

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

PURGING OUT THE LEAVEN.

A Sermon

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."—1 Corinthians v. 6—8.

"WHAT God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." Evermore in Scripture the doctrines of grace are married to the precepts of holiness. Where faith leads the way, the virtues follow in a goodly train. The roots of holiness and happiness are the same, and in some respects they are but two words for the same thing. There have been persons who have thought it impossible that holiness should come out of the preaching of salvation by faith. If you tell men that "there is life in a look at the crucified One," will they not conclude that cleanness of life is unnecessary? If you preach salvation by grace through faith, and not at all by the works of the law, will they not draw the inference that they need not be obedient to Christ, but may live as they list? To this the best answer is found in the godly, honest, and sober lives of the men who are most zealous for the gospel of the grace of God. On the other hand, there have been others of Antinomian spirit, who have dared to say that because they are saved, and Christ has finished his work for them, so that nothing is left undone by way of merit, therefore, henceforth they may act as they please, seeing that they are not under law, but under grace. Our reply is, that the faith which saves is not an unproductive faith, but is always a faith which produces good works and abounds in holiness. Salvation *in* sin is not possible, it always must be salvation *from* sin. As well speak of liberty while yet the irons are upon a man's wrists, or boast of healing while the disease waxes worse and worse, or glory in victory when the army is on the point of surrendering, as to dream of salvation in Christ while the sinner continues to give full swing to his evil passions. Grace and holiness are as inseparable as light and heat in the sun. True faith in Jesus in every case leads to an abhorrence of every false way, and to a perseverance in the paths of holiness even unto the end.

No. 965.

The apostle Paul while he was showing the Corinthians how wrong they were to tolerate an incestuous person in their midst, compared the spirit of uncleanness to an evil leaven; then the leaven suggested to him the passover, and turning aside for a moment he applied the type of the paschal feast, so as to make his argument yet more cogent. He would urge purity upon them by every conceivable reason, and his keen eye saw an argument in the celebration of the passover. In using this type he furnishes me with another proof of the fact, that hard by any Scripture wherein you find the safety of the believer guaranteed, you are sure to see needful holiness set side by side with it. Here you have at the passover a favoured people safe beneath the sprinkled blood, safe in that dire hour when the destroying angel's sword was unsheathed, but you find that people busily engaged in purging out the defiling leaven from their houses: they were not saved by purging out the leaven, but being preserved by the sprinkled blood, they were obedient to the divine precept, and diligently put away the corrupt and forbidden thing. The purity of the house from leaven went side by side with its safety by the blood.

We shall, this morning, first, consider *the happy condition of believers*; next, *the holy duty commended to them*, running side by side with their privilege; and thirdly, we shall show how *their happiness and holiness, their holiness and happiness*, act and re-act upon each other.

I. We have set forth to us THE HAPPY CONDITION OF ALL TRUE BELIEVERS IN CHRIST. "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast."

The habitual, normal state of a Christian is that of one keeping a feast in perfect security. We are to be, as a rule, like the Israelites who stood at the table of the passover festival, with loins girt, and staves in their hands, expectant of a joyful deliverance. Observe how the apostle puts it; take his words one by one. "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." "Our passover," that by which God's wrath makes a transition, and passes over from us who deserve its full vengeance. It passed upon the Lamb of God, and therefore it passes over us. Christ is sacrificed or slain, his life is taken, for he gave himself for us; his life and blood, yea, his truest self, he yielded up for us. The word *for us* implies substitution. Christ is sacrificed *for* or instead of us. We should never think of saying that Paul was sacrificed for us, though it is true Paul did lay down his life for the church of God, to promote the interests of the faithful, and in a certain sense, since his exertions handed down the gospel, he died even for us; but we use the term so generally and so correctly in the sense of substitution, that we should not think of applying it to any but our Lord, who alone in the fullest sense was sacrificed *for us*. He is the Lamb of our passover, sacrificed in our behalf, that we might not be sacrificed, roasted in the fire of suffering that we might go free. It is by the process of substitution that, according to abundant Scriptures, believing sinners are passed over in judgment, and so escape eternal condemnation. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is

every one that hangeth on a tree." "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." No one can doubt this doctrine who believes the word of the Lord by the prophet Isaiah in his fifty-third chapter, "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." "He was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

Our great joy is that the sacrifice through which we are passed over is already slain. No new victim is expected or required. The sacrifice by which we are delivered is complete. Accursed be all those who say that there is offered to God continually a sacrifice in the mass by which the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is rendered complete. He hath said, "It is finished," and they are liars before God who say otherwise. "This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." Do you think me severe in my speech, I say no other than Paul said, "If any man preach any other gospel, let him be accursed." All that was wanted to atone for our sin, all that was required to vindicate the law of God, is already offered, there is nothing left to be presented by so-called priests on earth, or to be made up by the penances and payments of their dupes. Our passover *is* sacrificed; let others offer what they will, ours is the Lamb once slain, and there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin.

This completeness of sacrifice indeed is the main part of the festival which the Christian should perpetually keep. If there were anything yet to be done—if the substitutionary sacrifice were imperfect, how could we celebrate the feast? Anxiety would destroy all enjoyment. "It is finished," is the joyous peal which rings us into the celestial banquet of present peace; the fact that we are complete in him, perfect in Christ Jesus, is our soul's deepest delight.

Our sacrifice is slain: "therefore," says the apostle—and it is a natural inference from it—"let us keep the feast." By which I understand this: Jesus Christ, the Paschal Lamb, not only was offered as a sacrifice towards God, but he has become a festival towards ourselves; in him we have communion with God, and joy and peace through believing. We are to keep the feast by feeding upon Christ. The paschal lamb was not slain to be looked at, to be laid by in store, or merely made the subject of conversation; but it was slain to be fed upon. So, Christian, it is your daily business to feed upon Christ Jesus, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed. Jesus is the food on which your faith must be nourished; and what rich nourishment he is! God over all, blessed for ever, hath redeemed us; the Word made flesh, who dwelt among us, has been sacrificed for us. My soul, what more could be required? What more canst thou desire, or can the Almighty One demand? A sacrifice divine, a perfect man in union with the eternal God, dies for thee. What more is needed to make thy

faith firm and unmoved? Come and feed thyself on this bread which came down from heaven. The infinite love of the great Sacrifice, the amazing wisdom of it, the transcendent merit of it, the abounding fulness of the blessings which it secures; let your souls consider these things, and feed upon them till they are satisfied with favour and full of the goodness of the Lord. Here is a festival the viands of which never can be exhausted, and from which the guests need never depart. Remember that at the paschal supper the whole of the lamb was intended to be eaten; and even thus, O believer, the whole of Christ thou art to feed upon. No part of Christ is denied thee, neither his humiliation nor his glory, his kingship nor his priesthood, his Godhead nor his manhood; all this has he given to thee and for thee, and thou art now to nourish thy soul by meditating upon him.

Forget not, moreover, that a feast is not only for nourishment, it is for something more, for joy, for exhilaration. Let us in this sense also keep a lifelong feast. The Christian is not only to take the doctrines which concern Christ, to build up his soul with them as the body is built up with food, but he may draw from them the wine of joy and the new wine of delight. It is meet that we rejoice in Christ Jesus. He is the bliss of the saints. Is it not a joy unspeakable and full of glory, that my sin will never be laid to my charge if I am a believer; that my sin has been laid at Jesus' door, and he has put it all away, so that if it be searched for it shall not be found? Is it not an intense delight to believe that Jesus has so effectually put away sin that no destroying angel can touch one of his saints? There being no condemnation, there can be no punishment for us either in this world or in that which is to come. We are as safe as Israel when the door was sprinkled with the blood. And more, being justified, we rise to a higher position, we are adopted into the family of God, and if children, then heirs. What a vista of glory opens before our eyes at the mention of that word, heirs of God! All things are ours, because Christ our passover has been slain for us. My brethren, do not let your religion merely keep you calm and quiet, look for bursts of joy. "Praise him upon the cymbals, praise him upon the high-sounding cymbals." Surely there should be an excitement of delight created by truths so grand, by blessings so inestimable as those of which we are partakers! Let us not treat our religion as merely an ordinary meal for our souls, but as a holy banquet of wine wherein our souls may be exceeding glad.

When the Jews came together at the passover, we find that they were accustomed to sing. They did not close the paschal supper without chanting some portions of the great "Hallel," which consisted of those Psalms at the end of the book, dedicated to the praise of God. Let us keep the feast in the same way, nourishing our souls with Christ's sacrifice, making our hearts glad by reflecting upon the blessing which this has brought us, and never forgetting to magnify Jehovah, the Father, the giver of Christ, the founder of the covenant, our God in Christ Jesus. Let your praises never cease. You remember what I started with, that when the apostle says, "let us keep the feast," having drawn that exhortation as an inference from the fact that the passover is killed, he does not mean, "let us sometimes keep the feast," but let us always keep it. Our passover is perpetual. It has no

times and seasons, it is lifelong. Salute ye your God each morning with your hymn of praise, ye redeemed ones ; let not the sun go down without another hymn of thanksgiving. Praise him, praise him, praise him. Ceaseless as your mercies let his praises be. O for the life of heaven on earth, to be always praising God ! Our sacrifice is slain, therefore let us keep this feast of daily adoration and hourly thankfulness to him who passed us by in mercy when he might have smitten us in wrath.

At the passover the devout Jew was accustomed to teach his family the meaning of the feast. The children said, "What mean ye by this ordinance?" And then the father explained to them how they came out of Egypt, saying, "With a high hand and an outstretched arm Jehovah brought us forth, and on the night when he smote the firstborn of Egypt, he smote not us, for the lamb was slaughtered, and when the Lord saw the blood upon the door he passed over us." Let it be a part of our continual festival—and I do not know a more delightful duty—to tell to others what our Redeeming Lord has done. Too many of you need to be stirred up to this pleasant duty. When you once break through those wicked cowardly habits—for I cannot help thinking them so in many of you—which lock your mouths and prevent your giving Jesus praise, you will find it sweet to tell to your children and kinsfolk the story of the atoning sacrifice. While blessing them you will obtain a double blessing in your own souls, and if it should please the Holy Spirit to bless your teaching to the salvation of your fellow men, you will be happy indeed.

Do not suppose that I am exhorting you to keep the feast when you come to the Lord's-supper. I do not refer to that emblematic feast at all. I refer to our daily lifelong fellowship with Jesus." Christ our sacrifice is slain for us, therefore let us keep the feast;" the inference is of continuous force. When is Jesus slain? Is he not slain at this hour; was not his sacrifice completed upon Calvary's bloody tree? Therefore let us keep the feast always, for the Lamb is always slain. Our keeping of the feast is not a matter for times and seasons, for festivals and holidays, it is always our position. O you who go with your heads bowed down like bulrushes, and yet are the Lord's true people, I would fain put my hand on your shoulders and say, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast." Wherefore should we lie in the dungeon when liberty is ours? "Alas," saith a downcast one, "I have so many corruptions." I know you have, my dear brother. We will talk about that directly, but "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast." "But I have so many troubles and I am so very poor." So were many of the Israelites, but when they had slain the passover they kept the feast; so notwithstanding all these things which make you sorrow, you must feast, for "our passover is sacrificed." "Ah! my cares," saith one. What business hath a believer with cares? Is it not written, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, he will sustain thee, he will never suffer the righteous to be moved"? You cannot keep a feast while care, like a harpy, hovers above the table; but let us, like Abram, drive away the birds of prey, and keep the feast. "Ah! but I am thinking about the past, my old sins still haunt me." What, after Christ your passover is slain? Surely the past is blotted out and forgiven.

"Still," says one, "my mind is heavy, my harp is on the willows." Will not a sight of Calvary relieve you? Jesus Christ was made a curse for you that you might not be regarded any longer as accursed. Will not this make you lift up the note of thanksgiving? Certainly it ought. It should be always feast time with God's servants, since Christ their passover is slain. "But I have nothing to rejoice in," says one, "except my religion." What more do you want? What was there brought on the table at that paschal supper by way of good cheer, except the paschal lamb? I grant you there was something else upon the table, but what was it? Bitter herbs. Surely those were not an addition to the joy? It was not sharp sauce such as we ordinarily use, but bitter, pungent herbs. These did not please the palate, yet they kept the feast upon the lamb, which was all they needed. So you may bring the bitter herbs of your deep repentance that your sin made it necessary that the Lamb of God should die; but all the feast is *in him*, and all the world can contribute nothing to that feast but bitter herbs. If you had all the world, and derived comfort from it for a time, in the end it would become bitter as wormwood. Bitter herbs all things beneath the sky must be, only Jesus is the true feast. My soul, rejoice in the Lord always, for thou hast always reason to triumph, since Jesus Christ is slain.

II. Close side by side with the picture of the lifelong feast, we find A HOLY DUTY COMMENDED to us. "Purge out, therefore, the old leaven." "Let us keep the feast; not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleaven of sincerity and truth."

Leaven is used in Scripture, we believe in every case—there is only one case in which the question could possibly be raised—as the emblem of sin. This arises partly from its sourness. We being ourselves leavened with evil, find leaven somewhat palatable at the first, but God, who hates all evil, puts away the type in all its stages. Sin, which for awhile may seem pleasant, will soon be nauseous even to the sinner; but the very least degree of sin is obnoxious to God. We cannot tell how much God hates sin. With the entire intensity of his infinite nature he loathes it; he cannot look upon iniquity, it is detestable to him, the fire of his wrath will burn for ever against it, because sin is infinitely loathsome to his pure and holy nature. He calls it leaven, then, because of its sourness. Leaven is, moreover, the offspring of a sort of corruption, and tends towards further corruption. Sin is a corruption, it dissolves the very fabric of society, it dissolves the constitution of man, wherever it gets into our nature it puts it out of order, disjoins it, destroys its excellence, and poisons its purity. Leaven is also very spreading. No matter how great the measure of flour, the leaven will work its way. There is no saying, "Hitherto shalt thou go, but no farther," a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Even thus it is with sin. When that leaven had place among angels, it brought a multitude of them down to hell. One woman sinned, and the whole human race was leavened by her fault. One sin drops into the nature, and it becomes entirely depraved, corrupt through and through, by the leavening influence.

Now, according to the apostle, if the leaven of evil is permitted in a church, it will work its way through the whole of it. In the Christian

church a little false doctrine is sure to pave the way for greater departures from truth, so that no one can predict the end and result of the first false teaching. You cannot say, "I will be so far unorthodox;" you might as well break the dykes of Holland, and bid the sea be moderate in its encroachments. The doctrines of the gospel have such a close relation to one another, that if you snap a link, you have broken the whole chain, and we may say of the system of truth what is written concerning the law, "He that offendeth in one point is guilty of all." The renunciation of one truth almost necessarily leads to the giving up of another, and before a man is half aware of it himself he has let go the gospel. I greatly fear that the denial of the eternity of future punishment is but one wave of an incoming sea of infidelity. Deny the awful character of the desert of sin, and the substitutionary work of Christ will soon follow. Indeed we have living proofs of this at this day, and we shall see many more before long. The new teaching eats as doth a canker. It speaks fair, but in its heart there is a deadly enmity to the gospel itself, and the sooner it is seen to be so the better for the church of God.

The leaven of evil living, too, is equally obnoxious in the church; tolerated in one it will soon be excused in another, and a lower tone of thought with regard to sin will rule the church. The toleration of sin in the church soon leads to the excusing of it, and that to the free indulgence of it, and to the bringing in of other sins yet more foul. Sin is like the bale of goods which came from the east to this city in the olden time, which brought the pest in it. Probably it was but a small bale, but yet it contained in it the deaths of hundreds of the inhabitants of London. In those days one piece of rag carried the infection into a whole town. So, if you permit one sin or false doctrine in a church knowingly and wittingly, none can tell the extent to which that evil may ultimately go. The church, therefore, is to be purged of practical and doctrinal evil as diligently as possible. That sour and corrupting thing which God abhors must be purged out, and it is to be the business of the Christian minister, and of all his fellow helpers, to keep the church free from it.

We will, however, view the text as relating to ourselves, and let me remark that the apostle had in his mind's eye the custom of the Jews at the passover. In consequence of the command that they should purge out the leaven at the passover, the head of the household among the Jews in the olden times, especially when they grew more strict in their ritual, would go through the whole of the house on a certain day to search for every particle of leavened bread. It was generally done in the evening with a candle, and the servants and others would accompany the good man of the house to search for every crumb. Clothes were shaken, cupboards were emptied, drawers were opened, and if a mouse ran across the room and might be supposed to carry a crumb of bread into its hole, they trembled lest a curse should rest on the home. So strict did they become that our Saviour might have rebuked them as straining at a gnat while swallowing a camel. We, however, have no need to fear excessive strictness in getting rid of sin. With as scrupulous a care as the Israelite purged out the leaven from his house we are to purge out all sin from ourselves, our conduct, and our conversation. Here is a task set before

you, then, my brethren. Note well, we do not urge you to purge out sin in order that you may save yourselves, for Christ our passover is slain, and our salvation is secured. But that being done, in order that we may keep the feast and unbrokenly possess the joy of salvation, we are to purge out the leaven of sin. We may suppose that the Jewish householder would very soon put away all the large loaves of leavened bread that remained in the house; just as you and I, when we were sorrowing for sin, gave up at once all those gross outward sins in which we indulged before. Some of these have never tempted us again. Drunkenness, profanity, uncleanness—I have known men give up these sins at once, in a moment, and they appear to be delivered from their power henceforth and for ever. Then perhaps there were some stray crusts which the children had left. These were put away also. So there may be certain minor sins in the judgment of the world which the Christian man, when converted, may not put away the first week; but when they are seen he says, “I must have done with these; Christ my passover has been offered, I cannot do this wickedness. I am a child of God, more is expected of me than of others.” But the most trouble would be caused by the little crumbs of leaven; these might be hidden away in the cupboard, and perhaps it was a long time after the search began before the householder found these out; but when he did, he said, “Put them away, they must not remain.” And, beloved, many a Christian man has not found out the sinfulness of some actions for years after his conversion. I am very conscious that certain matters which I thought very lightly of years ago would greatly trouble my conscience now. As I have obtained light upon certain sins I have through grace put them away, and I expect as long as I live to find something which, viewed in a brighter light, and from a higher standing, will be discovered to be sinful, and I desire grace to have done with it. We must not hesitate for a moment; we must not retain even a crumb of the evil leaven; we must earnestly desire to sweep it all out.

The whole house was searched. I have seen a picture in which the servant is represented as cleansing the cooking vessels in the kitchen, the housewife is searching garments and cups in the dining room, and the master and his sons are opening cupboards, and chests, and diligently investigating. A Christian man may feel that he has got rid of all the leaven from his shop, he is upright, and honest himself, and his system of business is just; yet it may be there is leaven in his private house, for the children are uncorrected, the Sabbath is disregarded, or the servants' souls are neglected. Perhaps however the home is right, and then there may be leaven in the bed-chamber. Your conversation with yourself and your God may be in a sad condition. Prayer may be restrained. Suppose you have purged out the leaven of hypocrisy and are sincere, are you also free from the leaven of anger? May you not still be slow to forgive? Are you clear of the leaven of pride, or of covetousness? Every part of our nature needs searching, the reins, the heart, the judgment, all must be cleansed. Purge out the old leaven wherever it has penetrated; it must come away or else, though we are safe beneath the blood, we shall not know and enjoy our safety. The feast cannot be kept while the old leaven is wilfully left within us.

I told you that the head of the household usually performed the search;

let your best powers of judgment be exercised upon yourself, my dear brother. Too many exercise their understandings in criticising others, but they do not judge themselves in the same way. Let your main and chief thought be, now that you are saved, to get rid of sin, let the master powers of your soul be called into this purging work, and ask the Master himself to aid you. Doth he not sit as a refiner to purify the sons of Levi? Search me, O God; try me, and know my ways. Thine eyes can see what mine cannot. May the great Purifier put forth from us every crumb of the old leaven of our natural corruption.

I said that a candle was used to throw a light into every corner of the house, that no leaven might escape notice. Take you the candle of God's word, the candle of his Holy Spirit. Do you say, "There is nothing wrong in me if I judge myself by my fellow men"? My brother, it is a small thing to be able to say no more than this. To be approved of men is but a poor standard for a Christian. Does thine own heart reproach thee? Does the word of God reproach thee? To be measuring myself by my fellow men, and saying, "Compared with them I am generous to the poor, and diligent in God's service." This is to be proud because you are taller than pigmies or fairer than blackamoors. Compare yourself with Paul, with John, with Brainerd or Rutherford, and even that is ill advice, for what were the best disciples compared with their Master? There must be no lower standard for us than the perfection of Christ. No attainment must ever satisfy us until we are conformed to his image who is the firstborn among many brethren. You will tell me I am holding up a high standard. I am; but then you have a great helper, and I will show you in a moment how you may be of good cheer concerning this business.

To purge out the old leaven many sweepings of the house will be wanted; one certainly will not suffice. You must search, and search, and search on, until you get to heaven. The motto of your life must be, "Watch, watch, watch." For, mark you, you are sure to leave some leaven, and if you leave a little it will work and spread. Sin has evermore a swelling tendency, and until the Holy Spirit has cut up the last root of sin, evil will grow up again in the heart, at the scent of water it will bud and put forth once again its shoots. Here is work for all time, enough to keep us busy till we land in eternity.

It is hinted in the text that there are forms of evil which we must peculiarly watch against, and one is malice. Is a Christian man likely to be malicious? I trust in the strong sense of that term we have done with malice, but, alas! I have known believers who have had a very keen sense of right, and therein have been commendable, who have too much indulged the spirit deprecated here; that is to say, they have been very severe, censorious, and angry—angry with people for not being perfect. Though not perfect themselves, and though they know that if they are better than others, the grace of God has made them so, yet they are bitter and untender towards the imperfections of Christian people, and they cherish feelings of prejudice, suspicion, and ill-will. They do not seek the improvement of the faulty, but their exposure and condemnation. They hunt down sincere but faulty people, and denounce them, but never by any chance

offer an excuse for them. In some believers there is too much of the leaven of unkind talking; they speak to one another about the faults of their brethren, and, in the process of retailing, characters are injured and reputations marred. Now harsh judgments and evil speakings are to be put away from us as sour leaven. If a man has injured me, I must forgive him; and if I find him to be faulty, I must love him till he gets better, and if I cannot make him better by ordinary love, I must love him more, even as Christ loved his church and gave himself for it, "that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." He did not love her because she was without spot or wrinkle, but to get the spots and wrinkles out of her; he loved her into holiness.

Take good heed also that every form of hypocrisy be purged out, for the apostle tells us to eat the passover with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Do let us leave off talking beyond our experience, let us never pray beyond what we mean. Ask God, my brother, to clean us from all unreality, that nothing may be in us but true metal. There is a strong temptation among Christian ministers, and Christian men of all sorts, to seem to be a little more than they are. God save us from it. The slightest taint of hypocrisy should be abhorred by the Christian man. All illwill and all mere seeming should be detestable to the Christian, for where these are there can be little or no communion with Jesus. The fellowship of heaven is not enjoyed where the leaven of hell is endured.

III. Our last point shall be touched briefly. THE HAPPINESS OF THE BELIEVER ACTS UPON HIS HOLINESS, AND HIS HOLINESS UPON HIS HAPPINESS.

First of all, *the happiness acts upon the holiness*. We have drawn a picture of the paschal feast. Set it before you again. If I know that I feed upon Christ day by day, who has been sacrificed for me, the happiness I feel leads me to say, "Yet it was dearly purchased; my sins slew my Saviour, and therefore will I slay my sins." Every taste you get of redeeming love makes you feel that sin is a cruel and detestable thing, and therefore you will destroy it. Sitting as you do within the house, and knowing that you are all safe because the blood is on the lintel outside—what next? Why, you will say, "The firstborn sons of Egypt are slain, and am I preserved; what then? Why I must be God's firstborn, and must belong to him." "Ye are not your own, but ye are bought with a price," is the voice of the angel as he passes by the house which he must not enter to destroy. Has Christ loved me and died for me? Then I am his, and if I am his I cannot live in sin. If I am redeemed, how can I continue a slave? If I belong to Jesus I cannot serve the devil, I must be rid of sin. Then, further, if I feel that all is safe my mind is calm, and I am able to care about the state of my heart. The Israelite was safe within his house, he needed not to keep watch and ward outside, the sprinkled blood was his security, and therefore he had time and space to see to the interior of his abode. Now, said the believer, "I have nothing to do with saving myself, for my salvation is finished, and therefore I will see to my growth in grace." He who has outdoor work done for him may well see to his indoor work, and earnestly turn his thoughts

to the purging out of the old leaven. The freedom you have from fear through the blood of Jesus gives you the peace of mind needful for a thorough search after your sins. Moreover, the Christian man is encouraged to put away his leaven of sin because he has the foresight of a profitable exchange. The Israelite gave up leavened bread, but he soon had angels' food in the place of it. So the Christian says, "I give up these sins; they were sweet to me once, now they are sour, stinking, corrupt leaven; I shall receive nobler enjoyments, fellowship with heaven shall be my portion. I may gladly part with leaven, for I am called to eat the bread of angels, nay, the bread of God.

The Christian, too, who knows that his sin is forgiven, feels that the God who could put away his load of sin, will surely help to conquer his corruptions. When I see Calvary I believe everything to be possible. If Jesus can blot out sin, his Spirit can subdue it. The holy peace created in the soul by feeding upon Christ, nerves the spirit for conflict with inbred sin. We will overcome it, we will drive out the Canaanites which defile our souls, we will be pure, we will be perfect, for greater is he that is with us than all they that be against us. So you see our happiness in many ways promotes our holiness.

I am quite sure you will not need me to enlarge upon the fact that *holiness produces happiness*. How quiet doth the soul become when the man feels, "I have done that which was right, I have given up that which was evil." I grant you that the deep peace of the believer arises from the sprinkled blood, but it is enjoyed by purging out the leaven. You question yourself and say, "Can I believe in Christ if I am living in sin?" and you get back the comfortable sense that Jesus is yours when you can honestly feel that you have, by the Holy Spirit, renounced your old sins. Purging out the leaven clears your evidences, and so enables you to keep the feast. You were safe enough through the blood, but now you find happiness in a sense of security, a happiness which would have been taken from you had you fallen into sin. My brethren, how can we expect to enjoy communion with Jesus Christ while we indulge in sin? I am sure you will find that at the bottom our want of fellowship with Christ arises from our want of careful walking before the Lord. I read sometimes holy Rutherford's letters, and say, "I wish I lived like this." Now, if I do not do so, it is either Christ's fault or mine. Can I say it is Christ's fault? I dare not. He is as willing to reveal himself to me as to any other of his servants. It is my fault then. My dear brother, if you do not walk in the light as Christ is in the light, it is not because he is not willing that you should walk in his light, it is because you keep at a distance from him, and so walk in darkness. Do you believe that the sad faces among God's servants are caused by their poverty? Some of the very poorest of saints have been the most joyful. Do you think they are caused by their sicknesses? Why, we have known persons confined to the bed of sickness twenty years together, who have found a very heaven below in their chamber of languishing. What is it that makes God's people look so sad? It is the old leaven. "Let us keep the feast," says the apostle, but it is useless to hope to do so while we keep the leaven. Perhaps there is one thing which we know to be our duty, but we have not attended to it; that one neglect will break up our festival. "He that knoweth his

master's will, and doeth it not shall be beaten with many stripes." Are these stripes to be given in the next world? I do not believe it, it is in this world that erring believers will be beaten, and very often depression of spirit, losses and bereavements, happen to a Christian because he has knowingly violated his conscience by neglecting a duty or permitting a sin. Jesus will not commune with neglecters of his will. Jesus will have no leaven where he is. If you tolerate that which is nauseous to him expect not a comfortable word from him. If you walk contrary to him he will walk contrary to you. Can two walk together unless they be agreed? I would with much affection press these considerations upon you, for I have pressed them upon my own heart. I fear we shall not enjoy the blessing we have had as a church unless there is more jealousy for holiness among us. I am afraid some of us are barren of spiritual usefulness because we do not watch against sin. O keep your conscience tender! Beware of getting it seared. It is like the pond in the winter; a very thin scale of ice is formed at first, but afterwards the whole surface becomes hard enough to bear half a town. Beware of the thin scale over your conscience. Keep your heart tender before God, ready to be moved by the faintest breath of his Spirit. Ask to be like sensitive plants, that you may shrivel up at the touch of sin, and only open out in the presence of your Lord and Master. God grant it to you. God grant it, for Jesus' sake.

This last sentence, and I have done. There are some here who are not saved. Do notice how salvation comes—not through purging out the leaven; no, that operation is to be seen to afterwards, but salvation comes because the Paschal Lamb is slain, the soul feeds on Jesus, his blood is sprinkled, and the soul is saved; afterwards comes the purging out of sin. Dear soul, if thou wouldst be saved, do not begin at the wrong end, begin with the Saviour's blood, begin with Calvary's cross; go there as a poor sinner, and look to him, and then after that we will say, "Let us keep the feast," and we will diligently see to it in his strength that the leaven be put away. God bless you for Christ's sake.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Exodus xii. 1—28;
and 1 Corinthians v.