

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

OUR CHANGE OF MASTERS.

A Sermon

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“Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”
Romans vi. 18.

MAN was made to rule. In the divine original he was intended for a king, who should have dominion over the beasts of the field, and the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea. He was designed to be the lord-lieutenant of this part of creation, and the form of his body and the dignity of his countenance betoken it. He walks erect among the animals, while they move upon all-fours; he subjugates and tames them to perform his will, and the fear and dread of him is upon all creatures, for they know their sovereign. Yet is it equally true that man was made to serve. At his beginning he was placed in the garden to keep it, and to dress it, and so to serve his Maker. His natural feebleness, his dependence upon rain, and sun, and dew, his instinctive awe of an unseen and omnipotent spirit, indicate that he is not the chief of the universe, but a subordinate being, whose lot it is to serve. We find within man various powers and propensities seeking to get dominion over him, so that his mind also is capable of servitude. The appetites which are essential for the sustenance of his bodily frame, even such as eating and drinking, endeavour to master him, and if they can they will do so, and reduce him below the level of the swine. Man is in part spirit, but he is also in part animal, and the animal strives to get dominion over the spiritual; and in many, many men it does so, till they are utterly degraded. Nothing can be worse than a soul enslaved by such a body as that of man. The brute nature of man is the worst sort of brute. There is no beast in wolf, or lion, or serpent that is so brutish as the beast in man. Did I not tell you last Sabbath day that whereas, according to the Levitical law, he that touched a dead animal was unclean till the evening, he who touched a dead man was unclean seven days, for man is a seven times more polluting creature than any of the beasts of the field when his animal nature rules him.

If evil aims at ruling man the good Spirit also strives with him. When God of his infinite mercy visits man by his Spirit, that Spirit does

not come as a neutral power to dwell quietly within man, and to share his heart with the Prince of Darkness, but he enters with full intent to reign. Hence there is a conflict which cannot be ended by an armistice, but must be carried on to the end, and that end will be found either in the driving out of the evil or in the thrusting out of the good; for one or the other, either the Prince of Darkness or the King of Light, will have dominion over man. Man must have a master: he cannot serve two masters, but he must serve *one*. Of all sorts of men this has been true, and it has perhaps been most clearly seen in those who were evidently made to lead their fellow men: it is specially seen in such a man, for instance, as Alexander, a true king of men, so heroic and great-hearted that one does not wonder that armies were fired with enthusiasm by his presence, and drove everything before them. Alexander conquered the world, and yet on occasions he became the captive of drunkenness and the bondsman of his passionate temper. At such times the king of men, the vanquisher of armies, was little better than a raving maniac. Look for further illustration at the busts of the emperors of Rome, the masters of the world; study their faces, and mark what grovelling creatures they must have been. Rome had many slaves, but he who wore her purple was the most in bonds. No slave that ground at the mill, or died in the amphitheatre, was more in bondage than such men as Tiberius and Nero, who were the bond-slaves of their passions. High rank does not save a man from being under a mastery: neither does learning nor philosophy deliver men from this bondage, for the teachers of liberty have not themselves been free, but it has happened as the apostle saith, "While they promise them liberty they themselves are the servants of corruption." Solomon himself, with all his wisdom, played the fool exceedingly, and though he was the most sagacious ruler of his age he became for awhile completely subject to his fleshly desires.

Man is born to be a servant, and a servant he must be. *Who shall be his master?* That is the question. Our text proves the point with which I have started, for it speaks of "being made free from sin," and in the same breath it adds, "Ye became the servants of righteousness." There is no interregnum: there does not appear to be a moment left for an independent state, but out of one servitude we pass into another. Do not think I made a mistake in the use of the word servitude; I might have translated the Greek word by that of slave, and have been correct. "Being made free from sin, ye were enslaved to righteousness." The apostle makes an excuse for using the figure, and says, "I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh." He did not know how else to describe it, for when we come from under the absolute power of sin we come at once into a like subjection to righteousness; as we were governed and swayed by the love of sin, so we become in a similar manner subject to the forces of grace and truth. As sin took possession of us and controlled our acts, so grace claims us as its own, takes possession of us, and rules us with an absolute sway. Man passes from one master to another, but he is always in subjection. Free will I have often heard of, but I have never seen it. I have met with will, and plenty of it, but it has either been led captive by sin or held in blessed bonds of grace. The passions drive it hither and thither like a

rolling thing before a whirlwind ; or the understanding sways it, and then, according as the understanding is darkened or enlightened, the will acts for good or evil. In any case the bit is in its mouth, and it is guided by a power beyond itself.

However, I leave that question, and call attention this morning first of all to *our change of masters*—"Being made free from sin, we become the servants of righteousness": secondly, to *the reasons for that change*; and thirdly, to *the consequences of that change*.

I. We begin with OUR CHANGE OF MASTERS. We must have a master, but some of us by divine grace have made a change of masters infinitely to our advantage. In describing this inward revolution we will begin with a word or two upon our old master. The apostle says in the verse preceding our text, "*Ye were the servants of sin.*" How true that is! Those of us who now believe, and are free from sin, were all without exception the servants of sin. We were not all alike enslaved, but we were all under bondage. Sin has its liveried servants. Did you ever see a man dressed in the full livery of sin? A fine suit, I warrant you! Sin clothes its slave with rags, with shame, and often with disease. When fully dressed in Satan's uniform the sinner is abominable, even to his fellow sinners. If you want to see sin's liveried servants dressed out in their best or their worst, go to the prison, and you will find them there; or go to the dens of infamy in this great city, or to the liquor-bars, or to the places of vicious amusement, and you will find them there. Many of them wear the badge of the devil's drudgery upon their backs in poverty and rags, upon their faces in the blotches born of drunkenness, and in their very bones in the consequences of their vice. Satan has regimentals for his soldiers, and they are worthy of the service.

But great folks have many servants who are out of livery, and so has sin. We were not all open transgressors before our new birth, though we were all the servants of sin. There are many slaves of evil whom you would not know to be such if you only saw the surface of their characters. They do not swear, or steal, or commit adultery, or even break the Sabbath outwardly; on the contrary, they are most moral in their conduct. They are the servants of sin, but they are secretly so, for fear of rebuke; they are non-professing sinners and yet sincerely in love with sin. They stood up and sung the hymn just now, they bowed their heads in prayer, and they are now listening to the sermon, and no one will know the difference between them and the servants of Christ by their exterior; but at heart they reject the Son of God, and refuse to believe in him, for they love the pleasures of sin and the wages of unrighteousness. A kind of selfish caution restrains them from overt acts of transgression, but their heart loves not God, and their desires are not towards his ways. O, my dear hearer, if thou art setting up thine own righteousness in thy soul as an anti-Christ against God's Christ, if thou art kicking against the sway of the Divine Spirit, if thou art secretly living in sin, if thou art following out some sweet sin in secret, even though thou darest to appear in the livery of Christ, yet still thou art the slave of sin. Hypocrites are worse slaves than any others, because they are laid under the restraints of religious men without enjoying their consolations, and they practise the sins of the ungodly without their pleasures. Every hypocrite is a fool and a coward; he has not the will

to serve the Lord and yet he has not the courage to serve the devil out and out. These go-betweens are of all sorts of people the most to be pitied and the most to be blamed.

As long as we are unbelievers we are the servants of sin, but we are not all outdoor servants of sin. Sin has its domestic servants who keep quiet, as well as its soldiers who beat the drum. Many keep their sin to themselves: nobody hears of them in the street, they raise no public scandal, and yet at heart they are the faithful followers of wickedness and rebellion. Their idols are set up in secret chambers, but they are heartily loved. Their desires and aspirations are all selfish, but they try to conceal this fact even from themselves; they will not serve God, they will not bow before his Son, and yet they would shrink from avowing their rebellion. They are amiable, admirable, and excellent in their outward deportment; but they are the indoor servants of Satan for all that, and their heart is full of enmity against God. Some of us confess that it was so with us. When none found fault with us we were, nevertheless, rotten in heart. We used to pray, but it was a mockery of God; we went up to God's house, but we regarded not his word, and yet in all this we prided ourselves that we were righteous.

There are, however, many believers, who were once outdoor servants of Satan, sinning openly and in defiance of all law. I thank God that there are some here who are now the servants of Christ, upon whom I can look with great delight, although they were once the open, overt, zealous, diligent servants of the devil. Now they are washed, renewed, and sanctified. Glory be to God for it. Oh that the Lord would bring some more great sinners inside this house and turn them into great saints, for bold offenders make zealous lovers of Jesus when he puts away their sins. They love much because they have had much forgiven, and inasmuch as they desperately sinned so do they devoutly love; and their surrender to Christ is as entire and unreserved as their former surrender to the service of evil. In this let God be praised. Still, let us all humbly bow before the truth we are now speaking of, and own with great humiliation of spirit that we were the servants of sin.

In passing on we notice next the expression of the apostle, "*Being made free from sin.*" Through divine grace we have been led to trust the Lord Jesus Christ for eternal salvation, and having done so we are at this moment free from sin. Come you who trust the Saviour's name, and rejoice in the words before us, for they describe you. You are made free from sin—not you *shall be*, but you *are*. In what sense is this true?

First, in the sense of condemnation. The believer is no more condemned for sin. Your sin was laid on Christ of old, and he as your scapegoat took it all away. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." You are acquitted and justified through the Lord your righteousness. Clap your hands for joy! It is a mercy worth ten thousand worlds. You are made free from the damning power of sin, now and for ever.

Next, you are made free from the guilt of sin. As you cannot be condemned so does the truth go further, you cannot even be accused; your transgression is forgiven you, your sin is covered. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."

“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” You are delivered from sin’s guilt at this moment—“made free from sin.”

You are in consequence free from the punishment of sin. You shall never be cast into hell, for Jesus has suffered in your stead, and the justice of God is satisfied. As a believer in Christ, for you there is no bottomless pit, for you no undying worm, for you no fire unquenchable; but, guilty as you are by nature, Christ hath made you so completely clean that for you is reserved the “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world.”

Nor is this all. You are made free from sin as to its reigning power, and this is a point in which you greatly delight. Sin once said to you, “Go,” and you went: it says “Go” now, but you do not go. Sometimes sin stands in your way when grace says “Go,” and then you would gladly run but sin opposes and hinders; and yet you will not yield to its demands, for grace holds dominion. You push, you struggle, you resolve that sin shall not be lord of your life, for you are not under the law but under grace. Sin hides itself in holes and corners of your nature, skulks in the dark about the streets of Mansoul, plots and plans if it can to get the mastery over you; but it never shall: it is cast out of the throne, and the Holy Ghost sits there ruling your nature, and there he will sit until you shall be perfected in holiness, and shall be caught up to dwell with Christ for ever and ever.

“Made free from sin.” I wish I could now leave off preaching, and get into a quiet pew, and sit down with you and meditate upon that thought; chewing the cud as you farmers say, and getting the juice out of this rich pasturage. “Made free from sin!” Why, as I pronounce those blessed words I feel like an escaped negro in the old slave days when he leaped upon British soil in Canada. After all his running through the woods, and crossing of hills and rivers, he was free! How he leaped for joy! How he cried with delight! Even so did we exult in our liberty when at the first our Lord Jesus set us free. You who were never slaves, and never felt the taskmaster’s lash, you do not know the value of liberty; and so in spiritual things, if you have never felt the slavery of sin, and have never escaped therefrom into the good land of grace where Christ hath made you free indeed, you do not know the joy of the redeemed. I am free! I am free! I am free!—I that was once a slave to every evil desire! I am made free by omnipotent love! I have escaped from the taskmaster’s fetters, and I am the Lord’s free man! Let all the angels praise my redeeming Lord. Let all the spirits before the throne praise the Lord, who hath led his people out of bondage, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.

Now, how came we to be free? We have become free in three ways. First, by *purchase*, for our Saviour has paid the full redemption money for us, and there is not a halfpenny due upon us. Blessed be his name, there is no mortgage on his inheritance; the price is all paid and we are Christ’s unencumbered property for ever. Here we stand at this moment free, because we are ransomed, and we know that our Redeemer liveth.

Our body, soul, and spirit are all bought with a price, and in our complete manhood we are Christ's.

Next, we are free by *power* as well as by purchase. Just as the Israelites were the Lord's own people, but he had to bring them out of Egypt with a high hand and an outstretched arm, so has the Lord by power broken the neck of sin and brought us up from the dominion of the old Pharaoh of evil and set us free. The Spirit's power, the same power which raised Christ from the dead, ay, the same power which made the heavens and the earth, hath delivered us, and we are the ransomed of the Lord.

And then we are free by *privilege*. "Unto as many as believed him, to them gave he the privilege to become the sons of God." God has declared us free. His own royal, majestic, and divine decree has bidden the prisoners go forth. The Lord himself looseth the prisoners, and declares that they shall no more be held in captivity. Price and power and privilege meet together in our liberty.

How came we to be free? I will tell you another story. We are free in a strange way. According to the chapter in which we find our text we are free because *we have died*. If a slave dies his master's possession in him is ended. The tyrant can rule no longer, death has relaxed his hold. "He that is dead is free from sin." Sin comes to me and asks me why I do not obey its desires. I have a reply ready. "Ah, Master Sin, I am dead! I died some thirty years ago, and I do not belong to you any more. What have you to do with me?" Whenever the Lord brings a man to die in Christ the blessed, heavenly death unto sin, how hath sin any more dominion over him? He is clear from his old master, because he is dead. Our old master lives to us, but we do not live to him. He may make what suit he pleases, we will not acknowledge his right. Some of us have made a public claim of our freedom by death, for *we have been buried*, and the apostle saith, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." We do not trust in the burial of baptism, for we know that there would have been no truth in it if we had not been dead first; but still it is a blessed sign to us that inasmuch as we died we have also been buried. Whenever the devil comes to us we can each one say to him, "I am no servant of yours, I died and was buried, did you not see me laid in the liquid tomb?" Oh, it is a blessed thing when the Lord enables us to feel a clear assurance that our baptism was not a mere form, but the instructive token of a work within the soul wrought by the divine Spirit, which set us free from the thralldom of sin.

A third thing has happened to us: *we have risen again*. According to Paul's teaching we have risen in the resurrection of Christ: a new life has been given to us: we are new creatures in Christ Jesus. We are not the same people that we once were; old things have passed away, behold all things have become new. If some of you were to meet your old selves you would not know yourselves, would you? My old self does not know me, and cannot make me out. I am dead to him as to his reigning power, and buried too, so that I can never be his subject, nor

can he ever be the king of my heart, yet he struggles to dwell within me, and seems to have as many lives as a cat. Every now and then my old self sneeringly cries to my true self, "What a fool you are." My true self answers, "No, I was a fool when you had sway, but now I have come to my right mind." Sometimes that old self whispers, "There is no reality in faith," and the new self replies, "There is no reality in the things which are seen. This world is a shadow, but heaven is eternal." "Ah," says the old self, "you are a hypocrite." "No," says the new self, "I was false when I was under your power, but now I am honest and true." Yes, brethren, we are risen with Christ: with him we died and were buried, and with him we are risen, and hence we are free. What slave would remain under the dominion of a master if he could say, "I died, sir: you cannot own me now, for your ownership only extended over one life. I was buried; did you own me when I was buried? I have risen again, and my new life is not yours; I am not the same man that I was, and you have no rights over me." We have undergone this wondrous death and resurrection, and so we can say this morning with heartfelt joy, "We are made free from sin."

We are also free from sin in our hearts: we do not love it now, but loathe the thought of it. We are free from sin as to our new nature: it cannot sin because it is born of God. We are free from sin as to God's purpose about us, for he will present us ere long blameless and faultless before his presence with exceeding great joy. We do not belong to sin; we refuse to serve sin; we are made free from it by the grace of God.

Now, the third part of this change of masters is this—"ye became the servants of righteousness." So we have done, and we are now in the possession of righteousness and under its rule. A righteous God has made us die to sin: a righteous God has redeemed us: a new and righteous life has been infused into us, and now righteousness rules and reigns in us. We do not belong to ourselves, but we yield ourselves up entirely to the Redeemer's sway through his Spirit, and the more completely he rules us the better. The text says we are enslaved to righteousness, and so we wish to be. We wish we were so enslaved that we could not even will a wrong thing nor wish an evil thing. We desire to give ourselves up wholly and absolutely to the divine sway, so that the right, and the true, and the good may hold us in perpetual bonds. We abandon ourselves to the supremacy of God, and we find our liberty in being entirely subjected to the will of the Most High. This is a change of masters with which I know that some of you are well acquainted. I am afraid, however, that others of you know nothing about it. May the Lord grant that you may be made to know it before you go to sleep to-night. May you be delivered from the black tyrant and brought into the service of the Prince of Peace, and that straightway.

II. Secondly, let us survey the REASONS FOR OUR CHANGE. How do we justify this change of masters? A man who makes frequent shifts is not good for much. But we changed our old master because he never had any right to us, and we were illegally detained by him. Why should sin have dominion over us? Sin did not make us, sin does not feed us, sin has no right to us whatever; we never owed it a moment's homage; we are not debtors to the flesh to live after the flesh. Our old master cannot summon us for desertion, for he stole our services. Besides, our old

master was as bad as bad could be. You never saw his portrait; but he that would paint a picture of sin would have to put upon the canvas all the monstrosities that ever existed, and all the horrors that were ever imagined, and these would have to be exaggerated and condensed into one, before they could fairly depict the deformity of sin. Sin is worse than the devil, for sin made the devil a devil; he would have been an angel if it had not been for sin. Oh, who would serve the destroying tyrant who of old cast down even the stars of light and turned angels into fiends? We ran away from our old master because we had never any profit at his hands. The apostle says, "What fruit had he then?" Ask the drunkard, "What did you get by the drink?" Who hath woe? Who hath redness of the eyes? Ask the spendthrift what he gained by his debauchery. He would hardly like to tell you, and I certainly should not like to repeat his tale. Ask any man that lives in sin what he has gained by it, and you will find it is all loss; sin is evil and only evil, and that continually. We have found that out, and therefore we have quitted the old master, and taken up with the new. Beside that, our old master, sin, brought us shame. There was no honour in serving him. His work is called by Paul, "those things whereof ye are now ashamed." We are in the sight of God, ay, and in our own sight, ready to blush scarlet at the very thought of the evil in which we once took delight. Sin is a grovelling, mean, despicable thing, and we are ashamed of having been connected with it. Moreover, its wages are death, and this is dreadful to think upon. Sin at one time was pleasant to us, but when we found out that sin led its servants down to hell, and plunged them into fire unquenchable, we renounced its rule, and found another lord.

But why did we take up with our new Master? We could not help it, for it was he that set us free; it was he that bought us, it was he that fought for us, it was he that brought us into liberty. Ah, if you could see him you would not ask us why we became his servants. In the first place, we owe ourselves wholly to him; and in the next place, if we did not, he is so altogether lovely, so matchless, and so charming, that if we had a free choice of masters we would choose him a thousand times over, for he is the crown and glory of mankind, among the sons there is none to be compared to him.

If you want us to justify our service of him, we tell you that his service is perfect freedom and supreme delight. We have had to suffer a little sometimes when his enemy and ours has barked at us, and the ungodly have called us ill names, but we count it honour to suffer for Jesus' sake: for he is so sweet, and so good, that if we had a thousand lives, and could give each one away by a martyr's death, we count him worthy of those lives, so sweet is he to our hearts' love. Why have we taken our new Master? Why, because he gives us even now a present payment in his service. If there were no hereafter we would be satisfied with the present delight he gives us, but in addition to that he has promised us, as a future reward, life eternal at his right hand. We think, therefore, that we have more than sufficient reason for becoming the servants of Jesus Christ, who is made of God unto us righteousness. Dear hearers, how I wish that you would all enter my Lord's service by faith in his name.

III. In the third place, and very practically, I want to talk to those

who are servants of God upon THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS CHANGE. Ye have become the servants of righteousness, and the first consequence is that you belong wholly to your Lord? Have you recognized this? I know numbers of Christian people—I hope they are Christian people, for in some points they seem as if they were—but if I were asked to look at their lives, and give an opinion as to whom they belong, I should be compelled to say, “They seem mostly to belong to themselves.” To whom does their property belong? “To themselves.” To whom does their time belong? “To themselves.” To whom does their talent belong? “To themselves.” As far as I can see they lay all out upon themselves, and live for themselves. And what do they give to God? If they are rather generous they give him the candle-ends and the parings of the cheese, and little odds and ends, threepenny-bits, and things they do not want, and can give without missing them. There are hundreds of professors who never gave God anything that cost them a self-denial; no, not so much as going without a dish on the table, or a picture on the wall, or a ring on the finger. There are numbers of professing Christians who spend a deal more on the soles of their boots than on Christ, and many women who spend more on the feathers and the flowers which deck their bonnets than on their Saviour. Yes, and I have heard of men who said they were perfect, and yet they were worth half a million of money, and were hoarding up more! Sinners dying and being damned and missionaries without support, and yet these absolutely perfect men are piling up gold and letting the cause of Christ stop for means. It is not my theory of perfection, nay, it does not seem to me to come up to the idea of a common Christian who says he is not his own. If you are really saved, brethren, not a hair of your heads belongs to yourselves: Christ’s blood has either bought you or it has not, and if it has, then you are altogether Christ’s, every bit of you, and you are neither to eat nor drink, nor sleep, but for Christ. “Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” Have you ever got a hold of that? Just as a negro used to belong to the man that bought him, every inch of him, so you are the slave of Christ; you bear in your body the brand of the Lord Jesus, and your glory and your freedom lie therein. That is the first consequence of being set free from sin,—ye became the servants of righteousness.

What next? Why, because you are Christ’s his very name is dear to you. You are not so his slave that you would escape from his service if you could; no, but you would plunge deeper and deeper into it. You want to be more and more the Lord’s. His very name is sweet to you. If you meet with the poorest person who belongs to Christ you love him, and though perhaps some who are like Christ in other respects may have awkward tempers, you put up with their infirmities for his sake. Where there is anything of Christ there your love goes forth. I remember when I left the village where I first preached I felt that if I had met a dog that came from Waterbeach I should have petted him; and such is the love we have for Christ that the lowest and weakest thing that belongs to him we love for his sake: the very sound of his name is music to us, and those who do not love him we cannot endure. Haydn, the great musician, one day walked down a London street and turning into a music-seller’s shop, he asked the salesman if he had any select and beautiful music?

"Well sir," said he, "I have some sublime music by Mr. Haydn." "Oh," said Haydn, "I'll have nothing to do with that." "Why, sir, you come to buy music and will have nothing to do with Mr. Haydn's composition! What fault can you find with it?" "I can find a great deal of fault with it, but I will not argue with you: I do not want any of his music." "Then," said the shopkeeper, "I have other music, but it is not for such as you," and he turned his back on him. A thorough enthusiast grows impatient of those who do not appreciate what he so much admires. If we love Jesus we shall sometimes feel an impatient desire to get away from those who know him not. You do not love Christ? What kind of man can you be to be so blind, so dead? You can be no friend of mine if you are not a friend of Christ's. I would do anything for your good, but you cannot yield me delight or be my bosom friend unless you love my Lord, for he has engrossed my heart and taken entire possession of my spirit. If you have thus become a servant of righteousness you will weary of that which does not help you in his service, but the name of your Master will be as choicest music to you.

And now, dear friends, let me mention another result. All your members are henceforth reserved for Christ. What does the apostle say? "When ye were the servants of sin ye were free from righteousness." When Satan was your master you did not care about Christ, did you? You had no respect for him, and if anybody brought the words of Jesus before you you said, "Take them away—I do not want to hear them." You went wholly in for evil. Now, just in the same way yield yourself up wholly to Christ, and say, "Now, Satan, when I was yours I did not yield obedience to Jesus, and now that I am Christ's I can yield no obedience to you." If Satan brings sin before you, say, "I cannot see it: my eyes are Christ's:" and if he would charm you with the sweet sound of temptation say, "I cannot hear it: my ears are Christ's." "Oh," saith he, "seize on this delight." You answer, "I cannot reach it; my hands are Christ's." "But taste this sweet draught," saith he. You say, "I cannot take it, my lips are Christ's, my mouth is Christ's, all my members are Christ's." "Well, but you can form a judgment, cannot you, about this error?" "No, I do not want to know anything about it; my understanding is Christ's." "Oh, but hear this new thing." "No, I do not want to hear it; I have found Christ, who is new enough for me; I do not want your novel discoveries; I am dead to them. I do not want to be worried with arguments which dishonour my Lord: take them away. When I was a servant of sin I would not meddle with the truth, and now that I am a servant of Christ I will not trifle in the opposite direction; I have done with all but Jesus."

Think, my brethren, when we were servants of sin in what way we served it; for just as we used to serve sin, so ought we to work for Jesus. I do not speak to all here present, but I speak to many who were sinners of an open kind: how did you serve sin? I will answer for them. They did not require to be egged on to it; they did not want any messenger of the devil to plead with them and urge them to unholy pleasures and unclean delights. Far from it; some even of their own companions thought them too imprudent. Now, dear friends, you ought not to want your ministers or Christian friends to stir you up to good

works ; you ought to be just as eager after holiness as you were after sin. Evil was very sweet to you once. You used to watch for the day when you could indulge in a sweet sin ; did you not ? When the time was coming round when you could take a deep draught of iniquity you took the almanack and looked for it as a child for his holidays. You did not mind travelling from town to town to make a round of dissipation. Brother, serve Christ in the same way. May his Holy Spirit help you to do so. Watch for opportunities of doing good ; do not need whipping to duty. Instead of requiring to be urged forward in evil we needed holding back : did we not ? Our parents had to put the rein upon us ! Sometimes mother would say, "John, do not so," and father would cry, "My boy, do not this." We wanted a deal of restraint. I wish I had a band of Christians round me who needed holding back in the service of Christ : I have not met with that sort yet. I am prepared with any kind of curb when I meet with a high-mettled Christian, who goes at too great a rate in his Lord's service. For the most part my Master's horses are fonder of getting into the stables than out into the hunting field. I have not met with one who has done too much for the Lord. I shall never be guilty of too much work myself ; I wish I could go like the wind in serving Jesus.

Brethren, be just as hot to honour Christ as you once were to dishonour him. As you have given the devil first-rate service, let Christ have the same. You recollect in the days of your sin, some of you who went in for it thoroughly, that you never stood at any expense—did you ? Oh no, if you wanted pleasure in sin, away went the five pounds, and the hundreds. How often do I meet with men, particularly those given to drink, who get pounds in their pockets and never know how they go ; but they will never leave off till all is spent, be it little or much. Poor fools, poor fools. Yet I wish we could serve Jesus Christ thus unstintedly. No expense should be reckoned so long as we can honour him and bless his name. Bring forth the alabaster box ; break it, never mind the chips and pieces ; pour out the oil, and let Jesus have it all. It was thus I served Satan and thus would I serve Christ.

Ay, and the poor slaves of sin not only do not stop at expense, but they are not frightened by any kind of loss. See how many lose their characters for the sake of one short hour of sin. How many are wringing their hands now because none will trust them, and they are cut off from decent society because of one short-lived sin. They ruin their peace and think nothing of it. A quiet conscience is the brightest of jewels, but they fling it away to enjoy their sin. They will lose their health, too, for the sake of indulging their passions. The devil says, "Drink, drink ; drink yourselves blind ;" and they do it as eagerly as if it were for their good. They are martyrs for Satan. Never did a Zulu fling himself upon death for his king so recklessly as these servants of Satan yield themselves for his service. They will do anything ; they will destroy their health, and, what is worst of all, destroy their souls for ever for the sake of sin's brief delights. They know that there is a hell, they know that the wrath of God abideth for ever on guilty men, but they risk all and lose all for sin. In that same way should we serve our Lord. Be willing to lose character for him ; be willing to lose health for him ;

be willing to lose life for him ; be willing to lose all, if by any means you may glorify him whose servant you have become.

Oh, who will be my Master's servant? Here he comes! Do you not see him? He wears upon his head no diadem but the crown of thorns; adown his cheeks you see the spittle flowing, his feet are still rubied with their wounds, and his hands are still bejewelled with the marks of the nails. This is your Master, and these are the insignia of his love for you. What service will you render him? That of a mere professor, who names his name but loves him not? That of a cold religionist, who renders unwilling service out of fear? I pray you, brethren, do not so dishonour him. I lift the standard this morning to enlist beneath the banner of Christ those who will henceforth be Christ's men from head to foot; and happy shall the church be, and happy the entire Israel of God if a chosen number shall enlist and remain true to their colours. We need no more of your nominal Christians, your lukewarm Christians, whom my Master spues out of his mouth: we need men on fire with love, all over consecrated, intensely devoted, who, by the slavery from which they have escaped, and by the liberty into which they have entered, are under bond to spend and be spent for the name of Jesus, till they have filled the earth with his glory, and made all heaven ring with his praise. The Lord bless you, beloved, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans vi.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK."—116 (Song II.), 653,
119 (Song III.)