

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE JOY OF JESUS.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 5TH, 1880, BY

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.”—Luke x. 21, 22.

LAST Lord's-day morning we considered the lamentations of Jesus; we will now turn our thoughts to the joys of Jesus. It is remarkable that this is the only instance on record in the gospels in which our Lord is said to have rejoiced. It stands alone, and is, therefore, the more to be prized:—“In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit.” He was the “man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” for our sakes, and therefore we are not astonished to find few indications of joy in the story of his life. Yet I do not think it would be fair to infer from the fact of a solitary mention of his rejoicing that he did not rejoice at other times; on the contrary, our Lord must, despite his sorrow, have possessed a peaceful, happy spirit. He was infinitely *benevolent*, and went about doing good; and benevolence always finds a quiet delight in blessing others. The joy of the lame when they leaped, and of the blind when they saw, must have gladdened the soul of Jesus. To cause happiness to others must bring home to a sympathetic bosom some degree of pleasure. Sir Philip Sydney was wont to say, “Doing good is the only certainly happy action of a man's life;” and assuredly it is hard to see how the love of Jesus could refrain from rejoicing in blessing those around him.

Moreover, our Lord was so *pure* that he had a well of joy within which could not fail him. If it be indeed true that virtue is true happiness, then Jesus of Nazareth was happy. The poet said—

“What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,
The soul's calm sunshine and the heartfelt joy,
Is virtue's prize.”

Such calm and joy must have been the Saviour's, though for our sake he bowed beneath the heavy load of sorrow. The perfectly holy God is the perfectly happy God; and the perfectly holy Christ, had it not been that he had taken upon himself our griefs and sicknesses, would have been perfectly

happy; but even with our griefs and sicknesses there must have been a deep peace of soul within him which sustained him in his deepest woe. Did not the Father himself say of his beloved Son, "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows"?

Nor is this all, for our blessed Lord lived in unbroken fellowship with the Father, and fellowship with God will not permit a soul to abide in darkness: for, walking with God, he walks in the light as God is in the light. Such a mind may, for certain purposes, come under clouds and glooms; but light is sown for the righteous, and it will speedily break forth as the dawn of day. Those nights of prayer and days of perfect service must have brought their own calm to the tried heart of the Son of God.

Besides, Christ Jesus was a man of *faith*; faith's highest exposition and example. He is "the author and the finisher of faith," in whom we see its life, walk, and triumph. Our Lord was the incarnation of perfect confidence in the Father: in his life all the histories of great believers are summed up. Read the eleventh of the Hebrews, and see the great cloud of witnesses, and then mark how in the twelfth chapter Paul bids us look to Jesus as though in his person the whole multitude of the witnesses could be seen. He it was, who "for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame." His faith must, therefore, have anticipated the reward of his passion, and have brought the joy thereof home to him even while he sorrowed here. His joy was a light from the lamps of the future, which were to be kindled by his death and victory. He had meat to eat that his disciples knew not of; for his long-sighted eye saw further than they, and while they mourned his departure he saw the expediency of it, and told them that if they loved him they would rejoice, because he was going to the Father. Be sure of this, that our Lord felt beneath the great waterfloods of outward affliction an under-current of joy, for he said, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." What meant he by this if he had no joy in his people? Could he have spoken so many happy words, and so often have said to his disciples "Be of good cheer," if he had been always downcast himself?

But still it is remarkable that our text should be the sole recorded instance of his joy, so far as the evangelists are concerned. It is clear that joy was not a distinguishing feature in our Lord's life, so as to strike the beholder. Peace may have sat serenely on his brow, but nothing of the exuberant spirits which are seen in some men, for his countenance was marred with lines of care and grief. We do not hear that he laughed, though it is thrice recorded that he wept; and here for once, as quite unique, we find the inspired assurance that he rejoiced. Because of its singularity the record deserves to be looked into with care that we may see the cause of delight so unusual.

The words here used are very emphatic. "He rejoiced." The Greek word is much stronger than the English rendering; it signifies "to leap for joy." It is the word of the blessed Virgin's song, "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." Strong emotions of delight were visible upon our Lord's face, and were expressed by the tones of his voice as well as by his words. It is clear that he was greatly glad. The text also

says, he "rejoiced *in spirit*": that is, deep down in the very centre of his nature, in that largest and most capacious part of his human being, the Redeemer rejoiced. Man is body, soul, and spirit; but the spirit is the nobler and most vital part, and it was with a spiritual, inward, and most living joy that the Lord Jesus Christ rejoiced. It was joy of the truest and fullest sort which made the Saviour's heart to dance. Come we, then, near to this rejoicing Saviour, who wraps the garments of praise about him, perfumed with delight; and let us see if we cannot learn somewhat from his joys, since, I trust, we gathered something from his griefs.

I. First, let us look at our Lord and note that his joy was JOY IN THE FATHER'S REVELATION OF THE GOSPEL. "I thank thee, O Father, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." He rejoices in his Father's revelation of the gospel. It was not joy in the fame which had gathered about his name insomuch that John heard of it in prison. It was not joy in the manifest tokens of power that went forth with his commissioners, though they rejoiced that devils were subject unto them; but it was joy in God's revealing the gospel to the sons of men.

I call your attention to the fact that he ascribed all that was done to the Father, *and joyed that the Father was working with him*. His disciples came back to him and said, "Even the devils are subject unto us through thy name"; and they spake not amiss, for the name of Jesus was their strength, and deserved honour; but the Lord, with that sacred self-abnegation which was so natural to him, replies, "I thank thee, O Father, that thou hast revealed these things." He takes no honour unto himself, but ascribes the glory unto the Father, who wrought with him. Imitate him, O ye who call him Lord! Let the work of the Father be your joy. If God gives us any success in the preaching of the gospel let our joy be that the Father's power is going forth with the word. We are not so much to joy in *our* instrumentality as in the hand which uses the instrument, and works by it. Oh, misery! misery! to be attempting gospel ministry without God! But oh, bliss, bliss unspeakable, to feel that when we lift our hand God's hand is lifted too, and when we speak the word the voice of God is ringing through our feeble speech, and reaching the hearts of men! It is to true believers a great joy that the Father is bringing home his wandering children, and receiving penitents into his bosom.

The Saviour's joy was that through the Father's grace *men were being enlightened*. The seventy disciples had been from city to city, working miracles and preaching the gospel, and their Master was glad when they returned with tidings of success: "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit." It pleases Jesus when the gospel has free course, and God is glorified thereby. Then, in measure, he sees of the travail of his soul, and is filled with satisfaction. Shall we not find our joy where he finds his? Shall we not enter into the joy of our Lord? Whenever we hear good news of a village evangelized, of a township moved by the glad tidings, of a country long shut up from the gospel at length opened to the word, let us feel our highest and deepest joy. Rather let us rejoice in this than in business prosperity or personal advantage. What if we can find no joy in our own circumstances, what if even spiritual affairs within our

soul are full of difficulty; let us joy and rejoice that God the Father is revealing the light of his gospel among the sons of men. Be this our highest wish, "Thy kingdom come," and in that coming kingdom let us find our utmost happiness. Be sure that the joy which warmed the heart of Christ can do us no hurt: it must be a pure, sacred, and ennobling joy, and therefore let us indulge in it very largely. Christ's joy lay in the Father's sending forth his light and his truth, making men to see things which prophets and kings had desired to behold, but had not been favoured to see. Jesus rejoiced in this, that the blessings of grace were being revealed by the Father.

Further, our Saviour's joy lay very much in this, that this revelation to men *was being made through such humble instruments*. We read that "he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God." There was not among the twelve or the seventy, one person of any social status. They were the common people of the field and the sea. In after years Paul was raised up, a man richly endowed in learning, whose great abilities were used by the Lord, but the first ministers of Christ were a band of fishermen and countrymen, altogether unknown in the schools of learning, and regarded as "unlearned and ignorant men." The grandest era in the world's history was ushered in by nobodies: by persons who, like their leader, were despised and rejected of men. To any one of them it might have been said, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence."

Observe carefully that the persons whom our Lord had been employing were not only obscure in origin, but they were of a low degree of spiritual understanding, were in fact babes in grace as well as worldly wisdom. Their joy, when they came back to tell what had been done, was evidently childish as well as gracious. They joyed in their success as children do in their little achievements; but their Lord was thankful, because he saw the open-heartedness and the simplicity of their characters in the gladsome way in which they cried, "Lord, even the devils are subject to us through thy name," and he thanked God that by such babes as these, such children, such true-hearted children, and yet such mere children, he was pleased to make known his word among the sons of men. Rest ye sure that our Lord even at this day finds a delight in the weakness of the instruments he uses.

"He takes the fool and makes him know
The mysteries of his grace;
To bring aspiring wisdom low,
And all its pride abase."

Not you, ye scribes, who have counted every letter of the Old Testament, does he elect to be filled with the Spirit. Not you, ye Pharisees, who so abound in outward religion, does he choose to spread the inward life and light. Not you, ye Sadducees, who are versed in sceptical philosophy, and boast your cleverness, does he call to preach his gospel to the

poor. He hath taken to be the heralds of his glory men from the sea of Galilee whom ye despise: men, simple-hearted, ready to learn, and then as ready to tell out again, the message of salvation. Our Lord was by no means displeased with the absence of culture and learning in his followers, for the culture and learning of the period were utter vanity, but he was glad to see that they did not pretend to wisdom or astuteness, but came to him in all simplicity to accept his teaching, because they believed him to be the Son of God. Jesus rejoiced in spirit about this.

And yet, further, his great joy was *that the converts were of such a character* as they were. "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." It is true that certain persons sneeringly asked, "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him?" There were some who thought lightly of Jesus because those whom they imagined to be learned men had not signified their adhesion to his cause; our Lord himself had no concern in that direction, but called the Pharisees blind and the scribes hypocrites, as they assuredly were. Other voices may have enquired, "Who are these that follow Jesus? Of what class are his converts?" The answer would have been, "They are rustics, fishermen, and common people, with here and there a woman of substance and a man of means. The bulk of them are the poor to whom for the first time the gospel is preached. Such have gathered to Christ and received his word." Some even said that a parcel of boys and girls were in the streets crying, "Hosanna," and this showed how common-place the Preacher was. At this day I have heard the Lord's people spoken of as a poor set; people of no position, a lot of persons whose names will never be known, a mere assembly of Jack, Tom, Harry, Mary, Susan, and the rest. This was the very thing to which Jesus refers with thankfulness. He was glad that he was surrounded by unsophisticated, childlike natures, rather than by Pharisees and scribes, who, even if they be converted, are sure to bring some of their old manners with them.

He was glad that the Father had revealed his light and his salvation to those who were lowly and humble, who, though poor in this world, were "rich in faith, giving glory to God." Thus you see that the very fact, which certain very superior people fling in our teeth as a disgrace, was to our Saviour a subject of joy. I have heard foolish ones sneer at certain churches which are earnest for the truth by affectedly asking, "Who are they? A mob of common people, tradesmen or working men, and the like. Are there any of the aristocracy among them? Do you find any of the highly intellectual in their ranks?" What if we do not, we shall not therefore sorrow, but join with Jesus in saying, "We thank thee, O Father, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Christ found himself at home among those open-hearted folks that gathered around him, for he was himself a child-man, who wore his heart upon his sleeve, boasting of no wisdom though he was wisdom's self. Our Lord never sought himself, as the wise and prudent of his age did; but he was meek and lowly in heart, and therefore found himself at home amongst a people who were willing to receive his teaching and eager to tell it out again to their countrymen; and so he blessed and praised God that such were chosen. Oh, friends, it is not that Christ would not have the greatest come to him, it is not

that Christ would not have the learned come to him ; but so it is, that his greatest joy is that those come who, whatever the greatness or the littleness of their learning, are childlike in spirit, and like babes are willing to learn, and prepared to receive what he shall teach to them. He was glad to receive persons with lowly notions of their own intelligence, and a supreme belief in the veracity of their great Teacher.

If those who are reckoned to be learned profess to come to Christ they are generally a trial to the church. All the merely human learning that has ever come unto the church has, as a rule, been mischievous to it : and it always needs great grace to keep it in its right place. At first came the Gnostics with their philosophy, and into what perils they dragged the church of God I cannot stay to tell you : then arose others out of whose wisdom grew Arianism, and the church was well-nigh withered to her very heart by that deadly form of heresy. The schoolmen did for her much the same, and to this day whenever any of the would-be-thought-wise men meddle with religion, they tell us that the plain word of God, as we read it, must be interpreted by modern thought, and that it bears another meaning which only the cultured can possibly comprehend. When philosophy invades the domain of revelation it ends in perverting the gospel, and in bringing in "another gospel which is not another." It is with human wisdom as it is with human riches, how hardly shall they that have it enter into the kingdom of God ! True wisdom is another thing ; that is a gift which cometh from above, and causeth no puffing up of the heart, for it adores the God from whom it came. The wisdom which is true and real the Lord is prepared to give to those who confess their unwisdom, to those who will be babes in his sight. It is not ignorance which God loves, but conceit that he hates. Knowledge is good, but the affectation of it is evil. O for more true wisdom ! May God give us much of it, and may those who are babes as yet come to be men of full stature in Christ Jesus. Yet forget not your Lord's joy in the character of his converts, but remember the lines in which the poet of the sanctuary paraphrases our text :—

"Jesus, the man of constant grief,
A mourner all his days,
His Spirit once rejoiced aloud,
And turned his joy to praise.

"Father, I thank thy wondrous love,
That hath revealed thy Son
To men unlearned, and to babes
Hath made thy gospel known.

"The mysteries of redeeming grace
Are hidden from the wise,
While pride and carnal reasoning join
To swell and blind their eyes."

Our Lord's joy sprang from one other source, namely, his view of *the manner in which God was pleased to save his people*. It was by revealing these things to them. There is, then, to every man who is saved a revelation, not of anything over and above what is given us in the word of God ; but of that same truth to himself personally and with power. In the word is the light ; but what is needed is that each man's eye

should be opened by the finger of God to see it. Truth in the Scriptures will never save till it becomes truth in the heart: it must be "revealed" unto the most unprejudiced and true-hearted. Even men of childlike spirits and receptive natures will not see the truth unless it be specially revealed to them. There must be a work of the Father through the Holy Ghost upon each intellect and mind ere it can perceive the truth as it is in Jesus. Hence, when unregenerate men tell us that they cannot see the beauty of the gospel, we are not at all astonished,—we never thought they could: and when boastful men of "culture" declare that the old-fashioned gospel is unworthy of the nineteenth century with all its enlightenment, we are not surprised; for we knew that they would think so. Blind men are little pleased with colour, and deaf men care little for music.

Human wisdom cannot make a man without eyes see the light. What do you know about the gospel, oh ye blinded wise men? What judges can you be of the light of revelation who seal up your eyes with the mud of your own cleverness, and then say you cannot see! Christ never intended that you should. He will only reveal himself as he pleases, and he hath pleased to do this to another kind of persons from what you are. Oh, you that are wise in your own conceit, the gate of true wisdom is barred against you! You cannot by searching find out God, and when he graciously reveals himself you refuse to see him, and therefore it is just that you should perish in the dark. Well do you deserve this judgment. Let justice be done. That God had been pleased to reveal himself to many through the preaching of the seventy was a great joy to Jesus; and let us also rejoice whenever God reveals himself to men. Let us be glad when one who is simple in heart is made a child by divine grace through being born again. Let us furthermore rejoice whenever conversion is wrought by instruments that cannot possibly claim the glory of it. Let us praise and bless God that salvation is his own work from first to last. Come, all ye who love the Father, and say, with the great Firstborn, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."

II. I have thus tried, as far as I am able, to explain the cause of the Saviour's joy; I would now call your attention to HIS MODE OF EXPRESSING THAT JOY.

I have noticed some kind of joy in conversions which has not been wise in its expression, but has savoured of glorying in the flesh. "Oh, we have had a wonderful time, we have had a blessed season! We have been visited by those dear men, and we have exerted ourselves in downright earnest to get up a revival. We have done wonders." Such talk will not do. Hear how the Saviour speaks; his joy finds tongue in *thanksgiving*,—"I thank thee, O Father." He ascribes the work to the Father, and then renders all the praise to him. This is the eloquence of joy—"I thank thee, O Father." Brethren, whenever you are happy, sing hymns of thanksgiving. "Is any merry? let him sing psalms." The fittest language for joy, whether it be on earth or in heaven, is adoration and thanksgiving to God. Blessed be the name of the Lord that we are gladdened in the harvest field of Christian work; for it is he

that giveth seed to the sower and causeth the word to spring up and bring forth fruit a hundredfold.

Our Lord found expression for his joy in *declaring the Father's sovereignty*. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth." Some shrink back from the idea of God as Lord of all things above and below. To them the free will of man seems the greatest of all facts; and lest there should be the slightest intrusion upon man's domain they would have God limited as to his absolute power. To magnify man they would minimize God. You will hear them talking against those of us who magnify divine sovereignty, and imputing to us the notion of a certain arbitrariness in God, although such a thought has never entered our minds. Jehovah, who gives no account of his matters, but orders all things according to the good pleasure of his will, is never arbitrary, unjust, or tyrannical: and yet he is absolute and uncontrolled, a sovereign who reigns by his own self-existent power, himself the source and origin of all law. He can be trusted with absolute sovereignty, because he is infinite love and infinite goodness. I will go the utmost length as to the absolute supremacy of God, and his right to do as he wills, and especially to do as he wills with his own, which gospel grace most certainly is. He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and he will have compassion on whom he will have compassion, and none can stay his hand or say unto him, What doest thou? When Christ was gladdest he expressed that gladness by ascribing unto God an infinite sovereignty, and shall that truth be gloomy to us? Nay, rather we will each one view the work of the Father's grace, and cry, "I thank thee, O Father, and I thank thee all the more because I know that thou art Lord of heaven and earth."

If I am addressing any who quarrel with the doctrine of the sovereignty of God, I would advise them to cease their rebellion, for "the Lord reigneth." Let them at least go as far as the Psalm, "Let the people tremble"; even if they cannot go a little further and sing, "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof." Power and rule are best in the hands of the great Jehovah, who ever links together in his own single character both fatherhood and sovereignty. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth." Dismiss from your minds all caricatures of the doctrine, and receive it in its purest form—"the Lord is king for ever and ever. Hallelujah." Your joy, if it be deeply spiritual and very great, will never find room enough for the sweep of its Atlantic waves, till you delight yourself in the absolute supremacy of God. The deep ground swell of delight within the Redeemer's soul could find no grander space over which it could expand its force than the unlimited power and dominion of the Lord of heaven and earth, whose key it is which opens or shuts the kingdom of heaven, whose word it is which hides or reveals the things of eternity.

Our Lord *delighted in the special act of sovereignty* which was before him, that the Lord had "hid these things from the wise and prudent, and had revealed them unto babes." He communed with God in it, he took pleasure in it, and said, "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." His voice, as it were, went with the Father's voice; he agreed with the Father's choice, he rejoiced in it, he triumphed in it. The will of the Father was the will of Christ, and he had fellowship with the

Father in every act of his sovereign choice ; yea, he magnified God for it in his inmost spirit. He says, " Even so, Father ; for so it seemed good in thy sight ;" for he knew that what seems good to God must be good. Some things seem good to us which are evil ; but that which seemeth good to God is good. Jesus praises God about it for no other reason than it is God's good pleasure that it should be so. Oh, what a state of heart it will be for you and me to get into when we can express our highest joy by a perfect acquiescence in the will of God, whatever that will may be. See here, brethren, the road to contentment, to peace, to happiness, yea, heavenly life this side the grave. If you ever come to feel that what pleases God pleases you, you will be glad even in affliction and tribulation. If your heart is ever schooled down to accept as your will that which is God's will, and to believe anything to be good because God thinks it good, then you may go through the rest of your days singing and waiting till your Lord takes you to his own bosom. Soon will you rise to the place where all the singers meet and sing for ever unto God and the Lamb ; all self and rebellion being for ever banished. Herein, then, Christ found a channel for his joy—in thanksgiving, in magnifying the divine sovereignty, in having communion with it and in delighting in it.

III. Thirdly, and briefly, I want you to see OUR LORD'S EXPLANATION OF THE FATHER'S ACT. The Father had been pleased to hide these things from the wise and prudent and to reveal them unto babes, and Jesus Christ is perfectly satisfied with that order of things, quite content with the kind of converts he has and the kind of preachers that God has given him.

For, first, *the Lord Jesus does not need prestige*. Read the twenty-second verse—" All things are delivered to me of my Father." A mere pretender, when he begins to prophesy and set himself up for a religious leader, how pleased he is when some learned doctor endorses his claims ! If some man of wealth and station comes to his side how he plumes himself. The Saviour of our souls sought no such aids. The verdict of the world's *literati* could not make his word more truthful than it is, nor more convincing, for its power lies in the Spirit which reveals it. If great men say " Aye," they will not make his doctrine more sure ; nor will they make it less truthful if they all say " Nay." Prestige for Christ ! It is blasphemy to think of such a thing. " All things," saith he, " are delivered to me of my Father." High priests and leaders of religion denounce him, but all things are delivered unto him of his Father. The Sanhedrim determine to put him down, but all things are delivered unto him of the Father. The learned deride his claims to be the Messiah ! What matters it to Christ ? The Father has committed all things into his hand. He stands alone, and asks for no allies ; his own power, unborrowed and unaided, is quite sufficient for his purposes. Do you think, brethren, that we are going to stay our preaching of the gospel until we shall have the so-called culture and intellect of the age upon our side to say, " It is even so" ? Not we, but rather do we believe God in the teeth of the wiseacres, and say, " Let God be true, and every man a liar." Jesus needs no imprimatur from scholars, no patronage from princes, no apologies from orators. The pomp, and power, and wisdom, and cunning of the world were not with him, and he thanks God that he is not encumbered with such doubtful gain, but that this truth has been revealed to

those who are not wise in their own eyes, nor intelligent in their own esteem, but, like children, willing to learn from God, and glad to believe all that he reveals.

See how the Lord explains it yet further, by showing that *human wisdom cannot find out God*. "No man knoweth who the Son is but the Father, and who the Father is but the Son." No man; though he be a master in Israel. Men of science may puzzle their brains, and with great ingenuity they may try to thread the intricacies of the unknown, but they must err from the truth if they refuse revelation. Such a thing as natural religion, spontaneously born of man's intellect, does not exist. "Oh," say you, "surely there is much of it." I say that whatever is truly religious in it was borrowed from revelation, and has been handed down by tradition. Talk of comparative religions—there is but one, and the other pretenders have stolen certain of its clothes. Men see, no doubt, much of God in nature, but they would not have done so had there been no revelation. First came the light through revelation, and then afterwards, when men saw it reflected from various objects, they dreamed that the light came out of the reflectors. Men hear something of revealed truth, and when their thoughts run in that line, that which they have heard is awakened in their minds, and they think themselves inventors. God is not known except as he reveals himself, nor can he be discovered by human ingenuity. Carnal wit and thought tend not that way, but tend from God unto blackest darkness. God is only to be known through Christ, so the text saith: "No man knoweth who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." As the light, after God had created it, was lodged in the sun, so is all knowledge of God treasured up in Christ as the Sun of righteousness. He it is that in himself hath light, the light that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world, if he be lightened at all. We must receive Christ or abide in darkness; yea, and the light which is in Christ is not perceptible by any man except by revelation. What saith the text, "No man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him"? There must be a special and distinct revelation of Christ, and of the Father by Christ to each man, or else he will remain in blindness to the day of his death.

The power, then, which lies in merely human wisdom is a force which often hinders men from coming under the influence of revelation. Only by revelation can they know, and by a revelation personally receive. But the man is so wise that he does not want to be taught, he can find it out for himself. Yield himself to an infallible book or an infallible spirit? Not he! Well, then, because of his very wisdom he becomes incapable of learning. Truth to tell, what is human wisdom? The supposed wisdom of man is folly, that is the short for it all. They write a history sometime of religious thought, and of the various phases through which Christianity has gone, and on this they ground remarks; but I should like somebody to write a truthful history of philosophy. The history of philosophy is a record of the insanities of mankind: a catalogue of lunacies. You shall see one generation of philosophers busily engaged in refuting those that went before them, and doing it very well indeed. But what will the next generation do? Why refute this! The

philosophies that were current one hundred years ago are all exploded now, and all the teachings of to-day, except such as are clear matters of fact, will be exploded ere I go down to my grave, if I live to be grey-headed. There is not a philosopher now living that can be sure but what there is some other fact to be discovered yet which will upset every hypothesis that he hath sent forth into the world. Philosophers who conceitedly glory over believers in revelation are fools, for they know nothing with certainty, and absolute certainty appertains only to divine revelation. In those who pretend to wisdom apart from God folly abounds. There is no light in them, nor in any man except that which cometh from the Spirit of God. That wisdom which sets itself up apart from God is atheism, because God knoweth, and he saith to man, "I will teach you, I will reveal myself to you by my Son." But wisdom says, "We do not want to be taught: we know of ourselves." Then you are a rival to God! You pretend to be superior to God, since you are not willing to learn of him, but will rather trust yourself. This folly and this atheism are the reasons why God hides his mind from the wise and the clever; they reject him, and therefore he gives them over to a judicial blindness, and Christ thanks him that he does, for it is but justice that he should do so. When the Lord is pleased to give to any man a childlike spirit then is he on the road to knowledge. This is true even in science itself. The secrets of nature will never be revealed to the man who believes that he already knows them. Nature herself does not teach the man who comes to her with prejudice. A man who thinks he knows beforehand sits down to study nature, and what does he generally discover? Well, he learnedly dreams of a universal solvent, or that the baser metals can be transmuted into gold, or that there is a perpetual motion. Those, you say, are things philosophers believed years ago. Yes, but their theories of to-day are just as stupid, and the science of to-day will be the jest of the next century. The greatest absurdities have been the pets of philosophy for hundreds of years, and why was it that men did not know better? Because they did not go to nature and ask her to teach them what was fact; they made an hypothesis, and then they went to nature to force her to prove it, as they do now; they start with a prejudgment of what they would like to be, and then take facts and twist them round into their system, and so they blind themselves by their own wisdom. Well, if it be so in nature, and I am sure it is, it is certainly more so in grace, for when a man comes to the word of God and says, "Now I know theology beforehand; I do not come here to find my creed in the Bible and learn it like a child, but I come to turn texts about and make them fit into my system." Well, he will blind himself, and will be a fool, and it is right he should be blinded, for hath he not done that wilfully which must of necessity lead to such an end?

Brethren, simple teachableness is the first essential for the reception of a revelation from God, and if you have it to-day, if you are seeking after truth, if you are crying after her, and if you are willing that God should reveal her to you, if you are anxious that he should reveal truth to you in Christ, you are the sort of person upon whom God in sovereignty looks with divine favour, and unto such as you are will he reveal himself. What is wanted is faith, a childlike, receptive faith; not faith in a pope, not faith in a man, not faith in an old established creed, but

faith in God. Oh, my hearer, be thou willing to learn of him, and thou shalt not be left uninstructed.

Now a lesson or two, and I have done. The first lesson to be learnt is this. If great men, if eminent men, if so-called learned men, are not converted, do not be cast down about it,—it is not likely they will be. In the next place, if many converts are obscure persons, persons without note or name, do not be at all disgusted with that fact. Who are you that you should be? Who are you that you should despise any upon whom God has looked in favour? Rather rejoice exceedingly with your Lord that God hath chosen the despised, and you with them.

Next, learn that the sovereignty of God is always exercised in such a way that the pure in heart may always rejoice in it. God never did a sovereign act yet that the loving Christ himself could not rejoice in. Be you content, therefore, to leave everything in the hand of God that you do not understand, and when his way is in the sea, be quite as glad as when his way is in the sanctuary; when his footsteps are not known, feel that they are quite as righteous and quite as holy as when you can perceive the path in which he moves.

The ultimate honour of the gospel is secured unto God alone, let that be our last lesson. When the wind up of all things shall come there shall be no honour to any of us, nor would we desire it; but out of it all, out of the choice of each one, and out of the revelation made to each one, will come up, multiplied into a thousand thunders, the voice as of Christ in his whole mystical body, "I thank thee, O Father." This shall be the song of heaven concerning the whole matter, as well concerning the lost as the saved. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth." There shall be no cavils amongst the pure in heart, nor questions among the perfected spirits, but the whole family reviewing the whole of the Father's government, the hiding as well as the revealing, shall at the last say, Christ leading the utterance,—"I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

Brothers and sisters, let us learn our need of a personal revelation, let us seek it if we have not yet received it; with a childlike spirit, let us seek it in Christ, for he only can reveal the Father to us; and when we have it let it be our joy that we see him revealing it to others, and let this be our prayer, that the God of Jacob would yet bring others unto Christ, who shall rejoice in the light that has made glad our eyes. The Lord be with you. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Matthew xi.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—97, 705, 219.