

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit

CHRIST IS ALL.

A Sermon

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“Christ is all, and in all.”—Colossians iii. 11.

THE apostle was arguing for holiness. He was earnestly contending against sin and for the maintenance of Christian graces, but he did not, as some do, who would like to be thought preachers of the gospel, resort to reasons inconsistent with the gospel of free grace. He did not bring forward a single legal argument; he did not say, “This do, and ye shall merit reward;” or, “This do not, and ye shall cease to be the beloved of the Lord.” He knew that he was writing to believers, who are not under the law but under grace, and he therefore used arguments fetched from grace, and suitable to the character and condition of “the elect of God, holy and beloved.” He fed the flame of their love with suitable fuel, and fanned their zeal with appropriate appliances.

Observe in this chapter that he begins by reminding the saints of their having risen with Christ. If they indeed have risen with him, he argues that they should leave the grave of iniquity and the grave-clothes of their sins behind, and act as those who are endowed with that superior life, which accounts sin to be death and corruption. He then goes on to declare that the believer's life is in Christ, “for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” He infers holiness from this also. Shall those who have Christ for their life defile themselves with guilt? Is it not inevitable that, if the Holy One of Israel be in them as their life, their life should be fraught with everything that is virtuous and good? And then he brings forward the third argument, that in the Christian church Christ is the only distinguishing mark. In the new birth we are created in the image of Jesus, the second Adam, and in consequence all the distinctions that appertain to the old creation are rendered valueless; “there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all:” the argument from this fact being, that since the only abiding distinction in the new creation is Christ, we should take care that his image is most clearly stamped upon us, so that we may not only confess with our tongues that we are Christians, but our conversa-

tion and our entire character shall bespeak us to be such. As you may recognise the Jew by his physiognomy, the Greek by his gracefulness, and the barbarian by his uncouthness, so should the Christian be known by his Christliness, by the light, love, and life of Christ streaming forth from him. This is the seal of God which is set upon the forehead of the faithful, and this is the mark of election which is in due season graven in the right hand of all the elect.

Now, as the only distinction which marks the Christian from other men, and the only essential distinction in the new world of grace, is Christ, we are led to see beneath this fact a great underlying doctrine. In the realm of grace, things are what they seem. Christ is apparently all, because he is actually all. The fact of a man's possessing Christ is all in all in the church, because in very deed Christ is all in all. All that is real in the Christian, all that is holy, heavenly, pure, abiding, and saving, is of the Lord Jesus. This great granite fact lies at the basis of the whole Christian system, Christ is really and truly all in all in his church, and in each individual member of it.

We shall, this morning, in trying to open up this precious subject, by the help of the Divine Spirit, first, notice *by whom this truth is recognised*; secondly, we shall consider *what this truth includes*; thirdly, *what it involves*; and fourthly, *what it requires of us*; for if you observe, the text is followed by a "Therefore;" there is a conclusion logically drawn from it.

I. First, then, BY WHOM IS THIS TRUTH RECOGNISED? Paul does not say that Christ is all in all to all men, but he tells us that there is a new creation, in which the man is "renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him," where all national and ceremonial distinctions cease, and Christ is all and in all. It is not to every man that Christ is all and in all. Alas! there are many in this world to whom Christ is nothing; he scarcely enters into their thoughts. Some of the baser sort only use his name to curse by; and as to many others, if they have a religion, it is a proud presumption which excludes a Saviour. The creed of the self-righteous has no room in it for the sinner's Saviour; the justifier of the ungodly is nothing to them. The worldly, the frivolous, the unchaste, the licentious, these do not permit themselves to think of the Holy Redeemer. Perchance some such are now present, and though they will hear about him this morning, and of nothing else but him, they will say, "what a weariness it is," and be glad when the discourse is ended. Jesus is a root out of a dry ground to multitudes, to them he hath no form nor comeliness, and in him they see no beauty that they should desire him. Ah, what will they do when he is revealed in the glory of his power? They thought it nothing to them as they passed by his cross, but they will not be able to despise him as they stand convicted before his throne. O ye who make Jesus nothing, kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Without Christ, you are to-day without peace, and will be for ever without hope! Nothing remains for Christless souls at the last, but a fearful looking-for of judgment and of fiery indignation. I could well pause here, and say, let us pray for those who are unbelievers, and so are living without a

Saviour, that they may not remain any longer in this state of condemnation.

There are others in this world to whom Christ is something, but not much. They are anxious to save themselves, but since they must confess some imperfections, they use the merits of Christ as a sort of makeweight for their slight deficiencies. Their robe is almost long enough, and by adding a little fringe of the Redeemer's grace it becomes all they can wish. To say prayers, to go to church, to take the sacrament, to observe Good Friday, these are the main reliances of many a religionist, and then if the coach sticks a little in a deeper rut than usual, they call in the help of the Lord Jesus, and hope that he will put his shoulder to the wheel. They commonly say, "Well, we must do our best, then Christ will be our Saviour, and God is very merciful." They allow the blessed and all-sufficient work and sacrifice of the Saviour to fill up their failures; and imagine that they are extremely humble in allowing so much as that. Jesus is to them a stopgap, and nothing more. I know not whether the condition of such people is one whit more desirable than that of those to whom Jesus is nothing at all, for this is a vile contempt and despising of Christ indeed, to think that he came to help you to save yourselves, to dream that he is a part Saviour, and will divide the work and honour of salvation with the sinner. Those who yoke the sinner and the Saviour together as each doing a part rob Christ of all his glory; and this is robbery indeed, to pilfer from the bleeding Lamb of God the due reward of his agonies. "He trod the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with him." In the work of salvation Jesus stands alone. Salvation is of the Lord. If Christ is not all to you he is nothing to you. He will never go into partnership as a part Saviour of men. If he be something he must be everything, and if he be not everything he is nothing to you.

There are many who, unconsciously to themselves, think Jesus Christ to be much, but yet they do not understand that he is all in all. I allude to many seeking souls, who say, "I would put my trust in Jesus this morning, but I do not feel as I ought." I see, thou thinkest that there is at least a little of thy feeling to be added to the Saviour's work ere it can avail for thee. "But I am not as penitent as I should be, and, therefore, I cannot rest in Jesus." I see, thy penitence is to add the topstone to the Saviour's yet unfinished work. Perhaps it is one of the hardest works in the world, so hard as to be impossible except to the Holy Spirit himself, to drive a man away from the idea that he is to do something, or to be something, in order to his own salvation. Sinner, thou art the emptiness, and Christ the fulness; thou art the filthiness, and he the cleansing; thou art nothing, and he is all in all; and the sooner thou consentest to this the better. Have done with saying, "I would come to the Saviour if this, and if that," for this quibbling will delude, delay, and destroy thee. Come as thou art, just now, even at this moment, for Christ is not almost all, but all in all.

There are some, too, who think that Christ is all in some things, but they have not yet seen the full teaching of the text; for it saith: "Christ is all, and in all." He is all," say they, "in justification; he it is that pardons all our sins and covers us with his righteousness, but as to our sanctification, surely, we are to effect that ourselves; and as to our

final perseverance, it must depend wholly upon our own watchfulness. Are we not in jeopardy still? Are there not some points which depend upon our own virtue and goodness?" Beloved, God forbid I should say a word against the most earnest watchfulness, against the most diligent endeavours, but I beseech you do not place them in a wrong position, or speak as though the ultimate salvation of the believer were based upon such shifting sand. We are saved in Christ. We are complete in him. We are sanctified in Christ Jesus: "And he is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." Christ is all, not in my justification only, but in my sanctification too. He is all, not only in the first steps of my faith, but in the last. "He is Alpha and Omega; he is the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord." There is no point between the gates of hell and the gates of heaven where a believer shall have to say, "Christ fails me here, and I must rely upon my own endeavours. From the dung-hill of our corruption up to the throne of our perfection there is no point left to hazard, or set aside for us to supply; our salvation has Christ to begin with, Christ to go on with, and Christ to finish with, and that in all points, at all times, for every man or woman born that ever shall be saved. There is no point in which the creature comes in to claim merit, or to bring strength, or to make up for that which was lacking. "Christ is all, and in all." The saints are "perfect in Christ Jesus." He said, "it is finished," and finished it is. He is not the author of our faith only, but the finisher of it too. He is all in all, and man is nothing at all.

This is a truth which every believer has recognised. There are a great many differences among believers, but there is no difference as to this essential point. Unhappily, the Christian church has been divided into sections, but those divisions do not affect our agreement upon this one point, that Christ is all. It is no uncharity if I say that the man who does not accept this is no Christian, nor is it too wide a liberality to affirm that every man who is sound in heart upon this point is most certainly a believer. He who trusts alone in Christ, who submits to him as his sole teacher, king, and Saviour, is already a saved man; but he who gives not Christ the glory, though he should speak with the tongues of men and of angels, though he should have the gift of prophecy, and all knowledge, and though he should have all faith, and could remove mountains, and he should appear to have all virtue, yet he is no Christian if Christ be held in light esteem by him, or be anything less than all in all; for in the new creation this one thing stands as the mark of the newly created, that "Christ is all, and in all" to them, whatever he may be to others.

II. Having thus shown where this truth is recognised, we pass on to notice WHAT THIS TRUTH INCLUDES.

It was the advice of an aged tutor to a young student not to take too magnificent a text. I have sounded that warning in my own ears this morning. This little text is yet one of the greatest in the whole Bible, and I feel lost in its boundless expanse. It is like one of those rare gems which are little to look upon, and yet he who carries them wears the price of empires in his hand. It would not be within the compass of arithmetic to set down the value of this sapphire text.

I might as soon hope to carry the world in my hand as to grasp all that is contained in these few words. I cannot navigate so huge a sea, my skiff is too small, I can only coast along the shore. Who can compress "all things" into a sermon? I will warrant you that my discourse this morning will be more remarkable for its omissions than for what it contains, and I shall hope indeed that every Christian here will be remarking upon what I do not say; for then I shall have done much good in exciting meditations and reflections. If I were to try to tell you all the meaning of this boundless text, I should require all time and eternity, and even then all tongues, human and angelic, could not avail me to compass the whole. We will swim in this sea though we cannot fathom it, and feast at this table though we cannot reckon up its costliness.

1. According to the connection, Christ is all by way of *national distinction, subject for glorying, and ground for custom*. Observe, "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free," in the new creation, but "Christ is all, and in all." In the new world there is no difference between Jew and Gentile; barbarian simplicity and Greek cultivation are as nothing. I suppose as long as we are in the flesh we shall set some store by our nationality, and like Paul shall somewhat glory that we were free born: but surely the less of this the better. Within the gates of the Christian church we are cosmopolitan, or rather we are citizens of the New Jerusalem only. As a man, I rejoice that I am an Englishman, but not with the same holy joy which fills me when I remember that I am a Christian. When I meet another man who fears God, I do not want him to think me an Englishman, nor do I desire to regard him as an American, a Frenchman, or a Dutchman; for we are no longer strangers and foreigners but fellow-citizens. If any man be a Christian and a foreigner after the flesh, he is yet in spirit ten thousand times more allied to me than if he were an Englishman and an unbeliever. Greatly is it to be deplored whenever the convulsions of nations drag Christian men into opposition to one another on the ground of politics. One part of the body of Christ cannot be at war with another. It is a shameful thing whenever we suffer our earthly nationality to dominate over our heavenly citizenship. Queen Victoria and President Grant are well enough in their places, but King Jesus is Lord of all; we are above all things subjects of his Imperial Highness the Prince of Peace. Nobody comes into the church as a Jew or a Gentile, nor does he remain there as a Greek or a Scythian, whatever he may have been before; when he becomes a Christian, Christ is all. Earthly distinctions of rank, if they still exist, as they must while we are in this world, are brought to a minimum within the church, they are almost obliterated, and what remains is sanctified to sacred ends.

Christ is all in the church by way of glorying. The Greek said, "The Hellenes are a race of heroes; remember Sparta and Athens. Are we not foremost in civilisation, and were we not chief in war? Who set bounds to the Persian tyrant, and bade the boastful monarch bite the dust? We hold our heads erect when we think of Marathon and Salamis." But when the Greek joined the Christian church, he forgot his national boastings, and henceforth gloried only in the cross of him whose

single arm defeated the hosts of Satan, and led captivity captive. The Jew when despised returned scorn for scorn, and said to Greek and Roman, "You may speak of Marathon, but I sing of the Red Sea; you may boast of Persia broken, but I tell of Egypt vanquished; mine are the glories of the Lord of hosts in the far off ages. We were a people when you were as yet unknown, and we are the chosen favourites of Jehovah." The moment the Jew sat down at the gospel supper, he laid aside his hereditary pride and bigotry, and recognised the fact that the Greek was as much a brother as the believing Hebrew at his side. So the Scythian, when he came into the Christian church, was no longer a Barbarian, he spoke the language of Canaan as correctly as his Grecian fellow Christian. The slave no sooner breathed the air of the Christian church than his shackles fell from off him. He might be a slave at home with his master, but he was no slave there. While the freeman, though he had been born free, or with a great price had obtained his freedom, never in the Christian church looked down upon the slave. Bond and free were one in Christ Jesus. Nobody had any personal ground for glory; neither race, nor pedigree, nor rank, nor position, were of any account, but Christ was all. "*Christianus sum*," I am a Christian was and is the universal glorying of all saints.

This at the same time obliterated all their sinful national customs. The Greek said originally, "I may certainly indulge in this vice, because the Lacedæmonians have always observed this custom;" and the Jew, perhaps, might have said, "I will eat nothing common or unclean, neither will I consort with Gentiles, because our fathers did not so." The Barbarian said, "I cannot submit to the laws of civilised life; my father ranged the desert;" and the Scythian said, "I shall rob, and pillage, and kill, for I am a wild man; why should I not? Did not my fathers do so from generation to generation?" When the various tribes came into the Christian church, down went all separating and evil customs at once. What hath Christ said? What hath Christ done? What hath he bidden us? These are law to us and nothing else.

Thus the distinctions of race, the gloryings of the nationality, and the habitudes and customs of various nations, all sank into nothing, for Jesus Christ in the Christian church became all in all. That, I doubt not, is the meaning of the text in its connection. Christ all and in all by way of distinction.

2. Secondly, Christ is all in all to us in another three-fold way—to God, before our enemies, within ourselves. Happy art thou, O child of God, that in all thy relationships to the Great Judge of all the earth, Christ is all in all to thee. Thou needest a mediator to stand between thee and God; Christ is that. Thou wantest a high Priest to present with his own sacrifice thy prayers and praises; Christ is that. Thou wantest a representative to stand at all times before God, an intercessor to plead for thee, one who shall be a daysman, akin to thee and akin to God, who can put his hand upon both; Christ is that to thee. Whenever God looks upon thee in Christ, he sees in thee all that ought to be there. Did he look upon thee apart from Christ, he would see in thee nothing he could commend: but thou art "accepted in the Beloved." Even the omniscient eye of God detects nothing for which to condemn the soul which is covered with the righteousness

of Christ. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." Without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, is the entire church as seen in the person of Christ Jesus, her representative and head. Christ is all for us before the throne of God.

But, alas! we need some one to stand between us and our enemies. There is Satan; how shall I meet him? He will accuse me; who shall plead my cause? Christ is all in all for that. Whatever fiery darts Satan may shoot, Christ is the shield that can quench those darts. If Satan tempt me, Christ shall plead for me before the temptation comes. Whenever I have to contend with Satan, this is the weapon with which I should arm myself. If I reason with him, if I bring forward any strength of my own to oppose him, he may well say to me: "Jesus I know; but who art thou?" But if I bring Jesus into the conflict, and wield the merit of his blood, and the faithfulness of his promise, the destroying angel cannot overcome the sprinkled blood. We overcome through the blood of the Lamb. Christ Jesus is both shield and sword to us, armour and weapons of war.

So in our conflict with the world. Whatever trials you have, my dear brother, Christ is all in all to meet them. Are you poor? He will make you rich in your poverty by his consoling presence. Are you sick? He will make your bed in your sickness, and will so make your sick-bed better than the walks of health. Are you persecuted? Be it for his sake, and you may even leap for joy. Are you oppressed? Remember how he also was oppressed and afflicted; and you will have fellowship with him in his sufferings. Amidst all the vicissitudes of this present life, Christ is all that the believer wants to bear him up, and bear him through. No wave can sink the man who clings to this life-buoy; he shall swim to glory on it.

So, too, *within myself* Christ is all. If I look into the chambers of my inner nature, I see all manner of deficiencies and deformities, and I may well be filled with dismay; but when I see Christ there, my heart is comforted, for he will both destroy the works of the devil, and perfect that which he has begun in me. I am a sinner, but my heart rests on its Saviour; I am burdened with this body of sin and death, but behold my Saviour is formed in me the hope of glory. — I am by nature an heir of wrath, even as others, but I am born into the second Adam's household, and therefore I am beloved of the Most High, and a joint-heir with Christ. Is there Christ in thy heart beloved? Then everything that is there that would make thee sorrow may also suggest to thee a topic for joy. The saint is grieved to think that he has sin to confess, but he is glad to think that he is enabled to confess sin. The saint is vexed that he should have so much infirmity, yet he glories in infirmity because the power of Christ doth rest upon him. He is grieved day by day to observe his wanderings, but he is also rejoiced to see how the Good Shepherd follows him and restores his soul. So that all the evils and shortcomings in me which make me weep, also make me glad when Jesus is seen within. For all I see within myself lacking or sinful, I see a sufficient remedy in Christ, who is all in all.

Thus I have given you a second way of meditating upon our text. Christ is not only all by way of distinction, but he is all to God, all between us and our enemies, and all within ourselves.

3. We may see another phase of the same meaning if we take a third division. Christ is all *for* us, he is all *to* us, he is all *in* us.

Christ is all *for* us, the surety, the substitute in our stead to bear our guilt; "For the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "The chastisement of our peace was upon him." "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." He is also the worker standing in our place to fulfil all righteousness for us. He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. All that God requires us to be, Christ is for us. He has not presented to God a part of what was done, but has to the utmost farthing paid all that his people owed. Acting as our forerunner in heaven, he has taken possession of our inheritance, and as our surety he secures to us our entrance there. *For* us all Jesus is all.

And this day he is all *to* us. We trust wholly in him. I often question myself upon many Christian graces, but there is one thing I never can doubt about, and that is I know I have no other hope but in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. If a soul can perish relying with all its power upon the finished work of the Saviour, then I shall perish; but if saving faith be an entire reliance upon Him whom God hath sent forth to be a propitiation for sin, then I can never perish until God's word be broken. Can you not say that, dear brethren, and will it not yield you comfort? Have you anything else you could trust to? Have you one good work that you could rely upon? Is there a prayer you have ever offered, an emotion you have ever felt, that you would dare to use as a buttress, or as in some degree a prop, to your hope of salvation? I know you reply, "I have nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing; but Christ my Saviour is all my salvation and all my desire, and I abhor the very idea of putting anything side by side with him as a ground of my dependance before God." Oh, then, assuredly you have the mark of Christ's sheep, for to all of them Christ is all.

I said also that Christ is all *in* us, and so he is. Whatever there is in us that is not of Christ and the work of his Spirit, will have to come out of us, and blessed be the day in which it is ejected. If I am growing and advancing, but it is a growth in the flesh and an advance in self, it is a spurious fungus growth; and, like Jonah's gourd, it will perish in a night. Wood, hay, stubble, are quick building, but they are also quick burning; only that which belongs to "Christ formed in me the hope of glory," will prove to be gold, silver, precious stones; this may seem slow building, but it will abide the fire. O Christian, pray much and labour much to have Christ in thee, for he is all that is worth having in thee. He is only the husk of a Christian who has not the precious kernel of Christ in his heart. Christ on the cross saves us by becoming Christ in the heart. Jesus is indeed all for us, all to us, all in us.

4. Shift the kaleidoscope, and take the same truth in another way. *Christ is the channel of all, the pledge of all, the sum of all.*

The *channel* of all. All love and mercy flow from God through Christ the mediator. We get nought apart from him. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." Other conduits are dry, but this channel is always full. "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Christ is the *pledge* of all. When God gave us Christ, he did as much as say, "I have given you all things." "He that spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" He is a covenant to us, the title-deeds of the promised rest.

And, indeed, Christ is not only the channel of all, and the pledge of all, but the apostle says he is all; so I take it he is *the sum* of all. If you are going to travel on the Continent, you need not carry a bed with you, nor a house, nor a table, nor medicine, nor food; if you only have gold in your purse, you have these condensed. Gold is the representative of everything it can buy, it is a kind of universal talisman, producing what its owner wishes for. I have never yet met with a person in any country who did not understand its meaning. "Money answereth all things," says the wise man, and this is true in a limited sense; but he that has Christ, has indeed all things: he has the essence, the substance of all good. I have only to plead the name of Jesus before the Father's throne, and nothing desirable shall be denied me. If Christ is yours, all things are yours. God, who gave you Christ, has in that one gift summed up the total of all you will want for time and for eternity, to obliterate the sin of the past, to fulfil the needs of the present, and to perfect you for all the work and bliss of the future.

5. Once more let us view our text in another light. *Christ is all we need, all we desire, and all of good that we can conceive.* He is all I need. Jesus is the living water to quench my thirst, the heavenly bread to satisfy my hunger, the snow-white robe to cover me, the sure refuge, the happy home of my soul, my meat and my medicine, my solace and my song, my light and my delight.

He is all I *desire*, and when most covetous I only covet more of his presence; when most ambitious, it is my ambition to be like him; when most insatiable in desire, I only long to be with him where he is. He is all I can *conceive* of good. When my imagination stretches all her wings to take a flight into realms beyond where the eagle's wing hath been, yet even then she reacheth not the height of the glory which Christ Jesus hath promised her; she cannot conceive with her most expanded powers of anything more rich and precious than Christ, her Christ, herself Christ's, and Christ all her own. Oh, if you want to know what heaven is, know what Christ is, for the way to spell heaven is with those five letters that make up the word Jesus. When you get him he shall be all to you that your glorified body shall need, and all your glorified spirit can conceive. O precious Christ, thou art all in all.

III. I have shown you then, in a very hurried way, what it is that this truth includes; now, with greater brevity still, **WHAT DOES THIS TRUTH INVOLVE?** It involves a great many things. First, it involves the glory and excellence of Christ. Of whom else could it be said that he is all in all? There are many things in this world that are good, but there is nothing that is good for everything. Some plants may be a good medicine, but not a good cordial; the plant of renown is good every way. Good clothing is not able to stay your hunger, but Christ the bread of heaven is also the Father's best robe. You cannot expect any finite thing to be good for all things, but Christ is infinite goodness. This tree of life bears all manner of fruits, and the leaves

are for the healing of the nations. He is strength and beauty, safety and sanctity, peace and plenty, healing and help, comfort and conquest, life here, and life for ever. Glory be to the Lord Jesus Christ ! What can he be less than God, if he be all ? "All." Is it not a synonyme for God ? We say there cannot be two Gods, because the one God is everywhere, and fills all space ; and who then can he be who is called "all in all," but "very God of very God ?" Worship him, my brethren, with all your hearts, rejoice in him, bless him from day to day. Let not the world think you poor who are so rich in him. Never suffer men to think you unhappy, who have perfect happiness in the ever blessed Immanuel.

See, in the next place, the safety and the blessedness of the believer. Christ is all ; but the believer can add, "And Christ is mine." Then the believer has all things—all that he *will* want, as well as all he does want. No emperor that has not Christ is half as rich as he that has Christ and is a beggar. He that hath Christ, being a pauper, hath all things ; and he that hath not Christ, possessing a thousand worlds, possesses nothing for real happiness and joy. Oh, the blessedness of the man who can say, "Christ is mine." On the other hand, see the wretchedness of the man who has not the Saviour : for if Christ is all, you who believe not on him are devoid of all, in being destitute of Christ. But you say, "I try my best, I attend public worship, I do a great deal that is good ;" you have nothing if you have not Christ. Do not flatter yourself that you are getting on and adding goods to goods in spiritual things ; if you have not a Saviour you are naked and poor and miserable ; you are without all if you are without Christ, who is all. The Christian, then, is rich, but everyone who is destitute of Christ is poor to the extreme of poverty.

See, too, in the truth before us a rebuke for the doubts of many seekers. They will say, "I have not this, I have not that." Suppose thou hast it not, Christ has it, if it be good for anything. "I would fain cast myself upon the mercy of God in Christ this day, but,"—Ah, away with thy "buts." What dost thou want ? "I want true belief," saith one. Come to Christ for it then. "I want a broken heart," says another. If you cannot come with a broken heart to Christ, come for a broken heart.

" True belief, and true repentance,
Every grace that brings us nigh,
Without money,
Come to Jesus Christ and buy."

We have an old proverb about the folly of taking coals to Newcastle ; but what folly must that be which makes a man think that he can take something to Christ, when Christ is all. Come, come, come, come to him, poor sinner, and let him be all in all to thee. Simply rely upon him and be at peace.

How this, again, rebukes the coldness of saints. If Christ be all in all, then how is it we love him so little ? If he be so precious, how is it we prize him so little ? Oh ! my dull, dead, cold heart, what art thou at ? Art thou harder than adamant, and baser than brutish, that thou art not much more moved with ardour and fervent affection towards such a Lord as this ? Christ is all, my brethren, yet look how little we offer

to him—of our substance how scant a portion—of our time how slender a part—of our talents how small a parcel! God stir us to holy fervency, that if Christ be all for us, we may be all for Christ. May we lay ourselves out without reservation to the utmost stretch of our power, asking fresh strength from him, that we may do all that can be done by mortal men, and that all may be done with us by God, that he shall see it to be compatible with his glory to do.

Again, by our text another lesson is furnished us. We learn here how to measure young converts. We ought not to expect them to be philosophers or divines; Christ is all. If they know Christ, and are resting in him, we are bound to say, "Come, and welcome." Be they poor, be they unlettered, if Jesus Christ be formed in their hearts, even though we can see him there only as a dim outline, we are to open wide the gate, and receive them as Jesus received us.

Here is a measure, too, by which to measure ministers. The fashion of the world is to admire him most who shall speak most rhetorically. Accursed be the day in which oratory was tolerated in the Christian pulpit. It has been the bane and plague of the church of God. This labour after flowery speech, this seeking after polished periods and gaudy sentences, what is it but a pandering to the world, and a prostitution of the ministry of reconciliation. Had men learned what the apostle meant when he said, "I brethren, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom," they would have preached far other wise than they have done. We should strive to speak the gospel simply from our hearts, and then men's hearts will be impressed with the truth. Alas, this toying with fair words, and seeking after pleasing expressions, this dressing up of truth in the flaunting finery of falsehood, degrades rather than adorns the gospel, and it has done incalculable damage to souls, and to the advance of truth. Measure ministers by this, What is there of Christ about them? That ministry which hath no savour of Christ in it, be it what it may, is a ministry which the Lord will not own, and that you ought not to own; it is not God-sent, and ought not to be received by you. Give me Christ Jesus, though the speech in which he be set forth be of the most uncouth kind, rather than the choicest inventions of the most ingenious thinkers, from which Jesus Christ is absent, or in which he is not exalted.

Brother, this will also help you to estimate your own devotions. You came to the communion table the other day, but you did not enter into fellowship with Christ. Ah! then there was a lost opportunity. You were in your closet this morning in prayer, but you did not plead the name of Jesus. Ah! then again there was a lost season of devotion. You are a Bible reader, and your eye glances over the holy words, but you do not see Jesus in each page; then your reading has failed. You have been giving to the poor of late; but have you done it for Christ's sake? You have sought to win souls: have you done it in Christ's strength? If Jesus be absent, you have offered a sacrifice from which the heart is gone; and among the Romans, no omen was supposed to be so damaging as the absence of the heart from the sacrifice. No Christ, then there can be no acceptance, but a fulness of Christ proves a fulness of acceptance with God.

IV. There are many other things which I could have said, but time

has failed me, and therefore I must close by noticing WHAT THIS TRUTH REQUIRES OF US. Christ is all in all; therefore "put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering." The exhibition of the Christ-life in the saints is the legitimate inference from the fact that Christ is all to them. If Christ is all, and yet I being a Christian am not like Christ, my Christianity is a transparent sham, I am nothing but a base pretender, and my outward religiousness is a pompous pageantry for my soul to be carried to hell in—nothing more. It is a gilded coffin for a lifeless spirit. I shall perish with a double destruction, if I have dared to profane the name of Christ by taking it upon me, when I have not the essence of the Christian religion within me. Orthodoxy, though it be of the most assured sort, is vanity of vanities, unless there be with it an orthodoxy of life: and experience, whatever man may say about it, is but a dream, a fiction of his own imagining, if it does not display itself in shaking off the sins of the flesh, and putting on the adornments of holiness. O brethren, these are searching things to everyone of us. Who amongst us lives as he should at home? Could you bear that the angel who visits your house should publish, before the great cloud of witnesses, all that he has seen there? In your shops, in your businesses, you professors, are you always upright and straightforward as Christians should be! You merchants on the Exchange, are not some of you, who profess to be Christians, as greedy and as overreaching as others? I charge you, if you have any respect for Christ, lay down his name if you will not endeavour to honour it. You will be lost, you covetous money-grubbers, you earth-scrapers, who live only for this world, you will be lost; you need not doubt of that, you will be lost sure enough; but why need you make the assurance of your condemnation doubly sure by the base imposture of calling yourselves Christians. Meanwhile, let the Ethiopian call himself white, if he will; let the leopard declare that he has no spots; these things shall not matter; but the falsehood of a man who lives without Christ, while calling himself a Christian, brings such dishonour upon him who was nailed to the tree, and whose religion is that of holiness, that I beseech you, by the living God, give up your profession, if you do not endeavour to make it true. If you are not living as you should, do not pretend to be what you are not. Seek ye unto God, that the life of Christ being in you, you may manifest it in your conversation.

Without Christ ye are nothing, though ye be baptised, though ye be members of churches, though ye be highly esteemed as deacons, elders, pastors. Oh, then, have Christ everywhere in all things, and constrain men to say of you, "To that man Christ is all in all: I have marked him; he has been with Jesus, he has learned of him, for he acts as Jesus did. God grant a blessing on these words, for Christ's sake. Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Colossians iii.
and iv. 1—6.

Sermon Readers are respectfully reminded that the 200 boys at the Stockwell Orphanage are supported by voluntary contributions, and that these are always thankfully received by C. H. Spurgeon, Clapham.