

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

"HEIRS OF GOD."

A Sermon

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"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."—Romans viii. 17.

THIS chapter—the 8th of Romans—is, like the garden of Eden, full of all manner of delights. Here you have all necessary doctrines to feed upon, and luxurious truths with which to satisfy your soul. One might well have been willing to be shut up as a prisoner in paradise, and one might well be content to be shut up to this one chapter, and never to be allowed to preach from any other part of God's Word. If this were the case, one might find a sermon in every line; nay, more than that, whole volumes might be found in a single sentence by anyone who was truly taught of God. I might say of this chapter, "All its paths drop fatness." It is among the other chapters of the Bible like Benjamin's mess which was five times as much as that of any of his brothers. We must not exalt one part of God's Word above another; yet, as "one star differeth from another star in glory," this one seems to be a star of the first magnitude, full of the brightness of the grace and truth of God. It is an altogether inexhaustible mine of spiritual wealth, and I invite the saints of God to dig in it, and to dig in it again and again. They will find, not only that it hath dust of gold, but also huge nuggets, which they shall not be able to carry away by reason of the weight of the treasure.

I notice, in this chapter, and also in many other parts of Paul's writings, that it is his habit to make a kind of ladder—a sort of Jacob's ladder, let me call it,—which he begins to climb. But every step he takes leads to another, and that one to another, and that again to yet another. You see it here. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God,"—there is the leading of the Spirit,—“they are the sons of God.” And when he gets to sonship, then he says, "And if children, then heirs." So he gets to heirship, and he climbs still higher when he says, "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." I think he means us to judge, by this mode of writing,

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that this ought to be the style of our Christian experience. Every measure of grace which we receive should lead us to seek after something higher still. We are never to say, "This is the pinnacle of grace; I cannot get beyond this." Self-satisfaction is the end of progress; so we are constantly to cry, "Higher, and yet higher still; onward and upward,"—and still to ask to be filled yet more completely with all the fulness of God.

My text is far too large for me to attempt to preach from it in an exhaustive style; so I will just make four observations upon it; and even those observations will only give you a bird's-eye view of the great truths here revealed. May God grant that, in each of those four things, there may be food for your souls!

I. The first thing that I see in the text is **THE GROUND OF HEIRSHIP**: "If children, then heirs." The children of God are heirs of God, and they come to be heirs through being his children, and in no other way.

Mark that *we are not heirs of God as the result of creation*. I cannot say what we might have been by creation had the Fall not ruined us; but that fatal disobedience of our first parent robbed us of any inheritance that might have come to us in that way; and now, by nature, we are "children of wrath, even as others," but certainly not heirs of the promise or heirs of the grace of God. No, beloved friend, nature will never entitle you to be a joint-heir with Christ. Whatever you may think of your human nature,—and you may suppose that it is not so depraved as the nature of others,—you may even get the notion that yours is a very superior sort of human nature;—well, let it be what it may, it will not entitle you to this inheritance. For as it was not the children of the flesh who were necessarily the heirs of the old covenant, even as Ishmael, born after the flesh, was not the heir, but Isaac, born after the spirit; and not Esau, but Jacob; so is it now. It is not what you are by nature,—not that which is born of the flesh, but what you are by grace,—that which is born of the Spirit,—that is the ground upon which heirship may be claimed before God. So, my dear hearer, if you are in a state of nature,—if you have never passed out of that state into a state of grace,—this text has nothing to do with you.

And, further, as our heirship with God depends upon our being the children of God, *it does not depend upon our natural descent*. I have already shown you that it does not depend upon our nature, but there is another phase of that truth which needs to be mentioned. There were some, of old, who said, "We have Abraham to our father;" but being born as sons of Abraham after the flesh availed not to give them any part in the inheritance which was according to the Spirit. And, to-day, there are some who say, "We are the children of godly parents. We were born in a Christian land, so, of course, we are Christians." Not so, you are no more Christians, on that ground, than if you were the children of the Hottentot in his kraal. You need as much to be born again as does "the heathen Chinese"; you need to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit as much as if you had been taught from your childhood

to bow your knee to a block of wood or stone. O ye, who are the inhabitants of this so-called Christian country, you stand before the living God in no sort of preference to the heathen, except that you have the privilege of hearing the gospel; but if you reject it, it shall be more tolerable for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the inhabitants of heathen lands, in the day of judgment than for you. Did not our Lord Jesus Christ say that “many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom.”—the favoured ones of his day, or of our day,—“shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth”?

Further, as the inheritance is not by creation, nor by natural descent, *neither can it come by meritorious service.* The apostle says, “If children, then heirs;”—not, “if servants.” You may toil, and keep on toiling all your life, but that will not make you an heir of God. The servant in your house, however diligent, is not your heir; for a servant to claim to be the heir, would not be tolerated for a moment in a court of law. The servant may be able truthfully to say, “I have been in my master’s house these many years, neither transgressed I at any time his commandments; and all that is right for a servant to do, I have done for him from my youth up;” but if he were to go on to ask, “What lack I yet?” the reply would be, “You lack the one thing that is absolutely essential to heirship, namely, sonship.” Oh, how this truth cuts at the root of all the efforts of those who hope to win heaven by merit, or to obtain the favour of God by their own exertions! To them all, God says what Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Ye must be born again.” Birth alone can make you children, and you must be children if you are to be heirs. O sirs, if you remain what you are by nature, you may strive to do what you please; but, when you have dressed out the child of nature in its finest garments, it is still only the child of nature, finely dressed, but not the child of God. Ye must be, by a supernatural birth, allied to the living God, for, if not, all the works that you may perform will not entitle you to the possession of the inheritance of the Most High.

And as good works cannot do this, *neither can any ceremonial observances.* You know that there is a ceremony of which children are taught to say, “In my baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.” It does not matter what people may say in order to make an excuse for believing that this statement is true, for it is as gross a falsehood as was ever put into human language. We know it is not true. Look where we may, we can see numbers of persons who were sprinkled in their infancy, or were even baptized after they had reached years of discretion, but their conduct shows that they are not members of Christ, children of God, or inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. And as that ceremony cannot make them Christians, neither can any other, whether it be devised by man, or ordained by God himself, for God never intended that any ceremony should take the place of the new birth, the regeneration, which must be wrought by the Spirit of God himself.

“Not all the outward forms on earth,
Nor rites that God has given,
Nor will of man, nor blood, nor birth,
Can raise a soul to heaven.

“The sovereign will of God alone
Creates us heirs of grace ;
Born in the image of his Son,
A new peculiar race.”

And, without the Holy Spirit to carry out that sovereign will of God by making us to be born into the image of his Son, we are not his heirs, for thus it stands in our text, “*If children*, then heirs;” which implies that, if we are not children, we are not heirs.

So this is the all-important enquiry for us to make. Do we, beloved friends, possess this qualification which is absolutely essential to our heirship? Have we been born again? We cannot have been born into God’s family when we were born the first time, for Christ himself said, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh,” and nothing more;—“and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,” so we must be born of the Spirit, we must be born again, born from above, if we are to be children of God. Did you ever undergo that great change? Do you know what regeneration means? I do not mean, have you read of it in the Confession of Faith, but have you experienced it in your own soul? Are you new creatures in Christ Jesus? For, as the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, if any of us have not been created anew in Christ Jesus, if we have not been born again by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, we cannot possibly be the children of God, and heirs according to the promise.

If we have been thus regenerated, we shall certainly know it. There may be times when we shall doubt it; but we shall know it, partly by the indwelling of the Spirit, as Paul wrote to the Galatians, “Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, *Abba, Father*;” and in the verse before our text, we read, “The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” Do you know anything, dear friend, about this witness-bearing by the Holy Spirit? I have often asked myself that question, so I feel free to ask you the same. This is not a thing that you may know, or may not know, and yet possibly may be safe; but you must have this witness of the Holy Spirit, or else the witness of your own spirit will be a very doubtful thing indeed. The Holy Spirit never confirms a false witness, but a true witness he will confirm; and if the witness of your spirit be true, you will have, more or less definitely, the witness of the Spirit within you, bearing confirmatory testimony that it is even so.

Those who are truly the children of God have yet another mark by which they can be recognized, namely, that there is a likeness to their Heavenly Father begotten in them. If a man says to you, “I am the son of So-and-so,”—some old friend of yours,—you look into his face to see whether you can trace any likeness to his father. So, when a man says to us, “I am a child of God,” we have the

right to expect that there shall be at least some trace of the character of God visible in his walk and conversation. Come, dear friend, with all your imperfections, are you seeking to be an imitator of God, as one of his dear children? Do you try to do that which he wishes you to do? Do you make his Son to be your Exemplar? Do you strive after holiness? Are you aiming at obedience to those divine commands, “Be ye holy; for I am holy:” “be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect”? Do you feel that, because you are a child of God, it becomes you to walk even as his firstborn Son walked while he was here below? Remember that, without holiness no man shall see the Lord; because, without holiness, no man has the evidence that he is indeed a child of God.

And, once more, the main evidence of our being children of God, by the new birth, lies in our believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” There are many evidences of the life of God in the soul, but there is no other that is so abiding as the possession of faith in Jesus Christ. Perhaps, dear friend, you are afraid to say that you have the likeness of God upon you, although others can see it; but I hope you are not afraid to say, “I do believe that Jesus is the Christ,” and the apostle John says, “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.” If you accept him as appointed and anointed of God to be your Saviour, and commit your soul into his hands, then be you sure that you are a child of God, for true, simple, sincere faith in the Lord Jesus exists only in the heart of the regenerate. No unregenerate man ever did, or ever could, believe in Jesus Christ; but where the Lord has given the divine life, he gives faith at the same time,—faith which is the surest proof of the existence of that divine life in the soul.

God grant to each one of you the grace to test yourself by these four questions:—“Have I been born again? Have I the Spirit of adoption? Have I at least some likeness to my Heavenly Father? Do I believe in Jesus Christ?” If so, then you are a child of God, and that childhood is the ground of heirship, so we can leave that point, and go on to the next.

II. The text teaches, in the second place, THE UNIVERSALITY OF HEIRSHIP TO ALL THE CHILDREN OF GOD: “If children, then heirs;”—not some of them heirs, but, “if children, then heirs,” all of them without an exception. Proven that they are children, it is also proven that they are heirs. It is not so among men, for, often, it is only the firstborn sons who are the heirs; but, with God, the rule is, “If children,”—whenever born,—“then heirs.”

Why is it that all the children of God are his heirs? First, *because the principle of priority as to time cannot possibly enter into this question.* There is a Firstborn, who has priority by nature, and honour, and right; but he is “the firstborn among many brethren;” and in him all the rest of the children of God are also firstborn, for Paul writes of “the general assembly and church of

the firstborn, which are written in heaven." The question of the time of birth is, sometimes, a matter of very great concern on earth. In the case of twins, a few minutes may make all the difference between "his lordship" and his brother who is no lord at all,—between the brother who shall be heir of many broad acres, and the one who shall go forth upon the broad ocean to earn his bread. But, with God's children, there is no difference in point of time. Adam, if he was the first man converted, certainly has no priority over Paul, although Paul says that he was as "one born out of due time." Noah, an early member of God's great family, has no preference over Abraham; indeed, Abraham seems to be mentioned with greater honour than any of those who had gone before him; certainly, they had no priority over him. Time has to do with time, but time has not to do with eternity; so, whether you, my brother, were born to God fifty years ago, and I five-and-twenty years ago, and our young friend over there five-and-twenty days ago, it makes no difference. "If children, then heirs," because the date of birth cannot come into our reckoning when we have to do with eternal things.

Again, we know that *the love of God is the same toward all his children*. They are all his children,—all chosen, all redeemed, all regenerated, all called, all justified, and they shall be all glorified. Where a father loves all his children alike, his disposition leads him to treat them all alike, both as to what he gives them now, and also as to what he will leave them as an inheritance; but, sometimes, circumstances—such as the law of the land and the title-deeds of estates,—prevent the father from treating all alike. But, in the case of the children of God, laws cannot hamper or hinder him. He is the great Law-Maker, and he can control circumstances so as to do everything according to the dictates of his own heart; and his heart of love says, "I have loved all my children alike, and they shall all have the blessing;" and so they shall, beloved. Though you, my dear friend, think yourself obscure, and one of the least in God's Israel, your name is just as prominently written upon the heart of Christ as the names of his apostles are, and you are as dear to the Lord as the very noblest among his saints. Indeed, he carries the lambs in his bosom, so the little ones have the best chariot of all. He may leave the sheep to walk, but he carries the lambs; and he always takes special care of the weak and feeble. "If children, then heirs," because all God's children are equally partakers of their Father's love.

Again, we know, from Scripture, that *all the children of God are favoured with the same promise*. If you turn to the 6th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the 18th verse, you will find there what Paul says to all the Lord's children. What a precious passage that is where he tells us that, "by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." In the previous verse, he mentions the heirs of promise, and by that expression he means all the children of God, for they are all heirs according to the promise, and all heirs of

the promise. Well, then, as God has given them a promise, he will fulfil it; and that promise is that they shall be heirs of this world, and also heirs of the world to come; and he will fulfil it to them all, and keep his oath by which he has confirmed it to them, so they shall surely be his heirs.

Notice, again, that all God's children are his heirs *because they are all equally related to him through whom the heirship comes*, for every child of God is neither more nor less than brother to the Lord Jesus Christ, yea, a member of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. In this brotherhood with Christ, there can be no degrees; a man is not partly a brother, and partly not a brother. If he is a brother of Christ, he *is* his brother. A man is not partly in Christ, and partly out of Christ. If one with Christ, he *is* one with Christ; and all the members of Christ's mystical body are quickened with the same life, and shall have the same heaven to dwell in for ever. Seeing, then, that we are all one in Christ Jesus, the heirship which comes to us by way of the Firstborn must come equally to all the children.

And there is one more very comforting reflection, and that is, that *the inheritance is large enough for all the children*. Rich men sometimes have to let their estates go to the eldest son, according to the stupid regulations of this age, “to keep up the family dignity.” There are some great lords, who find that they can accumulate wealth enough to set up two or three sets of families, and they do so; but, in other families, there generally are some of the children who must remain lean in order that the firstborn son may grow fat. Now, it is not so with the inheritance of God, because there is enough for all; and there is this peculiarity about it, that every child of God has all the inheritance, yet there is not any the less for all the rest of the family. It can never be said, in relation to human affairs, that each heir has all the inheritance, yet no one else has any less than all. You, my brother, if you are a child of God, are an heir of God, and so am I; and I have not any the less of God because you have him, and you have not any the less of God because I have him. Nay, if it were possible for it to be so, I should have the more in the joy that you also have the same blessing, and you would have the more in the joy of seeing others partaking in the same privilege as you have. The whole of God belongs to Christ, and the whole of God belongs to the least member of Christ, all are “heirs of God.” So, you see that there was no reason for the exclusion of the younger branches of God's family in order to make up a greater estate for the older ones. All the children of God are the heirs of God, because the inheritance is an infinite one, and there is an infinite inheritance for each one of them.

O beloved, let us dwell for a moment or two on this theme! The text says, “If children, then heirs.” It does not say, “If children, then apostles.” None of us could attain to that high office. It does not say, “If children, then preachers.” Here and there, one of us could claim that title. It does not say, “If children, then deeply-experienced saints.” Some of

us may never be that. It does not say, "If children, then mighty men of valour." Perhaps some of us are too timid ever to grow to that. It does not say, "If children, then rich men," because some of us are poor. It does not say, "If children, then favoured with health," for some of us have little enough of that boon. It does not say, "If children, then filled with full assurance," for some of us are vexed with many doubts and fears. But it does say, "If children, then heirs." So let us rejoice that we are "heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Let us rejoice in that fact now, and let us begin to live worthily of our rank as heirs of God. Let us strive after holiness, and seek to live as becometh the heirs of eternal life, considering what manner of persons we ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness.

Thus I have spoken of the universality of the heirship to all the children of God.

III. Now, thirdly, I want to speak concerning THE INHERITANCE ITSELF: "If children, then heirs; heirs of God."

That little phrase, which I have just uttered, is one which none of us can fully comprehend, and none of us may even attempt to do so. This is the glory of our inheritance, that we are "heirs of God." Will you give me your most earnest attention while I remind you of some of the descriptions of our inheritance which are given in Scripture?

Here is one, which you will find in the 21st chapter of the Revelation, and the 7th verse: "He that overcometh shall inherit all things." That is the extent of your inheritance, "all things"; and it is not a singular expression, for you have it again in 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22: "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours." The richest man who ever lived could not say that all things were his; but the poorest Christian who ever lived can say that. If you turn to the 1st chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the 14th verse, you will find that we are there called "heirs of salvation." Looking on a little further in the same Epistle, in the 6th chapter, and the 17th verse, you will find that we are called "the heirs of promise." In his Epistle to Titus, the 3rd chapter, and the 7th verse, Paul calls us "heirs according to the hope of eternal life;" while James says, in the 2nd chapter of his Epistle, at the 5th verse, that we are "heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him;" and Peter says, in his first Epistle, the 3rd chapter, and 7th verse, that we are "heirs together of the grace of life." If any preacher wants to deliver a series of sermons upon the heirship of the saints, let him take these texts, and preach upon them. I have not time to do that to-night, and even if I should say all that I could upon all these texts put together, I should not then have said so much as my text says, for that does not speak of "the heirs of promise," or the "heirs of salvation," or the "heirs of the kingdom," but it says, "heirs of God."

"Heirs of God,"—what does that mean? Well, it means, first of all, that *we are heirs to all that God has*. Suppose I am my father's heir, and that he has an old thatched cottage worth a shilling a

week,—well, that is what I am heir to; but if I happened to be the heir of the Duke of Westminster, he might take me over a county, and say to me, “That is what you are heir to.” Ah, just so! Whatever the father has, that is what the child is heir to. Now think what God has. Stretch your wings, most vivid imagination! Fly abroad, most capacious thought, and when the remotest bounds of space have been crossed, you have only just commenced your endless journey. We will not attempt such a flight as that. We will stop at home, and meditate upon the great truth that all God has is ours because we are his,—heirs of God.

Yet even that, great as it is, is only part of the meaning of our text, for the apostle next means that *God himself belongs to us*. David said, “The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance,” and this is what every child of God can say; so that the portion of each child of God is not only what God has, but what God himself is. O child of God, thou hast God’s power to protect thee, God’s eye to guide thee, God’s justice to defend thee, God’s immutability to be constant to thee, God’s infinity to enrich thee! Thou hast God’s heart of love, God’s hand of power, God’s head of glory,—time would fail me to tell all that thou hast, for thou hast all that God is to be thine for ever and ever.

All the worlds that at present have been created are but as mere trifles compared with what God could make if he so pleased. A thousand, thousand, thousand, thousand worlds, when they were all made, would be but as a handful of dust scattered from his almighty hand, and he could, if he willed, do the like again a thousand, thousand, thousand, thousand times over. “Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering.” Think of the whole mountain range as one great altar, and all the cedars set ablaze, and then all the beasts that feed there offered up as a burnt sacrifice; yet the prophet says that is not sufficient for God. Then, how great he must be! Oh, make him great in your hearts, and reverence and adore him; but when you do so, do not forget to say, “My God! my God! my God!” How often you have that expression in the Psalms! It never could have been there, as the utterance of any mere man, if it had not been first in the eternal purpose of God as the utterance which was to be on the lip of Christ in that dread hour when he cried, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” So, now, each believer can say, “*my God*,” for Jesus Christ himself puts it, “My Father and your Father; my God, and your God.” In some aspects God is as much my God as he is Christ’s God, and as much my Father as he is Christ’s Father. O beloved, I have got out of my depth now! I wish I were able to go even deeper into this wondrous truth, but there I must leave off what I have to say concerning the inheritance itself: “heirs of *God*.”

IV. My last point is, perhaps, as blessed as any in the whole text. It is, THE PARTNERSHIP OF THE CLAIMANTS TO THE INHERITANCE: “joint-heirs with Christ.”

This is, first of all, *the test of our heirship*. Listen. You are not an heir of God alone; you cannot be. You can only be an heir of God through being "in Co."—in company—joint-heir with Christ. Now, are you and Christ in company? That is a simple question. Are you and Christ in company, or do you stand alone? If you stand alone, you are a poor miserable bankrupt, gazetted in the court of heaven; so do not try to stand alone. You will perish if you do. But are Christ and you thus joined together? Have you learned to trust in Christ, to live in Christ, to pray in Christ, to trade with heaven through Christ, and to have everything in Christ? That is the test of heirship. God's child is born God's heir, but it is because he is in Christ, and is born in union with Christ, that he becomes God's heir. If we are out of Christ, we are out of the family of God, and out of the heirship of God. "Without Christ," you are "without God in the world;" but in Christ, joined in company with Christ, you are an heir of God.

This, beloved, seems to me to be *the sweetest part of all the inheritance*. Once let me know that I am one with Christ, and so have become a fellow-heir with him, and it is like heaven below to my soul. Indeed, I shall like heaven itself all the better, and I shall like all that God is going to give me by-and-by all the better, because I am going to share it with Christ. A good deal depends upon the company we may meet in going to any place to which we may be invited. A person might ask you to his house, and you might not know whether you cared to go there. But suppose the host were to tell you that a very dear friend of yours was going to be there, you would say, then, "Oh, yes, I will go for the sake of having his company!" Now, wherever Jesus Christ is,—I do not care whether it is in the house of a Pharisee, or on some lonely hillside,—it is good to be where he is, and to go sharés with him; it makes everything more sweet to be able to enjoy it with him. So, beloved, while you are heirs of God, you are not the only heirs; for you are joint-heirs with Christ, and you will share the inheritance with him. When the Lord Jesus Christ prayed the best prayer that he could pray for his people, do you remember what he asked for? It was this: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me;"—as if he knew that his people would prize something that belonged to him better than anything else in all the world, or even in heaven itself. If Christ sups with us, it is a blessed supper though it is only a dish of herbs; but if Christ is absent, it is a poor dinner though there may be joints enough to make the table groan. To my mind, then, this is the sweetness of our inheritance, that it is a joint-heirship with Christ.

This also shows *the greatness of the inheritance*; because, if we are to be joint-heirs with Christ, it cannot be a little thing that we are to share with him. Can you imagine what the Father would give to his Son as the reward of the travail of his soul? Give yourself time to think what the everlasting God would give to his equal Son, who took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and who humbled himself, and became

obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Can you think of a reward that would be large enough for him? Let the Father's love and the Father's justice judge. Oh, it must be a large inheritance, for such a well-beloved Son, and such an obedient Son as he was! I, a poor worm of the dust, cannot think of anything that I consider good enough for him. Lord, I would have him crowned with many crowns, and set up on a glorious, high throne. But what must be the reward which his Father devises for him? What must be the greatness of the infinite recompense which the infinite God will bestow upon his Only-begotten? Follow that line of thought as far as you can, and then recollect that you are to be joint-heir with Christ. What he has, you are to share. I will read those wonderful words again; “If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” The same glory that is to be his, he will have us to enjoy with him.

Again, this joint-heirship *ensures the inheritance to us*. I am quite sure that I should not like to go into partnership with just anybody whom I might meet in the street; indeed, if I had a share in any limited liability company, I would do with it as the man did with the bad bank-note,—lay it down, and run away from it as fast as ever I could. What multitudes of people have been ruined by taking shares in companies which seemed to be the nicest, neatest, most money-getting schemes under heaven! But one need not mind going shares if one has nothing at all, and the other partner is the wealthiest person in the whole world. So, what a blessing it is to go shares with Christ, because we know that he cannot fail. I was thinking, just now, that, if I ever should lose heaven, seeing that I am joint-heir with Christ, it would be “the firm” that would lose it, because we must stand or fall together if we are joint-heirs. Somebody once said to a holy man, “Your soul will be lost.” “Then,” said he, “Christ will be the loser.” He was like the negro, who was quite unconcerned when the ship was being wrecked. He said that he should not lose anything, for he belonged to his massa, and his massa would lose it. Well, what the negro said in his simplicity, we may say in real earnest. If our souls are lost, it will be Christ who will be the loser, for he bought us with his blood, and he will lose what he purchased at so great a cost. And his Father gave us to him, so he will lose his Father's gift. And he has loved us, and is married to us, so he will lose his spouse, the beloved of his soul. But he will *not* lose us,—he cannot lose us; and if Christ cannot lose his inheritance, then none of his people can lose theirs, for we are joint-heirs with him. If two partners go into a court of law, and the case is decided against the one, it is against the other also, for the two are one in that matter. So, if the decision could, by any possibility, be given against anyone who is in Christ Jesus, it would be given equally against the Lord Jesus Christ himself; but that cannot be. How secure, then, is the inheritance of the saints! We are joint-heirs with Christ.

And, my brethren, to conclude, *how this endears his love to us,—*

that he should thus put himself on the same footing with us as to his heirship, first taking us into union with himself, making us joint-heirs with himself, and then himself going back to heaven to plead for us, and to make it part of his glory up there to prepare the place which we are to share with him. Does not this bind us fast to him? If he lets us be sharers in his inheritance in glory, will we not gladly be sharers here in his sufferings and in his shame? Is there anybody who desires to spit upon Christ as they did of old? Then, let him do me the honour to spit upon me for Christ's sake. Is there anyone who has an evil word for Christ? Then, let that word fall upon my ears. Do you not feel, beloved, that it is an honour for you to endure any reproach for Christ's sake? Surely, if we are to be with him there for ever, it is but right that we should be with him here; if we are to share the splendour of his throne, we may be joyful to share the dishonour of his cross so far as we may.

I have thus set before you the heirship of the saints, and the way to attain it. I pray God the Holy Spirit to apply the message to his own people, and to make them feel glad in the Lord. As for the others, I have shown that they can only be heirs through being children, and if you are not the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, I pray the Lord to reveal to you whose children you must be, and what inheritance you must expect to have at the last. Yet I pray you to remember that the way of salvation lies in simply looking to Jesus Christ. May you look to him to-night,—not to-morrow; ere you leave this place, present this prayer, "O Lord, give me the nature of thy children, and the spirit of thy children, and faith in Jesus, as all thy children have it, for his dear name's sake! Amen."
