

# Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

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OTHER SHEEP AND ONE FLOCK.

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## A Sermon

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 25TH, 1883, BY

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“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall be one fold, and one shepherd (or more correctly, one *flock*, one shepherd).”—John x. 16.

THIS verse is guarded before and behind by two notable statements. Before it we hear the Master say, “I lay down my life for the sheep,” and immediately after it we meet with another grand sentence, “I lay down my life, that I might take it again.” The first statement, “*I lay down my life for the sheep*” is the sheet anchor of our confidence when storms assail the vessel of the church. The Lord Jesus has by his death proved his love to his people; and his determination to save them is made clear by his laying down his life for them; therefore doubt and fear should be banished and the very name of despair should be unknown among the Israel of God. Now are we sure of the love of the Son of God to his chosen flock, for we have an infallible proof of it in the laying down of his life for them. Now also are we absolutely certain that Christ's purpose is perpetual: it cannot alter; the Lord Jesus has committed himself to that purpose beyond recall, for the price is paid and the deed is done by which the purpose is to be effected. Beyond this we are hereby assured beyond a shadow of a doubt that the divine purpose will be carried out, for it cannot be that Christ should die in vain. We think it a kind of blasphemy to suppose that his blood should be spilt for naught. Whatever was proposed to be accomplished by the laying down of the life of the Son of God, we feel absolutely certain that it will be fully performed in the teeth of all adversaries; for we are not now speaking of man's design, but of the purpose of God, to which he devoted the heart's blood of his only-begotten Son. We both patiently hope and quietly wait to see the salvation of God, and the performance of all his designs of love; for that death upon the cross is a cause which will surely produce its effect. Christ did not die at a peradventure. The supposition of a Saviour disappointed in the results of his blood-shedding is not to be tolerated for a moment. In darkest times that glorious cross flames with light. No evil event can prevent its efficacy. Still in that sign we conquer. If Jesus has laid down his life for the sheep, then all is well. Rest assured of the Father's

love to those sheep; rest assured of the immutability of the Divine purpose concerning them, and rest assured of its ultimate achievement. It must not, shall not be that God's own Son shall lay down his life in vain. Though heaven and earth should pass away, the precious heart's blood of the Son of God shall accomplish the end for which it was so freely poured forth. Jesus says, "I lay down my life for the sheep," therefore the sheep must live who have been redeemed at such a price as this, and the Shepherd in them shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied. So far we are cheered by the vanguard which marches in advance of our text.

But as if the poor, timid people of God would, nevertheless, at times fancy that the purpose of Christ would not be achieved, behold in the rear another sentence, "*I lay down my life that I might take it again.*" He that died, and so redeemed his people by price, lives that he may himself personally see that they are also redeemed by power. If a man dies to achieve a purpose, you feel sure that his very soul must have been in it: but if that man should rise again from the dead, and still pursue his purpose you would see how resolutely he was set on his design. If he rose with greater power, clothed with higher rank, and elevated to a more eminent position, and if he still pursued his great object, you would then be more than certain of his never-ending determination to perform his design. In the risen life of Jesus assurance is made doubly sure: now are we sure that his design must be carried out, nothing can hinder it. We dare not dream that the Son of God can be disappointed of the object for which he died, and for which he lives again. If Jesus died for a purpose he will accomplish it; if Jesus rose for a purpose, he will accomplish it; if Jesus lives for ever for a purpose, he will accomplish it. To me this conclusion seems to be past question: and if it be so, it puts the destiny of the sheep beyond all hazard. Did not Paul argue much in the same way when he said, "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life"?

If any of you have been cast down by reason of present difficulties, let these two grand texts sound their silver trumpets in your ears. If you have been looking forth from the windows, and the outlook has seemed to be exceeding dark, take courage, I pray you, from what your Lord has done: his death and resurrection are prophetic of good things to come. You dare not think that Christ will miss the end of his death: you dare not think that he will miss the purpose of his glory-life: why, then, are you cast down? His will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven, as surely as he came from heaven to earth, and has returned from earth to heaven. His purpose shall be carried out as surely as he died and lives again. Is not this the secret reason why, when the Lord appeared to his sorrowing servant John, he said to him, "I am he that liveth and was dead and am alive for evermore, amen, and have the keys of death and of hell"? Is not the dying and then living Shepherd the safety and the glory of the flock? Wherefore comfort one another with these words of your Lord, "I lay down my life for the sheep"; "I lay down my life, that I might take it again."

I. There are four things in the text itself which deserve your

attention, for they are full of consolation to minds troubled by the evils of these perilous times. The first is this,—OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST HAD A PEOPLE UNDER THE WORST CIRCUMSTANCES. When he speaks of “other sheep,” it is implied that he had certain sheep at the time; and when he says “other sheep have I which are not of this fold,” it is manifest that even then the Good Shepherd had a fold. The times were grievously dark and evil, but a few true hearts clustered about the Saviour and by his divine power were protected as in a “fold.” It has been supposed that our Lord here alludes to the Jews as “this fold”; but the Jews, as such, were never Christ’s fold. He could not have meant to call the Jews around him his fold, for a little further on he exclaims, “Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.” His fold were that little handful of disciples whom by his personal ministry he had gathered, and who stood folded, as it were, about their Good Shepherd. They might be sneered at as a little company, but he saith to his enemies who are standing outside the fold foaming with wrath, “Other sheep I have that are not of this little fold: these you cannot see, but I have them none the less for that; these I must in due time lead, and then there shall be one flock and one Shepherd.”

See, then, that the Lord Jesus had a people in the worst times. Doubtless these days are exceedingly dangerous, and I have certain brethren round me who never allow me to forget it, for they play well in the minor key, and dwell most judiciously upon the necessary topic of the general declension of the church and the growing depravity of the world. I would not stop them from their faithful warnings, although I can assure them that, with slight variations, I have heard the same tune for years. Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth up, and it has been good for me. I recollect hearing some thirty years ago that we lived in awful times; and, as nearly as I can recollect, the times have been awful ever since; and I suppose they always will be. The watchmen of the night see everything except the coming of the morning. Our pilots perceive dangers ahead and steer with caution. Perhaps this is as it should be; at any rate, it is better than sleeping in a fool’s paradise. Be this as it may, it is clear that the days of our Lord Jesus Christ were emphatically terrible times. No age can be worse than that age which literally crucified the Son of God, crying, “Away with him! Away with him!” Whether the present days are better than those I will not determine, but they cannot be worse. The day of our Lord’s first advent was the culmination and the crisis of the world’s career of sin; and yet the Good Shepherd had a fold among men in the midnight of history.

There was a *sad lack of vital godliness* in those days. A few godly ones watched for the coming of the Messiah; but they were very few, such as good old Simeon and Anna. A small remnant sighed and cried for the abounding sin of the nation; but the salt was almost gone: Israel was becoming like Sodom and Gomorrah. The choice band of mourners in Zion had not quite died out, but their number was so few that a child might write them. Speaking generally, when the Saviour came to his own, his own received him not. The mass of professing people in that day was rotten throughout; the life of God was gone; it

could not dwell with the Pharisees nor the Sadducees, nor any of the sects of the times, for they were altogether gone out of the way. The Lord looked, and there was no man to help or to uphold his righteous cause: those who professed to be its champions had altogether become unprofitable. As for the religious teachers, their mouth was become an open sepulchre, and the poison of asps was under their tongues: and yet the Lord had a people in Judea even then. On earth there was still a fold for sheep whom he had chosen who knew the Shepherd's voice and gathered to his call and followed him faithfully.

It was a time when *will-worship abounded*. Men had given up worshipping God according to the Scriptures, and they worshipped according to their own fancies. Then you might hear the trumpet in every corner of the street, for Pharisees were distributing their alms. You could see fathers and mothers neglected, and families broken up because the scribes had taught the people that if they should say "Corban" they were free from all obligation to help father or mother. They taught for doctrines the commandments of men, and the commandments of God were laid on one side. To wear broad-bordered garments and phylacteries was exalted into a matter of first importance; while to lie and cheat were mere trifles. To eat with unwashed hands was thought to be a crime, but to devour widow's houses was a thing which to the most self-righteous Pharisee caused no qualm of conscience. The land was filled with will-worship, and that is one great and growing hindrance nowadays; but for all that Christ had a fold of his own, and in it were those who knew his voice, and these, following at his heel, were enabled to go in and out and find pasture.

It was a day when there was the most *fierce opposition* to the real truth of God. Our Lord Jesus could hardly open his mouth but they took up stones to stone him. It was said that he had a devil and was mad; and that he was a "gluttonous man and a wine bibber, the friend of publicans and sinners." The rage of men against Christ was then boiling at its greatest heat, till at last they took him and nailed him to the cross because they could not endure that he should live among them. And yet he had his own in those dreadful times: even then he had his chosen company for whom he laid down his life, of whom he said to the Father, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word." To those he spake saying "Ye are they that have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me." Wherefore, beloved, I gather that though at this time there is a sad decline in vital godliness, and though will worship sweeps over the land with its tumultuous waves, and though opposition to the pure truth of Christ is more fierce than ever; nevertheless even at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. Even to-day the answer of God saith to the complaining prophet, "Yet have I left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal." Wherefore, my brethren, in confidence possess ye your souls.

Now, it is to be noticed that this little company of Christ's people he calls a "fold." Afterwards they were to be a "flock," but while his bodily presence was with them they were pre-eminently a "fold." They were few in number, all of one race, mostly in one place, and so

compact that they could fitly be said to be a fold. One glance of the Shepherd's bodily eye saw them all. Happily, also, they were so thoroughly distinct from the rest of the world that they were eminently and evidently folded. Our Lord said of them, "Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." He had shut them in to himself, and shut the world out. Within this blessed seclusion they were perfectly safe, so that their Lord said to the Father, "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled." Whatever their mistakes and faults, and they were many, yet they did not conform themselves to the generation among which they dwelt, but they were kept apart as in a fold while Jesus was with them. In that fold they were protected from all ill weathers, and from the wolf, and the thief. The Lord's presence with them was like a wall of fire round about them: they had only to run to him and he answered all their adversaries, and defended them from reproach. Like another David, the Lord Jesus guarded his flock from all the ravening lions that sought to devour them. True, even in that little fold there were goats, for he himself said, "I have chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil." Even then they were not absolutely pure, but they were wonderfully so; and they were marvellously separated from the world, preserved from false doctrine, and kept from dividing and scattering. Within that fold they were being strengthened for the future following of their great Shepherd. They were learning a thousand things which would be useful to them when afterwards he sent them forth as lambs among wolves; so that they would be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves," because of what they had learned of their Lord. Thus you see that in the worst times the Lord had a church, I might almost say the best church. May I not call it so? for that apostolic church upon which the Holy Ghost descended was not a whit behind the church of any era that succeeded it. It was the choice flock of all the flocks of the ages, even that feeble company of which Jesus said, "Fear not, little little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Yet you see one thing is notable here, that when Jesus had thus shut them all in he would not allow them to become exclusive and glide into a state of selfish satisfaction. No, he opens wide the door of the sheep-fold and cries to them, "Other sheep I have." Thus he checks a tendency so common in the church to be forgetful of those outside the fold, and to make one's own personal salvation the sum and substance of religion. I do not think it wrong to sing—

"We are a garden wall'd around,  
Chosen, and made peculiar ground;  
A little spot, enclosed by grace  
Out of the world's wide wilderness."

On the contrary, I judge that the verse is true, and sweet, and ought to be sung; but then there are other truths besides this one. To us also the Shepherd opens the door of the enclosed garden and says, "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." The fold is our abode, but it is

not our sole sphere of action; for we are to go forth of it into all the world seeking our brethren. Seeing that our Lord has other sheep which are not of this fold, and these are to be found by him through his faithful people, let us arouse ourselves to the holy enterprise.

“O, come, let us go and find them  
 In the paths of death they roam;  
 At the close of the day 'twill be sweet to say,  
 ‘I have brought some lost one home.’”

Beloved, I shall leave this point when I have said to you,—never despair! The Lord of hosts is with his people. They may be few and poor, but they are Christ's, and that makes them precious. A common sheepfold is not a thing of glory and beauty, four rough walls compose it, and it is but a hovel for sheep; even so the church may appear mean and base in men's eyes; but then it is the sheepfold of the Shepherd-King, and the sheep belong to the Lord God Almighty. There is a glory about this which angels do not fail to see. Here is human weakness, but also divine power. We do not, I fear, estimate the strength of a church aright. I read of three brethren who had to carry on a college when funds were running short. One of them complained that they had no helpers, and could not hope to succeed; but another who had more faith said to his brother, “Do you ask what we can do? Do you say that we are so few? I do not see that we are few; for we are a thousand at the least.” “A thousand of us!” said the other, “how is that?” “Why,” replied the first, “I am a cipher, and you are a cipher, and our brother is a cipher; so we have three noughts to begin with. Then I am sure the Lord Jesus is ONE: put him down before the three ciphers and we have a thousand directly.” Was not this bravely spoken? What power we have when we do but set the great ONE in the front. You are nothing, brother; you are nothing, sister; I am nothing; we are all nothing when we are put together without our Lord: but, oh, if he stands in front of us then we are thousands; and again is it true on earth as in heaven, the chariots of the Lord are twenty thousand, even thousands of messengers, the Lord is among them as in the holy place. Wherefore, my friends, be ye not cast down at any time, but say unto yourselves—We are not even now come to so dark a night as once fell on this world. We are not at this painful moment in such a desperate condition as the church of Christ was in his own day; and if the Lord be spiritually in the midst of us we need not fear though the earth be removed, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, for there is a city which abides for ever, and there is a river the streams whereof shall for ever make her glad. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early. Wherefore, my fellow-believers, be ye strong and of good courage!

II. But now, secondly, it is clear, for the text teaches it in so many words, that OUR LORD HATH OTHER SHEEP NOT YET KNOWN TO US. He says, “Other sheep I have.” I want you to notice that strong expression, “Other sheep *I have*,”—not “I shall have,” but “I have other sheep.” Many of these sheep were not even in the thoughts of the apostles. I do not think it had crossed the mind of Peter, James, or John that their Lord had any sheep in this poor savage island, then scarcely regarded as being within the borders of the earth. I do not

suppose the apostles at that time even dreamed that their Lord Jesus had sheep in Rome. No, their most liberal notion was that the Hebrew nation might be converted, and the scattered of the seed of Abraham gathered together in one. Our Shepherd-King has greater thoughts than the most large-hearted of his servants. He delights to enlarge the area of our love. "Other sheep have I." You do not know them, but the Shepherd does. Unknown to ministers, unknown to the warmest-hearted Christians, there are many in the world whom Jesus claims for his own through the covenant of grace.

Who are these? Well, these "other sheep" were, first, *his chosen*; for he has a people whom he has chosen out of the world, and ordained unto eternal life. "Ye have not chosen me," said he, "but I have chosen you,"—there is a people upon whom his sovereignty has fixed its loving choice from before the foundation of the world. And of these elect ones he says, "I have them." His election of them is the basis of his property in them. These are also *those whom his Father gave him*, of whom he says in another place, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me": and again, "Of those whom thou hast given me I have lost none." His Father's eternal donation of them seals his title to them. These are the people for whom he peculiarly and especially laid down his life, that they might be *the redeemed of the Lord*. "Christ loved his church, and gave himself for it." These are they that are redeemed from among men, of whom we read, "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." The Lord Jesus laid down his life for his sheep: he tells us so himself, and none can question his own statement. These are those of whom Jesus says "I have them," for on account of these he entered into *suretyship engagements*, even as Jacob undertook the flock of Laban and watched day and night that he should not lose them, and if one had been torn, he would have had to make it good. These sheep represent a people for whom Christ hath entered into suretyship engagements with his Father that he will deliver each one of them safely at the last day of account, not one of them being absent when the sheep shall pass again under the hand of him that telleth them as they will at the last great day. "Other sheep I have," says Christ. How wonderful that he should say, "I have them," though as yet they were far off by wicked works.

What was their state? They were a people without shepherd, without fold, without pasture, lost on the mountains, wandering in the woods, lying down to die, ready to be devoured by the wolf; yet Jesus says, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold." They were sheep that had wandered exceeding far, even into the most shameful iniquity, and yet he says, "I have them." Bad as this world is to-day, it must have been far worse in the cruel Roman age as to open vices and unmentionable abominations; and yet these wanderers were the sheep of Christ, and in due time they were delivered from their sins, and fetched away from all the superstition and idolatry and filthiness into which they had wandered. They were Christ's even while they were afar off; he had chosen them, the Father had given them to him, he had bought them, and he determined to have them; nay, he saith, "I have them," and he calls them his own even while they are transgressing and running headlong to destruction.

It seems to me that these were as well known to Christ as those that were in his fold. I think I see him, the Divine Man, standing there confronting his adversaries, and when he has cast his glance upon his foes, I see his eyes going to and fro throughout the whole earth to gaze upon a sight far more pleasant to him. While he speaks his eyes flash with joyous fire as they light upon thousands out of every kindred and people and tongue, and while he quotes to himself the words of the twenty-second Psalm: "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations. A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation." He spies out the myriads that are his, and he rejoices before his scornful foes as he sees his growing kingdom which they are powerless to overthrow. Proud, self-righteous men may blindly refuse the leadership of the Lord's anointed Shepherd, but he shall not be without a flock to be his honour and reward. Did not the Lord at that time rejoice in his inmost heart and soliloquize within himself thus—"Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength"? This led him to say, "Other sheep I have."

In this there is great comfort for God's people who love the souls of their fellow-men. The Lord has a people in London, and he knows them. "I have much people in this city," was said to the apostle when as yet nobody was converted there. "I have them," says Christ; though as yet they had not sought him. Our Lord Jesus has an elect redeemed people all over the world at this time, though as yet they are not called by grace. I know not where they are, nor where they are not; but for certain he has them somewhere, since still it stands true, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold." This is a part of our authority for going out to find the lost sheep; for we brethren have a right to go anywhere to ask after our Master's sheep. I have no business to go hunting after other people's sheep; but if they are my Master's sheep who shall stop me over hill or dale enquiring, "Have you seen my Master's sheep?" If any say, "You do intrude in this land," let the answer be, "We are after our Master's sheep which have strayed here!" "Excuse our pushing further than politeness might allow, we are in haste to find a lost sheep." This is your excuse for going into a house where you are not wanted, to try and leave your tract and speak a word for Christ: say, "I think my Master has one of his sheep here, and I am come after it." You have received a search-warrant from the King of kings, and therefore you have a right to enter and search after your Lord's stolen property. If men belonged to the devil we would not rob the enemy himself; but they do not belong to him; he neither made them nor bought them, and therefore we seize them in the King's name whenever we can lay hands on them. I doubt not but what there are some here this morning who neither know nor love the Saviour as yet, who nevertheless belong to the Redeemer, and he will yet bring them to himself and to his flock. Therefore it is that we preach with confidence. I do not come into this pulpit hoping that peradventure somebody will of his own free will return to Christ; that may be so or not, but my hope lies in another

quarter; I hope that my Master will lay hold of some of them and say, "You are mine, and you shall be mine; I claim you for myself." My hope arises from the freeness of grace, and not from the freedom of the will. A poor haul of fish will any gospel fisherman make if he takes none but those who are eager to leap into the net. Oh, for an hour of Jesus among this crowd! Oh, for five minutes of the great Shepherd's handiwork! When the good Shepherd overtakes his lost sheep he has not much to say to it. According to the parable he says nothing, but he lays hold of it, lays it on his shoulders and carries it home, and that is what I want the Lord to do this morning with some of you whose will is all the other way, whose wishes and desires are all contrary to him. I want him to come with sacred violence and mighty love to restore you to your Father and your God. Not that you will be saved against your will, but your consent will be sweetly gained. Oh, that the Lord Jesus would take you in hand and never let you go again. May he sweetly say to you, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."

III. Our third head contains in it much delight. OUR LORD MUST BRING OR LEAD THOSE OTHER SHEEP. "Them also I must bring"—read it, and it will be more accurate, "them also I must lead:" Christ must be at the head of these other sheep, and they must follow his lead—"them also I must lead, and they shall hear my voice." Those who belong to Christ secretly must be openly led to follow him.

First, it is Christ that has to do it, even as he has done it hitherto. The text says, "Them *also* I must bring," and this language implies that those who have already come he has brought. All that were in the fold Christ had brought there, and all that are to be in the fold he must lead there. All of us who are saved have been saved by the mighty power of God in Christ Jesus. Is it not so? Is there anyone among us that came to Jesus without Jesus first coming to him? Surely, no. Without exception we all admit that it was his love that sought us out and brought us to be the sheep of his pasture. Now, as the Lord Jesus has done this for us he must do it for others; for they will never come except he fetch them.

Here comes in that emphatic, imperious "*must*." The proverb is that "*must*" is for the king, and the king may say "*must*" to all of us: but did you ever hear of a "*must*" that bound the king himself and constrained him? Kings generally do not care to have it said to them you "*must*;" but there is a king, the like of which king there never was nor shall be for glory and for dominion, and yet he is bound by a "*must*"—the Prince Immanuel saith, "them also I *must* bring." Whenever Jesus says "*must*" something comes of it. Who can resist the omnipotent *must*? Clear out, devils! Clear out, wicked men! Flee, darkness! Die, O death! If Jesus says "*must*" we know what is going to happen: difficulties vanish, impossibilities are achieved. Glory, glory, the Lord shall get the victory! Jesus says of his chosen, his redeemed, his espoused, his covenanted ones, "Them also I *must* bring," and therefore it must be done.

Furthermore, he tells us how he must do it. He says, "They shall hear my voice." So that our Lord is going to save people still by the gospel. I do not look for any other means of converting men beyond the simple

preaching of the gospel and the opening of men's ears to hear it—"They shall hear my voice." The old methods are to be followed to the end of the chapter. Our standing orders are,—“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” We are not commissioned to do anything else but continue to preach the gospel, the selfsame gospel which saved us and which was delivered to us at the beginning. We know of no alterations, enlargements, or amendments to the gospel. We obey and follow one voice, not many voices. One gospel of salvation is to be proclaimed everywhere, and no other work is in our commission.

Then it is added, “They shall hear my voice.” It is promised that they shall first lend an attentive ear and then that they shall yield a willing heart to the voice of divine love, and follow Jesus where he leads. “What then,” saith one; “suppose I speak in Christ's name, and they will not hear?” Do not suppose what cannot be! The Scripture says of the chosen sheep,—“they shall hear my voice.” The rest remain in their blindness, but the redeemed will hear and see. Do not again say, “Suppose they will not!” You must not suppose anything that is contrary to what Jesus promises when he says, “They shall hear my voice.” The graceless may stop their ears if they will, and perish with Christ's voice as a witness against them, but his own redeemed shall hear the heavenly voice and obey it. There is no resisting this divine necessity: Jesus says—“I *must* bring them, and they *shall* hear my voice.” It was with this that Paul turned to the Gentiles, and said to the Jews, “Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.” He had no fear about the reception the word would meet with; neither ought we to entertain any, since Christ has a people who must be led, and shall hear the voice of the Bishop and Shepherd of souls.

We have heard it said that “If Christ *must* have his people, what is the good of preaching?” What would be the good of preaching if it were otherwise? Why, dear sir, this fact is one great reason why we preach. That which you suppose to be a motive for inaction is the strongest motive for energetic movement. Because the Lord has a people that must be saved we feel an imperious necessity laid upon us to join with him in bringing this people to himself. They *must* come, and we *must* fetch them: Christian brethren, do you not feel that you *must* help in compelling them to come to the wedding-feast? Is it not laid upon you that you *must* go after lost souls, that you *must* speak to them, seeing that you *must* have a hand in bringing these blood-bought ones to Christ by his Holy Spirit?

And again, are there not some in this place who feel a necessity laid upon them also that they *must* come? Do I not hear some of you saying, “I have stood out a long while, but I *must* come; I have resisted divine grace long enough, and now Christ has laid his hand on me, I *must* come.” How I wish that a heavenly “*must*,” a blessed necessity of omnipotent decree may overshadow you, and bear you as a sheep to the fold. Oh that you may now yield yourselves unto God because the love of Christ constraineth you. Submit yourselves unto God, owning the supreme authority of his grace, which shall lead every thought into captivity, that henceforth Christ may reign in your hearts, and put every enemy under his feet. He saith, “Him that cometh to

me I will in nowise cast out." "I will trust him," saith one; "I feel I must." Just so; and that trust is a mark of your election of God, for "He that believeth in him hath everlasting life." "Whom he did predestinate them he also called." If he is calling you it is because he did predestinate you; and you may rest quite sure of it, and yield to him with holy joy and delight. As for me, I feel so happy in preaching the gospel, because I am not fishing with a "chance" and a "perhaps" that some may come. The Lord knoweth them that are his, and they shall come. Every congregation is, in this sense, a picked assembly. I felt this morning when I came here that there were so many friends out in the country for the holidays that we should very likely have a thin house. I rejoice that I was altogether out in my reckoning, but even then I thought, God has a people that he will bring whom he means to bless. Here they are, and now while standing here I know that God's word "shall not return to him void, but it shall accomplish that which he pleases, and shall prosper in the thing whereto he hath sent it."

IV. But now, lastly, OUR LORD GUARANTEES THE UNITY OF HIS CHURCH. "Them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." We hear a great deal about the unity of the church, and notions upon this subject are rather wild. We are to have the Roman and the Greek and the Anglican church all joined together in one: if they were so, the result would not be worth two-pence; but much evil would come of it. God has, I doubt not, a chosen people amongst all these three great corporations, but the union of such questionable organizations would be a dire omen of mischief to the world: the dark ages, and a worse Popedom than ever, would soon be upon us. The more those three quarrel with each other the better for truth and righteousness. I should like to see the Anglican Church standing at drawn daggers with the Roman, and coming into a more and more open opposition to its superstitions. I would to God that the national church would in all things be delivered from the Pope of Rome and his Antichristian enormities.

Truly, this has been carried out as a matter of fact; there never was but one Shepherd of the sheep yet, even Christ Jesus; and there never was but one flock of God yet, and there never will be. There is one spiritual church of God, and there never were two. All the visible churches up and down the world contain within themselves parts of the one church of Jesus Christ, but there were never two bodies of Christ, and there cannot be. There is one church, and there is one Head of the church: the motto of Christianity is,—one flock and one Shepherd.

As a matter of experience this is carried out in believers. I do not care who the man is, if he is a truly spiritually-minded man he is one with all other spiritually-minded men. Those people in any visible church who have no grace are usually the greatest sticklers for every point of difference and ever particle of rite and form. Nominal professors are soon at war, quickened believers follow after peace. Of course, when a man has nothing else but the outside, he fights for it tooth and nail; but a man who loves the Lord, and lives near him, perceives the inner life in others, and has fellowship therewith: that inner life is one in all the quickened family, and compels them to be one in heart.

Set two brethren at prayer, the one a Calvinist and the other an Arminian, and they pray alike. Get a real work of the Spirit in a district and see how Baptists and Pædo-Baptists pull together. Tell out your inward experience and speak of the Spirit's work in the soul, and see how we are all moved thereby. Here is a brother, a member of the Society of Friends, and he likes silent worship; and here is another who enjoys hearty singing; but when they get near to God they do not quarrel over this, but agree to differ: the one says, "The Lord be with you in your holy silence," and the other prays that the Lord may accept his brother's psalm. All who are one with Christ have a certain family feeling, a higher form of clannishness, and they cannot shake it off. I have found myself reading a gracious book which has drawn me near to God, and though I have known that it was written by a man with whose opinions I had little agreement, I have not therefore refused to be edified by him in points which are unquestionably revealed. No, but I have blessed the Lord that, with all his blunders, he knew so much of precious vital truth, and lived so near his Lord. What Protestant can refuse to love the holy Bernard? Was there ever a more consecrated servant of God or a dearer lover of Christ than he? Yet he was most sorrowfully in bondage to the superstitions of his age and of the Romish Church. Are you not all one with him who sang—

"Jesus, the very thought of thee  
With sweetness fills my breast;  
But sweeter far thy face to see,  
And in Thy presence rest"?

The external church is needful, but it is not *the one and indivisible church of Christ*. Jesus as the life binds his church together, and that life flows through all the regenerate, even as the blood flows through all the veins of the body. Drop the external, and look by faith into the spiritual realm and you will see one flock and one Shepherd.

The practical lesson is, let us belong to that one flock. How are they known? Answer: they are a hearing flock—they hear the Lord and follow his lead. Be you one of those who listen to Christ's voice, and to none besides. Keep to the one Shepherd! How do you know him? It is Jesus: in his feet and hands are nail-prints, and his side bears yet the scar. He it is who leads the one only flock. Follow Jesus and you are right. Follow him everywhere and you are happy. The best way to promote the unity of the church is for all the sheep to follow the Shepherd. If they all follow the Shepherd they will all keep together. Let us go forth and try and do that, and let us long for that happy day when all disputed points shall be settled by all obeying the Lord. Compromises would only mean an agreement to disobey the Lord. Let no man yield a principle under pretence of charity: it is not charity to call falsehood truth. We must follow Jesus fully, and we shall come together. First pure then peaceable is the rule. Oh, when shall the triple banner again float over all,—"*One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism!*" Oh, God the Holy Ghost, forgive us our errors, and bring us to thy truth! Oh, God the Son, forgive us our want of holiness, and renew us in thine own image! Oh, God the Father, forgive us our want of love, and melt us into one family. To the one God be glory, in the one church, for ever and ever. Amen.