

# Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

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JOHN'S FIRST DOXOLOGY.

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## A Sermon

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 2ND, 1883, BY

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AT EXETER-HALL.

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“Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”—Revelation i. 5, 6.

JOHN had hardly begun to deliver his message to the seven churches, he had hardly given in his name and stated from whom the message came, when he felt that he must lift up his heart in a joyful doxology. The very mention of the name of the Lord Jesus, “the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth,” fired his heart. He could not sit down coolly to write even what the Spirit of God dictated: he must rise; he must fall upon his knees; he must bless and magnify, and adore the Lord Jesus. This text is just the upward burst of a great geyser of devotion. John’s spirit has been quiet for awhile, but on a sudden the stream of his love to Jesus leaps forth like a fountain, rising so high that it would seem to bedew heaven itself with its sparkling column of crystal love. Look at the ascending flood as you read the words, “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

Now, in the matter of this bursting out of devotion at unexpected times, John is one among the rest of the apostles. Their love to their divine Master was so intense that they had only to hear his footfall and their pulse began to quicken, and if they heard his voice, then were they carried clean away: whether in the body or out of the body, they could not tell, but they were under constraint to magnify the Saviour’s name; whatever they were doing they felt compelled to pause at once, to render direct and distinct homage unto the Lord Jesus by adoration and doxology. Observe how Paul breaks forth into doxologies: “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.” Again: “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.” The like is true of Jude, who cries: “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his

glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." The apostles overflowed with praise.

This explains to me, I think, those texts which bid us "rejoice evermore," "bless the Lord at all times," and "pray without ceasing": these do not mean that we are always to be engaged in devotional exercises, for that would cause a neglect of other duties. The very apostle who bids us "pray without ceasing," did a great many other things beside praying; and we should certainly be very faulty if we shut ourselves up in our private chambers, and there continued perpetually upon our knees. Life has other duties, and necessary ones; and in attending to these we may render to our God the truest worship: to cease to work in our callings in order to spend all our time in prayer would be to offer to God one duty stained with the blood of many others. Yet we may "pray without ceasing," if our hearts are always in such a state that at every opportunity we are ready for prayer and praise; better still, if we are prepared to make opportunities, if we are instant in season and out of season, and ready in a moment to adore and supplicate. If not always soaring, we may be as birds ready for instant flight: always with wings, if not always on the wing. Our hearts should be like beacons made ready to be fired. When invasion was expected in the days of Queen Elizabeth, piles of wood and combustible material were laid ready on the tops of certain hills, and watchmen stood prepared to kindle the piles should there be notice given that the ships of the enemy were in the offing. Everything was in waiting. The heap was not made of damp wood, neither had they to go and seek kindling; but the fuel waited for the match. The watch-fire was not always blazing, but it was always ready to shoot forth its flame. Have ye never read, "Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion"? So let our hearts be prepared to be fired with adoring praise by one glimpse of the Redeemer's eyes; to be all on a blaze with delightful worship with one touch from that dear, pierced hand. Anywhere, wherever we may be, may we be clad in the robes of reverence, and be ready at once to enter upon the angelic work of magnifying the Lord our Saviour. We cannot be always singing, but we may be always full of gratitude, and this is the fabric of which true psalms are made.

This spontaneous outburst of John's love is what I am going to preach upon this morning. First of all I shall ask you to consider *the condition of heart out of which such outbursts come*, and then we will look more closely at *the outburst itself*; for my great desire is that you and I may often be thus transported into praise, carried off into ecstatic worship. I long that our hearts may be like Eolian harps through which each wind as it sweeps on its way makes charming music. As roses are ready to shed their perfume, so may we be eager to praise God; so much delighting in the blessed exercise of adoration that we shall plunge into it when colder hearts do not expect us to do so. I have read of Mr. Welch, a minister in Suffolk, that he was often seen to be weeping, and when asked why, he replied that he wept because he did not love Christ more. May not many of us weep that we do not praise him more? Oh that our meditation may be used of the Holy Spirit to help us in that direction!

I. First, let us look at THE CONDITION OF HEART OUT OF WHICH OUTBURSTS of adoration arise.

Who was this man who when he was beginning to address the churches must needs lay down his pen to praise the Saviour? We will learn the character of the man from his own devout language. We shall see his inmost self here, for he is carried off his feet, and speaks out his very heart in the most unguarded manner. We shall now see him as he is, and learn what manner of persons we must be if, like him, we would overflow with praise. It would be easy to talk at great length about John from what we know of his history from other parts of Scripture; but at this time I tie myself down to the words of the text, and I notice, first, that this man of doxologies, from whom praise flashes forth like light from the rising sun, is first of all *a man who has realized the person of his Lord*. The first word is, "Unto *him*;" and then he must a second time before he has finished say, "To *him* be glory and dominion." His Lord's person is evidently before his eye. He sees the actual Christ upon the throne. The great fault of many professors is that Christ is to them a character upon paper; certainly more than a myth, but yet a person of the dim past, an historical personage who lived many years ago, and did most admirable deeds, by the which we are saved, but who is far from being a living, present, bright reality. Many think of Jesus as gone away, they know not whither, and he is little more actual and present to them than Julius Cæsar or any other remarkable personage of antiquity. We have a way, somehow, a very wicked way it is, of turning the facts of Scripture into romances, exchanging solidities for airy notions, regarding the august sublimities of faith as dreamy, misty fancies, rather than substantial matters of fact. It is a grand thing personally to know the Christ of God as a living existence, to speak into his ear, to look into his face, and to understand that we abide in him, and that he is ever with us, even to the end of the world. Jesus was no abstraction to John; he loved him too much for that. Love has a great vivifying power: it makes our impressions of those who are far away from us very lifelike, and brings them very near. John's great, tender heart could not think of Christ as a cloudy conception; but he remembered him as that blessed One with whom he had spoken, and on whose breast he had leaned. You see that is so, for his song rises at once to the Lord's own self, beginning with, "*Unto HIM.*"

He makes us see Jesus in every act of which he speaks in his doxology. It runs thus: "Unto *him* that loved us." It is not "Unto the love of God," an attribute, or an influence, or an emotion; but it is "Unto *him* that loved us." I am very grateful for love, but more grateful to him who gives the love. Somehow, you may speak of love and eulogize it; but if you know it only in the abstract what is it? It neither warms the heart nor inspires the spirit. When love comes to us from a known person, then we value it. David had not cared for the love of some unknown warrior, but how greatly he prized that of Jonathan, of which he sang, "Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women!" Sweet is it to sing of love; but sanctified hearts delight still more to sing, "Unto *him* that loved us."

So, too, with the washing from sin. It is enough to make us sing

of pardoning mercy for ever and ever if we have been cleansed from sin ;” but the centre of the joy is to adore him “that washed us from our sins in his own blood.” Observe that he cleansed us, not by some process outside of himself, but by the shedding of his own blood of reconciliation. It brings the blood-washing into the highest estimation with the heart when we look into the wounds from whence the atonement flowed, when we gaze upon that dear visage so sadly marred, that brow so grievously scarred, and even peer into the heart which was pierced by the spear for us to furnish a double cleansing for our sin. “Unto him that washed us.” The disciples were bound to love the hands that took the basin and poured water on their feet, and the loins which were girt with the towel for their washing ; and we, brethren, must do the same. But as for the washing with his own blood, how shall we ever praise him enough? Well may we sing the new song, saying, “Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.” This puts body and weight into our praise when we have realized *him*, and understood how distinctly these precious deeds of love as well as the love itself come from him whose sacred heart is all our own.

So, too, if we are “kings and priests,” it is Jesus who has made us so.

“Round the altar priests confess :  
If their robes are white as snow,  
'Twas the Saviour's righteousness  
And his blood that made them so,”

Our royal dignity and our priestly sanctity are both derived from him. Let us not only behold the streams, but also consider the source. Bow before the blessed and only Potentate who doth encrown and enthrone us, and extol the faithful high-priest who doth enrobe and anoint us. See the divine actor in the grand scene, and remember that he ever liveth, and therefore to him should we render perpetual glory. John worships the Lord himself. His mind is not set upon his garments, his crowns, his offices, or his works, but upon himself, his very self. “I SAW HIM,” says the beloved apostle, and that vision almost blotted out the rest. His heart was all for Jesus. The censer must smoke *unto him*, the song must rise *unto him*;—unto himself, unto his very self.

I pray that every professor here may have a real Christ, for otherwise he will never be a real Christian. I want you to recognize in this realization of Christ by John this teaching,—that we are to regard our holy faith as based on facts and realities. We have not followed cunningly-devised fables. Do you believe in the divine life of Christ? Do you also believe that he who is “very God of very God” actually became incarnate and was born at Bethlehem? Do you put down the union of the Godhead with our humanity as an historical fact which has the most potent bearing upon all the history of mankind? Do you believe that Jesus lived on earth and trod the blessed acres of Judæa, toiling for our sake, and that he did actually and really die on the behalf of sinners? Do you believe that he was buried, and on the third day rose again from the dead? Are these stories in a book or facts in the life of a familiar friend? To me it is the grandest fact in all history, that the Son of God died and rose again from the dead, and ever lives as my representative. Many statements in history are

well attested, but no fact in human records is one half as well attested as the certain resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This is no invention, no fable, no parable, but a literal fact, and on it all the confidence of the believer leans. If Christ is not risen, then your faith is vain; but as he surely rose again, and is now at the right hand of God, even the Father, and will shortly come to be our judge, your faith is justified, and shall in due season have its reward. Get a religion of facts and you will have a religion which will produce facts by operating upon your life and character; but a religion of fancies is but a fancied religion, and nothing practical will come of it.

To have a real, personal Christ is to get good anchor-hold for love, and faith, and hope. Somehow men cannot love that which is not tangible. That which they cannot apprehend they do not love. When I was about to commence the Orphanage at Stockwell, a gentleman who had had very large experience in an excellent orphanage, said to me, "Begin by never expecting to receive the slightest gratitude from the parents of the children, and you will not be disappointed;" for, said he, "I have been connected with a certain orphanage," which he mentioned, "for a great many years, and except in the rarest case I have never seen any tokens of gratitude in any of the mothers whose children have been received." Now, my experience is very different. I have had a great many grips of the hand which meant warm thanks, and I have seen the tears start from the mother's eye full often, and many a grateful letter have I received because of help given to the orphan children. How do I explain the difference? Not that our Orphanage has done more than the other; but the other Orphanage is conducted by a Committee with no well-known head, and hence it is somewhat of an abstraction; the poor women do not know who is to be thanked, and consequently thank nobody. In our own case the poor people say to themselves, "Here is Mr. Spurgeon, and he took our children into the Orphanage." They recognize in me the outward and visible representative of the many generous hearts that help me. They know me, for they can see me, and they say, "God bless you," because they have someone to say it to. There is nothing particular about me, certainly, and there are others who deserve far more gratitude than that which comes to me; but it does come to me because the poor people know the name and the man, and have not to look at a mere abstraction. Pardon the illustration: it suits my purpose well. If you have a Christ whom you cannot realize you will not love him with that fervent affection which is so much to be desired. If you cannot reach the Lord in your mind, you will not embrace him in your heart; but if you have realized the blessed Master, if he has become a true existence to you, one who has really loved you and washed you from your sins, and made you a king and a priest, then your love must flow out towards him. You cannot resist the impulse to love one who has so truly loved you, and is so well known to you.

This also gives foothold to faith. If you know the Lord Jesus you feel that you can trust him. "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee." Those to whom Christ has become a well-known friend do not find it difficult to trust him in the time of their distress. An unknown Christ is untrusted; but when the Holy Spirit reveals Jesus he also breeds

faith. By the same means, your hope also becomes vivid, for you say, "Oh, yes; I know Jesus, and I am sure that he will keep his word. He has said, 'I will come again and receive you unto myself;' and I am sure that he will come, for it is not like him to deceive his own chosen." Hope's eyes are brightened as she thinks of Jesus and realizes him as loving to the end; in him believing, she rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory. To love, to trust, to hope, are all easy in the presence of a real living Christ; but if, like the disciples at midnight on the Galilean lake, we think him to be a mere spectre or apparition, we shall be afraid, and cry out for fear. Nothing will suffice a real Christian but a real Christ.

Next, the apostle John, in whom we note this outburst of devotion, was a man *firmly assured of his possession* of the blessings for which he praised the Lord. Doubt has no outbursts; its chill breath freezes all things. Oh for more assurance! Nowadays we hear Christian people talk in this way:—"Unto him that we hope has loved us, and that we humbly trust has washed us, and that we sometimes believe has made us kings, unto him be glory." Alas! the doxology is so feeble that it seems to imply as little glory as you like. The fact is, if you do not know that you have a blessing, you do not know whether you ought to be grateful for it or not; but when a man knows he has covenant mercies, that divine assurance which the Holy Ghost gives to Christians works in him a sacred enthusiasm of devotion to Jesus. He knows what he enjoys, and he blesses him from whom the enjoyment comes. I would have you, beloved, know beyond all doubt that Jesus is yours, so that you can say without hesitation, "He loved me and gave himself for me." You will never say, "Thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee," unless you are first established upon the point that Jesus loves you; for "we love him because he first loved us." John was certain that he was loved, and he was furthermore most clear that he was washed, and therefore he poured forth his soul in praise. Oh to know that you are washed from your sins in the blood of Jesus! Some professors seem half afraid to say that they are cleansed; but oh, my hearer, if you are a believer in Jesus, the case is clear, for "there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus"! "He that believeth in him hath everlasting life." "He that believeth in him is justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses." "Ye are clean," saith Christ. "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit;" and "Ye are clean."

"O how sweet to view the flowing  
Of the Saviour's precious blood!  
With divine assurance, knowing  
He has made my peace with God."

This well-grounded assurance will throw you into ecstasy, and it will not be long before the deep of your heart will well up with fresh springs of adoring love. Then shall you also praise the Lord with some such words as these: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Once more. I think we have brought out two points which are clear enough. John had realized his Master, and firmly grasped the blessings which his Master brought him; but *he had also felt*, and was feeling very strongly, *his communion with all the saints*. Notice the use of the plural pronoun. We should not have wondered if he had said, "Unto him that loved *me*, and washed *me* from my sins in his own blood." Somehow there would have been a loss of sweetness had the doxology been so worded, and it would have hardly sounded like John. John is the very mirror of love, and he cannot live alone, or rejoice in sacred benefits alone. John must have all the brotherhood round about him, and he must speak in their name, or he will be as one bereft of half himself. Beloved, it is well for you and me to use this "us" very often. There are times when it is better to say "me," but in general let us get away to the "us"; for has not our Lord taught us when we pray to say, "Our Father which art in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; forgive us our trespasses," and so on? Jesus does not bid us say, "My Father." We do say it, and it is well to say it; but yet our usual prayers must run in the "Our Father" style; and our usual praises must be, "Unto him that loved *us*, and washed *us* from our sins." Let me ask you, beloved brethren, do you not love the Lord Jesus all the better and praise him all the more heartily because his grace and love are not given to you alone? Why, that blessed love has embraced your children, your neighbours, your fellow church-members, myriads who have gone before you, multitudes that are round about you, and an innumerable company who are coming after; and for this we ought to praise the gracious Lord with unbounded delight. It seems so much the more lovely,—this salvation, when we think of it, not as a cup of water of which one or two of us may drink, but as a well of water opened in the desert, ever flowing, ever giving life and deliverance and restoration to all who pass that way. "Unto him that loved us." Oh, my Lord, I bless thee for having loved me; but sometimes I think I could adore thee for loving my wife, for loving my children, and all these dear friends around me, even if I had no personal share in thy salvation. Sometimes this seems the greater part of it, not that I should share in thy compassion, but that all these poor sheep should be gathered into thy fold and kept safe by thee. The instinct of a Christian minister especially leads him to love Christ for loving the many; and I think the thought of every true worker for the Lord runs much in the same line. No man will burst out into such joyful adoration as we have now before us unless he has a great heart within him, full of love to all the brotherhood; and then, as he looks upon the multitude of the redeemed around about him, he will be prompted to cry with enthusiastic joy:

"To him that lov'd the souls of men,  
And wash'd us in his blood,  
To royal honours raised our head,  
And made us priests to God;

"To him let every tongue be praise,  
And every heart be love!  
All grateful honours paid on earth,  
And nobler songs above!"

Thus much upon the condition of heart which suggests these doxologies.

II. Secondly, let us look at THE OUTBURST ITSELF. It is a doxology, and as such does not stand alone: *it is one of many*. In the Book of the Revelation doxologies are frequent, and in the first few chapters they distinctly grow as the book advances. If you have your Bibles with you, as you ought to have, you will notice that in this first outburst only two things are ascribed to our Lord. "To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Now turn to the fourth chapter at the ninth verse, and read, "Those living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne." Here we have three words of honour. Run on to verse eleven, and read the same. "Saying, thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power." The doxology has grown from two to three in each of these verses. Now turn to chapter v. 13. "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Here we have four praise-notes. Steadily but surely there is an advance. By the time we get to chapter vii. 12, we have reached the number of perfection, and may not look for more. "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen." If you begin praising God you are bound to go on. The work engrosses the heart. It deepens and broadens like a rolling river. Praise is somewhat like an avalanche, which may begin with a snow-flake on the mountain moved by the wing of a bird, but that flake binds others to itself and becomes a rolling ball: this rolling ball gathers more snow about it till it is huge, immense; it crashes through a forest; it thunders down into the valley; it buries a village under its stupendous mass. Thus praise may begin with the tear of gratitude; anon the bosom swells with love; thankfulness rises to a song; it breaks forth into a shout; it mounts up to join the everlasting hallelujahs which surround the throne of the Eternal. What a mercy it is that God by his Spirit will give us greater capacities by-and-by than we have here! for if we continue to learn more and more of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge we shall be driven to sore straits if confined within the narrow and drowsy framework of this mortal body. This poor apparatus of tongue and mouth is already inadequate for our zeal.

"Words are but air and tongues but clay,  
But his compassions are divine."

We want to get out of these fetters, and rise into something better adapted to the emotions of our spirit; I cannot emulate the songsters of Immanuel's land though I would gladly do so; but as Berridge says—

"Strip me of this house of clay,  
And I will sing as loud as they."

These doxologies occur again and again throughout this book as if to remind us to be frequent in praise; and they grow as they proceed, to hint to us that we also should increase in thankfulness.

Now, this outburst *carried within itself its own justification*. Look at it closely and you perceive the reasons why, in this enthusiastic manner, John adores his Saviour. The first is, "Unto him that *loved* us." Time would fail me to speak long on this charming theme, so I will only notice briefly a few things. This love is in the present tense, for the passage may be read, "Unto him that *loveth* us." Our Lord in his glory still loves us as truly and as fervently as he did in the days of his flesh. He loved us before the world was, he loveth us now with all his heart, and he will love us when sun, and moon, and stars have all expired like sparks that die when the fire is quenched upon the hearth and men go to their beds. "He loveth us." He is himself the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and his love is like himself. Dwell on the present character of it and be at this moment moved to holy praise.

He loved us first before he washed us: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us." Not "Unto him that washed us and loved us." This is one of the glories of Christ's love, that it comes to us while we are defiled with sin—yea, dead in sin. Christ's love does not only go out to us as washed, purified, and cleansed, but it went out towards us while we were yet foul and vile, and without anything in us that could be worthy of his love at all. He loved us, and then washed us: love is the fountain-head, the first source of blessing.

Think of this as being a recognizable description of our Lord—"Unto him that loved us." John wanted to point out the Lord Jesus Christ, and all he said was, "Unto him that loved us." He was sure nobody would make any mistake as to who was intended, for no one can be said to love us in comparison with Jesus. It is interesting to note that, as John is spoken of as "that disciple whom Jesus loved," so now the servant describes the Master in something like the same terms: "Unto him that loved us." No one fails to recognize John or the Lord Jesus under their several love-names. When the apostle mentioned "him that loved us," there was no fear of men saying, "That is the man's friend, or father, or brother." No; there is no love like that of Jesus Christ: he bears the palm for love; yea, in the presence of his love all other love is eclipsed, even as the sun conceals the stars by his unrivalled brightness.

Again, the word "him that loved us," seems as if it described all that Christ did for us, or, at least, it mentions first the grandest thing he ever did, in which all the rest is wrapped up. It is not, "Unto him that took our nature; unto him that set us a glorious example; unto him that intercedes for us;" but, "Unto him that loved us," as if that one thing comprehended all, as indeed it does.

He loves us: this is matter for admiration and amazement. Oh, my brethren, this is an abyss of wonder to me! I can understand that Jesus pities us; I can very well understand that he has compassion on us; but that the Lord of glory loves us is a deep, great, heavenly thought, which my finite mind can hardly hold. Come, brother, and drink of this wine on the lees, well refined. Jesus loves you. Grasp that. You know what the word means in some little degree according to human measurements, but the infinite Son of God loved you of old, and he loves you now! His heart is knit with your heart, and he cannot be happy unless you are happy.

Remember, he loves you with his own love according to his own nature. Therefore he has for you an infinite love altogether immeasurable. It is also like himself, immutable; and can never know a change. The emperor Augustus was noted for his faithfulness to his friends, whom he was slow in choosing. He used to say, "Late ere I love, long ere I leave." Our blessed Lord loved us early, but he never leaves us. Has he not said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"? The love of Jesus is a pure, perfect, and divine love: a love whose heights and depths none can measure. His nature is eternal and undying, and such is his love. He could not love you more; he will never love you less. With all his heart and soul and mind and strength he loves you. Come; is not that a grand excuse, if excuse is wanted, for often lifting up our hearts and voices in hearty song unto the Lord? Why should we not seven times a day exult before him, saying, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen"? Oh for new crowns for his blessed brow! Oh for new songs for his love-gifts ever new! Praise him! Praise him, all earth and heaven!

Then the apostle passes on to the second reason why he should thus magnify the Lord Jesus by saying, "And washed us from our sins in his own blood." "Washed us." Then we were foul; and he loved us though we were unclean. He washed *us* who had been more defiled than any. How could he condescend so far as to wash *us*? Would he have anything to do with such filthiness as ours? Would that sublime holiness of his come into contact with the abominable guilt of our nature and our practice? Yes, he loved us so much that he washed us from our sins, black as they were. He did it effectually, too: he did not try to wash us, but he actually and completely washed us from our sins." The stains were deep and damnable; they seemed indelible, but he has "washed us from our sins." No spot remains, though we were black as midnight. "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow," has been realized by every believer here. But think of how he washed us—"with his own blood." Men are chary of their own blood, for it is their life; yet will brave ones pour it out for their country or for some worthy object; but Jesus shed his blood for such unworthy ones as we are, that he might by his atonement for ever put away the iniquity of his people. At what a cost was this cleansing provided! Too great a cost I had almost said. Have you never felt at times as if, had you been there and seen the Lord of glory about to bleed to death for you, you would have said, "No, my Lord, the price is too great to pay for such a one as I am"? But he has done it; brethren, his sin-atonement work is finished for ever: Jesus has bled, and he has washed us, and we are clean beyond fear of future defilement. Shall he not have glory for this? Will we not wish him dominion for this?

"Worthy is he that once was slain,  
The Prince of Peace that groan'd and died;  
Worthy to rise, and live, and reign  
At his Almighty Father's side."

Does not this doxology carry its justification in its own bowels? Who can refuse to praise at the remembrance of such grace as this?

Nor is this all. The Lord that loved us would do nothing by halves, and therefore when he washed us in his own blood, he "made us kings." What is that? Are we kings this morning? We do not feel our crowns as yet, nor perhaps grasp our sceptres as we might, but the Lord has made us a royal priesthood. We reign over our own selves, and that is a dominion which is hard to gain, indeed, impossible without grace. We walk like kings among the sons of men, honoured before the Lord and his holy angels—the peerage of eternity. Our thoughts, our aims, our hopes, and our longings are all of a nobler kind than those of the mere carnal man. Ours is a nature of a higher order than theirs, since we have been born again of the Spirit. Men know us not because they know not our Lord; but we have a heritage they have not, and we have prepared for us a crown of life which fadeth not away. The Lord has made us kings and endowed us with power before his presence, yea he has made us rich since all things are ours. We read of the peculiar treasures of kings, and we have a choice wealth of grace. He has made us even now among the sons of men to possess the earth and to delight ourselves in the abundance of peace.

Furthermore our Lord has made us priests. Certain men impiously set up to be priests above the rest of the Lord's people. As Korah, Dathan, and Abiram are they, and they had need fear lest they and their evil system should go down into the pit. Whoever they may be, all the people of God are priests. Every man that believes in Jesus Christ is from that moment a priest, though he be neither shaven nor shorn, nor bedecked in peculiar array. To the true believer his common garments are vestments, every meal is a sacrament, every act is a sacrifice. If we live as we should live, our houses are temples, our hearts are altars, our lives are an oblation. The bells upon our horses are holiness unto the Lord, and our common pots are as the bowls before the altar. It is the sanctification of the Holy Spirit which gives men a special character, so that they are the priesthood of the universe. The world is dumb, and we must speak for it: the whole universe is as a great organ, but it is silent; we place our fingers on the keys, and the music rises towards heaven. We are to be priests for all mankind. Wherever we go we are to teach men, and to intercede with God for them. In prayer and praise we are to offer up acceptable oblations, and we are ourselves to be living sacrifices, acceptable unto God by Jesus Christ our Lord. Oh, what dignity is this! How you and I are bound to serve God! Peter Martyr told Queen Elizabeth: "Kings and queens are more bound to obey God than any other persons; first as God's creatures, and secondly as his servants in office." This applies to us also. If common men are bound to serve God how much more those whom he has made kings and priests unto his name!

What does the doxology say? "To him be glory and dominion." First, "To him be glory." Oh, give him glory, my beloved, this morning! Do I address any that have never yet accepted Christ's salvation? Accept it now, and thus give your Saviour glory. Have you never trusted Jesus to save you? The best, the only thing you can do to give him glory is to trust him now, sinner as you are, that he may remove your transgressions. Are you saved? Then, dear brother, give him glory by speaking well of his name, and by perpetual adoration.

Glorify him in your songs, glorify him in your lives. Behave yourselves as his disciples should do, and may his Spirit help you.

But the doxology also ascribes to him dominion. My heart longs for Jesus to have dominion. I wish he might get dominion over some poor heart this morning which has hitherto been in rebellion against him! Yield thee, rebel! Yield thee to thy Sovereign and Saviour! "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." To him be dominion over hearts that have never submitted to him; and assuredly to him be fullest dominion over hearts that love him. Reign, my Lord, reign in my bosom more and more; cast out every enemy and every rival; reign supreme, and reign eternally. Set up thy throne also more and more conspicuously in the hearts and lives of all who call themselves Christians. O my brethren, ought it not to be so? Is it not clear to you that since he has loved and washed us he should have dominion over us? Ah! let him have dominion over the wide, wide world, till they that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him, and his enemies shall lick the dust. Reign for ever, King of kings and Lord of lords.

Then it is added, let him have glory and dominion "for ever and ever." I suppose we shall have some gentlemen coming up to prove that "for ever and ever" only means for a time. They tell us that everlasting punishment means only for a time, and, of course, everlasting life must mean just the same, and this praise must also have a limit. I mean not so, nor do you, beloved. I pray that our Lord may have endless glory, eternal dominion. I pray that Christ's power and dominion may be over this generation, and the next, and the next, until he cometh, and then that it may be said, "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever." Hallelujah! As long as there is wing of angel or song of man; as long as God himself shall live, may the Lord Jesus Christ that loved us and washed us have glory and dominion.

Now we have come to the last word of the text. It finishes up with "Amen." "For ever and ever. Amen." Can you heartily say "Amen" to this? Do you wish Christ to have glory and dominion for ever and ever? If you know he loved you, I am sure you do; if you know he washed you, I am sure you do. Now let our beating hearts in solemn silence say, "Amen"; and when we have done that, do you think you could join with one voice with me and say it out aloud, like thunder? Now, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen;" and "Amen" yet again. (Here the great congregation joined aloud with the preacher.) The prayers of David the son of Jesse were ended when he came to that, and so may ours be, and so may this morning's service be. God bless you through his adorable Son. Amen and Amen.

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PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Revelation i.

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HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—427, 337, 317.