

# The New Park Street Pulpit.

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CONSTRAINING LOVE!

## A Sermon

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“Oh love the Lord all ye his saints.”—Psalm xxxi. 23.

LOVE Jehovah—so the text runs. God the Father demands your love, and he deserves the warmest affection of your hearts. He has chosen you from before the foundation of the world. He has given his Son that he might redeem you with his precious blood. He has taken you into his family by divine adoption. He has “begotten you again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” It is to him that you address your prayers; it is he who grants you your requests. 'Tis he who glorified his Son Jesus, receiving him into the heavens as your representative; and he will glorify him yet again by gathering you together with all his people into the mansions provided for the blessed. “Oh love the Lord all ye his saints.” Love the Son! 'Tis he whose delights were with the sons of men of old, he who entered into suretyship and covenant engagement on the behalf of his elect. 'Tis he who with his precious blood has ransomed our souls and delivered them “from going down into the pit.” He is our mediator through whom we pray, and our intercessor who prays for us. He is our head, our husband, our king. He it is, even Jesus, who took our nature, and wears a body like our own. 'Tis he who imparts to us his mind now, and promises that hereafter we shall bear his likeness in glory. “Oh love the Lord all ye his saints.” Love the Holy Spirit! He hath been revealed to us, and is known by us as “the Comforter.” How endearing!

“He in our hearts of sin and woe  
Hath bidden streams of grace arise,  
Which unto endless glory flow.”

He has quickened us when when we were dead in sins; he has given us the grace of repentance and of faith; he has sanctified us, and kept and preserved us up till now. He has taken of the things of Christ and has showed them unto us; he has dwelt in our poor hearts; he has been our comforter, our instructor, and our daily teacher; 'tis he who convinced us of sin when as yet we perceived not its malignity; and 'tis he inspires our hearts and souls with the supernatural will and disposition of living to God. It is of the Holy Spirit we are born again and made partakers of the new creation. It is by the same Spirit we are ultimately to be changed into the image of our Lord from glory to glory. “Oh love the Lord all ye his saints.” If a blind world sees no beauty in its God, and therefore does not love him, yet oh ye saints, love your God. If the enemies of the Most High set up other gods, and bow down before them, if they turn aside into crooked ways, and go a whoring after their false gods, yet, oh ye saints of his, stand fast and turn to your Jehovah, and love him ever more. Do not merely serve him, but love him. O house of Israel! be not his slaves; serve not your God as the heathen serve their gods, out of terror and fear, but “love the Lord all ye saints.” Be not as the subjects of Pharaoh, flogged to their work with the whip, but be ye the dutiful children of your loving Father. Serve him, I say, and rejoice before him. Let love sweeten all your services; give him all your hearts; make him the object still supreme of all your heart's desire. Ever live to him as you live by him.

I shall have to ask your patience this evening, while I take a liberty with my text. It is this; I mean to confine its exhortation to one person of the Divine Trinity. I have already accepted it in its comprehensiveness, “Oh love *Jehovah*, all ye his saints.” To-night, I propose to use it as consonant with such an occasion

as the present, when we shall celebrate the supper of our Lord;—"Oh love the Lord *Jesus* all ye his saints;" and I shall endeavour, as the Holy Ghost shall enable me, first of all *to stir you up to love Jesus, by showing how meet and befitting it is that you should do so*; and then I shall *seek to show the excellencies of loving Jesus*; how profitable it will be to your spirit, if your heart is wholly inflamed with love to him.

I. First, then, my beloved, let one sentiment animate every mind, and one emotion fill every heart. "Oh love the Lord all ye his saints." I feel in beginning to exhort you to love Christ, that love is a stream which must flow spontaneously, a fountain that must bubble up of its own accord. When grace makes a man love Christ, it doth not do it by force, for love is a wine that cannot be trodden out of the grapes with pressure; it must freely distil. The heart cannot be forced to love. 'Tis true it can be constrained by love, but by no other constraint. Moses, with all the thunders that gave extraordinary sanction to his mission, never could make a heart love God. There is nothing but love that can create love, and love itself comes like droppings from the honeycomb. The only pressure it will deign to endure is the pressure of love. "Draw me," says love, "I will run after thee: drive me and I cannot but resist—my desire cannot even stir, much less can I run after thee with fervent attachment. My heart melted while my beloved spoke, because he was my beloved. Because he loved me, and spake right lovingly, my heart melted; had he been angry with me, had he spoken with coarse words my soul might have melted with fear, but it never could have been dissolved with love." Love, I say, is the only pressure which may be used to produce love, and yet, methinks, I may "stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance," for it may so happen that while I strike some few sparks, they may touch the inflammable passion of your new-born spirits; the breath of the Spirit may fan them, and nurture them, till the love of your heart will seem as if it had received new fire.

Oh love! let me bring forth some of thy delicious sweets. Let me reason with the tenderest logic of the heart. "Love the Lord *Jesus* all ye his saints," because his Father loves him. It must always be right for us to love whom God loves. Now the Father hath much love, but his pre-eminent love is for his only-begotten Son. One with the Father from before all worlds, one in essence, as well as in dwelling-place and attribute, our *Jesus* was ever so dear to his Father's heart, that no tongue can tell, nor even heart conceive, how deep the well-spring whence love flowed from the Father to the Son. "The Father hath loved the Son, and given all things into his hand." He hath loved him, not only because of the unity of their nature, and because of their being one God, but the Father's love has flowed out to Christ as the Mediator. He has loved him for his obedience which he perfected, for the sufferings which he endured, for the ransom which he paid, for the battle which he fought, for the victory which he won. There was one eye that always followed Christ more closely than any other; there was one heart that always understood his pains, and one face that was always filled with celestial delight, when *Jesus Christ* overcame his enemies. "He who spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him up for us all." When he had delivered him up methinks his bowels yearned for him, his heart followed him, and his soul loved him, as he saw him rising superior to every enemy he stooped to meet, victorious in every conflict he deigned to wage, bearing every cross he condescended to undergo, and casting every load away from him when he had borne it the predestined time. The Father, I say, hath loved the Son, because of the great things he hath done, and therefore hath he delivered all things into his hand. And, oh heavenly Father! dost thou love the Lord *Jesus*, and shall my heart refuse to love him? Am I thy child, and shall not the object of my Father's love be the darling of my heart? What thou delightest in shall be my delight; where thou seest beauty, mine eye shall gaze with rapture; and where thy heart finds solace, there shall my heart find unceasing repose and ineffable joy. Doth Christ lie in thy bosom—he shall lie in mine; is his name engraven on thy heart—oh let it be engraven on mine also; dost thou love him—love him so that thou couldst not love him more—be it my privilege to love him thus with all the force and vehemence of my ransomed renovated nature, giving up all my spirit to be devoured by that consecrated fire of love to the Lord *Jesus Christ*.

Again, may I not stir you up my brethren, to love *Jesus Christ*, by reminding you how the angels love him? They have ever loved him since they have known him. It is true they are but the creatures of yesterday compared with him; he is the Everlasting Father; he is the Eternal One, and they, excellent in strength though they be,

are but created ones, yet, oh how they have loved him! It was their greatest pleasure to fly at his will ere he descended from heaven to earth. He had but to speak and it was done. His angels were spirits, and his ministers were flames of fire to do his will. Whatever had been the service he demanded of them, they would have thought it their highest heaven to have performed his will. And when he left the shrine of the blessed to come to earth and to suffer, ye know my brethren how they followed him along his starry road, how they would not leave him till the last parting moment, and then their songs pursued him down to earth, while they chanted "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." You know how ever afterwards they watched over him, how they came to him in the desert after his great battle with the enemy, and ministered to him. You know how he was seen of angels all along his pilgrimage, how in the garden there appeared unto him an angel strengthening him. You understand how around the bloody tree they pressed in strong desire to see a God in agonies, and wondered what it all could mean, until he said—"It is finished." They visited his tomb; an angel descended from heaven to roll the stone away from the door of the sepulchre; yea more, angels formed his escort when he ascended up to the realms of heaven. Well have we been taught to sing—

"They brought his chariot from on high,  
To bear him to his throne,  
Clapped their triumphant wings and cried,  
The glorious work is done."

You know how now they bow before him, casting their crowns at his feet, and how they join the everlasting song of "Glory, and honour, and majesty, and power, and dominion, and might be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Do the angels love him—the angels that have never tasted of his flesh, that never needed to be washed in his blood, and shall not my heart love him? Spirits, spirits, spotless ones! do ye cry, "Worthy the Lamb"—my heart shall echo back your notes in louder strains—

"Worthy the Lamb that died," they cry,  
"To be exalted thus;"  
"Worthy the Lamb," our lips reply,  
"For he was slain for us."

Stand back ye angels! give to man the first place in love; ye may adore, but ye cannot love as we love, for he is our brother, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. "He took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham." He is ours more than he is yours; he is man, he was never angel; he is our brother and kinsman, our next in blood. Jesus, our souls must love thee; we cannot permit even angels to be our rivals here; we will be jealous even of them. We press nearer to thy throne than even they can do.

On each of these themes I am compelled to be short, though there were indeed room enough for expansion, "Oh love the Lord all ye his saints," because your brothers that are caught up to the third heavens love him. And here let us just seek to bring this theme home to each one of us. How many dear friends and kinsfolk according to the flesh we have up yonder, where the clouds float not, and winters are not known, where tears trickle from no eyes, and furrows mar no brows! Up yonder we have friends; how often do we speak of them as lost, but how foolish we are; they were never more truly found. Is that mariner lost who has escaped from a shipwrecked vessel and stands upon the rock? No, no; they need not our pity; they might rather commiserate us, if there could be such a thing. We are struggling in the surf to reach the shore as they have done. And oh, my brethren, methinks that whatever they do above should be sufficient example for us to do the like here below. And now, hark, hark how they sing before the throne! Methinks among those glad voices I can distinguish some of friends, of fellow-labourers here below, of parents, of husbands, of wives, of children, that here worshipped with us, but have now gone up yonder to the higher seats of the divine synagogue, to sing in nobler strains than we can do. Hark how they sing, and what their theme—

"Jesus, the Lord their hearts employ  
Jesus, my love, they sing;  
Jesus, the life of both our joys,  
Sounds loud from every string."

And, oh, how they love him! Methinks I see them; they have no tears, but joy may moisten their eyes as they looked at that dear face, and as they talk to one another with their hearts burning;—burning with fiercer fire and clearer flame than those favoured disciples who went to Emmaus with their Lord. They say to one another, “How glorious he is, and we are like him.” Methinks I hear their sweet conversation, as they count the crowns upon his brow; as they bow down and adore; as they stand up and admire, and then, transported with delight, fly into his arms again. With him in paradise continually, in sweet communion with him,—oh, how they love! We are such cold creatures; like icebergs are our hearts, but theirs are like flames of fire. Oh, shall it not be enough to stir us up to love the Saviour, when we think how they love him who have crossed the Jordan, and have gone before.

But, come, we will take another argument. Surely I need not say to you, let us love the Lord Jesus, because everything that could possibly enamour our souls and constrain our love is to be found in him. There is a thing called beauty which wins upon the hearts of men. Strong Samson is weak as a child before its enchantment. Mighty men, not a few, have bowed before it, and paid it homage; but if you want beauty, look into the face of Jesus; that marred visage hath more loveliness in it than in all the smiles of Cleopatra, or of the fabled maidens of days of yore. There is no beauty anywhere but in Christ, O sun, thou art not fair, when once compared with him. Ye stars, ye are not bright, if ye be set side-by-side with his eyes, that burn like lamps of fire. O fair world, and grand creation of a glorious God, thou art but a dim and dusky blot compared with the splendours of his face. When you shall see Christ, my brethren, you will be compelled to say that you never knew what loveliness was before. When the clouds are swept away, when the curtains that hide him from your view are drawn aside, you will find that not anything you have seen will stand a moment’s comparison with him. You will be ready to break out “O, black sun, black moon, dark stars, as compared with my lovely Lord Jesus.” I say, my brethren, if you want one to love fairer than the children of men, who shall always be worthy of your love, and always show to the eyes of others, that there was a sufficient reason for your giving up your heart to him. Love Jesus, for there ne’er was such beauty in the world as there is in him.

Does wisdom win the love of men? Is he not wise—wiser than all the sons of men? Doth strength win love? Do martial triumphs, prowess, and renown subdue the heart? Daughters of Jerusalem, would ye love a hero? Go forth and meet King Jesus as he returns red from the battle-field, glorious in triumph. Do men sometimes give their love because they at first are led to reverence the character, and then afterwards to esteem the person? Oh, think of the matchless character of Christ Jesus! Were there ever such perfections as meet in him? He hath not the excellency of one man, but of all men, without the faults of any. He is not merely the Rose of Sharon, but he is the Lily of the Valley. He may not only be compared at one time to the citron among the trees of the wood, but anon he is as the goodly cedar. All types of beauty fail, and “apples of gold in pictures of silver,” lose their force when we come to treat of him. We must coin new words before we can describe the excellencies of Christ. In fact, we must have done with tongues, and go into that land where spirits utter their thoughts without the motion of lip or the expiration of breath, ere we shall be able to express the surpassing beauty, the unuttered excellency of the glorious character of Christ. Oh, love him then, ye people of God; love him; look into his face, and see if ye can help it; look, I say, at his character, and see if ye can resist it. But I tell you, if ye love him not, it is because ye do not know him.

“His worth if all the nations knew  
Sure the whole earth *must* love him too.”

It were impossible to know Christ, and yet not to have the heart affected by him; you must be overpowered by his charms. One look of his eyes, one touch of his hand, shall ravish your heart. Once be able to see his face, and let him but dart a glance at you, your two hearts must be united. Is thy soul to thee like a river rippling in its bed alone; and is Christ yonder, like another river gloriously flowing towards the sea? Pray the Lord to bend the stream of thy love till it falls into the river of his love, and then you shall be as two streams, whose banks were once divisions, but both are now melted into one. You can then say with the apostle. “For me to live is Christ,” I run in the same channel; “and for me to die

were gain," I shall be lost in the ocean, swallowed up in boundless and eternal love. "Oh love the Lord all ye his saints."

Yet once more, and this perhaps shall be the best argument I can give, the one which, after all, has the most effect upon us. We love him—why? Because the Father loved him? Oh no; we are too gross for that. Do we love him because the angels love him? We are not wise enough for that. Do we love him because the redeemed love him? I fear, my brethren, we are still too carnal for that. Do we love him because of his own excellencies? I trow not, at first: that is an after attainment of grace. We love him, *because he first loved us*. Come, then, love him, Oh ye saints, because he first loved you.

Here is a theme before me which almost imposes silence on my tongue. There are some themes which make one wish that some teacher more able would accept the responsibility of explaining them, because we are afraid of marring their symmetry while we grapple with their details. The picture stretches out as it were before my mind's eye with dazzling glory, but I cannot sketch it so that others can see all its grandeur. Christ's love to us we sometimes guess at, but, ah, it is so far beyond our thoughts, our reasonings, our praises, and our apprehension too, in the sweetest moments of our most spiritual ecstasy,—who can tell it? "Oh, how he loved us!" When Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus, the Jews exclaimed with surprise—"Behold how he loved him." Verily ye might say the like with deeper emphasis. There was nothing in you to make him love you, but he left heaven's throne for you. As he came down the celestial hills, methinks the angels said "Oh, how he loved them." When he lay in the manger an infant, they gathered round and said, "Oh how he loves." But when they saw him sweating in the garden, when he was put into the crucible, and began to be melted in the furnace, then indeed, the spirits above began to know how much he loved us. Oh Jesus! when I see thee mocked and spit upon—when I see thy dear cheeks become a reservoir for all the filth and spittle of unholy mouths—when I see thy back rent with knotted whips—when I behold thy honour and thy life both trailing in the dust—when I see thee charged with madness, with treason, with blasphemy—when I behold thy hands and thy feet pierced, thy body stripped naked and exposed—when I see thee hanging on the cross between earth and heaven, in torments dire and excruciating—when I hear thee cry "I thirst," and see the vinegar thrust to thy lips—when I hear thy direful cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," my spirit is compelled to say, "Oh how he loves!" He could die, but he could not cease to love; he could be rent in pieces, but he could not be rent away from his people; he could be buried in the grave, but his love could not be buried; it must live, it must exist, it cannot be sundered from his chosen.

Think, too, my brethren, how much he must have loved you when you were going on in sin. You used to call his ministers hypocrites—his people fools; his Sabbaths were idle days with you; his book, his precious book, was unread; you never sought his grace. Sometimes, perhaps, you used to curse him, perhaps persecute him in his children, and yet he loved you. And when his Spirit came after you, you tried to quench it; you would not attend the place where the arrow had first stuck in your conscience; you went to the theatre, you tried to quench the Spirit, but his love would not be mastered by you; he had resolved to have you, and the bridegroom would win your heart. Oh how he loved you, when he received you all black and filthy to his bosom, gave you the kiss of his lips, and saluted you as his own fair spouse. Since then bethink you, how he has watched over you in sickness, how he has carried you in his bosom when the road was rough, how he has covered you with his wings, and nurtured you with his feathers. Think, I beseech you, how he seems to have moved heaven and earth to bless you; how he has always had a ready ear to hear your prayer, and a swift foot to run to your immediate help. Remember this, above all things—how ill you have requited all his love. You have served him but little, given him the fag ends, you have brought him no sweet cane, neither have you filled him with the fat of your sacrifices. You have given him no bullocks out of your fold, no he-goats out of your flock. You have offered to him the blind and the maimed; you have given him sacrifice, but have you requited him according to his kindness to you? He bled for you; have you resisted unto bloodstriving against sin? He gave his whole self for you; have you given your whole being up to him? There was not a single nerve in his body which did not thrill with love to you; there was not a drop of blood which had not in its red fluid your name. Surely his body, whole and sole, was all yours—his humanity and his Godhead too; and are you all his, and can you

say—no, I will not ask you, you cannot say—that you have made a dedication to him, as truly as he made for you. Oh, love him then, because of his love to you. I am sure you don't know how much he loved, because if you did it would break your heart to think you love him so little. Sweet Master, if thou wert here to-night to tell thy people how thou lovest them, thou wouldst break their hearts. I am a poor spokesman for thee, Jesus! Would that thou wouldst speak thyself. Come hither—nay, thou art here; thou art wherever two or three are met together. Come hither to thy people then, and wrap them in thy crimson vest, and tell them all thy name! Speak unto them and say, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." Shed thy love in their hearts. May they have an infinite consciousness of thy infinite, thy boundless, thy fathomless, thy endless love to them, and then thy work is done; there will be no need for thy poor servant to cry, "Oh love the Lord all ye his saints," for they will love thee to the full.

II. In the second part of my subject I am now to shew you some of THE EXCELLENCIES OF LOVING JESUS.

"Oh love the Lord all ye his saints." There are many excellencies which flow from love. Love is an ointment that giveth forth a sweet smell: but better than that, it is an ointment which healeth wounds, that giveth health unto the marrow of the bones. Love hath a wondrous power. It may seem but little in itself, but it makes men giants. He who bathes in the stream of love, becomes invulnerable, nay, he becomes omnipotent. Wherein he doth not love he is weak; but so far as he loveth is he strong beyond all thought of weakness. Brethren, one of the first things which love to Christ will do for you, is, it will make you bear suffering for Christ with joyousness. Remember the martyr Lambert, one of the earliest of the martyrs burnt for Christ's sake, by the Papists. He was treated as badly as any could have been, for when tied to the stake, the fagots were green, and the fire exceeding slow, and he burnt away by slow degrees, feet and legs being consumed, while yet life was in the body; and that poor soul, when the fire was just about to take away life, though he had been hours burning, was seen to lift up such poor hands as he had—black and charred things—and clap them as best he could, and say, out of that poor black face, that looked like a cinder in the flame, "None but Jesus; none but Jesus." With that he rode in his chariot of fire up to Christ. Perhaps you have to endure some cruel mockings at times. It may be that to serve Christ becomes arduous work for you. Love him, and you cannot tell how easy it will be to suffer for him. In fact, the more you have to suffer for him the more happy you will be. You will count it all joy; nay, you will rejoice in that day, and leap for joy when you are allowed to suffer for the name of him who suffered so much for you. As sure as ever you flinch at the little fire which these mild and gentle days can afford you; as sure as ever you start back at the faint rebukes which the world gives you now, you may infer that you don't love your Master as you ought; for when you love him, then will you feel that anything and everything that the world can do, can never move you from him.

"The cords that bind around my heart,  
Tortures and racks may rend them off,  
But they can never, never part  
The hold I have on Christ my Lord."

Love will not only make suffering easy, but further, it will make service joyous. Oh, don't you know in the Church how much shrinking there is from labour for Christ. Why is it in any Church that there are found brethren who are always for getting others to work, and not wishing to do it themselves. It is lack of love, my brethren; for as soon as ever we love we shall be wanting to do something for Christ. When we love each other, what things we think of in order to give pleasure. With what solicitude does the wife think what she could do to bring the smile upon the husband's face; and how will the loving husband think of some means by which he can show his love to his wife. Is it so with parents and with children. Have not you seen the mother sitting up night after night without any sleep, and yet she was not weary? Oh, she was very, very weary, but she did not know it; her love would not let her feel it. Have you never seen the tender spouse watching over her husband at the brink of death, never taking her eyes from him, forgetting to eat bread, thinking of nothing but him? She sleeps as she sits in that chair. It is hardly for a moment. Did he start? She wakes. Was not the fever heavy on him? She is ever awake, and all the while she holds on, though her eyes are red with

sleeplessness. She says she could do it, and she certainly could do it too, night after night, and never fly. And so, do but get your heart full of love to Christ, and it is wondrous what you can do for him. Nothing you can do for him will be too much. See how the Moravians served their Master. There was an island in the West Indies, upon which some of the Moravians came to land, and they wanted to preach the gospel to the blacks. They asked what would be the condition upon which they would be allowed to land. The cruel terms were these—that they must themselves become slaves. Two of those Moravian brethren became slaves; they bent their back to the lash that they might toil by day, in order to have the opportunity by night of preaching the gospel to their poor black companions in captivity. You will remember too, that when there was found somewhere in Africa a place where there were lepers confined, persons whose limbs had rotted away with foul disease, two Moravians were found to go in there, and though they knew they could not come out alive, and that they must soon be the subjects of leprosy themselves, and die by slow degrees. They were ready enough, and willing enough to do it all. The love of the Moravians, brethren, seemed to me to be one of the chiefest examples of what the love of every Christian should be. There should never be any choice nor stopping. Does Jesus want me here? Can he make better use of me dead than alive? Let me die. Will he be more honoured in my poverty than in my wealth? Let me be poor. Will he be more glorified by my toil than by my rest, or by my sickness than by my health? Then be it so. As he surrendered all to the Father, so will I surrender all to him. As the Father gave all into his hands, so will I give all into his hands to be his for ever and ever. Love to Jesus will make all service for him to be joyous.

Again, love to Christ will make obedience sweet. "Love makes our willing feet in swift obedience move." What things we will do for those we love that we would not do for anybody else. So for Christ we will do many things, because we love him, without consulting our feelings, or considering whether any benefit is to accrue, or whether, as some say, it will be of any use. Be it absolutely a command, or more gently, a counsel: "whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." Sometimes when I think of many good brethren and sisters here that know it to be their duty to be baptized in his name, and come to his table and celebrate his ordinance in remembrance of him, and they don't do it, though Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments," I don't know what to say for them; I must let them speak for themselves. I sometimes think, surely if they loved their Master better, they would count obedience a pleasure. I think they would say, "I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments," and they would be ready at once to run in the Lord's way, without making exceptions to any of his commandments.

Still more, my brethren, love for Christ will make communion very sweet. How pleasant it is to talk to those we love. Give us a good friend, and you have given us a very great boon. A rainy day in doors with a good companion is very happy; but the best landscape on a sunny day, in the society of those for whom we have no affection, is but a poor thing. Let me be with Christ in the meanest place, rather than with the sinner in his high places. Luther used to say, "I would rather fall with Christ than stand with Cæsar;" and might you not say you would rather be with Christ in poverty than with anybody else in all the glory and grandeur of this world? Once love Christ, and you will never be content to be far away from him. You will say with the spouse, "As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet unto my taste." Friend, how long is it since you had fellowship with Christ? Ask the question round, brethren. Each man, and each woman, answer it. You are a believer, your faith is in Christ; how long is it since you have seen your Master? How long since you have talked with him? How long since he has spoken to you? Pass that question round again, I say, and let every man answer it. I am afraid there be some Christians who have not communion with Christ by the month together, nay, I fear by the year together. Oh, what Christians must you be. Where is that wife's love who never wishes for a husband's smile all through the year? Were there much affection between two friends who could live in the same house, and not speak? Oh, brothers and sisters, let us examine ourselves, and begin to doubt if we can be happy without fellowship with Christ. Christ is so precious to a believer, that the believer and Christ should be like two turtle doves, that cannot live unless they are in each other's company. Of the turtle dove it is said, that when its mate is gone you can never make the turtle consort with another, bring all the doves you will. It is

a lonely dove, and will not be consoled; there it sits, and pines and coos itself to death, mourning for its mate. The only way to kill a Christian would be to take Christ from him. You might bring him the other things, and yet never find another name, never another to whom his heart would be knit. Nay, if you took up all the saints that have been buried, you could never find one that the believer could consort with as he has consorted with Christ, and held fellowship with him. Let us all be like the dove then, and cleave to the Lord with full purpose of heart.

I think there is no need to say any more on this point, or add another syllable, except it be just this one—love to Christ will make trust easy. I say love to Christ will make trust easy. You have heard that often-told story of the wife on board ship who saw her husband cool and calm when the wind was blowing hurricanes and the masts were creaking. She asked how it was, and the husband, reaching a sword, ran upon her, put it to her very breast, and the wife didn't start for a minute. "Wife," said he, "how is it you are not afraid? this sword is sharp." "Oh," saith she, "but it is in my husband's hand." "Well," said he, "and though that wind is terrible, it is in my Father's hands." Love can trust under any circumstances. It is wonderful how some men have been betrayed into trust. You could not excuse them at first; they have put their hand and become security for another, because they really loved the person so much that they could not think it possible he could deceive them; and we must not be too severe, because we don't know the circumstances between the two in these cases. We love because we cannot help it: we trust where we love. How the child trusts the mother. The mother has lost her way; she is on a bleak hill; the snow is falling, and she cannot find the track. The path is covered, and there may be a wolf in the distance, and the mother may hear it, but the infant does not start; it sleeps on her breast, and if it wakes it toys with the mother's cheek, and whilst she is full of alarm, it knows no fear because it loves. And see how the child will spring into your arms, though he be on some height, and if he should fall he would hurt himself. "I will catch you child," and it is done; he springs. And so, where there is love there will be trust. Do you find it hard to believe Christ? Love him better, and it will be easy. Do you find it hard to think that all things will work together for your good? Love him, and you will be sure of it; you will be quite sure of it. "It cannot be," say you, "that my sweet Lord Jesus will ever do me an ill turn; I love him so well, and he loves me so well. Let him smite me, and I will kiss his hand; I am sure that he means it in love, it is but a love pat upon a child. Even when he frowns at me I will still believe that he has a smiling face, only he conceals it to make better known the purpose of his grace. Yea, though he slay me, yet will I trust in him. I will say, he did it, I will trust in him.

Thus, brethren, I think I have given you ample reasons for loving Christ. As for those of you who have never trusted him, I cannot say to you love him; trust him first, and you shall love him afterwards. Give your soul up into his hands. I charge you by the living God, have done with your self-righteousness, and flee to Christ who has bled on the cross, and when you have been washed in his blood, and robed in his righteousness, then shall you love him. O Jesus, O Jesus, come forth and win men's hearts to-night! Thou heavenly lover, our sweet Master, come we beseech thee! When I tell thy story, men will not love thee; nay, should I tell it with tears in my eyes they would not believe me. Come, tell it thyself to them; on their way home break their hearts in love to thee. May they to-night fulfil the verse we have often sung in thy honour—

"Dissolved by thy goodness, I fall to the ground,  
And weep to the praise of the mercy I've found."

Jesus! bring the wanderers home. Reclaim thy lost sheep! May there be joy on earth, and joy in heaven, over sinners whom thou hast found, sinners whom thou didst come to seek and to save. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." The Lord add his blessing for Jesu's sake.