

The Saint's Inventory

by Thomas Bradbury

The sermon explores the concept of Christ's property in His people, highlighting the relationship between God and His people and the different aspects of Christ's property in them.

Scripture: Isaiah 49:15, Hosea 11:8, Romans 8:17, 1 Corinthians 3:21, 1 Corinthians 6:11, 1 Corinthians 6:19, 2 Corinthians 6:10, Ephesians 1:11, Hebrews 7:26

Topics: "Sovereign Grace", "Christian Sanctification"

Description

Thomas Bradbury preaches on the profound grace of God revealed in the 1st Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, showcasing how God's sovereign grace shines brightly in the lives of those who were once given up to sin. He emphasizes the transformation brought about by God's rich and distinguishing grace, as seen in the Corinthian Christians who were washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus. Bradbury delves into the concept of believers belonging to Christ and Christ belonging to God, highlighting the intimate relationship and possession God has in His people. He explores the believer's inventory, where all things, including ministers of the Gospel, the world, life, death, things present, and things to come, are declared to be theirs in Christ.

Transcript

"Therefore let no man glory in men. For 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; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." (1 Corinthians 3:21-23)

There is scarcely any part of Divine revelation, where the free, sovereign, uninfluenced grace of God shines forth more brightly than this 1st Epistle of Paul to the Corinthian Christians.

"Sovereign grace o'er sin abounding" meets us in every verse, flowing from JEHOVAH, the full, free, and inexhaustible fountain of the same. We behold this more as we notice those who were the recipients of this grace. By nature they were wholly given up to lewdness, licentiousness, and profligacy, and those of us who have observed the world's ways know well the meaning of the term, "a Corinthian woman." This term speaks not well for the morality and chastity of the Corinthians.

But leaving this, let us take a view of those, whom God had separated from the corrupt mass, by His rich and distinguishing grace. Turn to chapter 6 verse 11: "And such were some of you." What does Paul mean by that word "such?" Read at your leisure that black, dark, and filthy catalogue of sins and abominations

given in the two preceding verses. Let me ask you, Can you read it without feeling something of your depravity, and at the same time some little experience of the lovingkindness and grace of a covenant God, flowing through the person of that blessed One "who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens?" (Heb. 7:26) Yet in the face of such an awful catalogue we read, "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God." (1 Cor. 6:11) Can we imagine, even for a moment, that there are those who profess to be partakers of this grace, and who profess to pray for it, yet who can find fault with plain Scripture declarations of the same, saying, "Oh, that man paints human nature too black, and brings out the failings of Jonah and Peter too prominently."

Mark you! "that man" alluded too is the one who now addresses you, and who will not read for you this black catalogue, nor that dreadful description of human nature found toward the close of Roman chapter one. But those who have a true estimate of themselves through the teaching of the Holy Ghost will not find much fault with a man who Scripturally lays poor proud nature low, and is the instrument in bringing them down to the footstool of sovereign mercy. That is the spot to which I desire in the inward conflict of my soul to bring every poor law-convinced, broken-hearted sinner that hangs upon my lips, and whose spirit is moved with the gracious testimony which flows from my exercised heart.

"And such were some of you." Look at these persons before and after God took them in hand. Can they be one and the same? Oh, how filthy, yet washed from all sin in precious atoning blood! Oh, how depraved, yet partakers of a nature as pure and as spotless as the sinless nature of our Lord Jesus Christ! Oh, how condemned, "yet justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ!" What does that mean? Something more than acquittance; it is a perfect clearance from all charges brought by Satan against these sin-burdened ones, who still experience the power of indwelling sin, the incorrigibility of their nature, the enmity of their carnal mind, and the awful temptations of Satan.

God, in His Gospel, declares them to be "free from sin, justified from all things, all fair, without fault before the throne of God." (Rev. 14:5) But while all this is gloriously true, they are not without spot in their own eyes, they are not without fault in the sight of others. We see this in the testimony given throughout the whole of this epistle. This teaches us a very precious lesson, in the true and spiritual understanding of which, we shall be blessed with a liberal spirit toward those who are weak and wavering, and a spirit of consideration toward those who may differ from us in externals, which I call the children's playthings, for such they are in the judgment of every man or woman to whom God has bestowed a little common sense in connection with His free and sovereign grace.

If you look at the Church of Corinth, you will see it the most corrupt in practice of all Churches in apostolic times. Read through the Epistle to the Galatians, and you will see their Churches the most corrupt in doctrine. Now throughout the whole exposure of the corruption in connection with these Churches, we find not one word calling upon those who were born of God, and taught by Him, to separate themselves from the Churches. Ofttimes in fancied Scriptural separation there is fearful spiritual pride. In separating ourselves from those whom God in His providence has identified us with, we are liable to run into discord and dissatisfaction. It therefore behoves us who are blessed with the teaching of God the ever-blessed Spirit to seek our place at the feet of Jesus, begging of Him to lead us into brighter apprehensions of His Father's will concerning us, and into a more blessed appreciation of His own work in His people, in whatever Church they may be found. We have wondrous grace revealed here. We see elect, redeemed, and regenerate ones, yet corrupt in practice, not walking straight, nay, not walking at all; but fallen, fallen most foully. We read at the commencement of chapter 5 of one who was guilty of a most abominable

crime, yet he was to be treated not as an enemy, but as a brother. Depend upon it, the apostle's manner of dealing with an unruly or fallen brother was vastly different to the Pope's bulls of excommunication which are filled with curses the most fiendish, ay, and vastly different, too, to the administration of Church order and discipline in many so-called Protestant Churches. You may rest assured that that minister is greatly lacking in judgment, and also in spirit of the Master, who makes his pulpit a vehicle to hurl personalities at the weak and halting ones of his congregation. The pulpit ought always to be a spot consecrated by the Holy Ghost for the declaration of God's glorious Gospel to meet the wants and necessities of His poor, tried, and tempted children. My dear friends, as I am led to look at, and to loathe myself, I have not a stone to throw at any of you, neither have I a reproving word for the most inconsistent among you. The knowledge of what I am in myself gives me to understand what that means,

"The more Thy glories strike mine eyes,

The humbler I shall lie."

Now look at the chapter which I have read for our instruction. Paul addresses the Corinthian Christians as "the Church of God, sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints." Look at chap. 1:30: "But of Him" that is, of the Father "are ye in Christ Jesus, who" that is, Christ Jesus "of God is made unto us Wisdom," for we greatly need it; "Righteousness," for we have none of our own; "Sanctification," for we are one unmingled mass of depravity; "Redemption," deliverance from the thralldom of sin, Satan, and self.

"That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." See! there is no wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, or glory apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, and He is all these to His people in Him. Paul commences the chapter before us thus: "And I, brethren." He is one with them, a brother in the same family, a partaker of the same grace. He aspires not to the office of censor, though he must tell them the truth concerning them. He condemns not as a judge, but counsels as a brother.

He does not say, I cannot acknowledge you as my brethren because of your depraved and disorderly conduct, for if you were partakers of grace, you would be more consistent. A pretty article I should be were I to address any poor halting child of God after that fashion. Yet Paul wrote, "I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." (1 Cor. 3:1) Carnal, yet elect, redeemed, regenerate. He as much as says, You have compelled me to address you according to the ground you occupy.

Their disorders arose from the flesh, and their inconsistencies were the breakings forth of their carnal mind, therefore he spoke to them as carnal, yet as babes in Christ. "I have fed you with milk and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men?" or, "according to man?" (1 Cor. 3:2,3) You are not walking according to the Spirit and in the fear of the Lord, but according to the clique with which you are identified, or according to the man whom you have made your model preacher.

Here is a lesson for us. There are those whose religion is confined to the Grove, to the Tabernacle, or to some other earthly building; but may the Lord, in His infinite mercy and goodness, grant to you who are attached to me for my work's sake, that you may see little of me, and much of my Master. May it be yours when you hear the voice of the preacher to be swallowed up in the sweet strains of Gospel music which flow alone from the once broken heart of our most glorious Christ who lives and reigns for His own up yonder.

Time would fail me to point out the marvellous grace abounding in this precious chapter, but, in humble dependence upon the leading of God's good Spirit, I would seek to direct your minds into the understanding and enjoyment of the new covenant provision set before us in the portion I have read as my text which divides itself into two questions:

I. WHO? "Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

II. WHAT? The saint's inventory "For 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."

I. WHO? "Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." This reveals a property or possession which God has in His own people in Christ Jesus. My soul was blest with a little quiet, resting in the truth of the portion in Deut. 32:9-12, as our dear friend Davis was preaching God's truth most preciously from it at "Old Dulwich" the other evening: "For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance," etc. That is gloriously true which is stated by the Holy Ghost in Ps. 24:1: "The earth is the LORD'S, and the fullness thereof."

We who know Him as Sovereign Lord of all can sing with spiritual intelligence and joy, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." (Rev. 4:11) But, mark! Here we see a peculiar property, a peculiar possession, God has in His own elect. To these the Holy Ghost witnesses in a special manner: "Ye are God's inheritance," and "ye are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." (Rom. 8:17) Have you noticed that wonderful truth which is mutually enjoyed by God and His elect family declared in Eph. 1:11 and 18? "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." See! The Father's glory in the saints! God's glory in His own Israel. He is the glory of His people Israel (Luke 2:32) and His people Israel is His glory. (Isa. 46:13) The Lord is the inheritance of His people, (Num. 18:20) and His people is His inheritance. (Deut. 32:9) God's elect is God's inheritance in a peculiar manner His inheritance in love, His inheritance according to His eternal choice of them in Christ Jesus.

Human illustrations and metaphors all fail to show forth the glorious, eternal, inalienable property Jehovah has in His people. We see the relationship existing between father and son; but none can truly tell the interest a father has in his child, but the father whose affection has been tried and tried again by the waywardness of the one he loves so well. That father whose trials are sanctified by the indwelling Spirit of God knows something of this. But nature fails to describe the tested and inalienable care and concern which God has over His children.

See Ps. 103:13,14: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." Look also at Jer. 31:20: "Is Ephraim My dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore My bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord." Look again at Isaiah 46:13: "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem."

Here we get at a more refined view of Jehovah's affection to His own. A loving mother is a soft-hearted creature, and God in covenant has been pleased to use her as a metaphor to show forth His eternal and

unchanging affection to His weak, wavering, and oftentimes wandering children. A child is always a child, and not all the devils in hell, nor all the sinfulness that devils can work in the child, can ever unchild him. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion of the son of her womb?

Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." (Isa. 49:15) Look again, and here you have a precious declaration of God's love and compassion to His rebellious child. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine anger is turned within Me, My repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of Mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim, for I am God, and not man." (Hosea 11:8,9) Do you wish for another proof of God's affection?

Here you have it in Isaiah 62:4: "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah (My delight is in her,) and thy land Beulah" (married) the land of Divine revelation, spiritual promise, and covenant relationship "for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married." Think of a father's affection for his child, and there you have a faint illustration of Jehovah's affection for His children.

Think of a mother's fondness for her babe, that is a feeble metaphor to show forth unchanging fondness of Israel's covenant God. Think of the love of a bridegroom for his bride, and you fail to discern the love of Jesus for His bride the Church. Do you wish for a Divine exposition of the love of Christ to His Church? Read it for yourselves at the latter part of Eph. 5. Here He is represented as united in the bonds of covenant love to His bride the Church. Though the Church is raised to so high a dignity as union with the Mighty God, yet she has nothing in herself to boast of.

She owns she is black. He declares she is comely. Yes, and though I am here this morning confessing my sinfulness and wretchedness before Him, yet He has again and again caused me to hear His gracious voice, saying, "Thou art all fair, My love: there is no spot in thee." (Songs 4:7) Sometimes, when I have been passing through a wilderness of temptation and tribulation, I have Him near me. When sinking in floods of sorrow, His strong, powerful arm of love has upheld me. When my spirit has been faint and weary, His ear has been ever open to my sighs; and when "pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that I despaired even of life," then His kind arm was under my head, and His right hand embraced me.

"Ye are Christ's." The precious metaphors of God's most Holy Word all fail to show forth the untold and ineffable love of the Church's Bridegroom, Lover, and Husband. Here is a question. How did we become the property of Christ? The Arminian and fleshly free-willer is determined to find the cause in himself. He will tell you how he began to work for God, how well he pleased God, and how admirably he worked himself into God's good graces, until, by perseverance, having something to pay, he became a partner in the concern. That won't do for us! We don't begin with ourselves; in fact, we don't begin at all. Self has no place in our creed nor in our confidence. Sinful self and righteous self are both excluded. If a man is occupied with self in any phase or feature thereof, pride is sure to inflate him, and he cannot be low at the footstool of sovereign mercy. It is only when we see ourselves utterly, utterly vile, when we are convinced that our best righteousness are as filthy rags, and the experience in which we boasted was but as the morning cloud and the early dew, then we can truly appreciate the truth that God is everything to us, and we can sing

"Saved from the power and guilt of sin,

The law's tremendous curse,

We'll now the sacred song begin

Where God began with us."

We will look at the property Christ has in His people in the light of four R's. Reservation. Redemption. Regeneration. Relationship.

"Ye are Christ's" by reservation. Know ye not that precious declaration in Jer. 50:20?"In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve." That God has a people whom He has reserved to Himself we gather from the encouraging words of the Angel of the covenant, or the ANGEL-JEHOVAH to doubting Elijah as he was sighing and crying in the desert. See 1 Kings 19:18, and Rom. 11:4,5: "I have reserved to Myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." Here we see that in all ages God has reserved to Himself a people. This reservation is styled in God's Word, Election, Predestination, Donation, or gift, and Separation. Am I Christ's? When did I become so? Oh, my dear friends, as the glory of the eternal Three shines in the heart of a poor lost sinner, he rejoices in the glorious view of what he was in the mind, will, purpose, pleasure, covenant, and counsel of the Father before all worlds. "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me," (John 17:6) said the covenant Surety to the Father as He prayed and pleaded on their behalf. Why did the Father give them to Christ? That He might be glorified in their everlasting salvation and security in Christ. He gave the Church as members to Christ their Head. This is THE CHRIST OF GOD. God's Christ, not man's Christ. The Christ of God's love. The Christ of God's design. The Christ of God's producing. The envy of all hell. The glory of all heaven. God wills, and none can frustrate His will, that His Christ shall appear before Him in glorious completeness Christ the Head and members one perfect body. It fills my heart with adoring gratitude, to know that the Father gave me to Christ, as a part of that body, which shall appear before Him in the perfection of Divine glory and beauty throughout all ages. See! He gave me to Christ to be saved from all those transgressions, sins, and iniquities that I should fall into first by Adam's act and deed, and then by my own base departures from Him. "Christ is the Head of the Church and the Saviour of the body." (Eph. 5:23)

"Ye are Christ's" as the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand. The beautiful flock of which He is the bountiful Shepherd. The flock of slaughter, hated and persecuted of men, but eternally loved of Him. Amid the wastes of a ruined creation the flock wanders far away from Him

"As far from God as sheep can run."

Not according to that compromise with Arminianism in Article 9. of the Church of England: "Man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil." God's Word, and the experience of God's child, says, gone altogether from original righteousness, and, instead of "inclined to evil," it is "only evil continually." (Gen. 6:5) Yes, His flock by nature is altogether gone from Him, and desires Him not, yet this is the truth in my case

"Jesus sought me when a stranger,

Wandering from the fold of God;

He, to save my soul from danger,

Interposed His precious blood."

Wandering sheep! Scattered sheep! Slaughtered sheep! All according to His predestined purpose, that He might magnify His own grace in their redemption, recovery, salvation, and eternal glorification. Our Lord Jesus Christ was not only set up as the Head of the body and the Shepherd of the sheep, but also as the Bridegroom of His bride, the Church. The bride was given to the heavenly Bridegroom in the council of eternity, and her espousal to her Lord was by the sovereign decree of God the Father, and in the set time of favour, to be witnessed in the heart of every elect vessel of mercy by God the ever-blessed Spirit.

"Ye are Christ's." Not only by reservation, but also by redemption. He, and He alone, had the right, the power, and the will to redeem His people; and He did redeem them. From the adoring heart of Zacharias flowed forth the precious confession: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people." (Luke 1:68) What is redemption? It is a buying back by the payment of a price demanded. The price is the precious blood of forfeited life of our sinless Surety and Saviour. This He gave for them, and thus they became His purchased possession. They are the purchase of His blood. They are His as the fruit of His sufferings. See Isaiah 53:11: "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied." Know ye what that means? I know precious few who do. Here we see the Lord Jesus Christ in soul travail, and in the understanding of this we can see something of the maternal aspect of eternal and unchanging love as flowing from the heart of our Lord Jesus Christ. He laboured in spirit and travailed in soul to bring forth, as it were, from the womb of Divine purpose a seed that should call Him blessed, and which should sound forth His praise for ever and for ever. Look at that precious declaration in Psalm 110:3: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power; in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning Thou hast the dew of Thy youth." From the womb of the eternal purpose. From the morning of the eternal day of grace Thou hast a reserved and redeemed people. Paul, writing to such, says: "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor. 6:19,20) Your members and your reasoning faculties are not your own. You belong wholly to Him who redeemed you at so great a price. I have pointed out to you aforetime that the priests in the Old Testament dispensation were set apart by the ear, the thumb, and the toe being touched by blood. And Old Testament type, but a New Covenant reality. My ear in my head denotes my will. My hand indicates my work. My feet signify my way. These all belong to Him.

"Ye are Christ's." Not only reserved by grace and redeemed by blood, but regenerate by power. "A seed shall serve him." (Ps. 22:30) These are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Pet. 1:23) What Word is this? The Bible? No, but that Word revealed in the Bible. What is the written Word to me without the Living Word, of which it testifies in me by the power of the Holy Ghost? Yes, what is the written Word to me without the revelation in me of the covenanting, creating, communicating, and blessed be His name, communing Word? Nothing whatever. We are born again by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever. We are children of God by the sovereign power and gracious indwelling of God the ever-blessed Spirit, who has given us an experimental interest and a personal oneness with our Lord and Master in His resurrection life. "I live." No, I do not. "Christ liveth in me." (Gal. 2:20) I live down here? No; I live up yonder. That is my home, where a precious Christ ever lives and possesses a blessed home for me.

"Ye are Christ's" by spiritual relationship. O, what a marvellous mercy to be able to sing

"Hail, sacred union, firm and strong!"

How great the grace! how sweet the song!

That rebel worms should ever be

One with incarnate Deity!"

Nearer to Him than wife is to husband. Nearer to Him than the babe is to her who bore it, and from whose bosom it drinks in nourishment more freely and lovingly given than it can partake of it. Nearer to Him than the son is to the father whose heart yearns over him with paternal affection. This is relationship eternal, indissoluble. The bride embraced in the everlasting arms and ever-loving heart of her royal Bridegroom. This relationship cannot be fully described, and is only revealed a little here and there during our wilderness journey. The fullest and clearest revelation we have of this relationship we find in John 17:21: "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee; that they also may be one in us." This is covenant relationship in ties of love and blood which can never be forfeited nor alienated. "Ye are Christ's." Christ's sheep. Christ's brethren. Christ's Church. Christ's bride.

II. WHAT? The saint's inventory "For all things are yours." This sounds strange in the face of Paul's declaration: "For whom I have suffered the loss of all things;" (Phil. 3:8) yet both are blessedly true. The moment we experience the possession of the unsearchable riches of Christ, away all old things are swept. I know it is so. With Christ we must suffer the loss of character, reputation, comforts, and earthly ease; ay, everything that tends to bind me to this wilderness world. "Having nothing" is spiritually true in the experience of every living child of God who sits at the feet of Jesus learning His will and drinking in of His Spirit. Turn to 2 Cor. 6:10: "Having nothing, and yet possessing all things." There you have it. Having nothing in this world to minister to my spiritual necessities, all things of a spiritual and eternal nature I have in Christ. It is only in the enjoyment of this covenant relationship that we possess experimentally any of the blessings treasured up in Him. Men may own broad lands, marvellous riches, vast estates, and splendid titles, but what are these apart from Him whom our souls love? Men add house to house and field to field, they build barns and store them, go to bed in the evening and wake up in the morning in hell. We boast not of our possessions here. Yet Paul could say: "All things are yours." It was in the understanding of this, I believe, that caused Dr. Watts to sing so sweetly

"Keep silence all created things,

And wait your Maker's nod;

My soul stands trembling while she sings

The honours of her God.

Life, death, and hell, and worlds unknown,

Hang on His firm decree;

He sits on no precarious throne,

Nor borrows leave to be."

All things are in His sovereign hand, and all things serve Him. What? This unstrung bundle of nerves which I feel myself to be this morning among the all things which serve Him? Yes, and together with this, the Holy Ghost thundering down to the very depths of my spiritual existence, "I will show thee greater

abominations than these." See! The temptations of the devil abound, disappointments meet on every hand, hopes are blighted, expectations perish, and where I seemed to be making for myself a spot in which I could serve God with cheerfulness, there, foe after foe breaks in upon me and spoils all my fair schemes of earthly and spiritual joy. Why? To teach me that I must find my all in Him, and that all things work together for good to me.

"All things are yours." First of all, the ministers of the Gospel are yours. Paul, Apollos, and Cephas are given as illustrations, and here we may consider the first clause of the text, "Therefore let no man glory in men." There is an abundance of this which makes for divisions and distractions. Invidious comparisons are drawn between ministers, and one is held up to admiration while another is despised. Is one, according to the mind of the Spirit, eloquent, another favoured with a sweet experience, another deeply taught and exercised? The one is as near and as dear to the Master as the other. It is folly for the children to be bolstering up one at the expense of another. Let me give you a case in point. One Tuesday night I was away. Previous to the service, one of our friends heard that I should be absent, and said to his wife, "We won't go to chapel tonight, as Mr. Bradbury will not be there." He went to his room but God gave him no comfort there. He left the room, met his wife, both were on the same errand; they must not stay away from chapel because Mr. Bradbury was absent. They came. My dear friend Ponsford preached from Rom. 8:1. He was led to speak of the Headship of Christ as seen in the comparison of Adam the first and Adam the last. Precious truth was revealed to our friends, unknown to them before; and to this day they bless God for that visit to Grove chapel. God sends His ministers with His word and fits them for their respective spheres according to His will. Some are pioneers preparing the way, others are pastors for the feeding of the flock. Gifted ministers and humble servants are equally owned of God, and it is our mercy to know that popularity is no criterion of God's approbation. All God-sent ministers are yours, and though we may, and do, prefer one before the rest, let us be careful how we speak of any of God's anointed ones.

"All things are yours." "The world?" Ay, the world, though we are separated from the world that lieth in the wicked one. Yet it is a marvellous fact that the world we are separated from is ours. The devil will try to make us believe that all the pleasures in this world are at his command. As he said to the Master, so he will say to the servant, "All these things will I give thee, if." Why, all things belonged to Christ as earth's rightful Lord and Head over all creation for His Church. The devil blinds the eyes of his own with the fleeting brilliancy and fading pleasures of this world. All that the world contains and all that transpires in it is for Jehovah's glory and the good of His children. "Wherefore do the wicked live?" To be God's sword to cut the cords which bind His children to earth, God's hammer to smash their hard hearts and break all their fair designs of earthly ease, God's chisel, God's rasp, God's sandpaper, to polish His jewels of electing love. Why do the tares grow together with the wheat? To keep the wheat warm. It is marvellous for us to notice how God puts all creation under contribution for the good of His Church. See! "Fire and hail; snow and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling His word." (Ps. 148:8) The fire preserved the three Hebrew children. The water defended the Israelites and drowned their enemies. In Joshua's days, hailstones defeat the armies of Canaan. Hail, lice, flies, locusts plague the Egyptians. A snow-drift shelters a praying family from persecuting foes. A Scotch mist hides the worshipping Covenanters from the bloodthirsty dragoons of Claverhouse. God is never at a loss for means to shelter, defend, and feed His own. "The earth is the Lord's," and He will use it for His own glory.

"All things are yours." "Life of death." Is it this miserable fleeting life which must cease at the moment of dissolution? Yes, and something more. It is life in union with a risen Jesus, life promised before the world began, life communicated by the power of the Holy Ghost. Life imperishable, yet life given for a prey. "Or

death." Are you afraid of it? There are some who, through fear of death, are all their lifetime subject to bondage. (Heb. 2:15) Death, that thing of fleshly fear, is the portal of glory, over which God has written: "Jesus Christ has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel." (2 Tim. 1:10) The sting of death is sin, and the end of sin is death. In the death of Christ death lost its sting, for sin was put away and every question concerning it for ever settled between God and His elect.

"Things present, or things to come," are yours. Things present may not be very pleasant, but they are all right, all in the will. "Things to come." The anxious dread tomorrow. The toils and weariness of the coming week. The endeavours of Satan's brood to spoil our rest and soil our reputation. The dreaded hour and article of death. The promises all fulfilled. Foes all defeated. God's purposes of redeeming love all fulfilled. Entrance into glory. A glorious eternity with Him. "All are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

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