guilty of by undergoing the weight of His infinite wrath. This He did, and no one else could (Ps. 40:6–8). [Second,] to support and succor us under our temptations. This also He is able to do (Heb. 2:18). The world tempts, but be of good cheer, “I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). The Devil also, but “the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly” (Rom. 16:20). [Third,] to save and deliver us from all our enemies, wicked men, death, and the grave (1 Cor. 15:55–56).

5. A sappy root. This is another excellency. If a root be withered and dry, the tree cannot flourish. How should it? See Psalm 104:16: “The trees of the LORD are full of sap.”

The sap of this great tree that keeps it green and flourishing is the Spirit, the Spirit of grace. Now Christ the root had the Spirit without measure (John 3:34; Col. 1:19), according

to the promise (Isa. 11:2). He had a fullness of all the gifts, graces, and comforts of the Spirit: knowledge, wisdom, faith, love, meekness, patience, humility, self-denial. He had them all in perfection as God-man. There was in Him no mixture of the contrary corruptions.

6. A supplying root. The sap which the root has, it has it not for itself but for the branches. The branches suck and draw from it and so are maintained in their greenness and fruitfulness. Though the root have it, yet if it do not communicate it, the tree is none the better. The Lord Jesus Christ is a communicative root. What He has of the Spirit He has for us (John 1:16; Ps. 68:18; cf. Eph. 4:8).

As the sun has light; the springs and fountains, water; the mother, milk in her breasts—not for themselves—so it is here. He is our Joseph, our great corn master. Joseph did not lay up for his own use, but to supply others. See His gracious invitation to poor sinners to come to Him for what they want (Isa. 55:1–3; Matt. 11:28; John 7:37; Rev. 3:18). And let us come to Him accordingly.

Exhortation 1

Suppose we are branches, true branches, in Christ the vine. What is to be done?

1. You have cause to be very thankful to the great Husbandman that has grafted you into Him.

Consider (1), if He had not done it, it had never been done. We could not have engrafted ourselves. Godly relations, ministers, could not have done it. No hand but His could have performed it.

(2) What misery it frees us from. Hereby we are cut off from the wild olive, from the Devil's stock and family, from the bondage of his vassals (Rom. 11:24).

(3) What privileges it entitles us to. It is a great dignity and honor to be a branch of such a noble vine. Now you may with comfort call God Father and come to Him with boldness, assured of due supplies, of all things needful both for life and godliness. Hereby you have right and title to the heavenly inheritance. Your root will certainly bring you where He is.

(4) How unworthy you were, and how unlikely for such advancement. Perhaps of mean extraction, less than the least; perhaps a crooked piece. There are but a few, and you are one (John 14:22). Be not high-minded (Rom. 11:14).

(5) The time when He did it. Perhaps early in your days. If so, the time was a time of love (Ezek. 16:18).

(6) By what means. The word, perhaps occasionally heard; the rod, perhaps working with the word. Oh say, as David, “Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits” (Ps. 103[:1–2]). Say, as Paul, “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever” (1 Tim. 1:17).

2. Your duty is to take the comfort of it to your souls daily. It is the will of God that His people should be a comforted people. And what will comfort, if this will not: Christ is the vine, and I am one of the branches? If so (1), then the Father will certainly take care of me, to purge me and prune me, seasonably, for my good ([John 15:]1–2).

(2) Then I will be sure not to be cut off nor cast out (John 17:11–12). Dead branches are easily broken off, nay, blown off; but not living ones—that is, provided I am a fruitful branch. And He will make us fruitful. As it is our duty, so it is His promise.

(3) Then when I die, I will be transplanted into God’s paradise.

(4) Then He will reckon with those that lop at these branches (Ps. 80:12).

3. You must abide in Him. “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (John 15:4–7). There are in these verses three arguments to move us to it. While we abide in Him, He will abide in us. It will be a means of our fruitfulness, and we will have what we will for asking.

What is it to abide in Christ?

(1) To abide in the truths of Christ, to hold them fast and not to let them go (2 Tim. 1:13). God only knows how we may be tried as to this matter. The way of popery is an erroneous way in doctrinals. It is called the lie, and how many poor souls are poisoned by it! But beware, “lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness” (2 Peter 3:17).

(2) To abide in the righteousness of Christ. Our own righteousness and Christ’s righteousness are in competition. Now which are you for? The Pharisee was for his own (Luke 18). Paul was for Christ’s (Philippians 3). We have need to look to this daily, in everything.

(3) To abide in the love of Christ (John 15:9; Jude 21). The way to continue in the love of Christ is to continue in His obedience (John 14:23).

(4) To abide in the fellowship of Christ. Fellowship with Christ is to be had in the use of His holy ordinances (Song 1:7–8).

4. We must abound in fruit bearing. This He expects from all the branches that are in Him. Leaves will not serve the turn. It is fruit that God looks for. Yet there must be leaves also, a visible profession (Rom. 10:10).

(1) There must be good fruit (Matt. 3:10), the fruits of the Spirit: “Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” (Gal. 5:22[–23]).

(2) Much good fruit (John 15:8). A little will not serve, though good. It must bear a proportion to our standing. There is more looked for from those that have stood long than from others (Heb. 5:12). It must also bear a proportion to our supplies. Where most cost has been bestowed, most means used, there should be most fruit.

(3) It must be fruit in season (Ps. 1:3), according to the present circumstances of our condition (Eccl. 7:14).

Oh that I knew what to say to move to this! The great controversy that God has with us at this day is about our fruit. So little is found that we have reason to fear cutting down (Isa. 5:7; Luke 13:7–9).

5. There is duty lying on us also toward our fellow branches, which is:

(1) As much as in us lies to live in love and peace with them, not envying, judging, despising, boasting—the higher, the lower; the bigger, the lesser; the stronger, the weaker. All branches are not top branches. There should be no provoking, rubbing against, fretting one another (Gal. 5:6).

(2) To promote their growth and fruitfulness. Everyone in his place and way. One means of doing this is by Christian communion (Heb. 10:25).

Exhortation 2

Suppose we are not yet true branches. Is there no hope?

None at all if we continue in that condition (Eph. 2:12). If without Christ, we are without hope. But if we look about us in time, the matter may be amended. Oh, then be persuaded today, while it is called today.

1. Acquaint yourself with the terms of the change, on what terms you may be Christ's and Christ yours. And accept of them. Many are ignorant and so perish (John 4:10). The terms are:

(1) You must be willing to come off from the old stock, the service of sin. All sin must be renounced. No more fruit must be brought forth to it.

(2) You must assent and consent to a new master. You must take His yoke on you. And what harm is there in all this? Oh, do it.

2. Apply yourself to the great Husbandman, which is the Father. Beg of Him to graft you into this vine, to bestow His Spirit and grace on you, to be a living principle in you.

3. Assent and consent to the gospel.

CHAPTER 4

Christ Is Raiment to Us, and It Is Our Duty to Put Him On

But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.

—ROMANS 13:14

The same that was said when our Lord told His hearers He must be their food, and they must eat His flesh—this is a hard saying (John 6:60)—may be said concerning this of Paul here: “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.” Is Christ a garment, a coat? It seems He is.

Food and raiment are the two great requisites for our bodies, which, if we have we are commanded to be therewith content (1 Tim. 6:8). The same two things must be had also for the soul: food and raiment—spiritual food and spiritual raiment. And what is that? I answer: Jesus Christ. He is our food, and He is our raiment. And if we have Him, we may well be content, nay, joyful and cheerful and thankful. But, alas! How many are there that mind not these things, that are carking and caring what they will eat, and what they will drink, and wherewithal they will be clothed, as to their bodies, their perishing part, but mind not what becomes of their souls, their precious, their heaven-born souls, whether they be fed or no, clad or no.

The apostle here would have it to be otherwise: “Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.” But in Galatians 3:27, he speaks as if

all that were baptized had put on Christ already: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

There are two ways of putting Him on: in profession, in word and tongue; in power, in deed and truth. Of the former it is intended in Galatians. So we have all put Him on when we were baptized. Of the latter in Romans. Oh, that we would all be persuaded so to put Him on.

Show:

- I. What of Christ is the garment that we must put on.
- II. What are the properties of Christ as a garment, what kind of garment He is.
- III. Why and how we are to put Him on.

What of Christ Is the Garment That We Must Put On

Two things in Christ are the garment: His merit and righteousness—we must put on this for our justification—[and] His Spirit and grace—we must put on this for our sanctification.

Justification and sanctification are our two great concerns. It is necessary that we be justified and that we be sanctified. Now neither of these can possibly be had otherwise than by putting on Christ. There is no justification but by His merit, no sanctification but by His Spirit. See 1 Corinthians 6:11. And therefore should we not, by all means, put Him on?

1. His merit and righteousness for justification. Justification has two things in it:

(1) Acquitting us from guilt. We have all sinned, have we not? Yes. And is not God thereby offended? Yes. And must He not be atoned and pacified, His justice satisfied? Yes. But how? By anything that we ourselves can do or suffer? No. By anything that any of our fellow creatures can? No. How then? Only by the dying and rising again of the blessed Jesus, "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our

justification” (Rom. 4:25). His blood alone satisfies and pacifies. Therefore, His blood alone justifies. And that blood is the garment that we must put on, else no atonement. Put it on! What is that? Hear, talk of it? No. Stand by and look on it? No. Hearing of clothes is not putting on clothes. Looking at clothes is not. So here. To put Him on is to receive and apply Him to ourselves by a true and lively faith. Believing Him both able and willing to redeem and save me and thereupon coming to Him and closing with Him, and on my so doing, persuading myself that God for His sake does forgive me, and thereupon comforting myself, being of good cheer. It is called receiving the atonement (Rom. 5:1, 9–11). Till this be done, your soul is naked in the sight of God. The shame of your nakedness appears—that is, your sins are all on the score. You are guilty, and God is angry. And if you should die in that condition, you will be certainly lost, and that forever. Does it not concern us then to put on Christ, to believe in Him for justification from the guilt of sin?

(2) Accepting of us as righteous. Some will have this to be no part of our justification, but the former only. I think justification includes this also, according to the definition in the [Westminster] Catechism.

“Wherein he pardons all our sins and accepts of us, as righteous in his sight.” This Paul says he labored in (2 Cor. 5:9). Now how may this be? “In the beloved” (Eph. 1:6)—that is, in Christ, through His merit and righteousness alone. He has not only prevailed by what He did and suffered and is doing for us that we may be forgiven and not come into condemnation, but, moreover, that we may come into favor, be loved and owned, be kissed and embraced, our persons accepted, our performances accepted. And how? For any worth or worthiness that is in us or them? No. Only in His name and for His sake and through His merit. In order to which, we must put

Him on, as Jacob put on the clothes of his brother Esau (Gen. 27:15) when he came for the blessing. Jacob was in no fault. He did not come for a pardon. No, he came for a blessing. But unless he had put on Esau's clothes, he had not had that blessing. But having them on, he had it. "And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed" (v. 27). So here, we must put on the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, His merit and righteousness. We must come in His name. We must plead what He has done and suffered for us as our elder brother. And then, "See, the smell of my son"; and then, "A blessing, else none." Therefore, God "give thee of the dew of heaven, and... of the earth" (v. 28). See also in the story concerning Joseph and his brethren (Gen. 42:20; 43:5). No Benjamin, no corn. Now our Benjamin is Christ, or rather, God's Benjamin, His Son, our Brother. In Him, He is well pleased, and in Him only (Matt. 3:17; 17:5). If we come without Him, we come without our errand.

2. His Spirit and grace for our sanctification. Besides the clothes we are to appear in before God, which are Christ's righteousness alone, there are clothes also that we must appear in before men, yes, and before God too. And those are Christ's Spirit and grace, the new nature, the divine nature. We must be new creatures (2 Cor. 5:17). New within, and new without; new in heart, and new in life; putting off the old man, and putting on the new (Eph. 4:24). Now that new man is Christ. If we have not His Spirit, we are none of His (Rom. 8:9). Him, therefore, and His Spirit we must put on, His image and likeness, being as He was (Heb. 7:26). Holy, doing as He did, walking as He walked (1 John 2:6). Note how it comes in here (Rom. 13:12-13). Cast off the works of darkness, rioting,

drunkenness, and put on—what? Sobriety, temperance? No, but all in one: the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus, the Savior; Christ, anointed to be so; Lord, to rule you.

What Kind of Garment Is the Lord Jesus Christ?

It is a great matter, especially with some, what kind of clothes we wear—that they be tight and fashionable and according to our rank and quality, rather above it than under it or below it or short of it. And most commonly those that are most curious and concerned about the clothing of their bodies are least curious and concerned what clothes their souls have. It is to them no matter what rags, what filthy rags, they appear in both before God and man.

Behold, I bring you tidings this day of brave clothes which may be yours, if you will—each of you—for the putting on. And those are the Lord Jesus Christ: His merit and righteousness to justify you; His Spirit and grace to sanctify you. What say you? Will you accept of them? Will you have them, put them on, wear them?

Tell us, first, what are their properties that should commend them to us?

In general, in Luke 15:22, it is called the best robe. Best indeed—no other is to be compared with it. Brown bread and the gospel are good fare. Rags and Christ's righteousness are good clothing. It is first in worth and excellency and first in order of time—though not as to our persons, yet as to our nature in Adam.

1. The Lord Jesus Christ is a costly garment, the dearest and most costly garment that ever was. We may judge of its excellency by its price. Some people are extraordinarily profuse about their clothes and are cautioned against it (1 Tim. 2:9; 1 Peter 3:3).

Lo, here is a costly robe indeed—not to us that must wear it (it costs us nothing but the accepting and putting it on), but to Him that made and prepared it. It cost Him dear. 'Ere the Lord Jesus Christ could be a suit of clothes for your soul to justify, sanctify, save you, He must be made a man. And so He was. He must die the death of the cross. And so He did. We read of Joseph's brethren dipping their brother's coat in a goat's blood and sending it to their father (Genesis 37); but our Joseph dipped the coat that was to be for us in His own blood (1 Peter 1:18–19). And does not this commend it to you? He clothed Himself with the rags of our nature that He might clothe us with the robe of His grace—nay, more than that: He was made sin for us, a curse for us, “that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13).

2. He is a comely garment. There are some persons whose clothes in the eyes of sober men are very uncomely: disfiguring rather than adorning the body; discovering rather than hiding their shame. But here is a garment comely indeed, beautiful and lovely and glorious—a garment that makes the soul that has it on amiable toward God. He is pleased with it and accepts of it.

The imputed righteousness of Christ does so. The implanted righteousness is called grace, that is, beauty. See what is said of one particular grace (1 Peter 3:4–5). Could we but see a soul out of Christ that has not put Him on yet, what guilt and filth it lies under, what dirty rags it has on—we should wonder how it could endure itself, much more how the pure and holy God does endure it, especially coming so near Him as sometimes they do in holy ordinances: “I will not smell in your solemn assemblies” (Amos 5:21). See Ezekiel 16 where is set forth both our miserable, loathsome condition by nature

(v. 4–8) and our lovely, amiable condition by grace (v. 10–14), though what is said is meant chiefly of their church privileges.

3. He is a large garment. The righteousness of Christ for justification is so. He is able to save to the uttermost. There is in Him merit enough to satisfy for all your sins, to pay all your debts. He has incense enough to perfume all your services. What is said of the bed is true of all the garments, of all our own righteousness: They are too short and too narrow (Isa. 28:20). Your nakedness appears through them.

The Spirit and grace of Christ for sanctification is so. As He forgives all your iniquities and has wherewithal, so He will heal all your diseases, mortify all your corruptions. There is a perfection of parts in sanctification. The whole man is renewed, though not yet wholly (1 Thess. 5:23), but as light in a morning—all the sky over.

4. He is a lasting garment, nay, everlasting. The Israelites had clothes that lasted forty years and did not wax old. That was a great while (Deut. 8:4). But here is a garment which lasts forever.

The righteousness of Christ for justification is everlasting righteousness (Dan. 9:24). There is a fountain of it that cannot be drawn dry—not a cistern, [but] a laver (Zechariah 13). As long as we will last sinning, the righteousness of Christ will last satisfying. Abuse not this, at your peril: “Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid” (Rom. 6:1[–2]).

The grace of Christ is lasting too. Where it is in truth, it is in perseverance. “Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing” (Ps. 92:13–14). We read of two sorts of clothes, Genesis 3: one, of Adam and Eve’s making aprons of fig leaves (v. 7); another, of God’s making coats of skins (v. 21). There is a great deal of

difference in warmth and in duration. The former may represent our own righteousness; the latter, Christ's. The beasts whose skins were used died.

5. He is a white garment. He is expressly said to be so (Rev. 3:18). When the angels appeared at any time in human shape, that was the color their clothes were of (Mark 16:5; Acts 1:10). So, when our Lord was transfigured (Matt. 17:2). The whiteness signifies two things:

(1) Innocency and purity. Every justified person clothed with Christ's righteousness is, as it were, innocent before God (Ps. 26:6). So the sanctified are in comparison with others, and it is their duty to labor to be so more and more.

(2) Joy and gladness (Eccl. 9:8). He that has put on Christ and is accepted of God has reason to rejoice all the days of his life. And he ought to do so (Phil. 4:4; Isa. 61:10).

The woman which John saw (Rev. 12:1) was clothed with the sun, a shining garment indeed. The priests under the law were clothed in white linen garments. And see Revelation 19:8: "The fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

6. He is the wedding garment of such we read (Matt. 22:12). It is to be understood of Christ's righteousness imputed. There is no welcome with God without it. It is to be understood also of His Spirit and grace implanted, a suitable frame of heart to gospel privileges. Put on Christ, and you have that. And will not all this prevail to make you in love with it?

How Must We Put on Christ?

Three things must be done:

1. There must be a work of conviction wrought on your soul. You must see your need of this clothing. Most people, as Laodicea, say they have need of nothing. And alas! They have

need of everything—particularly of good clothes, for they are naked. A sinful condition is a naked condition. Your body is perhaps well enough clothed, decently and warm. But your soul is naked and destitute and exposed [and] dirty and has nothing to hide it.

2. All that will have these fine clothes must come to Christ and buy them (Rev. 3:18; Isa. 55:1). In buying, there is parting with one thing and receiving another. Can you find in your heart to part with your rags in exchange for these good clothes? The rags of your sins (Rom. 13:12–14; Eph. 4:22–24). The rags of your own righteousness (Isa. 64:6; see Zech. 3:3–4). Were such an offer made you concerning other clothes, how gladly would it be accepted!

3. Having bought them, that is, made the bargain, and consented to the terms of having them, we must put them on and wear them. Not as a hat to put off to everyone we meet; not as a cloak to be worn only when we go abroad; but as your inner garment to be worn next [to] you, an upper garment, and, above all these, as your entire garment. Christ must be your all in all: your day clothes; your night clothes. Put Him on daily and duly, constantly and continually. It is a good meditation, when we are putting on our clothes, we must put on bowels of mercies (Col. 3:12), charity (v. 15), humility (1 Peter 5:5), meekness (3:4), or, which includes all, the Lord Jesus Christ. If so, when we die, we will put on better clothes of glory. Christ will never put them off that put Him on.

CHAPTER 5

Christ Is the Head; The Church Is His Body

And he is the head of the body, the church.
—COLOSSIANS 1:18

The union between Christ and His church is twofold:

1. Relative, like that between persons that are in relation mutually one toward another. Of which kind we have had an account of fourteen—as He is their husband, father, brother, friend, master, teacher, king, captain, physician, advocate, shepherd, bishop, inhabitant, keeper.

2. Real, of which kind there are several. This is the first.

Doctrine: That the Lord Jesus Christ is the head; and His church, the body.

There is such a kind of union between them and such a kind of relation as is between the head and the body. Bodies are of several sorts, whereof each have their several head.

1. There is the body politic. And so a kingdom is a body, and the head of that body is the king (Ps. 110:6). The church is a spiritual kingdom. The head and king of it, in that sense, is Christ.

2. There is the body natural, and that has a head joined to it and one and the same living soul animating that head and that body. They make together one living man. So here. The head is Christ. The body is the church. The living soul, which is one and still the same, animating this head and this body is the Spirit. So that Christ and His church, being endued with one and the same Spirit, make together one mystical body (1 Cor. 12:12–13).

What church is this meant of? Whether is it the church visible, consisting of all those good and bad that profess faith in Christ and obedience to Him, or the church invisible, called the church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven, including those only that are called and chosen and faithful and excluding others? I answer: Both in a different sense are to be reckoned Christ's body, and Christ, the head of both.

(1) In respect of external rule and government. So Christ is the head of the church visible, and the church visible is His body—nay, He is head of every man (1 Cor. 11:3).

All that call themselves Christians do profess, at least in word and tongue, to own the Scriptures as the rule of faith and manners. And what they declare we are to believe concerning God, that they say they do believe, and what the Scriptures declare to be duty required of man, that they say they will do.

And this profession makes them members at large of the great body, the church. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27)—that is, put on the profession of Christ. And we may plead it with them accordingly. Are not you a Christian, baptized into Christ? How dare you then to carry it at this rate?

(2) In respect of vital influence. So He is the head of the church invisible only, nay, only of those in it that are effectually called. Though the elect not yet called are to be reckoned His, and He, theirs, in purpose and decree, yet none but such

to whom it is actually given to receive Him to themselves and to give themselves to Him (Hos. 1:11), appointing to themselves one head, making it their own act and deed, are to be considered His body.

As in the natural body, besides the integral parts such as hands, arms, legs, back, breast, etc., which make the body, there are oftentimes wens,¹ warts, moles, and other excrescences, which are covered over with the same skin and are fed and nourished after a sort with the same nourishment and yet are not true parts or members of the body. So it is here. There are many that stick, as it were, to the body of Christ, covered over with the same skin of profession, partake in the same ordinances, and yet after all are but wens and warts and moles. They are no living members. They have no true union nor any true communion with the Lord Jesus. They are among us but not of us. And the day is coming when they will be made manifest, on which account the gospel is compared to a net. See Matthew 13:47–50.

There are but two heads of all mankind: Christ and the Devil. If you are not a member of Christ, you are a limb of the Devil, that spirit that works in the children of disobedience. Oh, tremble at the thought of it for yourself, for your near and dear relations, your children. And make sure your true union with Christ as your head. Make sure that you have His Spirit.

Show:

- I. What kind of head Christ is.
- II. What kind of body the church is.
- III. What kind of members of that body we should every one of us be.

1. *Wens*: cysts.

What Kind of Head Is Christ?

This I will lay before you in several particulars:

1. Christ is to His church the only sovereign and supreme head. The head has the preeminence in the body. It is placed by nature uppermost, and all the rest of the members below it. The Lord Jesus is uppermost, above all and over all (Rom. 9:5). It follows here that in all things He might have the preeminence. The preeminence is His above all persons in all things (Ps. 45:2; Song 5:10). It is our duty then in all things to give Him that which is His due. Let nothing rob Him of it. “If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy” (Ps. 137:6)—[in] Hebrew, “the head of my joy.” Make the Lord Jesus the head of your love, hope, desire, delight. Many stand in competition with Him, as the world, sin, self, the devil. Also, the Antichrist. He styles himself the head of the church universal, but it is a usurpation. The church has no head but Christ—no ministerial head. None is deputed by Him for that office, Himself alone being sufficient for it.

We do acknowledge, in a sense, the supreme magistrate may be styled the head, that is, the governor in external matters of that part of the church which is in his dominions, as the head of the woman is said to be the man (1 Cor. 11:3)—that is, her superior to rule over her in the Lord. But such a governor of the universal church, we know none.

2. Christ is a suitable head, a head suitable to the body of which He is head. The body has the human nature; therefore, so has He (Heb. 2:14). It was necessary it should be so, that the same nature that sinned might suffer. He may here take occasion to adore the infinite wisdom of the Father, that contrived this way, and the infinite love of the Son, that would stoop so low (Ps. 8:4–5).

3. Christ is a supplying head. He nourishes and cherishes (Eph. 5:29–30). The head in the body supplies the body with two things especially:

With spirits. It is the seat of spirits, from whence they are derived to all the parts as there is need and occasion. The Lord Jesus is said to have the seven spirits (Rev. 3:1), that is, abundance of the Spirit (cf. John 3:34; Col. 1:19; Eph. 1:23), and that to communicate (Ps. 133:2; Eph. 1:16). To Him, therefore, we must have recourse.

With guidance and direction. The office of the head is to show the body whither to go and what to do. There, the eyes are seated, as in a watchtower. See Revelation 5:6: “Seven eyes.” Whereinsoever we have need at any time of guidance, we must look to Him, as Paul (Heb. 12:6). And we have a promise: “I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye” (Ps. 32:8).

4. A sympathizing head. He is such a head as has a fellow-feeling with all His true members, even the meanest of them, in all the evils that befall them. In the evils of temptation (Heb. 2:17–18; 4:15–16); in the evils of affliction (Isa. 63:9); in the evils of persecution (Acts 9:4). When the toe was but trod on, the head cried out, “Why persecutest thou me?” This affords great comfort and encouragement, good ground of hope that He will arise for their rescue (Isa. 63:9); also in their joys and comforts (Matt. 25:40).

5. A safe head. If a man be fallen into a pit of water, as long as his head is kept above, he is well. Whatever befalls the body, the head is above, out of the reach of gunshot. It is well for him, it is well for us, that it is so. Men may strike at His headship, but “why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?... Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion” (Ps. 2:1, 6). Christ is far above all principality and power and

might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come (Eph. 1:21).

6. A saving head. Being safe Himself, He will in due time make us safe too (Eph. 5:23). He is Jesus (Matt. 1:21)—a savior. It is His prayer, “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me” (John 17:24). Though the head and members are parted awhile, yet they will be together forever. Salvation is either personal or public; temporal, spiritual, or eternal; according as the evils are that do encompass us, sins, sorrows, temptations. “And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom” (2 Tim. 4:18). In the head are the eyes, to spy dangers; the mouth, to speak for help; the wisdom and understanding, to contrive which way to effect it.

What Kind of Body Is the Church?

1. It is a great body. This appears if we consider those only that are called and chosen and faithful—though who those be is not and cannot be infallibly known to us. Even they at this day now living in the world are not a few but many. Indeed, comparatively, compared with them that perish, the Scripture says of them [that] they are but a little flock. Yet in themselves they are many. And the Lord make them a hundredfold more than they are.

It appears also if we consider the whole professing body of Christians that are baptized into the faith of Christ. Then they are a great many more.

And it appears further if we consider all that have been and are and will be, as met together with their head in glory. See what account the Scripture gives of them: “I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all

nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands” (Rev. 7:9). Therefore, there is no reason why any should stumble at the paucity or fewness of the people of God.

2. It is a growing body. “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end” (Isa. 9:7). Here are many promises in the Word to this purpose which have had and have and will have their accomplishment. Growth is twofold:

(1) Extensive, when more are added. More to the number of the elect, we believe, are not to be added. They who teach, “If you are not predestinated, pray that you may be predestinated,” do certainly miss it. But to the number of the called, there may be more added (Acts 2:47) with a common call, with an effectual call. And our duty is to pray heartily every day that we may be so.

(2) Intensive, when those that are already good and are in the body are made better—better in heart and better in life. This is often promised as a mercy and as often commended as a duty (Mal. 4:2; Prov. 4:18; 2 Peter 1:5–8; 3:18).

3. It is a divided body. The more is the pity, but so it is. A great part of it is divided from the head. I mean not in respect of unity of spirit and affection—so all the true members are near to Him, and He is near to them—but in respect of place and condition. He is in heaven above; they are on the earth beneath. And it is their grief and burden that it is so, and, therefore, they pray and long and wait till it be otherwise (Phil. 1:23; Revelation 22).

It is also divided, sadly divided, within itself—not divided from the wicked of the world only (that is a division that must be), but the body within itself: Christian against Christian; church against church; nay, I would I might not say,

saint against saint. But then, observe, it is not in fundamental matters. All are agreed to love God and hate sin and believe in Jesus Christ and keep the commandments. The difference lies in some lesser matters, as that between Paul and Barnabas about John Mark going along with them, [or] Paul and Peter about eating or not eating with the Gentiles, about meats and days, wherein the kingdom of God consists not.

And the truth is the evil lies more in the mismanagement of their differences than in the differences themselves. The fault is either despising or judging. There is hope the Lord in due time will mend this matter, as Christ has prayed (John 17).

4. It is a distempered body. This is one reason of the former—therefore so divided because so distempered. If it were not for the distempers that are in the body, there would be no such divisions in the body (1 Cor. 3:1–3; James 4:12). The distempers that prevail are ignorance, darkness, want and weakness of judgment in the understanding, which cause error and mistake, [and] also pride, passion, self-love, ambition, covetousness. These are the diseases of this great body. The man of sin with his great lie, the whore with her fornication cup have deceived, deluded, intoxicated the nations. And when they will come to themselves and be thoroughly sober, God only knows.

5. It is a persecuted body. Look how it was with the natural body of our Lord Jesus when He was here on earth. Even just so it is and has been with His mystical body. He was scourged, buffeted, spit on, crowned with thorns, torn with nails, speared with spears, nailed to the cross. Even so has it been with His followers. We may wonder, the enemies of it being so many, mighty, and malicious, that they have not made an utter end of it before this time. That complaint of the psalmist may well be the whole church's complaint: "Lord, how are they

increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me” (Ps. 3:1). But why does the Head suffer it to be so, when it is certainly in the power of His hand to help it? I answer: There is good reason for it, else it should not be. He knows how to make it work for good to them and for glory to Himself.

6. It will be a prevailing body—allusion to Genesis 49:23–24 (see Zech. 12:1, 3, 6).

Not a member will perish—a good argument for the perseverance of saints. Lord, if in Thy Book all Thy members are written, much more are all Thine.

The body natural was so in its glorious transfiguration, resurrection, ascension, coronation in glory. And so in its kind and measure and time will the body mystical be also (Isa. 26:19; see Ezekiel 37).

What Kind of Members of This Body Should We Be?

As to ourselves, we must look to it:

1. That we be true members, that we have true union with this blessed Head. And that must be by a true and lively faith, accepting of Him and giving ourselves to Him (Eph. 3:17). Is this done? Is it done in deed and in truth? I beseech you, see to it. Many are tied to Christ by an outward profession that are not grafted into Him. There may be glass eyes and wooden legs fastened by art to the body. And those wooden legs may have silk stockings, and yet they are not of the body. So as to ourselves. “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21).

2. That we be thriving members. If a member in the body do not grow, it is a sign something is amiss in it (Col. 2:6; 1 Thess. 4:1). This is one end wherefore the means of grace

are afforded to us (Eph. 4:11–15). They do grow indeed that do grow up into Christ, the head, more and more: into His merit, into His Spirit, for justification, for sanctification. Yet note every part has a proportionable measure of growth, though what that is we know not. And therefore, we are still to be pressing forward.

As to our head, our duty stands in:

1. Subjection. If He be our head, we must be subject to Him in all things—our will subject to His will in doing, in suffering. What He appoints concerning His day, His worship, His discipline, we are readily and cheerfully to submit to, taking His yoke on us. Though commands be hard and uneasy to the carnal part, are they His commands? If so, we must obey. So also for providences. “And [Jesus] said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23).

2. Similitude. The members ought to be like the head. In Daniel 2, we read of an image whose head was gold, and the members silver, brass, iron, nay, clay. It must not be so in Christ’s body: “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.... Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son” (Rom. 8:9, 29). See how the apostle argues as to this: “Know ye not that your members are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid!” (1 Cor. 6:15). Oh, think, when a temptation to sin comes, is this to be like Christ? Was Christ passionate or revengeful or covetous?

3. Sympathy. As the head sympathizes with the members, so the members sympathize with the head. If a blow be offered at

the head, the hand will venture a cut to save it. Are we affected with the dishonor done to the Lord Jesus by the wickedness that abounds in the midst of us? Do we lay it to heart? Do we feel the contempt cast on His name, His gospel, His ministers, His people? The psalmist could say, “The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me” (Ps. 69:9).

As to our fellow members, our duty stands in these seven things:

1. Charity, brotherly kindness, and love toward them all. All the members in the natural body love one another. So should all the members in the mystical body. And that love must be unfeigned and without dissimulation (Rom. 12:9–10).

2. Care not to hurt any of them in word or deed (Eph. 4:25). Lie not. Why? Because members one of another. The hand will not take a knife and cut the leg or the foot, nor will the teeth bite the arm. No, not though accidentally hurt, there is no revenge. So should it be among Christians: “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves” (Rom. 12:19). “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another” (Gal. 5:14–15).

3. Contentment in that place in the body in which God has set us, though a mean and low place. Not envying those that are above us or are preferred before us in parts, gifts, estate, employment (5:26). The foot envies not the hand; nor the leg, the arm—because the hand and the arm are nearer the head.

4. Condescension. If we be in a high place in the body, we should be condescending to those that are below, not slighting,

despising, or undervaluing (Rom. 12:16; 1 Cor. 12:21–22; 1 Peter 5:5).

5. Compassion toward all. We are to weep with them that weep and rejoice with them that rejoice. The members in the natural body do so (1 Cor. 12:26; Heb. 13:3). In the body mystical, it should be so.

6. Communion, free and frequent. In the natural body, the members are always together. We cannot be so in the body mystical. Our condition is a scattered condition, till gathered together in heaven (1 Thess. 4:17–18; 2 Thess. 2:1). But it should be the case as much as may be (Heb. 10:25).

7. Communication. Whatever each member has, it has it not for itself, but for the body. The eye, the ear, the hand are not for themselves merely. So it should be with the body mystical—not every man for himself, but for others also (Eph. 5:16; Phil. 2:4, 21). Hereby also we may try ourselves whether we are true members.

CHAPTER 6

Christ Is Our Hope

And [the] Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope.

—1 TIMOTHY 1:1 (the latter part)

Does anyone inquire, What is Christ to us? I reply: He is our foundation, our food, our root, our raiment, our head, and our hope. Hope has in Scripture two significations: It signifies the grace of hope, which is the expectation of some good thing to come. “The hope of the righteous shall be gladness” (Prov. 10:28)—that is, their hoping has a good issue. And it signifies the object of hope. So in the text.

Doctrine: The Lord Jesus Christ is a Christian’s hope—the object of his hope.

All the good that we look for, we do and look for only from, by, and through our Lord Jesus Christ. Others may possibly make other things the object of their hope, but we must make the Lord Jesus Christ alone the object of our hope. I will show:

- I. What the things are that we do hope for by, from, and through Jesus Christ.
- II. What in Christ we do make the grounds of that hope.

- III. What the success of that hope is, and how we are like to speed¹ in it.
- IV. Whence it is that we speed so well.
- V. Make application.

What Are the Things That We Hope for by, from, and through Our Lord Jesus Christ?

They are in general of two sorts:

1. Things that concern the life that now is, that pertain to the body and to the outward man. We have occasion for these and will have while we are in the body. Now which way must we look for them? Who must be our hope? Not any creature, one or other; not second causes. If they be, they will deceive and disappoint us. [It is] but our Lord Jesus Christ Himself alone. Every good man says, “He is my hope” (Ps. 20:7–8; 52:7; Prov. 18:10–11). It sweetens all such mercies, that they come from and through such a good hand. We must exercise this hope:

(1) In all our wants and necessities, for supply of them. If we want food, raiment, rain, fair weather, success in business, health from sickness, ease from pain, He alone must be our hope. And if He be so, He will see to us (Ps. 23:1; 34:10; 37:3; Luke 22:35).

(2) In all our perils and dangers, for preservation from them, for preservation through them (Ps. 3:5–6; 23:4). When the ship was sinking wherein Paul was—see the narrative, Acts 27:22, etc.

(3) In all our straits and troubles, for support under them, for deliverance out of them (Ps. 34:10; 55:22).

(4) Concerning our children after us, when we are gone (27:10; Jer. 49:11).

1. *Speed*: make good progress.

(5) In reference to public affairs, that He will fight our battles for us and give us victory over all our enemies. See Joshua 5:13.

2. Things that concern the life that is to come—spiritual things, eternal things. For these also, our hope must be in Christ and in Him only. “His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life,” namely, life present, “and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3), for:

The grace itself that makes us godly is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is He that sanctifies, [and] His Spirit that regenerates. “The author and finisher of our faith” (Heb. 12:2). The gold is His, and the eye salve, His.

The forgiveness of our sins and the justification of our persons is through Christ (Rom. 5:1; 8:1; Eph. 1:7).

The acceptance of our services [and] audience for our prayers is for His sake (John 16:23; 1 Peter 2:5).

So ability and strength both for doing and suffering. We can do nothing further than He enables (John 15:5). Nothing. Nor undergo anything if His arm be not under us.

A blessing on ordinances is through His presence with us in them (Matt. 18:20; 28:20).

Victory over spiritual enemies, corruptions, temptations, the Devil, the world, the flesh is through Him (Rom. 8:37).

The pouring out of the Spirit as a comforter is on His account (John 14:16).

So persevering grace is from Him. It is by His power we are kept (1 Peter 1:5).

A safe and comfortable passage out of this into the other world is the effect of His presence (Ps. 21:4). He will send His angels (Luke 16:22). And, when we come thither, good entertainment there. That we will be acknowledged and acquitted,

that He will say, “Well done,” [and] give us a place in His kingdom (Matt. 10:32; John 14:2–3; Jude 24).

The raising up of our bodies at the last day is because of Him. “I am the resurrection” (John 11:25). And this is promised (6:39–40). But how? See 1 Corinthians 15:42–44.

Soul and body will be together in eternal happiness, with all the saints and with the Lord. And here is the top stone of the great building. And is this by Christ? Yes, by Christ. “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable” (15:19). In this life, but not in this life only, else, of all creatures most miserable. Now all these together are great things. Then:

(1) The saints of God are people of great hopes that look for all this. They are great dealers. They trade not, as the men of the world do, for pebbles but for rich pearls; for a kingdom, an eternal kingdom. Oh that all such would learn to carry it accordingly, that it might appear by their behavior in everything that they are of a great spirit and of great designs, as Moses (Heb. 11:24–26).

(2) The Lord Jesus Christ is a great savior that has wherewithal to answer the hopes of such abundance of people, trusting to Him and expecting from Him to be made thus happy by Him and to have all this from Him. We may wonder whence the King has to maintain such armies and whence to reward His friends that are faithful to Him and do Him service, but how much more cause to wonder whence the Lord Jesus Christ has to reward His faithful servants.

(3) The men of the world are great fools, that when such a great happiness may be had in the heavenly Canaan, they prefer the onions and garlic of Egypt before it—as the old Israelites did, despising the pleasant land (Ps. 106:24), a sin that God did never forgive them but charged it on them, so that their carcasses fell in the wilderness. And the case is the

very same as to those that despise the grace of the gospel and the rich offers of life and salvation by Jesus Christ (Heb. 2:3; 3:17; 4:1).

What in Jesus Christ Do We Make the Grounds of Our Hope Touching All These Things?

There is ground enough and enough, again and again. We know whom we have trusted, and in whom we have hoped, and why (Heb. 6:19–20). Hope is there compared to an anchor, the use whereof is to keep the ship steady in storms. What kind of anchor? Sure and steadfast, not weak and wavering. How so? It enters within, fastens on Christ in heaven, not on mud or sand or other loose ground, but on a rock (Isa. 28:16).

Three things we have in Him to bottom our hopes on:

1. The price He has paid to procure and purchase them. That was His own blood, a price sufficient, a price accepted by the Father. They are all bought and paid for, yea, are paid for to the full worth and value of them. If a friend of ours have purchased an estate for us, we feel confidence. Behold a friend, who “though he was rich...became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Cor. 8:9). Have we not then good grounds for hope? Nay, for joy in hope (Rom. 5:2)?
2. The promise He has made to bestow it. There is nothing of all these blessings and benefits but what He has expressly told us in His holy Word will be certainly conferred on us, if we will believe in Him and be ruled by Him (Matt. 12:23, 29; John 10:28). But may we trust Him? Is He faithful? Will He not deceive us? I answer: There is no danger. Had you as many souls as you had hairs on your head, you might venture them all on His bare word. But for our more abundant consolation we have His oath (Heb. 6:18), His bond with two seals (Rom. 4:11). And will we yet distrust hope?

3. His being present always at the right hand of the Father, making intercession, that He may see it all done accordingly (Heb. 7:25). If a legacy be left me by a dear friend, and he trust executors with it that are false, I may lose it that way, notwithstanding his good intention—as with many an orphan. But there is no danger of that here. Our Lord Himself has so ordered the matter that He is His own executor. Then certainly He will see His will performed. Then we have good ground of hope if able to make out our title.

How Are We Likely to Speed in Our Hopes?

Many hope for great things and fall short. Here there is no danger: “Hope maketh not ashamed”—their hope (Rom. 5:5), the grace of hope or the object of hope, Jesus Christ. Neither of them makes them ashamed—that is, they are sure not to be disappointed. They will certainly have the things they look for. The reason follows, namely, either God’s love to them in the sense of it shed abroad in our hearts, or their love to God. Because He loves them, and they love Him, therefore, no disappointment. I dare challenge all the ages of the world and all the records of time and all the people that ever lived on the face of the earth to produce one instance of one person that made the Lord Jesus Christ rightly and truly His hope, that was disappointed—disappointed of pardon, peace, acceptance with God, and eternal life at last, or, disappointed as to the thanks of this life, unless they hoped amiss. Our rule in hoping is to hope according to the promise, else we may hope amiss. The promise being with proviso, as far as for God’s glory and our good, such must the hope be. No evil will befall (Ps. 91:10). No good wanting (34:10).

Whence Is It We May Be So Certain We Will Not Be Disappointed, if the Lord Jesus Christ Be Our Hope?

Because He is what He is according to these three titles given here to Him:

1. He is Jesus a savior, one raised up on purpose to bring people to heaven. The very name encourages hope.
2. He is Lord; Jehovah, blessed forever; King of kings and Lord of lords; almighty in power; able to save. Other hopes are weak and unable.
3. He is Christ, anointed of God to be both Lord and Jesus. Him has God the Father sealed, that is, commissioned under hand and seal, and also fitted every way for the undertaking (Acts 10:33).

What Use Should We Make of This?

1. Then if Christless, we are hopeless (Eph. 2:12). Not absolutely, but while remaining in that state. For let me ask, What is your hope? I mean especially touching the main matter, your eternal salvation? Have you ever any thoughts about it? It is for the most part grounded on a purposed repentance and reformation hereafter on our part, and on God's part, a little mercy, which a good God will not deny, for a good man would not. This is all that the most trust to. But this will certainly deceive (Job 27:8; Prov. 11:7; Matt. 7:24–27). It has deceived thousands, and will you.
2. Then saints are blessed, for the Lord Jesus Christ is their hope (Ps. 146:5). Why then not comforted, having such things in hope, in reversion—besides in hand, in possession?
3. Then try your hopes and be sure they be right, else expect disappointment. How were they wrought? If born with you,

and you never did otherwise than hope, suspect that hope. The foundation of good hope is laid in a kind of despair—no hope in the way I am in, therefore I must have a better foundation. How do they work? Is it in a constant care to please God, [a] fear to offend Him? Then they are right (Acts 26:7). Do they lead to self-purifying (1 John 3:8)? Do they produce love to the Lord Jesus? It cannot be otherwise if you have a good hope.

4. Exhortation to all to make Christ alone their hope, renouncing all other (Ps. 73:25), especially their own righteousness (Phil. 3:7–8).

5. Caution. Do not say there is no hope, for, blessed be God, there is while Christ lives.

CHAPTER 7

Christ Is Our Refuge

Who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.

—HEBREWS 6:18

These words are a description of true believers, such to whom belong the strong consolation—that is, who ought to be greatly comforted. They are such as have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them. The same that is the hope is the refuge, namely, Jesus Christ and His undertaking for us. True believers are such as fly to Him—for two reasons:

1. In reference to what is to come, to lay hold on the hope set before them—that is, the hope laid up for them in heaven (Col. 1:5) and set before them in the gospel, together with all the benefits purchased for them in their way thither.
2. In reference to what is present. They fly to Him for refuge every day, and they have need so to do.

Doctrine: That the Lord Jesus Christ is a Christian's refuge, to whom he must fly every day. Show:

- I. What is meant by refuge.
- II. What need we have of a refuge every day.
- III. What kind of refuge Jesus Christ is.

IV. What it is to fly to Him for refuge, and what should move us so to do.

What Is Meant by a Refuge?

A refuge is that which men are wont in times of trouble or danger to betake themselves to for safety or supply, promising themselves that there they will have it. Refuges are of two sorts:

1. The one personal. Sometimes there are such and such persons in whom we confide and from whom we expect shelter, a near and dear relation, a trusty, faithful friend. We call him our refuge and make him so if we want anything, if anything ail us. Jonathan was David's refuge in his flight from Saul. Jephthah was the Gileadites' refuge (Judges 11). Magistrates are the poor man's refuge, the shields of the earth.

2. The other real. There are things that are our refuge, as, in time of war, a strong castle or walled town. There, we conclude we will be safe. Against want, the rich man's wealth is his strong city (Prov. 18:11). In case of guilt and justice pursuing, Joab fled to the horns of the altar. That was his refuge. The Jews, by God's appointment, had six cities of refuge, to which the manslayer was to fly. Now to these the apostle is supposed here especially to allude. As they had their refuges, so have we. Theirs were so many cities; but ours is one, Christ.

What Need Have We of a Refuge Every Day?

We need a refuge on a fourfold account:

1. Guilt contracted. We are sinning daily, besides old scores. The avenger of blood, that is, God's offended justice, is in pursuit of us, at our very heels, though we see him not. If he overtake us before we get into Christ, we are undone. If we trust to other refuges, if we take hold of the horns of any other

altar, he will pluck us thence, as they did Joab; and away we must go to execution. It is for every sin that this is our case, for the law says, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. 3:10). Oh what need have we then to bethink ourselves!

2. Temptations assaulting. The world, the flesh, and the Devil are all busy by fair means, by foul, by allurements, by affrightments, setting on us to draw us from God and duty to sin and folly. Temptations are sometimes of one kind, sometimes of another. Now the query is, Where is our refuge? Whither go we for strength, for safety? To something in ourselves? Or, as David against Goliath, in the name of the Lord of hosts, in the strength of the grace of Jesus Christ?

3. Troubles befalling. Sufficient for each day is the evil of it. One event or other happens that crosses and grieves us. Now have we no refuge, nothing to betake ourselves to, that may help to bear us up? One says, "I have a father and mother to look after me." Another: "I have a friend that will not see me want." "But," says the believer, "I have a refuge beyond them all, and that is Christ."

4. Dangers threatening. Besides what present evils we meet with, there are others that we have prospect of, afar off. And many times, the very fear of them is more grievous than they themselves are when they come. Now against these, also, Christ Jesus is and ought to be a Christian's refuge (Ps. 56:3; 112:7). Oh, be convinced of this, that on all these accounts you have need of a refuge. Till this is done, all I will say will be to no purpose. "What will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? to whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory?" (Isa. 10:3). These are good questions.

What Kind of Refuge Is Jesus Christ?

He is a refuge that has these properties, and they are all desirable in a refuge:

1. He is an appointed refuge, ordained of God on purpose for us to fly to in all our ailments. There were many cities in Israel, many in every tribe; but only six appointed for refuge. And God Himself appointed them, not Moses (John 3:16; 1 Cor. 1:30). We may plead it with Him in reference to all His offices, whereinsoever we have need of Him, that He is therefore raised up and sent and anointed and sealed as priest to satisfy for us, as prophet to teach us, as king to protect and defend us.

2. He is an able refuge, all-sufficient. Many refuges that people fly to under guilt, under trouble, prove unable to shield and shelter them. Many persons are either feeble and infirm and cannot, or false and treacherous and will not. Many things, as strongholds and castles, in time of war are untenable, broken reeds. So Rabshakeh calls Egypt (Isa. 36:6). And so it proved to God's people, when they trusted to it and relied on it. "When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound" (Hos. 5:13). Of our Lord Jesus, this is said, which is certainly true, "I have laid help upon one that is mighty" (Ps. 89:19). He is able to save "to the uttermost" (Heb. 7:25). "In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (2:18). "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst," says the poor leper (Matt. 8:2). He can acquit from guilt. He can secure from danger. He can support, and He can supply.

3. He is a refuge at hand. If a friend be never so able to help, if he be far off when we have need of him, what the better

are we? “The word is nigh thee” (Rom. 10:8). “God is...a very present help in trouble” (Ps. 46:1). “The LORD of hosts is with us” (v. 7, 11)—present with us. It is a very comfortable consideration when under guilt, wounded, to know that the remedy is at hand. When tempted, under prevailing fears of want, in trouble, in danger, to be assured that cities of refuge are so near.

4. He is a universal refuge, for all person[s]. Whoever will may come and find shelter with Him (Isa. 55:1). Everyone (Rev. 22:17), whoever will, Jew or Gentile, rich or poor. God has nowhere excluded you. Then do not you exclude yourself. Cities of refuge were for strangers, not Israel only.

He is a refuge in all cases, inward or outward, bodily or spiritual. Let the offence be what it will, He has merit for the pardon of it. Let the temptation be what it may, He has strength to overcome it. Let the danger be ever so threatening, He can save from it. There was a limitation in the cities of refuge. They were only for the manslayer. The thief, the highwayman, the adulterer had no city. But in Christ there is a refuge for the most guilty. “[I] was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy” (1 Tim. 1:13). “And such”—referring to the awful list before enumerated—“were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:11).

5. He is an unchangeable refuge (Heb. 13:8). The six cities of refuge in the land of Canaan are passed away and gone and are refuges no more. So is also many a strong fort and tower. But our refuge is still what He was and where He was (Ps. 27:10; 146:3, 5, 10; Heb. 7:24).

6. He is an open refuge. If a refuge be never so near us, if it be shut against us, what the better are we? If the castle bridge be drawn up, what can it avail us? Our Lord Jesus is an open savior, a “fountain open”—not sealed and shut up (Zechariah 13). His eye is always open to see and behold us; His ear, to hear our prayers; His arms, to receive and embrace us; His hand, to give, to supply us; His doors, to bid us welcome. Oh that we were as open to Him as He is to us (Psalm 24). He calls and calls again (Song 5:1).

7. He is the only refuge. Besides Him there is no other—none in heaven, none on earth; none within us, none without us (Isa. 40:6–8).

None for justification. When we have sinned, what other way is there of making atonement? Can saints and angels do it? Can our own righteousness? Then Paul would never have renounced his, as he did, though far beyond ours. His anxiety was to be found in Him (Phil. 3:8–9), as the malefactor in the city of refuge.

None for strength, either to do duty or to resist temptation. Paul says he could do all through Christ strengthening him, but nothing in and of himself. We are more than conquerors only in Him (Rom. 8:37).

None in all our outward concerns, public or personal (Ps. 62:5–8; 146:3–5).

What Is It to Fly to Him for Refuge, and What Should Move Us So to Do?

If Christ be such a refuge, and the only such, then what is the reason so few come to Him for refuge?

1. The reason is they do not know Him. Their minds are blinded. They will not believe the report of the gospel concerning Him. “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who

it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water” (John 4:10).

2. They are deluded with false refuges. They have other things to trust, one to this, another to that (Ps. 20:7; Prov. 18:11; Isa. 28:15). When God will send them hereafter to the refuges they have chosen, oh the shame and confusion that will then follow!—as Judges 10:14: “Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation.” The righteous when they see it shall laugh (Ps. 52:6–7).

3. They do not feel their need of a refuge (Prov. 3:17).

If others, however, will not, let us make Him our refuge and fly to Him accordingly.

What Is It to Fly to Christ for Refuge?

1. It is to betake ourselves to Him. “Behold,” He calls, “Come unto Me.” Let your soul answer, “Lo, I come.” Come for pardon of all your sins. Come for righteousness wherein to appear before God. Come for mercy, grace, peace, strength, comfort, quickening. Yea, come with boldness (Heb. 4:16).

2. It is to lay hold on Him, so the word is here, by a true and a lively faith.

As a man sinking lays hold on a bough, cord, plank cast out to save him.

As Joab laid hold on the horns of the altar, when Solomon sent to slay him (1 Kings 2:28).

As we lay hold on the opportunity of a good bargain when it is offered to us, closing with it, accepting of it, deliberately, sincerely, freely, and forever. This is believing. And you that have thus taken hold, keep your hold. Let not Satan nor unbelief beat you off. Say, “Either at this door I must have salvation

or perish forever.” Necessity oftentimes makes them strong that are otherwise weak. When life lies on it, and I must either hold fast or die, strength is summoned.

3. It is to do it with all speed. Flying is the swiftest motion of all other. Such should ours be to Christ. “I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments” (Ps. 119:60). For three reasons:

[1] The immanency of our danger. The avenger of blood is at your heels. If he overtake you short of Christ, you are undone forever.

[2] The uncertainty of our life. We are here today and gone tomorrow. No time is ours but the present time (1 Cor. 6:2).

[3] The uncertainty of the offer of this refuge. Many a man’s day of life is longer than his day of grace (Luke 19:42). Oh, then bestir yourself. Hoist up sail while the wind blows. Strike while the iron is hot. Do you think the malefactor pursued would stay to talk and prate with every idle companion? No. But [he would] run with all his might for fear of the worst. So should we. His flight was but to save a temporal life; ours, an eternal.

What Encouragement Have We Thus to Fly to Christ for Refuge?

1. His express call and command: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden” (Matt. 11:28). Heavy laden, either with outward burdens, want, sickness, unkindness of relations, or malice of enemies. However it be, make your case known to Him. Spread it before Him by prayer and supplication. Cast your care on Him. Believe it is that which He knows to be best for you. He can and will make a way for you to escape. But then you must keep His way, not turn aside. Or, heavy laden with inward pressures of guilt, sense of wrath, prevailing fears. “Come to Me,” says He, “as to your refuge. I will relieve you and succor you” (Isa. 50:10).

2. The experience of the saints of God in all ages, who have found Him a ready refuge to them in all their troubles (Ps. 34:4–6). There is no instance to the contrary. No guilty sinner that repented and believed the gospel and laid hold by faith on the Lord Jesus for peace and pardon ever went without it. And should not this encourage us?

Under the law, we are told there were officers yearly chosen on purpose to oversee the highways to the cities of refuge, to be sure that they were in good repair, that there was no hindrance, no stumbling stone (Deut. 19:3). Besides, they were all Levites' cities. The same is the work of ministers of the gospel now. The command to them is, "Prepare ye the way" (Isa. 40:3). And woe unto us if it be not done; and a thousand woes to them, that instead of removing stumbling stones out of the way lay them in the way, instead of encouraging, discourage.

To conclude, my exhortation is:

(1) To all that have not made Christ their refuge, by all means to do it, and that quickly, for delays are dangerous.

(2) To those that have, to be doing it, yet daily, more and more. And when they have done it, in God's name to take the comfort of it. Your consolation should be strong consolation, that have fled for refuge—that is, too strong for all your doubts and fears, prevailing against them and over them. No life is so sweet as theirs that make Christ their refuge at all times in all things. But then be sure you are never caught out of Him. The malefactors if ever taken out of the refuge were slain. "We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end" (Heb. 3:14).

CHAPTER 8

Christ Is Our Righteousness

*And this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD
OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

—JEREMIAH 23:6

That these words are to be understood of the Messiah or Savior no one doubts that knows the Scripture, Jew or Gentile. But that Jesus of Nazareth is He, the Jew denies. The Christian only believes. He has many names given Him in Scripture—two, in the words foregoing: a righteous branch (v. 5); a king, reigning and prospering; Immanuel (Isa. 7:14); Wonderful, Counselor (9:6–7); Jesus (Matt. 1:21). But among all the rest of His names, none is more sweet than this in the text: The Lord Our Righteousness. The Lord Jehovah, the incommunicable name of God, never given to any creature in heaven or earth. By this we prove Him to be the infinite and eternal God. What can be plainer? He is Jehovah, having His being of Himself and giving breath and being to all things, for “all things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3). He is our righteousness. What that means, you will hear; but this is His name by which He will be known, and this is His memorial unto all generations. By this name, He has been, is, and will be called by all true believers.

Doctrine: Jesus Christ is the Lord our righteousness, and it is our duty to call Him so. Of all that we are to teach, and you are to learn, concerning Him, I beseech you learn this. Be not ignorant of this. Show:

- I. What it means.
- II. Prove it duty to call Him so.

What Is Meant by Him Being Our Righteousness

It means:

1. That it is in Him alone that God the Father is well pleased. And is that so? Yes. It was declared twice by a voice from heaven (Matt. 3:17; 17:5). “Not only with whom but in whom I am well pleased, atoned, pacified, satisfied. I acquiesce in Him, without looking any further. Let Me have Him, and I have enough. I have all.” He is God’s all in all, and why then should He not be ours? If He be well pleased in Him, why are not we?

2. That it is by and through Him alone that we are justified—that is, acquitted from guilt and accepted into favor, which are the ingredients of justification.

Acquitted from guilt. Guilty we all are. We know it. We can none of us deny it. Having sinned, we are for our sins justly liable to God’s wrath and curse, both in this world and that which is to come. To be so is to be wretched and miserable. Now how will we do to be acquitted? Why, through Jesus Christ only. He is the way, and there is no other (Acts 13:33, 39). Were we thoroughly convinced of guilt, we should hearken to this. It would be thought a word worthy of all acceptance. And so it is (1 Tim. 1:15).

Accepted into favor (Rom. 5:1–2; Eph. 1:6). The grace and favor of God is the creature’s happiness—want that, and want all; have that, and have all. Now there can be no hope of

this favor but in and by Jesus Christ. The holy God will admit of none into His friendship or fellowship but those to whom Jesus Christ is made righteousness.

3. It is through His merit and mediation alone that our performances are made acceptable (1 Peter 2:5). As our bad deeds are no otherwise to be expiated, so our good deeds are no otherwise to be accepted. To what purpose is it for any of us to do anything that is good, if we be not accepted in it—to pray, hear, give alms, keep the Sabbath? Now it is Christ's righteousness alone that merits that acceptance. He is the incense that perfumes all.

4. It is by Him alone that we have right and title to the heavenly inheritance. It is His purchase. He bought it with His blood. We had a right by creation upon condition of perfect obedience, but we lost it by our fall in Adam. It is restored only by the second Adam. If He be the Lord our righteousness, we may plead that and say, "Lord, Christ is mine; save me. Save me from hell, for I am in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1). Bring me to heaven, for I am in Christ." He is the way, the door.

But it may be asked, How will it be made out from Scripture that this is the meaning of Him being our righteousness? I answer: Both the Old Testament and the New are one in it, as face answers to face in a glass or in the water. As the cherubim looked toward each other, so the Bible agrees on this subject.

In the Old Testament, it is prophesied of Him that He should "bring in everlasting righteousness" (Dan. 9:24). What to do? To "finish the transgression...and to make reconciliation for iniquity." Would you have an end made of your sins? It must be in this way. It can be in no other. In Malachi 4:2, He is called "the Sun of righteousness," not only righteous in Himself, pure and spotless, but the Lord our righteousness. As full of righteousness for our purpose, in everything, as the sun

is of light—no danger of wanting. As free to communicate as the sun is, whoever will may come. As refreshing and comfortable where He does communicate it, as the sun is.

In the New Testament it is further cleared, so that he that runs may read.

“Of God...made unto us...righteousness” (1 Cor. 1:30), that is, God the Father pitying our lost and undone condition, for want of a righteousness, made Him righteousness to us. “Here is My Son,” says He, “[He] will be your righteousness. I make Him so to you. [I] ordain, constitute, and appoint Him your atonement, propitiation, advocate, surety. Plead Him accordingly.”

Again, “He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (5:21). Note it is said, “He was made sin for us”—that is, the sin of the world was imputed to Him, made to meet upon Him as the debts of a great many debtors are upon one common surety (Isa. 53:6). Being found under such a debt, He was treated accordingly (53:10): bruised, “made an offering”—that is, by dying on the cross. The same with Him being made “a curse” for us (Gal. 3:13). (Lord! That such things should be spoken of Him, done to Him, for the sake of poor worms!) Now this suffering and dying of His is imputed to us as our righteousness, as when the surety pays a debt, his payment is imputed to the debtor as if he himself had paid it. Not His being born, living, fulfilling the law, but His death. Not the sufferings of His life, but His dying sorrows.

Note also, hereupon we are made the righteousness of God in Him. We are accepted, justified, acquitted. But why the righteousness of God?

(1) Because this imputed righteousness is a righteousness of God’s own contriving and providing for us. “Which is of God by faith” (Phil. 3:9)—not the righteousness of works,

which is of ourselves, but of God by faith. We are sinners by imputation. We may be righteous the same way.

(2) Because Christ is God, who wrought it out and brought it in for us. It is not a man's righteousness, poor and weak and insufficient, but a God's righteousness. He is Jehovah our righteousness.

[Prove It Is Our Duty to Call Him So]

I am to persuade you all to call Jesus Christ by this sweet name, "the Lord our righteousness," each one with application to himself—as David. And would you think an Old Testament saint that lived under that dark dispensation should have such clearness in this matter? A shame to us that are not clear in it that live under gospel light. "O God of my righteousness" (Ps. 4:1)—the God on whom alone I do rely for righteousness. The prophet Isaiah speaks of it as the Shibboleth of all the saints (Isa. 45:24–25). It was Paul's choice in particular, his deliberate choice, and should be ours, each of us (Phil. 3:8–9). Oh that I knew what to say that would prevail. Someone perhaps objects and says, "Call Him by this name! It is the easiest thing of a thousand." You should distinguish doing it in word and tongue and doing it in deed and truth—understandingly, uprightly, absolutely, so as to renounce all others and to cleave to Him alone. Consider:

1. The misery they are in who never yet called Jesus Christ by this name, and the blessed and happy condition they are in that have done so. Let me set the one of these over against the other, and if you will mix faith with it, I should hope it might move you.

(1) Till we have called Jesus Christ "the Lord our righteousness," that is, heartily owned Him as such, our condition is a shameful, naked condition. And that is a wretched, miserable condition (Rev. 3:17), because, till clothed with Christ's

righteousness, our shame appears in the sight of God. Our shame is our sin. All your sins are before Him, and He loathes the sight of them. Perhaps you say, "What matter?" Oh, do not say so, for it is a matter, a sad matter. When Adam saw his nakedness, he ran and hid himself. So would you, did you see yours. Well, but on the contrary, if you have heartily owned Christ, your soul is a clothed soul, clothed with white raiment, clean and white, lovely and amiable. You may go with comfort into the presence of God, as Jacob in Esau's clothes. Again:

(2) Till we have called Jesus Christ "the Lord our righteousness," ours is a dismal, dark condition. When we call the Lord our righteousness, then He rises on our souls as a sun of righteousness, and that which follows is the light of comfort and peace and joy—such joy as none knows but they that feel it. It is hidden manna. Righteousness and peace meet together, in this sense (Ps. 85:10). "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:1–2). In the Lord will all the seed of Israel be justified and will glory (Isa. 45:25). But till then, there is small cause for glorying. All your own righteousness is but a spark of your own kindling, notwithstanding which, you lie down in sorrow. Is it possible for you to think of past sins and a future judgment, and the joints of your knees not tremble, as Belshazzar's did? But:

(3) Till we have called Jesus Christ "the Lord our righteousness," we are in a perilous, perishing condition. Christ's righteousness is to us as Noah's ark. How happy were Noah and all his that were in it. They all escaped. How miserable all the rest, though many, some climbing higher than others, nay, some that helped to frame the ark; yet they perished. Consider:

2. The difficulty, nay, the impossibility of being pardoned and justified, accepted and saved in any other way, and the facility and easiness of obtaining it in this way. Set these also the one against the other.

(1) It is impossible we should be accepted of God without a righteousness, one or other, because He is a righteous God—that is, He is of pure eyes and therefore cannot endure to look on iniquity (Ps. 5:4; 11:7). He is also just and true to His word, His threatening word. Now by that the curse is entailed upon every transgression. Death is the wages of every sin. Therefore, death and the curse must be undergone, or no pardon. The very natural conscience owns this. Whence else are all the qualms of fear and horror, which the wicked lie under? Besides:

(2) It is impossible that either our own righteousness or the righteousness of any of our fellow creatures, one or other, in heaven or earth, should bear us out and bring us off before God. I say it is impossible, absolutely impossible:

That our own should. For it is not to be called a righteousness. We have no such thing (Rom. 3:9–10). Righteousness is complete conformity to the righteous will and law of God. Where is that to be found? Nowhere on earth (Isa. 64:6; see Mic. 6:6, etc.).

It may be objected, “Yea, but with the help of a little mercy it may do.” I answer: Show me that scripture where pardon and peace and salvation are promised to a mixture of a little of our righteousness and a little of God’s mercy. It is impossible:

That any other creature’s should. I mean saint or angel, or what they call the church’s treasure, made up of works of supererogation, done by men eminent for piety, in things good but not commanded, whereof the pope has the key. (And who had the key lately, when for several months there was no pope?)

It is a mere fiction (Ps. 49:7; Isa. 63:16).

But on the other hand, how easy is it to obtain peace and pardon and salvation by the merit and righteousness of the Lord Jesus, by calling Him by this name. Easy, did I say? Mistake me not. I do not mean easy in itself or easy to the power of nature. No, it is harder to believe in Christ for righteousness than to keep all the commandments, because keeping the commandments has something in the heart of man agreeing with it. But so has not the way of justification by faith, it being purely by revelation. I mean easy to grace, easy where God is pleased to give a willing mind—as knowledge is easy to him that understands (Prov. 14:6; Matt. 11:28–30; 1 John 5:3). Easy—that is, it is a ready way to justification and salvation, whereas seeking it by our own righteousness is a roundabout way. We can never while we live know in any other way that one sin is pardoned, because perseverance to the end is required.

It may be asked, “If this be the only way and such an easy, ready way, then what is the reason there are so few that walk in it? Nay, what is the reason it is so scoffed and ridiculed as it is? It is called putative righteousness.” I answer: The apostle, who was best studied in this point of any other teacher that ever was, speaking of the Jews, who of all other people did most stumble at this stumbling stone, gives two causes of their so doing: their ignorance and their pride. “They being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God” (Rom. 10:3). The same are still the causes.

Ignorance of God’s righteousness. Their minds are not enlightened to see that this is the way that God has appointed, and that it is a sweet way and a safe way.

Loathness to let go their own righteousness. They would fain¹ merit heaven for themselves. They scorn to accept of it as a gift or to sue for it as poor persons. Some who would be persuaded to leave their sins would not be persuaded to quit their doing so from being their righteousness. But it will not be (Isa. 46:12). He that will put on the Lord Jesus Christ for justification must put off himself and all his own merit and righteousness, saying, "None but Christ, none but Christ." And if He alone were not sufficient, it were another matter. Is He not Jehovah our righteousness? Has not the Father said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"? Oh, then be persuaded. And you that have called Him by this name, call Him so still. There are four special times and seasons when this should be done:

(1) When we have done amiss and are under guilt, and wrath threatens. And when is it not that it is so? Every day. If you are not concerned, so much the worse. If made sensible, we will cry out, "Oh for a righteousness!" Behold, here is one, Jesus Christ the righteous, [who] "is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:1-2).

(2) When we have well done, after some good work, and pride of heart rises, and we begin to expect from God as if we were something. No, Jesus Christ is the Lord my righteousness. I am an unprofitable servant when I have done all.

(3) When we ask anything of God. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you" (John 16:23).

(4) When we come to look death and judgment in the face, which will be shortly. When sick and dying, oh then for

1. *Fain*: be inclined to.

Christ and His righteousness. It will be the cordial of cordials (1 John 1).

But observe this caution: Christ is not so our righteousness as that we ourselves must not be righteous and do righteously. We must be righteous, as if we were to be saved by it, and deny it, as having done nothing.

CHAPTER 9

Christ Is Our Light

I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should [or might] not abide in darkness.

—JOHN 12:46

It is not here only but elsewhere in diverse places of Scripture that our Lord Jesus is held forth under the notion of a light.

1. It is said, “God is light” (1 John 1:5). No creature has the like resemblance to the divine nature as light has. He does not only dwell in light, but He is light. Light is a pure, bright, clear, spiritual, unmixed substance. God is infinitely so. Now Jesus Christ, as God, is light. God of gods, light of lights, very God of very God.

2. But the text speaks of Him as coming into the world as God incarnate, God manifest in the flesh. And as such, it says of Him, nay, He says it of Himself, “I am come a light.” And why? To what end? “That whosoever believeth on me should [or might] not abide in darkness.”

Here are two *doctrines*:

The one: That Jesus Christ is come a light into the world.

The other: That now Jesus Christ is come a light into the world, those that believe in Him do not abide in darkness. Or

rather, thus: Jesus Christ is come a light into the world, that is, good news. It is one of His Old Testament names, “He that cometh” (Ps. 118:26; cf. Matt. 11:3). It is a truth now that He is come. He that was to come is come.

1. Jesus Christ is come a light into the world, a foundation and food, a root and raiment, our head and hope, refuge and righteousness—and not only so, but a light. This adds to the goodness of the news and makes it better. What comfort could we take in anything we have without light?

2. Now Jesus Christ is come a light into the world, those that believe in Him abide not in darkness.

This is the best news of all: that the light does not shine on them in vain. They have eyes to see it. They have the comfort of it. Show:

- I. What kind of light Jesus Christ is.
- II. What inferences we are to draw from Him being come a light, such a light, into the world.

What Kind of Light Is the Lord Jesus?

There are several kinds of light. There is glowworm light, and rottenwood light; firelight and candlelight; starlight and moonlight. All these are lights. But there is one light more that is far beyond them all, and that is sunlight, between which and the former there is no comparison. And that light Jesus Christ is—sunlight. None of the former is the light of the world. Only the sun is so. Now Jesus Christ is “the light of the world” (John 8:12). Not only come a light into the world, but He is the light of the world.

It was prophesied of Him before He came that He should arise a sun (Ps. 84:11; Mal. 4:2).

It is expressly told of Him that He did arise accordingly as such when He did come, “the dayspring from on high hath

visited us” (Luke 1:78)—the sun rising. John the Baptist was the morning star that came before Him. Now sunlight has these properties:

1. It is glorious light. The most glorious in itself. The glory of it is such as the eye cannot behold or look on without winking or twinkling (1 Cor. 15:41). The beauty of glorified bodies is set forth by it for want of a better illustration (Matt. 13:43). So is represented Christ in His transfiguration (17:2). And is not Jesus Christ of all others the most glorious? His name is Michael. “Who is like unto thee, O Lord.” “Thou art fairer than the children of men” (Ps. 45:2; Song 5:10). He is the standard-bearer. His is the preeminence (Col. 1:18). If you ask, “In what?” I answer: In everything that is excellent. In all manner of perfections, wisdom, power, holiness, He is far exalted above all that is named both in heaven and earth. Every knee must bow to Him, and every creature yield. Candles are not seen, no, nor stars nor the moon itself when the sun shines. Their light disappears. So are all other things eclipsed by the Savior. Oh, then let this advance your esteem of Him more and more. You may think too highly of others, but not of Him. Either He will be uppermost, or nothing.

2. It is general light. It shines everywhere (Ps. 19:6). One sun serves all the world. Nay, we are told, that all places have equally the same measure and proportion of the sun’s presence with them every year, though not after the same manner. All have as much day as night, and as much night as day, which is certainly a contrivance of infinite wisdom, and it is to be adored in it. There is but one Christ, but that one is a universal savior to all the world—so that all that are saved are saved by Him alone and by no other (1 John 2:2). When He sent forth His apostles to preach the gospel, see their commission—how large! “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to

every creature” (Mark 16:15). What the psalmist says of the sun and its course, Paul applies to their preaching (Rom. 10:18). I cannot say all the world has alike the benefit of the gospel at this day. Would to God it had. But to be sure, we have it and have long had it (Matt. 4:16), for which we have cause to be very thankful. “While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light” (John 12:36).

3. It is a fountain light. What light the moon and the planets have, they derive it all from the sun. They have none of their own further than he communicates. So Jesus Christ is the springhead and fountain from whence every good and perfect gift comes. Gifts of nature do all flow from Him. “That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (1:9). So some understand that of the light of reason, which all men have. It is a ray from this sun—all learning, knowledge in arts and sciences, trades and manufactures. So also gifts of grace. “And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace” (1:16). He is the author as well as finisher of faith (Heb. 12:2). And, therefore, in all our wants we must have recourse to Him, and in all our receivings we must give Him the praise.

4. It is a free light. It costs us nothing. What is more free than the light? So what is more free than free grace (John 4:10), the gift of God (Rom. 5:15), the free gift? So Christ is called, and justification by Him. In this strain the promises and calls and invitations run: “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. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your

soul delight itself in fatness” (Isa. 55:1–2; Rev. 22:17). Therefore, you are inexcusable, if you go without.

5. It is enlightening light. The sun has not its light for itself, but for the world; and it communicates it accordingly. It rises every morning and dispels the darkness of the night and shines all the day. And very sweet and useful it is. Our Sun, Christ, is an enlightening sun (Luke 2:32). He finds us not only in the dark but blind (Rev. 3:17), even darkness itself. But He does not leave us so. He opens blind eyes. That is more than the sun in the firmament does or can do. Bring your eyes, and he will bring light; but eyes he gives not. But this Sun gives eyes (Isa. 42:6–7). He does not only reveal the object but repairs the faculty. He is a healing sun (Mal. 4:2). In Revelation 3:18, we read of “eyesalve,” and in 1 John 2:20, of the unction. Oh, pray for this, as Paul does for the Ephesians (Eph. 1:17–18). Pray as the blind man that came to Christ for eyesight.

6. It is increasing light. In the morning, when the sun first rises, there are mists and fogs and clouds, which darken the air. But, by degrees, as the sun gets up, they vanish and are gone and anon¹ noonday comes. So it is with the souls that Christ enlightens (Prov. 4:18; see Isa. 30:26). Our knowledge in the things of God is never perfect and complete while we live in this world (1 Cor. 13:14). Hereafter, it will be. Allude to Mark 8:22.

(1) We should therefore be humble in ourselves, not only because what we have we have received, but because if we receive but little, it is little only in comparison with what we will have. Pride of understanding is a root sin.

(2) We should be patient toward others, not judging and censuring and despising them because they see not what we

1. *Anon*: in a short time.

do. We should rather encourage and comfort them. Their light also is growing (Phil. 3:15).

What Inferences Are to Be Drawn from This Subject?

1. What a miserable condition then is a sinful, Christless condition! If Christ be the light, then those who are out of Christ are out of the light. If the Sun of righteousness be not risen on your soul, you are benighted to this day. It may be risen among us and yet not be risen on us. It may shine in the places where we live and yet not shine into our hearts (2 Cor. 4:6). Who can choose but pity Egypt, where it was dark for three days. Much more the northern regions, where it is dark for six months. Most of all, poor souls that have been in darkness all their days, those who see nothing, know nothing, and, which is worst of all, care to know nothing in the things of God and of their souls—nay, who hate the light, shut their eyes against it, and love darkness rather than light (John 3:19–20). How will such escape, that rebel against the light (Job 24:13), saying, “Depart” (21:14)? No godly man does so. Where the least glimmering of saving light has shined into the soul, it begets a desire after more and more of it—a love to the means, especially the Word of God.

But wherein lies the misery of a blind and dark condition?
I answer:

(1) It is very uncomfortable. Light is sweet and pleasant (Eccl. 11:7); so is knowledge in the things of God. Ask those that have it. They will tell you that they would not be without it for a world. This pleasure you have none of (Prov. 2:10). Sermons are like the white of an egg to you, without savor, without relish.

(2) It is very unsafe. You have a journey to go that will not be gone without light. There are many byways. It is easy to miss the right way. They find it so that are most enlightened,

much more those that have no light. There are many gins² and snares and pitfalls. There is great danger of being caught. "He that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth" (John 12:35). He thinks he is going to heaven, and alas, he is going to hell.

(3) You have work to do that will not be done without light, nay, not without sunlight. Some ordinary works may be done by candlelight, but not this. You have a God to serve, a soul to save—which is needful work (Luke 10:42) and nice work, not to be done by the light of nature or the power of nature.

(4) It is miserable here. Such are under the Devil's power at present (who in this sense is the ruler of the darkness of this world [Eph. 6:12]) and in the highway to the regions of eternal darkness, to be a companion with him forever. Darkness and prison go together (Isa. 42:7; Acts 26:18).

(5) It will be miserable hereafter. All this is said to affect you with the misery of such a condition, and yet all is nothing till you are brought to make the application to yourselves: "Is not this my condition?" Rather are you not ready to say, with the Pharisees, "Are we blind also?" (John 9:40)? Sure I am, we were each of us born blind. Are we convinced of that? Has the light enlightened us so far? If it has, the next query will be when and how were you enlightened, your eyes opened, the change wrought. If you do not know when or how, can you witness the thing itself and say, as he, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see" (9:25)? It cannot be but that one born blind and afterward seeing must be sensible of a great alteration, though but little at first, yet more and more afterward.

2. *Gins*: a trap for game.

2. What an unspeakable mercy then was the giving of Christ to save us from all this misery, to be a light to lighten the world! We have cause to bless God every day for the light of the sun. What a dungeon were the world without it! The moon and all the stars, as many as they are, cannot do that which one sun does. So saints and angels and all the creatures put together are nothing without Christ. Therefore, thank God, above all, for the unspeakable gift—especially if He be risen on your soul, if He have begun to make you light in the Lord (Eph. 5:8). This is certainly the mercy of mercies. All is nothing without it. Though He have blessed you with temporal blessings of all sorts—health, strength, wife, children, a plentiful estate—say, “All this were nothing,” if He had not called you out of darkness into His marvelous light (Col. 1:12–13).

3. Of what concernment is it to us to come to Christ to be enlightened by Him? Were you, any of you (which blessed be God you are not) destitute of bodily eyesight, and I could tell you tidings of one that could infallibly cure you, how welcome should I be! Behold! I bring you tidings of one that can cure your spiritual blindness. But then you must come to Him, believe in Him, as here, that “whosoever believeth”—that is, mixes faith with the report of the gospel—concerning Him, His ability and willingness to save, in the sight and sense of this blindness and darkness and the insufficiency of all other remedies, betakes himself to Him, craves help of Him, casts himself on Him, trusts in Him, does as He directs him, will not abide in darkness. As he to whom Jesus said, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.... He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing” (John 9:7). The direction was, “Go, wash”—so I address you. Now what harm is there in all this? Will it not be of unspeakable benefit and comfort to your soul here, hereafter? Behold, He counsels you: “I counsel thee to buy of

me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see” (Rev. 3:18). Behold, He calls you (Mark 10:49). Oh, let the call this day be an effectual call. Delay no longer. Away quickly to the throne of grace and beg for this eye salve—to the means of grace—and seek it there.

4. What is to be done by those on whom this light is risen? I answer: As Christ is the light of the world, so you also are the light of the world. He Himself has honored you with that name, “Ye are the light of the world” (Matt. 5:14)—not the greater light that rules the day—He only is that—but, the lesser lights. Then:

(1) Let your light shine before men (v. 16). Hide not your candles under a bushel. Walk as children of the light (Rom. 13:12–13; Eph. 5:8; 1 Thess. 5:5–8).

(2) Let your light be growing and increasing more and more, especially concerning the evil of sin, the weakness of self, the excellency of Christ, the beauty of holiness, the vanity of this world, the reality of the other world.

CHAPTER 10

Christ Is Our Life

When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

—COLOSSIANS 3:4

There are three lessons to be learned from these words: (1) that Christ is our life; (2) that Jesus Christ will appear; (3) that when Christ will appear, all true believers will appear with Him in glory.

Our attention will be confined to one—Christ is our life. You see it is plainly and expressly laid down here. He that runs may read the truth of it. And is He our life? Then how dear and precious should He be to us! Skin for skin, and all that a man has will he give for his life. Yet how many are there that will live nothing for Christ, not a lust for Him. A bad sign. He is not yet their life, for if He were, they would not part with Him for a world, for a thousand worlds. Show:

- I. In what sense Jesus Christ is our life.
- II. What inferences may be drawn from it.

In What Sense Is Jesus Christ Our Life?

Life is threefold. There is natural life, spiritual life, and eternal life.

1. Natural life, which is the life of the body flowing from its union with the soul. While soul and body are together, we live. When they part, we die. Now who brought them together, who keeps them together? Jesus Christ. Then He is our natural life (Deut. 30:20).

He is so as God blessed forever. It is in Him that we live and move and have our being. He breathed into us the breath of life at first (Gen. 2:7). He holds our soul in life (Ps. 66:9). In this sense, He is our life (John 1:3–4).

He is so also as God-man, the mediator. We owe it to His intercession that we are here alive this day. Did not He interpose, we were gone. He is the dresser (Luke 13:7–9). “Cut them down,” says justice. “Let them alone,” says Jesus. And thence it is that we are let alone.

If a man be under a sentence of death, the friend that procures for him a reprieve may well be said to be his life. Now that is our case. And what pity is it that so few consider it, that so few lay it to heart. We live on Him. We cannot live without Him, and yet we do not live to Him.

2. Spiritual life, which is the life of the soul flowing from its union with God. When God and the soul come together, the soul lives. When they part, it dies. Your soul is but the carcass of a soul, if it have not union with God. Now there is no union with God but by Jesus Christ. It is He alone that brings God and souls together. He is the mediator, the peacemaker. First, the two natures, God’s nature and man’s nature, were united in Him, as God-man. Then, He took up the quarrel between their persons and made peace. God and man could never have come together but for Christ. He is the bond of the union. Then He, and He only, is the life (John 14:6)—no coming to the Father, that is, no union with the Father, but by Him.

By our natural life, we live to one another to mutual comfort and converse. By our spiritual life, we live to God and have converse with Him, and He with us—which cannot be unless we be alive to Him, for He is not a God of the dead but of the living. Now how are we made alive to God? Only through Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:11).

It is He that begins spiritual life in us (Eph. 2:1). Our natural condition is a dead condition, not only a dark condition, a blind condition, till He enlighten us, but a dead condition, till He quicken us. Many a man is blind that is not dead—born blind, yet not born dead. But we are born both blind and dead. We are before Him as those dead and dry bones (Ezekiel 37), till He breathes on us by His word and Spirit. Then we live, and not till then (Gal. 4:19). He is said to be formed in us, that is, to become the soul of our souls. His Spirit dwelling in us (which, if we have not [Rom. 8:9], we are none of His) is the same thing to our souls that our souls are to our bodies: the means and way and principle of their living. As His human nature was formed in the womb of the virgin by the Holy Ghost overshadowing her, so His divine nature is formed in every believing soul (2 Peter 1:4) by the same Holy Ghost overshadowing them.

It is He that carries it on and continues it. When He has breathed the life of grace into us, if He should then leave us to live of ourselves—alas! We should die again presently. And therefore, He looks to it, when He has bestowed it, to maintain and cherish it (Ps. 66:9; Heb. 12:2), which holds our soul in life. This is true of life spiritual. We say preservation is a continued creation (John 5:17). It is so with reference to grace. In Him, we live spiritually and move spiritually and have our being spiritually—live and move and have our being toward God. His flesh and blood is the food of our souls. Except we

eat of that and drink of that by believing, our souls can no more subsist than our bodies can without meat and drink.

He is the keeper of our spiritual life (1 Peter 1:5). Adam had the keeping of his own and lost it. The Devil cheated him of it. And so should we. Therefore, He Himself undertakes it, and it is well for us He has. We are no good keepers of spiritual life. We cannot ourselves keep life and soul together. It is He that does it every day.

3. Eternal life, which is the life of heaven. This and spiritual life are for substance the same. They differ in degree only. Life spiritual, the life of grace, is life eternal, the life of glory begun. And life eternal, the life of glory, is life spiritual, the life of grace perfected. They differ as the child's life and the man's life (1 Cor. 13:11–12); as the morning sun from the noon sun (Prov. 4:18); as the spring from the summer, the budding rose from the blown rose.

Now of this life Jesus Christ is:

(1) The procurer and purchaser. He bought it for us (Heb. 5:9). It was the will of the Father that He should come and bestow it on the remnant (John 6:40, 47; 10:10). He has it, has it already, that is, the earnest of it, in his heart, the first-fruits of that great harvest. Or, he is as sure of it as if he had it in his hand.

(2) He is the life itself. Wherein consists the happiness of heaven?

In being with Jesus. This was it He promised the penitent thief (Luke 23). This was it that Paul desired (Philippians 1). To be with Him so as to see Him and enjoy Him. It is sweet now to see Him through the lattices, through a glass darkly, in His holy ordinances. What will it be then to see Him face to face, to see Him not afar off, but near (Num. 24:17)? Not as

another's, but as our own? Dives saw Abraham and Lazarus in his bosom—but what the better?

In being like Him. There is now a kind of rude draught of His image drawn on the soul, but hereafter that draught will be perfected. We will be completely like Him. This follows on the former—likeness upon vision: now, in the rude draught (2 Cor. 3:18); hereafter, in the perfections (1 John 3:1–2). Like Him in body (Phil. 3:21). We will appear with Him—as here. Now, to speak properly, this is the life, and of this that saying of His is commonly interpreted: “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). As if He had said, “I am My people’s everlasting happiness, as God to Abraham (Gen. 15:1), your reward hereafter, your shield here. The life hereafter in the other world, and the true way to it in this world.” And what would we have more?

What May We Infer from Hence?

1. If Christ be our life, then without Christ, without life. Christless souls are lifeless souls (1 John 5:12). I beseech you attend to what I say. It is about matters of life and death, and those are matters of great concernment, especially life and death spiritual, life and death eternal.

If you have not Christ, you are dead men and women, for He is the life.

You are dead in law, under a sentence of death. It is only to those that are in Christ Jesus that there is no condemnation (Rom. 8:1). To others, then, there is.

You are dead in state, void of spiritual life. This my son was dead, dead to his father. His father was all one as if he had no such son. So is your case as to any duty or service. Now when did he begin to be otherwise? When became he alive? When he arose and came. Have you done so? If not, you are dead, dead to this day. If you have Christ, you did receive Him. But when?

How? At what ordinance? By whose offer? Perhaps you are not able to tell, when first. But I ask, when at all? Saints are often receiving Him. But if never, how have Him? We know when we received, that is, closed with, such a one as husband, wife, master, landlord, friend. And why not know when we received Christ as prince and savior? For certain, they that received Christ have received the Spirit of Christ (Gal. 4:6; contra Rom. 8:9). Now the Spirit is a spirit of grace and supplication, sets the heart against sin, inclines to what is good. It is a law written in the heart. Oh, try! Will you believe a man is dead that has neither breath nor sense nor motion? We reckon so, as to the body. And in like manner it is, as to the soul. If there are no inward breathings toward God, no desires after Him, no hearty praying, otherwise than in a cold, dead form rested in, the soul is dead. Crying is a sign of life. If there are no spiritual senses exercised, seeing, hearing, tasting, feeling; no sense of burden in sin; no taste of sweetness in the Word of God; no sight of invisible things; no ear to hear the voice either of word or rod—the soul is dead.

And so for motion. They that have received Christ Jesus the Lord, they walk in Him. To them, to live is Christ, as Philippians 1:21. They do all they do that is good in His name and strength, aiming to please Him. Now, will you bring your condition to this touchstone? What say you? Are you dead or alive? You are alive with bodily life, God be praised. But are you possessed of soul life! What life is there in the inward man?

2. Then the way to live is to make Christ ours—the only way. There is no other. You would all live, would you not? I live in the world—what else? I mean, live to God now, and live with Him hereafter. Oh, then come to Christ and close with Him. He complains [that] we will not (John 5:40). And why will we not? Because we are not convinced. We do not understand.

We do not believe. In a word, we will not, because we will not. Two things should move us:

[1] The one is the unspeakable misery of dead souls. See Ephesians 2:1, 2, 12. This now; and as for hereafter, they must be eternally dying.

[2] The other is the unspeakable happiness of living souls. They will appear with Him, who is their life. All must appear, but they in glory.

You tell us we are dead, and yet you tell us we must come to Christ. Can dead men come?

I reply: You have as much power as ever any had that lived before you. What power had Lazarus when he came out of the grave at Christ's call? The power went along with the call: "Lazarus, come forth." And Lazarus came forth. Again:

You can pray to God to give you the power, and when He has given it, you can use and employ it. And who requires more (Eph. 5:14)? Is it objected, "But I am an old sinner and have been long dead. Is there hope for me?" I answer: Lazarus had been long dead, yea, and buried, yet at Christ's word he lived. We read of two others raised by Him: the ruler's daughter, newly dead; the widow's son, upon the bier¹—signifying the several sorts of sinners spiritually dead, some young, some middle-aged, some old. There is hope for each. Yet presume not, neither say, "I will tomorrow," for tomorrow is none of ours. The uncertainty of the continuance of life natural should make us hasten to secure life spiritual and life eternal.

3. Then you that are alive, remember how you came to be so. You were not the authors of your own life. You had it from Christ. Therefore, let Him have the glory of it. Call Him by this name every day, "Lord Jesus, Thou art my life." We can

1. *Bier*: the stand upon which the coffin is placed.

destroy ourselves, but we cannot help ourselves (Hos. 13:9; Eph. 2:8). This should humble us and lay us low.

4. Then to Him we must go for all our daily supplies, for the support and maintenance of our life. The same that began the good work must perform and finish it. How often does David pray, “Quicken me, oh Lord. Oh Lord, quicken me” (Psalm 119). He was alive certainly, but being sensible of dullness, deadness, decays, he flies to God. So must we. We must excite, quicken ourselves, and exhort, quicken one another. Yet after all, it is grace that quickens.

5. We should bless God both for the life we have and the life we hope for (see Ps. 56:12–13; Isa. 38:19). Had it been from death temporal only, we had cause for praise; but much more for freedom from spiritual death. Encourage faith by it. He that has done the greater will do the lesser (Ps. 56:13). Encourage patience by it under outward troubles (118:18)—not to damnation. See Lamentations 3:49, a living man.

6. Then rest not in having life, but press after liveliness (Rev. 3:1–2). A lively frame in our walking is an excellent frame. It rids work, brings something to pass in religion. See how lively and active wicked men are.

CHAPTER 11

Christ Is Our Peace

For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.

—EPHESIANS 2:14

This “He” here spoken of is certainly our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we that were sometimes afar off are made nigh (v. 13). That which is said of Him is that He is our peace.

Doctrine: The Lord Jesus Christ is our peace.

I will show in what sense and how we are to understand it and what improvement we are to make of it.

Peace is threefold. There is peace with God, peace within ourselves, and peace with one another.

And all these Jesus Christ is: our peace. Not only a friend to it, but the thing itself. As our righteousness, our life, so our peace. He has not only brought in a righteousness, an everlasting righteousness, but He Himself is it. So He has not only made peace and proclaimed peace, but He is our peace. He not only gives us life, but is our life.

[Christ] Is Our Peace with God

When God made man, at first there was perfect love and amity between them—God at peace with man; man at peace with

God. They had sweet fellowship and converse one with another, walking together in the garden. But when Adam sinned, then, immediately, the quarrel began. Eating the forbidden fruit broke the peace, and ever since there has been a quarrel.

A mutual quarrel. God an enemy to man, man an enemy to God (Zech. 11:8).

A universal quarrel. It is true of all the children of Adam without exception, one as well as another children of wrath (Eph. 2:3).

Passively, God is wroth with us.

Actively, we are wroth with God. As all men are enemies, so all man is enmity (Rom. 8:7). The understanding, the will, the mind (Col. 1:21). Besides:

This is a growing quarrel. It increases more and more by actual sin (Hos. 4:1)—omission [and] commission.

And on God's part, it is a righteous quarrel. He has reason to be angry and to be offended with us.

This appears if we look on sin as a debt, and such it is. We are taught to pray, "Forgive us our debts." Sinner, let me tell you, you are indebted to the God of heaven. (And He to you. He owes you a payment [Deut. 7:10].) It may be you are beforehand in the world, but you are behindhand with God. You owe Him for all the talents you have received and not improved (Matt. 25:14, etc.). "[I] will recover my wool and my flax" (Hos. 2:9). I will recover—it is a law term. "It is My wool, Mine still as to the propriety, though given to you for your use."

It appears also if we regard it as a trespass: "Forgive us our trespasses." The divine law is given us as a hedge to keep us in compass. When we sin, we leap the hedge, as in profaning the Sabbath, we rob God, encroach on His time.

It appears further if we look on sin as treason, high treason, against the crown and dignity of the God of heaven, an affront to His majesty. It defies, despises, denies Him. "And Pharaoh

said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go” (Ex. 5:2).

This is the language of every willful sin. But:

It is the quarrel of a covenant (Lev. 26:25).

Now, on man’s part it is an unrighteous, unreasonable quarrel. He has done nothing to deserve our enmity (Jer. 2:4–5; John 10:32). And:

If it be not taken up, it is like to be an everlasting quarrel, like that with Amalek (Ex. 17:16). Other feuds death puts an end to, but here it is not so. Death brings the sinner into an endless state of misery and torment, where he is hating and cursing and blaspheming God, and God hating and plaguing and punishing him to all eternity. Oh that this were seriously thought of by us! That we would lay it to heart, making application each of us to ourselves—I am the man; God has a quarrel with me. I am indebted; I have trespassed. Think you hear Him saying to you, as to Ephesus, “I have somewhat against thee” (Rev. 2:4).

It is in reference to this quarrel that the Lord Jesus Christ is our peace. He interposes to take it up, and He has taken it up on terms agreed on. He is the Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5). He is the “daysman” (Job 9:33). As he that steps between to make peace between two that are at variance must deal with both parties, first with one, then with the other, so did He.

1. He deals with God, to atone and pacify Him. “I must have satisfaction,” says divine justice, “for the debt that these creatures owe me, for the wrong that they have done me, so many oaths, lies, curses, so many Sabbaths profaned, prayer neglected.” Lord, what will satisfy? Blood (Heb. 9:22)? Death (Gen. 2:17)? Will any blood, any death, do it (Rom. 6:23)? Will the blood of bulls and goats make amends? Will the death of rams and lambs satisfy? Nay, will the death of my firstborn

(Mic. 6:6–7)? No, it must be the blood of God, that the merit of it may be of infinite value. And that God must be man too, that the nature that sinned may satisfy, the same nature. Now, where is that God-man that will undertake it? “Lo, I come,” says the blessed Jesus. “Rather than this quarrel will continue, and divine justice be unatoned, and poor sinners everlastingly perish (Ps. 40:6), I will be made a man, a man of sorrows, a poor man. I will suffer and die, die on a tree.” “Why, that will do,” says God. “Let Me have that, and I will be a friend.” And He had it, in the fullness of time. He had it and declared Himself satisfied (Matt. 3:17; 17:5). Do we understand this, believe it, apply it? “All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:18–19).

2. Having done with God, He deals with man—every man, one by one; not Himself immediately, in His own person, but by proxy. He sends His Spirit to treat with us. And may I not safely say He has been one time or other treating with each of you, seeking to persuade you? What to do? Why, to be friends with God, to lay down your enmity against Him, and to be willing to be reconciled (v. 20). Ministers are the Spirit’s agents in this matter, and they come and beseech you. And when they beseech you, God in them beseeches you. Now some are prevailed with, blessed be God. “You, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled” (Col. 1:21). There is a certain hour of reconciliation one time or other in our lives, sooner or later. And there are they that can say, “He is our peace. He has

made both one, brought God and us together, broken down the partition wall.”

Some may ask, What is that partition wall?

On God’s side, the guilt of sin is it. Till that be satisfied for, He cannot be friends. This is broken down by Christ dying.

On our part, the corrupt nature is it, the carnal, stubborn will. Till that be subdued, the heart of stone turned into a heart of flesh, we will never be friends. We cannot. Now that is broken down by renewing grace. The Spirit of God in the work of regeneration and sanctification makes the change, turns the world upside down in the man, opens his blind eyes, softens his hard heart; of a stranger, brings him acquainted; of an enemy, makes him a friend. Now this work of making peace, bringing God and man together, is:

Necessary work. Work that must be done, or we are undone. It is the one thing needful, and there is reason it should be done quickly, because of the uncertainty of time and the greater uncertainty of opportunity (Luke 19:41).

It is work that no one else can do, but He only that is our peace. The papists grant there is but one mediator of reconciliation, though there be many of intercession. But we know but one, both of intercession and reconciliation, and Jesus is He.

It is work that He has done for some. I hope some of you. Are you not friends, reconciled?

It is work that He would do for all. It is not because of Him that any perish. He calls, invites, entreats, persuades (Rev. 3:20; Matt. 23:37; Isa. 45:22). Oh suffer yourselves to be prevailed with by Him. Say, “Lord, I yield. I will stand it out no longer.” Many arguments may be used to move us to be friends with God and to make Jesus Christ our peace. In order thereunto:

(1) Consider that there is no standing out against Him, no fighting it out with Him. He will certainly be too hard for us.

His arm is a long arm. Therefore, He can reach us wherever we are. There is no hiding ourselves from Him. Besides His sword, He has a bow and arrows (Ps. 7:12–13).

His arm is a strong arm, mighty, almighty, as to save, so to destroy. Therefore, the blow, when it falls, wherever it lights, will be accordingly (1 Cor. 10:22; Heb. 10:31). Oh that this were considered: “Who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together” (Isa. 27:4). By briers and thorns is meant the sinner himself, who is no more able to abide His wrath than briers and thorns a fire, and all those uninstituted ways and means which men have invented to themselves toward making peace. All our own righteousness, penances, pilgrimages—they are all utterly insufficient for this purpose.

(2) Consider He is willing, freely willing, to become friends. “Fury is not in me” (27:4), and verse 5: “Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me.”

By strength is meant the Lord Jesus Christ, the arm of God, the power of God, so called not only because by Him He made the world—as the Word—but because had it not been for His mediation He had been weak, as it were, could not consistently with His honor and justice have forgiven sin. But now it is otherwise.

By laying hold is meant believing. Faith in Christ is the soul’s laying hold on Christ, as Joab on the horns of the altar, as a sinking man on a cord cast out. As when a blow is threatened on the arm that holds the weapon, which prevents striking, so this laying hold prevents the stroke of justice. Now, will we thus lay hold on the blessed Jesus, plead His undertaking? Say, “Lord, be friends with me, for Christ has died and made peace.”

(3) Consider that until this be done, we are certainly miserable, for God is our enemy. Either friend or foe, that is certain.

If God be our enemy, all that is in God is our enemy. All the creatures are our enemies, waiting only for orders.

(4) Consider if this be done, we are made forever. This is Eliphaz's argument to Job (22:21). Good will come to you, all good—temporal, spiritual, and eternal.

Now there are certain marks by which to know whether Christ be our peace toward God:

(1) Have we thus laid hold on Him by believing, accepted of Him, yielded ourselves to Him with unfeigned consent and assent, renouncing all other? If so, your peace is made; the partition wall is broken down. You may go with boldness to the throne of grace and sue out your pardon and take the comfort of it (Rom. 5:1-2).

(2) What is sin to us? If Christ be our peace, sin is our trouble, lies heavy as a burden. It is felt and bewailed every day. If God be made our friend through Christ our peace, sin is looked upon as an enemy and hated and pursued and watched against accordingly. Time was when it had the entertainment of a friend, an inmate. The doors were open to it. It was heartily welcome. Provision was made for it. Is it otherwise now (2 Kings 9:22)?

(3) If Christ be our peace, He has not only reconciled God to us, but us also to God and to all that is His: His name, His glory, His Word, His day, His people—for their relation sake to Him, because they bear His image.

(4) If Christ be our peace and have made peace, there is always care to keep the peace. If any new matter of controversy arise, as soon as the heart smites, which it will do quickly, and we are made sensible of it, there will be no rest in the spirit till the divine favor be recovered again. Guilt in the soul is like a mote in the eye—not at ease till wept out. It used to be so among friends. Now, try by these marks. Many think all is

well when it is not so. Others doubt when there is no cause. Therefore, examine.

Christ Is Our Peace with One Another

It were a desirable thing that all who fear God in the land, in the neighborhood were at peace among themselves, for as for peace with wicked men, it will never be while the world stands. The seed of the serpent, of the bondwoman, will hate, will persecute the seed of the woman, the free woman. Fire and water will as soon be reconciled as these two seeds. But how happy were it if all good people were at peace, if all their enmities were at an end! The Savior left this blessing as a legacy (John 14), pressed it (ch. 15), prayed for it (ch. 17).

The only means of it is Jesus Christ. The scope of the text leads to understand it of the union made between Jew and Gentile, at mortal feuds before, but reconciled in Christ. And how?

1. By Him becoming a common savior to both. It was His object to “reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby” (Eph. 2:16).
2. By breaking down the wall of partition. That was the ceremonial law, which He put an end to at His death (v. 14).
3. By begetting in their hearts by His Holy Spirit a dear and entire love one toward another. As in His ministry He preached it and pressed it, so by His grace He works it. This was a great matter when first accomplished. Now He that reconciled this enmity and made peace can certainly reconcile any other, for none was ever greater than it. Those among ourselves are nothing to it. Let us apply ourselves to Him then and pray “for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee” [Ps. 122:6].

Pray that the wall of partition may be broken down, within, without—unwarrantable, unscriptural impositions without, and uncharitable, unchristian dispositions within.

Pray that by His Spirit and grace He would knit and join us together in brotherly love, which is the bond of perfectness. Something has been done and is in the doing toward it. All other names laid aside, this one taken up: the united brethren. Formerly a book called the *Protestant Reconciler* was publicly burned; now the king declares himself such.

Christ Is Our Peace within Ourselves in Our Own Bosom

We commonly call this peace of conscience. It is an inward, sedate, composed, cheerful frame of spirit at all times and in all conditions. Now, the blessed Jesus is this also. If the first, the third; for it is the result and product of it. When all is clear between us and heaven, how can it be but there must be joy in the Holy Ghost. Or, if not that, yet, however, peace, quietness? The noise of trouble is without. “This man shall be the peace” (Mic. 5:5). His being man laid the foundation—[in] Hebrew, “this man,” namely, the illustrious person described in verse 4. He not only gives peace as a legacy, but is the peace. Therefore, if we want peace, we must go to Him. If we have it, let us give Him the praise. It is called rest, and to Him we must come for it (Matt. 11:28–29).

CHAPTER 12

Christ Is Our Passover

For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

—1 CORINTHIANS 5:7-8

There are two things in these words:

1. The one a doctrinal position or assertion, containing in it the marrow or sweetness of the whole gospel: “For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.”
2. The other a practical inference drawn from it by way of use and application: “Therefore let us keep the feast,” etc.

The former branches itself into three propositions:

- I. Christ is our Passover.
- II. Christ our Passover is sacrificed.
- III. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

So also does the latter:

- IV. Therefore, we must keep the feast.
- V. Therefore not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice.

VI. Therefore with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Here were work for many Sabbaths. I will be brief on each.

Under the first head, the *doctrine* is:

Christ Is Our Passover

The Passover was a yearly feast among the Jews, appointed of God in remembrance of the destroying angel passing over the houses of the Israelites when the firstborn were slain in the houses of the Egyptians. Now Christ is not the feast, but forasmuch as there was a command about a lamb, called the paschal lamb, concerning which there were sundry rites and ceremonies enjoined to be observed, Jesus Christ is that lamb, that paschal lamb, called by a figure here, “the passover.” That lamb was a type of Christ. He is our paschal lamb. “Behold the Lamb of God” (John 1:29), as John the Baptist said, pointing at Him with his finger.

Now, a lamb was the fittest creature that could be to be a type of Christ, both in respect of harmlessness and also of usefulness. None more patient, none more profitable than a lamb. So Christ (Isa. 53:7). But it may be asked, What kind of lamb is referred to?

I answer: It was a male lamb, to note His vigor and strength. And it was a lamb without blemish, signifying His absolute purity and perfection (1 Peter 1:19). In Christ there was no defect or distortion, no spot or deformity. So also it was a lamb of a year old. In the Hebrew, it is the son of a year—a lamb in its prime, as we say. Now our Lord Jesus died in the prime of His age, between thirty and forty.

What, it may be inquired, was to be done to the lamb?

It was to be separated from the rest of the flock and kept apart four days before. So Christ was chosen out of the people and set apart from all eternity in the decree and counsel of

God to be a prince and a savior. It was also to be killed. So was Christ. He must die not a natural but a violent death, not in His bed but on a tree by the hand of violence. And that death of His is our life. Besides, the time of killing it was in the evening. So Christ suffered in the evening of the day, about three o'clock, at the time of the evening sacrifice. And He suffered in the evening of the world (v. 20). Toward the latter end of the fourth day, that is, the four thousandth year from the creation.

But the main matter was what they were to do with the blood and with the flesh. As for the bones, they were commanded not to break one of them, which was accordingly fulfilled literally in our Passover (John 19:33–36), signifying that notwithstanding His dying, He remained still able to save, even to the utmost.

As for the blood, they were to put it into a basin with a bunch of hyssop to sprinkle it on the doorposts of each house. And when the destroying angel came to destroy, where the blood was, it was a warning to him that there was no firstborn to be meddled with in that house, and so he passed them over.

Now our Passover is Christ. And:

1. The death He died was a bloody death. And it was well it was, for without blood there could be no redemption, no remission.
2. This blood of His we are to sprinkle by faith on the doorposts of our souls—that is, we are to make a believing application of it to ourselves, who loved me and gave Himself for me. We are commanded to do this. It is our duty to do it. We sin if we do not do it. We must believe that He is both able and willing to save, to save us, you and me, and thereupon to close with Him as our Savior.
3. Wherever this is done, the destroying angel—that is, the justice of God, the curse of the law, the divine threatenings,

the divine executioners, the avengers of blood—have nothing to do. The blood atones and pacifies. Here dwells a believer, one that has an interest in Christ, not in common only, but in special. Away, away, meddle not here.

Now is this done, brethren? Is Christ your Passover? Is His blood sprinkled on your souls? If not, sprinkle it quickly. You know not how near the destroyer may be. Death may be perhaps at the next house. If it be done, in God's name take the comfort of it (Rom. 5:9; 8:1). Also, make it appear it is so by you loving Him and living to Him. The blood was to be on the doorposts, visible to all that passed by (10:10).

But as for the flesh, they were to roast it, and when they had done, to eat it with bitter herbs with their loins girt and their staves in their hand.

Now all this had a spiritual meaning in it. Our Passover is Christ.

1. The roasting signified His inexpressible sufferings which He did undergo at His death. Was ever sorrow like His sorrow?

2. Our eating of it is by believing. Faith feeds on Christ dying. As the mouth eats meat when it chews it, as the stomach receives and digests it, whereby the body is nourished and strengthened, so the believing soul feeds on Christ. See John 6.

Once eating in a man's life does not do. We eat often. So we must be often feeding by faith on Jesus Christ. Yesterday's meat will not do today's work.

3. They were to eat it with bitter herbs. Those bitter herbs to us are godly sorrow for sin. They that truly believe are penitent. They also mourn for sin (Zech. 12:10). If you believe and have never mourned for sin, suspect that faith. It is said the herbs were made into a thick sauce to mind them of the clay that they made bricks with.

4. They were to eat with their loins girt and their staves in their hands, which is the posture of servants, girt for their work (Luke 12:35–36). We should be ready to every divine call (Ps. 27:8). And of travellers fitted out for a journey. They were out of Egypt, bound for Canaan; but a wilderness was in their way. So we are travellers to the heavenly Jerusalem. “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus” [Heb. 12:1–2].

Christ Our Passover Was Sacrificed

The Jews, by God’s appointment, had several sorts of sacrifices or offerings. Some were bloody, as their burnt offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings, trespass offerings. Others were unbloody, as their meat offerings, drink offerings of flour, wine, oil, etc.

Now Christ our Passover was a bloody sacrifice. His life went for it. He made His body an offering. He made His soul an offering, and the design thereof was to make peace.

Christ Was Sacrificed for Us

Not only for our good to set before us an example, but in our stead. By right, we should have been sacrificed. “No,” says He, “let Me be the sacrifice, and let these go their way.” We are the Isaacs; He, the ram. Oh, what love was there in this! How should it forever engage our hearts to Him.

Under the second head the doctrine is:

Therefore, Let Us Keep the Feast

What feast? Not the feast of Easter. We know no such scriptural institution. Each Sabbath day is our Easter day, a day sanctified

and set apart for the remembrance of our redemption finished by Christ on His resurrection day, the first day of the week.

“But there is mention made of Easter in Acts 12:4.” I consider that the Jewish Passover is meant, for it is not likely Herod should owe such respect to a Christian festival.

“But the keeping of Easter is ancient in the church.” I answer: It was so, but the Scriptures are more ancient.

Not the feast of the Lord’s Supper, though, it is true, that is a feast, and a feast on a sacrifice, and a feast that we ought all to keep, and to keep as here appointed. We are guilty of a sin of omission if we do not.

But by the feast here, I understand, rather, the whole course of our conversation in this world. It is but one word. Let us feast it then—that is, let us feed heartily and plentifully on this blessed Lamb, not poorly and sparingly. We ought every day to feast our souls on Jesus Christ, on His merit and righteousness, on His flesh and blood spiritually, on His Word, His promises, the manna, the hidden manna. I say, every day, by fresh acts of faith (Song 5:1–2). Not on Sabbath days only or sacrament days only, but every day—it is our own fault if we do not (Luke 16:19). And, which follows on the former, let us feast it, that is, rejoice in the Lord always (Eccl. 11:10).

Mirth is twofold. There is vain, carnal mirth, expressing itself in vain, frothy discourse, joking, and jesting, which are not convenient, in youthful frolics, drinking, and dancing. Enough of this and too much everywhere.

There is, also, sober, serious, holy mirth—spiritual joy, called joy in God, terminating in Him as the immediate object of it. And this the Word calls for again and again (Phil. 3:1; 4:4). It stands in opposition to a lumpish, heavy, drooping, melancholy spirit and behavior, which prevails oftentimes even over the best; but they should chide themselves for it, as David (Psalms 42 – 43). Consider:

1. A sorrowful frame of heart is a grief to the Spirit of God, whose office it is to comfort us.
2. It brings an ill report on the ways of God, discourages standers by, lays a stumbling block, as the evil spies.
3. It is weakening to ourselves. If the joy of the Lord is our strength (Neh. 8:10), as oil to the wheels, then a contrary frame of spirit causes us to drive heavily in duty. Remember but this one word and believingly apply it. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. And see if it will not thence follow. Therefore, let us feast it. Oh, how glad were the poor Israelites to be gotten out of Egypt! At Passover time, they made all outward shows imaginable of great joy and rejoicing.

Therefore Not with the Old Leaven, Neither with the Leaven of Malice and Wickedness

Allusion is here made to another of the appointments at the Jewish Passover, which was, that they should eat no bread with leaven in it during all the seven days that the Passover lasted. And very strict they were in it, searching with candles, cursing themselves if they knew of any crumb kept or hidden anywhere.

Now this the apostle applies here to naughty persons. He writes to have the incestuous church member cast out by the censure of excommunication. Why so? Because he is like leaven, and leaven will spread (1 Cor. 5:6). Guilt is infectious; therefore, put him from among you. It ought still to be so among those that own Christ for their Passover (2 Thess. 3:6).

He applies it also to naughty things, malice and wickedness. Those that call Christ their Passover must not be malicious, must not be wicked. Malice is inveterate anger and wrath and hatred toward any person. Away with it. It is leaven. It sours the spirit of him in whom it is, sours his duties. God cares not for them. No leaven was to be mixed with any sacrifice

(Lev. 2:11). Malice sours the converse, exposes to manifold temptations (Eph. 4:26–27). It makes a man in God’s account a murderer (1 John 3:15). Therefore, I beseech you all, as ever you expect benefit by Christ’s sacrifice for you, purge out this leaven (Eph. 4:31–32; 5:1).

So likewise for wickedness. This is a general word, including all manner of allowed willful sin. Away with it (2 Tim. 2:19). There is good reason why you should. Is Christ the minister of sin? Did He die to obtain leave and liberty for us to live in sin? God forbid! We cannot think so, but rather the contrary (2 Cor. 5:14–15; 1 Peter 2:24).

But with the Unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth

There is another thing compared in Scripture to leaven, which all they that keep the gospel Passover must put away; and that is, hypocrisy (Luke 12:1). Away with it. It will spoil all.

We must not be hypocrites, nor do anything we do in hypocrisy. Even disciples must beware of this. It is the cry of the world against us that we are such, but let us approve ourselves to God that we are not such, and then no matter.

We must not have a form of godliness without the power.

Nor a name to live without being alive indeed.

We must not do what we do to be seen of men.

We must not draw near to God with our mouths, when our hearts are far from Him.

We must not make clean the outside and be careless what is within.

We must not look one way and row another, as Jehu did.

Suspect this evil. Search for it. Watch and pray against it. Contrary to all this is sincerity and truth. They differ like shadow and substance, like the picture of a man and a man.

It was the saying of one, “I know no religion but sincerity” (John 1:14). It is the condition of the new covenant (Gen. 17:1).

It will be our comfort and joy (2 Cor. 1:12), our strength and preservation. “The integrity of the upright shall guide them” (Prov. 11:3). “Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee” (Ps. 25:21).

CHAPTER 13

Christ Is Our Portion

The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.

—LAMENTATIONS 3:24

There are several sayings in Scripture, both which men have said to their souls and which their souls have said to them.

1. Which men have said to their souls. Bad men: “Soul, take your ease” (Luke 12). That was a naughty saying. Good men, chiding sayings: “Why art thou cast down, O my soul?” (Psalm 42 and 43). Comforting sayings: “Return unto thy rest, O my soul” (ch. 116). Exciting sayings: “Bless the LORD, O my soul” (ch. 103).

2. Which their souls have said to them. Among the rest, this is one: “The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.” Where we have two things: (1) a doctrinal position or assertion—the Lord, that is, the Lord Jesus, is a believer’s portion—(2) a practical inference, “Therefore will I hope in him.”

In this method I will handle it. For the doctrine—the Lord Jesus Christ is a believer’s portion—I will show:

- I. The meaning of the word.
- II. What in Christ is that portion.
- III. And what kind of portion Jesus Christ is.

[The Doctrinal Assertion]*[The Meaning of the Word]*

For the first, the meaning of the word: The word “portion” is sometimes taken for a piece or part of a thing, be it a less part or a bigger part.

Sometimes not for a part but the whole. We call our all our portion. All we have to trust to, to live on. Such a one has so much, or so much for her portion, provision made for her by her father. Now our heavenly Father has made comfortable provision, set by a competent portion for every child of His. And that portion is Christ. He has not divided Christ among them, given a part of Him to one and a part of Him to another. Is Christ divided? No. But He has given Him all, all wholly and entirely to each one of them, so that each one may say, “All Christ is mine, mine to all intents and purposes.”

“The LORD,” said the psalmist, “is the portion of mine inheritance” (Ps. 16:5). Instead of lands and livings assigned to us, He has assigned Christ to us, as the Levites and priests were to have no other inheritance than the Lord (Num. 18:20). So it is now. We are heirs of God (Rom. 8:17). His testimonies are our heritage (Ps. 119:111). Such a promise as that is better worth than a thousand a year: “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5).

The psalmist adds, “And of my cup,” alluding to feasts, where each one had his mess of meat set by his cup side, and that was his portion for that time (Gen. 43:34; 1 Sam. 1:4–5). Now, the Lord is the portion of every good man’s cup. The mess he is to feed on, and a worthy mess He is. His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed. Wicked men have

a cup too, and the portion of a cup. And what is it? “Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup” (Ps. 11:6). Oh, fear and tremble lest this be your cup and your portion.

[What in Christ Is a Believer’s Portion?]

For the second—What in Christ is a believer’s portion?—[it is] all that He is and all that He has, both as God and as God-man.

1. As God, all His wisdom and power and goodness is theirs. I say theirs, to be employed for their best benefit and advantage.

2. As God-man, as mediator, His merit and righteousness is theirs for justification. His blood, for reconciliation. His sufferings and death, to make atonement.

His Spirit and grace are theirs for sanctification. Of His fullness they receive (John 1:16).

His comforts are theirs, to revive and refresh them when they are sad and drooping (Isa. 50:4). When the three young men were in the fiery furnace, the Son of God was there, as, at another time, with a handkerchief wiping off sweat and blood and tears.

His Word is for their guidance and direction in all their doubts and difficulties, like the pillar of cloud and fire.

His presence is theirs for their preservation and protection in all their perils and dangers (Gen. 15:1).

His crown and throne and kingdom are theirs eternally to reward them (Rev. 3:21).

[What Kind of Portion Is Christ?]

For the third, what kind of portion is Christ?—in general, He is a worthy portion (allusion to 1 Samuel 1:5). That is, a dainty, delicate portion, excelling all other, none like it, worthy of all

acceptation, that is, to be readily accepted of and closed with by each of us as soon as offered. But in particular, He is:

1. A soul portion—as here, “He is my portion, says my soul. The portion of my heart” (cf. Ps. 73:26), of my spirit, my inner man. The body with many people is well provided for, has a large portion, whose soul in the meantime has just nothing. Ah, poor soul! The belly full (17:14); the barns full (Luke 12:19); the coffers full—but the soul empty and unprovided for. The rich man was clothed (16:19). These were his good things (v. 25), his portion. Christ alone can be a soul’s portion, because He alone can answer the necessities and needs, the desires and expectations of a soul. Four things we want, which the whole creation has not for us, but He has them all and has them abundantly: wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor. 1:30). Concerning the first, wisdom, Job makes hue and cry and returns answer, *non est inventus*,¹ it cannot be found (Job 28:12, 14–28). The same is true of the rest. But in Christ they are to be had.

2. A sufficient portion. There is enough in Him, enough and enough again to make us all happy. Merit enough, Spirit enough, grace enough, glory enough. He is El-Shaddai—God that is enough (Gen. 17:1).

3. A satisfying portion. The soul that has Him will own and acknowledge it has enough (Ps. 116:7). There is many a man who has plentiful provision for this world and yet is still thirsting after more—like the daughters of the horseleech, crying, “Give, give” (Eccl. 5:10). The reason is God never put it into them to be our portion. If He had, they should have satisfied. But He has put it into Christ to satisfy (John 4:13–14).

1. *Non est inventus*: It is not found.

Not but that there are still desires after more, yet there is satisfaction with what is. Nay, “They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house” (Ps. 36:8). “As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness” (17:15).

4. A sweet portion—exceedingly pleasant and delightful. It does not only satisfy the soul that has it, but fills it with joy unspeakable and full of glory (16:5–6). It is a Canaan portion, which was a land flowing with milk and honey.

How sweet is the knowledge of Christ and gospel mysteries to the understanding part [of the soul] (Phil. 3:7–8)!

How sweet are the communications of His love and favor to the affecting part of the soul (Ps. 4:6–7; Song 2:3).

5. A suitable portion. If it were not suitable, it would not be sweet. If not proper, not pleasant. All the comfort of marriage depends on suitability. Christ is a meet help (Genesis 2).

6. A sure portion. We cannot say concerning any portion we have in this world, it is a sure portion. Many a child that has thought himself or herself secure enough, that their portion has been in good hands, in process of time, it has proved otherwise, either through death or deceit or some miscarriage or other. But a Christian’s portion, which is Christ, is to be sure in a good hand (Isa. 55:3).

A part in Christ is, therefore, a good part, nay, the best part, because it cannot be taken away from us.

“One thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:42). “Shall not” is a sweet word, and because Truth has said it, I am bound to believe it. It will not be taken away.

It will not while we live. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. It is secured by the promise and oath and power of God.

We will not waste it ourselves, as the prodigal son did his, and Adam his.

Neither men nor devils will wrest it from us (John 10:28). It implies they will be trying and endeavoring, but in vain.

It will not when we die. If other portions be not taken from us, we must from them. But “I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” [Rom. 8:38–39].

It will not to eternity. It is a lasting, everlasting portion. “God is...my portion forever” (Ps. 73:26). “Forever”—a sweet word.

[The Practical Inferences]

We notice the inferences to be drawn from hence and the improvement we are to make of it.

1. Then it follows that Christ is a rich christ, who has where-withal to portion such abundance of people, as in all ages and generations have been portioned by Him. The apostle calls it the unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph. 3:8). He is a bottomless mine of merit and spirit, a boundless ocean of righteousness and strength, a full fountain of grace and comfort. In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. That may be said of Him that can be said of no other: He has a store that can never be emptied. Oh, how should this endear Him to us! How should it draw out our thoughts and meditations into holy adorings of Him, as Song of Solomon 5:9–10!

2. Then all that are true believers are really and truly rich people. I do not mean rich in the world. There are many of them far from that, poor day laborers, poor servants in poor families. But I mean rich toward God, rich in His account and esteem (Luke 12:21; James 2:5). We read in Luke 16 of a poor beggar called Lazarus, a godly man. And was he indeed poor, who when he died, was carried into Abraham's bosom? Would you choose his condition, or the rich man's? We are bid (Psalm 48) to walk about Zion. So walk about a believer's portion. Count his bags, his coffers, his fields; the grace he has; the peace, the hope he has—and then tell me if he be not a rich man. Job was once the richest man in the world, but on a sudden all was gone. No, his grace remained with him, his patience, his faith, his hope.

3. Then how much does it concern us all to make this portion ours. May we do so? We certainly may, each of us. But how? By a sincere, hearty, deliberate choice of it. Choose it, and you will have it. Thus Mary did: "Mary hath chosen that good part" (Luke 10:42).

Now choosing one thing implies refusing another.

We must refuse everything else that you can name and say of it, "This is no portion for me."

As the pleasures of sin are not, a merry, jovial, sensual, flesh-pleasing life is not. Merry company is not. Wine and music are not. Strong drink is not. Rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness are not. Away with these then. They are no portion for your soul.

And the riches and honors of the world are not. Gold and silver are not. Houses and lands are not. Mammon is not. Preferment is not. Therefore, covet them not. Sit loose to them; live above them.

Further, our own merit and righteousness is not. It is a garment too narrow to cover us, a bed too short to stretch ourselves on. Therefore, we must deny it, not trust to it, not rely on it.

What then must we take to?

To Christ, and to Him only. Choose Him—that is, we must cordially accept of Him on the terms on which He is offered. Come to Him, roll ourselves on Him, assent and consent to His laws and government, saying, “None but Christ, none but Christ. None but Christ to justify, sanctify, rule, save me. None but Christ to be my prophet, my priest, my king.” It is a sign God has chosen us for His portion, when we have chosen Him (Deut. 32:9; Zech. 2:12). Thus Moses (Heb. 11:24–30). Here was first refusing, then choosing. He weighed both in impartial scales and on mature deliberation took to that which he believed best. Something of that kind must be done in like manner by each of us. Though we have not such great things to refuse as he had, yet if we refuse what we have and choose Christ, He becomes our portion. Now is this done? Have we thus refused? Have we thus chosen? If we have, blessed and happy are we! If not, do it quickly. Do it this day; do it now. Let your soul say, “Lord Jesus, Thou art and shalt be my portion. Let others choose as they list,² my sister Martha as she pleases, to be cumbered with much serving. This is my choice.” Tell God so, as David: “Thou art my portion, O LORD” (Ps. 119:57; John 21:15).

There are four sorts of persons who should especially hearken to this motion:

(1) Those that are young. The days of your youth are the days of your choice, your choosing days. Now choose Christ (Eccl. 12:1).

2. *List*: desire.

(2) Those that are poor and low in the world. Your father perhaps left you but a small portion. It may be ten or twenty pounds. It may be fifty or a hundred pounds. Aye, but your heavenly Father has provided a rich portion for you. He has given His Son to be your portion, and will you say, “I am well as I am. I will have none of Him”? The less we have on earth, the more need there is to make heaven sure, lest we should be doubly poor—poor here, and forever miserable.

(3) Those that are convinced, whose eyes are in some measure opened, whose hearts God has touched. You are specially concerned, for if you fail of Christ for your portion, when almost persuaded, not far from the kingdom, how sad will it be! To go to hell by heaven’s gates, like the foolish virgins! Therefore, choose, choose, I beseech you.

(4) Those that have children (Gen. 17:7). “I will... be a God unto thee, and to thy seed”—by entail, on the same terms.

(5) Then if Christ be our portion, and we can make out our title on good grounds, and that we have thus chosen, then it is our duty to hope in Him—as here, “Therefore, will I hope in him,” rely on Him, trust to Him. People are used to do so in that which is their portion. “I have a hundred pounds,” says one, “to live on.” Another: “I have two hundred. If the worst come to the worst, that will maintain me.” Is Christ your portion? Nay, but is He so indeed? You have then enough to live on. If He be your portion, He may well be your hope, your refuge.

A refuge as to the things of this life. You are well provided for. You will want no good thing (Ps. 34:10; 142:5). If all your creature comforts should fail, you may rejoice in your portion, which fails not (Hab. 3:17–18). As David, when all was gone, he “encouraged himself in the LORD his God” (1 Sam. 30:6)—though flesh and heart fail. Suppose a traveller [was] robbed, all about him taken away. Yet if he has more at home, if his portion be safe—if his cisterns be drawn dry, yet if

the fountain is flowing—he can rejoice. So should Christians rejoice in their portion.

A refuge as to our everlasting condition (1 Cor. 15:19). We have hope in this life, but not in this life only. When we die, all our other portions leave us (Ps. 49:17). And if we have no Christ to take to, how sad will it be! But if He be yours, fear not. You may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. “Why art thou, being the king’s son, lean from day to day?” (2 Sam. 13:4).

(6) Then we should carry it as those whose souls can say the Lord Christ is their portion.

In all holy obedience before Him (Ps. 119:57), fearing to offend Him, caring to please Him. For though it be not possible to lose the portion, it is possible to lose the comfort of it.

In a holy contempt of all other things in comparison with Him. How high do some women carry it that know they have a great portion. They spend accordingly. So should we—this is worthy (Col. 1:10). Remember, you are a king’s son. And we should carry it in holy joy and cheerfulness of spirit (Phil. 4:4).

Christ Is Our Propitiation

And sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
—1 JOHN 4:10

John, the beloved disciple, breathes nothing so much as love throughout this epistle. He gives us here a superlative instance of love—not ours to God, but God’s to us, in sending His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Doctrine: That Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is sent of God to be the propitiation for our sins. Show:

- I. The meaning of this.
- II. What kind of propitiation Christ is.
- III. What we learn from it.

Explain the Meaning of This

Propitiation is a hard word; but few understand it. It is used but thrice in all the New Testament—here, 1 John 2:2, and Romans 3:25. The latter word is used (Heb. 9:5), and there translated the mercy seat: “And over it the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy seat”—the propitiation.

1. In that sense it is true. Jesus Christ is our mercy seat. Now the mercy seat was a broad plate of pure gold laid on the ark,

in which were the two tables of the law, for a covering to it, just as long and as broad every way as the ark was, having above it the two cherubim with their wings stretched out, between which was the Shechinah or the manifestation of the presence and glory of God, who is said to dwell between the cherubim (see Ex. 25:17, 21). Now this mercy seat was a type of Christ. He is our mercy seat. As that was of pure gold, so He is pure and perfect and without spot.

As that was just as long and as broad as the ark or coffer in which the law was, so Jesus Christ, by the obedience of His life, did fully answer to all the commands of the moral law, without failing or offending in the least tittle—just as long and as broad. And by the obedience of His death did fully perform all that was required by the mediatorial law laid on Him by the Father. As that covered the ark and so was between the pure eye of God, dwelling between the cherubim, and the holy law put into the ark, so Jesus Christ comes between us as sinners and transgressors of the law and the wrath and vengeance of God due to us. It is therefore called the mercy seat because it is the blessed medium or means of divine mercy toward us (Heb. 8:12), the same word implying it is through Christ alone as our mercy seat.

2. It has another signification: propitiation, which is as much as propitiatory sacrifice. Sacrifices among the Jews, by God's appointment, were of several sorts, with reference to the design and end of offering them. They were especially of four sorts:

[1] Some were merely to honor God. Those were called burnt offerings, because the whole beast was burnt.

[2] Others were when something was wanting, to obtain it. Those were peace offerings, peace including every good thing.

[3] Others were when some mercy had been obtained, to give thanks for it—called thank offerings (Ps. 116:17).

[4] Others were to make atonement for sin, called sin offerings and trespass offerings: a bullock or a sheep or a goat or the like, duly offered, was a means to make reconciliation for the sin of the offerer. Not that divine justice could be thereby satisfied, but the divine will and pleasure was thereby performed. And it sanctified to the purifying of the flesh (Heb. 9:13), that is, continued to the offerer his right and title to all the privileges of the earthly Canaan, which by his sin he had forfeited. Now our sin offering, trespass offering, propitiatory sacrifice is Jesus Christ. These all pointed at Him. They were the shadows. He is the substance (1 Corinthians 7; 2 Cor. 5:21).

What Kind of Propitiation or Propitiatory Sacrifice or Sin Offering Is Christ?

1. Jesus Christ is a propitiation appointed of God. He did not put Himself on it, but was called to it. He that knew best what would please Him did Himself set Him forth (Rom. 3:25). This is a great support to faith in our addresses for peace and pardon (Ps. 89:19). He is the same that brought the ram to Abraham.

2. He is a propitiation accepted of God (Eph. 5:2). Therefore acceptable to Him, because appointed by Him.

But how do we know that He was accepted?

There were ways formerly of testifying acceptance by signs, as by fire coming down from heaven and kindling the sacrifice (Lev. 9:24; 1 Kings 18:38).

But this was done by two extraordinary ways: the one, by a voice from heaven, expressly affirming it (Matt. 3:17; 17:5); the other, by raising Him from the dead. No other sacrifice ever was so, no beast (Rom. 4:25).

3. He is a spotless propitiation. The beast that made atonement must be so—without defect, excess, blemish, else no acceptance (Lev. 22:20). Now such was He: conceived, born, lived, died without sin (Heb. 9:14; 1 Peter 1:19).

4. He is a slain propitiation. Without blood, there was no remission, and it must be lifeblood. The beast must die, else it could not be a propitiatory sacrifice. Now Christ died to make atonement (Rom. 3:25; 5:10) in His blood. The death He died was a bloody death, most bloody.

5. He is a voluntary propitiation, a freewill offering. Such the beasts offered in sacrifice were not. They would have lived if they might. Therefore bound with cords (Ps. 118:27). Howbeit, the offerer was to be willing (Lev. 1:3). But here, the same was both the offerer and the offering—and both willing (Ps. 40:7–8; John 10:18; Eph. 5:25). With the same severity where-with He checked the Devil, persuading Him to worship him (Matt. 4:10), He checked Peter, dissuading Him from sufferings (Matt. 16:23; see Luke 9:51; 12:50).

Why then did He pray, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me” (Matt. 26:39)?

To show that He had the sinless infirmities of human nature, one whereof is to fear dying—which, if He had been without, His yielding to it would not have been so strange. A shame to us to be so backward in our duty to Him.

6. He is a universal propitiation. The only one—instead of all other sacrifices, though but once offered. The legal offerings were repeated often, yearly, nay daily, twice every day—an evidence of their insufficiency. But Jesus Christ once only, and that once enough (Heb. 9:25–33; 10:11–12). If a plaster will cure a sore at once laying on, what need is there of a fresh

one? This condemns the popish mass, which themselves own must be repeated often.

It is of universal extent, to all that will accept of it and close with it: "Not for ours only," that is Jews, His countrymen and kinsmen according to the flesh, but to the Gentiles also, all the world over (John 3:15), the world, consisting of Jew and Gentile (Isa. 49:6; 1 John 2:2). This is good news for us sinners of the Gentiles. If we sin, we have an advocate. We have a propitiation, a sacrifice offered for us.

It is of universal extent likewise, to all sins, even presumptuous sins not excepted.

7. He is a complete propitiation. To a complete propitiation, three things were required: a priest, an altar, and an offering.

If either of these were wanting, there was no atonement. Now all these three met here in Christ.

The offering was His human body and soul, that is, Himself as a man (Eph. 5:2), His body (Heb. 10:5, 10), His soul (Isa. 53:10). The same nature that sinned, suffered.

The altar which sanctified the gift was not the cross (What could the wood of the cross do toward that?) but the divine nature—the Godhead, the eternal Spirit (Heb. 9:14). That was it that bore Him up under His sufferings, as the altar did the sacrifice. And that gave worth and value to them, to make them a price sufficient (Acts 20:28).

The priest was Himself the offering, as God-man. See the definition of a priest: "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Heb. 5:1).

"Taken from among men." So was He.

"Ordained." So was He, anointed, sealed—not without an oath, as Aaron, but with an oath (Ps. 110:4).

"For men." So was He, not for angels.

“In things pertaining to God.” To offer.

“Gifts, firstfruits, thank offerings.” So He, now in heaven, presents our prayers, praises, alms.

“Sacrifices for sins.” So He, as before, offered Himself on the cross.

8. He is a continual propitiation, not continually to be offered, but of continual virtue and efficacy. We read often of the continual burnt offering. The atonement made on the cross reaches us now as fully as if He had died but yesterday. The last sinner that will live to be reconciled and saved by Him will certainly find the truth of this. That burden of Psalm 136, concerning God’s mercy, may be sung also concerning Christ’s merit: It endures forever. There is a fountain of it (Zech. 13:1). We come to:

The Application of This

Show:

1. What need there was of this propitiation or propitiatory sacrifice. Might not God have spared His Son, and the Son have spared Him? “Wherefore was this waste?” (allusion to Mark 14:4).

It was no waste. The work of our redemption and salvation could not otherwise have been brought to pass, for ought we know. To those that slight it, it is indeed waste.

We have sinned—have we not? By omission, by commission, in thought, word, and deed. Where is the man, the woman, the child that can say, “I have no sin, am under no guilt”?

If we have sinned, God is angry with us. It cannot be otherwise. All sin is a provocation to the pure eyes of His glory. It grieves Him. It vexes Him. His holy nature is against it. So also is His righteous law, which forbids it, which threatens it, let the sinner be who he will (2 Sam. 11:27). If God be angry,

some course must be taken to appease and pacify Him. It will not wear off of itself. There must be some propitiation, something to make atonement. Now what should that be (Ps. 40:6; Mic. 6:6–7)? This man bid fair, but it would not do. Nothing of our own, prayers, tears, alms, penances, pilgrimages, nothing of anyone's else for us will do (Ps. 49:7–8). No, no. He is the propitiation—He, and none but He. Show:

2. What is to be done by us that He may be our propitiation. I beseech you, hearken to this, for it is the main matter. Take away *propitiation* if you take away *our*—as to any comfort we can have in it.

In general, we must do it in like manner as the guilty Israelite was to do, when he brought his bullock or his lamb to make atonement for what he had done.

Now what was that?

(1) He was to lay his hand on the head of the beast (Lev. 1:4). So must we lay a hand of faith on Christ, making a believing application of His merit and righteousness, each of us, to ourselves—to our own soul and to our own sin, who loved me and gave Himself for me: a propitiation for my sins. Without this there is no atonement.

(2) He was to confess his sin and to tell why he brought his offering (5:5), acknowledging if he had his desert he himself should die and not the bullock. So must we, as David (Ps. 51:4), as Job (33:27–28), as the prodigal, aggravating his fault against himself (Luke 15) with grief of heart and shame of face, and this with the hand on Christ's head (Zech. 12:10). Now how have we done this? Do we use to do it daily, in ordinary, in extraordinary?

(3) He was to comfort himself and to go away rejoicing in the atonement made and to sin no more. So must we

(Ps. 85:8). This is called receiving the atonement (Rom. 5:11). Show:

3. What is like to become of us if this be not done, and if Christ be not our propitiation. We must each of us ourselves be made a sacrifice. It is usual in Scripture to set forth the judgments of God on the wicked under this notion (Isa. 34:6; Jer. 46:10; Ezek. 39:17–18). Hence God is styled a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29). We are described as stubble. Now what work is there like to be, when fire and stubble meet (Isa. 27:4)!

Two things Christ suffered in being made a sacrifice: pain extraordinary, in body, in soul; shame extraordinary, in being crucified without the gate, naked, between two thieves, scoffed at. Now pain and shame in extremity and eternal is hell. And that is the portion of those that must be their own sacrifice (Ps. 9:17).

Pain in soul from the gnawings of a guilty conscience, the worm that never dies. Son, remember: In body, to be cast into a lake of brimstone and fire, into utter darkness, tormented, not a drop of water (Luke 16).

Shame without, with wicked company; in the place of souls; God, saints, devils laughing; and all this eternal (Dan. 12:2). Hear this and fear (2 Cor. 5:10–11). You that are delivered from all this, see the mercy of your deliverance by Christ your propitiation. Show:

4. What must they do whose propitiatory sacrifice Christ is?

(1) They must sacrifice themselves, soul and body, to Him for a thank offering (Ps. 51:17; Rom. 12:1–2).

(2) They must sacrifice their sins absolutely and entirely for a burnt offering, a whole burnt offering (Luke 19:27). They must be crucified as He was (Gal. 5:24). Crucifixion is a slow but sure death.

(3) They must sacrifice their all, freely and cheerfully, for Him, if thereunto called—estate, name, liberty, life. As Abraham his Isaac (Genesis 22; Rom. 8:36; cf. this with Rev. 6:9). Now how do we like this?

CHAPTER 15

Christ Is Our Freedom

If the Son therefore make you free, ye shall be free indeed.
—JOHN 8:36

This Son here is, for certain, our Lord Jesus Christ. It can be no other [than] the Son of God, the Son of man, so as never anyone was besides Him.

That which is said here concerning Him—“the Son”—or rather, which He says concerning Himself, is:

1. That He has a way of making people free, making Himself over to them to be their freedom: “If the Son therefore make you free”—this is implied.
2. That the freedom that He gives is extraordinary freedom. Those that are made free by Him are free indeed. No other freedom is like it, none to be compared with it. “Ye shall be”—this is expressed.

The explaining and proving of these two, together with the application, will be our present work.

Christ Has a Way of Making People Free

He is their freedom.

Freedom supposes bondage. The people to whom this was spoken could readily enough reply to Him, “We...were never

in bondage to any man” (v. 33). It was not true that they said, understand them in what sense you will. Bondage is twofold: corporeal, which is the bondage of the outward man; and spiritual, which is the bondage of the soul.

As to the former, their fathers had been often in sore bondage. Were they not so in Egypt to Pharaoh; to the Philistines and Ammonites and Moabites in the time of the judges? So for seventy years together in Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar. Nay, were not they themselves at this very time in bondage to the Romans?

But as to the latter, which is spiritual bondage, concerning which our Lord speaks—they had never been otherwise than under that (v. 34). So that it was plainly the pride of their hearts. They were loath to own their condition. So are others besides them (Rev. 3:17). But whether we will own it or not, it is certain there is a spiritual bondage, which we are all under by nature. And from that bondage it is that Jesus Christ makes free.

We were born in bondage. Paul could say, in a civil sense, “I was born free.” And so many of us say, but in a spiritual sense we cannot, for we were born captives, prisoners, slaves. Oh, that God would make us this day sensible of the misery of such a condition, that if we be yet in it, we may make haste out of it. And, behold, here is one who will help you out. If we be out of it and are already made free, we may see what cause we have to be thankful all the days of our lives.

Have we not since sold ourselves to work wickedness, sold to be bondmen (2 Peter 2:19)?

Three things are the cause of this bondage:

1. The guilt of sin. By that we are bound over to divine justice in a bond, the penalty whereof is eternal burning. Sinner, you do little think of this, but certainly it is so. Your sins are your debts; and they are bond debts; and the bond will be sued

shortly; and there will be an arrest; and you will be cast into prison, if some course be not taken to prevent it (Luke 12:58–59). Now from this we are made free by the Son dying for us on the cross, whereby He paid the debt and fully satisfied God's justice and had His acquittance, when He rose again from the dead (Rom. 4:25).

2. The corrupt nature, called the sin that dwells in us, the flesh, the old man. By this we are so fettered and chained to diverse lusts and pleasures that we are perfect slaves. The drunkard is a slave to his lust of drinking. The wanton, to his wantonness. The covetous man, to money. One owned he was a slave to tobacco. Another said when he began to love it (meaning, to be a slave to it), he left it. And as to that that is good, there is no desire toward it. But quite the contrary. There is enmity and averseness. Just as it was with the poor woman (Luke 13:11, 16). She could not lift up herself. When Satan has bound the soul, it is crippled. Now from this we are made free by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, as a sanctifier, renewing us in the whole man, breaking the power of indwelling sin, planting a contrary principle (Rom. 6:14–19, 22).

3. The fear of death. Fear generates bondage, which bondage is more or less according as the thing feared is and, according as the fear prevails, in the measure and degree of it. Now we are all by nature subject to this bondage through fear. Though it does not appear alike in all, there are few but one time or other have their qualms on every apprehension of danger—though not every one to such an excess as Belshazzar, whose knees knocked against each other, or as Herod, who feared lest John was risen from the dead.

From this we are set free by the same Spirit as a comforter, abating this slavish fear and working holy boldness and confidence, so that now the man can cheerfully look death in the

face, can look God Himself in the face, knowing He is a reconciled father (Rom. 8:15–16). The death of Christ purchased this (Heb. 2:14), and the Spirit of Christ applies it to the soul. Let him be afraid to die that is afraid to go to heaven. But:

What Kind of Freedom Is It?

In general:

1. A freedom indeed, that is, real freedom, substantially free. It is no fancied thing, no dream. Many a man that ruffles in the world and is the world's freeman does but seem free. Really he is a slave, under the power of sin and the devil. But if the Son have made you free, you are free indeed—free from the guilt of all your sins past, from the beginning of the world to this day; free from the power and dominion of sin, for time to come. It may tyrannize over you, but it no longer reigns in you, of choice and with consent—free from slavish fear, causing bondage.

2. It is inward freedom. The soul is made free, the mind and conscience. Now the soul is the man, the better, the more noble part. If it be well with that, all is well. Though your outward condition be low and mean, perhaps a poor servant, the drudge in the family, an apprentice to some hard master, working hard and faring hard—no matter. If the Son have made you free, you are free to God, the Lord's freeman (1 Cor. 7:22).

3. It is costly freedom. It cost Him dear that obtained it for us, namely, the Son.

There are two ways of obtaining freedom for captives: the one by force, fighting to procure it; the other by price, paying a sum of money for ransom. Both these ways the Son obtained our freedom for us.

He paid a price for it to the Father, bought it out, even the price of His own most precious blood (6:20; 1 Peter 1:19). Less would not serve. Either that or nothing.

He fought it out with the devil and death and the grave and by strength of hand rescued us. It is true, Himself was taken prisoner; but they could hold Him but awhile (Acts 2:24). Thus He is made redemption (1 Cor. 1:30).

4. It is comfortable freedom. Comfortable to us, that enjoy the benefit of it. It is attended with many exceeding great and precious privileges, which should each of them be so many arguments with us, if we are not free, to desire and seek it; if we are, to rejoice in it and be thankful for it. Those that are free of corporations enjoy many immunities and franchises, which strangers are unconcerned in, for the having of which they serve seven years. But what are those to believers' franchises? What to those that belong to God's freemen? And, which is more, they may be yours immediately, this very day, without seven years' service to obtain them (allusion to 1 Sam. 17:25).

What Are the Privileges of the Lord's Freemen?

In general they are of two sorts.

Those We Have by the Way, Now, in Possession

1. There are sundry evil things that we are free from:

(1) The guilt of sin, which is taken away by the pardoning mercy of God in the blood of Christ. Even this, where it is denominated a man, a blessed man (Ps. 32:1–2).

(2) The domineering power of sin, so that it is no more on the throne in us (Rom. 6:14). Though it remain, it does not reign. It is as the Canaanites were in Canaan after the Israelites had conquered it. They were under tribute.

But someone may say, "I find the power of sin great in me."

But are you a willing servant to it, as formerly? Do you yield your members? “I hope not so,” you reply. “I can truly say the evil I would not that I do, and though with my flesh I serve the law of sin, yet with my spirit, the law of Christ.” Then be of good comfort. The freedom is gradual.

(3) The irritating power of the law. This is said to be the strength of sin, as water to lime (1 Cor. 15:56). Sin takes occasion by the commandment (Rom. 7:8). If such and such things were not forbidden, we should have no mind to them; but now, when enjoying this freedom, it is otherwise. There is then in the heart a dear love to the law of God. The will consents to it, rejoices in it.

(4) The unscriptural commands, injunctions, and impositions of men in religious matters, wherein we have to do immediately with God. Not their civil commands in civil things. We say not so (13:1; Titus 3:1). Nor the scriptural commands in sacred things, as when they command days of public fasting or thanksgiving when there is occasion, because for this there is warrant in the Word of God. The king of Nineveh proclaimed a fast, and the good kings of Judah. But their unscriptural commands in the things of God, when they lay a necessity on those things wherein the gospel calls to liberty—in such a case we are bid to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free (1 Cor. 7:23; Gal. 5:1). Herein the Pharisees were faulty. And see what the Master says (Matt. 23:9–10).

(5) The evil of afflictions, not from afflictions themselves—the best men have oftentimes a larger share of those than others—but from the evil of them (Ps. 91:10). The evil of an affliction is the wrath of God in it. As much as there is of that in it, so much there is of real evil. Now, by the Son we are freed from that wrath. His blood has pacified it. That which afflicts is love, for our good (Heb. 12:5–8; Rev. 3:19).

(6) The sting of death and the grave—not from death itself, nor the grave itself, but from the sting of it. What that is, we read 1 Corinthians 15:56. Now sin is done away, therefore death is unstung. It may hiss and frighten, but it cannot hurt.

2. There are sundry good things that we are free to.

(1) We have freedom of access to the throne of grace. We may come thither as often as we will and stay there as long as we will. The oftener we come and the longer we stay, the more welcome we are (Heb. 4:16). Liberty of speech, free to speak our whole mind—it is through the Son (v. 15). We would account this a privilege were it to the presence of an earthly prince or potentate. One said he would desire no more toward the making of him rich than an interview for one hour in a day with his king.

(2) We are free to all the promises in the whole Bible. Take which you will, if Christ be yours, you have an interest in it, a right to it, and may comfortably plead it, as if named in it. This is clear from Hebrews 13:5—a promise made to Joshua on a particular occasion, yet we may say the same.

(3) We are free to the lawful and comfortable use of every good creature of God. This is certainly one thing wherein the Son has made us free. For instance, in our good (1 Tim. 4:3–5). Some have thought and taught and themselves practiced otherwise, but it is a mistake. They may as well revive and establish the whole law of Moses in those matters. The reason ceases; it is not such blood now that atones. It is true, in Acts 15, there was a temporary appointment with reference to their present circumstances; but it was but temporary. And those ceasing, the injunction ceased (Titus 1:15). We do not live now among Jews, likely to be offended.

Those We Are to Have at Home Hereafter in the Other World

No condemnation (Rom. 8:1); no wrath to come (1 Thess. 1:10); no “Depart ye cursed.” But a crown and kingdom that fades not away. All the Lord’s freemen are heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17). We are free to heaven now, every day, in our daily addresses. And we will be free to the mansions there when we go hence (John 14:2–3).

Uses

Hence we learn:

1. What a difference there is between one man and another, according as they are or are not in Jesus Christ.

Those that are in Christ Jesus are the Lord’s freemen. The Son has made them free, and they are blessed and happy. They are more excellent than their neighbors, on all these accounts (Acts 17:11).

Those that are not in Christ Jesus are the Devil’s bondmen, rowing in his galley, tugging at his oar, doing his drudgery (Luke 15:15; 2 Tim. 2:26), having first overcome them (2 Peter 2:10). Among men, what a difference there is between a servant and a master, an apprentice and a freeman. “With a great sum,” says the captain, “obtained I this freedom” (Acts 22:28).

2. How much it concerns each of us to examine as to ourselves, “Which of the two am I? Has the Son made me free?” It may be known, and it were good for us to know.

Those that the Son has made free cannot but be sensible of a great change from what was to what is. Were the Israelites, think you, sensible when they were out of Egypt, and afterward, when out of Babylon? Those poor men that have been at Algiers in slavery to the Turks and are come home again, some by flight, some by exchange, some by ransom (they come often to your doors)—ask them: Are they sensible of a

change? They will tell you, "Aye." Can you say, "I was [in] darkness, dead, blind, captive; but now, I enjoy the light. I am alive. I see. I am free"?

They are endued with a free spirit. There is certainly such a spirit, and it is one of the excellent spirits (Ps. 51:12), free to every good work, ready, willing, forward (27:8; 119:108; 122:1). Not perfectly or universally so, but then it is free.

3. What is to be done that we may be made free? There is no way but one, and that is to apply ourselves to the blessed Jesus, the Son here spoken of.

Tell Him your sense of present bondage, your desire to be made free, and your consent to the gospel terms. Tell Him that you are weary of sin's service and are willing to be His servant, or rather, freeman. Know for your encouragement He is sent on purpose (Isa. 61:1; cf. Luke 4:18). The gospel proclamation is like that of Cyrus (Ezra 1:1, 5). Could I assure all apprentices, servants, suppose all prisoners, galley slaves of freedom, how welcome would be the tidings!

4. What must they do that are made free? They must own their deliverance and their Deliverer with all thankfulness. The bells ring when the time of servitude is out (Ps. 116:16). Sing the song of Moses (Ex. 15:1; cf. Rev. 15:3).

They must stand fast in their liberty and press to be made more free.

They must promote and further the freedom of others. Tell them the difference you have found.

CHAPTER 16

Christ Is Our Fountain

In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.

—ZECHARIAH 13:1

This fountain is the Lord Jesus Christ, concerning whom it is here promised that He should be an open fountain, implying till then He had been a fountain shut up, a fountain sealed. And so He was. Now:

1. We are told here concerning the time when it should be: “in that day,” that is, in the gospel day, the famous day of the New Testament, when God was manifested in the flesh, taking our nature on Him and becoming incarnate. Then this fountain began to be opened. It was opened more and more after His resurrection, when the apostles went forth and preached the gospel to all the world. What was the tidings they brought? Behold, a fountain opened; behold, a redeemer, a savior—as the angel told at first (Luke 2:10).

2. Concerning the persons for whose use this fountain will be opened. It is said, “The house of David and...the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” Those were first the nation and people of

the Jews. To them first, God having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless them, “in turning away every one...from his iniquities” (Acts 3:26). In all places where they came, they began with them (17:1–2). But on their refusal, they turned and opened it to the Gentiles (18:5–6). And it was well for us that it was so. The house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem now are the Christian church, scattered far and wide, here and there, on the face of the whole earth. Among them it is that this fountain is open, not elsewhere. The rest of the world knows nothing of it.

3. Concerning the intent and design of opening it, and that is, “for sin and for uncleanness.” That is a brave fountain indeed that will wash from sin and from uncleanness—that is: from sin, which is uncleanness, polluting and defiling the soul, as dust or mire does the body; and from all sin, and particularly from that sin which we commonly call the sin of uncleanness. Seventh commandment sins of all sorts. There is cleansing to be had even for them. And where? At this fountain, namely, with our Lord Jesus Christ, who is made unto us of God, among other things, our fountain.

Doctrine: That the Lord Jesus Christ is our fountain. Show:

- I. Wherein.
- II. What kind of fountain.
- III. The application.

Wherein Is Christ a Fountain?

When it is said Christ is our fountain, it holds forth two things:

1. Fullness. A fountain is not like a cistern. A cistern may be full, but the fullness of it may be emptied. So may the fullness of a fountain too, but then a fountain, or a spring, fills itself again immediately. So does not a cistern. A cistern may

be full, but it does not rise up and run over, as a fountain does, and that continually. For this reason the corrupt nature in us is compared to a fountain (Jer. 6:7), bubbling up in vain thoughts, inordinate desires, corrupt affections. Now in Jesus Christ there is a fullness, and it is a fountain fullness: fullness, all fullness, and all fullness dwelling, and by the good pleasure of the Father (Col. 1:19).

What is He full of? The two things that our poor souls have most need of toward the making of us happy: merit and righteousness for justification, and Spirit and grace for sanctification.

He has merit enough. His merit is of infinite value, sufficient to take away all sin (Heb. 7:25), able to save. And He has Spirit enough to sanctify us throughout, to break the power of every lust, to strengthen us to every good word and work.

He is such a fountain as can open in us a fountain springing up unto eternal life (John 1:16; 4:14).

2. Usefulness. A fountain is of great use. What striving was there in Abraham's time and Isaac's time and Jacob's time about wells of water (Genesis 21 and 26). When Achsah was to ask a boon of her father Caleb, "Give me," said she, "springs of water" (Judg. 1:15). Were we to ask but one thing of our heavenly Father, there were reason it should be, "Lord, give us a fountain." Why, blessed be His name, He has given us one. Not only springs of water, useful for our outward man, a land of springs, like Canaan, but a christ, a christ for our souls.

A fountain of water is useful for three things:

(1) For quenching of thirst. How glad is the weary traveller or laborer of a spring of water, though it be but fair water. "Oh," says he, "it has saved my life." The Israelites in the wilderness when there was no water—what an affliction

was it to them. When they had it, it was sweet as honey and oil (1 Cor. 10:4).

Now this fountain is very useful for this purpose. Is your soul athirst? Athirst for peace, pardon, life, salvation, for grace, strength? Here is a fountain for you. Come and drink (Isa. 55:1). Buying frightens; therefore, come freely. You are called (John 7:37; Rev. 22:17). See the discourse of our Lord Jesus with the woman of Samaria (John 4:10–14). Alas! The most of men know not what this means. They are sensible of no need and, therefore, of no desire, but, “as the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God” (Ps. 42:1).

(2) For washing away filth. Water cleanses. We could not tell what to do without it—to make our bodies, our clothes comfortable. This fountain also is cleansing. Sin defiles, leaves a blot, a stain on the soul. It is uncleanness.

The guilt of it is so. From that, we are washed by the blood of Christ, satisfying God’s justice and making atonement, also purging the conscience (Heb. 9:14; 1 John 1:7; Rev. 1:5).

The corrupt nature, which is the root and principle of it, is so (Ps. 14:3). From this the Spirit of Christ washes in the laver of regeneration (1 Cor. 6:11; Titus 3:4–5).

(3) For watering the earth and making it fruitful. They use to have fountains for that purpose in their gardens to be ready in a dry season to fetch water to refresh the plants. Herein also Christ is our fountain. Did He not water us every moment, grace in us would languish and die (Isa. 27:3; see 44:3–4).

Now it is the second of these especially that this text speaks of: Jesus Christ is a cleansing fountain. We have need of Him as such, for we are filthy and defiled.

What Kind of Fountain Is the Lord Jesus?

As a cleansing fountain, He has these properties:

1. He is full. He has enough wherewithal to cleanse us: merit enough, Spirit enough. Under the law, they had cleansing appointments as to ceremonial pollutions; but ours is beyond theirs.

They had blood, but it was but the blood of bulls and goats, and that in a basin only. But we have the blood of the Son of God, not in a basin, but a fountain full of it.

They had water—one particularly called the water of purification, made of the ashes of a red heifer, kept in a pot for the purpose (Num. 19:9). But that availed nothing toward taking away the moral pollution. The blood of Christ does that. The papists, in imitation of this, have holy water, a mere vanity. They had also water in a brazen laver of vast extent in Solomon's time for the priests to wash in when they drew near to worship (1 Kings 7:23, 26; cf. 2 Chron. 4:5). But what is all that to a fountain? In this fountain, we are to wash every day, especially when we draw near in duties of worship: "I will wash mine hands in innocency; so will I compass thine altar, O LORD" (Ps. 26:6)—that is, in Christ's blood, which makes as if innocent.

2. He is a flowing fountain. It is of the nature of a fountain to flow forth. If it does not flow, it is not a fountain. There are continual issues every day from the blessed Jesus, both for justification and sanctification, or we were undone. This was signified by the blood and water that came out of His side.

3. He is a holy fountain. We have a spring in this county called by name Holy-well, but it makes none holy that go to it. It is well if it defile not some by the superstition of it. But here is a holy well indeed, and holy water indeed, that makes them holy, holy, that are washed in it. However unclean before, if washed with the grace of Christ, that uncleanness is done away. We are made partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4),

not in perfection at first, but by degrees, renewed more and more till presented without spot to God (Eph. 5:27), faultless (Jude 24). Oh, the rare virtue that is in this fountain. It makes a sinner a saint.

4. A healing fountain. In John 5, we read of a pool called the pool of Bethesda, which had a healing virtue. This is the true Bethesda. Our uncleanness is like that of the leprosy, a disease. This cleanses, as Naaman by washing in Jordan (2 Kings 5), as the leper in Siloam.

5. An open fountain. If it were of greater virtue than it is and were shut up, what the better should we be? No, it has pleased the Father to lay Him open. He is not an enclosed fountain, but a common fountain—as a common propitiation, so a common fountain (1 John 2:1–2), as common as the light or air.

Open and common to all persons, Jew and Gentile, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free. Whosoever will may come.

Open at all times, night or day, summer or winter (John 8:2), early in the morning (3:2). Nicodemus [came] by night, and both found entertainment with him (allude to Gen. 29:8). There is no stone to be rolled away.

Open and free as to terms. We say, “What is freer than a gift?” He is the gift of God (John 4:10), the free gift (Romans 5), the unspeakable gift (2 Cor. 9:15). Though you have no worthiness, no matter; He is worthy. Cordial acceptance makes Him ours. He forgives freely (Isa. 43:25).

6. The only fountain. Besides Him, there is no other (Acts 4:12). We may think, perhaps, as Naaman: “Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean?” (2 Kings 5:12). But no other fountain will do.

The Application in Four Particulars

1. Here is matter for thanksgiving to God, who:

(1) Appointed this fountain in the counsel of His will from all eternity (John 3:16).

(2) Opened it in the fullness of time, after it had been shut for four thousand years (Gal. 4:4).

(3) Opened it to us—to us of this nation, country, neighborhood, of this present age and generation. Here is matter of thanksgiving, that the gospel is not a hidden gospel to us, that it is yet daytime with us, that we are within hearing of the joyful sound.

(4) And, specially, that He has brought us to it and washed us in it. This is certainly the mercy of mercies: “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Rev. 1:5). This is more than angels can say.

When ten lepers were cleansed, only one returned to give thanks (Luke 17).

2. Here is matter for conviction. And oh that I knew what to say and how to order my speech, so that it might be convincing; but Elihu, “My God is He,” that must do it. Convincing! Of what? Of your need of this fountain to wash in. That which is unclean does certainly need washing. But you are unclean—I mean, your soul, your mind, your conscience, inwardly, spiritually. I am sure you were so by nature, born in guilt and filth, like an infant weltering in blood and pollution (Ezekiel 16). And are you washed? When, and how? And by whom, and with what?

I am sure that every sin you have committed has added to that original pollution and has made you more and more filthy (Ps. 106:39; Matt. 15:19–20). Even vain thoughts (Jer. 4:17). So is the world also (James 1:27). Nay, our best duties have their pollutions (Isa. 64:6). But there is one particular

kind of sins, those against the seventh commandment, that is especially called uncleanness. And have we been in no sort guilty of that, neither in thought, word, nor deed? That query of Solomon's is a searching one: "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" (Prov. 20:9). Even those that are washed have need to wash their feet (John 13:10).

3. Here is matter for exhortation:

(1) To that which is best. To keep yourself clean and to keep your way clean, which must be by taking heed thereto according to the divine Word (Ps. 119:9). Apply to the fountain.

(2) To that which is next best. If any pollution happen, to make haste to your fountain and wash speedily. I mean to the Lord Jesus, confessing, bewailing, believing. The sooner the better—as in the case of other dirt. Go wash seven times (allude to 2 Kings 5). You that have never been with Him for mercy, for grace, have most need of all. Feel it and believe there is a fountain just by you (allude to Gen. 21:19).

4. Here is matter for encouragement. This sweet promise has relieved many a poor soul that has been sinking.

(1) That it is a fountain. Therefore, mercy enough, merit enough.

(2) That it is an open fountain, not under lock and key, but free and common to all. None excepted, that except not themselves by unbelief.

(3) That it is to the house of Israel and the inhabitants of Jerusalem—that is, all the members of the visible church.

(4) That it is for sin indefinitely and particularly for uncleanness.

CHAPTER 17

Christ Is Our Wisdom

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom.

—1 CORINTHIANS 1:30

This plainly and expressly proves what I affirm concerning Jesus Christ, that He is made unto us of God wisdom—not only that He is wise, nay, wisdom itself (v. 24; Proverbs 1 and 8), but that He is made unto us wisdom, and that God made Him so, that is, God the Father, who first puts us into Him. We were not born in Him, but we are put into Him by renewing grace, as a graft or scion into the stock. And then He makes Him to us wisdom. So that here are four things asserted:

1. The original and fundamental privilege of all true believers. They are in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1).
2. A consequent privilege following on that: Thereupon He is made unto us wisdom.
3. The sole author both of the one and of the other, and that is God, God the Father—of Him, are you in Christ Jesus.
4. The scope, end, and design of this ([1 Cor. 1:]31): “that... He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

Doctrine: That Jesus Christ is made of God wisdom to all true believers that are truly in Him. Show:

- I. How we are to understand this.
- II. What practical inferences may be drawn from it.

How Are We to Understand This?

1. Objectively. As He alone is the object about which all true wisdom is conversant (Col. 2:3). Wisdom is either divine or human—the wisdom of God or of men.

He is the wisdom of God, as the power of God (1 Cor. 1:24), because the divine power and the divine wisdom were never so manifest in anything that ever He did as they were in Christ, that is, in the great work of our redemption by Him. All His works are made in wisdom (Ps. 104:24; Prov. 3:19). The footsteps of it are to be seen in all the creatures, in the several parts and members, and their proportions, especially man (Ps. 139:14). He governs the world in wisdom, wisely ordering all events to the great end of His own glory and His people's good. When we murmur, we charge God with folly (Job 1).

But above all, in our redemption by Christ—in the contrivance of it, finding out such a way wherein righteousness and peace are met together, mercy glorified, and yet justice satisfied. In Ephesians 3:10, it is called the manifold wisdom of God, such as angels wonder at.

He alone is the object of all our true wisdom. There are other things about which wisdom is conversant, but none like Christ (1 Cor. 2:2; Phil. 3:7–8). Our chief wisdom consists in closing with that wise design of the Father, acquainting ourselves with it, assenting and consenting to it, acquiescing in it (John 17:3)—so that if you ask, “Who is a truly wise man?” I answer: He that is truly a Christian, not that is barely called so, but that understands, believes, and acts as such (Deut. 4:6).

They are called wisdom's children (Luke 7:35). The world counts them a company of fools, but God esteems them wise.

2. Effectively, as He is the author and finisher of all that is in us which is true wisdom. Now that is grace. Grace is true wisdom, and nothing else is so. It is not wisdom to be wise to do evil, wise, as Ahithophel was, to plot mischief. Nor is it wisdom to be able to manage affairs dexterously and to advantage. But wisdom is to know Christ Jesus the Lord. Now whence have we this wisdom? It is the Spirit of Christ that works it in us (Eph. 1:17; 1 John 5:20). He is the author (Heb. 12:2). Of His fullness, we receive (John 1:16). His is the eye salve (Rev. 3:18). But, further, for explication, it may be inquired:

1. How is it said He is made unto us of God wisdom?

(1) In respect of eternal appointment and designation. The Father did from everlasting ordain, decree, and purpose that His Son, Christ, should be a common head to us, deriving wisdom to all His members, [and] a common fountain, whence they should fetch it. The head in the body we reckon the seat of wisdom. Here so (Col. 1:19; cf. John 1:16).

(2) In respect of effectual application, in the fullness of time. He is then made wisdom to us when we begin to be made wise by Him, and that is when we are savingly converted. Then, and not till then, are we turned to the wisdom of the just (Luke 1:17). But:

2. What are the special acts of this wisdom, by which it may appear whether we are so turned, so made wise?

(1) If Christ be made unto us wisdom, we have been in some measure convinced of our own folly and foolishness. This is the first step (1 Cor. 3:18). A fool thinks himself wise (Prov. 26:12), as the Pharisees (John 9:40). A wise man knows himself a fool, as David (Ps. 73:22) [and] Agur (Prov. 30:2-3).

Now inquire, “How is it with me? What is the opinion I have of myself?”

(2) If Christ be made unto us wisdom, we are brought to see the excellency and usefulness of wisdom and begin to prize it at a high rate and to beg it of God rather than anything else in the world. As the pulse of desire beats, the man is—not desire in word and tongue, not in sudden flashes of “wishing and wouling,” but the inward, hearty, settled desire, as of joy (Ps. 137:6). Not the desire in the heart, but of the heart. Would we do as Solomon [and] seek an understanding heart? Have we done so (1 Kings 3:5)? If God should say to us, as to him, “I have given you a wise and an understanding heart,” it would be a good evidence of being saved.

(3) If Christ be made unto us wisdom, we have chosen God for our chief good and highest end and the Lord Jesus Christ as our alone way to Him. If so, we are wise. If not, to this day we are fools. The proper act of wisdom is to determine the choice to right ends, as in other things, so in spiritual things, the things of the soul. Inquire what is your chief good and highest end. Is God, to please and honor Him? Or self? Can you say with the psalmist, “Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever” (Ps. 73:25–26)? There are few who can say this. Paul complains that “all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s” (Phil. 2:21). To seek Christ’s things is to seek such things as He sought. Now those were to please His Father. And have you learned Christ as your way, and do you walk in Him? Can you say, “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain”?

(4) If Christ be made unto us wisdom, it has taught us to fear the Lord and to depart from evil (Job 28:28). There is this difference between wisdom and knowledge: knowledge

is in speculation; wisdom is in practice. Many have a great deal of the former, that have none of the latter—good heads, but bad hearts and bad lives. See the properties of heavenly wisdom (James 3:17). It was thus with David (Ps. 119:93–101; Eph. 5:15–16).

(5) If Christ be made unto us wisdom, it has made the things of time to be as nothing to us, and the things of eternity to be all in all. It has altered our thoughts and pursuits. Inquire how is it with us as to this. Can we say, as Paul, “We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4:18)?

Things that are seen and not seen are either good things or evil things.

What are the good things temporal, riches, honor, pleasure in comparison with the good things eternal, the vision and fruition of the blessed God and the blessed Jesus? Can we despise the former for the latter, as Moses (Heb. 11:24–26)?

What are the evil things of time in comparison with the good things of eternity? Whether are we most afraid of the frowns of men or the frowns of God, a prison or hell? It was a high charge against Job, but false: “Take heed, regard not iniquity: for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction” (36:21). Daniel chose to disobey the king rather than God (ch. 6). So did the three young men (ch. 3).

The Practical Inferences

If Christ be made wisdom to those that are in Him, and only to those, then:

1. They that are not in Him are not wise. Nay, I must speak plain, they are fools. Nabal is their name, and folly is with them. We are forbidden to say to our brother, “You fool,”

under the pain and penalty of hellfire (Matt. 5:22), that is, in wrath and bitterness to judge any person as to his eternal estate; but not when it is spoken out of love to convince. And, God knows, that is my end. Paul calls the Galatians “foolish Galatians” (3:1). Christ calls the two disciples, nay, and all the rest of them in that matter, “fools” (Luke 24:25). I speak it to your consciences, and if your consciences speak it to you, hearken to them. Unconverted Christless people are fools. I prove it by three arguments:

(1) They choose like fools. Is he not a fool, that when a pebble is offered to him by one, and a pearl by another, chooses the pebble and refuses the pearl? Was not Esau a fool in parting with his birthright for a mess of pottage? Oh, sinner, whatever you think of it now, the day is coming when you will call yourself a thousand fools for preferring the trash of this world before the heavenly treasure—the dross, the dirt of the earth, before the glories of the eternal kingdom! It is recorded of Mary, as an act of the highest wisdom, and she is commended for it, that she chose to sit at Christ’s feet to hear His wisdom (Luke 10:42), as the queen of Sheba at Solomon’s (see 11:31).

(2) They count like fools. They count themselves wise and religious people a company of fools, when themselves are the fools and the religious wise (18:10; John 7:48–49).

They count on time to come as their own and presume accordingly, when, alas, it is not so. He that reckoned on time is properly styled a fool (Luke 12:20). They count on going to heaven when they die, but are miserably mistaken, as the madman at Athens that pleased himself with the conceit that all the laden ships were his.

(3) They carry it like fools. The carriage of a fool is vain and frothy. There is no seriousness in him. Are there not many such with whom it is so? Are not you one of them? “It is as

sport to a fool to do mischief" (Prov. 10:23). Are you under the power of a vain mind?

He carries it like a fool that hugs his worst enemy in his bosom and turns his back on his best friend. And does not the sinner so? Is not sin your enemy, the Devil your enemy? And are not they made much of, and Christ, your best friend, slighted and made nothing of? One of the fathers brings in the Devil pleading against such at the day of judgment, "Lord, does not this man deserve to be damned that would be ruled by me, that never did anything for Him, and would not?"

2. They that are sensible of their want of wisdom and would be wise may learn hence whither to go and what to do, that they may attain it. The way is to apply yourself to the blessed Jesus, who is made unto us of God wisdom. He is our Joseph. As they that wanted corn must go to Joseph, so they that want grace, any grace, the grace of wisdom, must go to Christ and plead this text with Him: "Lord, art Thou not made unto us of God wisdom?"

What need is there of this plea? Universal need, every day, in everything. They that have most, have need of more.

(1) We cannot carry it as we should in any relation without wisdom, neither as superiors, inferiors, nor equals.

What need have magistrates of wisdom (Ps. 2:10)! A conviction of this made Solomon ask as he did (1 Kings 3:7–10).

Ministers are in the same situation (Col. 1:28). What a plague are foolish shepherds (Zech. 11:15)! On the other hand, it is promised, "I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding" (Jer. 3:15).

So are masters of families, husbands, wives, parents. They all need wisdom that they do not miss it by severity so much or indulgences too much. Neighbors especially need it. If

without wisdom, how can we walk in it (Col. 4:5) so as that we may do them good, and they do us no hurt?

(2) Nor can we carry it as we should in any condition without wisdom. If we prosper and thrive in the world, there is need of wisdom to manage it so that we be not ensnared, not destroyed by it. If in affliction, it is necessary that we may keep the mean between fainting and despising. If reproached, reviled, persecuted, to carry it as we ought toward our persecutors, with meekness and yet with courage (James 1:3–5).

(3) Nor can we carry it as we should in any duty to be done to God or man without wisdom. If we pray, we need wisdom that we do not ask amiss. If we hear the word, we need wisdom that we may discern between wheat and chaff, that we may take our own portion. If we wish to reprove, we need wisdom to know when, how (Col. 3:16). If to reconcile differences (1 Cor. 6:5), if to manage good discourse (Prov. 31:26), to attend our particular calling, so as not to entrench on our general calling, to keep the world in its due place—we require wisdom in all.

(4) Nor can we carry it as we should in any difficult case that lies before us, nor tell how to determine for the best, without wisdom (Eccl. 10:10). I may spare my pains to prove we have need of it. We all know it and feel it by ourselves, if we know and feel anything.

How is it to be supplied?

I told you: By having recourse to the blessed Jesus in a humble sense of our need (Prov. 3:5–6).

We must pray, as Paul (Acts 9:6; James 1:5). We must study the Word. That must be our Abel, our counselor (2 Tim. 3:15). Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom (Col. 3:16). What that speaks, Christ speaks.

We must then believe, put on Christ, learn Christ, walk in Christ, which is the certain way to be made wise.

3. Here is matter of unspeakable comfort to all true believers, that Jesus Christ is made wisdom, that is, as some interpret it, that all that infinite wisdom that is in Him as God, and all that infused wisdom which He had as God-man wherein He grew (Luke 2:52) is all made over to us to be employed for our good. Do you know the meaning of this? If there be any matter or thing wherein that wisdom may stand you in any stead, it is yours. As if a woman marry a wise counselor, or a wise physician, if she need the help of either, it is ready. So it is here (allude to Prov. 31:11). Apply it:

(1) To our particular private affairs, especially in the great turns of our lives. If you are in Christ, He will order them for you. And He will order them wisely (Eph. 1:11), according to the counsel of His will. Therefore, cast your care on Him, commit your way to Him (Ps. 37:3–5; Isa. 30:18). Therefore, submit to His disposals, quietly, patiently of choice, cheerfully. Wisdom would have it so, sees it best it should be so. And will I gainsay¹?

(2) To the public affairs of the church and nation. Our enemies are not only many, mighty, malicious, but cunning, crafty, subtle. There are Ahithophels among them. No matter; wisdom is our friend, knows how to undermine and countertermine (Job 5:12), as he did Haman. The pilot is wise, though the sea is rough.

1. *Gainsay*: deny.

CHAPTER 18

Christ Is Our Way

I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

—JOHN 14:6

These are the words of our Lord Jesus concerning Himself, wherein He says, “I am the way.” The way, whither? To the Father. Is there no other way? No, no other way. “No man cometh...but by me.” And what else is He besides the way? The truth and the life also. The truth, therefore we may safely believe what He says. The life, therefore He is worth the seeking after.

Doctrine: That our Lord Jesus Christ is our only way to the Father, and besides Him there is no other way.

The Father is God. You would all come to God, would you not? Especially to God as a father? Then hearken to me today. My errand is to set you in the right way. Abundance of people quite miss their way to God and so perish in byways. There is but one right way, and that is Christ. Therefore, “kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him” [Ps. 2:12]. Show:

- I. In what sense Christ is the way to the Father.

- II. The properties of Christ as a way, what kind of way He is.
- III. What improvement to make of it.

In What Respects Is Christ the Way to the Father?

There are seven things which are our concernment with the Father, to which Jesus Christ is the only way.

1. Our acquaintance with the Father. It concerns us all to know God and be acquainted with Him (Job 22:21; John 17:3). Now there is no being acquainted with God but by Jesus Christ—no being savingly acquainted with Him. We may know something of Him by the works of creation, but not unto salvation. So, only by Christ (John 1:18). He has declared Him by what He was (Heb. 1:3); by word of mouth (He preached concerning Him); by the works He did; by suffering and dying. It declared Him a just, righteous, sin-hating God. Therefore, when Philip desired Him, “Show us the Father” (John 14:8), see His answer: “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (v. 9).

2. Our access to the Father. We are coming to Him daily in the duties of His worship, are we not? By prayer and supplication, alone, and with our families, in ordinary, in extraordinary cases. But if we come without Christ, we come out of the right way. “Through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (Eph. 2:18), that is, through His merit and mediation (Rom. 5:2; Eph. 3:12). By faith in Christ, applying that merit and mediation of His to ourselves and appearing in it before God, as Jacob in Esau’s clothes.

3. Our acceptance with the Father. If we come and are not accepted, what the better are we? Paul labored, “that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him” (2 Cor. 5:9). So should we. Now that is only in and through Jesus Christ (Eph.

1:6). This has been proclaimed so by a voice from heaven: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17; 17:5).

Pleased with our persons (allude to Gen. 43:3).

Pleased with our performances: "Ye... [are] an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5). As no sacrifice was accepted unless offered by a consecrated priest on the right altar, so here. Now Christ is both our priest and altar, sanctifying the gift (Heb. 4:14, 16).

4. Our atonement with the Father. The Father and we are fallen out. He is displeased toward us. How will we get the quarrel taken up? There is no way but one, and Christ is that way (Rom. 5:1; 2 Cor. 5:19; Eph. 2:13–14). He made peace by the blood of the cross. His death atoned and pacified God's offended justice, made amends for the wrong that we have done Him. And we may comfortably plead it accordingly as our righteousness.

5. Our adoption by the Father. Adoption is that that makes us the children of God. We are by nature the Devil's children, branches in the wild olive, and our fruit is accordingly. Adoption cuts us off from that stock and grafts us into a better stock, a good olive, puts us into God's family. Now, how is this done? Only by Jesus Christ. He is the way (John 1:12; Gal. 3:26; Eph. 1:4–5). And on us receiving of Him, it is done immediately.

6. The accomplishment of all the promises of the Father. The promises are our great charter. They are both exceedingly numerous and exceedingly precious.

But our Lord Jesus was the way to the making of them. They were made in Him, that is, supposing His undertaking. Out of Christ, God was a threatening God only, ever after the first promise, "Do and live," was slighted.

Also He was the way to the making of them good (2 Cor. 1:20). If ever we have occasion to put a promise in suit, it must be in His name, in the virtue of His merit and mediation.

7. Our admission into the everlasting kingdom of the Father. To say He is the way to the Father is as much as to say He is the way to heaven. Heaven is a place, a city, a city that has foundations. Now every city has a way to it, and so has this city—and that way is Christ. There our Father dwells and keeps court. When we come thither, we will see Him and enjoy Him, only by Jesus Christ.

It was He that purchased it for us by the merit of His death. We had never had title to it, if He had not so bought it. He is entered as our forerunner.

It is He that prepares us for it by His Spirit in the work of sanctification, beginning, carrying on, finishing it (Ps. 84:11; Col. 1:12–13). He is our Joshua, both conquering the Promised Land for us and dividing it to us, leading us over the Jordan of death.

[What Kind of a Way Christ Is]

I am to show what kind of a way Christ is. In general, when it is said Christ is a way, it must needs be that He is so in a singular and peculiar manner, and that His properties, as such, are extraordinary. And so they are, even made up of seeming contradictions.

1. He is both a new way and an old way, as the command of loving one another is both an old command and a new command (1 John 2:7–8). So it is here.

He is the old way to the Father, even from the beginning—the way that Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham all went. In

and through Him they were accepted and justified and saved (Jer. 6:16).

He is the new way, expressly said to be so (Heb. 10:20). New in respect of clearer discovery and manifestation, held forth before under types and shadows, now laid open, so that he that runs may read. For this new way we are concerned to sing a new song (Ps. 96:1; 98:1–2).

2. He is both a dead way and a living way. Dead—all other ways are dead things. And therefore He must die, and so He did, on a tree, or else He could not have been our way to God. If by dying He had not paid the ransom, undergone the penalty, there could have been no peace for sinners.

Living—He that was dead is alive again and lives forevermore. In Hebrews 10:20, He is called a living way, as here, and the life. If He were not living and the life, He could not be a way for us to the Father. It was His rising again that was our justification (Rom. 4:25).

3. He is both a broad way and a narrow way. A narrow way (Matt. 7:14)—we cannot walk in it and have elbow room for our lusts. The strictness of the divine precepts is the hedge compassing this way about, both on the right hand and on the left, which must not be transgressed and leaped over by those that intend Christ for their way to the Father (2 Tim. 2:19).

A broad way—in respect of the true spiritual Christian liberty which they have that walk in it. The same that is our way is our freedom (Ps. 119:45; John 8:36; 2 Cor. 3:17). There is no liberty to sin or to do what we list, but liberty as opposed to bondage through slavish fear (Rom. 8:15–16). In this sense, He is our way to the Father.

4. He is both a high way and a low way. A high way in the sense of Proverbs 15:24, above to the wise. They that walk in Christ

walk in a way out of sight to the carnal world—a way out of their ken.¹ They know it not, nor what belongs to it. Also in the sense of Isaiah 35:8. The high way is the ready way, the next way. So is Christ to the Father. Also in the sense of Psalm 68:18, because He Himself is on high at the right hand of the Father, far above principalities.

A low way, because He so humbled Himself as He did, that He might be the way trodden underfoot of men. And because they must humble themselves and be meek and lowly in heart that will walk in it, denying ourselves, our own righteousness and merit (Luke 9:23).

5. A rough and rugged way, and yet a plain and smooth way. Rough and rugged in respect of the stones of stumbling and rocks of offense that are in it to them that perish: “unto the Jews a stumblingblock” (1 Cor. 1:23). That He that could not save Himself from being hanged should save us from being damned—that by His stripes we should be healed. His death is our life.

Smooth and plain to Him that believes (1 Cor. 1:24; 1 Peter 2:7). Such, though fools, will not err therein (Isa. 35:8). “Knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth” (Prov. 14:6). To be sure, the knowledge of Christ and Him crucified is so to every believer.

6. A persecuted way, and yet a sweet and pleasant way. A persecuted way, both with hand and tongue—a sect everywhere spoken against (Acts 28:22). That sect was the Christian sect, the followers of the Lord Jesus, everywhere spoken against. Aye, and besides this, they that walk in it meet with many a cross of God’s laying in the course of His providence (Matt.

1. *Ken*: knowledge.

7:14). “Strait is the gate, and narrow”—affliction—“is the way, which leadeth unto life.”

Yet it is a pleasant way notwithstanding (Prov. 3:17). The way of justification by faith in Christ is certainly so, beyond any other way, so sweet, so comfortable to the enlightened soul—no other is comparable to it. The way of holiness also and new obedience carries its own reward with it (Ps. 19:11), in the testimony of a good conscience (2 Cor. 1:12).

7. It is a way beset with enemies on every hand, and yet secure and safe to them that walk in it. Beset with enemies—those are the devil and the world and the flesh, all against Christ as our way to the Father, all seeking to waylay us and to turn us aside into bypaths (1 Peter 5:8).

Yet secure and safe to them that walk in it. Their heels may be tripped up, and they may stumble and fall. But they will not be utterly cast down (Ps. 37:24), for the Lord upholds him with His hand. See 1 Peter 1:5: “Kept by the power of God.” If divine power be not sufficient for our preservation, what is?

8. An open way, and yet an enclosed way. Enclosed in the decree and counsel of God, which is secret and unknown. There is a remnant only according to the election of grace (Matt. 20:10; Rom. 11:5)—few chosen.

Yet open in the proclamation of the gospel, as a fountain open (Zech. 13:1). Whosoever will may come, freely (Isa. 55:1–2). So come you to this way. Come and welcome. It is not a way shut up from any of you, one or other.

9. A beaten way, and yet but few walking in it. But few at one time and in one place, here and there a traveller. But beaten by the multitudes that have been in all ages, and are and will be, as will appear, when they will all come together (Rev. 7:9).

What Improvement Are We to Make of This?

If Christ be the way to the Father, then:

1. If we are out of Christ, we are out of the way. Suppose a traveller hastening onward were informed, in answer to an inquiry respecting the road, that he was out of the way. How would he be surprised! Especially: if the business were earnest; if it were drawing toward night; if the false way were a foul way; and if the danger were imminent if he went on. And how culpable would he be, if he had been warned of that danger beforehand and would not heed. And still more, if a guide had been offered to lead him in the right way, and he had refused him.

Now this is your case, sinner. Oh, bethink yourself. It is to the Father you would go. If you get not into Christ, you will never come to Him. There is no other way. The way of sottish ignorance is not the way; nor of sloth and carelessness and lukewarmness; nor of wickedness and profaneness, swearing, drunkenness; nor of formal profession, in guilt and hypocrisy; nor of your own merit and righteousness; nor of trusting to the mediation of saints and angels. There is no way but Christ.

2. Exhortation. Then, “as ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” [Col. 2:6]. Receive Christ Jesus the Lord this day. You that never yet received Him, close with Him as your way to the Father, your only way, renouncing all other. None but Christ, none but Christ.

Having received Him, walk in Him.

Walk in His life and example, as your copy to write after (1 John 2:6).

Walk in His death, as your comfort and joy (Rom. 8:33–34; 1 John 2:1–2).

Walk in His name, merit, and mediation, in His righteousness and strength, in everything wherein you have to do with God, living and dying. If He be thus your way, He will be your life too.

CHAPTER 19

Christ Is Our Ensign

And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

—ISAIAH 11:10

By this root of Jesse here spoken of is certainly meant our Lord Jesus Christ, who came, according to the flesh, from Jesse, the father of David. It may be objected, “It should then be said of Him rather that He was a branch of Jesse, than the root of Jesse.”

I reply: He was a branch of Jesse as man, but as God, He was the root of Jesse, as David (Ps. 110:1; cf. Matt. 22:45).

Or thus: The family of Jesse was like a tree cut down and worn out, and, in process of time, from one of his roots in a dry ground (Isa. 53:2), that is, from Mary the virgin, a poor woman of the meaner sort, came one strangely and unexpectedly. And that was Jesus Christ the man, the branch. And He is the ensign here promised. And in that day, namely, the famous day of the gospel so much talked of, there will be a root of Jesse, which will stand for an ensign of the people. To it will the Gentiles seek, and His rest will be glorious.

Doctrine: Jesus Christ is our ensign. I will inquire:

- I. What an ensign is, and how we are to understand it.
- II. And what kind of ensign Jesus Christ is, and what good lessons we may learn from it.

What Is an Ensign?

An ensign has two significations: a standard and a standard-bearer.

1. A standard, that is, a flag or banner, such as both horse and foot companies of soldiers have, each company one.
2. A standard-bearer. We call him that carries that flag the ensign of the company. Now here it is taken not for the person, the standard-bearer, but for the thing, the standard, because it is said, "To it shall the Gentiles seek." And yet, to show that the same that is the ensign or standard or flag or banner, that is, the thing, is also the ensign-bearer, the standard-bearer, the person, it follows, "And his rest shall be glorious."

What Kind of Ensign Is Christ?

This ensign is an ensign extraordinary, such as is not to be found elsewhere—a none-such ensign. And so you will say when I have laid before you these ten properties which it has. And in the opening of each property, I will show you what the particular duty is which it calls for from us.

1. He is a military flag or ensign—a banner of war. We call the coats of arms which noblemen and gentlemen give for the distinction of families in times of peace, insignia, ensigns. But such an ensign Jesus Christ is not. He is an ensign for war, a soldier's ensign. Elsewhere He is said to be given for a leader and a commander to the people (Isa. 55:4). He is called the captain of our salvation (Heb. 2:10); here, the ensign.

This teaches us that Christianity is a warfare, and that Christ and Christians are warriors. He the captain and the ensign, and they the soldiers.

But who are the enemies, and what is the quarrel?

The enemies are the devil and the world and the flesh. The cause we are in is the glory of God. Remember this, as many of you as are baptized. You are the enlisted soldiers of the Lord Jesus. And look to it that you be good soldiers, prepared for hardness (2 Tim. 2:3), fighting under Him not only as your captain but as your banner. He Himself is your banner. We are every day, on one occasion or other, engaged with one temptation or other. Now what do we do? Do we yield, suffer ourselves to be overcome, led captive? Is that like a good soldier? Or, do we resist and fight it out in the strength of God's grace, standing fast in the way of our duty, keeping our integrity, whatever it costs us? This is like a good soldier (Heb. 12:4).

2. He is a movable ensign. Ensigns, flags, or standards march from place to place, from one town to another, as there is occasion, at the appointment of the captain. Now Christ our ensign is Christ held forth in the preaching of the gospel. Where the gospel is preached, there Christ the ensign is. He is said here to stand, in respect of Him abiding a savior (13:8). Yet He moves as an ensign. And who knows not what removes the preaching of the gospel is subject to—how it is for a time in a place, and then after a while gone again; and another place has it that had it not before. This was signified by the Old Testament tabernacle, which was a movable tent, made to be suddenly taken down and set up again and carried hither and thither. "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle" (Ps. 15:1), that is, Thy church on earth. It was awhile at Shiloh; then, at Gibson; then, at Jerusalem. What is our duty then? To

make a good use of it while we have it (John 12:35–36). Some people bid the ensign be gone, as the Gadarenes did.

3. He is a gathering ensign. The design and end of an ensign is to gather together all that either are enlisted soldiers or have a mind to be under such or such a captain. Now, in the preaching of the gospel, Christ by His ministers proclaims, “Ho, everyone that will be on My side against sin and the Devil, come to Me, whether Jews or Gentiles. Come, come.” As here, to it will the Gentiles come: “And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth” ([Isa. 11:]12). See the prophecy of good old Jacob (Gen. 49:10) and of Isaiah (56:8).

There is a gathering together to Christ, which is to come (2 Thess. 2:1).

There is a gathering to Christ, which is present. Now, now it is our duty to gather to Him. Till we do so, our condition is sad and perilous. We are the Devil’s soldiers fighting the Devil’s battles. “Away to Me,” says Christ. Now what says your soul? Will the call be an effectual call? It is as much as I can remember forty-nine or fifty years ago, to hear talk of the king setting up his standard, that is, his ensign, at Nottingham, [and] after that at Shrewsbury. The language whereof was, “All that will fight for me against the parliament come hither, for my prerogative against their privilege”—and multitudes came. That is the use of a standard or ensign. Now the Lord Jesus, I say, in like manner, invites you all to come to Him and to fight for Him, as Jehu (2 Kings 9:32). “Lord, whoever will not, I will,” let your soul thus answer. Our gathering to Christ freely and willingly must be not only as soldiers to their standard, but:

(1) As sheep to their shepherd. He is the good and great Shepherd. Are we joined to Him? Do we follow Him (Song 1:7–8; John 10:28)?

(2) As doves to their windows (Isa. 60:8). If they once get to their windows, they know they are safe there. Return to your rest (Ps. 116:7), to your Noah, as the dove (Genesis 8).

(3) As the children to the father. Children, to be sure, good children, love to be where their father is—to be taught and instructed and employed by him. So should we (1 John 1:3).

(4) As the eagles to the carcass (Matt. 24:28) for food. It is strange how far off sometimes they will reach the scent of a carcass. So here. “Where Christ is powerfully preached and comfortably exhibited in holy ordinances, there, oh my soul,” says the lively Christian, “will I resort.” “How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O LORD of hosts, my King, and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah. Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them. Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools. They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God. O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah. Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed. For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness” (Ps. 84:1–10). This is the right gathering of churches, to gather souls to Jesus Christ, to fight under His banner.

(5) As the chickens to the hen (Matt. 23:37). He is a guiding ensign. The use of the flag is to show the soldiers which way to

march. The way that the ensign goes, they must go. Our Lord Jesus, as our ensign, is our guide to go in and out before us (Isa. 55:4), a leader. And but for this leader, how often should we be at a loss—as the Israelites in the wilderness, but for the cloud and fire.

He leads us by His word and Spirit: His word outwardly, as the rule; His Spirit inwardly, as the principle (59:21).

He leads us also by His pattern and example (Matt. 11:29; John 13:13–14; 1 Peter 2:21). Now inquire, I beseech you, is it your daily care, every day, in everything, to walk after this guide? Is Christ your guide to the alehouse, to be drunk there? Are you following Him as your flag, when you are going into wicked company? I know you will say no. Then how are you His soldiers?

5. He is an unseen ensign. I mean, unseen with bodily eyes, wherein He differs from other ensigns. They are visible things, but by an eye of faith we see Him. We behold Him (Heb. 11:27). This looks like a contradiction, but it is not (1 Peter 1:8).

6. He is a uniting ensign. It is by the flag that belongs to the company, as much as by anything, that all the soldiers in that company, being gathered together, are knit together into one. That is their center of unity—not only their having but one captain and being engaged in one cause and their taking one and the same oath, but having the same flag. So our great center of unity is our Lord Jesus Christ, not only as our one captain, but as our ensign. We all profess to be one in Him—oh that we were so! “There is one body, and one Spirit... one hope...one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all” (Eph. 4:4–5, etc.). How many ones are there mentioned, and among the rest, one baptism, that is, one sacramental oath, and one Lord, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ, the uniting ensign. Some plead to have the pope the center

of unity, so that all that do not unite in him must be out of the way of salvation. Others are for episcopacy and the common prayer. As heretofore, one for Paul, Apollos, Cephas; but, "I am," said Paul, "for Christ" (1 Cor. 1:12). Where it seems to me, "I of Christ," are Paul's words concerning himself, owning Christ and no creature as his center of unity:

(1) Because of verse 13. Is Christ divided? As if he had said, "Are there many christs?" Being all one in Him, why not with one another?

(2) Because of 3:4: "While one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?"—where he leaves out those that say, "I am of Christ," from among them that are carnal. When I say we ought all to unite in Christ, I mean that all that profess faith in Christ and obedience to Him and walk answerable to that profession ought to be thought meet for our communion in all the ordinances, without laying down other terms of our own devising (Gal. 3:28). He united Jew and Gentile by this one ensign (Ephesians 2), and it is a shame if others will not be united by Him. His prayer is, "I pray for them also, which shall believe on Me, that they all may be one. As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them, that they may be one, even as We are one" (cf. John 17:20–22). And the same should be ours also.

7. He is an exalted ensign. Ensigns used to be so lifted up on high, to be seen afar off, and they are seen, accordingly, above the heads of all the soldiers. It is a custom also to choose the tallest, properest men to carry the colors, that they may help the more to lift them up. Now the blessed Jesus is such an ensign—lifted up three ways:

(1) In the kind of death which He died, even the death of the cross (John 12:32–33). As the brazen serpent on the pole (Numbers 21; cf. John 3:14–15).

(2) In His resurrection and exaltation at the right hand of the Father. There He sits, higher by the head and shoulders than all the people, in personal excellences and perfection (Song 5:10)—the standard-bearer.

(3) In the preaching of the gospel—that is the pole. The great work of ministers is to lift up Christ to people, to set Him forth as the most eligible and desirable, both on the account of what He is in Himself, and what He is to poor sinners. They are the friends of the bridegroom, wooing for Him, not for themselves. And will you be won by them?

8. He is an exposed ensign. Of all the officers and soldiers in the troop or company, he is most aimed at that carries the colors. Kill him, and the flag falls. And when the flag falls, they are all discouraged, and their hearts fail. Therefore, “Fight ye not with small or great, save only with the king of Israel” [2 Chron. 18:30]. And is it not in like manner with the blessed Jesus? When He was here on earth, what attempts were there, both by the Devil and wicked men, by all means to destroy Him, His person, even as soon as He was born, by Herod—afterward, in the wilderness, afterward, to break His neck. And at last, they did prevail to get Him hanged on a tree. And then they thought their work was done, but it proved otherwise. After His going to heaven, when Himself was gone to heaven, what opposition was made against the spreading of His doctrine, against His disciples and followers, especially His under standard-bearers, His deputy ensigns, the preachers of the everlasting gospel (see 1 Cor. 4:11–13). And still, even at this day, what striking at Him in all His offices—prophet,

priest, king! Now certainly it is everyone's duty to do all that ever he can toward the securing of the flag.

"Alas! What can we do?" I answer: What we can in our particular place and station. We can own it as our chief interest and act accordingly, contributing our utmost endeavors toward keeping the flag up, as Aaron and Hur supporting Moses, who held forth the rod of God (Exodus 17).

9. He is a covering ensign. As all the soldiers are concerned in the safety of the flag, so the flag is a means of the safety of all the soldiers (Song 2:4). His banner over me was love. By clinging close to it, unbroken, they are preserved. Our Lord Jesus is promised to His church under this notion, as a covering (Isa. 4:5-6; 32:2). He will hide all that are His in the hollow of His hand, under the shadow of His wings, in His secret place, to signify that He has more ways than one of doing it.

10. He is a conquering ensign. In the account of victories, always the number is given in how many ensigns killed, how many colors taken. By that they judge. Now here is an ensign that lives forever, a flag that cannot be taken. He always has been, is, and will be Jesus the conqueror (Rev. 19:11; cf. 6:2). But what are His conquests to us (see Rom. 8:37)? We are told of a vision that Constantine had, the first Christian emperor, of a banner with a bloody cross on it, with this motto, "Conquer by this," which gave him great encouragement in his wars with heathen opposers. In our late wars, one prayed to know which side should get the better, for on that side he would be. Use:

(1) By way of inquiry. What think you of Christ. How like you this brave ensign? Are you listed under it? Whom are you for?

(2) By way of exhortation. Be persuaded this day to give in your names to Him afresh, as your own act and deed, to be His (Ps. 20:5). Having done so, keep close to Him.

CHAPTER 20

Christ Is Our Example

For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

—JOHN 13:15

There were two great ends of the coming of our Lord Jesus in the flesh: the one, that by dying He might satisfy God's justice for our sins and so make peace; the other, that by living He may set before us an example.

Particularly in this chapter we have Him with a basin of water and a towel, washing and wiping His disciples' feet. If you say, "What an unbecoming thing was that, and why should He do so?," He Himself answers in the text: "I have given you an example. I did it to show you how you should stoop and condescend in offices of love one to another, for if I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet."

Doctrine: That our Lord Jesus Christ is our example. Show:

- I. How we are to understand this.
- II. What need we have of an example.
- III. What kind of example He is.
- IV. What lessons and what duty are to be learned from it.

How Are We to Understand This Our Example?

When I say the Lord Jesus Christ is our example, I mean three things:

1. He is the copy we are to write after, as children, when they are to learn to write, have copies set [before] them. It is not enough to tell them thus and thus you must do, but show them how by making the letters and setting them before them. So our Lord Jesus has set us a copy. “Mark how I have done,” says He, “and look that you do likewise.”

2. He is the pattern or sampler we are to work by, as girls when they begin to sew have samplers; as Moses, when to rear the tabernacle, had a pattern of God’s own making. See you do everything according to the pattern showed you in the mount (Ex. 25:9, 40). So our Lord Jesus, that we might be sure to do all things well, Himself became our pattern, our sampler.

3. He is the way we are to walk in, and His are the footsteps we are to tread in (1 Peter 2:21). Where He has trod before us, there we may safely tread. There are the footsteps of the flock (Song 1:8), which we are to go forth by. And there are the footsteps of the shepherd of the flock, that is, Jesus Christ, which we are carefully to tread in. And as far as we tread in those footsteps, wherein He has trod before us, we are in no danger of missing. It is when we tread in other footsteps that we go astray.

What Need Have We of an Example?

We have need of an example on two accounts. As of a righteousness for justification, a fountain for washing, a foundation to build on, a refuge to fly to—so of a copy, pattern, example to write, to work, to walk by.

We need it because of our own debility and because of our work’s difficulty.

If the work to be done be difficult work, and the person to do it be weak and infirm and unskillful and apt to miss it, then by all means, let him have an example to help him, to go before him. Besides a rule, let him have an example. Now that is our case. Is not the work we have to do hard and difficult? A God to glorify, a soul to save, duty to be performed, temptation to be resisted, affliction to be borne, relations to be filled up—is this easy? Is repenting work easy?

Are not we, the doers, weak and infirm, bent to backslide, unskillful in the word of righteousness, not only backward to but awkward in everything that is good? And have we not then great need of an example, one to go before us to show us how and which way? Our heavenly Father, who knows our frame, has provided for us accordingly. The whole Bible is a book of rules and examples, rules in the precepts, examples in the stories—both Old Testament and New—which are all to help our infirmities. And we should make use of them accordingly. But one example there is so in a special and peculiar manner, a pattern which in a special manner we are to take heed to, and that is the blessed Jesus, whose properties are to be shown by considering:

What Kind of Example Jesus Christ Is

1. He is a good example. There are bad examples and good examples. Bad examples there are enough, which we must not follow. Good examples, but a few, yet some. Aye, but one we have, eminent above all the rest. And that is the blessed Jesus. He was good, and He did good, and He went about doing good. And all to set us a copy that we might learn both to be good and to do good and to go about doing good (Ps. 37:3, 27). There is the precept: do as your Master has done before you. There is the pattern: imitate Him.

2. He is a great example. Dr. Jeremy Taylor, who wrote the history of His life, according to the four Gospels, titles his book *The Great Exemplar*. And certainly He was and is so.

The examples we have of other good men, even the best of them, in comparison with Him were but little examples, small copies. But He is a copy in text letters. The reason is they were but little folks in comparison with Him. They, but candles, at best but stars. He, the sun. Now as the sun exceeds and excels all other lights, so the blessed Jesus all other examples. There was never one of them all but would yield to Him, as John the Baptist did (John 3:30).

3. He is a general example, the example of examples. All others learned of Him; He, of none. But I mean general in two respects:

(1) He is an example to all persons. We are all to learn of Him and to do as He did and to walk as He walked. But will one and the same copy serve everyone to write after? Yes, here is a copy that will.

“But there are many of us that are in such conditions and relations as He was never in. We are women; He, a man. We husbands, wives, parents, children, tradesmen, husbandmen—how can He then be a pattern to us?”

I reply: Though He never was nor could be all and everything of that which we are, yet, however, be we what we will, His example will reach us, if not directly, yet by consequence, as the Word is a general rule. He carried it so and so, and in all that He was, in every relation and in every condition. And by parity of reason, if we carry it in like manner in our particular conditions and relations as He did in all His, soberly, righteously, godly, it cannot but be well. He had a spouse—see Ephesians 5:25.

“But not general,” it is objected, “for He was not an example to Old Testament people.”

Very true, and therein we have the preeminence. Yea, and all now have it not. But He is general to us.

(2) He is an example in all things. Other good men are patterns of good, one in one thing, another in another. Abraham in believing; Job in patience; Moses in meekness. But no one in everything. Jesus Christ only is such. “Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 13:13–14). It should be, “And put on sobriety, chastity, charity.” No, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, which includes all.

4. He is a public, evident example, set forth to be seen of all. Not a candle lighted and put under the bed or under a bushel but on the table in a candlestick. Many godly people, men and women, live and die in obscurity. Some are published, as in Clarke’s *Lives*. We have the story of what He did written at large in the Bible, and of the two we might better spare all the rest of the stories of Scripture than the one story of the life and death of Jesus Christ, because He is our great exemplar. Lose Him, and we lose all. Therefore, I beseech you, prize that part of your Bible in a special manner that tells you what Christ did and how He carried it.

We have ministers also, who on all occasions either do, or should, explain the great example to us, showing us what He did and how He carried it, to the end we may receive instruction by it.

5. He is a plain, easy example. There is a great deal of difference in writing between one hand and another. Some hands are so full of cuts and flourishes, that it is hard for a learner to learn to write after them. Others again so plain and easy

and free from such appurtenances that there is little difficulty in copying them. Now such a hand was that which Jesus Christ wrote—I mean, such a copy, such an example. The condition He put on was a mean, plain condition: a servant, not a knight or a lord or a prince. Now as His condition was, such His example was. He set a copy for poor people to write after. The meanest cannot say, “It is out of my reach” (Matt. 11:29). “Learn of me”—what to do? To make the world, to raise the dead, rebuke the winds and waves? No. To be meek and lowly—as here, to wash one another’s feet. Not to build churches or erect hospitals. Not to fast forty days and forty nights. Not to go barefoot on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Not to wallow naked in the snow, as Saint Francis.

6. He is a perfect, exact example, a copy without a blot. There never was any other so but Himself only. All the rest missed it in one kind or other, nay, missed it in that very thing wherein they were most exemplary: Abraham in unbelief, Job in impatience, Moses in passion, Peter in cowardice. The reason was, though they were good men, yet they were men compassed with infirmity. But here is one who had no infirmity (Heb. 7:23). He was holy, harmless. See His challenge: “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” (John 8:46). Oh, how well is it for us and what cause have we to be thankful that we have one sinless, spotless example, one that we can safely trust in and follow without fear of erring!

7. He is a purposely designed example, designed by God the Father from all eternity to be so. And that was one reason why the contrivance was that He should be a man like one of us: not only that in His death He might be a propitiation, the same nature that sinned satisfying; but also that in His life He might be a pattern—a man to men. Designed by Himself all

along in all that He said or did, He spoke so and acted so that He might—that is, “I *must* be an example” (Matt. 4:19).

8. He is a peculiarly blessed example. I mean, blessed of God for good to those that apply themselves to work and walk according to it. There is a blessing that attends endeavors in reference to other good examples that are before us, but especially this. And many a poor soul has found it so of a truth, found strength coming in from the Spirit of God, enabling him to do that in pursuing the example of the blessed Jesus which otherwise he could not have done. “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud”—smoothing the way—“of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus” [Heb. 12:1–2].

9. He is a perpetually abiding example (Heb. 13:8). Other copies of good men are worn out with time. We know little of them now, except some few scriptur[al] patterns. But here is one that will last to the world’s end (Matt. 28:20). “I am with you”—as a copy for you to write after, as well as to support and bless you.

What Is to Be Learned from This Subject?

1. Then, hence we learn who is a true Christian. There are Christians in name—such we all are. And there are Christians in reality. Who are they? Those that walk as Christ walked, that make Him their pattern and sampler, that can say with Paul, “To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21). A Christian! And not conform to Christ, to His image, to live as He lived? It is a contradiction, as for a man to call himself a Lutheran, a Calvinist, and not hold with Luther, or Calvin—an Aristotelian, a Pythagorean, a Platonist, and yet oppose their schemes. It is our badge as Christ’s sheep to follow Him: “My

sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me” [John 10:27].

2. We learn who are the best Christians among Christians. It is certain some are better than others. Now, who are the best? I answer: They who walk most like Jesus Christ, that tread most closely in His steps. Allusion to 2 Kings 14:3: “He did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, yet not like David his father: he did according to all things as Joash his father did.” David was the sampler, the standard. So is the Son of David.

3. Learn how far we are to follow all other examples—however good, however great—no further than they follow Christ’s example. When they leave Him, we must leave them (1 Cor. 11:1). The reason is, He is the great exemplar, the pattern of patterns (Heb. 12:1–2). In sitting at the sacrament, they are on a safer side than those that kneel, because Christ sat—though that does not prove we must, it proves we may.

4. Then let us in everything set ourselves to do as He has done before us. “He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (1 John 2:6)—ought, not may, if he will, or may choose, but ought. It is duty. Think you hear Him say, “Learn of Me,” or as Gideon, “Look on me, and do likewise” (Judg. 7:17)? Whom should children learn of but their father? Servants, but their master? Whom should sheep follow but their shepherd? It were a good thought in a doubtful matter, “What would Jesus Christ do if He were here? How would He carry it? Would He play at dice or cards, revel, be wanton?”

Wherein especially are we to imitate the holy Redeemer?

(1) In His care to please God in everything (John 8:29). Did He so? Then let us endeavor the same (Acts 9:6).

(2) In His contempt of this world and everything in it. What poor nothings were they to Him. Are they so to us—riches, honors, pleasures?

(3) In His charity toward all men. He had a love of pity and compassion toward enemies, prayed for them. So should we. But His special love was for the excellent. So should ours be (Eph. 5:2).

(4) In His carriage under His sufferings and at His death, so meek, so lamb-like, so silent, so submissive. Such should ours be.

But is it possible we should be as He was and do as He did?

I reply: It is not in the same degree. But yet as a child learning to write strives and does as well as he can and eyes his copy often, we may do. There are two motives to such endeavors: it will be an evidence that we are His now in the kingdom of grace; and it will be an earnest that we will follow Him hereafter in the kingdom of glory (Rev. 14:4–5).

CHAPTER 21

Christ Is the Door

I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

—JOHN 10:9

Of all the comparisons made use of by our Lord Jesus to illustrate and set forth what He is appointed of God to be to true believers, there is none more seemingly uncouth and unlikely and yet none wherein He is more express and positive than this, of a door. “I am the door.” He says elsewhere, “I am the way,” and, “I am the vine,” and here, “I am the door.”

Doctrine: That Jesus Christ is the door. Show:

- I. Of what use a door is, that we may see and be convinced that we have need of Him as a door.
- II. What are the properties of Christ as a door, and what kind of door He is.
- III. What improvement is to be made of it.

Lord, give me a door of utterance and the people, while I am speaking, a door of entrance. Amen.

Of What Use Is a Door, and How Is Jesus Useful As Such?

A door we all know is of a fourfold use, or for four purposes: to let out, and let in; to shut out, and to shut in. And so is Jesus

Christ. And therefore it is not amiss here that He says, "I am the door."

1. A door is to let those out of the house that are in it and have a desire or occasion to go out. It is not to break the walls down nor to creep out by the window. No, the door is made for the purpose of orderly going out.

Now there are four houses or places which it concerns us all to get out of, and the Lord Jesus Christ is the door by which we must get out if ever we mean to get out.

(1) There is the prison house of a sinful state and condition. In this we all are by nature, one as well as another (Gal. 3:22), shut up under lock and key, as prisoners are shut up, either for debt or as malefactors.

In this prison there are two rooms: one is God's, and the other is the Devil's. God's room in this prison is that in which we are all shut up by reason of the guilt of sin according to His law, exposing us to wrath and punishment. Consider sin as a debt. We are prisoners for that debt, as a fault, a trespass, a treason. We are prisoners for it, I say, prisoners already, though suffered to walk up and down, yet prisoners—bound over. There is a worse prison to come, but this is the way to it, the beginning of sorrows. Now is there never a door out of this prison, no way to pay the debt, to make satisfaction to divine justice, that we may be discharged? Yes there is, and Christ is that door. Whosoever believes in Him will not come into condemnation (Rom. 8:1). Thus it is prophesied of Him: "He hath sent me...to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound" (Isa. 61:1). By Him, many a poor prisoner has been set free (Ps. 116:16; 1 Tim. 1:13–15). Methinks we should all be glad of this, both those that are out and those that may get out if they will. Were such an offer made to the poor prisoners in Chester or

Shrewsbury or Ludgate or Newgate, the debtors' end or the malefactors' end, how welcome would it be!

The Devil's room in this prison is that in which all unconverted sinners are, under the dominion of sin, under the power of a corrupt nature, led captive by him (2 Tim. 2:26). Like Samson with his eyes out, grinding in the Philistines' mill, and the Philistines making sport with him. Here is the truth of your condition, sinner: "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:4). "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:2-3). Now is there no door out? Must I live and die in this condition? Is there no escaping? Yes. There is a door. He is raised up and sent of God on purpose to be the deliverer, as Moses out of Egypt, Cyrus out of Babylon. Do you not hear Him call? You have heard it many a time, but not heeded it. Oh, heed it this day and close with it. Say not, "I like my master, and I will not go free," but yield yourself to God, as one that is alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God (Rom. 6:13).

(2) There is the house of bondage under the ceremonial law, an uncomfortable house to dwell in. The fathers thought it so, a yoke, an intolerable yoke. But is there no door? Yes, Jesus Christ is the door. By Him, the gospel church is called to go out from bondage to freedom, from carnal to spiritual ordinances (Matt. 11:23). And yet there are some that will not stir, nay, are angry with those that do and hale and persecute

them—as Ishmael, the son of the “bondwoman,” did Isaac, the son of the “freewoman” (Galatians 4).

(3) There is the house of correction under afflicting providences. And this is a house that few of us but one time or other are taking a turn in it, and glad would we be to get out—the sick, to be well; in pain, to be at ease; they that are in want, to be supplied; the sad, to be comforted. Some cannot abide in this house but will break prison, use unlawful means to get out. There is but one door of lawful escape, and that is Jesus Christ. He is the door (Ps. 68:20). Make Him your friend, and let Him alone. How? Humble yourself to Him, accept of the punishment of your iniquity, justify God, judge yourself, bear patiently His fatherly chastisement, use lawful means, and yet be willing to continue His prisoner. And mark if this be not the right door. Murmuring, quarrelling, complaining, shifting will not do (Job 23:24–25; 33:19). There must be a turnkey, a doorkeeper (36:8–12).

(4) There is the house of the grave—a house in which we must all make our bed shortly; a dark, silent, lonesome house, wherein there is company enough, but no converse. Is there any door out of this house? Only one comfortable door, and that is Jesus Christ. “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (John 11:25)—the resurrection only to them that believe, and to all them. Others must be raised, but Jesus Christ is the resurrection only to true believers. None but they must come out through Him, as the door. There is victory only through Him (1 Cor. 15:56–57).

2. A door is to let those in that are without. Being open, we go in at it, and it is the right and usual way of entering. Now, such a door for such a purpose is Jesus Christ.

(1) He is the door into the pasture. So, in the context, He compares believing souls to a flock of sheep, and Himself to their shepherd. Now sheep must have some pasture, some place to graze in. That place must have some gate or door for the sheep to go in at. "I am the door," says He. What, and the shepherd too? Yes, and the shepherd too. What is the pasture then, to which He is the door? The pasture for believing souls is the Word of God, the ordinances of God, preaching, praying, singing psalms, sacraments, Sabbaths. Here Christ feeds His flock (Song 1:7-8). And brave green pastures they are (Ps. 23:2-3). Now the door is Christ. It is by Him we enter in His name by the assistance of His Spirit. Without Him, there is no blessing, no nourishment. How do the sacraments become profitable? By the blessing of Christ and the working of His Spirit. See then that we come in His name and strength.

(2) He is the door into the presence-chamber (Eph. 2:13, 18; 3:12). There is no coming to God with comfort but in at this door. It was His great end in dying, that He might bring us to God (1 Peter 3:18).

(3) He is the door into the storehouse or treasury of all the good things that we have need of, whether concerning this life or the other. The door to them was shut and locked up and barred and bolted by the Fall. There is no coming at any of them till the Son of God came and Himself became the door. "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" [Phil. 4:19]. They are laid up in the promises. Now Christ is the door to the promises (2 Cor. 1:20; Col. 1:19; cf. John 1:16).

(4) He is the door into the schoolhouse. The church of God in this world is like a great school, wherein all true believers are scholars or learners. The teacher is God (6:44). His ushers are the ministers, the under-teachers. The lesson is the will of God concerning our salvation. The door or entrance

into this school is Christ. By Him it is we are admitted into this privilege. He gives us the understanding (Ps. 119:130; 1 John 5:20), the entrance or door. Oh, beg of Him to help you in at this door, to take you under His blessed tuition.

(5) He is the door into the ark. I mean, Noah's ark, the close ship, wherein Noah and his family were saved. It had a door (Gen. 6:16). Now that door is Christ. There is no safety, no salvation but in and by and through His merit and mediation (1 Peter 3:21). He who enters by Him will be saved.

(6) He is the door into the atonement. It is by Him that we are let into the pardon-office, into a state of peace and reconciliation with God (Rom. 5:1; 2 Cor. 5:19–20).

(7) He is the door into grace and holiness. His blood is not justifying only but sanctifying. It is by Him that we are made new creatures, partakers of the divine nature, quickened (Eph. 2:1).

(8) He is the door into glory and happiness. He is the door into heaven. There is no coming thither but by Him. He is our forerunner.

3. A door is to shut out those that are without, to keep people from coming in at pleasure. They must knock that will enter. Our hearts have a door, and it is shut against Him. And He is fain to knock and call (Ps. 24:7, 9; Song 5:2; Rev. 3:20). These houses of His aforementioned have a door also, and they are kept by that door from being common. But if we knock, it will be opened (Matt. 7:7–8), provided we knock in time, else the door will be shut (Matt. 25:10–11; Luke 13:20–28). And provided also we knock in earnest (v. 24), not coldly, carelessly, not in guile and hypocrisy.

4. A door is to shut those in that are within. All that are let in by Christ into those blessed rooms before mentioned, let Him

alone to secure them there (John 10:28; 1 Peter 1:5). When Noah was in the ark, God shut him in.

What Are the Properties of Christ as a Door?

As a door, He has these properties:

1. He is a living door. This is peculiar to Him. No other door is so besides Him. As He is the living way (Hebrews 10), so He is the living door. The door to life, and a door that has life. Other doors are dead things. Now, it is true He was dead, but He is alive and lives forevermore. And thence it follows, "And have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1:18).

2. He is a low door. They that will enter in by Him must stoop, or else there is no entering. It was man's pride, lifting up himself against God, that shut up the old door. Therefore, it is humility and humiliation and self-denial that must help us in at this new door (Luke 9:23).

3. He is a strait door (Matt. 7:14). As we must stoop, so we must strip. There is no taking our lusts and sins in with us at this door. Away with them (allude to Mark 10:50). He, casting away his garments, rose and came to Jesus (see Matt. 19:23-24). A cable untwisted may in time be gotten through a needle's eye, but not else.

4. He is a strong door. The door into the temple was so when twenty men were employed night and morning to shut and open it. We read of brazen gates. Such a gate Christ is, and it was needful He should be so:

For comfort to His people. Therefore, He is able to save to the uttermost. Therefore, there is no danger of being broken open or plucked out. And:

For terror to others. Therefore, no breaking in on Him, otherwise than on His own terms.

5. He is an open door. I may say so in the sense in which He is an open fountain (Zech. 13:1), free to all (Isa. 55:1; Rev. 22:17). He excludes none from coming in at this door, that do not exclude themselves.

6. He is the only door. Besides Him, there is no other. "I am the door, that door, that one only door" (Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:5).

Our own merit and righteousness is no door. Therefore, said Paul, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil. 3:7–8).

The mediation of saints and angels is not. They themselves have need of Christ to be their door.

General mercy is not. It never yet pardoned one sin nor saved one soul, but in and by Jesus Christ.

Ministers are not, nor ordinances.

What Improvement Is to Be Made of This Subject?

1. What cause have we to bless God that there is such a door, especially that in love to our souls He has revealed it to us! Yet, more especially, that He has helped us in by it—that it is shut on us for our security and not against us for our exclusion.

2. What a condition are they in that are either in darkness or blindness, knowing nothing of this door, like the Sodomites (Genesis 18). Or, that are shutting it against themselves by unbelief. Or that are knocking at other wrong doors, like the priests of Baal (1 Kings 18).

3. Of what concernment is it to us, every one of us, both to own Jesus Christ as the only door and to get in by Him, and to do it quickly, before the door be shut.

CHAPTER 22

Christ Is as the Dew

I will be as the dew unto Israel.

—HOSEA 14:5

These words are a gracious promise made to Israel by the God of Israel, wherein the thing promised is that He will be as the dew to them. You know what the dew is. It is a moisture distilled from heaven on the earth, in a summer's morning, whereby the earth is refreshed in a dry season, and the grass and the corn and the herbs are refreshed and made to grow. Now to this little inconsiderable thing the Lord does here compare Himself—that is, God in Christ, for out of Christ, God is not a dew to us, but a consuming fire. And, therefore, I say in Christ, and therefore to Him I will apply it.

Doctrine: That the Lord Jesus Christ is as the dew to His Israel.

This comparison of the dew is made use of for illustration in sundry places of Scripture.

The inconstant goodness of a hypocrite or dissembler in religion is compared to the morning cloud and the early dew (Hos. 6:4). The morning cloud promising rain, the early dew performing something toward it—but nothing to purpose,

as good never a whit as never the better. So in the case of the hypocrite.

The multitudes of sincere converts that should be and were in the days of the gospel, especially at the first setting of it out, are compared to the multitude of the drops of dew in a morning: “the dew of thy youth” (Ps. 110:3), that is, multitudes of young converts.

The benefits that the world has from the presence of good people in it, especially when they are much made of. They are like the dew to the places where they live (Mic. 5:7).

The excellency of brotherly love and unity and unanimity among brethren is like the dew (Ps. 133:1, 3). It makes everything to grow and flourish and prosper.

The Word of God, especially the word of the gospel, is like dew (Deut. 32:2; Isa. 55:10–11; Heb. 6:7–8).

Here the Lord Himself says, “I will be as the dew unto Israel.” Show:

- I. What likeness there is between Jesus Christ and the dew.
- II. Who the Israel is to whom He will be as the dew.
- III. When especially it is that we have need of this dew.
- IV. What our duty is in reference to it.

What Likeness Is There between Jesus Christ and the Dew?

The dew has six properties, all fitly applicable without straining to the Lord Jesus Christ:

1. The dew is divine and heaven-born. It is not of the earth, earthy, but of heaven, heavenly. God Himself is the Father of it, not man (Job 38:28). It is often called the dew of heaven (Gen. 27:23, 39; Dan. 4:15, 33; 5:21). And is not Christ so? Is not God His Father? Was He not begotten of Him before all

worlds? Who will declare His generation (Isa. 53:1)? He is the dew certainly, for He came from heaven. He is the gift of God.

2. The dew descends, comes down. The motion of the sun is circular, in a round, from east to west. But the motion of the dew and the rain is perpendicular, in a direct line downward. And both for the good of man. Jesus Christ descended. He ascended, it is true; but first He descended into the lower parts of the earth (Eph. 4:9). And it was a descent indeed, if ever there was any—from the right hand of the Majesty of heaven to be born of a poor woman in a stable, laid in a manger. To condescend to be made man was much, but to be made sin, a curse, was much more.

3. The manner of the descending of the dew is observable. It descends silently, makes no noise, as the rain oftentimes does, clattering on the houses. Such was the coming of this dew, the Lord Jesus Christ, into the world. He came not with observation (Luke 17:20), with outward show, did not cry (Matt. 12:19)—not after the manner of kings and great men, sending harbingers before them. When He comes on the soul, either in a way of sanctification or of consolation, it is silently. There is no noise. The friend that sits on the same seat knows nothing of it, scarce the soul itself at present (Song 6:12).

4. It is the nature of the dew to soften as far as it goes. So does Jesus Christ. He finds the heart hard, incapable of divine impressions; but He does not leave it so. He turns the stone into flesh. That is more than dew ever did (Ezek. 36:26). By this we may know if this dew has ever descended on our souls. What softness, pliability, traceableness to the will of God, under ordinances, under providences, is there?

5. The dew moistens. So does Christ. The heart through sin is not hard only but dry, till grace comes. And that opens a spring, which spring springs up in the soul to everlasting life. Then there is weeping and mourning for sin—our own sins (Zech. 12:10), and other men's sins (Ps. 119:136). Ahab's repentance was in some things beyond Josiah's, but Josiah wept. So did not Ahab (cf. 1 Kings 21:27 with 2 Kings 22:19). It is said of Gideon's fleece, it was wet with dew when all was dry round about it (Judg. 6:37). So it is oftentimes with souls in ordinances, under providences.

6. The dew makes fruitful. The grass and the corn and the herbs and plants in the garden and in the field grow the better after the early dew. It is refreshing to them and causes them to thrive and shoot forth (Gen. 2:4–6). Says Elijah, when he would foretell a famine, as the means of it, "There shall not be dew these years." Says David, in his elegy on the death of Jonathan, when he would wish the mountains where he died barren, "Let there be no dew" (2 Sam. 1:21).

The author of all the fruitfulness of souls is the blessed Jesus, by the working of His Spirit and grace (Isa. 44:4). See what follows here: He will grow, that is, with all kinds of growth, downward, upward; in strength, comfort, usefulness. "From me is thy fruit found" (Hos. 14:8; see John 15:1–5; Mal. 4:2). As a sun, He furthers fruitfulness and growth: "grow up as calves of the stall."

Who the Israel Is to Whom He Will Be as the Dew

There is a twofold Israel spoken of: Israel the person (That was Jacob, so called from his prevailing with God in his wrestling. Of him it is not meant. He was dead and gone long before.); and Israel the people. This is twofold: (1) Israel according to the flesh. The nation and the people of the Jews, the seed

of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It was a truth with reference to them. The Lord was to them as the dew—refreshing, cheering, comforting, making them to grow and increase wonderfully. (2) And Israel according to the spirit. All truly penitent, believing people, whether under the Old Testament or under the New. Such as are described doing according to rules given (Hos. 14:1–4). To such as these, Christ is as the dew. It is true He must descend on us, ‘ere we can be such. But when His grace has made us such, then He is indeed the dew to us. Now when it is said here, “I will be as the dew unto Israel,” understand it:

1. Of the gospel church in general, and the particular churches and congregations, the visible members of it. The Lord Jesus has been, is, and will be as the dew to them, making them to grow and thrive and increase and bring forth.

2. Of particular believing souls—such as are Israelites indeed, princes with God, called and chosen and faithful. They will all witness for Him. I am sure I have found Him as the dew to me many a time. “And so have I,” will another say.

When Especially Have We Need of This Dew?

1. To be sure, we have all need of it while we are in an unconverted state and condition. Till a shower of this dew falls on you, you are good for nothing. God has no service, no fruit from you. You are like the mountains of Gilboa, under God’s wrath and curse. Oh, that you were made sensible of it; that your soul might be like the dry and thirsty ground that gapes for the dew and for the rain; that you were set a longing after it, crying and calling for it.

2. When the conscience is parched at anytime with the sense of guilt staring you in the face, through some willful omission

or commission. Oh, then for a shower of this dew! What is there else that can give ease and comfort, but only this (Rom. 5:1; 1 John 1:7; 2:1–2)? He alone is our city of refuge, the altar we must fly to.

3. Under the withdrawings of the light of God's countenance. When He is pleased to hide His face from the soul, whether provoked to it or for trial, when mourning all the day long—this alone must be the dew that must refresh and comfort (Prov. 14:12). A beam of that favor shining on the soul through Jesus Christ.

4. When a lit of barrenness prevails through the stirrings of some corruption, the success of some temptation, or through the want of quickening means and ordinances, the word, sacraments, Sabbaths, solemn assemblies. What has the soul to recover itself by out of this ill frame? Nothing but a shower of this dew. When He that has said here, "I will be as the dew unto Israel," comes by His Holy Spirit, puts in His hand by the hole of the door, speaks life and quickening to the soul, that makes a speedy change (as Song 5:2, 4, etc.).

5. In a time of outward trouble and calamity—when creature comforts fail, relations are unkind or, it may be, snatched away; when losses and crosses betide us, and our life is made uncomfortable to us. Oh, the help that is had then, at such a time and in such a case, from a shower of this dew! To be able to say, "My Christ is mine still, and I am His. I have my fountain, though my cisterns be all drawn dry" (Hab. 3:17–18), as David (1 Sam. 30:6).

6. When we come to die. The valley of the shadow of death is a very low place, so low that it is oftentimes very dark and uncomfortable to those that walk in it. But if the Lord Jesus be

with us in that valley, we need not fear (Ps. 23:4). One shower of the dews of His refreshing, comforting Spirit, whispering peace, enabling us to look beyond will make death to be quite another thing (1 Cor. 15:56–57).

7. When we go to an ordinance. The dew is necessary to prepare the ground for the plough.

8. When we have been at an ordinance. It is needful to close the soil with the seed.

What Is Our Duty in Reference to This?

1. Mix faith with it, as a divine truth, that there is certainly such a thing as this dew, and that the Lord Jesus Christ is it. We see and feel the other dew and know by experience what it is, but this is spiritual and invisible. Yet it is as real a thing as the other.

2. Be more and more sensible of your need of it every day in everything to soften, to moisten, to make fruitful. All is nothing without it. Nothing else will do the work but it only (1 Cor. 3:6–7).

3. Ask it of God. And, having asked it, expect and wait for it in the use of appointed means. “Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain” (Zech. 10:1). Say, “Lord, I want a shower of dew for my soul. My plants, my graces, my comforts wither and decline. My fruit fails. Help, Lord!” And for means, the ordinances are the way. We must lie by the pool side. Though they can do nothing without Him, though He can refresh without them, yet His ordinary way is in and by them. Wait as the husbandman (James 5:7; allude to 1 Kings 18:4).

“But I can do nothing,” says one. “I am unworthy.”

What does the ground do to invite the dew? It thirsts and desires and gapes. That is all. What worthiness is there in the earth to deserve such refreshments from heaven? None at all. The manna, that is, Christ, came down in the dew—in the ordinances—to be gathered only in the morning. Look to it, you that are young. It is the early dew. It is dried up at noon. There are no showers of it then. Therefore, remember now your Creator in the days of your youth.

4. Observe whence all your spiritual refreshments come, and all your fruit. It is from Christ as your dew. And let Him have the glory of it (Ps. 115:1; 1 Tim. 1:12).

Christ Is Our Sun

But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

—MALACHI 4:2

This sun here spoken of is certainly our Lord Jesus Christ. It must be He. It can be no other. He is the Sun of righteousness. That is:

He is most righteous in Himself—holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners as the Branch of righteousness (Jer. 33:15). Righteous as God, righteous as man, Jesus Christ the righteous. So He is called (1 John 2:1). He is a sun for righteousness, transcending all other.

Besides, He is made righteousness to us (1 Cor. 1:30), the Lord Jehovah, our righteousness (Jer. 23:6). So that if you have anything to do at any time with the righteous God, any sin to get pardoned, service accepted, and are sensible you have no righteousness of your own, take His and go in His name; and your work is done.

He is also a rising sun. There is a twofold rising of this sun.

The one general and universal to all the world at His incarnation, when the daystar, that is, the sun from on high visited us (Luke 1:78).

The other particular and personal in our horizon. And that is when we are savingly converted. Then He rises, and never till then, to our souls—"to you that fear my name." Not that we fear first, and then the sun rises. No, the sun rises first and puts that fear into your hearts, that is, that repentance, faith, new nature. And then He rises in us and on us, more and more. Now, the query is what the soul gets by the rising of this sun. What does the world get, what do particular creatures get by the rising of the sun in the firmament every day? I answer: Six things—light, life, heat, healing, furtherance in growth, and furtherance in fruitfulness. So do the souls of true believers by the rising of Jesus Christ, the sun of righteousness, on them. Every day they get spiritual light, life. And, therefore, if you ask what kind of sun Christ is and what are His properties as such, I answer: He is an enlightening, enlivening, heating, healing sun, furthering our growth and our fruitfulness. Of the two first we have discoursed before—as our light and life. Of the four last, this day.

Jesus Christ is made unto us of God a soul-heating, soul-warming sun. What heat, what warmth is there in the beams of the sun in the firmament in a summer's day! How extensive! There is nothing hid from the heat thereof (Ps. 19:6). Nay, if it be in the midst of the winter, though, by reason of its distance from us, the rays are weak and want force; yet how comfortable is it to us, how refreshing, how glad are we of it! And has Jesus Christ never been in like manner warming, refreshing, comforting to your souls? Have you never found Him a heating sun to you? It is true, there are places where the heat of the sun is such as not only blackens but burns. And there are people too to whom Jesus Christ is a burning, consuming sun—that is, to all the impenitent, unbelieving opposers of His kingdom and gospel, to all that go on still in their wickedness. See in the first of the chapter a very terrible

threatening: “All the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch” [Mal. 4:1]. But it follows, “Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings” [v. 2]—as if He had said, “Be not you afraid. He that will be a lion to others will be a lamb to you, an oven to others, a sun to you.” Show:

- I. What need we have of these warming influences from Christ, the sun of righteousness.
- II. And how and in what way Christ, the sun of righteousness, communicates heat and warmth to those that fear His name.

What Need Have We of These Warming Influences from Christ the Sun of Righteousness?

The need we have is on the account of the coldness we are subject to in spiritual things.

Some are key-cold, stone-cold. They have no heat, no warmth at all. How should they? They are dead, dead in trespasses and sins, altogether void of spiritual life. And that was once the case of every one of us and is still the case of every unconverted, unregenerate soul. Till Christ arise on us and give us life, we are dead (Eph. 2:1). When life comes, heat comes.

Even the best, such as are spiritually alive, are subject to their cold fits. The sense and feeling of which and complaining under it is a sign there is life, and that it is not the cold of death. Living people are cold, as perhaps some of you are now at this time. And dead people are cold. But there is this difference: the dead are always so. They feel nothing from it.

The causes of this spiritual coldness are:

1. Some inward distemper prevailing in the soul—some mortified lust striving, which drinks up the spirits. There are spiritual ague-fits, strokes of palsy. The more of the stone in the heart and the earth in the mind, the cooler it becomes.
2. From the season. Nighttime and wintertime are cooling times. When God withdraws, it is both night and winter with the soul, and no marvel then if it be cold.
3. From cooling circumstances, such as want of ordinances, engagement with carnal relations. See both in Psalm 120:5: “Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!” As if He had said, “Alas! How cold am I!”

The effects of spiritual coldness are:

1. Inward uneasiness. Warmth is comfortable; cold is uncomfortable. When this sun was eclipsed and gone, how sad were the disciples!
2. Unfitness for action. When numbness seizes the joints, the man can do nothing. “He sealet up the hand of every man” (Job 37:7). Wonder not if he cannot work.
3. Unaptness to receive impressions by the word and by the rod—as wax, when hard and cold.

Inquire, How Is Heat and Warmth Communicated by Christ to Those That Fear His Name?

In general, it is by His wings. “The sun,” say you, “has no wings.” It means His beams—in allusion to the fowls, who not only fly with their wings but warm and shelter their young with their wings (Matt. 23:37). But:

1. In particular, He is a warming sun to us.

(1) He is so by the immediate motions and comforts of His Holy Spirit. It is under that notion that He is promised as a comforter (John 14:16). Comfort is warming. Also, He is promised as fire (Matt. 3:11). When He sanctifies, He works as fire, which is cleansing. Also, when He comforts.

(2) And He is so by His word and ordinances, though not without the Spirit. They are dead things in themselves. It is the Spirit only that quickens. But the effect is produced when He is pleased to work with them and by them.

The word of Christ has a warming faculty (Jer. 23:29; Luke 24:32). Have not you yourselves found it so many a time? When you have come cold to it, benumbed, frozen, how strangely, how suddenly have you been altered, revived, quickened, comforted!

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a warming, quickening, comforting ordinance—as food, as physic, a cordial (allude to 1 Sam. 30:11–12).

Singing of psalms is another warming ordinance. “Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord” (Eph. 5:18–19).

(3) He is so by good society. The very sight of a good man warms, much more convers[ation] with him. And the more inward and intimate the better (Eccl. 4:11). Not only bad company but the want of good company is cooling. Fire is quenched as well by the withdrawing of fuel as by pouring on water (see Acts 2:41–47).

May I be bold to ask you, How is it with you? What temper are you in? Are you cold? What kind of cold is it—the cold of the living, or the cold of the dead?

My exhortation to you in both cases must be one and the same: Away to Christ, the sun of righteousness. Lay your soul

under His wings, His warm beams, the influences of His Spirit and grace, His word and ordinances.

Beg of Him to come and warm you by them. This is the meaning of David's often repeated request (Psalm 119) for quickening, quickening.

Prayers must be seconded with endeavors. Motion begets heat; so does meditation: "While I was musing the fire burned" [Ps. 39:3].

When you meet with spiritual warmth at any time, let the Sun of righteousness have the praise. We may lay ourselves under His warming beams, but what do we toward our own warming? Some ministers, some subjects are more warming than others; but we must use all the means, and that diligently.

2. Jesus Christ is made unto us of God a heavenly sun with healing in His wings. Our condition is oftentimes not only a cold, starved condition but a sick and wounded condition. We are sick of the disease of natural corruption. We are sick of the wounds of actual sin.

We should be greatly concerned, each of us, about these two. If anything ails the body, if that be sick, if that be sore, we send hither and send thither, far and near, for help. What! And no concernedness for the poor soul? We should in this case be more concerned, much more; for the soul is more precious than the body. One soul is of more value than a thousand bodies. The soul is the man. If the body be sick and die, it is but the body. The soul may do well enough. But if the soul be sick and die, the man is lost. The body may perish alone, but the soul never perishes without the body also perishing with it.

Count on it, each of you. You have need of healing. If you think not so, you have most need of all (Matt. 9:12). Have you not a corrupt nature? Why, that itself is a disease. Are you not

daily trespassing and transgressing? Your backslidings must be healed, or you are undone.

Behold, I bring you tidings of great joy. There is healing. There is a healer. The Sun of righteousness is risen. Away to Him then with all your sores, with all your sicknesses.

He cures of the disease of corrupted nature by His renewing grace. When the Spirit sanctifies, He heals. Oh, beg that Spirit of His (Ps. 51:10)!

He cures of the wounds of actual sin by His blood and merit, as a sun of righteousness imputing righteousness to us before God, wherein we are made to be accepted. This justifies, acquits, absolves, and so heals. See both together, Psalm 103:3. Consider:

(1) The healing that is with Christ, the sun of righteousness, is the alone healing. There is no other that can cure you (Acts 4:12). All other physic and physicians are of no value.

(2) It is all healing. There is no disease, no wound that He cannot cure. Among diseases, those that are hereditary are hardest cured. Now sin is such; but though it be so, He can cure it. Among wounds, those that have been longest neglected are hardest cured. Are yours such? Say not there is no hope. David lay three quarters of a year under the peril of a neglected wound, yet he did well. "The blood of Jesus Christ...cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). As when here on earth no disease was able to stand before Him, so it is now. The diseases of the soul submit to His healing touch.

(3) It is healing at hand. What is there nearer at hand to us, wherever we are, than the sunbeams? Would they afford a remedy for all sores and sicknesses, who would want it? Lo, here is a sun that will heal your soul. And how near is it! Away then, each of you, with all the speed imaginable, to this healer. Delays are dangerous. David complains, "My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness" (Ps. 38:5).

3. Jesus Christ is made unto us of God a growth-furthering sun. They will go forth and grow up as calves of the stall.

“Go forth”—as a sick man when healed goes forth; walks abroad, after long keeping his bed or chamber; abroad into the open air, which is refreshing and comfortable; abroad, about his occasions. So the soul, when cured of sin by the Sun of righteousness, then, and not till then, goes forth—that is, begins to live, to live to purpose to the will and glory of God, to his own happiness and salvation (116:16).

“And grow up.” Oftentimes, after a fit of sickness, when cured, children are observed to grow and shoot forth exceedingly. So it is with the soul, and it is owing to the sun’s wings or beams. Nobody doubts the influence the sun has on the growth of trees and plants. In winter, when the sun is away, they grow not. They scarce live. So it is with trees of righteousness, trees of the Lord’s planting. All their growth is owing to Jesus Christ.

Can a tree or plant grow without a root? No. Lo, He is our root.

Can a tree or plant grow without watering? Lo, He is our dew.

Can a tree or plant grow without warmth? Lo, He is a sun to us. His warm beams make us to grow, and nothing else will do it without Him. Sometimes growth in grace is spoken of as a commanded duty (2 Tim. 2:1; 2 Peter 3:18). In the text and elsewhere, it is spoken of as a promised mercy (Job 17:9; Prov. 4:18). And the blessed Jesus is the sole author of it.

“As calves of the stall.” It will be a speedy, useful growth. It is true, He promotes and furthers it by appointed means (Ps. 92:12–13). But still He Himself is the author of it.

Let us examine how it is with us. Do we grow, grow in knowledge, grow in grace? Are we better, better this year than the last, more humble, watchful, tender? It should be so.

Growth evidences truth. Painted trees grow not. Many grow worse and worse (2 Tim. 3:13). Growth will appear in strength and in steadfastness.

Let me exhort and instruct you. Would you grow? Get under the wings of this sun. “Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). How in grace? By growing in the knowledge of Christ—not head knowledge, but heart knowledge. After so much preaching of Christ, God will certainly expect you should grow apace. “Grow up into him” (Eph. 4:15)—into acquaintance with Him, into living on Him, especially as a sun of righteousness, healing us.

4. The same is also to be said concerning our fruit. Our Lord Jesus is a fruit-furthering sun.

The summertime, when the sun is with us, is the fruit-bearing time of the year. So when Christ is near the soul, and the soul is under His influences, then it bears fruit. “I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.... From me is thy fruit found” (Hos. 14:5–8; see John 15:1–8, “I am the vine,” etc.).

CHAPTER 24

Christ Is Our Shield

After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield.

—GENESIS 15:1

The word of the Lord that appeared to Abram and said this was the Lord, the Word, the second Person in the blessed Trinity—God the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. He appeared often to the fathers in visions before His great appearance, when He was made flesh and dwelt among us. Now that which He said was, “I am thy shield.”

“Aye yours, O Abram,” says one. “But what is that to us? What kin are we to Abram?”

I reply: No kin at all; only he was our father. And is that nothing? It is true, we are no kin to him according to the flesh, only as he and we are come of the same Adam and Eve. But, according to the Spirit, he is our father, and we are his children, if we are true believers. He is called the father of the faithful (Romans 4). All that was said to him was said to us. See Genesis 17:7: “A God unto thee, and *to thy seed.*”

Doctrine: That our Lord Jesus Christ is made of God a shield to all true believers.

“Your shield?” each faithful soul may hereupon say. “My shield, Lord”—as David (Ps. 3:3; 28:7; 119:114). Show:

- I. The meaning of this, what a shield is.
- II. The properties of this shield—what kind of shield Jesus Christ is.
- III. And what use is to be made of it.

What Is a Shield?

A shield is the same with a buckler, a broad plate of gold or brass or steel or such like, carried by soldiers in their left hand to ward off blows from the head and heart, while the right hand manages the sword. Such a thing God the Word promised Abram here, and us in him, that He would be to him a shield—that is, a defense, a protection, a preservation to keep us from all evil, from all hurts and harms, from everything that might annoy us.

But are we in danger? Do we stand in need of such a thing?

Certainly. We do every day and every night, every hour and every moment.

1. We are engaged in a warfare. Every Christian is to look on himself as an enlisted soldier and as such has need of shield and buckler—not only of a sword for offence, but of a shield for defense.

2. Our enemies that fight against us are many and mighty: the world, the flesh, and the Devil are the three generals, and under each is Gad—behold, a troop cometh. “We wrestle not against flesh and blood” (Eph. 6:12), that is, men like ourselves. And yet among such we have enemies, and therefore as to them we have need of a shield. After these things, after the war of four kings with five, after Abram had rescued Lot and made them all his enemies, no doubt he was afraid. Now the Lord

Jesus comes to him, “Fear not. They will none of them hurt you. I will stand between you and danger.” Nay, we have another enemy. I had like to have said, worse than all the rest, considered as an enemy. And that is God, the mighty and terrible God—a professed enemy to every wicked man going on still in his trespasses. If you have not a shield to defend you from Him, from the stroke of His offended justice, you are undone. Now that shield is our Lord Jesus Christ, not only to defend us from men and devils but from being hurt by God Himself.

3. It concerns us to get a shield, considering what it is that is in danger, even our all: all we are and all we have, our life, health, estate, families, nay, more than all these. Our souls, our precious and immortal souls, are in danger. They are in danger of being wounded, of being destroyed. Their purity, their peace is in danger. Oh, then see, see, I beseech you, the daily need you are in of some shield—nay, any shield will not serve—of this shield.

What Are the Properties of This Shield?

1. The Lord Jesus Christ is a living shield. Other shields are dead things, made of dead materials. But He lives and lives forever. He was dead, it is true; but He is alive again and lives forevermore.

2. He is a lasting shield. Other shields are subject to be worn out in process of time with much using, and then new ones must be had. Solomon made golden ones. In his son’s days, they were gone, and brazen ones made in the stead of them. But here is a shield the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). It is a long time since Abram and David had Him for a shield, yet He is as firm and good now as ever, as safe and as sure.

3. He is an encompassing shield. Other shields are for one side only, but here is a shield for every side—right side, left side, inside, outside (Ps. 5:12). It is said concerning Job, and though the Devil said it, he said truth: “Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?” (Job 1:10). A hedge about, and about, and round about, never a gap in it. Were there one open place, at that one, evil might come in.

4. He is an impenetrable shield, such a shield as cannot be pierced through. We are told of a buckler or shield that was sevenfold, the thickness of seven oxhides. What sword or spear or dart could pierce that shield? Lo, here is one beyond that, armor of proof, such a shield as nothing can prevail against, nothing can enter. Is it a thing possible to prevail by power against omnipotency?

5. He is the alone shield. Besides Him, there is no other. Solomon and the rest of the kings had choice. If one failed, they had another—for variety. But this never fails. There is no need of any other. It alone is sufficient. Other shields are shields of no value, such as cannot do our business, neither of one kind nor other. None but Christ, none but Christ.

Are not, it is asked, magistrates shields (Ps. 47:9)? They are sub-shields, under-shields. He alone is the chief shield. They can do nothing without Him. He can do what He pleases without them.

But is not faith a shield (Eph. 6:16)? “Taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” It is not faith that quenches in itself and of itself, but as it receives Christ and holds up Christ. Every shield must have a hand to hold it. So must this shield. Now that hand is faith—not love, not repentance, not patience, but faith.

6. He is an all-sufficient shield. He is a shield to all them that put their trust in Him. If there were more such than there are, He would be enough for each of them. But not to others (Ps. 31:19; Prov. 30:5). It concerns everyone then to make sure his interest in Christ. If Christless, shieldless.

He is so at all times and in all cases—against all enemies, bodily, spiritual; in all perils and dangers, to the inward, to the outward man (Gen. 17:1). Being God all-sufficient, He is a shield all-sufficient.

What Use Are We to Make of This?

1. This is a very comfortable truth to all the Lord's people—that Jesus Christ is a sun to enlighten and warm us, [and] that He is a shield also to protect and defend us. Let our condition be never so pleasant and delightful, if we be not safe in it, if exposed to perils and dangers by enemies, what the better are we?

It may comfort us:

(1) In reference to public concerns. We should be of a public spirit, that is, disposed to rejoice in any truth we hear (as many are in news told) that is for the good of God's people in general. Now such is this: The Lord Jesus Christ is His church's shield.

He is a shield to the universal church, visible and invisible, to protect and defend it from all its enemies, within and without, open and secret (Matt. 16:18). To Him being so to it all along, we owe the continuance of the being of it in the world to this day. The power and policy of hell and earth have not been wanting to undermine and destroy it, but our shield defends it.

Now it is His tabernacle. Moses's tabernacle was secured from wind and weather with a covering of rams' skins and badgers' skins. So Christ is the covering of His church (Isa. 4:5–6).

It is His vineyard. And see what care He has for the preservation of it, night and day (27:1–3).

It is His flock and fold. And to preserve it, see what He says. He will be a wall of fire round about.

It is His army. And to secure it, He is a shield-general—not only captain-general, and ensign-general, but shield-general, for their protection. Therefore, you that love Jerusalem, rejoice with her (Ps. 125:1–2). Her enemies will not prevail.

He is a shield to particular congregations and assemblies that profess faith in Christ and obedience to Him, especially that walk worthy of their profession, to protect and defend them against the wrath and violence of those that hate them. Are not we ourselves an instance, among many others in like circumstances? Had we been here today, if the blessed Jesus had not been a shield to us? Whose hand but His has been our covering? It is true we have a good law and a good king and queen. But had they been for us, if the Lord Jesus had been against us? No, no. He has been for us; therefore, they. “The shields of the earth belong unto God” (47:9). He that has undertaken the protection of the whole tabernacle has undertaken the protection of every apartment in it. He that has undertaken the care of the whole vineyard has undertaken the care of every bed in it. He that has undertaken to look after the whole flock has undertaken to look after every sheep in it. He that has the command of the whole army has the command of every troop in it. Therefore, to Him let us give the glory. Therefore, on Him let us still wait.

(2) In reference to our own particular personal concerns, we have daily need of a shield. And we have one and will have Him our shield, if we trust in Him—even the blessed Jesus.

He is our shield to secure and safeguard us from God’s wrath and curse due to us for our sins. Were it not for Him stepping between, every day we were undone. The blows falling on

us lighted on our shield and bruised Him (Isa. 53:4–5). He was made a curse for us, died the death for us. Oh, how should we love Him!

He is our shield from the rage and malice of Satan, who goes about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour us. And who secures us from him, but the blessed Jesus—the Lion of the tribe of Judah? He takes our part.

He keeps us from being tempted, preventing us with preventing grace. He was led Himself into the wilderness to be tempted (Matt. 4:1). But He does not lead us so. And it is a great mercy, and that for which we should be very thankful.

When we are tempted, He is our shield to ward off the blow of the temptation, so that it will not fall so heavy as otherwise it would (Luke 22:30–31; 1 Cor. 10:13). He was tempted, but see Paul’s testimony: “He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9).

He is our shield to give us victory over the temptation, nay, to make us more than conquerors, that is, triumphers, as Job was. “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations” (2 Peter 2:9) quenching the fiery darts of the wicked (Eph. 6:10).

He is our shield from the violence of wicked men. God had no sooner withdrawn His shield of protection from Job, but presently the Chaldeans and the Sabeans were upon him. We cannot imagine what our adversaries that hate us would do to us, not only to our assemblies and meeting places, but to our persons and families, if the blessed Jesus were not our shield (2 Kings 6:15–17).

He is our shield from the evils and disasters that we are day and night exposed to, going out, coming in, lying down, rising up. It is true, He makes use of second causes in doing it; but Himself is the principal. The angels are of His appointing

(Ps. 34:7; 91:11; 121). He strengthens our bars (147:13). He is our shield from sickness. He is the body's shield from falls and bruises. He is the children's shield from burning and scalding (Job 1:10). Say then, how much are we indebted, and what will we render?

2. Learn hence what a sad condition they are in, to whom Christ is not a shield. How are they exposed to all the evils and enemies that are against them! Imagine a man in a field fighting, and no shield, no friend. This is your condition, sinner. Oh, be sensible of it, and be afraid.

3. By way of exhortation and instruction:

(1) Make Christ your shield by a hearty closing with Him as such, from a due sight and sense of your absolute need of Him and of the insufficiency of all others in heaven and earth to safeguard and defend you. Renounce them all and cleave to Him. Suppose a paper or pasteboard shield were all the defense a man has in time of battle—how hopeless!

(2) Having made Him your shield, make use of Him as your shield, every day, in everything. Go not out, lie not down but under the shadow of His wings. Say, as in Psalm 20:7, "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God." Look up to Him for protection.

(3) Having and using Him as your shield, fear not. There is a fear of care and caution, which is our duty; and it is awakening. There is a slavish, weakening fear, which is our sin. How often are we warned against it—as here, "Fear not...I am thy shield."

CHAPTER 25

Christ Is Our Strength

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

—PHILIPPIANS 4:13

This were a big word of holy Paul in the former part of this verse—"I can do all things"—unless he had somewhat qualified it by adding in the latter part of the verse, "Through Christ which strengtheneth me." Do all things? One would hardly think it should be the same man that says elsewhere, "I am nothing, the chiefest of sinners, less than the least of saints." Each of these sounds like humility, bespeaks him a humble, meek, lowly, self-denying man, such as we all should be. But to say, "I can do all things," is high and strange. What could be said more even of God Himself (Job 13:2)? But his adding, "Through Christ," gives Him the glory, even Him who is God, blessed forevermore. It is true it is I that do when I do, but then it is as true, what I do Christ does in me (1 Cor. 15:10; Gal. 2:20). Then it is He and not I, His strength, and not my own.

Doctrine. That our Lord Jesus Christ is the alone strength of true believers. He is made unto us of God strength.

Not only wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, not only sun and shield, but strength also. He

does not only strengthen us, but He is our strength. The Lord is my strength—in the same sense in which He is our life. We do not only live in Him and by Him and through Him, but He Himself is our life (Col. 3:4). So we are not only strong in Him and by Him and through Him, but He Himself is our strength. Show:

- I. What strength this is meant of.
- II. What need we have of Him to be our strength—wherein:
- III. What are the properties of this strength.
- IV. How and by what means does He communicate it to us?
- V. What special inferences are to be drawn from it, that Jesus Christ is the strength of true believers.

Of What Strength Is This Meant?

Strength is twofold:

1. There is natural strength, which is strength of body. Some have very strong bodies in comparison of other[s]. They are stronger to bear burdens, to endure hardship, to do work. The strongest that ever was was Samson. But that the story of him is a scriptur[al] story and therefore certainly true, one would hardly believe it—that he should kill a lion; slay a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass; carry the city gates, posts and all, on his back; burst the green withes; and overturn a house with his two hands (Judges 14–16). The Lord was certainly with him, with him after a peculiar manner, strengthening him; or he could not have done it. He was herein a type of Christ. He is our Samson (Jer. 50:34). Now as to this strength, either we have it, or we have it not. We must be content if we have it, thankful. We must not by any means be proud of it (9:23–24). For consider, there are sundry kinds

of beasts that have more of it than we. We received it, and a small matter may take it away—a short fit of sickness.

2. There is spiritual strength, which is in the mind and soul, called strength in the inner man (Eph. 3:16). The one of these may be where the other is not. Samson was strong in body but weak in mind, else he would not have been deceived by a woman (Prov. 7:26). Many are weak in the outer man—women are the weaker vessels—who, nevertheless, are of great spiritual strength.

What Need Is There That He Should Be Our Strength?

Those who think they have need of none have most need of all—as of righteousness, wisdom, washing, physician, so of strength. That which needs strength is weakness. Now we are none of us weak, are we? All strong, strong to do anything. We can do all things, I warrant. No such matter. We are weak and can do nothing, nothing, nothing truly good, as it ought to be done, further than Christ works it in us. “Without me”—separate from Me, not taking Me along with you—“ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). You cannot please God, profit others, save your own souls.

Our weakness is universal weakness. We are all over weak. I mean in the inner man, spiritually weak (Isa. 1:6).

[1.] We are weak in the head, weak-headed. The head is the upper region of the soul. The apprehending, understanding, remembering faculty is there. And are these strong or weak with us in spiritual things? Weak, certainly (1 Cor. 2:14). Do not you find it so in yourselves and others (Prov. 30:3; Luke 14:25)? How dull, how forgetful! Is it not our daily complaint, and yet will we say we have no need of Christ? Oh, see your need of Him and beg of Him to give you “an understanding, that we may know him that is true” (1 John 5:20). Beg of Him

to open your understanding, that you may understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:45). Every time we open the Bible to read, every time we go to hear a sermon, let us say, "Lord Jesus, be strength to my understanding, my memory."

2. We are weak in the heart—weak-hearted (Ezek. 16:39). The heart is put for the lower region, the will and the affections. In these, it is true, there is strength; but it lies the wrong way, as wise to do evil, but to do good we have no knowledge. We are strong and stiff in choosing evil and fast in holding it, in refusing good motions, resisting, gainsaying, loving simplicity, hating knowledge (Proverbs 1). But as to that which is good, how weak are we to embrace it and hold it fast! How weak are we in spiritual combats with sin and Satan, yielding presently, overcome immediately, easily, at the first onset. What is that but weakness? Now the Lord Jesus is the strength of our heart (Ps. 73:26).

3. We are weak in the hands—weak-handed. The hand is the part that we receive with if any gift is offered, money, a jewel. Such a hand we must have, or we cannot be saved. Now that hand is faith. And are we strong or weak in believing? As weak as water. It is not in us to believe, till the Lord Jesus works it in us. Faith is His gift. The disciples were of little faith.

The hand is the part that we hold with when we have received. Suppose a man, taking hold of Christ, good hold, justifying hold, saving hold—can he keep that hold by any strength of his own? No, he cannot, but as Christ is his strength. He is weak.

The hand is what we work with. We have a great deal of work to do for God, for ourselves, for the good of others—repenting work, obeying work, praying work. And are we not weak in it, not only backward to it, but awkward, untoward?

And is not He our strength? I can do all things through Christ (Isa. 33:2).

4. We are weak in the back and shoulders. Those are the bearing parts. And are we strong there? Can we hold up under a heavy cross or calamity befalling us? No, no. We sink; we droop; we faint. And that is a sign our strength is small (Prov. 24:10). But if the blessed Jesus put to His helping hand that strengthens, that upholds (Phil. 1:29; Col. 1:11). Therefore, to Him we must go in this case also.

5. We are weak in the feet. Those are the standing parts that bear the weight of the body. The shoulders bear other things, but the feet bear them. Now what feet have you, what ability to stand? We are often called on to stand—"Stand therefore" (Ephesians 6). But have we strength of our own wherewithal? Do we stand on our own legs? No, certainly. "Stand fast in the Lord" (Phil. 4:1).

Those are the walking parts. And what walking ability have we? The way we are to walk is in the way of God's commandments of righteousness, of holiness, of our duty. Alas, how weak! Not only weak-sighted, eyes weak, not seeing our way, however not clearly and plainly, but weak-footed, as appears:

(1) By our aptness to stumble, even at straws. Every little thing offends and turns us aside.

(2) By the slowness of our pace. Were it not for weakness, how might we rid ground in our way to heaven.

(3) By our inability to hold out. We are soon tired. We begin well, but are weary presently.

This weakness is born with us and is increased through our own default, more and more.

It is growing weakness. Old men become weaker and weaker—and yet we are loath to own it, through pride of heart.

What Are the Properties of This Strength?

1. It is divine strength. Less than divine strength and other than divine strength will not do divine work. We had need of the strength of God to take hold and to wrestle with God and to walk with God and to work for God. And, therefore, such is provided for us. “By his strength he had power with God” (Hos. 12:3)—not by Jacob’s own strength, but Jehovah’s strength. Everlasting arms were under him, enabling him to tug and wrestle with Him, as he did. “According to his glorious power” (Col. 1:11)—not according to our own shameful weakness. Christ the power of God (1 Cor. 1:24). Therefore, be of good comfort, you feeble soul. God and a weak creature can do anything.

2. It is daily strength—that is, strength that we have need of every day, and strength that is ready for us every day. “Be thou their arm every morning” (Isa. 33:2). Think of this, when waking every morning.

Three things are to be done every day:

(1) New temptations are to be resisted. And how else will we be able to resist them, but in the strength of Jesus Christ? Read 1 Samuel 17.

(2) New afflictions are to be borne. Sufficient for each day is the evil of it. We are born to trouble and born again to trouble. But whence are we able to bear it, but in the strength of Christ (Col. 1:11)?

(3) New duties are to be performed toward God, toward our neighbors, toward our families, toward ourselves. And whence are we able to do them, but in the strength of Christ? Christ is our arm in every prayer, in every thanksgiving, in every repenting act, in every believing act. Are we to give reproof, to take reproof? Strength is needful. So in the affairs of our particular calling.

3. It is inward strength. I mean not only strength in the inward man, in opposition to bodily strength, but strength arising and flowing from an inward principle. A man may be strong to do much and suffer much from external weights pulling and drawing, that is, from motives from without to please men or gain applause from men. But that is another thing from what is done by an inward principle: grace in the heart, the love of God shed abroad there, the love of Christ constraining, as the bias in the bowl, the spring in a watch. Both of them are out of sight, but both are strong and strengthening. Now inquire: Have you this principle? Can you witness to such a drawing from within?

4. It is increasing strength. It is said of our Lord Himself that He grew in strength (Luke 2:52), that is, as man. So do all that are His (Prov. 4:18). They go from strength to strength (Job 17:9; Ps. 84:7). Thence it is that true believers who live long are best at last. Other things weaken by age, but grace strengthens by it.

5. It is suitable strength. It is suited:

To persons that have it according as their age, condition, need requires. The little finger has not the strength of the arm, nor is it needful it should have it. So a private Christian needs not the strength of a magistrate or minister, nor the child or the servant that of the master or father in the family. It is suited also:

To the work that is to be done with it. All work requires not the same measure of strength for the doing of it. One has work of one kind, now of another. See Numbers 7:6–8: “As thy days, so shall thy strength be” (Deut. 33:25).

6. It is sufficient strength (2 Cor. 12:9). As for ourselves, we have no sufficiency of our own to anything that is good. No

matter, while there is an all-sufficiency in the grace of Christ. Therefore, fear not that any temptation, affliction, duty will be too hard for you (Ps. 23:4).

How Is This Strength Communicated to Us?

1. By the immediate influences of His Spirit (Eph. 3:16). As it is the Spirit that quickens, so it is the Spirit that strengthens. He is the soul of our souls. As all the strength the body has, it has from the soul, so all the strength the soul has is from the Spirit. He works all our works in us and for us (Isa. 26:12). Our mortifying work (Rom. 8:13), our repenting work (Zech. 12:10), our praying work (Rom. 8:26).

2. By the ordinances. The word is strengthening both read and preached. It strengthens the head in knowledge, the heart in faith and love and all obedience. The sacraments as seals are strengthening—what a help to believing!

3. By good society. “They go from strength to strength” (Ps. 84:7)—that is, they increase in number and by that means in strength.

What Special Inferences Are to Be Drawn Hence?

1. Learn what is the reason we are so weak, the ground of all our infirmities. We are Christless, Christless.

Some are totally so, therefore, tossed to and fro like children by errors, by temptation. Therefore, no work is done for God or for the soul.

All in part are so. We go forth in our own strength, as Peter. And you know what came of it.

2. Learn what to do that we may be strengthened. Ask it of God in the name of Jesus Christ (Ps. 68:28; Isa. 33:2). Every day in everything.

3. Learn what to do when we have asked and received it. Use it. It is a talent. We can do more than we think we can, through Christ strengthening.

4. Learn what to do when duty is done, especially if well done. Give Him the glory (Ps. 115:1; 1 Cor. 15:10; Gal. 2:20).

CHAPTER 26

Christ Is Our Song

The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.

—PSALM 118:14

Christ, the true treasure, is certainly hid in the field of the Old Testament, particularly in the book of Psalms, yet more particularly in this psalm. Who else but He is the stone refused by the builders and made the headstone of the corner (v. 22)? Who else but He is here spoken of (v. 14), “My strength and song”? Is it not the same that is become our salvation? Our Jesus? All true believers may as truly say it in their measure as David: He is my song.

Doctrine: That Jesus Christ alone is and ought to be the song of all true believers. Show:

- I. In what sense we are to understand it.
- II. What of Jesus Christ is it that is especially a believer’s song.
- III. What are the properties of that song which Jesus Christ is to all true believers.
- IV. Make the application.

In What Sense Are We to Understand This, “The Lord Is My Strength and Song”?

To be sure, not in that sense in which Job says, “Now am I their song, yea, I am their byword” (Job 30:9). Or David: “I was the song of the drunkards” (Ps. 69:12). It is enough and too much that He is so to unbelievers, to them that swear by His blood and wounds, as unholy things, trampling them under their feet. No. “Unto you...which believe he is precious” (1 Peter 2:7). Believers have other thoughts of Him, carry it otherwise toward Him. And it is one of their best evidences that they are true believers.

But it is to be understood in a threefold sense:

1. He is the main object of their hope and trust and ought to be so. Of this we discoursed before from 1 Timothy 1:1. That which is our confidence uses to be our song. If gold be our confidence, gold is our song. If our great friends are our confidence, they are our song. And so everything else. Now a believer’s great, nay only, confidence is the Lord Jesus Christ. His hope is in Him and in no other. No, not in God Himself, nor in the mercy of God, nor promises out of Christ. “The LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation” (Isa. 12:2). Are our sins to be forgiven, our performances to be accepted? His merit and righteousness alone must be our song. We must hope and trust in no other.
2. He is the main subject of their praises and thanksgivings and ought to be so. We have many occasions to sing, that is, to give thanks, on account of the many, many mercies and deliverances vouchsafed, both public and personal (Ps. 32:7). Nay, we must sing not of mercy only but judgment also (101:1), like the nightingale, even when the thorn is at our breast. But the mercy of mercies that we are to sing of and to bless God for is Jesus Christ, the gift of gifts, the unspeakable gift (2 Cor. 9:15).

3. He is the main matter of their joy and rejoicing and ought to be so. He is the head of their joy (Ps. 137:6). He is the gladness of their joy (43:4). We may rejoice in other things. Husbands are bid to live joyfully with the wife of their youth (Ecclesiastes 9). We must eat our bread with joy and rejoice in the labor of our hands. But still, Jesus Christ must be our chief joy. Our song must be of Him, above and beyond them all. And is it so? Can we appeal to God and say, "Lord, Thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that it is so"? If we can, it is a good sign of the good work wrought in us. "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3). Mark no confidence. Jesus Christ alone is our confidence. And where is our joy? Is it not in Christ Jesus? He that rejoices aright in Christ Jesus can find enough in Him to rejoice in, in the want of other things (Hab. 3:17-18).

Three things are requisite to the making of Jesus Christ our song, that is, the main matter of our joy and rejoicing:

(1) An interest in Him. Not a common interest, which all have in Him as a common savior; but a peculiar interest, a special interest, as my Savior. This must be supposed. Now that which gives this interest is our closing with Him by faith. It is believing that makes Him ours. That is the foot by which we come to Him, the hand by which we receive Him, the mouth by which we feed on Him. What is it that makes two one in the conjugal relation, but the mutual assent and consent each to the other (Hos. 3:3)? So it is here.

(2) The knowledge of that interest. Many have the former that have not this, and that is the reason why many, concerning whom we hope they are truly in Christ Jesus, yet do not rejoice in Him as they ought. He is not their song. Their strength He is to uphold and support them that they sink not under their doubts and despondences; but their song, He is not. The

more is the pity that these two should be parted, yet sometimes it is so. Zion said, "The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me" (Isa. 49:14). And is it any marvel, when the King of Zion Himself has said so, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Ps. 22:1)? It therefore concerns all true believers that have an interest in Christ to clear up their interest to their own souls, that they may be able to say, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His," and, therefore, He is and will be my song.

(3) Suitable walking. If we let the reins loose to sin and folly, if we suffer the world and the vanities of it to encroach on us and to steal away our thoughts and affections, that will quickly spoil Christ's being our song (Hos. 9:1). Joy is forbidden fruit to a backslider. Such have other work to do. It is they only that keep conscience void of offence, that walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, that keep close to God and duty. I say, it is they only that can rejoice in Christ Jesus. And therefore, see to it, all you that desire to make Christ your song and to rejoice always in Him. Mind your way. Mend your pace. Ply your work.

What of Christ Especially Is a Believer's Song?

True believers sing and ought to sing:

1. Of what Jesus Christ is in Himself as to His personal excellences and perfections. It is usual to make songs and to sing them by way of encomium or praising of worthy men that outshine others. They made songs of Saul and of his valor, of David also. David himself made a song in praise of Jonathan. And have not we much more cause to make and sing songs of the blessed Jesus? Is there any like Him, any in heaven or on earth to be compared with Him? There is something in Him that makes Him more admirable than His being a savior. What is that? His perfections as God infinite, eternal, unchangeable

in His being, wisdom, and power. Of these, we ought to sing. His name is Michael—"Who is like Thee, O Lord"! We ought to sing of Him as a savior, our Savior—so in the text—and is become my salvation. There is no need to make songs to this purpose. There are some made already. Read Psalm 45. The book of Solomon's Song is an encomium of our Solomon. Read 5:10, etc.

2. We ought to sing of what He is to us. You have heard in sundry particulars already, and more is yet behind. He is our foundation, our food, our root, our raiment. And should we not sing of these? Is there not cause?

3. We ought to sing of what He has done and is doing and will yet do for us.

What He has done. He has taken our nature on Him and in our nature suffered and died. He has washed us from our sins in His own blood, called us with a holy calling, begun a good work.

What He is doing. Is He not ever living to make intercession for us? Is He not guiding and guarding us, enlightening and comforting us, every day?

What He will do for us. He will perform the good work that He has begun. He will come again and fetch us to Himself, that where He is, there we may be also. Can you name any other to sing of, that has done the like for you?

What Are the Properties of This Song?

1. He is the angels' song. They were singing songs at the beginning of time to the praise and glory of God-Creator (Job 38:7). Aye, and they were singing too in the fullness of time (Luke 2). And what was their song? It was to the praise and glory of God-Redeemer (Luke 2:13-14). Though they could not sing, as we, "Who washed us from our sins"—yet for our

sake they sang, "On earth peace." Yea, and for their own confirmation also. So that it is no disparagement to be heard singing this song when the blessed angels themselves sing it. Christ is their song.

2. He is the most ancient song—the song of the ancients. All the Old Testament saints sung of Him and rejoiced in Him. Abraham saw His day and rejoiced. The patriarchs sung of Him. The prophets sung of Him, Isaiah especially, the evangelical prophet (read ch. 5; 12; 26; 27; 63)—only with this difference: They sung of Him as one to come, for they saw Him, though it was but as through the lattices or as through a glass darkly.

3. He is the new song. Wherever you read of a new song in Scripture, it points at Him (Ps. 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 149:1). He is the New Testament song. Ever since His coming in the flesh, all His saints have been singing of Him, as of one already come, rejoicing in Him and showing forth His praises. As fast as they have been made new creatures, they have learned this new song. New, that is, excellent, because when things are new they are at the best. New, on the account of new occasion given, a new mercy received.

4. He is their night song (Job 35:10; Ps. 13:8). In the night season, when others are sleeping, true believers are rejoicing in God their Redeemer and solacing themselves in Him (Ps. 149:5; Song 1:13; Acts 16). Paul and Silas sang at midnight.

In the night of sorrow and affliction. To be able to sing then, when everything looks sad and sorrowful round about us, is a great matter—as David (1 Sam. 30:6).

5. He is their song all the week and their song on the Sabbath. We are bid to rejoice in the Lord always, every day. And they

that have an interest in Christ and know it, do so—but especially on Sabbath days (Ps. 118:24). Sabbath days are set apart on purpose. Psalm 92 is entitled a psalm or song for the Sabbath day (v. 1–3).

6. He is their song while they live and their song when they die. While they live, in all the turns of their lives (146:2). And in a special manner when they come to die, on sickbeds and deathbeds. As it is said of the swan, that she sings sweetest when dying, so it is with many of God's people. At the death of Mr. John Janeway, one present said he never was in a room where God in Christ had more praises than there at that time.

7. He is their song in the world and will be their song to eternity. What is the great employment of heaven, and what will it be forever and ever, but to lift up God-Redeemer (Rev. 5:9–13)? Jesus Christ is to be our everlasting song (Isa. 35:10). It is good to be found doing that now that we would be glad to be found doing hereafter—world without end.

[The Application]

Let us make the application:

1. This may serve for an examining sign or mark of trial whereby to know what we are as to our spiritual state and condition. We are bid to try ourselves (2 Cor. 13:5). The glory of God and our own comfort depend much on our knowing or not knowing of ourselves. Marks are needful for our help herein. Among others, this: What is Jesus Christ to us? What think we of Him? Has He ever been our song? Do we rejoice in Him? Do we not rejoice in other things more than in Him? Have not other things more of our thoughts, desires, pursuits, joys? If yea, suspect yourself, and change your way. Conversion

is often spoken of under the notion of singing (Ps. 138:4–5; Isa. 54:1; Rom. 15:9–10).

Get acquainted with Jesus Christ. The Word reveals Him to us, but the Spirit reveals Him in us. Pray for that Spirit. Be learning Christ daily.

Make Him your own by believing. Accept of Him; close with Him; let all go for Him.

Having done this, be often meditating what the blessings and benefits are that are made over to us by Him and through Him—justification, adoption, and sanctification—and call them all your own (Ps. 48:11–12).

2. Here is a word of reproof to the true believers among us that do not make Christ their song—that are in Him, but do not rejoice in Him, however, not with evenness and constancy, not in that measure and degree that they should and ought. You should chide yourself for it (Psalm 42; 43:5). Consider:

It grieves the Spirit of God.

It blemishes the ways of God, makes you a stumbling block to them that are without, like the evil spies.

It is weakening to yourself. The more Christ is our song, the more is our strength (Neh. 8:10). Then search out the cause.

3. Exhortation to all that call themselves believers. Make Christ your song, week days and Sabbath days.

He is worthy that you should.

The gain of it will be your own, in present comfort, in eternal recompense. “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost” (Rom. 15:13).

Christ Is Our Horn

Blessed be the Lord... [for he] hath raised up an horn of salvation for us.

—LUKE 1:68–69

These are the first words of the song of Zacharias, the father of John, wherein he blesses God, not for John (though John was to him a great mercy, being the son of his old age; yea, and a mercy to all Israel, being the prophet of the Highest and the forerunner of Jesus), but for Jesus, the mercy of mercies, the universal mercy. If you ask, wherein? I answer: As a redeemer—who “hath visited and redeemed”—God the Father, by God the Son; not from corporal, but from spiritual slavery. We have cause to bless God every day for a redeemer, and, as a horn of salvation.

Doctrine: That our Lord Jesus Christ is raised up of God to be a horn of salvation to all true believers. Show:

- I. The meaning of this: why a horn, and wherein a horn of salvation. And:
- II. What kind of horn of salvation Jesus Christ is, what are the properties of this horn. And:
- III. Make the application.

[The Meaning of This]

I am to explain this—a horn of salvation. A horn has many significations in Scripture:

1. There are horns, properly so called, wherewith beasts are armed: some with two; some, it is said, with one, as the unicorn, which has its name from having but one horn (Ps. 22:20–21). These horns are not only the beauty of the beast that has them but his strength also. With them, he pushes and gores and tosses to and fro what is in his way. And it is incredible what the strength of some creatures is in their horns.

2. There are figurative horns. We read of the horns of the altar, to which the beasts were tied that were unruly when they were to be sacrificed (118:27), and to which Joab fled for refuge from the avenger of blood that was in pursuit of him (1 Kings 2:28).

The power of wicked men, wherewith they vex and oppress their poor neighbors, is called their horn (Ps. 75:4–5, 10). The godly also have their horns: “The horns of the righteous shall be exalted” (v. 10)—that is, “I will advance them to honor and power.” It is never well with a nation or kingdom but when it is so (Prov. 11:10). Antiochus, that bloody enemy of the Old Testament church, the type of the antichrist, is called in Daniel, “the little horn” (Dan. 7:8, 21).

3. There is the musical horn to blow with, either made of a beast’s horn or of some other materials framed in the likeness of a beast’s horn, crooked (1 Chron. 25:5). The same are elsewhere called cornets (Ps. 98:5–6; Dan. 3:5, 15).

4. There is a vessel called a horn wherein oil was put, when David was anointed king by Samuel (1 Sam. 16:1, 13). Saul was anointed with a vial of oil, a small quantity (10:1). David was anointed with a horn, that is, abundance of oil—noting

the difference that was to be between them in their gifts for government and in the duration of their kingdom.

Now which of all these is applicable to Jesus Christ? I will tell you when I will first have told you what the salvation is. Salvation is threefold: temporal, from temporal enemies; spiritual, from sin and the world and the Devil; eternal, in heaven, from the wrath that is to come. Neither is that all. Salvation of each sort has more in it than rescue from evil. It includes also the presence and fruition of the contrary good. So that salvation is the main matter. When it is said of Christ that He is a horn of salvation, it means that He is the author and procurer of all good to us, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. It is He also that saves and delivers us from all evil, bodily and ghostly, present and future. Well might Zacharias say, “Blessed be the Lord... [for he] hath raised up an horn of salvation” (cf. Ps. 68:19–20).

A horn of salvation—namely, a saving horn. Other horns are destroying horns. Beasts’ horns are so. The little horn was so. But, lo, here is a saving horn, a horn that hurts nobody but those that stand it out against Him and think to fight it out with Him. Them He pushes and gores and ruins with a witness (Luke 19:27; 20:18). As for others, He is to them a saving horn, a redeeming horn, a delivering horn

What Are the Properties of This Horn of Salvation?

There are only two properties, according to the twofold signification of a horn: He is a plentiful horn of salvation, as horn signifies plenty; and He is a plentiful horn of salvation, as horn signifies power.

I will put them together in this proposition: There is plenty of powerful salvation in Jesus Christ, by the appointment of the Father, for all true believers—that is, for all that will come to Him for it. I will show:

1. That salvation by Jesus Christ is powerful salvation. What we translate “a horn of salvation” is by some rendered “a mighty salvation.” Salvation by Jesus Christ is mighty salvation (Jer. 50:34). Their Redeemer is strong. If He were not strong and mighty, yea, almighty, He could be no redeemer for us, because of the mighty enemies that were and are against us and because of the vigorous opposition they make to hinder our salvation. He that will be the author of salvation to us must be strong enough to deal:

(1) With God, for He is against us as sinners. His justice is our enemy and must be satisfied. And can the blessed Jesus do that for us? Is He able? Yes, He is able, in the sense in which we call a rich man an able man. He is able in respect of wealth and riches to pay all our debts, if they were a thousand times more and greater than they are, not farthings and pence and pounds only, but even talents. And therefore, if any be sent to the prison of hell for their debts, it is not for want of a sufficient surety to undertake for them, but for want of accepting of Him (Heb. 7:25). Oh, mix faith with this, and say, “If it be so, why am I thus? His merit is of infinite worth and value.”

(2) With Satan. He is the gaoler¹ in whose custody all unregenerate people are. They are his prisoners, his captives, his galley slaves now and must be with him forever. And can the blessed Jesus deal with him? Is he hard enough for Him? He is certainly. He has broken his head (Gen. 3:15). He has led captivity captive (Ps. 68:20), made a show of him openly (Colossians 2), vanquished and destroyed him. We read in Matthew 4 of a duel which He fought with him, though on great advantage on the Devil’s part; yet He beat him out of the field, which was a pledge or specimen or earnest of His great victory by dying (Heb. 2:14). It must needs be so. Though the

1. *Gaoler*: jailer.

Devil have great power, as well as great wrath (Eph. 6:12), yet his power is but created power. He is a creature still. But our redeemer is Jehovah. There are two lions: the one, a fallen angel (1 Peter 5:8); the other, God blessed forever, the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

It is an act of infinite power to fetch a soul at first out of the Devil's clutches by converting grace (Luke 11:24).

It is an act of infinite power to preserve us ever after from being ruined by him.

(3) With the corrupt nature in us. This is as hard to be dealt with, to be subdued and conquered, as the Devil himself. Suppose an impregnable castle defended by a mighty giant, a Goliath. That is the case. There are two wards in this castle: the higher ward and the lower ward.

The understanding—that is the higher ward, fortified with invincible ignorance, inveterate prejudices. These He pulls down (2 Cor. 10:4). He enlightens the mind (Eph. 5:8). It is strange with what power.

The will—that is the lower ward, stubborn, obstinate, [and] will by no means be persuaded, till the mighty grace of Christ comes (Ps. 110:3).

(4) With the malice and power of wicked men, the professed enemies of God's people. Can the blessed Jesus deal with them? Is His horn strong enough for their horns? Certainly it is and will be sure to overcome them.

(5) With death and the grave (1 Cor. 15:56–57).

2. There is plenty of this powerful salvation—enough, and enough again. Not a vial but a horn of salvation. It is the appointment of the Father that it should be so: "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell" (Col. 1:19). He is all fullness dwelling—not for Himself, but for us (John 1:16). As the fullness of milk in the mother's breasts, of light in the

sun, or the fullness of water in the spring or fountain, which is a flowing fullness (Zech. 13:1), “a fountain.” Not a vessel or laver, alluding to that wherein the priests were to wash—larger in Solomon’s time than it was in Moses’ time, though still only a laver. But here is a fountain. There is a great deal of difference between a laver and a fountain. Our wants are many and great. And if our supplies be not accordingly, what will become of us?

(1) We want righteousness wherein to appear before God every day for the pardon of our sins and for the acceptance of our services. Our own will not do. He has it for us. He has enough, a horn of righteousness, everlasting righteousness (Dan. 9:24). A spring that cannot be exhausted. He is Jehovah our righteousness (Jer. 23:6).

(2) We want wisdom to lead and guide us in all the practical affairs of our souls. How often are we at a loss for want of it! Lo, here is a horn of wisdom for you—divine, heavenly wisdom (Col. 2:8). Not for Himself, but for us; not to be laid up, but to be laid out (1 Cor. 1:30; James 1:5). He gives liberally.

(3) We want strength—strength to do in doing time, to suffer in suffering time. Our strength is weakness; our sufficiency, insufficiency (2 Cor. 3:5). Lo, here is a horn of strength for you. Not only a strong horn, in itself strong, but a horn of strength for us, to make us strong. See discourse on Philipians 4:13. We can do nothing without Christ (John 15:5), but all things through Christ.

(4) We want grace. Some want it altogether—they have none of it. Others, that have it, want more of it: more faith and more humility and more meekness, patience, contentment, submission. Lo, here is a horn of grace for you, a fullness. Would you have more faith? Pray as the apostles (Luke 17:5), “Lord, increase our faith.”

(5) We want peace, that is, comfort in our souls, from the sense of God's love and favor toward us. Many a one would give all the world, if they had it, for one smile of His face. Lo, here is a horn of peace and comfort for you in Christ Jesus (John 14:27; 2 Peter 1:2). He is our peace, not only our peace-maker, but our peace-matter. Away to Him then by believing.

(6) We want eternal life—want it indeed, for we have forfeited it and are never likely to recover it by anything we can do. This is salvation—the topstone. Now there is with Christ a horn of this also (John 10:10).

(7) We have temporal wants also—some of one kind; some of another. I put these last because they are the least, of least consequence in comparison, though we are apt to complain most of them. One wants health; another, wherewithal to pay his debts and maintain his family and pay his taxes. Another is struck at by enemies and wants a friend to stand by him. Lo, here is a horn of supply for you in all your wants, one that has wherewithal; for the earth is His and the fullness thereof, as well as heaven and the fullness thereof. “My God shall supply all your need” (Phil. 4:19). It includes temporal needs. When He sent forth His apostles without purse or scrip, at their return He asked them, “Lacked you anything?” And they said, “Nothing, Lord.”

The Application

1. Let this advance your esteem of the blessed Jesus. Think of Him according to what is meet, as a strong, mighty, rich, able savior. The preeminence is His. Let Him have it (Col. 1:18).

2. Let us bless the Lord God of Israel, who has raised up the horn of salvation for us, laid help on one that is mighty (Ps. 89:19). We have cause to be thankful for our temporal salvations by Him, but especially for spiritual and eternal salvation.

“Lift up the horn” (1 Chron. 25:5), that is, Christ. They sung the gospel psalms, such as Psalms 2; 68; 110; etc.

3. Let us make sure our interest in this horn by heartily closing with Him on gospel terms, that we may each of us call Him “my horn” (18:2).

4. Live on Him with all holy joy and cheerfulness (Eccl. 9:8). There is no room for despair or distrust.

5. Live to Him in all holy obedience—care to please, fear to offend—in order to living with Him.

Christ Is Our Honor

Unto you therefore which believe he is precious.

—1 PETER 2:7

The *doctrine* from these words is this: That Jesus Christ is an honor to all true believers.

“To be precious to them and to be an honor to them,” you say, “are two things.”

I reply: They are in effect the same. However, to be an honor to them is, I am sure, more agreeable to the original, for what else is the Greek word here but an “honor”? See the margin.

Two things I mean by it: (1) He is the author of honor to them; (2) He is and ought to be the object of honor from them. He honors them, and they do and should honor Him. The latter follows on the former. The former is to be spoken to as to the doctrine; the latter, as the application by way of inference from it. Show:

- I. Wherein and on what accounts Jesus Christ is the author of honor to all true believers.
- II. What kind of honor it is.
- III. What we learn from it.

How Is the Lord Jesus the Author of Honor to All True Believers?

We use to say concerning the king, that he is the fountain of honor, that is, all his subjects that are men of honor derive their honor from him. Others give them honor, but it is he that makes them honorable. Now King Jesus is He and He alone that is the fountain of honor to all true believers. They derive their honor from Him.

1. He has Himself an honorable esteem of them. They are persons of honor, even the meanest of them, in His account (Isa. 43:4). He finds them, as all the rest of the children of Adam, without honor, even as the beasts that perish by nature (Ps. 49:12, 20). This is the burden of that psalm, but He does not leave them so. They find favor in His eyes through His own mere mercy and free grace, and then He honors them. He loves them and then honors them, just as it is with kings oftentimes: They do not honor men for desert sake but for good pleasure sake. They will because they will, and thence many unworthy men are men of honor. So the King of kings. We must say, "After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus 3:4–6). We must all say in like manner, "Not by works of righteousness." It was the dear love He had to them and the honorable esteem He had of them that made Him do and suffer as He did for their ransom and recovery (Rev. 1:5). [He] loved and washed, as John 13:1—loved, and therefore washed their feet with water. He took on Him the form of a servant (Phil. 2:7). And like a servant, He served

that He might honor us. His degrading purchased our honor (Luke 22:27). Oh, how should this affect us!

2. His will is that everyone else should be in this like Himself in having an honorable esteem of them. As when the king bestows a degree of honor on a person, makes him a knight or a lord or an earl, he expects others so to regard him. So it is here (see Esth. 6:3, 6–7). They that do not honor the true saints and servants of the God of heaven do not do as Jesus Christ would have them do (Ps. 5:4). It is made the character of a citizen of Zion that he honors them that fear the Lord—honors them, has a high and honorable esteem of them, however low and mean they may be in the world as to their worldly state and condition. However much they may be despised and scoffed and scorned at by others, they are the excellent of the earth in his eye, because they are so in Christ’s eye (16:2).

3. He has done that for them, which in the account and esteem of men may and does deserve that honor. I do not say they deserve that He should honor them—I said the contrary before—but that men should honor them: “Honour to whom honour” (Rom. 13:7).

What is it that He has done for them that may be the ground of men honoring them?

(1) One ground of honoring men is on the account of their personal excellences and endowments. Some are honorable for their learning and knowledge in arts and sciences; some, for their wisdom and prudence in the management of secular affairs—in the field, as soldiers; in the senate, as counselors. Now if so, the people fearing God deserve honor indeed, for they have better knowledge than others. They from the least even to the greatest know God. And whence have they that knowledge, but from Christ, who gives them an understanding (1 John 5:20)? They have wisdom also, another

sort of wisdom, wisdom from above in soul affairs. They are wise to discern the times. And whence have they that wisdom, but from Jesus Christ, who is made unto them of God wisdom (1 Cor. 1:30)? They search the Scriptures, and those make them wise and therefore noble (Acts 17:11).

(2) On the account of their great usefulness in their particular places and stations, in court or camp, for peace or war. Does this deserve honor? Then saints deserve it, for who are more useful than they?

By their prayers, fetching down mercies, keeping off judgments, as Moses.

By their presence. They are chariots and horsemen, the militia of the country (allude to 2 Kings 3:14).

By their pattern. They are the lights of the world shining among men, giving good examples, showing which is the way to heaven by walking in it. And whence is all this, but from the Spirit of Jesus Christ which is in them and with them. It is grace that enables them, and therefore He is their honor.

(3) On the account of their honorable relations wherein they stand. He that is himself in honor reflects honor on all that are related to him. Now what are the relations of true believers?

They are all the children of God—and how, but by faith in Jesus Christ (John 1:12; Gal. 3:16)? And is not that a high honor? We honor the children of great men for their honorable parents' sake. And is there not reason then that we should honor true believers, that are the sons and daughters of God Almighty? They are honorable by birth, not the first, but the second, both by father and mother (4:26). Among men, some have one that have not the other; but we have both.

To be a servant, even the meanest, to men of honor, carries honor in it. Then believers are honorable, for they are

the King of heaven's servants by their own choice and by His acceptance (Ps. 116:16).

Nay, they are His friends, admitted to His secrets, acquainted with His counsels (John 15:15)—as Hushai was a friend to David (2 Sam. 15:37); Zabud, to Solomon (1 Kings 4:5). Sir Fulk Grevil had inscribed on his tomb, "Servant to Queen Elizabeth and Friend to Sir Philip Sydney."

(4) Some are made honorable by marriage—the wife by the husband. Then all true believers are honorable, for they are all, and each of them, espoused to the Lord Jesus. And His honor is their honor (2 Cor. 11:2; read Ps. 14, which is the nuptial song).

(5) Some are honorable on account of their honorable hopes. Young heirs are honored for their inheritance sake, though as yet under age. Then all true believers ought to be honored, for they are all heirs, not of an earthly but a heavenly inheritance—heirs of heaven, nay more, heirs of God. God Himself is their inheritance, and higher we cannot go (Rom. 8:17). Their honorable attendants are the angels (Heb. 1:14), nay, the Son Himself (Luke 12:37).

(6) Some are honorable on account of their honorable offices and employments (Rev. 1:5)—kings and priests. So He makes them.

(7) Others are honorable on account of their honorable name (James 2:7). The word Christian is from Christ. All this honor have all His saints (Ps. 149:9).

What Kind of Honor Is It That True Believers Have from Jesus Christ?

It has these properties:

1. It is real honor. Other honors are but a shadow, a dream, a fancy. This has substance in it (Prov. 8:21). As the riches of a

believer are substantial riches, not things that are not (23:5), so the honors of a believer are substantial honors. God does really and truly honor such. So does the blessed Jesus. So do the angels.

2. It is righteous honor. Other honors which the honorable men of the earth have are oftentimes unrighteous—unjustly given and unjustly taken—when they that have them do not deserve to have them. But here it is deserved, not, as we said before, at the hands of God (we can merit nothing), but at the hands of men it is (2 Sam. 6:22).

3. It is heavenly honor. Other honors are from below. This is from above. Other honors are on earthly accounts; this, on heavenly. The birth of a believer is heavenly; his endowments, heavenly. He is heaven-born and heaven-bred. His inheritance is in heaven hereafter. His conversation is there now. Therefore, if it were asked, “Is it from heaven, or of men?” (Luke 20:4), you may answer, as to this honor, “From both, but principally and originally from heaven.”

4. It is harmless honor. Other honors often hurt those that have them, puff them up with pride, make them haughty and high-minded, as Haman. But so does not this. Paul, to whom Christ was more an honor than to any other, was humble. Who was more humble than he, more low and mean in his own eyes (2 Cor. 12:11; Eph. 3:8)?

5. It is unsought honor. What endeavors are there to obtain other honors, what struggling and striving, what cringing and courting, what bribing and waiting. But here it is not so. This honor is truly like our shadow. It follows those that in the sense of their own unworthiness fly from it. And it flies from those

that in pride of heart are ambitious of it (Ezek. 16:6; Matt. 20:20–28).

6. It is unfading honor. It is honor that lasts. It is lasting, everlasting. We have known diverse that for a time have been in great honor, on the very topmost pinnacle of honor, and by and by in disgrace and dishonor, hooted at. But it is not so here. As He loves to the end (John 13:1), so He will honor to the end—not only to the end of time, but to an endless eternity, forever and ever. We will never fall from this honor.

What May We Learn from This Subject?

1. We learn what to think of the great and glorious Majesty of heaven and earth. His name and His Son's name is certainly on this account to be admired and adored by us and by all His creatures, angels and men. For what? For His infinite love and free grace in condescending in this manner to a remnant of Adam's seed, so as to put all this honor on them. We have cause to say, as David, "O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.... When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained.... What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?... O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" (Ps. 8:1, 3, 4, 9). Or, as the same David elsewhere, with reference to the honor done to himself in his advancement to the kingdom, "Who am I, O Lord GOD? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?" (2 Sam. 7:18). Especially may those say so, who themselves are made partakers of this honor, who are received into the family of God, who are made His servants, His friends, His children, though so mean, so vile: "Lord, what am I, or what is my father's house?"

2. We learn what to think of those who are not believers—all the ignorant, careless, carnal, unregenerate generation. Certainly, they have no part nor lot in this matter. They are none of those that God will honor. They are all strangers to this dignity and advancement. Would you know what the esteem of God is concerning them? Look into His Word. See what that says concerning good men. It says they are God's jewels, the excellent of the earth, His favorites, His children, the dearly beloved of His soul. But what says it of the wicked? They are chaff, dross, dogs, swine. Oh then, see that none of you be such. Fear, fear lest it be your condition.

3. We learn what is the true way to true honor. It is in our nature to desire it—as to be covetous in desiring wealth, voluptuous in desiring pleasure, so ambitious in desiring honor. But the misery is we mistake our end and consequently our way. We take those things to be wealth and pleasure and honor that are not so and that not to be so which is so, and we pursue accordingly. Oh, be convinced that the way to be honored, I mean, to have Christ an honor to us, is to believe, that is, to close with Him on gospel terms (Isa. 60:19)—your God, your glory (1 Sam. 2:30; Ps. 91:15; Isa. 28:5; John 12:26).

4. We learn what is our duty toward those to whom Christ is an honor. Certainly it is our duty to see them truly honorable and to love and honor them accordingly (allude to 2 Kings 20:12–13). The Babylonians worshipped the sun and, knowing that for Hezekiah's sake their god had gone back, they sent to do him honor. Let this advance your esteem and enhance your value of good men—that Christ Himself does them honor. And they deserve it at your hands, though not at His.

5. We learn what is their duty to whom Christ is an honor: to make it their business to honor Him all they can, all their days.

As they should love Him, so they should honor Him (1 John 4:19). Why is He to be honored?

He is worthy that it should be so—truly worthy as God, as God-man, as our Redeemer and Savior.

It is the Father's will it should be so (John 5:22–23; Col. 1:18–19). Therefore, He has the preeminence, because it pleased the Father.

It will be our own benefit and comfort, living and dying. We will be no losers but gainers by it.

Wherein are we to honor Him?

In general—let Him be precious to you. Have high and honorable thoughts of Him. Speak high and honorable things concerning Him, as Paul did.

Do nothing to displease and dishonor Him, but everything contrary (Phil. 1:2).

Let other things be precious to you and persons, for their relation sake to Him—His Word, day, worship, people.

Stand on your honor. Perform promises. Do nothing below you.

Christ Is Our Sanctification

Who of God is made unto us... sanctification.

—1 CORINTHIANS 1:30

These words themselves are the *doctrine*. That Jesus Christ is made unto us of God sanctification.

The word translated “sanctification” is most commonly rendered in Scripture “holiness” (Rom. 6:19; 1 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 12:14). Jesus Christ is made unto us of God holiness. He is not only holy in Himself—the holy child Jesus (Acts 4:27, 30), nay, most holy, infinitely, eternally, and unchangeably holy—but He is made holiness to us, that is:

1. He is appointed of God to be the author of our sanctification, to work holiness in us for the making of us holy. As the efficient cause, as He is the Lord our righteousness to make us righteous by imputation, so He is the Lord our holiness to make us holy by implantation. We are justified, that is, accepted of as righteous in the sight of God, through His merit made ours. We are sanctified, that is, actually made holy, by His Spirit which is given to us to abide with us forever (1 Cor. 6:11). Justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, sanctified by the Spirit of the Lord Jesus (Heb. 2:11). Now the question is, Are you glad to hear this, or no? Everyone would be willing to be accepted as

righteous, acquitted from guilt; but are you willing to be sanctified, to be made holy?

2. He is the pattern, the sample, the exemplary cause of our sanctification. Holiness in us is the copy or transcript of the holiness that is in the Lord Jesus (John 1:16). As the wax has line for line from the seal, [and] the child, limb for limb, feature for feature, from the father, so is holiness in us from Christ. To be sanctified is to be made conformable to the image of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29). It is to be made like Him in heart and life. Yet so, as that in three things there is a difference:

[1] He sanctified Himself. So do not we. We are sanctified by Him (John 17:19). As He raised Himself to life, so never did any other; but we are raised. It would have been long enough 'ere we should have made ourselves holy.

[2] He was originally holy, never otherwise, not only as God but as God-man (Luke 1:35). So are not we. We were unsanctified before we were sanctified, unholy before holy. So was not He.

[3] He is absolutely, universally, and completely holy. He had the Spirit poured out on Him without measure. So have not we. Our sanctification at the best in this life is but imperfect. It is true, there is a perfect day to come, and our light shines more and more toward it; but here below we have it not. Our wine is mixed with water; our gold, with dross. So was not His. For further clearing of this I will show:

- I. What sanctification is, or, what it is to be sanctified.
- II. That we have need of one to be made sanctification to us.
- III. That Jesus Christ is made so, and how He sanctifies.
- IV. And what practical inferences are to be drawn from this subject.

[What Sanctification Is and Our Need of One to Be Made It for Us]

I will join the two first together by explaining what sanctification is and by showing that we need one to be made sanctification to us.

To be sanctified is variously expressed, represented, and set forth in the Scriptures:

1. It is to be renewed. Sanctification is the work of God's Spirit, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God (Eph. 4:22–34). It is the making of us new creatures (2 Cor. 5:17). It is the changing of our very nature. We are by it made partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4)—a high expression. Now have we not need of one to do this for us? Can we do it for ourselves, or for one another? We cannot. Therefore, the great God has undertaken it for us (Ezek. 36:26). And He does perform it by Jesus Christ. To Him, therefore, we must go.

2. It is to be regenerated, that is, born again (John 3:3, 5). As sure as there is a first, there is a second birth. Now, can we beget ourselves? We cannot. The second birth is from above. We are begotten of God and born of God (1:13; Titus 3:5–6; 1 Peter 1:3).

3. It is to be raised from death to life, to be quickened (Eph. 2:1), that is, sanctified. Sanctification is the first resurrection (Rev. 20:6). Now, can a dead man raise himself to life again? Did ever any do it? He cannot. It is God alone that raises the dead. It is by Christ alone that dead souls are made alive. He is the resurrection and the life.

4. It is to be reconciled to God. There is enmity, enmity ever since the fall, between God and man—mutual enmity. God an

enemy to man, man an enemy to God (Zech. 11:8; Rom. 8:7). Now Jesus Christ as mediator brings them together and makes them friends, and He alone can do it.

He makes God a friend by dying. His death satisfied and so pacified. He has said, "In Him, I am well pleased."

He makes us friends by sanctification, destroying the enmity—not all at once, but by degrees: "and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5[:18]). Is this reconciling work done with you?

5. It is to be converted. Sanctification is the same with conversion. It turns us about. We are born with our backs on God and heaven and our faces on sin and hell, till grace comes and that converts, turns (Acts 3:19, 26). And we must be turning more and more all the days of our lives (Matt. 18:3; Luke 22:32). Now, can we turn ourselves? Have we not need of one to do it for us? Certainly we have: "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God" (Jer. 31:18).

6. It is to be called with an effectual call. There is a common call, and there is an effectual call. It is the effectual call that is the same with sanctification (Rom. 8:30). Now, calling is by another. We do not call ourselves. That other is Christ (2 Tim. 1:9). Who called Peter and James and John, and Andrew and Zacchaeus? Did not He?

7. It is to be changed (2 Cor. 3:18). Sanctification makes a great change. The judgment is changed, the disposition, the way, the company—I am not I. It is a greater change that grace makes at conversion than that death makes. At death, grace is turned into glory (Job 14:14)—"change come," which is the turning of the same thing from a lower degree to a higher. But at conversion it is from sin to grace, between which there is no likeness.

8. It is to be cured. Sin is the sickness of the soul, a dangerous sickness, a mortal disease, though but few are sensible of it. Can we cure ourselves or cure one another? No, the only physician is our Lord Jesus Christ, raised up of God for that purpose. No hand but His can heal us: “Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases” (Ps. 103:3), forgives in justification, heals in sanctification by degrees. “I will heal their backsliding” (Hos. 14:4)—heal their bent to backslide. Compare Hosea 11:7: “My people are bent to backsliding from me.”

9. It is to be cleansed. Sin is the pollution of the soul. And it is pollution ingrain, such as nothing can wash us from but the fountain opened, and that fountain is Christ (Zech. 13:1). “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you” (Ezek. 36:25). This was fulfilled, when at their return from Babylon they were quite out of love with idols and idolatry, of which they were so fond before (1 Cor. 6:11; Eph. 5:25–26).

10. It is to be clothed. A sinful condition is a naked condition (Rev. 3:17). And what must poor naked souls do but come to Christ, to His shop, and here buy of Him white raiment (Zech. 3:3–4; Rev. 3:18)? “I clothed thee also with brodered work,” etc. (Ezek. 16:10–14). The prophet’s statement is understood of their public privileges and advantages above other people. But it is true also in a spiritual sense. Grace is rich raiment, princely, priestly, comely clothing that waxes not old.

11. It is to be consecrated. Sanctifying is the same with consecrating, that is, setting apart from common and profane to holy and spiritual uses, as persons, places, vessels, times were under the Old Testament. In allusion to which, all true believers are a people sanctified, that is, set apart for God, separated from the

world and sin and vanity to be the Lord's peculiar: His temple, priests to Him, anointed for that purpose (Ps. 4:3). But:

How Is Jesus Christ Made All This to Us?

In what way and by what means does He bring all this to pass in us and for us? That He does it is plain in the text and elsewhere. But query, How?

1. Principally by the working of His Spirit and grace. The Spirit of Christ is the sanctifier. When He comes into the heart to dwell there, He renews, and He regenerates, and He raises, and He reconciles. The Father creates; the Son redeems; the Holy Ghost sanctifies (Titus 3:5–6)—mark, it is through Jesus Christ. If He had not satisfied and died to make God friends with us, He would never have sent the Spirit to make us friends with Him. The sending of the Spirit to sanctify as well as to comfort us is owing to the intercession of the Lord Jesus (John 14:16).

2. Instrumentally by the Word: "Sanctify them through thy truth" (John 17:17). Error never sanctifies. False doctrine, corrupt erroneous opinions may prevail to bring people over to a party, but never to turn them from sin to God, to convert, regenerate, renew. Truth only does that (Titus 1:1; James 1:17).

The word of truth begins, and the same carries on, this good work—as a word of conviction, of humiliation, of illumination, of regeneration, of faith, and of holiness. And therefore this should advance our esteem of the Word of God, the written Word, the word preached. And we should hear it accordingly (Ps. 119:9).

The Practical Improvement

1. Shall I propound one needful question to you? Are you sanctified? Is Jesus Christ made of God sanctification to you?

It is a thing that may be known. We may make our calling and our election sure—our election by our calling, by our sanctification; for to be sanctified is to be called, and to be called is to be sanctified. And not our election only, but our justification and our glorification may be made sure by it (Rom. 8:30). And how sweet, how comfortable will that be! But how is this to be done? There are three marks:

(1) Where Christ is made to us sanctification, it is become natural to us to walk in all holy obedience to the will of God. I say natural not to the old but to the new nature. Now what is done naturally is done freely—as water from a spring (Ps. 110:3), easily (1 John 5:3), delightfully (John 4:34), and evenly and constantly and perseveringly. Fire always burns, stones always tend downwards, because their nature is so. Thus it is with the old nature in sinning (Jer. 6:7), and thus it is with the new nature in obeying (John 4:14).

“Then,” says one, “I fear I am not sanctified.”

I reply: The trial is not to be made by any one single action at any one time, but by our course and way. How is it ordinarily with us? There is no man but does something that beasts do. But is he therefore a beast? There is no beast but does something that a man does. But is he therefore a man?

(2) Where Christ is made to us sanctification, holiness is highly prized and dearly loved, and more and more of it earnestly desired. I believe it is never otherwise among the truly sanctified. Now, is it so with us? We love civility and moral honesty and temperance and sobriety. So does many a one that hates holiness.

(3) Where Christ is made to us sanctification, He is owned and acknowledged as our all in all. The crown is set on His head. We rejoice in Christ Jesus. To us, to live is Christ. All the sanctified are brought by their sanctification to Christ. They were strangers to Him before, but now they are friends.

2. Shall I suppose you now propounding to me another needful question: "What may I do that Christ may be made to me sanctification?"

(1) We must be inwardly and thoroughly convinced that there is an absolute necessity He should be so. This must be the case:

If we mean to please God in this world. None but the sanctified are accepted of Him. He has no pleasure but where His image is and His likeness is. Our sacrifices are an abomination, our prayers an abomination, otherwise. Till the tree is good, the fruit cannot be good. And also:

If we mean to enjoy God in the other world. "[Without holiness] no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14), that is, see Him so as to enjoy Him. It is the pure in heart who will see God (Matt. 5:3). Heaven would not be heaven to an unsanctified soul, if we might suppose such a one admitted there. Now are we convinced of this? "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.... Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:3, 5). When Christ thus discoursed to Nicodemus, he was offended. It may be, so may some of you. How can this be? But, "Verily, verily, I say unto you," must silence all objections.

(2) We must apply ourselves to the Lord Jesus by faith and prayer.

By faith, closing with Him not only as the Lord our righteousness but as the Lord our holiness. Not only as our only justifier by His merit but as our only sanctifier by His Spirit.

By prayer, calling on Him. "Lord, if ever Thou wilt do anything for me, sanctify me" (Ps. 51:10). Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians should be ours for ourselves: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming

of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 5:23). So should Christ’s prayer: “Sanctify them through thy truth” (John 17:17).

(3) We must attend on the ordinances. These are the conduit pipes through which the grace of sanctification is conveyed to poor souls.

3. Shall I suppose you now propounding one question more: “What must they do to whom Christ is already made sanctification?”

(1) They have cause to bless God for it every day, all their days (Ps. 103:1–3).

(2) They must press after further degrees of sanctification, more and more, dying to sin, living to righteousness.

(3) They must promote the sanctification of others also.

CHAPTER 30

Christ Is Our Supply

But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

—PHILIPPIANS 4:19

Doctrine: That the supply of all our needs is only from God and only by Jesus Christ.

That is as much as to say that Jesus Christ alone is our supply. Can you readily turn to a more sweet, comfortable text of Scripture than this is in all your Bibles, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation?

Supplies we would have, and here they are for us—supplies to all our needs, not some, but all.

And that from God: “My God shall supply.” Paul’s God was the same that we call our God—Jehovah, blessed forever. He says, “My God,” because He had supplied him, and His God would.

“According to his riches in glory.” That is, in such a manner, measure, and degree as becomes Him. Not what is fit for us poor worms to receive, but what is fit for Him to give.

And all this in and by and through Jesus Christ. Without Him, no supply is to be had to any of our needs. We might have starved and died and perished eternally, but for Him. He Himself is our supply. Show:

- I. What our needs are, and what it is that He supplies us with.
- II. What are the properties of this supply.
- III. What special resemblances there are of it.
- IV. What practical inferences are to be drawn from the whole.

What Are Our Needs, and with What Does the Lord Christ Supply Us?

There are seven things that we have need of, and there is supply to be had for them all in Jesus Christ—some pertaining to life; some, to godliness (2 Peter 1:3).

1. Righteousness and strength.

Righteousness. They that have none have need. “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10). We have to do with a righteous God, and a righteousness must be had, or there is no standing before Him. Ho! Where will we have it? Of our own, we have it not, nor has any creature in heaven or earth wherewithal to supply us. It is to be had only in and by Jesus Christ. He is the Lord our righteousness (Jer. 23:6). He is made unto us of God righteousness (1 Cor. 1:30). Our God has supplied our need of this in His Son (Dan. 9:24). He has brought in everlasting righteousness. To Him, therefore, we must go plead His righteousness for the forgiveness of our sins, the merit of His death, His righteousness for the acceptance of our performances.

Strength. They that are weak have need. Of what? Of strength. Now we are all weak, weak as water. Weak as sinners. How weak is your heart! Weak as saints, under manifold infirmities. Weak to resist temptations, to bear afflictions, to perform duties. What will we do? “My God shall supply.” Jehovah-Jireh—God will provide. Nay, He has provided, “for

when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom. 5:6). Have they need of strength? I will die and purchase it for them. So that now the believer may say, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:13). See both these together: “Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength” (Isa. 45:24).

2. Mercy and grace.

Mercy to pardon. This we are or should be calling for every day (Ps. 51:1; 56:1), for certainly we have need, whether we feel our need or no. Now, have we any hope? Will our God supply us? He will, through Jesus Christ, but not otherwise. Out of Him there is no mercy. The mercy of God is, therefore, called the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 21), because our supplies of it are only in and by and through Him.

Grace. Have you no need of grace, quickening grace, preventing grace, renewing grace, assisting grace? They that think they have no need have most need of all. Now, where is it to be had? “My God shall supply,” but it must be through Jesus Christ. “Of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace” (John 1:16). Compare this with Colossians 1:19: “It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.” Away to Him then, that is, to God by Him. See both together in one scripture: “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).

3. Peace and comfort.

I mean that which is inward—peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost. Do you want it, any of you? Many who do, think they do not, mistaking false peace of their own speaking to themselves for the true peace. Away with that and come to Christ for the true peace, for that which He calls His peace—“My peace” (John 14:27). If He speak peace,

no matter who speaks trouble. If He troubles, no matter who speaks peace (Eph. 2:14). He is our peace.

4. Food and raiment. Under these two are comprehended all the necessaries of life, and sometimes under one of them—bread. “Give us this day our daily bread.” Now have we no need of these? We all have. We cannot live without them, without daily supplies of them. And whence are they to be had? Jehovah-Jireh—“My God shall supply.” But it is only by and through Jesus Christ. He bought every meal’s meat for us and every suit of clothes for us, or we had never had either. And therefore, to Him we must have recourse every day. In all our needs, even of these things, we should say, “Lord Jesus, feed me, clothe me, today.” Has He ever yet failed you (Luke 22:35)?

5. Protection from enemies, bodily and ghostly—our great adversary, the Devil, and all our little adversaries. They would swallow us up every day, if our God did not watch over us, if the blessed Jesus were not our shield. Our enemy sickness would destroy our health. Our enemy pain, our ease. Our enemies the caterpillars and the locusts and the palmerworms, all the increase of our fields; the murrain, our cattle; the fire, our houses. But He preserves and keeps us (Psalm 121). So likewise for public enemies.

6. A guard through death. We must all shortly, in the order in which God has appointed, take our turn through the darksome valley. And dare we venture alone, without a convoy? There is no safe convoy but Jesus Christ (Ps. 23:4). His presence with us will bring us safe through, else we perish (1 Cor. 15:55–56). It is He alone that can make a lane through this Red Sea, this Jordan. “Jordan’s rough,” said a dying person,

often repeating it. “Jordan’s rough.” It may be we may find it so, but the winds and the seas obey Him.

7. A guide to glory. Will we be supplied with this also? Never fear it, if Christ be ours (Ps. 73:24). “For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death” (48:14)—beyond death. Not only to death and through death but beyond death. Compare Psalm 121:1: “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills”—beyond the hills—“from whence cometh my help.”

What Kind of Supplies Are to Be Had for Poor, Needy Souls with Jesus Christ?

1. Rich supplies. “My God shall supply all your needs according to his riches.” A rich God gives rich supplies. He is rich in mercy, pardoning mercy (86:5). Therefore, He multiplies to pardon great sins. He is rich in grace (1 Peter 5:10), the God of all grace. Therefore, He gives liberally (2 Cor. 9:9). He is rich in comfort, the God of all comfort (1:3). God who comforts (7:6). Therefore, He makes the consolations of His people oftentimes to abound, not only full, but running over. “I can hold no more.”

2. Ready supplies. We need not go far for them. They are always at hand. “The word is nigh thee.” Other friends that should supply our needs are many times at a distance, afar off, and either know them not or do know them, but cannot send to us. But there is nothing of that here. Our heavenly Father knows what we want. And whenever He pleases to supply, the way is short. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we may hear and receive from the blessed Jesus in heaven (Ps. 46:1–11).

3. Glorious supplies—“according to his riches in glory.” That is glorious that is singular and superlative, such as makes him

famous and renowned whose it is. Now such fame, such great fame is our Lord's. His supplies are such as He is worthy to be praised for, His supplies of mercy and grace. How many thousands in heaven, how many thousands on earth are blessing Him for these. "Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever" (Phil. 4:20). They put a glory also on them that have them, making them famous, as Manasseh, Mary Magdalene, Paul, being pardoned sinners.

4. Gradual supplies. We are not supplied with everything all at once, but now with one thing, then with another—now in a lower, after in a higher degree (Prov. 4:18). A converted person no sooner has a grain of grace, but his good will would immediately be perfect in grace. No sooner is he comforted a little, but presently he would have full assurance. Not so. Soft and fair. When out of Egypt, you are not forthwith in Canaan. You must be willing to receive supplies as God is pleased to communicate them.

5. Universal supplies. All your needs.

But is there any more than one thing needful?

There is only one main thing chiefly and principally needful, but that one thing branches itself out into many things. Lo, there are in Christ supplies for all—all persons, at all times, in all things.

6. Undeserved supplies. There is nothing in us to merit any good thing at God's hands. Whatever we would have, we must sue for it, as a beggar for an alms. If a beggar be blind, sick, sore, naked, dumb, old, [then] his blindness, sickness, his disease, his nakedness, his want of speech, his age speak for him not in a way of merit but as a meet object for mercy to work on. So it is here. Our spiritual maladies bespeak us fit objects of mercy—but they surely lay no claim to it.

7. Covenant supplies, made over to us by promise. And He is faithful that has promised.

8. Constant supplies, daily, duly, forever.

What Resemblances Are There of This?

We see it illustrated:

1. As the heavens supply the earth. The earth would be a barren, useless thing, if it were not for what the heavens supply it with every day in daily influences. The warmth it has is from above; the moisture, and thence comes its fruitfulness. "I will hear the earth" (cf. Hos. 2:21). Therefore, the earth must call. We are the earth, earthy; the heavens are Christ, heavenly. Unless He supply us with warmth, moisture, sunshine, rain, what are we (6:3)? But then He must hear us, hear from us. We should be crying, calling, "Help, Lord."

2. As the earth supplies the inhabitants. The earth is not our mother only but our nurse. We were not only made out of it, but we are maintained by it (Eccl. 5:9). Thence we have all our corn, wine, oil, hemp, flax to feed, to clothe us. A good nurse gives abundance of milk. Now as the earth nourishes and maintains all that live on it, high and low, rich and poor, so it is with Jesus Christ. As we live by Him, so we live on Him. But then as to this also, the earth must hear the corn, and the corn hear Jezreel (Hos. 2:22). There must be asking by prayer, seeking in the use of means, knocking by importunity—and persevering in both.

3. As the head supplies the members. The head is the treasure of the body, wherein the spirits are lodged and laid up for the use of the body. And thence it is that all the members are supplied; and when they fail, the body languishes and dies. So

all believers, from Christ their head, having union with Him, receive vital influences: righteousness and strength and grace and peace and comfort and quickening, in want of which they are weak and can do nothing (John 15:5).

4. As the root supplies the branches. In the root of a tree the sap is lodged and laid up for the use of the tree. Thence it moves up into the branches, little and big; and the sap they receive is that which nourishes and feeds and makes them grow and bring forth fruit. So all believers receive from Christ. He is our root (v. 4–5).

5. As the sun supplies the stars. The stars have no light of their own, nor the moon either, no more than a clod of earth, further than the sun shining on them puts light into them. Their light is a borrowed light. So is all the spiritual light that we have—knowledge, grace, comfort—borrowed from Christ.

6. As the sea supplies the rivers (Eccl. 1:7). They come from it; they return to it. So the glory of all our receivings every day from Jesus Christ should return to Him again in thankful acknowledgments.

7. As the fountain supplies the cisterns. The cisterns are often emptying; the bowls, emptying. Away to the well daily. So, in this case, Christ is our fountain.

8. As the store chamber supplies the family. It is said concerning Joseph that he built storehouses, and there he lodged the corn, and thence the people had it as they needed. Our storehouse is Jesus Christ. There God the Father has lodged and laid up a fullness for us. Therefore, to Him we must go. And may we hope to speed? Never fear it. “My God shall supply”—He shall. Observe with what confidence he speaks it.

The Practical Improvement

1. Beg of God this day to make you sensible of your needs. Multitudes are not (Rev. 3:17). We do not look into our souls, turn our eyes inward; and that is the reason. Beg the eye salve (v. 18). For “he hath filled the hungry with good things” (Luke 1:53).
2. Believe the truth of this saying of Paul’s. He was not hired to proclaim that which is not, to deceive people. It is a real truth: “My God shall supply all your need” (cf. Ps. 23:1).
3. Have recourse to the blessed Jesus. Tell Him what your need is—mercy, grace, righteousness.
4. Acknowledge Him in all supplies.

CHAPTER 31

Christ Is Our Resurrection

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

—JOHN 11:25–26

Here we have it from the mouth of the Lord Jesus Himself. And He having spoken it, we may safely believe and assert and make a *doctrine* of it: That Jesus Christ is the resurrection to true believers. Show:

- I. How we are to understand this.
- II. What proof there is of it.
- III. How we are to improve it.

How Are We to Understand This?

“I am the resurrection.” There is a threefold resurrection, and Jesus Christ is all the three to true believers.

1. There is spiritual resurrection, which is the raising of the soul from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. It is called the first resurrection, for so I think we are to understand that passage (Rev. 20:6). All that are made truly holy by the renewing, sanctifying grace of God are certainly thereby delivered from the second death, that is, from burning in hell

forever. Now all true believers have this holiness wrought in them. And how, but by Jesus Christ? When He is made unto us sanctification, then He is thus made unto us resurrection (Eph. 2:1). It is His voice that opens the grave and fetches us out. He says to us, "Live," and we live, and the time is a time of love. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (John 5:25)—"and now is," then, at that very time. There was a present resurrection in the conversion of diverse that left all and followed Him. No less than almighty power can do this, can bring to pass such a wonderful change.

Examine, inquire, brethren. Are you thus raised again? Are you passed from death to life? There is such a thing, and it may be known. And we can have no comfort in living the life of nature if we be not spiritually alive, if we do not live the life of grace.

Now one good mark to know it by is the end that we live to. Whether is that—God, or self? Do we live to God or to ourselves (Rom. 6:11)?

Another is by the food that we live on. Is that Christ (Phil. 1:21)?—His merit and righteousness for justification, His spirit and grace for sanctification!

Another is by the rule that we live by. Is that the rule of the new creature—the Word of God? Is that the card and compass we sail by, the light and lamp we walk by? Or is it something else—the dictates of our own corrupt nature, carnal reason, fleshly appetites, the course and custom of this vain world? Try by this.

Let me exhort you. Would you have Christ, this resurrection, to you? Close immediately with the gospel call. Stand it out no longer against the voice, entreating, beseeching. As soon as ever Christ said to Lazarus, "Come forth," presently Lazarus came forth, without ifs or ands, without making objections.

“How,” you ask. “Can I that am dead stir?” No, though you are as he was with the grave clothes about him, yet he that was dead came forth. So I address you: “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light” (Eph. 5:14).

2. There is a figurative resurrection, and that is the raising of a person or people from an exceedingly low, miserable, afflicted, helpless condition to a state of comfort and joy, peace and safety. Such a thing there is, and it is a resurrection. There is something in it, like to a resurrection (Hos. 6:1–2)—when smitten and torn, reckoned as dead; when delivered and recovered and settled again, reckoned as raised again. Read Ezekiel 37. That valley of dead and dry bones was the nation and people of the Jews in the time of their captivity in Babylon, where they lay past all hope, till the end of the seventy years. And then, by a proclamation from Cyrus, they were released, and it was like a kind of a resurrection. It is in like manner with them at this day and has been for near seventeen hundred years—a scattered, broken, miserable people. There is a time, we hope, at hand, when God will gather them again, that there may be one sheepfold, as there is one Shepherd. Now, how is that time called? Resurrection time (Rom. 11:15)—life from the dead. Once more: The condition of many ministers and people among ourselves, of many in France, has been in outward appearance a dead condition. The words of the Act [of Uniformity] are that they will be as if naturally dead. But, blessed be God, there has been a resurrection in some measure, a coming out of the grave again, of which, whoever was the instrument, the Lord Jesus Himself was the principal agent. He is the resurrection to us. When a company of Nonconformists went to court to congratulate the king and queen and to thank them for the present liberty, being clothed alike in long black cloaks, such as ministers

usually wear in London, a scoffer said, “Whither are all these going, to a burial?” “No, sir,” said one of them, “to a resurrection.” It is so, likewise, in reference to personal deliverances from personal calamities, as Isaac, when bound and laid on the altar (Heb. 11:19). It was Paul’s case (2 Cor. 1:8–10). Has not Jesus Christ in this sense been the resurrection many a time to you and to me? We were brought low, and He helped us. Was not Job’s restoration a resurrection? So some understand Job 19:25–26.

Learn hence on whom to depend and to whom to fly in such cases, even to the blessed Jesus.

Learn also to whom to give the praise of such a resurrection, public or personal—even to the same.

3. There is a proper resurrection, and that is the raising up of the dead bodies, properly, naturally dead, out of which the life and the soul is departed. And is Jesus Christ that too? He is. That is chiefly meant here. The text was spoken to Martha, the sister of Lazarus, on occasion of raising her brother to life again, after he had been dead four days. Now, as to this, Jesus Christ is the resurrection three ways:

(1) As He was the only one that ever raised Himself to life again. No one ever did it but He. (It is not with us in the sleep of death as it is in the death of sleep, when we have slept enough we wake of ourselves. No, the human body must be waked.) And therefore, as in some places it is said, “God raised him from the dead,” so in other places it is said, “He rose again the third day”—making it His own act and deed (1 Cor. 15:4). He had two natures, the divine and human. His human nature could never have raised itself. No, His divine nature raised His human nature. Christ, as God, raised Himself as man.

(2) As by His power alone it was that all were raised that ever were raised—all under the Old Testament, all under the

New. Though Himself in His own proper person raised three only—the ruler’s daughter, newly dead; the widow’s son, on the bier; Lazarus, buried—yet all that ever any of the prophets raised or that ever any of the apostles raised, they raised in His name, not in their own, by a power derived from Him, not by any power of their own (allude to Acts 3:12, 16).

(3) As to the day of the great resurrection at the end of the world, when all the dead will be raised. It will be done only by the power of the Lord Jesus, especially as to true believers. The raising of them will in a special manner be His doing. And as to this it is that He is the resurrection.

[What Proof There Is of This]

Let us consider the proof of this.

1. It is certain there is to be such a thing. As sure as we must die, we will live again, go to the grave, and come out again. But Job asks, “If a man die, shall he live again?” (Job 14:14). I answer: Not a life of opportunity again. There have been and there are those that deny this—old Sadducees, new Sadducees (1 Cor. 15:12; 2 Tim. 2:18). I will give no other proof at present but that of our Lord Jesus (Matt. 22:23–34). Therefore, Abraham was alive in soul, but the soul of Abraham was not Abraham. Therefore, His body must live too. Can this be? Yes, easily, to almighty power.

2. For the manner of it, how it is to be, God has revealed it to His holy apostles, else we could not have known it: “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:16–17).

The Lord Himself will descend. This Lord is the Lord Jesus Christ, and no other. The Father has committed it wholly into His hand. He is the resurrection. The same that ascended, the same will also descend. He descended once in rags of flesh; but when He will descend the second time, it will be in robes of glory.

There will be a great shout, the voice of the archangel, that is, of Christ Himself. We never read of more than one archangel, the Lord of the angels. And the trump of God. Trumpets were used in calling of assemblies. So here—the greatest of assemblies that ever was. They are used at the assizes, when the judges are going to the bench. So here. This was the trumpet that Jerome said was always sounding in his ears.

“The dead in Christ shall rise first”—either, the dead for Christ, the martyrs, before other saints, or the dead in Christ, that is, all true believers, before the rest of mankind. Those who lived and died in true union with Him by faith, which union still remained even when dead, or, before those that will then be found alive.

And what then? Then we which are alive and remain will be caught up, etc. This is the short account the Scripture gives us concerning this matter. And we are bound to believe without doubting or wavering that so it will be.

Read to the same purpose but more fully 1 Corinthians 15. It is the scope of the whole chapter, where the apostle:

(1) Positively asserts and proves that there is to be such a thing, that all true believers must and will certainly rise again at the last day. See one of his arguments: “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable” (v. 19).

(2) Plainly lays the ground of it on Christ’s being made the resurrection to them. If He be risen, then they will rise. But He is risen. Therefore, believers will rise. The consequence he proves from their union with Him. He is the head; they,

the members. It is a real union (v. 15). If the body of one saint were lost, there would be a maim in Christ's mystical body. Therefore, it is said we will be changed, that of the same metal our glorious body may be fashioned like to His glorious body (Phil. 3:21). It is said also that the head and members will be together in the same place (John 17:24).

He is the firstfruits; they, the lump (Lev. 23:10–11; 1 Cor. 15:20; read Deut. 26:1, etc.). It is a relative union.

He is the second Adam; they, the children descended from Him (1 Cor. 15:21–22). This is another relative union. He proves it also from the victory that He has obtained over everything that might hinder: sin, death, the grave, the devil (v. 25–26; Heb. 2:14–15).

Is not Christ the resurrection to unbelievers? Must not they rise also?

They must rise; but neither by virtue of any union they have with Him, nor any victory He has obtained for them. The Devil is not against the rising of the wicked. He does nothing to oppose or hinder it. He would have their souls and bodies to come together again, in order to their being tormented together. The grave is free to part with them for the same reason. But they would hinder the rising of the godly. Aye, but they will not (1 Cor. 15:55–56). The wicked are raised by the power of Christ, in order to condemnation, but the righteous by their union with Christ: the one in wrath; the other in love (John 5:28–29). The righteous to be married, crowned; the wicked to be executed.

3. He declares also with what kind of bodies they will be raised, the self-same in substance (Job 19:26), but greatly changed in qualities—no defect, no deformity. If scars have been received in suffering, they are not to disgrace but to honor them. They will be made like Christ's body: either that, Matthew 17:1–2;

or that, Acts 1:9–11; or that, Revelation 1:13–16. In particular, see 1 Corinthians 15:35–33, 42–44. Their bodies will be made spiritual, immortal, incorruptible, powerful, able to attend the soul in all its actings and operations without weariness, not as here below, but able to bear up all that weight of glory which is prepared. In a word, have you seen the body of the sun in its noonday brightness, such a light as you are not able to behold? Then you have seen something like it. “They that turn many to righteousness [shall shine] as the stars” [Dan. 12:3]. But it is said in Matthew 13:43, they shall shine forth “as the sun.”

The Improvement

1. That of the apostle: “Wherefore comfort one another” (1 Thess. 4:15). It is a thing that the servants of the Lord should be often talking of one to another for the comforting and encouraging one of another. If one another, sure ourselves much more. This should be done:

Under bodily blemishes and infirmities. They will shortly be done away.

Against fears of death and the grave. It is but unclathing us to put on better. The grave is as the refiner’s furnace.

Against inordinate sorrow at the death of godly friends (John 11:23; 1 Thess. 4:13). They are not dead, but asleep—as when we take leave over night.

2. That of the same apostle: “Be ye steadfast”—it may be rendered, “Exhort one another”—“unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

A notable spur to all manner of duty in general—“to abound therein.” It will certainly not be in vain.

In particular—to serve God with our bodies (6:14–15), not to serve the Devil and lust and sin with them.

CHAPTER 32

Christ Is Our Redemption

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us... redemption.

—1 CORINTHIANS 1:30

The words themselves are the *doctrine*: That Jesus Christ is made of God unto all them that are in Him redemption. Show:

- I. What this means.
- II. What kind of redemption.
- III. What the duty is that it calls for from us.

[What This Means]

What does this mean: “made redemption”? You may think we had this before when it was showed that He is made freedom to us, from John 8:30. But you will see presently that there is something else meant by it.

He is made of God redemption to us, that is, God has ordained and appointed Him from all eternity and in the fullness of time raised Him up and sent Him to be the author and procurer of redemption for us—or, which is all one, to be a redeemer to us. So that if asked, “What did Jesus Christ come into the world to do?,” we answer, “To redeem us.” They are the first words of Zechariah’s song (Luke 1:68).

Now to redeem is, in general, to recover those that are in bondage out of bondage. As suppose one rowing in a galley under the Turks is rescued (which may be done three ways, besides that of voluntary discharge and demission)—as the Jews were released by Cyrus out of their captivity in Babylon, he may be said to be redeemed. Redemption, namely: (1) by power, when those who kept us in bondage are conquered and overcome; (2) by exchange, when one prisoner is let go for another; (3) by price, when a sum of money is paid to buy off a prisoner, more or less, according as the quality of the prisoner is.

Now this last is properly redemption, and this last is the way in which Jesus Christ has made us free. He has bought us out of the hands of divine justice by laying down a ransom for us.

If you ask what that was, I answer that sometimes it is said to be His life (Matt. 20:28), sometimes Himself (1 Tim. 2:6), and sometimes His blood (1 Peter 1:18–19). These three come to the same. We are redeemed by Christ dying for us, shedding His blood, laying down His life, offering up Himself. This fully satisfied the demands of God's justice. "Let me have this," says He, "and I have enough. I expect no more by way of satisfaction for the sin of man. I am well pleased, atoned, reconciled, made friends." To this purpose we are told of a covenant of redemption which was transacted from all eternity between the Father and the Son, the terms whereof were that if the Son would come and be man and die, that dying of His should be accepted as the price or ransom of all the elect, however many there were. The Son accepted of this motion, did what was to be done, suffered what was to be suffered, and so became our redemption. See some footsteps of this covenant transaction in two scriptures: Psalm 40:6–8; Isaiah 49:2, 6, 9. But:

What Kind of Redemption Is This?

1. Needed redemption. It is the redemption that we needed. He came to supply all our needs. Now among other needs, being in bondage, we needed one to redeem us—not only one to clothe us, being naked; to feed us, being hungry; to wash us, being filthy; to heal us, being wounded; to cure us, being sick—but to redeem us. If He had done all this for us in our bondage and left us still in bondage, we had been miserable notwithstanding. Therefore, He comes and buys our freedom, pays our ransom. We were God's prisoners, and the Devil was the gaoler. We were left in his hand, under his power, and his we must have been forever, but for Christ the Redeemer.

2. It is a nonsuch redemption, when compared with other redemption. Whether personal, as Joseph out of prison, or Peter (Acts 12), or Daniel, out of the lions' den; [or] whether public, as from Egypt, from Babylon. It surpasses them all in number, way, and consequences.

3. Distinguishing redemption. It is the redemption that others needed, as well as we; but it is denied to them and granted to us. Therefore, I must call it distinguishing redemption.

It is denied to the angels that sinned. They had as much need as we, for they are in bondage as well as we, under God's wrath and curse as well as we—nay, before we were. But He took not on Him the nature of angels. The commons are ransomed; the nobles, left behind. He paid no price to redeem them. As that tree fell, so it lies and must lie forever.

It is denied to the greatest part of mankind, as to the saving benefit and efficacy of it. The elect reap the benefit absolutely; others, conditionally. Yet there is no collusion because the decree is secret, for multitudes there are that know nothing of it, and of those few that do multitudes reject and slight it and are never the better for it: "Redeemed...to

God...out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Rev. 5:9). How should we then adore and admire! “Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?” (John 14:22).

4. It is diverse, manifold redemption according to the manifold evils that we lay under. They are of three sorts: temporal, spiritual, eternal.

(1) He is redemption to us from temporal evils—such as concern the body and the life that now is, such as sickness, death, poverty. Not that they will not befall us—for they do, and all things come alike to all, redeemed and unredeemed. But, that they will not hurt us. The sting of them is taken out. No evil things befall (Ps. 91:10). There is no curse attends them (Gal. 3:13). Were this rightly understood and duly made use of, it were the sweetest argument imaginable, both against fears of temporal calamities before they come (Job 5:19) and the best against inordinate dejections and despondencies when they are come.

(2) But, which is better, it is redemption to us from spiritual evils. These are worse evils than the former, because they affect the better part of us, which is our souls—they first and immediately, but not them only, but our bodies also. I will mention two only:

The guilt of sin, whereby we are bound over to punishment, the fear whereof causes bondage (Heb. 2:14). To redeem us from this, He is made righteousness to us for our justification, that is, for our discharge from that guilt, for the forgiveness of all our sins and the accepting of us as righteous. This is an unspeakable blessing and benefit, and it is made over to all the Lord’s redeemed ones, who are now to reckon themselves at peace with God (Rom. 5:1).

The filth and power of sin, whereby sin has dominion over us, and we are perfect slaves to it, the vilest of slaves (John 8:34). To redeem us from this, He is made sanctification to us. He sends His Spirit into the heart, who renews and regenerates, turns the man from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, enabling him to die to sin more and more and to live to righteousness more and more. This He does as a redeemer, and is doing. It is called redeeming us (Titus 2:14). By redeeming from all iniquity, the apostle does not there mean from the guilt and punishment of it only, but from the power and dominion of it, from the love and liking of it. It is the same with purifying. These two, justification and sanctification, are never parted (Ps. 103:3; 1 Cor. 6:11).

(3) There is another sort of evils yet, and those are eternal evils. And by redemption here we are especially to understand our deliverance from those, because it is mentioned after righteousness and sanctification as a thing different from them, and because of what we find in other scriptures, where redemption is applied to something in the other world: "waiting for...the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:23), that is, the resurrection and glorification of our bodies (cf. Luke 21:23 with Eph. 4:30), the day of redemption. This is certainly some day yet to come, when the work of our redemption will be fully finished, the topstone laid; for hitherto, as we see and know but in part, so we are redeemed but in part. In Hebrews 9:12, it is called eternal redemption. Our present redemption by Christ is eternal in the design and tendency of it. It is in order to eternity, but that to come is eternal in regard of the eternal evils it frees us from and the eternal happiness it puts us into possession of, when it will be accomplished, and Jesus Christ is made all that to us.

Taking it in this sense, I will show:

1. What those eternal evils are which redemption frees us from.

(1) It frees us forever not only from the guilt and filth and power of sin, but from the very being of it also. It must not only no longer have a throne in us, as at conversion, but not so much as a seat or place in us, and that forever. And are you not glad at the very thought of this? Nay, it frees us from all possibility of sinning to eternity. Adam had no sin, but a possibility of sin he had—and so it appeared, for he did sin. Paul groaned for this (Rom. 7:24).

(2) It frees us from Satan ever having any more to do with us, either as a tempter or as a tormentor. He is busy now with the saved (1 Peter 5:8), and he will be more busy hereafter with those that perish (Matt. 18:34). But where the redeemed are, he comes not (Rom. 16:20).

(3) It frees us from all sorrow and suffering, of whatever kind in mind or body. All tears will be wiped away. There will be no weeping nor wailing nor gnashing of teeth—no fire, no worm, no brimstone, no darkness. These are the portion of the damned, not of the redeemed (Rev. 21:4).

(4) It frees us from all society with wicked and ungodly men, and that forever. They are blended here, and it pleases neither (Ps. 120:5–6). But there is a redemption coming (Matt. 25:33). All this happiness you say a stone has—no sin, no sorrow. Therefore, I will show:

2. What there is that is positive in this redemption.

(1) As soon as the redeemed die (for die they must, even as others—Jesus Christ has not redeemed us from dying), their souls immediately go to God, to the vision and fruition of Him in glory (Luke 23:43; Phil. 1:23). It grieves me and shames me that I can speak with no more sense and savor of these things. Such apprehensions as a child prior to its birth has of this world, such we have of the world to come.

(2) At the resurrection, at the last day, the same soul and the same body will come together again. Though we are not redeemed from death, we are to be from the grave—not from going down into it, but from being held by it (Isa. 26:19; Hos. 13:14). Nay, not raised only, but raised incorruptible and immortal—glorious, like Christ’s glorified body.

(3) To all eternity, there will be a fullness of uninterrupted joy and felicity, a remaining rest, a Sabbath without a week of working days after it, perpetual, eternal. Lo, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Cor. 2:9). It is a happiness such as the infinite love and wisdom of the great God could contrive and the infinite love and power of the great God could effect and perform on the behalf of a remnant, whom His delight was to honor. Read Esther 6:6–9. But that was a poor honor in comparison with this honor.

3. I will show how Jesus Christ is made this to us, this future redemption.

He is the purchaser of it. It was bought with His blood, bought back. We had mortgaged it for the forbidden fruit and must never have retrieved it, had not He died (Eph. 1:14). It is redeemed for us, and we are redeemed for it.

He is our forerunner in it (Heb. 6:20). He went thither as our attorney or proxy to take possession of the purchase in our name and stead (John 14:1–2).

It is He that Himself actually puts us into possession of it.

When we die, the angels are His messengers, sent by Him to convoy us into Abraham’s bosom.

At the resurrection, it is His voice and trumpet that raises the dead. He is the resurrection.

At the judgment, He is the judge, the sentence is from Him. "Come, ye blessed."

It is He Himself alone that is the sole object of all our future happiness—to be with Him, to see and enjoy Him, is our future redemption (Rev. 21:23).

[The Duty to Which Redemption Calls Us]

The improvement:

1. Then it concerns us all, by all means, to give all diligence to make sure to ourselves our interest in this redemption.

It is certain all are not thus redeemed. Abundance of mankind miscarry and perish.

It is certain those that do are miserable creatures and will be so to all eternity.

Those will be most miserable that were once in a fair possibility of being saved and yet missed. Therefore, I beg of you, for the Lord's sake and for your own soul's sake, look about you.

Now those to whom Christ is made redemption are such, and none but such, as are in Him. Are you in Him, grafted into Him by a lively faith? Have you His Spirit?

Those to whom Christ is made redemption are such, and none but such, to whom He is made wisdom and righteousness and sanctification. Has He been these to you? If so, the redemption is yours. Is He your wisdom? Have you left the follies of sin and chosen wisely? Is He your righteousness? Have you called Him by that name and renounced your own merits? Is He your sanctification? Are you new creatures?

2. If Jesus Christ be made of God this redemption to you, then, in God's name, take the comfort of it. Lift up the head and hands that hang down. Rejoice in the Lord always, and again, I say, rejoice. Were there but a small portion of worldly

happiness made sure to us in reversion, after a few years in this world, were we sure of some great lordship with the appurtenances of it—our thoughts would be running on it. We should solace ourselves in the foretaste of it. And lo, heaven itself made ours will not keep us from drooping! It is our unbelief that hinders our joy.

3. Then live as the redeemed of the Lord:

Live with your eye on the redemption. Be viewing it often, aiming at it as your scope (2 Cor. 4:18).

Live with your hand on the plough, abounding always in the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58).

Live with your feet on the world, despising its glories, bearing patiently its frowns (Heb. 10:34).

Live with your heart on the Redeemer, in love and thankfulness (Ps. 107:1–2).

CHAPTER 33

Christ Is Our Lesson

But ye have not so learned Christ.

—EPHESIANS 4:20

Doctrine: That our Lord Jesus Christ is the lesson that we are to learn. Show:

- I. The meaning of this.
- II. What kind of lesson Jesus Christ is.
- III. What inferences may be drawn from it.

[The Meaning of This]

Let us inquire into the meaning of this: He is a lesson.

To understand this, we must look on the church as a great school, wherein we ourselves and all others that are baptized with Christian baptism are thereby entered as scholars. Baptism is the enrolling or enlisting of us as scholars in this school. And can anything be said then, with reason, against the baptizing of infants? Do not you oftentimes send your children to school very young and little, before you expect they should learn much? “No matter,” say you, “we will enter them.” Now in this great school:

1. There is a head master or teacher, and that is the Spirit of God, the alone teacher of hearts (John 14:26; 15:1).

2. There are the ushers and under-teachers. And those are the ministers, whose work it is as ministers to instruct and teach people, young and old, weak and strong, one with milk by catechizing, the other with strong meat by preaching, as they are able to bear it.

3. There is the lesson they are to learn, and that is, in one word, Christ. Christ is the lesson, the great lesson, taught in the church. Learn Him, and you learn all. Learn not Him, and you learn nothing. The expression may seem harsh and uncouth, but you see it is Paul's phrase of speech, and, I think, he had the Spirit of God: "Ye have not so learned Christ."

What is it to learn Christ?

1. We must learn to know Him. This is absolutely necessary, and on this the foundation of all the rest is to be laid (17:3). It is life eternal, the way to life eternal—the first step toward it. The knowledge of Christ blessed Paul preferred before everything in this world (Phil. 3:6, 10). Now how unlike herein are the most of us to Paul, who prefer everything else before this. There are four things especially which we should all covet to know concerning Christ:

(1) Who and what He is in Himself. He is God, and He is man. He is God-man.

He is God blessed forever, begotten of the Father before all worlds. This account of the knowledge he had of Him Peter gave when the question was put to him, "Whom say ye that I am?" "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:15[-16]). Do you know this? Not with comprehensive knowledge—as if we could, by our finite understandings, fathom the depth of it, for it is a mystery how it should be, a son without a mother—but with the knowledge of faith that it is. We are to believe it because God has revealed it.

He is man also. He was born of the Virgin Mary in the fullness of time, when the Word was made flesh. And here is another mystery to be believed and not to be pried into: that there should be a son without a father. Now these two natures, united in one person, are Christ. Have you learned this? Oh, learn it.

(2) What He has done.

He has fulfilled all righteousness by the perfect obedience of His life.

He has satisfied God's justice for all our sins by the merit of His death.

He has raised Himself again out of the grave on the third day and thereby declared Himself to be the Son of God with power.

Yea, and He is still doing for us in heaven, where He lives to make intercession.

And hereafter, at the end of the world, He will certainly come again with great glory to judge both quick and dead. Have you learned this? Do you know it? Again:

(3) What He has said. There are a great many choice sayings of His recorded in the book called the Bible—nay, choice sermons preached by Him, for He was a preacher. Those we should learn, for they contain in them the whole will of God concerning our salvation, which He came out of the Father's bosom to reveal and make known. And yet how many heed them not nor mind to learn them. They had rather be reading an idle romance or playbook. God complains, "I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing" (Hos. 8:12)—much more, "My gospel."

(4) What He is made of God to all His elect, such as were given to Him from all eternity by the Father. He is their foundation, food, root, raiment, head, hope, refuge, righteousness. Have you learned this? You have heard it often, but have you

learned it? Have you understood all these things? Can you say you know them? There is a twofold knowledge: one that swims in the head and goes no further; another that sinks into the heart.

2. We must learn to believe in Him—not only learn what it is to believe, but do it. Many can answer to what is faith in Jesus Christ that have not faith in Him. Now to learn Christ is to have faith in Christ. None else can say they have learned Him (John 6:45). To believe in Christ is to come to Christ, as the sick man comes to the physician; the thirsty, to the fountain; the hungry, to the cupboard; the malefactor, to the city of refuge. Have you thus learned Him, received Him, closed with Him, let all go for Him—all your sins, all your own righteousness—saying, “None but Christ, none but Christ”?

3. We must learn to love Him. The apostle speaks of being taught of God to love one another (1 Thess. 4:9), and certainly there is such a thing as being taught of God to love Jesus Christ. Now have you been so taught? Can you appeal to Him with Peter and say, “Lord Jesus, Thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I love Thee”? They that do not love Him have not learned Him. Learn but two things of Him, and you cannot but love Him—how lovely He is in Himself (Ps. 45:2; Song 5:10, etc.) and how loving He has been to you in giving Himself for you (Gal. 2:20), in washing you from your sins in His own blood. Paul prays, “And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge” (Eph. 3:19).

4. We must learn to obey Him, to do in everything as He would have us to do. Faith and love without this, if we could suppose them without it, which certainly they are not if true, are nothing, signify nothing (John 14:15; 15:14). Paul is in the context exhorting Christians to walk worthy of their calling,

not as do the heathen. “No,” says he, “you have not so learned Christ—you are better taught.”

5. We must learn to suffer for Him, if He call us thereunto. And what day passes over our heads wherein we are not, in one kind or other, called to it? Now have you learned to do it, to take up your cross and to follow Him (Luke 9:23)?

What Kind of Lesson Is Christ?

1. He is the lesson that all should learn. All that mean to be saved should learn Jesus Christ. There is no salvation in any other (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). You are not all bound to learn Latin or Greek or Hebrew; to learn logic, philosophy, or mathematics; to learn the several trades and manufactures. But you are all bound to learn Christ, bound by the covenant of your baptism, bound by your being called Christians. Either cease to be called a Christian or learn Christ—to know, believe, love Him.

2. He is the lesson that anyone may learn. There are some arts and sciences that are above and beyond the capacity of some people, though they would never so much wish it. Though they desire and endeavor all that ever they can, yet it will not do. They labor in vain. Now such a lesson Christ is not. He is an easy lesson, easy to be learned. Mistake me not. I do not mean easy to mere nature. No, it is quite contrary. It is to mere nature hard and difficult, nay, utterly impossible. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14). Witness Nicodemus (John 3). But easy—to the mind enlightened, easy—to the willing learner (Prov. 14:6). Easy, where God gives a faculty, which He always does to those that seek it. Christ is a way, wherein “the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err” (Isa. 35:8). Oh, learn this way. You must travel it. How could it have been else,

that so many plain, illiterate men, such as the apostles were, should all on the sudden be such proficient in this learning?

3. He is the lesson that few do learn—the more is the pity. People are taken up with the study of other things, but make light of this learning, as of the gospel feast (Matt. 7:14; 22:1–7).

4. He is the lesson that multitudes are damned eternally for not learning. If I should say it is the only damning sin, I could make it good from Scripture. Whatever we have done amiss, if we have learned Christ, it will be forgiven. Whatever good we have done, unless we have learned Christ, it will not be accepted. This will be the question: Has he learned Christ? Is he found in Him (Rom. 8:1)? If children at school do not learn their lesson, there is but a rod to whip with. But if we do not learn Christ, there is a hell to burn us in.

5. He is a lesson that we must be sure to learn by heart—I mean, be hearty in learning, inward, sincere, upright, serious. With the heart man believeth unto righteousness (Prov. 23:26; Rom. 10:10). If we learn Christ to talk of Him only and not to walk in Him, to have Him on the tip of our tongues and not to lodge Him in the secret chambers of our hearts, it will not do.

6. He is a lesson that is best learned on our knees. When in a humble sense of our ignorance, blindness, darkness, dullness, we go to God, every day, for the unction, saying, “Lord, teach me”—as David, up and down Psalm 119 (he, “Thy statutes”; we, “Thy Christ”)—we learn best. We then make the best progress in this school (Ps. 25:9; Zech. 4:5, 13).

7. He is a lesson that but one book is enough to teach us. Other learning is not had without abundance of books. Philosophers, historians, physicians, lawyers must have large libraries. But one book alone well learned will suffice to make you a

Christian (2 Tim. 3:15). Then search the Scriptures (John 5:29). Prefer having eyes to read the Scriptures and be blind to everything else, than to read everything else and neglect the Bible.

8. He is a lesson that it will do us abundance of good to learn. It is a useful lesson. All kinds of learning are in some way or other useful, but this learning excels them all, for it is profitable for all things.

It is unspeakably satisfying to the understanding part. The most learned, after all their inquiries into other learning, have professed themselves uneasy and dissatisfied; but this fills—as the great Mr. Seidell, when dying, said he had rest nowhere but in Titus 2:11–14.

It is unspeakably sweet and comfortable and refreshing and joyous, like honey and the honeycomb. Every word of God is so (Ps. 19:10), but especially God the Word. How sweet is it to a lost, undone sinner to be acquainted with a savior! Other learning increased, increases sorrow (Eccl. 1:18); but this does not.

It is strangely renewing and changing within in the inner man, making the tree good, bowing the will, raising the affections (2 Cor. 3:18).

It is strangely reforming and amending without in the life and conversation.

There is no bridle like this to keep us from sin. When a temptation to sin comes, it says, “No, I have not so learned Christ. I thank God I am better taught.” There are other arguments on this head:

Is this your kindness to your friend?
It will be bitter in the end;
Thy vows, O God, upon me lie,
Should such an one as I am fly?

“Was Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. Did He teach me to be proud, passionate, envious, drunken? No, I never learned that of Him.”

There is no spur like this to put us on duty.

He that has learned Christ has learned the example of Christ, learned Him as a copy to write after. To learn Christ is to learn of Christ. “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me” (Matt. 11:29). It is called His law (Gal. 6:2).

He that has learned Christ has learned the encouragements given by Christ in the promises.

9. He is a lesson that we can never be perfect at. He that has learned it best and learned most of it must, after all, say there is more to be learned—yet ever learning (2 Tim. 3:7) is true of this learning. It is a bottomless ocean that we can never fathom. Our finite understandings are not capable of reaching His infinite perfections (1 Cor. 8:2).

10. He is a lesson that when we have once learned we can never unlearn again. It is the better part that can never, never be taken away (Luke 10:42). All other learning may be lost. Many a great scholar has gone mopish. However, death dissolves it, melts it. It is gone like a snowball in a thaw. It is a pity it should be so, but so it is. But he that has learned Christ has learned Him forever. Death robs him not of it but perfects it (1 Cor. 13:12).

What Inferences Are to Be Deduced from Hence

1. An inference of reproof to several sorts of persons:

(1) To those that slight and despise this excellent lesson and learning, as if it were not worth the looking after. “Father, forgive them; they know not what they do.” The blessed stoop to look into this depth, and is it below us?

(2) To those that have learned Christ in some good measure but do not improve their learning—who do not improve it for their own furtherance in the ways of God and godliness; that use it not as a bridle, a spur, nor for the instruction of others, especially those under their charge. When Andrew had found Christ, he called Peter. When Philip found Him, he called Nathaniel (John 1). So should we—not in pride and vain glory, but with an earnest concern that others may be acquainted with Him.

2. An inference of comfort and encouragement to those that fall not justly under either of these reproofs—that prize this lesson and are learning and improving it for their own and others' good. Go on and prosper. The Lord is with you. Your path will be “as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (Prov. 4:18). There is a promise (Matt. 25:20) for your encouragement. “Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance” [v. 29].

3. An inference of exhortation to all. By all means, whatever you do, learn Christ. Con this lesson; be conning it every day. “Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD” (Hos. 6:3). Follow on by daily prayer, reading, hearing, meditation, conference. When you have it, it will make you rich amends—here and hereafter. Value that preaching best that has most of Christ in it. It is sad to see whole sermons printed, and Christ not once named in them. Is that preaching Christ? Paul could say, “We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord” (2 Cor. 4:5; cf. 1 Cor. 2:2). Remember, you are Christians. What! And not learn Christ?

You that are young, now is your learning age. Some of you are scholars—oh, learn Christ.

You that are old, there is yet a learning day. Nicodemus was old when he began. Yea, all of you—learn Christ.

Christ Is Our Ladder

And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

—GENESIS 28:12

This ladder which Jacob saw was no other than our Lord Jesus Christ, who was, under that notion and resemblance, represented to him. What else should it be? And a very clear notion it is and very helpful to our understandings to apprehend what He is made of God unto us—a ladder.

Doctrine: That our Lord Jesus Christ is made of God unto us our ladder.

You all know what a ladder is, and what use it is for. Now just such a thing our Lord Jesus Christ is—our ladder. And of the same use He is to us spiritually for the good of our poor souls.

“But,” says someone, “it was only a dream.” I answer: It was a divine dream sent of God, a vision than which nothing can be more certain. Show:

- I. The properties of this ladder.
- II. Of what use it is to us.
- III. The inferences.

[The Properties of This Ladder]

I am to show the properties of this ladder. It is a ladder in all respects extraordinary. There never was any other like it.

1. It is a living ladder. In the same sense in which, as a way, He is called a new and living way (Heb. 10:20), in the same sense, as a ladder, He is a new and a living ladder. Other ladders are dead things, but this ladder lives. It is true He was dead, but He is alive again and lives forevermore (Rev. 1:18). And it is well for us that He is so, for if He live, then we will live also.

2. A long ladder. The longest that ever was, for it reaches from earth to heaven. That was the posture in which Jacob saw it—the foot on the earth, and the top of it in heaven. Hereby were signified His two natures—His divine nature, as God; His human nature, as man. As man, He was set on the earth, a son of Adam, born of a woman, lived here on the earth for a time, as other men do. As God, He was always in heaven, begotten of the Father before all worlds, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable. The uniting of these two natures, the nature of God and the nature of man, in one person is the mystery of all mysteries (1 Tim. 4:16). That the glory of the Godhead did not destroy the meanness of the manhood nor the meanness of the manhood debase the glory of the Godhead is mysterious indeed. The bush which Moses saw burning and not consumed was an emblem of this. But what need was there that the foot of the ladder should be on the earth—that our Redeemer should be man?

I reply: There was need that He might have a body wherein to suffer and die—such a body as ours that had sinned, for whom He was to die.

But what necessity is there that the top of it should reach to heaven—that He should be God?

I answer: That the Godhead might give virtue and value to the sufferings of the manhood, and that He might support it under them—which else would have failed. Besides, to bring God and man together, it was requisite He should be both God and man: God, that He might deal with God, which man as man was not fit to do; man, that He might deal with man, which God as God, a holy God, could not do without consuming him, a sinful creature—as a consuming fire with stubble. Here is the meaning of Him being Emmanuel, God with us—God in our nature, which if He had not been He could not have been Jesus, a savior (Matt. 1:21–23). Now our duty hereupon is:

(1) To adore infinite love and infinite wisdom in the contrivance of this way, which no other could have found out, saying, “Lord, who is like unto Thee?”

(2) And to say also, “What shall we render?”

3. A lasting ladder. Other ladders wear out in process of time and fail and come to be good for nothing but the fire. Says the workman, “I dare not venture to climb it. I will fall and break my bones. It is worm-eaten and rotten.” There is no danger of that in this ladder (Heb. 13:8). The righteousness which is brought in by Him is everlasting righteousness (Dan. 9:24). All the saints from the beginning have made use of it, and it never yet did fail any, nor never will to the world’s end. “He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him” (Heb. 7:25)—to the utmost of times.

4. A free ladder, open and common to all. Whosoever will may come and make use of it and welcome. If we do not by unbelief exclude ourselves, God has nowhere excluded us. The promise runs in general terms (Isa. 55:1; Matt. 11:28; John 7:37; Rev. 22:17). The fountain is open, not sealed (Zech. 13:1). Our Lord Jesus was born in an inn, which is free to all comers, died

with His arms stretched out on the cross, and was nailed so to signify His readiness to embrace all that will come to Him.

5. A firm ladder, steady and strong. Our Redeemer is mighty (Heb. 7:25)—able to save. From what? From our sins.

From the guilt of them—however many, however great; crimson, scarlet guilt, by the infinite merit of His blood and passion.

From the dominion and power of them, by His Spirit and grace. Though the Devil himself steps in to strengthen the snare, He is able to burst and break it and to set us free. Therefore, fear not nor be dismayed. Greater is He that is with us than he that is against us.

6. A ladder fitted every way for the use for which it was intended. But:

Of What Use Is It to Us?

1. That by it blessings might descend from heaven to us. If our Lord Jesus had not interposed by dying to make peace, this could not have been. Curses, wrath, light[ning] bolts, thunderbolts might have come down and would have come without this ladder, but no blessing, no token for good, no beam of favor. There would have been fire and brimstone, as on Sodom. The reason was because man had sinned, and thereby God was provoked. And till divine justice was fully satisfied, mercy could do nothing. The way was blocked up. Now Christ comes and by dying makes satisfaction and so takes out of the way that that hindered; and now blessings are showered down of all sorts, temporal, spiritual, concerning the life that now is and that which is to come. “God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19)—not some, but all. And how? By Christ Jesus. He is the ladder by whom they descend, the conduit pipe for conveyance of all

our fresh water from the fountain above to the cisterns below. It is by this ladder that all our pardons come. We are needing of them every day. Give us this day—and forgive us this day. And we never have them but when we come for them in His name. All the infinite mercy that is in God did never forgive one sin out of Christ.

It is by this ladder that all the grace and strength we have comes. Of this also we have daily need for doing duty, resisting temptations, bearing afflictions. It comes down to us by this ladder. Therefore, it is called the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, because we have it only by Him and from Him and through Him (John 1:16).

It is by this ladder that all the returns of prayer come in (John 16:23). We had lately a day of prayer, wherein special mercies were prayed for with reference to present affairs. Which way must those mercies come, think you? Certainly, down this ladder.

2. That by it we may ascend from earth to heaven and go to God. From earth to heaven is a long way, and uphill too. There is no ladder from hell to heaven. Fly it we cannot (Luke 16:26). We have no wings for the purpose. But climb to heaven we may—and how, but by a ladder? Christ is that ladder.

By this ladder our performances must all ascend while we live: our prayers and praises and alms-deeds, our fastings and humiliations. You would have them go to God, would you not? And be accepted of God, would you not? Then they must go by Christ (Matt. 3:17; 17:5; 1 Peter 2:5). He is the high priest; His intercession is the incense (Rev. 8:3).

By this ladder our persons must ascend when we die (John 14:6). No man comes to the Father but by Him, to the kingdom of the Father, the glory, presence, vision, fruition of God.

It was the merit of His death that purchased it for us. That is the price of it.

It is the working of His Spirit in us that fits us for it.

It is the efficacy of His prayer that brings us to it (17:24). We never begin to climb this ladder till converted, and then step by step. Gradually is sin weakened, grace strengthened—not at once.

What Inferences Arise Hence?

The inferences will be by way of answer to five questions:

1. If Christ be our ladder for us to ascend on, how is it then said here that Jacob saw the angels of God ascending and descending?

The ascending and descending of the angels of God on this ladder, Christ, is for our good, benefit, and advantage. The angels are ministering spirits for us (Heb. 1:14). The design of the vision was to comfort Jacob at his entrance on a perilous journey in his flight from his angry brother. It was a seasonable, refreshing cordial (2 Kings 6:17; Ps. 34:7; 91:11–12).

But why ascending?

(1) For fresh orders, to act for their good every day (Matt. 18:10)—their angels. Though nothing else be theirs, “their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven”—expecting the least nod or beck.

(2) To give account of their stewardship, what they have done. Allude to Luke 14:21. Read Job 1 and Zechariah 1.

(3) With separate, departed souls in their arms, to place them in Abraham’s bosom (Luke 16:22).

But why descending?

To execute their orders for preservation, provision, society, supply. Jacob was alone here. He had no company. Oh how sweet is it to see both the ladder and the travellers going

up and down! Note, all are either ascending or descending—none standing still, none idle, all busy. This may comfort all the Lord's poor Jacobs in all their straits and troubles—not the Esaus, the wicked of the world. Their attendants are ugly devils, living and dying.

2. If Jesus Christ be our ladder, what is faith?

The hand by which we take hold of the ladder. The foot also by which we come to it and climb by it. As good then even no ladder as no hands and feet, as good there were no Christ as no faith (John 8:24). An unbelieving soul is a maimed soul, handless and footless, and therefore helpless. Then be not faithless, but believing. Reach hither your hand, as Christ said to Thomas (ch. 10), in a sight and sense of your undone condition without Him. Receive the report of the gospel concerning Him, His ability and willingness to save. Renounce all other ladders and cleave to this alone. Behold, He calls you.

3. What are the rounds of this ladder?

The several particulars of His undertaking: steps downward first, and then upwards, on each of which there is matter for faith to fasten on—His incarnation, temptation, passion, resurrection.

4. Is Christ alone the ladder? Are there no other ladders but He?

No other. How should there be? Who are they? Who besides Him has His foot on earth and His head in heaven? Name who.

The papists fancy other ladders to themselves: saints and angels, the Virgin Mary. Are these God? The angels ascend and descend on the ladder. They are not the ladder.

But their end in ascending and descending is as mediators for us. They ascend with our prayers and descend with God's answer.

What Scripture is there for that? Where does the Word of God tell us so? If nowhere, there is no ground for faith, and whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Nay, it says the contrary (1 Tim. 2:5).

The Protestant, pharisaical self-justiciaries make a ladder of their own righteousness. They hope to work out peace and pardon and salvation for themselves by their own performances, as the poor, carnal, mistaken Jews of old did (Rom. 10:3). Paul disclaims this way to heaven (Phil. 3:7–8). How can we be a ladder to ourselves? Alas! The best of our doings are imperfect and defiled. However, they are duty. Therefore, they cannot merit anything. Say then, I beseech you, "None but Christ."

5. Why is it said, "Behold a ladder"?

It is common both in the Old Testament and the New, when Christ is spoken of, to say, "Behold" (Isa. 7:14; 42:1; John 1:29). This notes to us what our duty is in reference to Him.

We are to admire and wonder, as often as we think of Him (Isa. 9:6). His name is wonderful. They do not know Him that do not wonder at Him—at what He is, at what He has done and suffered, at what He is doing, at His love and free grace especially.

Behold and bless God for making and rearing this ladder. To behold Him is to believe in Him (45:22; 65:1). "Look unto Me," as the stung Israelites to the brazen serpent.

There are four special seasons wherein to behold this ladder:

(1) When we are doing anything for God, then behold it as the only way and means of being strengthened for it and of being accepted in it.

(2) When we have done anything against God, when guilt stares us in the face, then behold it as the only way and means of peace and pardon.

(3) When distress and trouble and danger are before us, then behold it, and the angels ascending and descending on it.

(4) When death is about to lay his cold hand on us—as Stephen, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God” (Acts 7:56).

Christ Is the Truth

*The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by
Jesus Christ.*

—JOHN 1:17

There are two Johns especially spoken of in the New Testament: John the Baptist and John the Divine. These words were spoken by the former and recorded or written by the latter. John bare witness of him, that is, John the Baptist, His fore-runner or harbinger, that was to Him as the morning star is to the sun, His messenger, to tell the world that He was coming. And what was it that he bare witness to concerning Him? This among the rest: that grace and truth came by Him.

Two things are here opposed to the law that came by Moses.

[1] Grace. It is elsewhere so opposed: “Not under the law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:14)—where by law is commonly understood the Mosaical dispensation, the management whereof was in such a way, with so much terror, that it looked like as if it had been the first covenant of works. And some have so mistaken it to be and called it so. Then by grace is meant the new covenant, called the covenant of grace, which it is a great privilege to be under. There is between this covenant and the other as much difference as between being

under the cold, dark shades of the night and the bright, warm, refreshing beams of the noon sun, between being in bondage and being at liberty. Now taking grace in this sense, it came by Jesus Christ. It is made in Him and by Him and through Him. And, therefore, He is expressly called the covenant (Isa. 13:6; 49:8). We should bless God for this grace and take the comfort of it and walk answerably to it, not letting sin have dominion over us.

[2] Truth.

Doctrine: That truth came by Jesus Christ. It came when Jesus Christ came, when the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

He is the truth (John 14:6): the way, that way; the truth, that truth; the life, that life. There are many ways and many truths and many lives or kinds of life, but Jesus Christ is most eminently and transcendently that way, truth, life: the true and living way, or the way in which, the truth by and through which, we come to that life, which alone deserves the name of life, and that is, eternal life. I will:

- I. Explain what the truth is, and how the truth came by Jesus Christ.
- II. And apply it.

Explain the Subject

When our Lord Jesus Christ was at Pilate's bar (John 18:37–38), He said, "For this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth"—to which Pilate replies by asking Him a question: "What is truth?" And before he had his answer, [he] went his way. It is a pity he had not stayed. We had then known from the mouth of truth what is truth, but he went out. It is so with many people. They take on them as if they desired to know the truth and to know their duty, but it is

but a copy of their countenance. Really they do not, as Balaam (Numbers 22). There is one way of knowing what is truth, by the contraries. There are three things that are contrary to truth, by considering which it may be known what truth is:

1. Figures and shadows and types are things contrary to truth. As suppose the picture or representation of a man—we do not say it is the true man. The truth is he that is represented by it. Now so the truth came by Jesus Christ—that is, all the figures and types and shadows of Him whereby He was held forth to the fathers under the Old Testament were all fulfilled in Him. And therefore when He, the truth, the substance, was come, they were all to vanish away. And so they did (Heb. 9:24)—the figures of the true. For example:

Under the Old Testament, they had manna, little, round, and white, which came down in a dew every morning and was their food for forty years. Here was a figure, a shadow. Now the truth of this came by Jesus Christ. He is the true manna (John 6:32)—the true bread.

They had a brazen serpent hung on a pole, that whoever had been stung and did but look was healed by virtue of God's ordinance. Now when Christ came, the truth of this came. He is the true brazen serpent (3:14–15). The looking is by faith (Isa. 45:22).

They had a rock that followed them and supplied them with water. The truth of that rock was Christ (1 Cor. 10:4).

We read of a ladder that Jacob saw, the feet whereof was on earth, the head in heaven. The truth of that ladder was Christ.

We read of a ram that was brought to Abraham to sacrifice instead of Isaac. The truth of that ram was Christ sacrificed for us and in our stead.

We read of a lamb that was slain at the Passover, and the blood sprinkled, whereupon the destroying angel passed by. That lamb was Christ (5:7).

We read of a high priest richly clothed and bearing on his breast the names of the twelve tribes and going into the holy of holies and burning incense there. The truth of this was Christ, and so of all the rest. Now to make more new significant ceremonies is to intimate that Christ is not come.

2. Falsehood and error is contrary to truth. There is truth doctrinal (2 Tim. 2:18). Now this truth is but one. Error is manifold. There are many errors, but only one truth; and that one truth is Christ. When He came, the truth came. A preacher of the truth came. A witness of the truth came.

(1) He preached the truth. All that He said in all His sermons, parables, discourses, disputations was all true, as true as truth itself. He never broached nor owned nor patronized any error—no, not any, not the least. Several great truths of grand importance He taught, as:

Concerning the design of the Father in sending Him into the world, which was to save the world (John 3:16). He was the first that plainly and clearly revealed this. It was hid before (1:18).

Concerning the necessity of regeneration (3:3, 5). Which of the prophets spoke of such a thing as a new birth? They call for turning, amending—but He, of being born again.

Concerning spiritual worship (4:24). In spirit, in opposition to the Old Testament carnal way by carnal ordinances. There is now an end put to those. The truth is come.

Concerning the process of the great judgment. Where have we such a manifestation of it, as that in Matthew 25:31–46:

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne

of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

The Judge Himself tells us here how and in what manner He will proceed. Now we have great reason to bless God that the truth is come in this sense also. But:

(2) He came a witness to the truth (John 18:37).

A witness is a martyr, and such was He. He scaled the truth with His blood. So have many others besides Him, both preachers and others; but He led the van. We call Stephen the proto-martyr of the New Testament (Acts 7). No, Jesus Christ was the proto-martyr of the New Testament. Therefore, none need to fear or be ashamed. Their dear Lord went before them to martyrdom.

3. Falseness and unfaithfulness is contrary to truth. A man of truth is He:

(1) That speaks the truth in His heart (Ps. 15:2). He will not tell a lie for the sake of any one, nor for any worldly gain or advantage whatsoever. Such a man of truth was Jesus Christ—not only when in the pulpit in His preaching, but in His ordinary converse. His word was not yea and nay, but His yea was yea, and His nay, nay.

(2) That keeps covenant and performs promise. This He does. You may safely venture on what He says in those scriptures: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”; “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (Matt. 11:28; John 6:37). And in any other, for in Him all the promises are yea and in Him amen (2 Cor. 1:20; cf. Rev. 3:14 and read Ps. 85:10). He promised His disciples when He went He would come again. And did He not meet them in Galilee? Did He not send on them His Spirit? He did so.

Is He not true also to His threatenings?

He is, certainly, except we repent. If we do, He repents; else not. See, as to Jerusalem, Matthew 23:33, which came to pass.

(3) That is just to all His relations and discharges honestly all His undertakings, without failing in the least. So did He to His disciples, while with them, as their master. So does He to all His saints, as head, husband, father, brother, friend, king,

captain. Then for His undertaking, He fulfilled it to the utmost. I mean, His great undertaking to redeem and save. He fulfilled it to the utmost without flinching or starting back (John 17:4). Did His Father contradict what He said? No, He did not. And then, for all His other undertakings subordinate to this, He has been, is, and will be just and true to them in hearing prayers, forgiving sins, supplying wants, subduing enemies.

The Application

Is Christ the truth? When He came, did the truth come? Then what is our duty? What does this call for at our hands?

1. We must know the truth (8:31–32). Be acquainted with it. It is a pity we should any of us be ignorant of it, not acquainted with it, personally acquainted. Do you know Jesus Christ? Have you learned Him? Oh, get to know Him. It is life eternal (17:3). It will make you free (8:32), free from a deal of bondage and misery and mistake that poor ignorant souls are subject to. See Paul's resolution: "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2; Phil. 3:7–8). The way to know this truth is to search the Scriptures. Dig into them (John 5:39). Also pray much. Beg of God an enlightened mind.

2. We must buy the truth, buy it and not sell it (Prov. 23:23). Christ the truth is a jewel worth your dealing for. You may all have Him. You cannot buy Him at any rate too dear, though with the price of all you are and have and can do. He is the true treasure (Matt. 13:44–46).

3. We must receive the truth. This receiving act is it that makes the truth ours (John 1:12). Not only receive Him in our understandings, by unfeigned assent, but into our wills and affections, into our hearts and souls, by unfeigned consent—as the wife

receives the husband when she takes him to be her husband; the servant, the master (Matt. 11:29).

4. We must rejoice in the truth (1 Cor. 13:6). This we cannot do till we know it, till we receive it. Have you received Christ Jesus the Lord? Then you have reason to rejoice in Him, for if He be yours, all is yours. We are told of a philosopher, that having found out a mathematical demonstration, was so pleased that he ran about like a madman, crying, "I have found it; I have found it." Much more may the upright soul (John 1:45; Phil. 3:3).

5. We must love the truth (Zech. 8:19; 2 Thess. 2:10). Truth is a thing peculiarly amiable. It has a loveliness in it above and beyond all other things, especially this great truth, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15)—a truth worthy to be embraced with both arms.

6. We must speak the truth one to another (Eph. 4:25). It is an abominable thing for those that call themselves the followers of Christ, the truth, to be found liars (Isa. 63:8; Eph. 4:15).

7. We must worship God in truth (John 4:23–24). "Let us draw near with a true heart" (Heb. 10:22). That is, in sincerity and uprightness, not in guile and hypocrisy—or in truth, that is, in Christ, as our only medium of worship: in His name.

8. We must walk in the truth (3 John 3–4), that is, in Christ Jesus (Col. 2:6). Have you received Him as the truth? Then walk in Him as the truth.

By relying wholly and solely on Him in the great business of your reconciliation and salvation and in all your straits and troubles (Acts 27:25).

By being in your measure like Him in word and deed, just and true and fast and faithful to God and man (Rev. 2:10).

Christ Is Our Treasure

The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field.

—MATTHEW 13:44

By this treasure we are to understand our Lord Jesus Christ, the king of this kingdom here spoken of.

Doctrine: That our Lord Jesus Christ is our treasure.

He that has found Him and has Him may truly say he has found treasure. Show:

- I. What treasure is, and what it implies.
- II. What kind of treasure Jesus Christ is.
- III. And what use we are to make of it.

What Is a Treasure?

In treasure, two things are supposed: the one, that the things be excellent and useful; the other, that there be abundance of them—else it cannot be said to be treasure.

The things must be such as are both excellent and useful, things of worth and value. We do not reckon a heap of stones or dirt to be treasure. Treasure is of gold or silver or jewels, either money or money's worth. In Jeremiah 41:8, we read of

treasures of wheat and barley and oil and honey. Though these are not gold and silver, yet they are things useful and necessary.

There must also be abundance of them. A little is not said to be treasure. No, where there is treasure, there is a deal to be had of such things—plenty of gold, variety of jewels, stores of wheat. And is not Christ treasure, then? Are there not abundance of excellent useful things to be had with Him? Can you name anything that is either truly excellent or truly useful that is not to be had with Him, and that in abundance, full measure, pressed down and running over? Colossians 1:19: fullness, all fullness dwelling in Him.

1. Is He not the sun of righteousness (Mal. 4:2)? The light of the world (John 8:12)? As full as the sun is of light—and that is as full as it can hold—so full and infinitely more so is Christ of righteousness and grace and strength of Spirit and merit, which are excellent things, and I am sure useful to us, for we are undone without them.

2. Is He not the fountain opened (Zech. 13:1)? A fountain is not a cistern, though it is true a cistern may be full. Yet there is a great deal of difference between a cistern full and a fountain full. A cistern may be full, but it does not run over. If it do, there is nothing to supply it with more, as there is in a fountain. Empty a fountain as often as you will, it fills itself without pouring anything into it. Not so a cistern. Now Christ's fullness is a fountain fullness, and we have need of such.

3. Is He not a horn of salvation (Luke 1:69)? A horn signifies plenty. His salvation is plentiful salvation. He is able to save to the uttermost (Heb. 7:25). And is not salvation an excellent, useful thing? Is anything more excellent, more useful? Especially spiritual salvation, to be saved from our sins, the guilt, the power of them? Eternal salvation, to be saved from the

wrath to come, from hell and damnation—to be instated in the heavenly inheritance? Of all this there is a horn, an abundance, with Jesus Christ for poor sinners. Therefore, we may well say of Him, He is our treasure. But:

What Kind of Treasure Is the Lord Jesus Christ?

There are these properties of this treasure:

1. It is peculiar treasure. The great God has such a saying concerning His people Israel: You shall be a peculiar people (Ex. 19:5). I am sure His people Israel may truly say so of Him—He is a peculiar treasure, that is:

He is treasure by itself, such treasure as has none like it—a nonsuch treasure, a treasure beyond all other treasures. The peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces, which Solomon speaks of (Eccl. 2:8), is not to be compared with this treasure. It is as far beyond it as gold is beyond dross, as pearls are beyond pebbles, as substance is beyond shadow.

He is the treasure of but a few. There are people that have worldly treasure, here and there one in a country. There are few people that make Christ their treasure. The most despise and make light of Him. They mind Him not. God's number is by far the smaller number. Many are called, but few chosen, like the grape-gleanings of the vintage or like the shaking of an olive tree. But those few that have Him have propriety in Him. They may call Him theirs. "My beloved is mine"—mine to all intents and purposes, a peculiar treasure to me. And this is indeed the sweet of it: "Who loved me and gave Himself for me; my beloved and my friend."

2. Precious treasure.

Precious in Himself, of infinite worth and value. The pearl of great price ([Matt. 13:]45) is Christ. His blood is precious (1 Peter 1:19). His promises are precious (2 Peter 1:4).

Precious in their account and esteem that have Him (1 Peter 2:7). They have precious thoughts of Him (Ps. 139:20). They have let all go for Him, as Paul: “What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” (Phil. 3:7–8). This is the language of one that had found this treasure.

3. Unseen, hid treasure. Other treasures are visible; this, invisible, out of sight, as believers and God’s hidden ones are. So Christ is a believer’s hidden one (Col. 3:3). Manna that none knows but they themselves that have it, and not they themselves always. Mary, when Christ spoke to her, thought it had been the gardener (John 20:15).

4. Undeified, honestly come by. Other treasures are not so oftentimes. They that have them scrape them together by fraud, violence, oppression. That which Solomon had was in a great measure of that kind, as appears by what they told his son: “Thy father made our yoke grievous” [1 Kings 12:4]. But those that have this treasure, Christ, have Him by free gift (John 3:16). He gave Him for us. He gives Him also to us. They have Him by lawful purchase. It is said here he “bought it” ([Matt. 13:]46)—not by paying a valuable consideration, I do not say so. It cannot be. Christ buys us so, but we do not buy Him so. It is a purchase without money and without price (Isa. 55:1)—by barter or exchange. We part with our sins, and we have a savior; with our own righteousness, our rags, and have His righteousness, that white robe. Have you been at this market? Have you made this bargain?

5. It is enriching treasure. It cannot be but that he that has worldly treasure must needs be a rich man. But he that has this treasure, Christ, is made rich by it toward God. And that is the true riches. That is to be rich indeed. A man may have treasure for himself, such treasure as the fool (Luke 12:20) had in his barns, and not be rich toward God, in God's account and esteem—rich toward the world and a beggar toward God. But if Jesus be yours, you are rich toward God. God will own you for a rich man. Perhaps poor on earth; rich in heaven. Oh, covet these riches. Get Christ to be yours, and you have enough.

6. It is enduring treasure. Other treasures are not so. Sometimes they molder away of themselves (Prov. 23:5). Other times they are spent by the owners. Other times they are plundered and stolen by thieves. But of either of these, there is no danger as to this treasure. It has no principle of corruption in itself. They that have it will not spend it. They may live on it.

They that would cannot take it away. The hiding of it in God speaks not only the secrecy but also the safety of it (Luke 10:42; John 10:28–29). A good reason why we should each of us give all diligence to make it sure to ourselves (Matt. 6:19–20).

What Use Is to Be Made of This Subject?

1. If Christ be treasure, then what a condition are they in that are without Him? They are in a poor, beggarly condition (Rev. 3:17). Worldly poverty nobody is fond of. It is a grief, a trouble, a shame, a disgrace, a burden. They that are under it are weary of it, and fain they would, if they knew how, be delivered from it. But as to spiritual poverty, it is not so—quite otherwise. There is no evil in it, nothing felt from it. Oh, be persuaded this day to change your mind herein. Believe a poor soul that has no spiritual riches, no Christ to make it rich toward God, to be in a far more miserable condition than the poorest beggar

in the country that has not a rag on his back, nothing to eat but what he wanders for, no bed to lie on, no place to hide his head in. I say, far more miserable. For:

All this concerns the body only, which is but the shell of the man. The other concerns the soul, the heaven-born soul.

All this concerns this life only, which is passing away and will be gone shortly. And then in the grave the rich and the poor meet together. There will be no difference between the dust of the one and the dust of the other. But spiritual poverty is the forerunner of eternal misery. The Christless poor here that live and die so must be miserable forever.

All this may be, and yet the man may be in the love and favor of God—his sins pardoned; his peace made, as Lazarus and many another. But if your soul be Christless, you are poor toward God. God is against you, and all that is in God is against you, though nothing appear. So it is—there is no middle state.

2. What is to be done that this treasure may be ours? What did this man do here in the text? He found it hid in the field. He hid it. He was glad he had found it. And, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. Something like this is to be done by each of us that Christ may be ours.

(1) We must find Him where God has hid Him, and that is in the field of the Scriptures. I mean we must mix faith with what God has revealed there concerning Him: His ability and willingness to save; His suffering, dying, rising again, with the design thereof; His many gracious invitations, encouraging promises made to poor sinners to come to Him, to accept of Him. This must be done with application to ourselves, as if our own names were found written therein. Have you thus found Christ? He bids us search (John 5:39). Search the Old Testament. He is hid there, but by digging we may find Him. Search the New Testament. He is above ground there. We are blind

if we see Him not. In this sense it is said concerning the strait gate and narrow way. Few there be that find it. And of the few that find it, fewer go in at the gate and walk in the way. So as to this treasure, not one in ten, twenty, or even a hundred who read the Bible find Christ in it or desire to find Him.

(2) There should be joy at our thus finding Him. This was before making the bargain here. Have you ever seen and understood and been affected with God's unspeakable mercy to you in affording you the field, the Scripture, wherein Christ is? In casting your lot and portion within hearing of the joyful sound? Have you said, "Lord, how is it?" "All the people," on one occasion, "went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them" (Neh. 8:12). It cannot be but the joy must be greater afterwards when the treasure is made ours. But there is great joy even in this: that it is revealed to us.

(3) We must hide it, not with the hiding of concealment to conceal from others our having found it, lest they should put us by the purchase—there is no danger of that. There should rather be an inclination to the contrary to proclaim it, as Andrew told Philip. Read John 1. Hezekiah did ill to show his treasures, but we must show ours. We must hide it with the hiding of meditation and consideration, as David hid the Word (Ps. 119:11), as Mary (Luke 2:19). We must hide it as the woman hid the leaven in the batch, as the husbandman hides the seed by harrowing it, as the stomach hides the meat in order to the digesting of it. Have we ever done this by what we have read and heard out of the Scriptures concerning Jesus Christ? Have we reflected afterwards, meditated on it, prayed over it? If not, do it yet. It is God's way, a special means that He has appointed and that He uses to bless.

(4) We must sell all and buy it. Is Christ the truth? Buy the truth. Is Christ the treasure? Buy the treasure. There is no making Him ours any other way.

Begging will not do. We may beg long enough, unless we buy. Read Matthew 25; Luke 13.

Steal Him we cannot. Some have been made rich that way, but not with these riches, not toward God.

Borrowing will not do. The foolish virgins would have borrowed oil of the wise; but not so.

It passes not by descent from father to son, as land does to the heirs or personal estate to the executors. Nothing of that here.

There is but one way, and that is by buying. And the terms are here set down: selling all. What all?

(1) All our sins (Ezek. 18:31), however beloved (Matt. 5:29, 38).

(2) All our own righteousness, as to any hope or expectation from the merit of them. We are more loath to part with this than the other. But it must be done, or we cannot possess the treasure.

(3) All our worldly concerns, if God calls (10:37). Now what say you to this? Are you sorrowful, as the young man (19:22)? Or do you like the bargain, and will you strike hands this day? It is all trash that you are called to part with. You will have treasure for it. Could I make you an offer, a real, serious offer, of better clothes, instead of those poor ones you have; a better house, estate—you would be glad and hearken to me and thank me. But, alas! I fear I will prevail with none of you to do this for your poor souls. Oh, be persuaded, not almost, but altogether.

3. What must they do that have this treasure, that can say, on good grounds, "I have thus bought it"?

There is cause why you should bless God all the days of your life for enriching you with this treasure.

Oppose the having of this to the want of all other worldly treasure (Phil. 4:18).

Where your treasure is, there let your heart be also (Matt. 6:21)—the thoughts, the affections.

Hold fast your treasure (Song 3:4).

CHAPTER 37

Christ Is Our Temple

And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

—REVELATION 21:22

That the Lamb here spoken of is our Lord Jesus Christ, there is no question. But the doubt is what we are to understand by the city here described, whereof the Lamb is the temple. The description of it begins at verse 10[–22]:

And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and

the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

It cannot be understood literally. There never was and never will be such a city, literally taken, of gold, of pearls. All agree in that. It is therefore to be understood figuratively and mystically and spiritually. Something like it is said by the prophet Isaiah (54:11–12).

Now the query is whether it be meant of heaven or of some future state of the church in this world, when Babylon will be fallen, the Jews called, and all the kingdoms of the earth be the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ.

I think of both, and that neither is to be excluded; for as we say of grace and glory—that grace is glory begun, and glory is grace perfected—so of this city we say it is begun on earth,

finished in heaven. If I can prove it is not to be understood of heaven only, that will serve my present purpose. I prove it:

1. Because this city is the bride, the Lamb's wife ([Rev. 21:]9). Now that is the church—not triumphant only, but militant.

2. Because it is the holy Jerusalem (v. 10). And is not the gospel church so, even in this world—the Zion, the Israel, the Jerusalem of God?

3. Because it is said to descend out of heaven (v. 10). Therefore, it is not heaven, for heaven does not descend out of heaven.

4. Because it is said, “The kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it” (v. 24), and the “glory and honour of the nations” (v. 26). Now that cannot well be understood of heaven. Therefore, of some future state in this world when religion will be uppermost and every thought brought into obedience. In like manner it may be queried whether Matthew 24 intend the destruction of Jerusalem or the day of judgment. I think both.

This is the city, but what churches are in it? How many, and what are they called? Has this Jerusalem no temple? Yes. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. The Lord God and the Lamb, that is, the Lord God which is the Lamb—as John 17:3—He is the temple.

This is true of heaven. There is no temple, no altar. There are no sacrifices, no ordinances there. God in Christ is all in all (1 Cor. 15:28).

It is true of all the future state of the churches, that there will be ordinances, and so of their present state. There are ordinances—the word, sacraments, prayer. But the Lamb is the temple, Christ the soul of those ordinances.

Doctrine: That the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb, the Lord God Almighty, is our temple and is to be so more and more. Show:

- I. The further meaning of this by way of explication.
- II. The properties of this temple.
- III. The use we are to make of it, which is the application.

[The Meaning of This]

I will further explain the subject.

“Temple” is a general word and signifies a place of worship, whatever it is that is worshipped in it (8:10)—[e.g.,] an idol’s temple (2 Chron. 26:7). Some think it were more proper to call our churches or other places of meeting for divine worship “temples,” rather than churches. But the temple, peculiarly so called, is the house or place of worship built at Jerusalem by King Solomon, whereof we read at large in 1 Kings 6, etc. It was one of the wonders of the world for state and magnificence. When it was burnt, another was built in Ezra’s time—short of that in outward glory, but beyond it in that it had Christ’s personal presence, who taught in it (Haggai 2). Now when I say Jesus Christ is our temple, I mean that the temple of King Solomon was a type of Christ. It was one of the shadows by which Christ was signified. He is the substance. This will appear in the following particulars:

1. The temple was the place of the peculiar residence of God. He dwelt there between the cherubim (2 Chron. 6:1–2). There, His glory did shine forth. It filled the house (5:14). It was called the Shechinah. He was so here, as He was nowhere else in the world besides. So Christ: He is the true temple. “In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9)—bodily, not in such a manner as in the temple, but bodily, in a way far beyond it.

His conception was by the power of the Holy Ghost overshadowing the Virgin Mary (Luke 1).

The name given Him was Emmanuel, God with us. God in our nature. He thought it no robbery to be equal with God (Phil. 2:6–7). He was God manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16). If asked, “What think you of Christ? Who is he?” say, “God manifest in the flesh. God clothed with a body.”

His endowments and perfections were all of them divine—His wisdom, power, holiness (1 Cor. 1:24; Col. 2:3). What else was it but the power of God that wrought all the miracles that were wrought by Him, that raised not others only but Himself also from the dead? It was requisite it should be so, both that He might bear up under His sufferings and to give virtue and value to them. If the fullness of the Godhead had not dwelt in Him, He could not have been a savior for us. We should adore this wise contrivance.

2. The temple was the place of the people’s peculiar recourse to God. If any of them had at any time any special business with Him, thither they must come to the temple. And there He promised He would meet with them and hear their prayers and do for them as there should be occasion (2 Chron. 7:12–16). If they did not come to it, however, they must look toward it. Now our temple is Christ. If you have any of you at any time anything to do with God, you must go to Him in Christ. In Christ it is that He will meet with you—no otherwise.

If you have done amiss and would be pardoned, it must be only in and by Jesus Christ. All your repentings are nothing without Him. It is His blood alone that makes atonement (1 John 1:7; Rev. 1:5). In the temple was the altar.

If you have done well and would be accepted, it must be only in and by Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:6; 1 Peter 2:5). The Jews when they pray turn their faces toward Jerusalem to this day,

because of the temple that was once there—as Daniel (Dan. 6:10; cf. 1 Kings 8:28). So must we toward Christ—not the face of our bodies, no matter whether eastward or westward, but the faces of our minds and souls, the face of our faith, looking at Him as our advocate with the Father, as the great high priest of our profession, as our altar, our temple, our all. We do certainly lose our labor if we do otherwise.

What Are the Properties of This Temple?

1. It is the only temple. There is none other besides it. There were many synagogues, but only one temple. “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5). Saints and angels are no temples for us, no mediators for us. The one temple was to be to them their center of unity, so should our one Christ be to us (Eph. 4:4–6).

2. It is the ordained temple, set apart and consecrated by God in His decree and purpose from all eternity, to be so. “For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore” (Heb. 7:28), consecrated—set forth (Rom. 3:25). This decree and purpose of His was declared and published in the fullness of time, to the end that all might take notice of it, especially when He raised Christ again from the dead (Ps. 2:7–8). He said to the Jews, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2:19)—meaning the temple of His body. This was the great sign of His divine commission (v. 18). He could give them no greater.

3. It is high and conspicuous (1 Kings 9:3), to be seen afar off. When He died, He was lifted up on the cross (John 12:32–33). When He went to heaven, He ascended up on high. When He comes again, every eye will see Him. God has not hid Him

from us but laid Him open to us, that whosoever will may come to Him. Cities of refuge were situate on the tops of hills. Christ is also high in place and preeminence.

4. It is holy and beautiful and glorious. The temple was called the beauty of holiness (Ps. 96:9). To be sure, Jesus Christ is so—absolutely, infinitely, eternally holy.

The temple of His body was holy, as it had no seeds of sickness in it; for we never read of anything ailing Him. So in Him was no sin, no disorderly appetites or desires, but all under rule. His eye was never guilty of one sinful glance. His tongue never spoke one idle word. Grace was poured into His lips (45:2). It was absolutely necessary it should be so, for He was to be an offering for sin (Heb. 10:10). And all offerings for sin were to be without blemish (Lev. 22:19–20; Heb. 7:26).

The temple of His human soul was holy. He received the Spirit without measure, was sanctified throughout. There was in Him no defect, no darkness, no guile. All was pure and holy and without spot. He was so in all His faculties. His will was perfectly complying with the will of His Father. It is not so with us. In the temple there was the holy place and the most holy place, called the holy of holies. Our temple is all most holy, the holy of holies. None is holy as He is holy.

5. It is a living temple. Solomon's temple was a dead thing, made of dead materials; but our temple is a living temple.

Christ personal is so. He was dead, but He is alive. And it is well for us that He is so.

Christ mystical is a living temple, that is, Christ considered in union with all true believers. He is a living foundation, and they are the living stones (1 Peter 2:4–5). And both together make a living house (Eph. 2:20–22).

6. It is a lasting temple. Solomon's temple was long since laid waste. So was Ezra's temple, not one stone left on another. But our temple abides forever (Heb. 13:8). It is not a tabernacle to be taken down.

The Improvement

1. If Christ be our temple, then we should on all occasions rejoice in Him and make our boast of Him. The Jews did so of their temple, even to excess—though it was far short of ours (Jer. 7:4). They would not endure to hear anyone speak against it. This was their quarrel with Stephen—"This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place" (Acts 6:13-14)—with Paul (21:28). Nay, before them, with our Lord Jesus Himself (John 2:19-20). And have not we much more reason to carry it in like manner toward our temple, the blessed Jesus? Should we not boast of Him, saying, with holy David, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee" (Ps. 73:25)? Or with that other good man, "None but Christ, none but Christ." This is one evidence of our being the circumcision (Phil. 3:3), as Paul was (vv. 7-8). Can we endure to hear Him spoken against, His name dishonored, His blood and wounds blasphemed by hideous oaths? There are great outcries for the church, the church; but how few mind the temple, the temple—this temple. The less others do, the more let us.

2. Then it concerns us all to get into this temple, not to rest in the outer court of profession but to press within the veil. The door into this temple is faith (Acts 14:27). When we receive the Lord Jesus as He is offered to us on gospel terms in the way of believing, we are brought into Him. We have union with Him. He becomes ours. We become His. Now inquire, I beseech you: Is this receiving work done? Are you in Christ

Jesus ? If so, there is no condemnation (Rom. 8:1). Joash was hid in the temple and secured there and so escaped (2 Kings 11:2). This temple of ours is a safe hiding place from guilt and wrath. It is our city of refuge. Oh, refuse not this offer. Say not, as Nehemiah, “Who is there, that, being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in” (Neh. 6:11).

3. All the worship we perform to God every day, of whatever kind, must be in this temple. If it be not temple worship, that is, if it be not offered up in the name of Jesus Christ, it is worth nothing.

We must go about in His strength, not in our own; for our strength is weakness (John 15:5; cf. Phil. 4:13). There were two pillars in the temple: Jachin and Boaz (1 Kings 7:21).

We must trust to His merit and mediation alone for acceptance. If we pray, whether in the closet alone or in the family or in the solemn assembly, it must be with an eye to Christ. Turn your faces toward this temple. If so, we have a promise (John 16:23), else none. If so, we have an encouraging instance (Ps. 18:6), else none. It is said, “Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples” (Hos. 8:14). So of many. They have other confidences—their own merit.

4. Is Christ our temple? We must also reckon ourselves His temple and carry it accordingly (1 Cor. 3:16). Even our very bodies, these poor, weak, frail bodies of ours, are dignified and honored with that title (6:19). Now temples must be kept for Him whose temples they are, for His use and service. Then glorify God (6:20; 2 Cor. 6:16–17). Temples must not be defiled. Buyers and sellers must be whipped out of these temples, that is, the world, lust, sin. How angry was Nehemiah: “And I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah, in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God. And it grieved me sore:

therefore I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber” (Neh. 13:7–8). We should do likewise: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” [1 John 2:15].

CHAPTER 38

Christ Is Our Ark

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark.

—HEBREWS 11:7

There are three arks mentioned in the Scripture, and they had all some reference to Jesus Christ.

1. Moses' ark, whereof we read in Exodus 2:3. This was a basket or coracle made of bulrushes, by means whereof he escaped being drowned in the Egyptian river. Our Lord Jesus Christ is to us that ark. In Him we are saved from being drowned forever in the infernal lake, which burns with fire and brimstone.

2. God's ark, whereof we read in Exodus 25:10. This was a chest or coffer of wood, covered with gold, wherein the two tables of the law, written with the finger of God, were kept, a sign or token of the special presence of God with that people. Where the ark went, God went. Our Lord Jesus Christ is to us that ark. By Him the law was perfectly kept for us. And if we have Him with us, we have God with us as a reconciled father.

3. Noah's ark, whereof we read in Genesis 6:14–16. This was a boat or ship, wherein Noah and his family were all saved when the world was drowned. And to this I especially refer when I

say the Lord Jesus Christ is our ark. Of this the apostle here writes, giving us a short account of the story, how it was: “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark.”

Doctrine: Our Lord Jesus Christ is our ark.

He is that to us and to all true believers that Noah’s ark was to him and to his family.

- I. There are several things wherein they agree.
- II. And several things wherein they differ.

[The Similarities]

For the first, they agree as follows:

1. Noah’s ark was of God’s directing and ordaining. He both appointed that it should be made and also gave particular instructions how He would have it made (Gen. 6:14, etc.). It was no invention of Noah’s. Had not God Himself spoken to him about it, it had never entered into either his head or heart. Now whose invention was the sending of Christ to redeem and save us by suffering and dying for us? Was it ours? No, our heavenly Father Himself in infinite wisdom contrived it for us: “I have found a ransom” (Job 33:24; cf. Ps. 89:19–20). “I have found”—He seems to glory in it as His own invention. The angels contrived it not for us, but the great God Himself. And how should this affect our hearts with love and thankfulness. It did Noah’s, no question, that He that contrived heaven and earth how they must be and every creature belonging thereunto should so far debase Himself as to contrive a box for Noah to save him in. “Lord, what is man? Lord, what am I?” might Noah say. And so must we. The first inventor of some rare device or engine usually goes away with all the praise. Everyone commends him. Lo, here is a rare device indeed.

2. The appointing of the ark for Noah was the result of the world's sin. If the world had not been so vile and wicked as it was, there had been no flood to drown it. If there had not been a flood, there had been no need of an ark to save Noah in. So here, if the first Adam had not sinned, the second Adam had not been revealed. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. If we had not been lost, He had never left the heavenly world. The whole need not the physician, but they that are sick. One of the fathers calls the sin of Adam, "*Felix culpa quae talem meruit habere redemptorem*"—a happy fault which deserved to have such a redeemer. Not that we are, therefore, to think ever the better of sin or to harbor a good thought toward it or concerning it—either that or any other; no, but the worse. By the breadth of the plaster, you may judge of the length and breadth of the wound. It was a great debt that would not be paid without such a surety.

3. When the ark was ready prepared, Noah went not in of himself till the Lord was pleased to come and call him (Gen. 7:1). "Come you"—and then he obeyed and went in, and the Lord shut him in. So here, though there be a christ given of God to redeem and save, a ransom provided, yet none are actually redeemed and saved by Him but those only to whom the Lord is pleased to give an effectual call (Rom. 8:30)—till He says, "Come, you man, you woman, you by name. Come you into Christ," we never stir a foot toward Him (John 6:45). As it was with the Jews in Babylon, though a proclamation issued out, yet none moved but those "whose spirit God had raised, to go up" (Ezra 1:5). Or as with Lazarus, though the stone was rolled away, yet till Christ said, "Come forth," he never stirred (Isa. 65:1; Eph. 2:1). Jesus saw Zacchaeus and invited Himself to his house before Zacchaeus saw Him (Luke 19). And have not we cause, as to ourselves, to adore the free grace of God?

Then for shutting him in, that was also God's own act and deed, for his security and safety. He would not trust Noah to shut himself in. So we are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" (1 Peter 1:5; cf. John 10:28–29; Phil. 1:6). Were our salvation in our own keeping, we should certainly lose it, as Adam did. Therefore, see that sweet promise and be comforted in it: "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me" (Jer. 32:40).

4. When God put Noah into the ark and shut him in, He did not leave him destitute. No, He provided comfortably for him.

He had the divine presence. It is not, "Go you," but, "Come you"—implying that Himself meant to go along with him and to abide with him there and to bear him company. All that God puts into Christ will be sure of His blessed presence with them at all times and in all conditions. "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers" (Isa. 26:20). Perhaps alluding to this very passage: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (43:2). "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). Is not this matter of comfort to a child of God? It was so to Moses: "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence" (Ex. 33:14–15).

He had the benefit of a window (Gen. 6:16):

For the conveying of light into it, else it had been a dungeon to him, a coffin, a grave. It had been called a darksome house. They that are in Christ are enlightened with heavenly light (Eph. 5:8). God opens the eyes of their minds.

And for viewing the mighty works of God in the great waters and the sad desolations made thereby on the earth,

especially the drowning of his obstinate neighbors, that would not be persuaded. Now he might see them floating by thousands. It is good for those who are in the ark, Christ, to be often looking abroad as through a window into the perishing world, where they may see both matter of pity as to others and matter of praise as to themselves (John 14:22).

By that window it was that the dove went out and by the same was taken in again with the olive branch. They that are in Christ have a window open heavenward by which they send thither in prayers and supplications and by which they receive returns thence in suitable supplies. That window is Christ Himself.

He had food also convenient for him (Gen. 6:21). The ship was sufficiently victualled for the voyage, though a year long. They that are in Christ are certainly well provided for. He Himself is their meat and drink, meat indeed and drink indeed. "They that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing" (Ps. 34:10).

5. All the while Noah was in the ark, the ark and he in it were tossed to and fro with the winds and waves. Yet still, as the waters swelled and prevailed, the ark was lifted upward toward heaven. The saints of God in this world are exposed to various trials, troubles, temptations (Isa. 54:11)—tossed with tempests. The ship was so in which the disciples were, and yet Christ Himself was with them in it. And as the ark lifted heavenward, so we should be elevated toward heaven, weaned from the world and things below, raised upward to things above in our thoughts, affections, desires, hopes (2 Cor. 4:16–18). This benefit by their afflictions makes them say with David, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted" (Ps. 119:71).

6. The ark was a means of safety and preservation to Noah. Nay, it alone was so, and there was no other. All that were in it

escaped; all that were out of it perished, though they climbed up to the top of hills and mountains and high trees, though they clung, as no question some did, to the sides of the ark. All would not do. They were fetched thence and drowned notwithstanding. So here: There is no Savior but Christ. Out of Him there is no salvation. In Him there is no damnation (Acts 4:12; 16:30–31; Rom. 8:1). He is set forth, and there is no other, to be the propitiation for sin. There is only one sun of righteousness. There was only one brazen serpent. There is only one mediator, one advocate. People may climb high in parts, gifts, profession, in freedom from common pollutions, in the performance of external duties—but all will not do, unless they are in the ark, unless they are in Christ Jesus. They may cling to Him by a temporary faith, but unless they are in Him they will perish. It was, methinks, saddest of all with the carpenters, who helped to make the ark, to be shut out. So it will be for those preachers, who are the means of saving others, but are not saved themselves.

7. They that were saved in the ark of Noah were but few, very few—eight souls: Noah and his wife, and his three sons and their three wives. All the rest of mankind, men, women, and children, were all lost. In like manner, they that are in Christ are but a remnant (Matt. 7:14). Not many are in Him by external profession. Far the greater part of the world are Jews, Turks, heathens. Among those who are in Him by external profession, very few are effectually called, are truly such as they profess to be. There are abundance of hypocrites. In the ark, of the eight, one was a Ham, whatever the four wives were. Among the twelve apostles, one was a Judas. In the destruction of Sodom, only Lot and his family escaped. Of six hundred thousand that came out of Egypt, but two entered the land of Canaan. This should be no offence to us nor occasion of

stumbling. It is better to be in the ark with a few than to be drowned with the rest for company. Do not you think so? Would you not choose so? When the saved come all together, they will be a great many. Let there be one the more for you this day, and another for you. It is observable, these eight saved ones in the ark were all of Noah's family, either born in it or married into it. We have a saying: It is good to be akin to land. Say I: It is good to be akin to God's Noahs. Their kindred often fare the better in this world for their sakes, and sometimes in the other world (Luke 19; Acts 16). All the eternally saved are such and only such as are of Christ's family, married to Him, born of Him. He is no ark to others, as to their everlasting state. Should we not then forthwith flee into the ark?

[The Differences]

For the second, they differ as follows:

1. The ark was a dead thing—made of dead materials, gopher wood, pitched within and without to hold out water. And when it had served that present occasion, what went with it we know not. Probably it rotted and became worm's meat, as other ships are used to do. But our ark is a living ark, the same yesterday and today and forever, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning—an everlasting, ever-abiding savior.
2. The saved in Noah's ark were but eight, and all those eight were either men or women, not a child among them. But in Christ, our ark, though the saved are but few, they are many eights, and among them not only some of both sexes, male and female, but some of all ages, old and young and little children.
3. The saved in Noah's ark escaped a present temporal death only. They were not drowned in the flood of waters as their neighbors were. I mean, the ark was no further instrumental

of good to them. But the saved in Christ Jesus are saved by Him from eternal misery, from the wrath that is to come, from being burned in hell forever. As for death temporal, they have no exemption from it, of no kind, in no circumstances. They die suddenly, even as others, a violent death, even as others. But then let the kind and circumstances of their dying be what God pleases, they are safe beyond death. Lo, here is a none-such ark.

Use 1: To you that hear me this day, I have three things to beg of you, not for myself, but for your own souls. And they are the same three things that Noah is said here to have done: to believe, to fear, and to prepare.

(1) To believe, not what I say or what other men say, but what the great God says, who cannot lie. And what says He? He says there is another flood coming, another deluge, a great one at the end of time for certain, besides other little ones that may come, and how soon we know not.

He says there is an ark ready of His own preparing, and that ark is Christ. And whosoever will may come and be saved by Him. Do you believe this? If not, you make God a liar.

(2) To fear and be afraid. Noah believed and feared. Why should not we? Fear what the flood threatened: death, judgment, the wrath to come. Are not these things to be feared! Fear, lest you be found out of the ark, graceless, Christless (Heb. 4:1). They that are in the ark must not fear (Luke 12:32). Others must. The men of the old world would neither believe nor fear but went on. And what came of it? Did they escape thereby? "The flood came, and destroyed them all" (17:26–30). We do believe; we do fear. Then:

(3) Prepare—what? An ark? We do not need. God has prepared one. But prepare, that is, make ready for this deluge, by getting into this ark of His preparing, renouncing all other.

Accept of Him, close with Him, yield yourselves to Him. Do it now, today, while it is called today. You may go into the ark, before you stir hence to go homewards.

Use 2: A word to those of you that are in this ark.

Bless God. It is the mercy of mercies. Let Him have the glory. Do you think Noah was not deeply affected—“Why was I preserved and not such a neighbor?” (Gen. 18:20).

Labor to walk answerable to the mercy. Cheerfully, against base fears. If Christ be yours, come what will, you are safe. Fruitfully, in all holiness and new obedience, as saved ones.

CHAPTER 39

Christ Is Our Altar

We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

—HEBREWS 13:10

By this altar we are to understand our Lord Jesus Christ, concerning whom the Christians may say they have Him. They have Him as their altar. As for those that serve the tabernacle, that is, the obstinate wicked Jews that would adhere to Moses and retain still the ceremonial law and the worship and the carnal ordinances thereof, either entirely alone and by itself or in conjunction with gospel institutions—they have nothing to do with Him, no right to eat of Him, that is, to partake of gospel privileges by Him.

Doctrine: That the Lord Jesus Christ is our altar. He is made of God to be so to us. We are to call Him by that name and to own Him as such. Show:

- I. What kind of thing an altar is, and what use it was for, and that Jesus Christ is of the same use to us spiritually.
- II. What are the peculiar properties of this altar which distinguish it from all other ordinances.
- III. The application.

[What an Altar Is and Its Use]

I am to show what an altar was, and that the Lord Jesus is spiritually of the same use to us.

An altar was like a square table, bigger or less according as it was made, to be used in worship. There were altars of remembrance (Exodus 17; Joshua 22). We read of altars which the heathen had and made use of in the worship of their idol gods and of altars used in the worship of the true God, Jehovah, blessed forever.

The altars made use of in the worship of the true God were either occasional or fixed. The occasional altars were such as were suddenly made on some particular occasion. And when that occasion was over, we hear no more of them. Such was that which Noah reared when he came out of the ark. The first we read of is in Genesis 8:20. Abraham also and Isaac and Jacob did all rear altars in the several places to which they came in their travels (12:8; 13:18; 26:25; 35:6–7). Still, where they had a tent, God had an altar, which we bring as an instance of the antiquity of family worship. Among God's people, there were family altars.

The fixed altars were those that were made afterward by God's own appointment, two by Moses, belonging to the tabernacle, and two by Solomon, belonging to the temple. Both for the same purpose, only Solomon's were larger than those that Moses made, because in Moses' time the people of God were low and poor and in straits in the wilderness, but in Solomon's time, rich and full and much more numerous. Our altars should be as our circumstances are. The same measure of service will not suffice when we are increased and advanced by God, that might when we were low and poor. Of those to whom much is given, more is required. See the different size in Exodus 27:1. Compare it with 2 Chronicles 4:1. The one was five, the other, twenty, cubits square.

These fixed altars, both in Moses' time and Solomon's time, were two, of different materials and for different use and diversely placed.

There was one made of wood covered with brass to burn the beasts on that were offered in sacrifice to God, which stood without doors in the courts.

There was another made of wood too, but covered with gold to burn incense on, which stood within in the holy place. Now which of these is Christ—that is, by which of them was He typified and His undertaking for us represented, as our redeemer and savior? By both. He is our alone altar. Himself alone is that to us which both these altars were to them.

1. He is our altar for sacrifice. In His dying for us, He offered Himself on Himself. He was Himself the priest and the altar. There must be a sacrifice offered, or else no atonement. The sacrifice of bulls and goats, etc., would not do. Then said He, "Lo, I come" (Ps. 40:6–7). The Son of God Himself must be the sacrifice; no other could do. But who will be the priest then? Where is one sufficient to manage this sacrifice? Priests were to be mighty men of valor. "I will be priest Myself," said He; and it was so. But where will an altar be had for the purpose, sufficient to bear the weight of this sacrifice? "I Myself," said He, "will be the altar too." And He was so—sacrifice, priest, and altar (Heb. 9:14). Now this altar for sacrifice is to be considered:

(1) In the matter of it. That was wood, covered with brass. Not wood outermost, for the fire would have burnt it; but wood within. Brass without signifying the two natures of Christ, His divine nature and His human nature. The brass of the divine nature secured and safeguarded the wood of the human nature, else the fire of God's wrath had consumed it, and, if so, no atonement could have been made. This was the

eternal Spirit, through which He offered Himself without spot to God (9:14).

(2) In the figure and form of it. It was exactly foursquare, as broad as it was long and as long as it was broad. By whose order was this? Who appointed it so? The great God Himself. This signified the stability and permanency of His undertaking. The square figure is steadfast and stable. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever (13:8)—a sure foundation.

(3) In the placing of it. It stood without in the outward court, noting the sufferings of Christ to be here below in this world. Here it was that He gave Himself to death, even the death of the cross. Or else, noting the particular place of His dying, which was without the gate (13:12). Now this altar and this sacrifice on it is all the hope we have for reconciliation with God. He alone is our propitiation (1 John 2:2). God has set Him forth to be so (Rom. 3:25). And, therefore, to Him we must betake ourselves on all occasions, trusting to His merit and righteousness alone for peace and pardon. It is impossible we should have it any other way.

2. He is our altar also for incense, in His interceding for us.
Note:

The matter of it. Wood covered with gold, not with brass as the other, but with gold, pure gold—signifying the two natures of Christ, in both which He makes intercession, as God-man. Hence with authority: “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory” (John 17:24).

Note, He is now a golden christ, a glorified redeemer. Heaven makes all gold that comes thither. There was a crown over the altar of incense.

Observe the form of it. This as the other was foursquare: “He ever liveth to make intercession” (Heb. 7:25; cf. Ex. 3:2).

Notice also the place of it: within, not without; in heaven, not on earth; in God's immediate presence before the mercy seat. There it is that His blood cries and His merits cry—not from the ground, as Abel's (Hebrews 12), not in humiliation but in exaltation (Zech. 6:13). Hence we may take occasion:

(1) To adore the infinite wisdom and free grace of God the Father in contriving such a way of redemption for us and in performing that contrivance. He Himself appointed the altar. He Himself appointed the Savior: "Of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30).

(2) To examine ourselves, what interest we have in this oblation, in this intercession, in this double altar. Is it ours? Can we say we have an altar? The way to know it is by inquiring what use we make of it. They only have interest in it that make use of it every day, in everything—for pardon for what we do amiss, for acceptance of what we do well. Many have none nor desire none. Many have such as they should not. "Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself: according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars; according to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images. Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty: he shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images" (Hos. 10:1-2). "I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing" (8:12).

(3) To exhort, by all means, to acquaint yourselves with this altar, to know Christ Jesus the Lord as your only atonement and only advocate, to fly to Him as such (1 John 2:1-2).

Further, concerning these altars, note:

1. It is said of each of them they had four horns, one at each corner—for ornament and for use.

The use was double. To bind the sacrifice to. The beast, from a principle of self-preservation, was loath to die. They were forced to bind him (Ps. 118:27). There was no need of cords to bind the blessed Jesus. He gave Himself: "I am He." That which bound Him was His Father's will and His own inclination, His love to poor sinners. The call is to us to bind all our sacrifices to the horns of this altar. So we must, or there will be no acceptance (1 Peter 2:5).

For guilty malefactors to take hold of, as Joab (1 Kings 2:28), Adonijah (1:50–51). When we have sinned, what else have we to take hold of? He alone is our city of refuge. The horns were four, pointing to the four corners of the world, east, west, north, and south. Our Lord Jesus is a universal savior to all nations and people. Whosoever will may come (Isa. 55:1; Rev. 22:17). There are no rails about this altar.

2. It is said the altar did sanctify the gift (Matt. 23:19). How sanctify it? By being offered there in due circumstances by a right priest in a right manner. The gift received a kind of adherent holiness from the altar. Whereas before it was a common beast, like the rest of the flock or fold, now it became hallowed. It had a peculiar worth and value put on it. The Lord did own it as His and accept of it for atonement. So Christ, by His merit and mediation, sanctifies all our gifts, puts a worth and value on them before God. As they come from us, they are worth nothing (Eph. 1:6). Therefore, in all our performances, as we must look to Him as our alone temple, so we must present all on Him as our alone altar (Heb. 13:15; 1 Peter 2:5). The voice from heaven testified, "In whom"—not only with whom—"I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17; 17:5).

3. They that served at the altar did eat of the altar. Others have no right to eat. But we have, we that hold fast our profession steadfast (cf. 1 Cor. 9:13; 10:18). When a beast was offered,

unless it were a burnt offering wherein God had all, God had one part, the priests another, and the offerer another. Some think they are called peace offerings because all these three did agree peaceably so to divide. The offerer with his part did make a feast for his friends, and they did eat together. The priest with his part maintained his family. God's part was burnt on the altar.

Now our altar is Christ. The same is also our sacrifice. Of Him we have all a right to eat and may each of us take our part in Him and be refreshed and nourished by Him if we will. But multitudes will not eat, that is, will not believe in Him, for eating is believing (John 6:53–54). By faith we make His death and sufferings and resurrection and intercession our own, applying it to ourselves as we do the meat when we eat it. To this we invite all, but most make excuses (Matthew 22). Oh, be yet persuaded. Consider, all other things are not food for you (Isa. 55:1–2). This is excellent food. None in the world fare better than those that eat of this altar. It is most excellent fare, and great plenty of it. This is true also of the Lord's Supper in the nature and design of it. It is a feast on a sacrifice. Christ is not sacrificed there, as the papists say, who therefore call it the sacrament of the altar and him a proper priest that administers it. He was sacrificed once for all. (Awhile ago, to symbolize with them, some would needs have the communion table in churches set altar-wise.) But there He feasts His family and friends on the sacrifice, that is, His body and blood. And they are welcome (Song 5:1). But multitudes refuse to be His guests. They choose rather to serve the tabernacle, nay worse, to serve their sins, their humors, their prejudices. They will repent it one day. The Jews prefer Moses. Therefore, as yet they have no right to eat. As the uncircumcised had no right to the Passover, so the unbaptized have none to the supper.

What Are the Peculiar Properties of This Altar?

1. It is the alone altar. Besides it there is no other. Saints and angels are no altars for us. Our own righteousness is not. Nay, God's mercy, out of Christ, is not. "None but Christ, none but Christ."

2. It is the appointed altar, appointed of the Father. He reared it. Therefore, there is ground of hope that He will accept us, if we come to Him in this way, which is His own way. Jeroboam's altar and Ahaz's altar were their own, not God's. Therefore, they were rejected.

3. It is a living altar. Other altars, as temples, were dead things, made of dead materials; but this lives, and lives forever.

4. It is a lasting altar. After it there is to be no other. It needs no repairing, as other altars do.

The Application

Exhortation to all to renounce all other and to make Christ alone your altar, that is, in all your addresses to God to look at Him alone for acceptance (Col. 3:17). "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months" (Rev. 11:1-2). Bishop Usher expounds this of two sorts of people bearing the Christian name: some that worship in the outer court; and some in the temple at the altar—that is, some in the spirit, rejoicing in Christ Jesus; others, in a formal, slighty, Christless way. These are left out to be trodden under foot by the Gentiles. Others are measured to be the Lord's marked, sealed, saved remnant. Oh then, see to this.

CHAPTER 40

Christ Is Our All

But Christ is all, and in all.

—COLOSSIANS 3:11, LATTER PART

You have had an account of thirty-nine things which Jesus Christ is made of God to us: foundation, food, root, raiment, head, hope, refuge, righteousness, light, life, peace, Passover, portion, propitiation, freedom, fountain, wisdom, way, ensign, example, door, dew, sun, shield, strength, song, horn, honor, sanctification, supply, resurrection, redemption, lesson, ladder, truth, treasure, temple, ark, and altar. Now, to what purpose is it to multiply more particulars? I am this day, from this text, to show you He is our all—or, as the apostle expresses it, our all in all. Twice, and but twice, is this phrase found in all the Bible: here, and in 1 Corinthians 15:28. Here, it is spoken of Christ, what He is in this world. There, of God the Father, what He will be to us in the other world, our complete happiness alone, without any other person or thing to help. And the one follows on the other. If Christ be all in all with us now, the Father will be all in all to us to eternity—else not.

Doctrine: That Jesus Christ is a Christian's all, or, his all in all.

There are two other Scripture phrases to the same purpose: the root of the matter (Job 19) and the one thing

needful (Luke 10:42). He alone is sufficient, Himself without any other, to make us happy, and without Him nothing else can do it.

What is a sick man's all in all? A physician. A condemned man's? A pardon. A captive's? A ransom. A hungry man's? Food. A thirsty man's? Drink. A man's in debt? A surety. This, in all respects, is our condition, and all this He is to us. Show:

- I. Wherein Jesus Christ is all in all.
- II. What we learn from it.

Wherein Is the Lord Jesus Christ All in All?

He is so to all persons, whether Jew, Greek, Barbarian—no advantage, no disadvantage. Are they in Christ, learned or unlearned? It is all alike. And He is so in all things.

1. In respect of the benefits we receive from Him and by Him and through Him.

(1) Jesus Christ is all in all in election (Eph. 1:4). He has chosen us in Him, in Him as our head. The free grace and love of God is the head of election. God did therefore choose us, because He did love us. And He did therefore love us, because He would love us. No other reason can be given (Deut. 7:7–8; John 3:16). But the head of the elect is Christ. God the Father gave them to Him to be His body and Him to them to be their head. But for Him and His undertaking for us, there had been no such thing as electing of us.

We are chosen to be conformed to Him (Rom. 8:29), that being made partakers of His image and likeness, we might be loved of the Father. There is reason, therefore, to love Him above all.

(2) He is all in all in creation. But for Him, the world had never been. We ourselves had never been. We owe our being to Him (John 1:3; Heb. 1:2). Young men are exhorted

(Eccl. 12:1) to remember their Creator—their Creator is Jesus Christ. We are all exhorted (1 Peter 4:19) to commit our souls to Him as unto a faithful creator. Having made them, He will look after them.

(3) He is all in all in providences: universal, to all; special, to His church; particular, to ourselves (John 5:22). He alone has the ordering of all events that are concerning us. What pleases Him, that He does. If He be for us, it matters not who is against us.

(4) He is all in all in redemption. He alone is the redeemer, and there is no other but He. He paid the price alone. There are no joint purchasers with Him for the satisfying of God's justice. He fought the field alone with the Devil, whose captives we were; and by destroying him, He rescued us (1 Tim. 2:5).

(5) He is all in all in conversion. When the fullness of time is come that a poor soul is to be brought home to God, whose work is it, who manages it? Not the man himself for himself. How should he? He is dead in trespasses and sins. Not the minister. He is the tool, the instrument (1 Cor. 3:6–7). It is only the blessed Jesus, by His Holy Spirit. He is all in all in the work of conviction and illumination and humiliation. He opens the eyes, and He softens the heart, taking the stone away and turning it into flesh.

(6) He is all in all in justification. Who was ever justified without Him? His righteousness is it alone wherein we appear before God, are acquitted, accepted. There is not a sin pardoned but for His merit's sake. His name is the Lord our righteousness (Jer. 23:6; 1 Cor. 1:30). He is made righteousness. The quarrel between us and God is taken up by Him alone. He is our peace; and He, our propitiation; and He, our advocate (1 John 2:2).

Sure, faith is all in all (Rom. 5:1).

If there were no Christ, there would be no faith.

(7) He is all in all in consolation. The Spirit, who is the comforter, is of His sending (John 14:10–18). And how does the Spirit comfort but by telling the soul that Christ is ours? Say that, and you say enough.

(8) He is all in all in preservation (Jude 1). We are not our own preservers, neither do we preserve one another. He alone keeps us, keeps us from falling (v. 24), from falling away; from being tempted, from being overcome by temptation. Peter's faith had certainly failed but for Him praying for him (Luke 22:30–31).

(9) He is all in all for teaching. He is the best teacher (Matt. 11:29; John 3:2).

(10) He is all in all for strength. If He be our arm, for doing, [or] our back, for bearing—we can do, we can bear all things.

(11) He is all in all at death. There is no dying safely without Him, without an interest in Him. We will certainly perish in that Jordan if He do not part the waters and make a lane for us to go through (Ps. 23:4). Never fear to look death in the face, if Christ be yours. There is no dying comfortably without Him. It is He alone that takes the sting out (1 Cor. 15:55–56). This is the cordial of cordials in a dying hour. "The blood of Jesus Christ...cleanseth us from all sin," says one good man (1 John 1:7). "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," says another (Rom. 8:1). Even those that will not own Him for their all in all living will acknowledge Him so dying. Then, "None but Christ, none but Christ."

(12) He will be all in all at judgment. That is all in all to a man then that will appear for him and plead his cause and bring him off. Now, that the blessed Jesus does for those who are His.

He is the judge. The absolution must come out of His mouth.

He is the advocate to plead on our behalf. "This is one of those for whom I shed My blood. He has loved Me and owned Me, and now I will love him and own him."

He is our plea also—our best plea, our only plea. What can you say, sinner, why sentence of condemnation should not pass upon you? This I have to say: Christ has died for me, yea, rather, is risen again. But so will everyone say. What proof is there of this? I have accepted of Him, believed in Him, yielded myself to Him, so have not others. Now if this must be our plea then, let it be our plea now, renouncing all others.

(13) He will be all in all to eternity. What is the heaven of heaven but to be with Jesus (Phil. 1:33)—in the vision and fruition of Him, to behold His glory, and to partake with Him in it? For this He prayed (John 17:24). As if He Himself could not be well there without us. To be sure, we cannot without Him.

2. In respect of duty to be done to Him. As He alone is our alpha, the beginning, the first, from whom all comes, so He alone is our omega, the last, to whom all tends.

(1) He is all in all to be known. Paul thought Him so and tells us as much for our imitation (1 Cor. 2:2; Phil. 3:8–10). The understanding part of a man can find no solid satisfaction in the study of anything else without Him; but in Him, it is abundantly to be found. "Si Christum noscis, satis est, si caetera nescis. Si Christum nescis, nihil est si caetera noscis."¹

"In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3), that is, not only as the subject, with whom it is, but as the object, about whom it is, conversant.

1. *Si...noscis*: If you know Christ, it is enough, if you are ignorant of other things. If you are unacquainted with Christ, it is nothing if you know everything else.

(2) He is all in all to be chosen. He is not only the truest truth, but the best good. Nothing we can name is so worthy of our choice as He is. Creatures are, all of them, jointly and severally, but partial good, each one of them good for some one thing and no more. Food will not clothe us; clothes will not feed us. But lo, here is a universal good, good for everything. Is not this the Christ? All in all for food; all in all for clothing.

(3) He is all in all to be loved. It is one of the titles that the spouse gives Him in the book of Canticles 1:7: "Oh thou whom my soul loveth!" And David (Ps. 73:25). There are many persons and many things that our love is closing with and running out upon, but I dare say none of them all deserves it as the blessed Jesus does. There is no danger of your over-loving Him. Love Him with all your heart, soul, mind, might, and He deserves it, both on the account of His loveliness in Himself and His lovingness to us (Ps. 45:2; 1 John 4:19).

(4) He is all in all to be desired. It is one of the names given Him, "The desire of all nations" (Hag. 2:7), that is, worthy to be desired by all, though actually desired but by very few. What say you brethren? Is your desire toward Him? But what kind of desire is it? Warm desire; hearty, lively desire; like that of the hunted stag after the water brooks, or the gaping earth after the rain? Can you say, with the church, "The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee" (Isa. 26:8)? There is good reason why it should be so.

(5) He is all in all to be delighted in (Phil. 3:3). He is to be made our song, the head, the gladness, of our joy. Rejoice we may in the good things that God gives us. He is angry if we do not (Deut. 28:47), but it must be with trembling (Ps. 2:11). There is no trembling required here. We may let forth the utmost strength of our souls when we are solacing ourselves in Him.

(6) He is all in all to be trusted. As the strength of joy may be laid out on Him, so the strength of faith and hope, and therefore of joy, because of faith and hope. He never failed any that put their trust in Him, for He is faithful and true. In Him all the promises of God are yea, and in Him amen (2 Cor. 1:20). He is all in all in the promises. Take any one, either concerning the life that now is or that which is to come, and act faith on it, according as it is, and try if it do not prove as I say.

(7) He is all in all to be thought on. He is the most excellent, lovely, amiable, sweet, comfortable object that our thoughts can possibly expatiate on. "How precious," says the psalmist, "also are thy thoughts unto me, O God" (Ps. 139:17). The covetous man's money is all in all with him, to employ his thoughts about. The ambitious man's honor and the sweet of it, as Haman. And the voluptuous man's sports and recreations. But the godly man says of Christ, "He is my all in all."

(8) He is all in all to be followed, as our pattern for imitation. We have before us a whole cloud of witnesses, but none like Christ to be absolutely rested in as a pattern and sampler.

He is a copy without a blot (Eph. 5:1-2; Heb. 12:2).

(9) He is all in all to be preached (2 Cor. 4:5). And certainly it is the best preaching, the most affecting, the most edifying, the most saving. To read or hear a sermon by a Christian minister before a Christian congregation, and Christ not once named from the beginning to the end—how absurd is it! And yet too many such there are! Tell it not in Gath. How unlike herein to blessed Paul, who did breathe Christ in all his sermons.

(10) He is all in all in the Scriptures. When you take your Bible in hand to read a chapter and have read it, reflect when you have done, and say, "What is there of Christ here?" He is the treasure in that field, the marrow in that bone, the manna in that dew, the diamond in that ring, the milk in that breast (John 5:39).

(11) He is all in all in the sacraments. What is baptism without Christ? An insignificant ceremony, a laver without water. His blood for justification and His Spirit for sanctification are the main in that ordinance (1 Peter 3:21). What is the Lord's Supper without Christ? A table without meat or drink. Oh, take heed of Christless sacraments. Not only the bread of the Lord but the Lord the bread should we press after.

(12) He is all in all in Sabbaths. The day is His. It bears His name. And yet how many come and go, and Christ is not once thought of.

(13) He is all in all in praying. A Christless prayer is of as little worth as any of the other. As when we pray in our own strength and not by the help of the Spirit of the Son—and when we rely on anything but Him and His merit and mediation, either for acceptance or an answer.

What Improvement Are We to Make of This Subject?

1. For discovery. Here is a mark whereby to try ourselves: What think you of Christ?
2. For reproof and admonition to those to whom Jesus Christ is nothing at all.
3. For exhortation to all to learn Him, to live on Him.

CHAPTER 41

Christ Is Our All (continued)

But Christ is all, and in all.

—COLOSSIANS 3:11, LATTER PART

The improvement we are to make by way of inference from all that has been said is this:

[Self-Examination]

It should put us on solemn and serious self-examination. And I am glad it proves to be a sacrament day because of the suitability of that duty by way of preparation for that ordinance (1 Cor. 11:28). I hope you have done it already, for fear of the worst. If not, do it yet. For this once, shall I do it? Shall I put the question, and will you make the answer?—not outwardly, with the voice, but inwardly, in your own consciences, as before the Lord. We will be examined for certain shortly in another manner by another examiner. Doing it well now may prevent doing it then, for “if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged” (v. 31). The thing to be inquired after is whether Jesus Christ be our all or no, our all in all? Would you know? Look within. Inquire:

1. Have you renounced all other things for your all, and have you received Him to be your all? This must be. God has so

ordered it. The terms are so laid. There is no remedy. If we look for any other, we must seek another gospel. Now:

Is the renouncing act done? Have you seen everything else, besides Christ, to be so far from being likely to make an all for you, that it is even just nothing at all? And, therefore, have you disowned, disclaimed it, saying, "This is no portion for me, no propitiation for me," and so of the rest? Three things are to be thus renounced: the Devil, the world, and the flesh. Likewise, our sins, our own righteousness, and all our worldly possession. Away with them. Two of these, the two first, God does call for; and the third we must be willing to part with, if He should—else how can Christ be said to be our all?

Is the receiving act done? Have you heartily closed with the gospel offer and taken Christ as your all? I do not mean in word and tongue only, for that will not do, but in deed and truth, inwardly, heartily? The hand is faith (John 1:12). I do not ask whether it were not a trembling hand, whether it were not done with some difficulty, as a thing against the grain; but whether it be done, really and truly done?

2. It may be known by the value we put on Him and by the daily use we make of Him:

That which is our all we esteem and prize above anything else, let it be what it will. It is uppermost with us. It has the preeminence. Now what say you, brethren? Is Christ uppermost with you? Has He in all things the preeminence (Col. 1:18)? I have often showed you there is reason He should. He best deserves it (Ps. 45:2). It is the Father's will He should have it (John 5:23). And, if He will not be uppermost, He will be nothing. Either He will be in the throne or not at all. It is said there was a motion made in the senate at Rome, that Jesus Christ might be taken in among the rest of their gods. Answer was made, "No, because if He were one, He must be all." They

must put away all the rest. He would be partner with none of them. The poor, low, mean thoughts that many people have of Christ is a clear argument that He is far from being their all. They heed Him not, neither His friendship nor His fellowship.

That which is our all we make use of daily, on all occasions wherein it may be advantageous to us. A potion, a balsam, a friend we so use. If we want anything, our trust is to it. Our reliance is on it. Now is Christ made use of by us daily, as our foundation to build on; our food to feed on; our refuge to flee to; our righteousness to rest in; our wisdom to guide us; our way to walk in; our lesson to learn; our ladder to climb by; our temple to look toward when we pray; our treasure to have recourse to when we want anything; our ark to run into when the deluge threatens; our altar to offer all our gifts on? If He be not all this to us, who is, what is? We must have it somewhere. It is all one to have no Christ, as to make no use of Him.

3. It may be known by our concernedness for Him and carriage toward Him.

Conceitedness for Him. That which is a man's all he is careful to keep, cautious not to lose (Job 2:4). The reason is because his life is his all. When that is gone, all is gone with him. Now is Christ our life? Shall skin for skin, or skin after skin, and all we have, go for Him, to get Him, to keep Him? What is His name and honor and glory and gospel and day and book and people and ordinances to us? Are they all precious, more precious than thousands of gold and silver? If it go well with them, can we rejoice, and grieve if it be otherwise? It was so with David, as to ordinances (Ps. 84:10) and as to His church and people (137:5-6). Never call Christ your all unless this be so. It may be known also by our:

Carriage toward Him. That which is a man's all he loves, delights in, is pleased and satisfied with. Is it so with your soul

toward Christ (73:25)? Do you love Him above all? Are your desires toward Him, your delight in Him? Is He the head, the gladness, of your joy? Do you see Him to be enough for you? And can you say, “O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee... to see thy power and glory.... My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness” (63:1, 2, 5)—satisfied? “None but Christ, none but Christ.” Now by these marks we may try, if we will be faithful to our souls, whether Christ be made all this to us, or no, in these forty things which you have heard of—that is, whether we be in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 1:30), whether we be true believers, whether we be for heaven or no. I beseech you, be not unwilling to come to the touchstone. Once well done, and it is done forever.

[Reproof]

Here is ground for sharp reproof to those to whom other things are all in all and Christ is nothing at all.

Are there any such? Certainly there are. But are there any such here? I wish there may not be. Why, who are they? They are of several sorts.

1. With the Jews to this day, Moses is all in all. They are altogether for the ceremonial law, not believing that the Messiah is come and has put an end to it. Their condition is sad (John 8:24). It is our duty to pity and pray for them. There were, it seems, among the Christians, some that were for both Christ and Moses too; but that would not do (Gal. 5:2–4). Those among ourselves with whom a pompous worship is all in all are too like them.

2. With the papists, in matters of faith, the church is all in all. They believe as the church believes, though what that is they know not. They practice as the church enjoins, without

inquiring, Is it agreeable to the mind and will of Him that is the king of the church? All for the mother, no matter for the Father. “The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these” (Jer. 7:4). When Christ sent forth His apostles, their commission was not, “Go teach what the church commands,” but what Jesus commands. There are those who please themselves with drinking healths to the church.

3. With the same people, in matters of devotion, the Virgin Mary is all in all. They go on pilgrimage to her shrines. They vow to her, pray to her. For one chapel and altar that Christ has, she has twenty, forty. For one Paternoster there are ten Ave Marias. They call her queen of heaven, gate of glory, fountain of mercy, mother of all grace—their saviouress, mediatrix, advocatress. In the Psalms where God and Lord is, they put Lady, and apply all the passages to her blasphemously—our Lady’s Psalter. They call to her to command her Son to do what they would have Him to do. We are told at Dieppe in Normandy there is an image of our Lady with a rod in her hand to correct her Son if He refused her.

4. With the same people, in matters of power and supremacy, St. Peter is all in all. The popes call themselves the successors of St. Peter. If in anything, it is in denying his Master and in cutting off the ear of Malchus with his sword. Their church lands they call the patrimony of St. Peter. They count him the rock on which their church is built, as if he were the foundation, not Christ. God deliver me from that church that is so founded. When the time of its fall comes, it will appear it was sand-built, not rock-built.

5. With some, the light within is all in all. It is so:

For guidance and direction. As it dictates, they say we are to do—without trying by the written Word, whereas, “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. 8:20). Time has been, said Paul, “I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth” (Acts 26:9). And it is said, it will be again (John 16:2). Also:

For justification and salvation. Some have said they expect it not by a christ crucified at Jerusalem, but by obedience to the light within, by which I am well assured they will never have it (Acts 4:12). We deny not a light within, but we deny its sufficiency in these two things.

6. With some, and those too many, their own righteousness is all in all—the merit of their own performances, what they are, have, do, suffer; their prayers, tears, alms-deeds; their innocence and freedom from common pollutions that are in the world through lust, as the Pharisee (Luke 18). These are the things they trust to, at least, in conjunction and copartnership with Christ. These with a little to eke from God’s mercy and Christ’s merit, as the old ignorant Jews (Rom. 10:3). No, if this were so, how is Christ all in all? See the mind that Paul was of and be like-minded: “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him” (Phil. 3:7–9).

7. With some, carnal pleasures and sensual delights are all in all. Let them have their fill with these, and they have enough. Wine and music and dancing and mirth and jollity; sports and pastimes and recreations; horses and hounds and hawks and harlots—these their hearts are on. Rioting and drunkenness

(Romans 13), making provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof—and will this do? In sober sadness tell me, can you think you are made and maintained for such a purpose (Eccl. 11:9; James 5:1, 5)?

8. With some, worldly wealth is all in all. Let them have money enough and land enough, and much good may others have with God and Christ and heaven, with grace enough and glory enough. Poor creature, what a miserable choice do you make (Prov. 23:5; 1 Tim. 6:9–10, 17)! See a sad instance of the consequences of this folly, Luke 13:16–21.

9. With some, a thing called reputation is all in all. To have a name among men, especially great men, to be in honor and power and to have preferment. They will sell God and their souls to compass it, as one of the popes did to be pope. And what a vain, poor, empty thing is this when they have it—a puff, a bubble! How uncertain! Of how short continuance! How many ways exposed!

10. With some, in one word, self is all in all. The great idol of the world is loving self and seeking self and pleasing self and applauding self (Phil. 2:21). Oh, let us all take warning and look to it. Our first lesson in Christ's school is to deny self (Luke 9:23).

[Exhortation]

Then suffer, I beseech you, a serious word of exhortation. It is to you all, without exception, one or other:

1. To make Christ—Christ, I say, and Christ alone—your all in all. If you make Him so to yourselves, it is the best evidence you can have that God has made Him so to you. Make Him so by a cordial and speedy closing with Him, accepting of Him as

your foundation, food, root. Teach them your children, and when they have learned them, explain them to them as well as you can. It will be a means to increase your own knowledge. God will make it so (Matt. 25:29).

Your baptismal vow binds you to it. Into what are you baptized? Was it not into Christ? And did you not put on Christ (Gal. 3:27)? A Christian—and Christless! How sad it is! A Christian—and Christ nothing to him! Is it so with Mahometans?¹ Is Mahomet nothing to them? With papists? Is the pope nothing to them?

If Christ be not all in all with you, He will be nothing at all to you—for justification, salvation.

If Christ be not all in all with you, you are nothing at all to God—only as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. Your praying is nothing; your repenting is nothing.

2. To walk as those that have made Christ their all:

Circumspectly, watchfully. Learn Paul's lesson: "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17). Pray, repent, deny yourselves, give alms, suffer reproof, all in His name, strength, merit.

Comfortably, cheerfully. There is cause. You are a happy man. All is yours if Christ be your all. "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Hab. 3:17–18). Christ is all, and in all.

1. *Mahometans*: Muslims.

