

The New Park Street Pulpit.

CHRIST EXALTED.

A Sermon

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AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool."—Hebrews x. 12, 13.

At the Lord's table we wish to have no subject for contemplation but our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, and we have been wont generally to consider him as the crucified One, "the Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," while we have had before us the emblems of his broken body, and of his blood shed for many for the remission of sins; but I am not quite sure that the crucified Saviour is the only appropriate theme, although, perhaps, the most so. It is well to remember how our Saviour left us—by what road he travelled through the shadows of death; but I think it is quite as well to recollect what he is doing while he is away from us—to remember the high glories to which the crucified Saviour has attained; and it is, perhaps, as much calculated to cheer our spirits to behold him on his throne as to consider him on his cross. We have seen him on his cross, in some sense; that is to say, the eyes of men on earth did see the crucified Saviour; but we have no idea of what his glories are above; they surpass our highest thought. Yet faith can see the Saviour exalted on his throne, and surely there is no subject that can keep our expectations alive, or cheer our drooping faith better than to consider, that while our Saviour is absent, he is absent on his throne, and that when he has left his Church to sorrow for him, he has not left us comfortless—he has promised to come to us—that while he tarries he is reigning, and that while he is absent he is sitting high on his father's throne.

The Apostle shews here the superiority of Christ's sacrifice over that of every other priest. "Every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man," or priest—for the word "man" is not in the original "after he had offered one sacrifice for sins," had finished his work, and for ever, he "sat down." You see the supe-

riority of Christ's sacrifice rests in this, that the priest offered continually, and after he had slaughtered one lamb, another was needed; after one scape-goat was driven into the wilderness, a scape-goat was needed the next year, "but this man, when he had offered only one sacrifice for sins," did what thousands of scape-goats never did, and what hundreds of thousands of lambs never could effect. He perfected our salvation, and worked out an entire atonement for the sins of all his chosen ones.

We shall notice, in the first place, this morning, *the completeness of the Saviour's work of atonement*—he has done it: we shall gather that from the context: secondly, *the glory which the Saviour has assumed*; and thirdly, *the triumph which he expects*. We shall dwell very briefly on each point, and endeavour to pack our thoughts as closely together as we can.

I. We are taught here in the first place, THE COMPLETENESS OF THE SAVIOUR'S WORK. He has done all that was necessary to be done, to make an atonement and an end of sin. He has done so much, that it will never be needful for him again to be crucified. His side, once opened, has sent forth a stream deep, deep enough, and precious enough, to wash away all sin; and he needs not again that his side should be opened, or, that any more his hands should be nailed to the cross. I infer that his work is finished, from the fact that he is described here as sitting down. Christ would not sit down in heaven if he had more work to do. Sitting down is the posture of rest. Seldom he sat down on earth; he said, "I must be about my Father's business." Journey after journey, labour after labour, preaching after preaching, followed each other in quick succession. His was a life of incessant toil. Rest was a word which Jesus never spelled. He may sit for a moment on the well; but even there he preaches to the woman of Samaria. He goes into the wilderness, but not to sleep; he goes there to pray. His midnights are spent in labours as hard as those of the day—labours of agonising prayer, wrestling with his Father for the souls of men. His was a life of continual bodily, mental, and spiritual labour; his whole man was exercised. But now he rests; there is no more toil for him now; there is no more sweat of blood, no more the weary foot, no more the aching head. No more has he to do. He sits still. But do you think my Saviour would sit still if he had not done all his work? Oh! no beloved; he said once, "For Zion's sake I will not rest until her glory goeth forth like a lamp that burneth." And sure I am he would not rest, or be sitting still, unless the great work of our atonement were fully accomplished. Sit still, blessed Jesus, while there is a fear of thy people being lost? Sit still, while their salvation is at hazard? No; alike thy truthfulness and thy compassion tell us, that thou wouldst still labour if the work were still undone. Oh! if the last thread had not been woven in the great garment of our righteousness, he would be spinning it now; if the last particle of our debt had not been paid, he would be counting it down now; and if all were not finished and complete, he would never rest, until, like a wise builder, he had laid the top-stone of the temple of our salvation. No; the very fact that he sits still, and rests, and is at ease, proves that his work is finished and is complete.

And then note again, that his sitting at the right hand of God implies, *that he enjoys pleasure*; for at God's right hand "there are pleasures for evermore." Now, I think, the fact that Christ enjoys infinite pleasure has in it some degree of proof that he must have finished his work. It is true, he had pleasure with his Father ere that work was begun; but I cannot conceive that if, after having

been incarnate, his work was still unfinished, he would rest. He might rest before he began the work, but as soon as ever he had begun it, you will remember, he said he had a baptism wherewith he must be baptised, and he appeared to be hastening to receive the whole of the direful baptism of agony. He never rested on earth till the whole work was finished ; scarcely a smile passed his brow till the whole work was done. He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," until he could say, "it is finished ;" and I could scarcely conceive the Saviour happy on his throne if there were any more to do. Surely, living as he was on that great throne of his, there would be anxiety in his breast if he had not secured the meanest lamb of his fold, and if he had not rendered the eternal salvation of every blood-bought one as sacred as his own throne. The highest pleasure of Christ is derived from the fact, that he has become the "head over all things to his Church," and has saved that Church. He has joys as God ; but as the man-God, his joys spring from the salvation of the souls of men. That is his joy, which is full, in the thought that he has finished his work and has cut it short in righteousness. I think there is some degree of proof, although not perhaps positive proof there, that Jesus must have finished his work.

But now, something else. *The fact that it is said he has sat down for ever proves that he must have done it.* Christ has undertaken to save all the souls of the elect. If he has not already saved them, he is bound to do something that will save them, for he has given solemn oath and promise to his Father, that he will bring many souls unto glory, and that he will make them perfect through his own righteousness. He has promised to present our souls unblemished and complete,—

"Before the glory of his face
With joys divinely great."

Well, if he has not done enough to do that, then he must come again to do it ; but from the fact that he is to sit there for ever, that he is to wear no more the thorny crown, that he is never again to leave his throne, to cease to be king any more, that he is still to be girded by his grandeur and his glory, and sit for ever there, is proof that he has accomplished the great work of propitiation. It is certain that he must have done all, from the fact that he is to sit there for ever, to sit on his throne throughout all ages, more visibly in the ages to come, but never to leave it, again to suffer and again to die.

Yet, the best proof is, *that Christ sits at his Father's right hand at all.* For the very fact that Christ is in heaven, accepted by his Father, proves that his work must be done. Why, beloved, as long as an ambassador from our country is at a foreign court, there must be peace ; and as long as Jesus Christ our Saviour is at his Father's court, it shows that there is real peace between his people and his Father. Well, as he will be there for ever, that shows that our peace must be continual, and like the waves of the sea, shall never cease. But that peace could not have been continual, unless the atonement had been wholly made, unless justice had been entirely satisfied ; and, therefore, from that very fact it becomes certain that the work of Christ must be done. What ! Christ enter heaven—Christ sit on his Father's right hand before all the guilt of his people was rolled away ? Ah ! no ; he was the sinner's substitute ; and unless he paid the sinner's doom, and died the sinner's death, there was no heaven in view for me. He stood in the sinner's place, and the guilt of all his elect was imputed to him. God accounted him as a sinner, and as a sinner, he could not enter

heaven until he had washed all that sin away in a crimson flood of his own gore—unless his own righteousness had covered up the sins which he had taken on himself, and unless his own atonement had taken away those sins which had become his by imputation; and the fact that the Father allowed him to ascend up on high—that he gave him leave, as it were, to enter heaven, and that he said, “Sit thou on my right hand,” proves that he must have perfected his Father’s work, and that his Father must have accepted his sacrifice. But he could not have accepted it if it had been imperfect. Thus, therefore, we prove that the work must have been finished, since God the Father accepted it. Oh! glorious doctrine! This Man has done it; this Man has finished it; this Man has completed it. He was the Author, he is the Finisher; he was the Alpha, he is the Omega. Salvation is finished, complete; otherwise, he would not have ascended up on high, nor would he also sit at the right hand of God. Christian! rejoice! Thy salvation is a finished salvation; atonement is wholly made; neither stick nor stone of thine is wanted; not one stitch is required to that glorious garment of his—not one patch to that glorious robe that he has finished. ’Tis done—’tis done perfectly; thou art accepted perfectly in his righteousness; thou art purged in his blood. “By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”

II. And now, our second point—THE GLORY WHICH HE HAS ASSUMED. “After he has offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God”—the glory which Christ has assumed.

Now, by this you are to understand the complex person of Christ; for Christ, as God, always was on his Father’s throne; he always was God; and even when he was on earth he was still in heaven. The Son of God did not cease to be omnipotent and omnipresent, when he came wrapped in the garments of clay. He was still on his Father’s throne; he never left it, never came down from heaven in that sense; he was still there, “God over all, blessed for ever.” As he has said, “The Son of Man who came down from heaven, who, also,” at that very moment, was “in heaven.” But Jesus Christ, as the Man-God, has assumed glories and honors which once he had not; for as man, he did not at one time sit on his Father’s throne; he was a man, a suffering man, a man full of pains and groans, more than mortals have ever known; but as God-man, he has assumed a dignity next to God; he sits at the right hand of God: at the right hand of the glorious Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, sits the person of the man Jesus Christ, exalted at the right hand of the Majesty on High. From this we gather, that the dignity which Christ now enjoys is *surpassing* dignity. There is no honor, there is no dignity to be compared to that of Christ. No angel flies higher than he does. Save only the great Three-One God, there is none to be found in heaven who can be called superior to the person of the man Christ Jesus. He sits on the right hand of God, “far above all angels, and principalities, and powers, and every name that is named.” His Father “hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and of things on earth, and of things under the earth.” No dignity can shine like his. The sons of righteousness that have turned many to God, are but as stars compared with him, the brightest of the suns there. As for angels, they are but flashes of his own brightness, emanations from his own glorious self. He sits there, the great masterpiece of Deity.

“God, in the person of his Son,
Hath all his mightiest works outdone.”

That glorious man, taken into union with Deity, that mighty Man-God, surpasses everything in the glory of his majestic person. Christian! remember, thy Master has unsurpassed dignity.

In the next place, Christ has *real* dignity. Some persons have mere empty titles, which confer but little power and little authority. But the Man-Christ Jesus, while he has many crowns and many titles, has not one tinsel crown or one empty title. While he sits there he sits not there *pro formâ*; he does not sit there to have nominal honor done to him; but he has real honor and real glory. That Man-Christ, who once walked the streets of Jerusalem, now sits in heaven, and angels bow before him. That Man-Christ, who once hung on Calvary, and there expired in agonies the most acute, now, on his Father's throne exalted sits, and sways the sceptre of heaven—nay, devils at his presence tremble, the whole earth owns the sway of his providence, and on his shoulders the pillars of the universe rest. “He upholdeth all things by the word of his power.” He overruleth all mortal things, making the evil work a good, and the good produce a better, and a better still, in infinite progression. The power of the God-Man Christ is infinite; you cannot tell how great it is. He is “able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him.” He is “able to keep us from falling, and to present us spotless before his presence.” He is able to make “all things work together for good.” He is “able to subdue all things unto himself.” He is able to conquer even death, for he hath the power of death, and he hath the power of Satan, who once had power over death; yea, he is Lord over all things, for his Father hath made him so. The glorious dignity of our Saviour! I cannot talk of it in words, beloved; all I can say to you must be simple repetition. I can only repeat the statements of Scripture. There is no room for flights; we must just keep where we ever have been, telling out the story that his Father hath exalted him to real honors and real dignities.

And once more: this honor that Christ hath now received (I mean the Man-God Christ, not the God-Christ, for he already had that, and never lost it, and therefore could never obtain it; he was Man-God, and as such he was exalted;) was *deserved* honor; that dignity which his Father gave him he well deserved. I have sometimes thought, if all the holy spirits in the universe had been asked what should be done for the man whom the King delighteth to honor, they would have said, Christ must be the man whom God delighteth to honor, and he must sit on his Father's right hand. Why, if I might use such a phrase, I can almost suppose his mighty Father putting it to the vote of heaven as to whether Christ should be exalted, and that they carried it by acclamation, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive honor and glory for ever and ever.” His Father gave him that; but still the suffrages of all the saints, and of all the holy angels, said to it, amen; and this thing I am certain of, that every heart here—every Christian heart, says amen to it. Ah, beloved, we would exalt him, we would crown him, “crown him Lord of all;” not only will

his Father crown him, but we, ourselves, would exalt him if we had the power ; and when we shall have power to do it, we will cast our crowns beneath his feet, and crown him Lord of all. It is deserved honor. No other being in heaven deserves to be there ; even the angels are kept there, and God "chargeth his angels with folly," and gives them grace, whereby he keeps them ; and none of his saints deserve it ; they feel that hell was their desert. But Christ's exaltation was a deserved exaltation. His father might say to him, "Well done, my Son, well done ; thou hast finished the work which I had given thee to do ; sit thou for ever first of all men, glorified by union with the person of the Son. My glorious co-equal Son, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy foot-stool."

One more illustration, and we have done with this. We must consider the exaltation of Christ in heaven as being in some degree a representative exaltation. Christ Jesus exalted at the Father's right hand, though he has eminent glories, in which the saints must not expect to share, essentially he is the express image of the person of God, and the brightness of his Father's glory, yet, to a very great degree, the honors which Christ has in heaven he has as our representative there. Ah ! brethren it is sweet to reflect, how blessedly Christ lives with his people. Ye all know that we were

"One, when he died, one, when he rose,
One, when he triumphed o'er his foes ;
One, when in heaven he took his seat,
And angels sang all hell's defeat."

To-day you know that you are one with him, now, in his presence. We are at this moment "raised up together," and may, afterwards, "sit together in heavenly places, even in him." As I am represented in parliament, and as you are, so is every child of God represented in heaven ; but as we are not one with our parliamentary representatives, that figure fails to set forth the glorious representation of us which our forerunner, Christ, carries on in heaven, for we are actually one with him ; we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones, and his exaltation is our exaltation. He will give us to sit upon his throne, for as he has overcome, and is set down with his Father on his throne ; he has a crown, and he will not wear his crown, unless he gives us crowns too ; he has a throne, but he is not content with having a throne to himself ; on his right hand there must be his bride in gold of Ophir. And he cannot be there without his bride ; the Saviour cannot be content to be in heaven unless he has his Church with him, which is "the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Beloved, look up to Christ now ; let the eye of your faith catch a sight of him ; behold him there, with many crowns upon his head. Remember, as ye see him there, ye will one day be like him, when ye shall see him as he is ; ye shall not be as great as he is, ye shall not be as glorious in degree, but still ye shall, in a measure, share the same honors, and enjoy the same happiness and the same dignity which he possesses. Be then, content to live unknown for a little while ;

be content to bear the sneer, the jest, the joke, the ribald song ; be content to walk your weary way, through the fields of poverty, or up the hills of affliction ; by-and-bye ye shall reign with Christ, for he has “made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign for ever and ever.” By-and-bye we shall share the glories of the Head ; the oil has been poured on his head ; it has not trickled down to us yet, save only in that faithful fellowship which we have ; but by-and-bye that oil shall flow to the very skirts of the garments, and we, the meanest of his people, shall share a part in the glories of his house by being made kings with him, to sit on his throne, even as he sits on his Father’s throne.

III. And now, in the last place, WHAT ARE CHRIST’S EXPECTATIONS ? We are told, *he expects that his enemies shall be made his footstool*. In some sense that is already done ; the foes of Christ are, in some sense, his footstool now. What is the devil but the very slave of Christ ? for he doth no more than he is permitted against God’s children. What is the devil, but the servant of Christ, to fetch his children to his loving arms ? What are wicked men, but the servants of God’s providence unwittingly to themselves ? Christ has even now “power over all flesh that he may give eternal life to as many as God has given him,” in order that the purposes of Christ might be carried out. Christ died for all, and all are now Christ’s property. There is not a man in this world who does not belong to Christ in that sense, for he is God over him and Lord over him.

He is either Christ’s brother, or else Christ’s slave, his unwilling vassal, that must be dragged out in triumph, if he follow him not willingly. In that sense all things are now Christ’s.

But we expect greater things than these, beloved, at his coming, *when all enemies shall be beneath Christ’s feet upon earth*. We are, therefore, many of us, “looking for that blessed hope ; that glorious appearing of the kingdom of our Saviour Jesus Christ ;” many of us are expecting that Christ will come ; we cannot tell you when ; we believe it to be folly to pretend to guess the time, but we are expecting that even in our life the Son of God will appear, and we know that when he shall appear he will tread his foes beneath his feet, and reign from pole to pole, and from the river even to the ends of the earth. Not long shall anti-christ sit on her seven hills ; not long shall the false prophet delude his millions ; not long shall idol gods mock their worshippers with eyes that cannot see, and hands that cannot handle, and ears that cannot hear—

“Lo ! he comes, with clouds descending ;”

In the winds I see his chariot wheels ; I know that he approaches, and when he approaches he “breaks the bow and cuts the spear in sunder, and burns the chariot in the fire ;” and Christ Jesus shall then be king over the whole world. He is king now, virtually ; but he is to have another kingdom ; I cannot see how it is to be a spiritual one, for that is come already ; he is as much king spiritually now as he ever will be in his Church, although his kingdom will

assuredly be very extensive ; but the kingdom that is to come, I take it, will be something even greater than the spiritual kingdom ; it will be a visible kingdom of Christ on earth. Then kings must bow their necks before his feet ; then at his throne the tribes of earth shall bend ; then the rich and mighty, the merchants of Tyre, and the travellers where gold is found, shall bring their spices and myrrh before him, and lay their gold and gems at his feet ;

“ Jesus shall reign where’er the sun
Does his successive journeys run ;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.”

Once more, beloved ; *Christ will have all his enemies put beneath his feet, in that great day of judgment.* Oh ! that will be a terrible putting of his foes beneath his feet, when at that second resurrection the wicked dead shall rise ; when the ungodly shall stand before his throne, and his voice shall say, “ Depart, ye cursed.” Oh ! rebel, thou that hast despised Christ, it will be a horrible thing for thee, that that man, that gibbeted, crucified man, whom thou hast often despised, will have power enough to speak thee into hell ; that the man whom thou hast scoffed and laughed at, and of whom thou hast virtually said, “ If he be the Son of God, let him come down from the cross,” will have power enough, in two or three short words, to damn thy soul to all eternity : “ Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” Oh ! what a triumph that will be, when men, wicked men, persecutors, and all those who opposed Christ, are all cast into the lake that burneth ! But, if possible, it will be a greater triumph, when he who led men astray shall be dragged forth.

“ Shall lift his brazen front, with thunder scarred,
Receive the sentence, and begin anew his hell.”

Oh ! when Satan shall be condemned, and when the saints shall judge angels, and the fallen spirits shall all be under the feet of Christ, “ then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, he hath put all things under him.” And when death, too, shall come forth, and the “ death of death and hell’s destruction” shall grind his iron limbs to powder, then shall it be said, “ Death is swallowed up in victory,” for the great shout of “ Victory, victory, victory,” shall drown the shrieks of the past ; shall put out the sound of the howlings of death ; and hell shall be swallowed up in victory. He is exalted on high—he sitteth on his Father’s right hand, “ from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.”