

JESUS CHRIST IMMUTABLE NO. 848

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 3, 1869,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”
Hebrews 13:8.*

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 Sunday morning of the New Year. This year he sends me this golden line, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.” I have preached from it before—you will find a sermon from this text in print (See #170, Volume 4—THE IMMUTABILITY OF CHRIST—by the grace of God, for all 63 volumes of C. H. Spurgeon sermons in Modern English, and 574 Spanish translations, all free, visit: www.spurgeongems.org). But we need not be at all afraid of preaching from the same text twice; the word is inexhaustible—it may be trod 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! There is always 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 a French monarch declared that he would sooner hear the repetitions of Bourdaloue than the novelties of another, so we may declare concerning our Lord Jesus; we would sooner hear again and again the precious truths of God 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 flashes of the light which forbid the least approach of 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!

We come then, to the old subject of this old text, and may the blessed Spirit give us new unction while we meditate upon it. Note first, our Lord's personal name, *Jesus Christ*. Notice secondly, His memorable attribute—“*He is the same yesterday, and today, and forever.*” 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 Savior, “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 Savior of all!”*

While He was yet an infant hanging on His mother's breast, He was recognized as Savior, 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 has rejoiced in God my Savior.” 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 Savior, for when it can be said that, “the tabernacle of God is with men and He does 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. Yes, and Jesus as a Teacher in the very first principles of His doctrine is a Savior—emancipating the minds of men from superstition, setting them loose from the traditions of the fathers, scattering, even, with His Infant hands, 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 Savior 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 Savior; 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 Savior as a baby, the Savior as a child, the Savior as the toiling, laboring, tempted man. But He comes out most clearly as Jesus *when dying on the cross*; so named in a writing of which the author said, “What I have written, I have written,” for over the head of the dying Savior you read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” There pre-eminently was He the Savior, 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 Savior of the world.” On Calvary it was 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 Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.” Yes, it is on the cross that Christ is peculiarly a Savior; 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 divine grace which gives us power for holiness, the brightest example were a tantalizing 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 of hell 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 He Savior 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 Magdalene in the garden; in His manifestation of Himself to the disciples when they were 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 Savior 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 sepulcher, and bearing away like another Samson the gates of the grave. He is a Savior 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 has God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” He is today, “the Savior of the body”; we adore Him as the only-wise God and our Savior. “He is able also to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives 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 Savior Jesus Christ.” Our daily cry is, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” Yes, and this is the name, the name, “Jesus,” by which He is known *in heaven at this hour*. Thus the angel spoke of Him before He was conceived by the virgin; thus the angels serve Him and do His bidding, for He said to John in Patmos, “I, Jesus, have sent My 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, “You men of Galilee, why stand you gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner

as you have seen Him go into heaven.” Under this name the devils fear Him, for didn’t they say, “Jesus we know, and Paul we know, but who are you?” This is the spell that binds the hearts of cherubim in chains of love; this is that which makes the hosts of hell tremble, and shrink back in fear! 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 among 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 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 Savior. But 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 apart, 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 Christians, 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 fullness dwell.” You have no contracted Christ, you have no narrow Savior; oh, the infinity of His love, the abundance of His grace, the exceedingly greatness of the riches of His love towards us! There are no words in any language that can sufficiently bring out 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 divine 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 prisons, then He comes and sets them free—He 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, He gives them to enjoy the riches of the glory treasured up in Himself! If this interpretation should make the name of Jesus one particle dearer to you, I am sure I shall be exceedingly happy! What do you think—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 be to give the full bearing of all His character? If His bare *name* is such a mine of excellence, what must His person be? If this, which is but a part of His garment, does so smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, O what must His blessed person be but a *bundle* of myrrh which shall lie forever between 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 sustained the cursed 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
Overwhelmed His holy soul.
Precious in His death victorious,
He, the host of hell overthrows,
In His resurrection glorious,
Victor crowned o’er all His foes!
Precious, Lord! Beyond expressing,
Are Your beauties all divine!”*

*Glory, honor, power, and blessing,
Be henceforth forever 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; and 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 of God. 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: My 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 first-born, 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 My 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 before unto sin, to become subservient to the anointed King who has 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 has divine grace given to Him that no priest ever had; their outward anointing was but symbolic—His was the true and the real! He has received that which their oil did but set forth in type and shadow; He has the real anointing from the Most High. Beloved, let us always look at Christ as the anointed Priest. My soul, you can never come to God except through the only ever-living 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 You thus ordained, and we give our cause into Your hands; offer our sacrifices for us! Present our prayers! Take our praises, and put them into the golden censer, and offer them before Your Father’s throne. Rejoice my brothers and sisters, 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 among His people. Peter spoke to Cornelius of, “how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit, 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! We declare no right of any *man* to bind another’s conscience, even though they are great in piety, and deep in learning; Augustine and Calvin, whose names we honor, for God honored them, they still 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 has appointed, and set to be the *only* mediator between God and man! And as for His prophesying, He speaks not of Himself—those things which He has learned of the Father, He has revealed unto us; He comes not as a

prophet who assumes office, but God has *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 as majestic as He who wore the crown of thorns, 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 Yourself, and needing not a sacrifice for Your own sake, You have presented unto God an offering which has perfected forever those whom You have set apart; and now, needing not to make a further offering, You have forever put away sin! And so is it with our Lord's prophesying—He has the power to teach. "Grace is poured into Your lips: therefore God has blessed You forever." 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 You our spirits bow!
Prophet, Priest, and King are You!
Christ, anointed of the Lord,
Evermore be You adored."*

Now, put the two titles together and ring out the harmony of the two melodious notes—Jesus Christ, Savior-Anointed. Oh, how blessed; can you see that our Beloved is a Savior duly appointed, a Savior abundantly qualified? My soul, if God appoints Christ a Savior of sinners, why do you raise a question? God set Him forth as a sinner's Savior. Come then, you 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 Savior to all who trust in Him! My poor heart trusts Him—she has peace! But why do some of you imagine that He cannot save you? Why do you 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 Savior. What? Do you think God has not girded Him with power enough, or furnished Him with enough merit with which to save such as you are? Will *you* limit what God has done? Will *you* think that His anointing is imperfect, and cannot qualify Jesus to meet your case? O do not so slander the grace of heaven; do not do such despite to the wisdom of the Lord; honor the Savior of God's anointing by coming now, just as you are, and put your 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 men! He exchanged the supernal splendors 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 objective—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, you will notice that it might be read thus, "Jesus Christ *Himself* yesterday, and today, and forever." The anointed Savior 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; it does as good as say that Jesus Christ is always Jesus Christ, yesterday, and today, and forever; Jesus Christ is always Himself. At any rate, if that is 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 sees 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 in the olden times, 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 Savior, 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, and 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 Savior to His people, as He is today, and they under Him received like precious gifts. If the goodly fellowship of the prophets could be here today, 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 says, “The same yesterday, and today.” He is the same today 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, today, 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 today! Jesus is the same today 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 you who labor and are heavy-laden,” was the burden of His cry, and 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 still merciful to sinners, and says to them yet, “Neither do I condemn you: go and sin no more.” That delightful sentence which so graciously came from His lips—“Your sins, which are many, are forgiven you”—is still His favorite utterance in human hearts. O do not think 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, you lowest and guiltiest ones; come near to Him with broken hearts and weeping eyes; though He is King and Priest, surrounded with unknown splendor, yet He still 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 still Jesus Christ the anointed Savior! In His earthly days He touched the leper and said, “I will. Be you clean.” He called Lazarus from the tomb, and Lazarus came. Sinner, Jesus is still as able to heal or quicken you now, as then! “He is able also to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.” Now that the blood is spilt, 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 also you 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 You gave Me I have lost none.” Rejoice that He is the same today—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 today, then, as He was on earth.

Blessed be His name, Jesus Christ is the same today as in apostolic days. Then He gave the fullness 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 as days now, as they saw at Pentecost! He is the same Christ; He could as readily convert 3,000 under one sermon today as in Peter's time; His Holy Spirit is not exhausted, for God gives it not by measure to 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 gospel 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 among us more Whitefields 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 today.”

He is the same, today, 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 succored 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 who lay in prison; to those who were cast to the lions; to those who 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 today; we have only to ask of God, and we shall receive the same benefit.

“Jesus Christ the same today,” says the text. Then He is the same today as He has been to us in the past! We have had great enjoyments of God’s presence; we remember the love of our espousals, and if we have not the same joys today it is no fault of His. There is still the same water in the well, and if we have not drawn it, it is our own 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. It is enough for us to remember that Jesus Christ is the same today as He always was.

Now, further, *Christ shall be tomorrow what He has been yesterday, and is today*. 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 gray, and these limbs begin to totter, and these eyes grow dim—Jesus Christ shall have the dew of His youth upon Him, and the fullness of His love shall still flow to us; and after death, or if we die not, at the coming of Christ and in His glorious reign, Jesus will be the same to His people, then, as now! There seems to be a notion abroad among 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 His 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; they will 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! They shall find Him always treating them all as unchanging love and immutable grace shall dictate; the rewards of the millennial state shall be always those of divine grace—they shall be such as not to exclude the very least of all the family, *all* shall have tokens of reward from the dear Savior’s hands! I know He will not love me today, and give me a 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 villainous as the dogma of “purgatory” and that, too, from those who say they are no sectarians! According to these people, we are all wrong but they; 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 communion with Him, no, shall see Him face to face, and rejoice forever in Him as their unchangeably, anointed Savior!

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

If our Lord is “the same yesterday, and today, and forever,” 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 have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follows 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, forever changing, it would be 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 says, “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 are His, and He is truly 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 today, and forever; do not be not carried about with various 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! We must not even *think* that some new philosophy or discovery of science has risen up 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 is 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 today, and forever,” must be divine. Then, believer, bring your adoration to Jesus! At the feet of Him who was crucified, cast down your crown! Give royal and divine honors unto Him who stooped to the ignominy of crucifixion! Let no one stop you of glorying in your boast that the Son of God was made man for *you*! Worship Him as God over all, blessed forever!

He also claims of us, next, that *we should trust Him*. If He is always the same, here is a rock that cannot be moved! Build on it! Here is an anchor; 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, but since He is evermore unchanged, rest on Him without fear.

And, lastly, if He is 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, today 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 always, and again I say, rejoice.” And, until the day breaks, and the shadows flee away, till the blest hour arrives when we shall see Him face to face, and be made like He is, be this our joy that “He is the same yesterday, and today, and forever.” Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Hebrews 13.

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