

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

JESUS CHRIST IMMUTABLE.

A Sermon

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“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.”—Hebrews xiii. 8.

FOR a very considerable number of years an esteemed and venerable vicar of a Surrey parish has sent me at the New Year a generous testimony of his love, and an acknowledgment of the pleasure which he derives from the weekly reading of my sermons. Enclosed in the parcel which his kindness awards to me, is a text from which he hopes that I may preach on the first Sabbath morning of the New Year. This year he sends me this golden line, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.” I have preached from it before—you will find a sermon from this text in print;* but we need not be at all afraid of preaching from the same text twice, the word is inexhaustible, it may be trodden in the winepress many times, and yet run with generous wine. We ought not to hesitate to preach a second time from a passage, any more than anyone going to the village well would be ashamed to put down the same bucket twice, or feel at all aggrieved at sailing twice down the same river; for there is always a freshness about gospel truth, and though the matter may be the same, there are ways of putting it in fresh light, so as to bring new joy to those who meditate upon it.

Moreover, what if we should repeat our teachings concerning Christ? What if we should hear over and over again the same things “touching the King”? We can afford to hear them. Repetitions concerning Jesus are better than varieties upon any other subject. As the French monarch declared that he would sooner hear the repetitions of Bourdaloue than the novelties of another; so we may aver concerning our Lord Jesus, we would sooner hear again and again the precious truths which glorify him, than listen to the most eloquent orations upon any other theme in all the world. There are a few works of art and wonders of creation which you might gaze upon every day in your life, and yet not weary of them. A great architect tells us there are but few buildings of this kind, but he instances Westminster Abbey as one; and everyone knows who has ever looked upon the sea, or upon the Falls of Niagara, that look as often as you may, though you see precisely the same object, yet there are new tints, new motions of the waves, and new flashings of the light, which forbid the least approach of

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monotony, and give to the assembling of the waters an ever-enduring charm. Even thus is it with that sea of all delights which is found in the dear Lover of our souls.

Come we, then, to the old subject of this old text, and may the blessed Spirit give us new unction while we meditate upon it. Note we, first, our Lord's personal name, *Jesus Christ*. Notice, secondly, his memorable attribute—" *he is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,*" and then let us have a few words about his evident claims, derived from *the possession of such a character*.

I. First, then, the personal names of our Lord here mentioned—" **JESUS CHRIST.**"

" **JESUS**" stands first. That is our Lord's Hebrew name, " **Jesus,**" or, " **Joshua.**" The word signifies, a Saviour, " *for he shall save his people from their sins.*" It was given to him *in his cradle*.

" Cold on his cradle the dewdrops are shining ;
Low lies his head with the beasts of the stall ;
Angels adore him, in slumber reclining,
Maker, and Monarch, and Saviour of all."

While he was yet an infant hanging on his mother's breast, he was recognised as Saviour, for the fact of God's becoming incarnate was the sure pledge, guarantee, and commencement of human salvation. At the very thought of his birth the virgin sang, " *My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.*" There is hope that man shall be lifted up to God, when God condescends to come down to man. Jesus in the manger deserves to be called the Saviour, for when it can be said that " *the tabernacle of God is with men, and he doth dwell among them,*" there is hope that all good things will be given to the fallen race. He was called Jesus, *in his childhood*—" *The Holy Child Jesus.*" It was as Jesus that he went up with his parents to the temple and sat down with the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions. Ay, and Jesus as a Teacher in the very first principles of his doctrine is a Saviour, emancipating the minds of men from superstition, setting them loose from the traditions of the fathers, scattering even with his infant hand the seeds of truth, the elements of a glorious liberty which shall emancipate the human mind from the iron bondage of false philosophy and priestcraft. He was Jesus, too, and is commonly called so both by his foes and by his friends *in his active life*. It is as Jesus the Saviour that he heals the sick, that he raises the dead, that he delivers Peter from sinking, that he rescues from shipwreck the ship tossed upon the Galilean lake. In all the teachings of his middle life, in those laborious three years of diligent service, both in his public ministry and in his private prayer, he is still Jesus the Saviour; for by his active, as well as by his passive obedience, we are saved. All through his earthly sojourn he made it clear that the Son of man had come to seek and to save that which was lost. If his blood redeems us from the guilt of sin, his life shows us how to overcome its power. If by his death upon the tree he crushes Satan for us, by his life of holiness he teaches us how to break the dragon's head within us. He is the Saviour as a babe, the Saviour as a child, the Saviour as the toiling, labouring, tempted man. But he comes out most clearly as Jesus *when dying on the cross*; named so in a writing of which the author said, " *What I have written I have written,*" for over the head of the dying Saviour you read, " **Jesus**

of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." There pre-eminently was he the Saviour, being made a curse for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. After beholding the dying agonies of his Master, the beloved apostle said, "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." On Calvary was it seen that the Son of Man saved others, though, through blessed incapacity of love, "himself he could not save." When he was made to feel the wrath of God on account of sin, and pangs unknown were suffered by him as our substitute, when he was made to pass through the thick darkness and burning heat of divine wrath, then was he, according to Scripture, "the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe." Yes, it is on the tree that Christ is peculiarly a Saviour. If he were nothing better than our exemplar, alas for us! We might be grateful for the example if we could imitate it, but without the pardon which spares us, and the grace which gives us power for holiness, the brightest example were a tantalising of our grief. To be shown what we ought to be, without having any method set before us by which we could attain to it, were to mock our misery. But Jesus first draws us up out of the horrible pit into which we were fallen, takes us out of the miry clay, by the efficacy of his atoning sacrifice, and then, having set our feet upon a rock by virtue of his merits, he himself leads the way onward to perfection, and so is a Saviour both in life and in death.

"That Jesus saves from sin and hell,
Is truth divinely sure;
And on this rock our faith may rest
Immovably secure."

Still bearing the name of Jesus, *our Lord rose from the dead*. The evangelists delight in calling him Jesus; in his appearance to Magdalen in the garden, in his manifestation of himself to the disciples, when they were met together, the doors being shut. He is always Jesus with them as the risen One. Beloved, since we are justified by his resurrection, we may well regard him as Saviour under that aspect. Salvation is still more linked with a risen Christ, because we see him by his resurrection destroying death, breaking down the prison of the sepulchre, bearing away like another Samson the gates of the grave. He is a Saviour for us since he has vanquished the last enemy that shall be destroyed, that we having been saved from sin by his death should be saved from death through his resurrection. Jesus is the title under which he is called *in glory*, for "him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." He is to-day "the Saviour of the body." We adore him as the only-wise God, and our Saviour. "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." As Jesus *he shall shortly come*, and we are "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Our daily cry is, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Ay, and this is the name, the name "Jesus," by which he is known *in heaven at this hour*. Thus the angel spake of him before he was conceived by the virgin; thus the angels serve him and do his bidding, for he saith to John in Patmos, "I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify these things." The angels prophesied his coming under that

sacred name. They came to those who stood looking up into heaven, and they said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Under this name the devils fear him, for said they not, "Jesus we know, and Paul we know, but who are ye?" This is the spell that binds the hearts of cherubim in chains of love, and this is the word that makes the hosts of hell to tremble and to quail. This name is the joy of the church on earth; it is the joy of the church above. It is a common word, a household name for our dear Redeemer amongst the family of God below, and up there they still sing it.

"Jesus, the Lord, their harps employ:—
 Jesus, my Love, they sing!
 Jesus, the life of both our joys,
 Sounds sweet from every string."

That man of God, Mr. Henry Craik, of Bristol, who, so much to our regret, was lately called away to his rest, tells us in his little work upon the study of the Hebrew tongue, as an instance of how much may be gathered from a single Hebrew word, that the name Jesus is particularly rich and suggestive to the mind of the Hebrew scholar. It comes from a root signifying amplitude, spaciousness, and then it comes to mean setting at large, setting free, delivering, and so comes to its common use among us, namely, that of Saviour. There are two words in the name Jesus. The one is a contraction of the word "Jehovah," the other is the word which I have just now explained to you as ultimately coming to mean "salvation." Taken to pieces, the word Jesus means JEHOVAH-SALVATION. You have the glorious essence and nature of Christ revealed to you as Jehovah, "I am that I am," and then you have in the second part of his name his great work for you in setting you at large and delivering you from all distress. Think, beloved fellow Christian, of the amplitude, the spaciousness, the breadth, the abundance, the boundless all-sufficiency laid up in the person of the Lord Jesus. "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." You have no contracted Christ, you have no narrow Saviour. Oh, the infinity of his love, the abundance of his grace, the exceeding greatness of the riches of his love towards us! There are no words in any language that can bring out sufficiently the unlimited, the infinite extent of the riches of the glory of Christ Jesus our Lord. The word which lies at the root of this name "Jesus," or "Joshua," has sometimes the meaning of riches; and who can tell what a wealth of grace and glory are laid up in our Immanuel? Mr. Craik tells us that another form of the same word signifies "a cry." "Hearken unto the voice of my *cry*, my King and my God." Thus salvation, riches, and a cry, are all derived from the same root, and all find their answer in our Joshua or Christ. When his people cry out of their prison houses, then he comes and sets them at large, comes with all the amplitude and wealth of his eternal grace, all the plenitude of his overflowing power, and delivering them from every form of bondage, gives them to enjoy the riches of the glory treasured up in himself. If this interpretation should make the name of Jesus one particle more dear to you, I am sure I shall be exceedingly rejoiced. What think you, if there is so much stored up in the

one single name, what must be laid up in himself! And if we can honestly say that it would be difficult to give the full bearing of this one Hebrew name which belongs to Christ, how much more difficult will it ever be to give the full bearing of all his character? If his bare name be such a mine of excellence, what must his person be? If this, which is but a part of his garment, doth so smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, O what must his blessed person be but a bundle of myrrh, which shall lie for ever betwixt our breasts, to be the perfume of our life, and the delight of our soul?

“ Precious is the name of Jesus,
Who can half its worth unfold?
Far beyond angelic praises,
Sweetly sung to harps of gold.

Precious when to Calvary groaning,
He sustain'd the cursèd tree;
Precious when his death atoning,
Made an end of sin for me.

Precious when the bloody scourges
Caused the sacred drops to roll;
Precious when of wrath the surges
Overwhelm'd his holy soul.

Precious in his death victorious,
He the host of hell o'erthrows;
In his resurrection glorious,
Victor crown'd o'er all his foes.

Precious, Lord! beyond expressing,
Are thy beauties all divine;
Glory, honour, power, and blessing,
Be henceforth for ever Thine.

Thus much have we spoken upon the Hebrew name. Now reverently consider the second title—*Christ*. That is a Greek name, a Gentile name—Anointed. So that you see you have the Hebrew Joshua, Jesus, then the Greek Christos, Christ; so that we may see that no longer is there either Jew or Gentile, but all are one in Jesus Christ. The word Christ, as you all know, signifies anointed, and as such our Lord is sometimes called “the Christ,” “the very Christ;” at other times “the Lord’s Christ, and sometimes “the Christ of God.” He is the Lord’s Anointed, our King, and our Shield.

This word “Christ” teaches us three great truths; first, *it indicates his offices*. He exercises offices in which anointing is necessary, and these are three:—the office of the King, of the Priest, and of the Prophet. He is King in Zion, anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows, even as it was said of old, “I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: with whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. . . . I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. . . . Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.” Saul, the first king of Israel, was anointed with but a vial of oil, David, with a horn of oil, as if to signify the greater plenitude of his power and excellence of his kingdom; but as for our Lord Jesus Christ, he has received the spirit of anointing without any measure, he is the Lord’s Anointed, for whom an unquenchable lamp is ordained. “There will I make the

horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed." Beloved, as we think of that name, Christ, let us reverently yield our souls up to him whom God has anointed to be King. Let us stand up for his rights over his church, for he is King of Zion, and none have a right to rule there but under and in subjection to the great Head over all, who in all things shall have the pre-eminence. Let us stand up for his rights within our own hearts, seeking to thrust out all rival objects, desirous to keep our souls chaste for Christ, and to make every member of our body, though it may have surrendered itself aforetime unto sin, to become subservient to the anointed King who hath a right to rule over it.

Next, the Lord Christ is Priest. Priests were anointed. They were not to undertake this office of themselves, nor without passing through the ceremony which set them apart. Jesus Christ our Lord hath grace given to him that no priest ever had. Their outward anointing was but symbolical, his was the true and the real. He hath received that which their oil did but set forth in type and shadow, he hath the real anointing from the Most High. Beloved, let us always look at Christ as the anointed Priest. My soul, thou canst never come to God except through the only everliving and truly anointed High Priest of our profession. O never for a moment seek to come without him, nor through any pretender who may call himself a priest. High Priest of the house of God, we see thee thus ordained, and we give our cause into thy hands. Offer our sacrifices for us, present our prayers, take thou our praises and put them into the golden censer, and thyself offer them before thy Father's throne. Rejoice, my brethren, every time you hear the name Christ, that he who wears it is anointed to be Priest.

So with regard to the prophetic office. We find Elisha anointed to prophesy, and so is Jesus Christ the prophet anointed amongst his people. Peter spake to Cornelius of "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." He was anointed to preach the glad tidings, and to sit as Master in Israel. We hold no man's teaching to be authoritative among us, but the testimony of the Christ. The teaching of the Lord's Christ is our creed, and nothing else. I thank God that in this church we have not to divide our allegiance between some venerable set of articles and the teaching of our Lord. One is our Master, and we own no right of any man to bind another's conscience; even though they be great in piety and deep in learning, like Augustine and Calvin, whose names we honour, for God honoured them, still they have no dominance over private judgment in regard to the people of God. Jesus Christ is the Prophet of Christendom. His words must always be the first and the last appeal. This, then, is the meaning of the word "Christos." He is anointed as King, Priest, and Prophet.

But it means more than that. The name Christ *declares his right to those offices*. He is not King because he sets himself up as such. God has set him as King upon his holy hill of Zion, and anointed him to rule. He is also Priest, but he has not taken the priesthood upon himself, for he is the propitiation whom God has set forth for human sin. He is the mediator whom the Lord God hath appointed, and set to be the only mediator between God and man. And as for his prophesying

he speaketh not of himself; those things which he hath learnt of the Father, he hath revealed unto us. He comes not as a prophet who assumes office, but God hath anointed him to preach glad tidings to the poor, and to come among his people with the welcome news of eternal love.

Moreover, this anointing signifies a third thing, that as he has the office, and as it is his by right, so *he has the qualifications for the work*. He is anointed to be king. God has given him royal power, and wisdom, and government; he has made him fit to rule in the church, and to reign over the world. No better king than Christ, none so majestic as he who wore the thorn-crown, but who shall put upon his head the crown of universal monarchy. He has the qualifications for a priest too, such qualifications as even Melchisedec had not; such as cannot be found in all the house of Aaron, in all its length of pedigree. Blessed Son of God, perfect in thyself, and needing not a sacrifice for thine own sake, thou hast presented unto God an offering which hath perfected for ever those whom thou hast set apart, and now needing not to make a further offering, thou hast for ever put away sin. So is it with our Lord's prophesying, he hath the power to teach. "Grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever." All the words of Christ are wisdom and truth. The substance of true philosophy and certain knowledge are to be found in him who is the wisdom and the power of God. Oh, that word "Christ!" it seems to grow upon us as we think it over; it shows us the offices of Christ, his right to those offices, and his qualifications for them:

"Christ, to thee our spirits bow!
Prophet, Priest, and King art thou!
Christ, anointed of the Lord,
Evermore be thou adored."

Now, put the two titles together and ring out the harmony of the two melodious notes: Jesus Christ, Saviour-anointed. Oh, how blessed! See ye not that our Beloved is a Saviour duly appointed, a Saviour abundantly qualified! My soul, if God appoints Christ a Saviour of sinners, why dost thou raise a question? God set him forth as a sinner's Saviour. Come, then, ye sinners, take him, accept him, and rest in him. Oh, how foolish we are when we begin raising questions, quibbles, and difficulties! God declares that Christ is a Saviour to all who trust in him. My poor heart trusts him: she hath peace. But wherefore do some of you imagine that he cannot save you, or ask, "How can it be that this man shall save me?" God has appointed him, take him, rest in him. Moreover, God has qualified him, given him the anointing of a Saviour. What, dost thou think God has not girded him with power enough, or furnished him with enough of merit with which to save such as thou art? Wilt thou limit what God hath done? Wilt thou think that his anointing is imperfect and cannot qualify Jesus to meet thy case? O do not so slander the grace of heaven! Do not such despite to the wisdom of the Lord; but honour the Saviour of God's anointing by coming now, just as thou art, and putting thy trust in him.

II. We shall now examine the second point, HIS MEMORABLE ATTRIBUTES.

He is said to be the same. Now, Jesus Christ has not been the

same in condition at all times, for he was once adored of angels but afterwards spit upon by menials. He exchanged the supernal splendours of his Father's court for the poverty of the earth, the degradation of death, and the humiliation of the grave. Jesus Christ is not, and will not be always the same as to occupation. Once he came to seek and to save that which was lost, but we very truly sing, "The Lord shall come, but not the same as once in lowliness he came." He shall come with a very different object; he shall come to scatter his enemies and break them as with a rod of iron. We are not to take the expression then, "the same," in the most unlimited sense conceivable. Looking at the Greek, one notices that it might be read thus, "Jesus Christ *himself* yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." The anointed Saviour is always himself. He is always Jesus Christ; and the word "same" seems to me to bear the most intimate relation to the two titles of the text, and does as good as say that Jesus Christ is always Jesus Christ, yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Jesus Christ is always himself; at any rate, if that be not the correct translation, it is a very correct and blessed sentence: it is sweetly true that Jesus Christ is always himself. Immutability is ascribed to Christ, and we remark that *he was evermore to his people what he now is*, for he was the same yesterday. Distinctions have been drawn by certain exceedingly wise men (measured by their own estimate of themselves), between the people of God who lived before the coming of Christ, and those who lived afterwards. We have even heard it asserted that those who lived before the coming of Christ do not belong to the church of God! We never know what we shall hear next, and perhaps it is a mercy that these absurdities are revealed one at a time, in order that we may be able to endure their stupidity without dying of amazement. Why, every child of God in every place stands on the same footing; the Lord has not some children best beloved, some second-rate offspring, and others whom he hardly cares about. These who saw Christ's day before it came, had a great difference as to what they knew, and perhaps in the same measure a difference as to what they enjoyed while on earth in meditating upon Christ; but they were all washed in the same blood, all redeemed with the same ransom price, and made members of the same body. Israel in the covenant of grace is not natural Israel, but all believers in all ages. Before the first advent, all the types and shadows all pointed one way—they pointed to Christ, and to him all the saints looked with hope. Those who lived before Christ were not saved with a different salvation to that which shall come to us. They exercised faith as we must; that faith struggled as ours struggles, and that faith obtained its reward as ours shall. As like as a man's face to that which he seeth in a glass is the spiritual life of David to the spiritual life of the believer now. Take the book of Psalms in your hand, and forgetting for an instant that you have the representation of the life of one of the olden time, you might suppose that David wrote but yesterday. Even in what he writes of Christ, he seems as though he lived after Christ instead of before, and both in what he sees of himself and in what he sees of his Saviour, he appears to be rather a Christian writer than a Jew; I mean that living before Christ he has the same hopes and the same fears, the same joys and the same sorrows, there is the same estimate of his blessed Redeemer which you and I have in these

times. Jesus was the same yesterday as an anointed Saviour to his people as he is to-day, and they under him received like precious gifts. If the goodly fellowship of the prophets could be here to-day, they would all testify to you that he was the same in every office in their times as he is in these our days.

Jesus Christ is the same now as he was in times gone by, for the text saith, "The same yesterday, and to-day." He is the same to-day as he was from old eternity. Before all worlds he planned our salvation; he entered into covenant with his Father to undertake it. His delights were with the sons of men in prospect, and now to-day he is as steadfast to that covenant as ever. He will not lose those who were then given to him, nor will he fail nor be discouraged till every stipulation of that covenant shall be fulfilled. Whatever was in the heart of Christ before the stars began to shine, that same infinite love is there to-day. Jesus is the same to-day as he was when he was here on earth. There is much comfort in this thought. When he tabernacled among men, he was most willing to save. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden," was the burden of his cry; he is still calling to the weary and the heavy laden to come to him. In the days of his flesh he would not curse the woman taken in adultery, neither would he reject the publicans and sinners who gathered to hear him; he is pitiful to sinners still, and saith to them yet, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." That delightful sentence which so graciously came from his lips, "Thy sins, which are many, are forgiven thee," is still his favourite utterance in human hearts. O think not that Christ in heaven has become distant and reserved, so that you may not approach him. Such as he was here, a Lamb, gentle and meek, a man to whom men drew near without a moment's hesitation, such is he now. Come boldly to him, ye lowliest and guiltiest ones, come near to him with broken hearts and weeping eyes. Though he be King and Priest, surrounded with unknown splendour, yet still he retains the same loving heart, and the same generous sympathies towards the sons of men. He is still the same in his ability as well as in his willingness to save. He is Jesus Christ the anointed Saviour still. In his earthly days, he touched the leper and said, "I will; be thou clean;" he called Lazarus from the tomb, and Lazarus came; sinner, Jesus is still as able to heal or quicken thee now as then. "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Now that the blood is spilt indeed, and the sacrifice is fully offered, there is no limit to the ability of Christ to save. O come and rely upon him, and find salvation in him now. Believer, it will cheer you also to remember that when our Lord was here upon earth, he showed great perseverance in his art of saving. He could say, "Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none." Rejoice that he is the same to-day. He will not cast one of you away, nor suffer his little ones to perish. He brought all safe in the days of his flesh; he takes care to keep all safely in these the days of his glory. He is the same to-day, then, as he was on earth.

Blessed be his name, Jesus Christ is the same to-day as in apostolic days. Then, he gave the fulness of the Spirit; then, when he ascended up on high, he gave gifts to men, apostles, preachers, teachers of the word. Do not let us think we shall not see as good days now as they

saw at Pentecost. He is the same Christ. He could as readily convert three thousand under one sermon to-day, as in Peter's time; his Holy Spirit is not exhausted, for God giveth it not by measure unto him. We ought to pray that he would raise up among us eminent men to proclaim the gospel. We do not pray enough for the ministry. The ministry is peculiarly the gift of the ascension. When he ascended on high he received gifts for men, and he gave—what? Why, men, apostles, teachers, preachers. If we ask for salvation, we plead the blood: why do we not ask for ministers, and plead the ascension? If we would do this more, we should see raised up amongst us more Whitfields and Wesleys, more Luthers and Calvins, more men of the apostolic stock, and the church would be revived. Jesus is the same to enrich his people with all spiritual gifts in this year 1869, as in the year when he ascended to his throne. "He is the same yesterday, and to-day."

He is the same to-day as he was to our fathers. These have gone to their rest, but they told us before they went what Christ was to them; how he succoured them in their time of peril; how he delivered them in their hour of sorrow. He will do for us just what he did for them. Some who lived before us went to heaven in a chariot of fire, but Christ was very precious to them at the stake. We have our martyrologies which we read with wonder. How sustaining the company of Christ was to those that did lie in prison, to those that were cast to the lions, to those that wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins! England, Scotland—all the countries where Christ was preached—have been dyed with blood and ennobled with the testimonies of the faithful. Whatever Jesus was to these departed worthies, he is to his people still. We have only to ask of God, and we shall receive the selfsame benefit.

"Jesus Christ the same to day," says the text. Then he is the same to-day as he has been to us in the past. We have had great enjoyments of God's presence; we do remember the love of our espousals, and if we have not the same joys to-day, it is no fault of his. There is the same water in the well still, and if we have not drawn it, it is our fault. We have come away from the fire, and therefore we are cold; we have walked contrary to him, and therefore he walks contrary to us. Let us return to him and he will be as glad to receive us now as in our first moment of repentance. Let us return to him. His heart is as full of love, and as ready to weep upon our neck as when we first came and sought pardon from his hands. There is much sweetness in the text, but I cannot linger longer upon that part of the subject; enough for us is it to remember that Jesus Christ is the same to-day as he always was.

Now, further, *Christ shall be to-morrow what he has been yesterday and is to-day.* Our Lord Jesus Christ will be changed in no respect throughout the whole of our life. It may be long before we shall descend to our graves, but let these hairs all be grey, and these limbs begin to totter, and these eyes grow dim, Jesus Christ shall have the dew of his youth upon him, and the fulness of his love shall still flow to us. And after death, or if we die not, at the coming Christ and in his glorious reign, Jesus will be the same to his people then as now. There seems to be a notion abroad amongst some that after his coming

Christ will deal differently with his people than now. I have been informed by a modern school of inventors (and, as I tell you, we live to learn) that some of us will be shut out from the kingdom when Christ comes. Saved by precious blood and brought near, and adopted into the family, and our names written upon the breastplate of Christ, and yet some of us will be shut out from the kingdom! Nonsense. I see nothing in the word of God, though there may be a great deal in the fancies of men, to support these novelties. The people of God, equally bought with blood, and equally dear to Jesus' heart, shall be treated on the same scale and footing: they will never be put under the law, never come to Christ, and find him rule them as a legal Judge, and beat them with many stripes in a future state, or shut them out of his estate of millennial Majesty. He will give to none, as a mere matter of reward, such rule and government so as to exclude others of his redeemed family; but they shall find him always treating them all as unchanging love and immutable grace shall dictate; and the rewards of the millennial state shall be always those of grace, shall be such as not to exclude the very least of all the family, but all shall have tokens of reward from the dear Saviour's hand. I know he will not love me to-day, and give me the glimpses of his face, give me to delight in his name, and yet after all when he comes, tell me I must stand out in the cold, and not enter into his kingdom. I have not a shade of faith in the purgatory of banishment, which certain despisers of the ministry have chosen to set up. I marvel that in a Protestant sect there should rise up a dogma as villanous as the dogma of purgatory, and that, too, from those who say they are no sectarians. We all are wrong but these, brethren; these are deeply taught and can discover what the ablest divines have never seen. That Jesus will love his people in time to come as strongly as he does now, seems to be a doctrine which if destroyed or denied, would cast sorrow into the whole family of God. Throughout eternity, in heaven, there shall still be the same Jesus Christ, with the same love to his people, and they shall have the same familiar intercourse with him, nay, shall see him face to face, and rejoice for ever in him as their unchangeably, anointed Saviour.

III. Our time has failed us, and therefore just two or three words only upon our Lord's EVIDENT CLAIMS.

If our Lord be "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," then, according to the connection of our text, *he is to be followed to the end*. Observe the seventh verse, "Remember them which have the rule over you, who hath spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation;" the meaning being—these holy men ended their lives with Christ; their exit was to go to Jesus, and to reign with him. Beloved, if the Lord is still the same, follow him till you reach him. Your exit out of this life shall bring you where he is, and you will find him then what he always was. You shall see him as he is. If he were a will-o'-the-wisp, for ever changing, it were dangerous to follow him, but since he is ever and equally worthy of your admiration and example, follow him evermore. That was an eloquent speech of Henry the Sixth of France, when on the eve of battle, he said to his soldiers, "Gentlemen, you are Frenchmen, I am your King. There is the enemy!" Jesus Christ saith, "You are my people;

I am your leader. There is the foe!" How shall we dare to do anything unworthy of such a Lord as he is, or of such a citizenship as that which he has bestowed upon us? If we be indeed his, and he be indeed immutable, let us by his Holy Spirit's power persevere to the end, that we may obtain the crown.

The next evident claim of Christ upon us is that *we should be steadfast in the faith*. Notice the ninth verse: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines." There is nothing new in theology but that which is false. All that is true is old, though I say not that all that is old is true. Some speak of developments as though we had not the whole Christian religion discovered yet; but the religion of Paul is the religion of every man who is taught by the Holy Spirit. We ought not, therefore, to indulge for a moment the idea that something has been discovered which may correct the teaching of Christ; that some new philosophy or discovery of science has arisen to correct the declared testimony of our Redeemer. Let us hold fast that which we have received, and never depart from "the truth once delivered unto the saints" by Christ himself.

If Jesus Christ be thus immutable, *he has an evident claim to our most solemn worship*. Immutability can be the attribute of none but God. Whoever is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," must be divine. Ever, then, believer, bring your adoration to Jesus; at the feet of him that was crucified cast down your crown. Give royal and divine honours unto him who stooped to the ignominy of crucifixion. Let no one stop you of this you glory in—you boast the Son of God made man for you. Worship him as God over all, blessed for ever.

He claims also of us next, that *we should trust him*. If he be always the same, here is a rock that cannot be moved; build on it. Here is an anchorage, cast your anchor of hope into it and hold fast in time of storm. If Christ were variable, he were not worthy of your confidence. Since he is evermore unchanged, rest on him without fear.

And, lastly, if he be always the same, rejoice in him, and rejoice always. If you ever had cause to rejoice in Christ, you always have cause, for he never alters. If yesterday you could sing of him, to-day you may sing of him. If he changed, your joy might change; but if the stream of your gladness springs solely and only out of this great deep of the immutability of Jesus, then it need never stay its flow. Beloved, let us "rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, rejoice;" and, until the day break and the shadows flee away, till the blest hour arrive when we shall see him face to face, and be made like him, be this our joy, that "he is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Hebrews xiii.