

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

EVANGELICAL CONGRATULATION.

A Sermon

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice; yea, and will rejoice.”—Philippians i. 18.

How Paul would have rejoiced had he been living now. Judging from the effect that was produced upon his mind by the evangelical labours at Rome, what think you, brethren, would have been the effect produced upon his mind by the evangelical labours in London? Because the brethren there were waxing bold in the name of Christ, he was glad. The fact that in the metropolis of the empire the glad tidings were proclaimed filled him with the profoundest satisfaction. His heart was, and his heart still would be, joyful in the Lord. And yet I take it that the ministry of the gospel in Rome must have been comparatively on a small and insignificant scale. I suppose that in proportion to the population and in proportion to the size of that city, the preaching must have been very circumscribed, and some things considered, considerably obscure. No preacher had lifted his voice from the terrace of the Capitol, no congregation had been gathered into the great area of the Colosseum, no public announcement had been made all over Rome, that if the people would flock to the Pantheon, they might hear about the incarnation of the Son of God. Anything like that would have kindled Paul's gladness into rapture. Christ preached out on the Campus Martius, or in the hall of Minerva, or on the platform of the Athenæum at Rome, would have left him nothing this side Paradise to desire. As it was, his cup was running over. Men were told in honest speech about the One who had come down from Heaven, who had come at the Father's bidding to proclaim His will and to accomplish his purposes. They had been told of a friend that “sticketh closer than a brother;” of the advocate and the mediator between God and man. And, the Spirit of all grace concurring with that which had been preached, the Apostle was fully persuaded in his own mind, that they had heard words whereby they would be saved, and that the promise of the life that now is, and the promise of the life that is to come, would by them be personally enjoyed. Hence he said, “I do rejoice,” and then emphatically again, “Yea, and I will rejoice.”

But how he would have rejoiced, or how he would rejoice if he were living now! Why, for every one man who preached the gospel in his time there are thousands who are preaching it now; for every hundred hearers of that day, there are thousands upon thousands now; and for every one place into which the citizens of Rome might go to hear about Christ and Him crucified, I need not say that there are many and ever multiplying places now. And you, my brethren—the pastor of this church and those connected with him—you have added to the number, thank God, of those places, and we are to-night to celebrate the completion of one, I suppose, of the best places that has ever been reared for the honour and for the glory of Christ. From the first day until now, from its foundation to its top-stone, you have begun and continued and ended: your desire, your prayer, your purpose, your ambition having been just simply this—that here the Redeemer's name may be magnified, that here His great salvation in all simplicity may be proclaimed. And we have come here to-night, to assure you of our sympathy, to give to you the pledges of our brotherly affection, and in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to bid you heartily God speed.

"Peace be within this sacred place,
And joy a constant guest;
With holy gifts and heavenly grace,
Be our attendance blessed."

Well, the apostle rejoiced, and would have rejoiced a great deal more had he occupied the place which I am occupying now. My purpose is to show to you to-night why there should be such rejoicing in connection with the preaching of Christ crucified.

Various reasons, of course, could be assigned; at least the several reasons could be thrown into various forms. I throw my idea of the matter into this form:—By the preaching of Christ the renovation of mankind is *intelligently proposed*, and not only so, but it is *graciously guaranteed*. Given—a ministry that shall speak out openly what Christ is, what Christ has done, what Christ is doing, what Christ requires, what Christ administers, and the renovation of our fellow man is not only intelligently proposed but is thereby on God's part graciously guaranteed. I rejoice that the very first text from which my brother has preached in this noble edifice was, though undesignedly, so singularly coincident with my own: "They ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ." The preaching and the teaching of Christ was the very first message with which he opened his service here, and I take that amongst other things to be a token for good.

I. In the first place, we rejoice in the preaching of Christ, because thereby **THE RENOVATION OF FALLEN MAN** is intelligently proposed.

High time, by common consent, that something was done in that direction. The foundations are out of course, everybody admits; and whilst many persons admit it, they also go about to suggest improvement, amendment, and cure. You will give me your attention whilst I recapitulate some of the projects which they suggest in order to the attainment of an end which is desired by us all. This is one suggestion:—Give the people, they say, a good, sound, secular education, impart to them the elements of knowledge, and when they are apprehended and understood, then educate and cultivate the corresponding results. Let them know about their own bodies and their own minds; let them know something about the chemistry of common life; let them know something about their relations to one another and to society at large, and then when you have done that, there is some hope that their renovation may be obtained. This is another suggestion:—Give to the people sound remunerative employment, recognize the right of every honest and industrious man to live, and then act upon your recognition by not preventing or interfering so that he cannot live. A fair day's wages, they say, for a fair day's work. The ample recompense for the unbegrudging toil. Save your countrymen from the dread of pauperism, and never insult them any more by the sanctimonious condescension of some of your so-called Christian charities. Let every man be enabled to earn his bread in the sweat of his brow, and thus you may hope that their renovation will be obtained. This is another suggestion:—Confer upon them honourable enfranchisement. Barring the criminal and the imbecile, esteem every man throughout the country to be a free man. If you expect him to pay the tribute, give him a voice in the imposition of that tribute; and let him be regarded by yourselves and equally with yourselves, and in all practical respects touching the commonwealth let him be regarded as a free man, and then you may hope that the renovation so desirable will be obtained. This is another suggestion:—Take care to raise them into better and more civilized habits. See where they live; see how they eat and drink; mark their demeanour one towards another, and towards the community at large. Change all that, or get them to change it, so that they shall prefer cleanliness to filth, frugality to wastefulness, the seemly garment to the rotten rags, and the well-ventilated and the well-lighted apartment to the mouldy attic in the roof, or to the dark pestiferous, rotten cellar underground; and when you have done that, you may hope that so far their renovation will be obtained. And this is another suggestion:—Let the people have their tastes cultivated. Introduce them to the great works of ancient and modern art, throw open your museums, take them into your picture-galleries, admit them into your artistic and your antique saloons, fire their love for the beautiful, kindle it yet more brightly and more brightly still, insure their rejection of the base through their predilection for the refined, and accomplish their abhorrence of the grovelling through their rapture with the sublime, and when you have done that, you have done much to obtain the renovation that we all desire.

I believe these are the great suggestions of the men who designate themselves, and I respectfully regard their designation, as the philosophical philanthropists. These are the suggestions which those men make; and they say, get all such things done, and then you will have society just what society ought to be both in regard to God and in regard to man. But now, can you look at these suggestions for a single moment without marking a most fatal defect throughout them all? They tell you about dealing with a man externally, but not a word about dealing with him internally. He is to be better cultured, better dressed, better housed, and all that, but as to the man, the subject of all that we are talking about, as for him essentially and inherently considered, there is nothing done whatever, and after all that philosophy and philanthropy together have accomplished, the man's heart is just what it was before. Well, I say in any company, in any place, what I say here, that if you leave the man's natural heart untouched, you may culture and cultivate him as you may, there is that which will laugh all your culture and all your cultivation to scorn. If a man's heart be right, his life will be right; if a man's heart be right in its relations towards God and towards man his life will be right, but not else. And no man's heart on earth is right. No! there is a universal, an absolute and unvarying necessity, as our Lord brought it out so distinctly with Nicodemus, "You must be born again." "You must be born again;" and choosing as we do to sit at his feet, we accept the great oracular deliverance from heaven, and authorised by that, we pronounce that all the suggestions which I have referred to are nothing worth. No, my brethren; to educate the people is expedient, to remunerate them incumbent, to enfranchise them desirable, to civilize them important, and to cultivate their tastes, if you will, laudable in all respects; but if you were to do all that to-morrow with every man, and women, and child in England, you have not put them into their right position, you have not inspired them with the right dispositions, you have not set them on the prosecution of the right career. A man may be educated and yet licentious; he may be well paid and yet vindictive; he may be enfranchised and yet covetous; he may be civilized in all his habits, and yet intemperate; he may be a man of cultivated taste, and yet he may have no love for his neighbour and no love for his God.

Why, what dishonesties, what startling dishonesties, have been perpetrated by men who have had all the benefits of our foremost colleges and of our first-rate schools! What debaucheries, what fearful debaucheries, have been perpetrated by men whose barns have been filled with plenty and whose presses have burst out with new wine! What inhumanities, what cruel inhumanities, have been perpetrated by men who have boasted and who have blustered, and who have brawled that they were free! What falsehoods, what shameful, incredible falsehoods, have been perpetrated by men who have been clothed in purple and fine linen, and have fared sumptuously every day! And what profanities, gross and blasphemous, have been perpetrated by men who have been the warmest admirers of Michael Angelo and Rubens, and who have been amongst the choicest of your connoisseurs, the very choicest of them in art! I need not adduce the evidence. It would insult and grieve the congregation if I did. Everybody here knows how that evidence accumulates. No, no, education and morality are not coincident—competence and morality are not coincident—civilization and morality are not coincident—liberty and morality are not coincident—and refined and cultivated tastes are not coincident with morality, so that if you have the one you are sure to have the other. Brethren, you may deal with man's external condition as scientifically as you can, and with his character—so far as the outward character goes—as philosophically as you can; but, as I said before, there is an underlying aboriginal peculiarity of his nature that laughs all your science and your philosophy to scorn. You cannot turn his condition into a paradise, you cannot convert him into a king and a priest unto God. Everywhere, without the exception of a land under heaven, and without the exception of an individual under heaven, men need the clean heart and the right spirit,—the new creation in Christ Jesus. They are dead in trespasses and sins; and they must be made alive unto God ere you will get for them the renovation or the improvement which is so much desired. Hence my rejoicing, and hence, as I believe, Paul's rejoicing, were he here, because of the preaching in a commodious place like this, because of the preaching of Christ. Brethren, it will be preaching that goes down to the bottom of things; it will be preaching that deals not with the symptoms but with the sources of human guilt; it will be preaching that takes all

profanity and debauchery, and dishonesty, and inhumanity, and falsehood, and deals with them, mark, not in their overt acts, so much as in their rudimental germs. My brother's preaching here will declare that if you could do all which our philosophic philanthropy desiderates, man would go wrong and be wrong, and presently would actually go on to justify and to glory in the wrong. It will be the preaching, in one word, that declares the absolute necessity of a new creation, of a new creation in Christ Jesus. It will deal not with conjecture but with certainty, not with theories but with facts, not with experiments but with realities, not with the words which man's wisdom teacheth but with the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth; it will deal not with the superficial, temporary, partial amendment, but intentionally at least with a profound, a radical, a fundamental, an everlasting cure. The preaching will never ignore one peculiarity of our nature because it is embarrassing, nor overlook another because it is inconvenient, nor tremble at another because it happens to be possessed of some authority and power. I anticipate and rejoice. Here will stand the preacher to declare in the good mother tongue of us all that the tree is bad, but that by God's grace it can be made good; that men are living unto themselves, but that by God's grace they can be brought to live unto Him; that the divine image is defaced, but that that divine image can be restored; that where sin is reigning even unto death, there grace may reign instead, through righteousness, even unto everlasting life; and therein we do rejoice, and if you be of my mind therein to-night we will all rejoice. Think of the place, look around it, conceive of it devoted to a purpose like this, and with tendencies and probabilities—for I am speaking only of these now—with tendencies and probabilities like these before our minds, is there a man or a woman listening to me who does not lift up his heart and rejoice and thank God now? Oh, I see the banner floating here that will be displayed because of the truth. I hear the trumpet blowing here that will proclaim the message of God's own mercies to man; I see the embassy going on here touching reconciliation between God and man, and I see the confederacies of Christian brotherhood here provoking one another to love and to good works. Our country will be the better for the place; we shall be relieved of our pauperism after all, and saved from our licentiousness, and rescued from our immorality. Aye, and we shall be rescued too from the superstition that would endanger our immortality by its sacerdotal, and wicked, and mischief-making tendencies; from the superstition that would put our immortality in jeopardy; and from the atheism that would laugh that immortality to scorn. It will be that our own land, so happy amid the nations of the earth already, shall be the royal habitation of righteousness, and joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost. Christ is preached. He has been preached here to-day already, and "therein I do rejoice, yea, and I will rejoice."

II. Secondly, we rejoice in the preaching of Christ, because thereby the renovation in question is GRACIOUSLY GUARANTEED.

There can be conceived of by us all wise and sagacious plans, that may, nevertheless, be frustrated when all comes to all by unknown and unperceived opposition. There are men all round about us who say, "Yes, and you ought to remember that and hold your peace, for just as beyond any question civilization will fail, so Christianity will fail likewise." And they have apparently a case; let us look at it. They say, "What can you do there?" and then they point us to the masses rising up early, sitting up late, eating the bread of carefulness, if in hundreds of cases they can get the bread to eat. "What can you do there?" they say, and then they point us to our merchants, our physicians, our statesmen, our artisans, our bankers, who are all with one accord apparently looking for what they preposterously call the main chance. "What can you do there?" they say, and then they point us to religious assemblies, where superstition and formalism have everything their own way, and where, because of sacramental rites performed upon unconscious infants, people are told that they are members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven. "What can you do there?" they say, and then they point us—alas! how they can point us—to multitudes whose licentiousness and profligacy are gradationally gross, and perhaps to quite as many multitudes whose licentiousness is gradationally refined, and then they say, "Now look at them, look round and tell us whether such ones will ever be prevailed upon to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly,

righteously, and godly in this present world?" and they take our own utterance, our own Scripture, and they say, "You may well enough call them 'dead in trespasses and sins.'" Brethren, we looked at the other case; let us look at this. I own that there are about it indications that ought to make every thoughtful Christian man a great deal more thoughtful, and a great deal more Christian too. Oh! the domination of ungodliness is desperate, and its tyranny is terrific, and its sagacity is superhuman, and its mastery of man is malignant in the last degree. How one stands sometimes and looks at it dismayed! If it would be content to take what is in itself inherently abominable, it would not be so bad. But it comes and takes what is in itself inherently amiable and moral, and with that it tries to do the work of death. It takes our legitimate occupations, and makes them a decoy to irreligiousness; it takes the amenities of our social life and perverts them to ungodliness; it takes the great charities of our homes and makes them antagonistic to devotion; ay, and it goes to the very altar of God and it makes the sacred and solemn ordinances of the church an opiate, pleasant enough, but dreadfully and fatally poisonous to the soul. So, I look as they bid me look, and then bethink myself of all the particulars and resources of my case again; and as I do so I say, "Your premises apparently are sound, but your conclusion is altogether unsound; the church is not always to be second to the world; Christ is not always to be resisted by the devil." No, no, my brethren, the church is to take precedence of the world; Christ is to be triumphant obviously and before the world; psalms and hymns and songs of praise are to come up into the ascendant, and knees are to bow and tongues are to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. And for believing like that, in the face of such a case, I offer these as my reasons.

1. With the preaching of Christ, God has formally connected the exertion of his power. "With God all things are possible." I sometimes apprehend that good men are forgetful of this, and they are for lying down and dying as though God had somehow or other ceased to be able to do everything. "With God all things are possible;" and should he gird his sword upon his thigh, should he go about to shew himself strong, I ask what are the world, the flesh, and the devil in their worst combinations then? What adversary would not succumb then, what adversary would not become a friend? "Yes," you say, "almightiness in action would do all that we require." Brethren, I speak of almightiness in action now; it is not simply that in this place there will be the message of God; along with that message there will be God himself. It is not that the word will be preached merely, but of his own will God will beget men by the word. It is not simply that the gospel will be proclaimed, but that that gospel is the power of God unto salvation. My brother will not stand here as the statesman stands in the senate house, or the advocate at the bar, or the lecturer on the platform of an Athenæum. He will stand here, I doubt not, as well accoutred and well furnished as they are mentally, intellectually, and so on; but eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures, as he or any other man may be, it is neither that eloquence, nor that might will effect the end. These things, and the things like unto them, are the vehicles through which God sends down his blessing, the instrumentalities by which God accomplishes his work, just the means and medium by which it pleases God to work. He will stand here a fellow-worker with God, so that the word will be in demonstration of the spirit and in power. Mark, the human will be confirmed by the super-human, the natural will be accompanied by the preter-natural, the earthly will be helped and succoured and blessed by the divine. With all that may be persuasive or argumentative or pathetic, with all that may be properly and intentionally adapted to commend the truth to every man's conscience in the sight of God, there will be the energy whereby God is able to subdue all things unto himself. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." And so in the face of all that seems to be opposed to us, we do rejoice, and we will rejoice, because God's own channel for the communication of his power is the preaching of Christ.

2. Secondly, with the preaching of Christ, God has been pleased formally to associate the accomplishment of his purposes. He has his purposes. "God so loved the world, that he sent his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life." The Lord told Paul at Corinth, when Paul was all but giving way to our common unbelief, he told him to stay there, and not to hold his peace. Why? "Because I have much people in

this city." And emboldened and encouraged by that, he stayed there a year and six months. Well, those purposes which thus come out in the Scriptures of truth which are possessed by us,—those purposes are to be accomplished. "By two immutable things in which it is impossible that God should lie, his Son is to see of the travail of his soul until he be satisfied. God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." But now, how are those purposes accomplished? Mark! "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned." Mark again, "It hath pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Mark again, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed, how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher?" Mark again, "There is one mediator between God and man—the man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Whereof I am ordained a preacher." See you not my drift? The preaching, obviously, demonstratively, stands connected with the purpose, which cannot fail; bound up with the everlasting covenant, which is ordered in all things and sure. "The word of the Lord endureth for ever, and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." I think therefore of our friend occupying this place, and of other men occupying similar places, and I take up with Paul's Jubilate again. He will stand here and this will be the plea, "As though God did beseech you by me." That will be the plea, "As though God did beseech you by me." And speak I to men to-night who do not understand as soon as they reflect how such a plea must chasten the preacher; how it must humble and yet dignify him; how, if he has a soul, it must bring out his soul and all that is within; "God by me beseeching you." What man so affected and impressed can be careless, heedless, prayerless, selfish? Oh! the plea does wonderful work for the minister. And what does it do for a people who will listen? Why, it arrests them, takes hold upon them, keeps hold of them, and God being present with his blessing never lets them go. And what does it do in regard to the Spirit of all grace, the author and giver of all the gifts we want? That plea adopted, earnestly and devoutly used, will bring the preacher into the fullest sympathy with the Holy Spirit of promise; as he stands here pleading, expostulating, comforting, encouraging, warning,—with the plea moving everything within him and everything around him, the divine purposes are recollected, and they are accomplished, until he and the brotherhood will have to say, "Who hath begotten us these? the young men and maidens, the old men and children, and the strangers that are within your gates." Aye! and let us hope, that some of you who have heard all the sermons hitherto and have never surrendered yourselves to Christ yet, that you will be given to them in answer to their prayer; not the units but the groups, not the individuals but the many, born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Oh! what will this place be then? Brethren, the angels will have large employment in this Tabernacle, heaven will have much to do in what is passing here. "For God is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent. Hath he said it and shall he not do it, hath he spoken and shall he not make it good?" Of him, and through him, and to him are all things, and he will come and stand by our brother here, proving himself to be "God over all, blessed for evermore."

3. Then, lastly, God has been pleased formally to identify the preaching of Christ with the manifestation of his sympathies.

Why, we could tell of much already—we could tell of much which has been done in our own time, and not upon a small scale either. But let us rather remember what God did in the earlier times of our evangelical history. What happened at Jerusalem? Believers were the more added unto the Lord, multitudes both of men and women, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." What happened at Ephesus? The name of the Lord Jesus Christ was glorified, and the men who had used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men, and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver." What happened all through Macedonia? "God maketh us," said the Apostle, "to triumph everywhere in Christ." And what happened upon the larger scale through proud and philosophic Greece and through lordly and domineering Rome? Why, we have it on the testimony of our enemies, that the preaching turned the

world upside down. The preaching did, mind. Before the preacher came, everything was earthly, and sensual, and devilish; after the preacher came, there was the alteration, the improvement, the renovation of which we speak. Not by the preacher's unassisted, original, independent effort, for the excellency of the power was of God and not of man. Mighty through God were the preachers throughout Greece, and Rome, and Asia Minor; and mighty too through God will be the preacher here. Say that London is as corrupt as Corinth was, that it is as worldly as Rome was, that it is as rationalistic as Athens was, that it is as dead set against Christ and his gospel as Jerusalem was, and you cannot very well say more than that: yet he that stood by the preacher in those places, and in those times, will stand by the preacher here. "Go, go, stand and speak in the temple all the words of this life." On Sabbath mornings he will hear that, and at other times besides, and when his courage and his heart may fail, he will hear besides, "Go, for I have much people in this city;" and so sent, he comes, and so coming, what ensues? Participat'ion of the Divine nature is vouchsafed unto the people, sympathy with the Divine purposes is induced within the people, communications of Divine grace are given to the people, life everlasting becomes possessed by the people; "heirs of God" are they, and "joint heirs in Jesus Christ." And what then?—as to anything of which the world can take cognizance. If these great spiritual, evangelical, everlasting results are so accomplished, what as to the evidence of which the world can take notice? Brethren, I speak boldly as I ought to speak. It is a vile and wicked calumny that our doctrines of grace lead to licentiousness. Never was there anything more palpably contrary to the truth; and all the history of the Church being my proof to-night, where Christ is preached as he ought to be preached, after the apostolic manner, neither licentiousness, nor wickedness of any kind, will abound there. No, there will be honest dealing, kindly neighbourhood, patriotic loyalty, world-wide philanthropy, truth-telling speech; there will be a race of men loving God with all their hearts, and *therefore* their neighbour as themselves. You cannot alter that order; you will never get a man to love his neighbour as himself till he has loved God first of all; and what we are looking for, and hoping and praying for being done, that order will supervene here. Loving the Lord their God with all their hearts, therefore the people will love their neighbours as themselves; and not being the amended ones but the regenerated ones, not being the improved ones but the twice-born ones, not being the corrected ones but the newly-created ones: the law will have no need to arm itself for them, justice will never need to be on the alert for them, humanity will never need to tremble for them,—no, and the purest chastity will never need to blush for them. Their bodies will be the temples of the Holy Ghost, and their members will be the members of Christ, sacred to His service in every way in which they can be employed. The tree having been made good, there will be fruit unto holiness, and the end of that shall be everlasting life. Well then, who does not rejoice? Everybody responds, "I rejoice." We all rejoice because of what will be done by the preaching of Christ here. We know that the place will be the birthplace of precious souls through successive generations; we know that the place will be like a great big human heart, throbbing, pulsating with beneficence and benevolence, obtained directly from the cross of Christ; and this great big human heart will be propelling far and near a thousand of influences, which shall be for "glory to God in the highest, for peace on earth, and good will towards men." It will be none other than the house of God and the very gate of heaven.

If indeed the preaching were of another kind from what we know it will be, it would be a very different thing. If I thought the preaching here was to be the preaching of Christ robbed of His divinity; the pure and perfect man to admiration, but not the co-equal and the co-eternal Son of God: I should not rejoice; but I know that it will be preaching in which Christ's proper deity will be spoken out unambiguously, and unequivocally, and systematically, that He will be declared here to be the friend that "sticketh closer than a brother," and at the same time our Lord and our God. If I thought that the preaching here was to be the preaching of Christ as an example merely, and not as a sacrifice, or as a sacrifice in some vague, indeterminate, rationalistic, deceitful, false sense of submitting His own will to His Father's, I should not rejoice; but I believe that it will be the preaching of Christ's propitiatory sacrifice, as a proper sin-offering, and that these words will bring out the aspect of the case as presented here:—

"He bore that we might never bear
His Father's righteous ire."

If I thought that the preaching here was to be the preaching of Christ with any hesitancy as to His power, or His readiness to save the transgressor, I should not rejoice; but I believe that there will be no approach to such hesitancy, that it will be Christ with His precious blood cleansing from all sin, Christ able to save even to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. If I believed that it would be the preaching of Christ independently or apart from His jurisdiction; if I thought it would be represented here that Christ had nothing to do with the lives and the conduct of His people: I should not rejoice; but I believe on the contrary that His royal and kingly character will be insisted upon, and that every believer will be told, "At your peril do you make Christ the minister of sin." If I believed that the preaching here was about to be at variance with the scholarship, the thoughtfulness, the uprightness, the spiritual-mindedness, of the past ages of the Church, I should not rejoice. I believe, on the contrary, that it will be preaching in strictest harmony with the sound evangelical scholarship, and with the lofty evangelical integrity, and with the concordant evangelical orthodoxy of all the ages that are past. I stand here as I would stand in some other places that I know to resent the imputation, and to show cause, if need be, for the resentment that in preaching Christ as we do, we have no scholarship, no talent, no honesty, no spiritual-mindedness on our part. Brethren, it is not so. I speak unto wise men, and ask you to judge what I say.

If I believed that the preaching here would regard all godly mystery as a scandal, and all godly boldness as a calamity, and all godly aggressiveness as a nuisance, and all godly joyfulness as an offence, I certainly could not rejoice; but I believe that the preaching here will hold all godly mystery in veneration, will strengthen and enforce all godly boldness, will honourably vindicate all godly aggressiveness, and will give, on behalf of godly joyfulness, the conclusive argumentation and the kindly and the pathetic appeal; and so believing, I ask again whether we shall not close our gathering, our service to-night, with one great song and psalm of thanksgiving to the Lord our God.

The maxim, the watchword, the war-cry here will be Revelation, not intuition; Faith, not imagination; the Scriptures, not tradition; the Gospel, not philosophy; the Person, not the proxy; Grace, not merit; the Cross, not the crucifix; the Saviour, not the Church. I, believing that, and knowing that, hearing indeed from all the brotherhood constituting the Church here, a great, unanimous, hearty, irrepressible amen, as I am thus speaking on their behalf, let us, I say, take the cup of salvation and let us call upon the name of the Lord. There may be others, I dare say there are, who have to sing the melancholy dirge—we have to sing the exultant psalm. They may, if they will, chant the lamentable elegy—we mean to chant the triumphant canticle. They may go and perform, if they must, the service for the dead—we come here to celebrate the great festival of a living Gospel, a living Church, and a living Saviour.

"Let the vain world pronounce it shame,
And fling their scandals on Thy cause;
We come to boast our Saviour's name,
And make our triumphs in His cross.

"With joy we tell a scoffing age,
He that was dead has left the tomb;
He lives above their utmost rage,
And we are waiting till He come."

Christ is preached: therein I do rejoice, and therein I will rejoice. And now, brethren, let us have the rejoicing in a joyous collection. I catch that response of yours, and I catch it as an honest man with his eye upon honest men; and if you go—in the main, at all events—with what I have been saying now, I ask you that you will give the evidence of your sympathy with me, and then and thereby the evidence of your sympathy with our brethren, in just making your collection to-night the outward and the visible sign of a gladness of your inmost soul, which amounts, approximately at least, to the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory.