

Method and Music, Or the Art of Holy and Happy Living

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that true Christian living involves doing every word and deed in the name of Jesus Christ, empowered by His authority, example, and for His glory.

Scripture: Colossians 3:17, Matthew 22:37-39, Acts 2:38, John 3:3, Philippians 2:5, Hebrews 7:25

Topics: "Christian Living", "Sanctification", "Christ as Mediator"

Description

In this devotional sermon, C.H. Spurgeon emphasizes the simplicity and power of living every aspect of life in the name of Jesus Christ. He explains that true holiness involves acting through Christ's mediation, under His authority, and following His perfect example. Spurgeon calls believers to a life of grateful service and holy motives, encouraging them to rely on the Holy Spirit for strength and guidance. This sermon offers a clear and practical guide to holy and happy living grounded in Scripture.

Transcript

BY C. H. SPURGEON,

"And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by Him." Colossians 3:17.

IT is always an advantage to have the laws of a kingdom as concise as possible. No one will ever be able to tell how much of litigation and consequent calamity has been caused in this country by the confused condition of our laws. When Napoleon issued his celebrated "Code Napoleon," which is an admirable summary of French Law, he conferred upon the empire one of the greatest gifts and proved himself a wise ruler.

We want law to be put into such a form that it can be understood, and that its application to many cases can be discovered at once. In the great moral government of God we have no room to complain in this matter—the precepts of holiness are few and comprehensive. First of all, the whole of morality was summed up in the Ten Commandments, and written upon two tablets. Then, as if this were not concise enough, we have the whole Law summarized in two commands, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself."

And even this is brought into shorter compass still, for that one word, "love," is the essence of all Divine Law. We, as Christians, find in the text an instance of the terseness, brevity, and clearness of Divine precepts. We have here a Law applicable to every Believer—to every action, word and thought—in every place, under all circumstances. And yet this comprehensive command is expressed in very few words. It is a great advantage to the mechanic to be able to carry with him in a small compass his square or rule by which he can adjust his materials, discover his errors, design correctly, and estimate his work when finished. Without such a rule he would be quite at a loss—with it he is ready for work.

We have before us a compendious rule of life, a standard of morals, a guide to holiness which we may carry in our memories without the slightest difficulty. And which, if we have but the will to use it, will be found never to fail us on any occasion. As the mariner's compass or the polestar, so may the text be to us. Here is an infallible directory as to the way of holiness—a judge whose decisions in the matter of righteousness and Truth none need distrust. Read the text over, and then I shall ask you to observe the points in it. "Whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by Him."

Observe, first, holy walking described. In the second part of the verse note holy music prescribed. And to enforce the whole text bear with me patiently till we close with the third head, which will be holy motive inscribed—inscribed, I trust, upon all our hearts.

I. HOLY WALKING DESCRIBED. "Whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." This rule is not applicable to every person here present. It can only be practiced by the regenerate. You must be in Christ before you can do anything in Christ's name. Until your nature is renewed, until you have submitted yourselves unto the righteousness of Christ, until Christ is formed in you the hope of Glory, you are not capable of walking after this high and hallowed fashion. "You must be born again."

The precept demanding your immediate attention is not the precept of this text but another. The words of Peter, in the Acts of the Apostles, are for you, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Or this, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." You must begin at the beginning. It will but mislead you if I exhort you to walk as Believers before you have received the inner life. The root must be changed before the fruit can be bettered. You need a radical change, my unconverted Hearer, and you must have it or perish forever.

Do not imagine that any imitation of Christian manners will save you—do not conceive that hanging upon your lifeless branches the semblance of fruits will transform you into a tree of righteousness, the planting of the Lord. Oh, no, the sap within you must be changed. The life of God must be infused into your soul. You must be made one with Christ, or you cannot serve Him. This precept, belongs, therefore, to none of you who have not believed in Christ Jesus! But it belongs to all of you, without exception, who are named by the name of Jesus Christ in Truth and sincerity. To all of you who have submitted yourselves to His government and are trusting in Him for salvation. You will listen, I trust, and give earnest heed to this message from your Beloved.

What, then, does this mean, that we are to do everything both in word and deed in the name of the Lord Jesus? Answer—there are six points in which this precept requires reverent care. First, do all through the office and name of Christ as Mediator. You as a Christian are bound to offer daily praise. You should often lift up your heart in grateful songs and Psalms to God—but see to it that you do all this work of praise in

the name of the Lord Jesus. No praise of yours can be sweet with God except it is presented through your great High Priest. Bring, therefore, your gifts of thankfulness to this altar which sanctifies the giver and the gift, and ever bless God through Jesus Christ.

You are also to abound in prayer. It is your vital breath. You cannot flourish as a Christian unless you constantly draw near to God in supplication. But your supplications must always be presented through the name of Jesus Christ. His name gives prevalence to prayer. It is not so much your earnestness or sincerity as His precious blood that speaks in the ears of God and intercedes for you. Pray always, then, with your eyes upon the finished Propitiation and the living Intercessor. Always plead the merits of Immanuel, and Heaven's gate shall open to you.

In addition to your prayers and praises, you are bound to serve Him according to the abilities entrusted to you in teaching the ignorant the way of salvation, in bringing in the unconverted, and in edifying the saints. But remember that your service to God in these respects can only be acceptable as you present it through the name of Jesus Christ. The hand of the Crucified One must offer for you the sweet cane which you have bought with money, and the fat of all your sacrifices. If you could give to God all the wealth that you possess, all the time of your mortal existence, all the talents with which you have been endowed—if you could do this from now on without a failure—if you did not present the offering through Jesus Christ it would be as though you had done nothing.

Your burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings would have no acceptance with Jehovah, for your sinful nature pollutes them all. How necessary it is, then, that we should often pause in our holy work, and say, "I am doing this for God, but am I presenting it in the appointed way? If I see anything of merit in what I am doing, I am acting contrary to the Gospel rule and I shall be rejected. I must bring all my work to the High Priest of my profession and offer it through

Him."—

"The iniquity of all our holy things Is cleansed by His blood, which covers all, And adds a rich perfume divinely sweet, Winning acceptance at the Throne of God For broken prayers, and faulty songs, and even For service marred with sad infirmities." Take heed, dear Hearer, that you see the blood sprinkled on your service for God. Almost all things under the Law were sanctified by blood, and all things under the Gospel, without exception, must be thus made sweet to God. The atoning sacrifice, the prevalent intercession of the one appointed Mediator, Christ Jesus, must be constantly before our minds in all that we attempt to do for our Lord God. Let us never forget this lest we utterly fail.

A second meaning of this precept is, "Do all under the authority of the Lord Jesus as your King." Say of such-and-such a doubtful or evil action, "This I cannot do. I could not feel that I was authorized to do it by any precept or example of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This I cannot do, for I should be stepping aside from the allegiance which I owe to Him. Therefore this I will not do, be the consequences what they may of loss or of suffering. I am not authorized by Christ to follow this course, neither will I, come fair, come foul."

On the other hand, when the act is allowed in Scripture, and only forbidden by the traditions of men, you may safely say, "This I feel that I may do. I see my Master has laid down no restrictions, therefore I will submit to no human traditions or regulations. The commands which will-worship would inflict upon me I cast to the wind, for superfluities of pretended holiness are but superfluities of naughtiness." When positive duty is concerned, your language will be, "This ac-

tion I find that I must do, for I see an express command for it—therefore, by His Grace, it shall be done. Be it difficult, it shall be achieved. Be it impossible, I will wait on Him who enables faith to remove mountains."

O that every Christian were altogether and evermore obedient to heavenly rule! As the planet revolves undeviatingly in its orbit, because with the law imposed upon it there has come forth a constraining and impelling force—so may we also pursue our course of duty, because we have not only heard the Divine precept—but feel the sacred energy of the Holy Spirit leading us in the prescribed path. Brethren, how safe we feel, and how happy in our consciences, if we are certain that we have the authority of the Great King for all our actions! The business of a Christian upon earth is not an independent one. He is not acting on his own account, but he is a steward for Christ.

What if I compare him to a commission agent who is sent abroad by his firm with full powers from his employer to transact business for the house which he represents? He is not to trade for himself, but he agrees to do all in the name of the firm which commissions him. He receives his instructions and all he has to do is to carry them out. His whole time and talent being by express agreement at the absolute disposal of his employers. Now, if this man shall lend himself to an opposition firm, or trade on his own account, he is not true to his engagements and he has to bear the responsibility of his acts. But so long as he acts for his firm, and does his best, his course is an easy and safe one.

If he follows the instructions of his principals he is eased of all responsibility. Should his trade be profitable or otherwise, he need not be vexed with anxieties, provided he has diligently followed the commands received from home. His acts are authorized from headquarters, and they are, therefore, safe for him. He falls back on his principals who gave him the commands, and in whose name he acted.

Now if we serve ourselves or the world, we must take the consequences of our unfaithfulness. But if we honestly serve the Lord, all is clear. When a Christian can say concerning any course of conduct, "I am bid to do this by Christ Jesus my Lord—I can find chapter and verse to authorize my acts." When he can feel that he is working for Christ and not for himself—with a single eye to the glory of God, and not with sinister aims and selfish motives—then he treads as on a rock, and defies the censures of his enemies. Let us, then, take good heed to our Lord's words, and walk carefully in His commands, for then His authority protects us, and every tongue that rises against us in judgment we shall condemn.

This rule of acting under the authority of Christ is applicable in an emphatic sense to those who are called to special service in the kingdom of Christ. Every man is called to do all the good he can, but some men are set apart to labor in peculiar departments of Christian work—and these should be doubly careful to do all in their Master's name. If a man were sinking through the rotten ice, any one of us would be authorized to do all we could to save him. But the iceman, who is appointed on purpose that he may save lives, has a peculiar authority for anything that he takes upon himself to do in the way of rescuing the drowning. He has the name of the Royal Humane Society at his back.

If a stranded ship were breaking up and the crew were ready to perish, we are all of us authorized to do all we can to save the shipwrecked. But the men who belong to the lifeboat's appointed crew have a right to come to the fore and take the oars and put out to sea. They are authorized to lead the way in daring and danger. So, my Brethren, those of you who have felt the Divine call within you, the sacred impulse which compels you to devote yourself to the salvation of your fellow men, you may do it boldly and without apology.

Your authority is from Christ, for the Holy Spirit has set you apart for the work. Let no man hinder or dispirit you. Press forward to the front rank in self-denying labor. Call it not impertinence, O you carping critics! It is but holy courage which brings earliest hearts to the fore. Push to the very front, you men of God, filled with daring and self-sacrifice—for if others should impute your zeal to evil motives, the Lord who reads the heart understands you—and having given you a commission He will not fail to vindicate His faithful servants.

A third sense of the text is important. We should do all under the sanction of the Lord Jesus as our Exemplar. It is an admirable course for us all to pursue, if when we find ourselves in circumstances of perplexity we ask ourselves the question, "What would Jesus Christ have done if He were in my circumstances?" The answer to that question is the solution of your difficulty. Whatever He would have done it will be safe enough for you to do. It is certain that He would not have been unbelieving. Equally certain that He would not have done a wrong thing to deliver Himself. We are also sure that He would not have been impatient, rebellious, or despairing—nor would He have grown wrathful or morose.

Well then, I know what I must not be and it may be possible to learn my positive, as well as my negative behavior from the same Guide. I shall be able to discover by turning over the pages of the Evangelists some portion of the Savior's

life very like my own. What He was in that situation I must pray for Divine Grace that I may be, and I shall certainly be led in the path of wisdom. The royal rule for a Christian is not what is fashionable, for we are not to be conformed to this world. It is not what is gainful, for the pursuit of gain would lead us to run greedily in the way of Balaam for reward.

It is not that which is generally prescribed in society, for full often the prescriptions of society are antagonistic to the teachings of Christ. Not even the conduct of professors, for too many even among them walk as Paul tells us even weeping, as the enemies of the Cross of Christ. Alas, my Brethren, the current holiness of the Church falls far below the Scriptural standard! Neither are the common rules of action among professors such as we could safely follow. A safe example is to be found nowhere but in the life of Jesus Christ Himself. Even the holiest of men are only to be followed so far as they follow Christ, but no further.

My Brethren, how calm will your hearts be, how serenely will you face your afflictions if you can feel, "I have done nothing but what my Master did before me. I have sought to tread in the footprints of His pilgrimage!" Why, you must be safe, you must be accepted if you do as Jesus did—for never can Christ's example lead a simple soul astray—

"It is always safe for souls to follow on Where Christ their holy Shepherd leads the way." Furthermore, as we are to do all through the office of Christ as Mediator, within the authority of Christ as King, under the sanction of Christ as Exemplar, so we should do everything to the glory of the Lord Jesus as our Lord and God.

When the Spanish mariners were traversing the seas upon voyages of discovery they never touched upon new land, whether an insignificant island or a part of the main continent, without at once setting up the standard of Ferdinand and Isabella, and taking possession of the soil in the name of their Catholic Majesties of Spain. Wherever the Christian goes, his first thought should be to take possession of all hearts in the name of the Lord Jesus, consecrating all opportunities and influences to the Redeemer's service. Such common things as eating and drinking become, by the giving of devout thanks, consecrated

to Christ's name. There is no action which is lawful, however commonplace it may be, but may be sanctified by the Word of God and prayer.

If the intense desire of our spirit shall be that we may glorify God as long as we are in this body, we shall find ways and means of accomplishing our object—and the Holy Spirit will help our infirmities. My dear Brethren, our soul's desires should be always true to Christ—most chastely faithful so as not to tolerate any carnal motive or self-seeking. How easily do we give place to self-glorification! How almost insensibly do we expect to receive honor of men! It is very hard to keep ourselves clear of self-seeking under some form or other—for even self-denial may be used with an object which is the reverse of self-denial.

The old philosopher, seeing a fool in fine apparel, pointed at him, and said, "that's pride," but he was equally right when seeing certain Spartans who affected to dress meanly, he said, "and that's pride." Pride often stands in the doorway, but it can as readily hide in the corner. There is a pride of self-sacrifice and a pride of apparent humility, which is everyway as haughty as vainglory itself.

Dear Friends, we must live for Christ, cost us what it may of watchfulness. We must not fail here. We dare not live for a party, or a sect, or even altogether for any one Church, however dear to us. We may live for the Truth, but only because God is glorified thereby. First and last, in the middle and everywhere, the constraining thought of Christian life should be, "all for Jesus."—

"All for the Master, all without reserve, All to the utmost of our manhood's might Each pulse, each throb of heart and thrill of nerve, Each hour of busy day and silent night."

Beloved, it is delightful to know that Christ is all mine, and I am all Christ's. It is a holy aspiration to desire to enjoy as much of Christ as our nature can receive, and then to exhibit as much of Christ as Divine Grace can enable us to reveal. "Everything for Jesus." "Christ all and in all Christ." Let these be the mottoes of every Believer. "Whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Aim in all you do to do it for His Glory.

The fifth point is, do all in the strength of the Lord Jesus as your Helper. With Him is the residue of the Spirit. And the Spirit of God is the Believer's power. "Without Me you can do nothing," says our Lord. We know the truth of that saying by unwise attempts which have ended in mournful failures. But let us in the future remember this Truth of God practically. Never let us commence a work without seeking strength from on High. We go about Christian service very

often as though we felt ourselves quite up to the mark for it. We pray without asking the preparation of the heart from

God.

We sing—ah, my Brethren, how universally is it so—without at all entreating the Holy Spirit to quicken our praises. And I fear some of us must confess sorrowfully that we preach at times as though the preaching were to be our work and not the work of the Holy Spirit through us. Do not you, as hearers, too often listen to the Word as if the mere hearing of it would do you good, or as if the speech of such-and-such a man would be certainly blessed to you? Shouldn't you, instead, wait upon God beforehand that your going up to the assembly might be profitable to your souls? Do all in the Master's strength, and how differently everything will be done!

Acknowledge all the time you are at your work that your strength comes from the Lord alone. Never let the thought cross your mind that you, as an experienced Christian, have a fitness for the work peculiarly your own—so that you can dispense with prayers for Divine aid, so necessary to the young! Never imagine that because through long years you have performed a service with acceptance that you can therefore now do it without renewed help. This is the way by which we sink into routine, degenerate into religious automata, and become like formalists and hypocrites. This is the way in which the power of God and the vitality of godliness are rendered so rare in the Churches.

If we do not feel conscious day by day of abiding weakness and consequent need of fresh strength from the Most High, we shall soon cease to be full of Divine Grace. Write this upon the tablets of your heart, "All my fresh springs are in You," and from this day forward in word and deed do all in the name of the Lord Jesus—and you will derive all your spiritual energy from Him, the Source.

Sixthly, we should do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, for He should be the element in which we live. It is said of the modern Greeks that whatever may be their faults mentally, they are faultless physically, for you never saw a Greek peasant in an ungraceful attitude, however much he might be off his guard and unconscious of your gaze. Gracefulness is a part of the Greek nature. So let the Lord Jesus Christ be so woven and intertwined into your very self that you cannot be otherwise than Christ-like under any circumstances. Lord, grant us this. It would be a glorious thing to be saturated through and through with the spirit of Christ, so as to live Christ evermore.

That eminent ornithologist, M. Audubon, who produced accurate drawings and descriptions of all the birds of the American Continent, made the perfection of that work the one object of his life. In order to achieve this he had to earn his own living by painting portraits, and other labors. He had to traverse frozen seas, forests, canebrakes, jungles, prairies, mountains, swollen rivers, and pestilential bogs. He exposed himself to perils of every sort and underwent hardships of every kind. Now, whatever Audubon was doing, he was fighting his way toward his one object—the production of his history of American birds. Whether he was painting a lady's portrait, paddling a canoe, shooting a raccoon, or felling a tree—his one goal was his bird book.

He had said to himself, "I mean to carve my name among the naturalists as having produced a complete ornithological work of America." This resolution ate him up and subdued his whole life. He accomplished his work because he gave himself wholly to it. This is the way in which the Christian man should make Christ his element. All that he does should be subservient to this one thing—"That I may finish my course with joy, that I may deliver my testimony for Christ, that I may glorify God whether I live or die."

We have thus seen what it is to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Let us stop a moment to remind you that this text administers a severe rebuke to many professed Christians. Too many Church members do nothing in Christ's name. Since the day when they were baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, they have done nothing else in that name. Ah, hypocrites! Ah, hypocrites! God have mercy upon you! Alas, how many others do but very little in Christ's name! I noted in a letter, by a certain pastor—not, I think, given to speaking severely, this remark—that he did not think in his own Church one in three of the members were doing anything for Christ.

I could not speak so sorrowfully as that concerning you, but I much fear that a large proportion of the strength of this Church is not used for the Lord. I believe that there is more used here than in almost any other Church, but still there is a great deal of wasted steam, a great deal of buried talent, and thereby

Jesus is defrauded. I noticed in an American paper an observation made concerning the Baptist Churches of North Carolina. A man acquainted with them said, "There are a hundred thousand members reported in the various associations. There are a hundred thousand baptized persons, and seventy-five thousand of them are only 'baptized dead heads.' "

It is an American term, but I am afraid we shall have to import it, for it is frightfully true that numbers of professors are just so many "baptized dead heads." They are of no use. They are not working. They are perhaps grumbling—the only sign of life they have—but they are neither giving of their substance nor laying out any other talents in the cause of Christ. If there are any such present, I pray that this text may be a thorn in your side and act as a spur to you. And may you from this day on do all that lies in your power in the name of the Lord Jesus.

The text also rebukes those Christians who do much in the name of some eminent Christian man. I shall not censure any particular denomination, but if the Truth censures them, let them hear it. When George Whitfield refused to form a new sect, and said, "Let my name perish, and let Christ's name last forever," he acted as his Lord would have him. Paul was not crucified for you, neither did Apollos die for you! Therefore take none of these names—but let the name of Christ be named among you—and under that name be known!

Though there is a Lutheran Church, it was a good saying of Luther, though couched in rugged words, "I desire above all things that my name should be concealed. That none be called by the name of Lutheran, but of Christian. What is Luther? My doctrine is not mine, but Christ's. I was not crucified for any. How comes it to pass, that I, who am but a filthy, stinking bag of worms, that any of the sons of God should be denominated from my name? Away with these schismatic names. Let us be denominated from Christ, from Whom alone we have our doctrine." It shall be well for all Churches when they are ruled by the like spirit. Names which indicate their difference of doctrine will probably survive till Christ comes, but the names of men they will do well to discard.

Once more—what a rebuke is our text to those professors who dishonor the name under which they profess to live! The Spaniards in America acted so cruelly, and with such a dreadful lust for gold, that when they sent their missionaries to convert the Indians, the Indians wished only to know whether the religion that was taught them was the religion of the Spaniards—for if it were they should like to believe something the very opposite. And if there was no Heaven but where the Spaniards went, they would sooner go to Hell than be with them.

Truly some professors' lives give much the same savor to the Christian religion. Men say, "Are these Christians, these mean, covetous, quarrelsome, domineering, boastful people? Then we will sooner be infidels than Christians." Out upon you, you caricatures of godliness! If there is one such here, may his conscience prick him. You have crucified the Lord afresh, and put Him to an open shame. How dreadful will be your punishment if you die in your present state! Repent of your sin and ask of God Grace to make your profession sincere.

And if you will not do this, at least be honest enough to give up your false profession—for you do but degrade it and yourself. There is no necessity, surely, to add to your innumerable sins, this sin of hypocrisy. What do you gain by it? No, Sir, if you must serve mammon and the devil, serve them. But why with supererogation of iniquity must you pretend to serve Christ?

II. We leave this first point, and find in the second part of the text, HOLY MUSIC PRESCRIBED. "Giving thanks

unto God the Father by Him." Soldiers march best to battle when the trumpet and drum excite them with enlivening strains. The mariner brightens his toil by a cheery cry at every pull of the rope. And it is an excellent thing when Christian men know how to sing as well as to work, and mingle holy music with holy service. The best music of a Christian consists in thankfulness to God.

Thanks should be rendered by the Believer with all the acts common to men. Our eating, our drinking, our social meetings, our quiet conversations with one with another—in all we should give thanks unto God the Father. This we should do in the labors peculiar to our vocation. Whatever your trade and calling may be, if you cannot sing aloud, you can sing in your hearts while your hands are busy. You can ring out the praises of God as well to the sound of the hammer on the anvil as to the peal of the organ. Your feet at the sewing machine may beat time to a sacred tune.

You can as well praise God while you crack your whip as when you sing a Psalm. Why not? If the heart is right you can mount up to the heavens from any place or labor. Whatever your calling may be you shall find some peculiarity in it which shall help you to magnify God, if you will but use a spiritual eye to discover it.

We ought especially to praise God in the exercise of our religion. Whenever the assemblies of God's people meet, there should be much of holy joy. Some people are so afraid of joy that one might suppose them to labor under the delusion that all who are devout must also be unhappy. If we worshipped Baal, to lance ourselves with knives were most fitting. If we were worshippers of Juggernaut or Kalee, self-inflicted tortures might be acceptable. If we adored the pope, it

might be proper for us to wear a hair shirt and practice flagellation. But we worship the ever-blessed God, whose delight is to make His creatures happy!

Holy happiness is a part of worship, and joy in the Lord one of the accepted Graces of the Holy Spirit. Brethren, let us be happy when we praise God. I have noticed with pain the way in which people will get rid, if they can, of happy words out of their hymns. The hundredth Psalm for instance, runs thus—

"All people that on earth do dwell,

Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice,

Him serve with_"

What? Well, they modernize it into—

"Him serve with fear." But, as I believe, the older form is—

"Him serve with mirth, His praise forth tell,

Come you before Him and rejoice." I am amazed some other scribe did not cut out the word "cheerful," and put in—

"Sing to the Lord with doleful voice." In this way the Psalm might have been "improved" until there would not have been a grain of worship left in it. I mean to sing it, "Him serve with mirth." And with a glad and

merry heart will I praise my God. If you are His child, rejoice in your Father's Presence. If you are pardoned, rejoice in the mercy that washed away your sins. Even if you are tried and troubled, rejoice that your afflictions are working together for your good! "Rejoice in the Lord always. And again I say, Rejoice."

The text tells us under what aspect we should regard God when we are thus thanking Him, "Giving thanks unto God the Father," blessing Him that He stands in that relation to us as well as to the Lord Jesus. The belief in the Divine fatherhood will surely make the sons of God happy. It is instructive to observe that thanks are directed to be offered especially to the Father. I suppose because we are most apt to forget to praise the Father. We love Jesus Christ for dying for us. We forget not the Holy Spirit because He dwells in us. But the common idea of the Father is dishonoring to Him.

Is He not regarded as all Justice, and seldom as the Fountain of Love? Now, it is the Father who stands at the back of all in the eternal purpose. It is the Father who gave the Son to die. It is the Father who justifies us through the righteousness of Christ, and adopts us into His family. The Father is equally to be loved and worshipped with the Spirit and the Son. And through Jesus Christ we should come to God, the terrible God as He was to us in our ungodliness, and worship Him as the Father now with thankful joy, because of the mercies we have received.

The gist of this second precept is that you stir up your hearts, my dear Friends, to the cultivation of a cheerful spirit. That you excite that cheerful spirit to the use of thankful words, telling your friends and neighbors of the goodness of God to you. These words should be oftentimes elevated into songs. These songs should, as on wings of flame, ascend up to where perfect spirits praise God both day and night. O, we that love the Savior, do not neglect this, "Whoso offers praise glorifies God." Glorify Him, then.

This praise, this cheerful spirit wins others. They, marking how you give thanks, will be attracted to your Savior and your God—while you will strengthen yourselves, also—for "the joy of the Lord is your strength." Despondency and murmuring will hamper you in all your efforts to glorify Christ, but to maintain an inward spring of thanksgiving is one of the best ways to keep yourselves in spiritual health. God help you, then, to carry out both these precepts—

"Work and praise! Hearts upraise!

Drink your fill of joy!

Happy they who all the day

Spend in Christ's employ.

For their song makes them strong,

Ready for their toil;

And their mirth, not of earth,

Sorrow cannot spoil."

III. A few words upon the third point, namely, HOLY MOTIVE TO BE INSCRIBED upon our hearts to secure obedience. These motives are four. A word on each.

Beloved in Christ, you have received all you have from God the Father through Christ. That you are not in Hell is due to His longsuffering. That you have been spiritually quickened is due to His gracious operation. That you are pardoned is due to His precious blood. Owing all to Him, what arises in your mind but gratitude? And what is the dictate of gratitude? Does it not teach you that it is your reasonable service to surrender yourselves to Him who bought you at such a price? For, ah, what a return it will be—how poor compared with what He has done for you! If you give your body to be burned for Him, yet He deserves infinitely more than all the sacrifices of the most painful death to recompense His stoop from the highest Throne in Glory to the Cross of the deepest woe. Let your gratitude compel you to do everything for Jesus.

Reflect, too, that the Well-Beloved for whom I plead today is worthy. "Him has God the Father exalted." Do you object to that exaltation? Should you not rather rejoice in it? Is not that song most true —

"Worthy is He that once was slain, The Prince of Peace that groaned and died; Worthy to rise, and live, and reign, At His Almighty Father's side"? Will you deny, then, to Christ that which He is worthy to receive? He deserves the crowns of angels, and the songs of all the perfected! Will you not give Him the best you have, even your hearts? I appeal to the justice which I trust governs your judgment—should not Jesus Christ be the one object of your life?

Further, many of us here present have professed to be His disciples. We remember well the day when we were buried with Him in Baptism unto death. We voluntarily came forward and we took upon ourselves to be immersed in His name, copying His example and obeying His command. If that act meant anything, it meant this—that we professed ourselves to be dead henceforth to the world and risen with Christ. Now, by the profession then made, by the communion then enjoyed, I pray you, my dear Brothers and Sisters, whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the Master's name. Let not this appeal to your honor be forgotten.

Lastly, I need not thus plead with some of you, for your hearts are pleading with you. I know you love Him whose name is as ointment poured forth. I know how the tendrils of your heart have entwined themselves about His Cross. His Person fixes all your love. You are only happy when you are walking in communion with Him. He is the sun of your soul, without whom you cannot live. Well, then, do what love dictates—bring forth the alabaster box of ointment, break it, pour the sacred nard upon His head, and if any ask, "Why is this waste?" say that He is worthy of it—and that you love much because you have had much forgiven.

This day bring forth the best that is within your store, the spiced wine of your pomegranate, and set it before your Lord, while Jesus sups with you and you with Him. Again I say arouse yourselves to live at a more vigorous rate, and let the whole of the force and energy that dwells within you, and all that you can borrow from the seventh Heaven, be given up to Him who loved you and gave Himself for you. May my Master's blessing be with these words, to all who hear or read them, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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