

We Are Accepted in the Beloved

by Thomas Bradbury

The sermon emphasizes the significance of the Beloved in our relationship with God, and how we can experience acceptance and salvation through Him.

Topics: "Union With Christ", "Divine Acceptance"

Description

Thomas Bradbury preaches on the profound truth of being 'Accepted in the Beloved,' emphasizing the undeserved grace and approval received through Jesus Christ. He delves into the deep experience of knowing and feeling the truth of being accepted in Christ, despite our unworthiness, and the paradox of growing in grace while recognizing our own sinfulness. Bradbury highlights the believer's position 'In the Beloved,' showcasing the eternal, unchanging union between Christ and His people through various metaphors like living stones in a spiritual building and fruitful branches in the True Vine. The sermon concludes with the perfection found in being 'Accepted in the Beloved,' where believers are received with approval, bound to the Receiver, and graced with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Transcript

"Accepted in the Beloved." (Ephesians 1:6)

Such precious words as these, appear too full of glorious grace for "a poor vile sinner" like me to take upon my lips. I say not this to produce effect, or to awaken any fleshly sensation in your minds, for I know that such productions last only for the moment, and pulpit effects, arising from the flesh and the devil, will perish with the experience of them. I have no desire to appear pre-eminent in sinnership, or in the experience of sin in its heinousness, but I speak thus, because God, in spite of my desires and determinations, makes me both know and feel the truthfulness of what I have declared.

It is a sweet mercy to me to be enabled intelligently, and I believe spiritually, through the teaching of the Holy Ghost, to trace out a God-given and a God-wrought experience in harmony with those whom He has made conspicuous in the display of His sovereign, rich, and all-conquering grace. As I read my Bible and my Bible reads me I love this blessed reciprocity I find the longer a redeemed sinner lives, and is blessed with the company and confidence of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Revealer of the Father's secrets, the Executor of the Father's will, and the more he will want to know Him.

I will tell you something more. The brighter the revelation of God's Christ to his soul, and the blacker self will be in his spiritual apprehension. The more his heart is warmed with a sense of the love of his God, and

the more he will mourn because of his coldness and deadness. This is a paradox which no hypocrite or mere professor can understand for a single moment. As the child of God grows in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and he sees more of His beauty, enjoys more of His bounty, and feels more of His blessedness, the more he is brought into a true conception of what he is in himself as a wretched, ruined, undeserving, and hell-deserving sinner.

See! Left to himself, all that he can do is to disbelieve every word of God's Book. Left to himself, though he takes up the hymn book and with his lips joins in singing these precious hymns, yet his heart is cold and listless, over which he mourns and weeps. He meets with God's dear people and he judges himself the vilest of them all. He meets with the children of the devil, and though his own heart shows him the wickedness of every one of them, yet he hates to be found amongst them.

But amongst them he must be found, for to shun them altogether, "then must he needs go out of the world." (1 Cor. 5:10) The wheat will grow amongst the tares, and the tares amongst the wheat, but there is no spiritual association. Business and other matters necessitate the meeting of the children of God and the children of the devil, but the heaven-born one quits the other's company as quickly as possible, not because he thinks himself better than they, for he judges his wretched nature to be a thousand times worse.

Yes, he discovers in himself a concentration of all the sins of all the people in the universe, and he discovers something else a heart, yearning, longing, panting and desiring after communion with a glorious God, and fellowship with a precious Christ. He would embrace God's Christ with warmth of love hitherto unknown, and he would remain in the heart-reviving embrace of the arms of everlasting love. It is no mean privilege to be brought into such an experience as this. When it is developed in the heart and understanding by the grace and indwelling of God the ever-blessed Spirit, Christ is exalted and self is ignored and excluded.

This we see in the experience of the apostle Paul. When he was confronted by those who called in question his apostleship, he could say, "In nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing." (2 Cor. 12:11) That appears to be high ground for Paul to take; but it was not a whit too high for God to give him, and what God had given, he had a right to maintain. For personal position and official importance the Spirit-taught child of God cares little, while the mere professor will aim for them with all his might. Perhaps the people of God sometimes put too low an estimate on the gifts of His providence, and hold them with too loose a hand: but for a man to aspire to a pulpit and make himself a king in it is purely absurd. A king! A poor wretched pauper to be a king in a pulpit? A man who has a true conception of himself in the light of infinite excellency, and who measures himself according to the infinite perfections of his Lord and Master, will seek, not his own glory, but God's; not his own exaltation, but Christ's; not his own honour, but the Spirit's. The true estimate which the God-sent minister has of himself is that of Paul, "though I be nothing." The apostle desired to be nothing before the Church except as he stood in the person of Christ. This he would not let go at the beck of Satan or the taunts of his blood, hence he said, "I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles." (2 Cor. 11:5) But listen! "For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle." (1 Cor. 15:9) That is growing; but it downward in self-esteem. See how he continues in his growth. Eph. 3:8: "less than the least of all saints." That is a blessed position for a poor child to be brought to. I know and feel it in my inmost soul this morning. Now turn to 1 Tim, 1:15: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

This reminds me of a dear old gentleman in Lancashire, concerning whose religion my now glorified friend, the late rector of Openshaw, had misgivings. One day the two were brought together. Mr. Parks seized an opportunity to test him. He said, "Well, Mr. Evans, surrounded as you are with blessings and luxuries, surely you can have no anxieties, cares, or perplexities." A tear started to the dear old gentleman's eyes, and in accents which evidenced deep inward emotion, he said, "Oh, Mr. Parks, don't talk like that! All this without Christ would be eternal ruin to me; but a crust with Christ would be the delight of my heart." A religion like that will do wont it? Just think about it. I must not go any further with these preliminaries, but, in humble dependence upon the guidance and grace of God the Holy Ghost, seek for mutual comfort, edification, and establishment in the deep things of God, from this glorious declaration of His most Holy Word, "Accepted in the Beloved."

I. THE PERSON "The Beloved."

II. THE POSITION "In the Beloved."

III. THE PERFECTION "Accepted in the Beloved."

I. THE PERSON "The Beloved." In this precious title we have more than I shall be able to get through this morning, or able to talk about while I remain among you. If all the world could not contain the books that should be written concerning Jesus, (John 21:25) how on earth can any poor pulpit pigmy think of exhausting a theme so great, glorious, and vast, as this of "the Beloved?" We hear of exhaustive preachers, but you may rest assured that the patience of the hearers is exhausted and not the fullness of the theme.

I love to deal out clean provender to clean beasts who chew the cud, and "inly ruminates" the glorious truths which God has spoken concerning His own loved Zion as seen by Him "accepted in the Beloved." In the contemplation of this precious portion our minds are lost in wonder, love, and praise. "THE BELOVED!" Who is He? The Beloved is God's most glorious Christ. The Beloved is our own Brother born for adversity. The Beloved is the Friend of sensible, saved, and eternally-loved sinners.

The Beloved is the Husband, Provider, Preserver, and Protector of His bride, the Church. He has been graciously pleased to manifest Himself to us as our Friend, and to reveal to us the covenant necessity that He must show Himself friendly to us. Again and again has He shown His friendship and love. When we were convinced by His holy law that without a perfect righteousness we must be for ever undone, He revealed Himself to us as the Righteousness of God in the perfection of His obedience to that law for us.

When we were ready to perish, and as poor hell-deserving wretches we dreaded the just wrath and indignation of a sin-hating God. He showed Himself friendly in revealing to us His marvellous condescension in coming down to endure the doom and suffer the death we so richly deserved. He showed Himself friendly in sending His good Spirit to teach, guide, comfort, and establish us in the faith of God's elect, and reveal to us a perfect Saviour who saves us from all our transgressions, sins, and iniquities.

Sins past, sins present, and sins to come. Sins committed with greediness previous to His revelation in me. Sins of ingratitude and rebellion since He made Himself known to me as my own God and Saviour. Sins against His agony and bloody sweat. Sins against His blessed Spirit. Sins against the blessed privilege He has thrust upon me to declare His glorious salvation and His loving sympathy with the tried and exercised hearts of His afflicted brethren. Though such a sinner, yet saved experimentally a thousand

times over, and here this morning to confess myself a greater sinner than ever, yet able to look up with a little confidence and thank God for putting me among such children as Mary Magdalene, that walking hell out of which Christ cast seven devils, and dear old Peter who denied Him and followed Him afar off, and that is all that I can do if He leaves me to myself for a single moment.

But, blessed be His holy name, He knows that I do follow Him, and that there are those now within these walls who follow Him at a distance with whose exercised spirits He has the tenderest sympathy. Our Jesus has not only saved us from sins that are past, but He has pledged Himself to save us from sins present and from sins to come. A pious objector to God's covenant and salvation will say, "What! do you mean that in the face of grace so bountiful and love so divine you have a license to sin?"

Get thee behind me, Satan. If I must have the desire of my heart, I would never commit another sin. But the purposes of JEHOVAH must be fulfilled, and His designs of grace must be accomplished, therefore the devil, who can only go the length of his tether, will tempt me, and I shall sin. In all this God's Christ will be exalted and the Father glorified. The sovereignty of His grace will be manifested in my deliverance from every sin, and in my presentation before the throne of His glory without failure, fault, or flaw by Christ, with Christ, and in Christ.

What think ye of such a Gospel as this? "Oh! there is too much sovereignty in it," cries Mr. Mongrel Calvinist. "There is too much of man's sin and God's free-grace, which makes God the author of sin," screams old Lady Legality. Well, let them cry and scream as they will, if the testimony from this pulpit should prove the means in the hands of God of sweeping away the whole congregation, I say, let the spirit of the testimony be intensified and that precious fact be reiterated to the praise of the glory of His grace,

"Though sinning, yet free from all sin."

"The Beloved." Who is He? The Beloved of the Father. Turn to John 17:24. There you see Him standing on high ground. As the Father's righteous Servant, the Steward of His bounties, and the Mediator of the covenant, He renders an account of His faithful service, and demands the reward due to the same. He says, "Father, I will." This is not simply a plea but a demand, a command.

"For all that come to God by Him

Salvation He demands;

Points to their names upon His breast,

And spreads His wounded hands."

There is the demand of the all-prevailing Intercessor to His ever-loving Father. "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." (John 17:24) The Beloved of the Father before all worlds. Between the Father and the Son in their perfect oneness in Godhead there was mutual and ineffable love, but the love of the Father was revealed to Him, as the Head and Representative of grace, when He was appointed as the great and glorious Head of the Church, the Surety of the covenant and the Saviour of His people. Turn with me to that precious testimony concerning Him in Proverbs 8:22-31. Christ, as the Wisdom of God, here speaks: "The LORD possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, or ever the earth was. Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in the habitable

part of His earth; and My delights were with the sons of men." Where is the habitable part of God's earth? St. Peter's at Rome? St. Paul's Cathedral? Your pretty tabernacles? Your beautiful parish churches? No! The hungering, thirsting, longing, panting child of God may seek Him in these and never find Him in one of them. Where, then, is the habitable part of God's earth? Long before the world began, infinite and eternal delight was in these spots. See Isaiah 57:15: "For thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." Look again at Isaiah 66:2: "To this man" to this piece of earth, elect of God and redeemed by blood "will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." Jehovah's joy and delight was in His Christ, and Jesus' delight was in His people before the world began. The habitable part of Jehovah's earth is the heart of His elect. In this we see something of what that means, "In whom ye are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. 2:22)

"The Beloved." The Father proclaims Him so. See Isaiah 42:1: "Behold." Something wonderful is coming. "Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine Elect." God's elect! Put the capital E to that name and there you see God's Christ. In this verse of Watts finds sweet agreement:

"Christ be My First Elect,' He said,

Then close our souls in Christ our Head,

Before He gave the mountains birth,

Or laid foundations for the earth."

Christ the Head of His elect brethren by Divine appointment and covenant engagement. He is the Head, we are the members. He is the Saviour, we are the saved. He is the Elect Brother, we are the elect brethren in union with Him, according to that precious chapter, Heb. 2:11: "For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." What does this mean? All of one family. "Therefore He is not ashamed to call them brethren." Christ, God's First Elect, not ashamed of, but identified with, the whole election of grace, and God the Father eternally delighting in them. "Mine Elect in whom My soul delighteth." This is Christ the Beloved of the Father. Turn now to Matt. 3:17: "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" or, "in whom My soul delighteth." Turn to Matt. 17:5, where you have narrated that amidst the raptures of Tabor's mount, when Christ was transfigured before His disciples, "Behold a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." Hear Him, the Beloved of the Father, the Proclaimer of His truth, the Revealer of His will, the Prophet of the Church. But let us look at this a little closer. Beloved of the Father! In what? 1. In the worth of His person. 2. In the work of His hands. 3. In the words of His mouth.

1. In the worth of His person. See John 3:35: "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand." All spiritual blessings, all covenant mercies, every needful grace, and all Divine consolations given into the hand of a precious Christ by the Father and wholly on the ground of the Father's love to the Son. Thus invested with all authority the Beloved could say, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." (Matt. 28:18) And, "As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him." (John 17:2) Oh, what a glorious Christ! All things in His hands are right. All the elect in His hands are secure. All blessings in His hands are inalienable. All things in heaven, in earth, and in hell are for the display of His glory, and, whether for the pain or for the pleasure of His people, they work together for good to them. He is not only the Beloved of the Father in the worth and beauty of His

Person, 2. but also in the work of His hands. See John 8:29: "And He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone: for I do always those things that please Him." Always, from Bethlehem to Calvary. In every thought of His heart, in every look of His eye, in every word of His tongue, in every action of His body, the Father was well pleased. This you see in Isaiah 42:21: "The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness sake." 3. He is the Beloved of the Father in the words of His mouth. Look at that precious testimony in John 11:42: "And I knew that Thou hearest Me always." Hearest with approbation, appreciation, and untold delight. Christ beloved in covenant, beloved because of the worth of His Person, beloved because of the work of His hands, beloved because of the words of His mouth, beloved because of the sweetness and power of His intercession on the behalf of His poor dumb children. Now He is exalted with great triumph into His Father's kingdom where He stands the one Object of the Father's delight and the adoring gratitude of all the glorified ones there.

"The Beloved." The Father's delight and affection in His Son is communicated to every member of the one body by the gracious will of God the ever-blessed Spirit, therefore the Father's Beloved is the Beloved of the Spirit. None can fully comprehend the love the blessed Spirit has in the Christ of God. Oh, my dear friends, oftentimes have I told you that we fall very far short of a just and true appreciation of the love of the Holy Ghost! Would that we could sing every moment that precious verse which God sent home to my heart in my prayer this morning:

"And Thou, eternal Spirit vast,

What love can Thine transcend?

Since Thou Thy lot with me hath cast,

Indwelling God and Friend!"

How is it that the Holy Ghost can make this vile body His dwelling-place, or take up His abode with any poor and undone sinner in this assembly? It is not simply because of the ineffable delight and love that the Father has in His Son, but because of the love that the Spirit also has in Him, therefore He must love all in union with Him. At your leisure, read over John 14,15, and 16., where you will see the promises of Christ that the Holy Ghost should be sent down from the bright heights of glory into dark dungeons, filthy holes, pits of corruption, wretched dens, and find out the most wretched of Adam's race such as depraved Rahab, filthy David, blood-thirsty Manasseh, the devil-possessed Magdalene, ay, and to hell-deserving me. Don't some of you find a vibration in your hearts and a quivering response And to me? Look at that precious testimony in Rom. 15:30: "The love of the Spirit." The Spirit loves God's Christ and reveals Him in the experience of the saints. He delights to glorify Him and give Him the pre-eminence over all things in the hearts of His people.

"The Beloved." Here we come a little closer home. He is the Beloved of souls in experimental union with Him. Why do they love Him? His love to them was uninfluenced; their love to Him was influenced by His. "We love Him, because He first love us." (1 John 4:19) When His love is revealed in me by the grace and indwelling of God the Holy Ghost, I cannot help myself, but am compelled to say with Peter, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." (John 21:17) And I cannot help but write bitter things against myself, because my love to Him is so feeble and faint, and I think of Him so little. I can sing indeed and in truth with Watts

"Dear Lord! and shall I ever live

At this poor dying rate

My love so faint, so cold to Thee,

And Thine to me so great?"

Why do we love Him? Ask the Psalmist. See Psalm 116:1: "I love the Lord, because He hath heard my voice and my supplications." And at verse 7, he says, "The Lord hath dealt bountifully with me." Then, if we love the Lord because He hath dealt bountifully with us, we love Him because of His covenant love in Christ Jesus and His blessing us with all spiritual blessings in Him according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." (Eph. 1:3,4) What marvellous provision!

What an unspeakable mercy to be brought into His house of wine, and, though "a poor vile sinner," to stand under the banner of everlasting love, without spot, flaw, wrinkle, or any such thing. Here I love Him "because He hath heard my voice and my supplications." The supplications which have gone forth in sighs, groans, and longings for the revelation of His own rich grace, for the experience of that covenant mercy which flows through the wounds, blood, and righteousness of my matchless and adorable Lord.

But let us look at this love as revealed in New Testament Scripture. You remember that precious scene described in John 21:15-17. Here we see Peter who followed his Master afar off, Peter whom Jesus caused to be mentioned by name to the women after His resurrection. "But go your way, tell His disciples, and Peter." Peter who lied, and cursed, and swore. Now you are going too far, says Mr. Precise. Am I? Not one step further than God has graciously revealed in His Word, and if you dare to find fault with Him, then fire as many shafts at me as you like, for they wont hurt me at all.

In the scene before us Jesus is represented as speaking to poor wavering Peter. He addresses him as Simon, for whensoever the Lord spoke a word of loving correction to him He invariably addressed him by his old name, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." The same question is repeated. I love to have a repetition of such questions from Him to my heart. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?" The same answer.

"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved." This does not mean that he was vexed with the threefold question, but grieved with himself. He remembered his threefold denial. He remembered the sorrows of his Master's heart when they were fast asleep in dark Gethsemane, and when they all forsook Him and fled. "He said unto Him, Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." Before the display of the rare beauties and rich graces of the Bridegroom, the adoring bride cries out, "This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend." (Songs 5:16) He was loved by the saints in Old Testament times.

He was loved by the confessors and martyrs who suffered for His name. Ay, and He is loved this morning by His scattered and peeled ones, His tempted and tried followers who write many bitter things against themselves, but who have not one hard thought of Him. He is loved by the poor in spirit who have no stock of grace to boast of. He is loved by those who mourn over sin and after Him. He is loved by those who hunger and thirst increasingly for sweet fellowship, blessed association, and hallowed communion with Him. What think ye of such a Beloved as this? He will soon "come to be glorified fully in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." (2 Thess. 1:10) We will now consider

II. THE POSITION "In the Beloved." I love that little word with a big meaning, "in." The Scriptures abound with this expression, which shows forth the eternal, indissoluble, unchanging union existing between Christ and His people. "In Christ." How are they in Him? In Him by the purpose, goodwill, and pleasure of the Father. In Him by covenant decrees. In Him by eternal predestination. In Him by sovereign election. In Him by spiritual regeneration. In Him by gracious preservation and everlasting glorification. "In Him." See what metaphors abound. Living stones in a spiritual building can never perish or pass away, because the strength and eternity of the Foundation is communicated to the building. Christ imparts to all His members the durability and permanency only to be found in Him. Fruitful branches in the True Vine cannot decay and die because of their union to their Living Root, Christ Jesus, who says to every mourner over its own barrenness: "From Me is thy fruit found." (Hosea 14:8) Members of the one body cannot perish because of their oneness with their ever-living and sympathizing Head. All strength, sympathy, comfort, and consolation flows from this great and glorious Head to every member of His body, the Church. But this is not all. Look at Israel in Goshen, under the shelter and security of the sprinkled blood. Here I wish to give you a hint again. You will hear persons talking sometimes of trusting in the blood, but you cannot find a sentence in all God's Book, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation, about trusting in the blood. What then are we to trust in? Trust in a living, glorified, and reigning Christ, every drop of whose precious blood was shed for His people. It is trust in a living Person. It is trust in an infallible Prophet. It is trust in a prevailing Priest. It is trust in a reigning King. It is trust in the Beloved. Look! The angel was to pass through the land of Egypt for the destruction of the firstborn, and to prove to the Egyptians that all their strength and beauty was in the hands of Israel's God. The Israelites were in their houses. The blood of the lamb was sprinkled upon the lintel and doorposts of their houses; but we find nothing about faith in the blood. God speaks, "When I see the blood I will pass over you." (Exod. 12:13) Mark you this! "When I see the blood," not when you see feel, or believe in it. Did He not pass over you through the whole dark season of your unregeneracy? It was then by the blood of the covenant sprinkled before the ark and the mercy-seat He manifested His care and concern over you. It was then, long before I knew Him,

"Determin'd to save, He watch'd o'er my path

When, Satan's blind slave, I sported with death."

And while He cut down thousands on the right hand and on the left, who went post haste to hell, yet I, who deserved that doom as much as they, am here to testify of His preserving love, and to sound aloud the precious fact that "He saw the blood and passed over me." "As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also He will deliver it, and passing over He will preserve it." (Isa. 31:5)

When Noah had finished building the ark, God said unto him, "Come thou and all thine house into the ark; for thee have I seem righteous before Me in this generation." (Gen. 7:1) Mark that word "Come." Noah must enter the ark with God, and God must enter with Noah. These two friends could not be parted. When Noah and his God were in the ark together, "the Lord shut him in," and shut the world out. Judgment came. The waters of the deluge drowned the world, but only beat upon the ark, which was a glorious type of God's Christ, His own Beloved, in whom the whole election of grace abides for ever safe. Look again at Lot. God said to him, "Haste thee, escape thither, for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither." (Gen. 19:22) To little Zoar lingering Lot was led by His covenant God, and when safely sheltered in it the fire of heaven descended and consumed the guilty cities of the plain.

Look at God's testimony concerning the position of the saint as given in this first of Ephesians. "In Christ," as God's eternally-loved ones. Blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ. (verse 3) Chosen in Him.

(verse 4) Predestinated in Him. (verse 5) Accepted in Him. (verse 6) Redeemed in Him. (verse 7) And inheritance in Him. (verse 11) "In Him!" When?

"Hail, sacred union, firm and strong!

How great the grace, how sweet the song!

That rebel worms should ever be

One with Incarnate Deity.

One in the tomb, one when He rose;

One when He triumph'd o'er His foes;

One when in heaven He took His seat,

While seraphs sang all hell's defeat."

See! In Him, when He was a little babe at Bethlehem. Oh, what a mercy to know that all my necessities, when I hung a poor weakling upon my mother's breast, were met and answered in the infant child Jesus. In Him, when He was a boy at Nazareth. Oftentimes I think of the days of my boyhood, especially when singing those precious words of Addison:

"When in the slippery paths of youth

With heedless steps I ran,

Thine arm unseen conveyed me safe,

And brought me up to man."

But the steps of the youthful Jesus were not heedless, He was ever diligent in His Father's business, and all this, with the spotlessness of His sinless life, was set down to my account. See! In Him when He was incarnate. In Him when He was circumcised. In Him when He was baptized. In Him when He was crucified. In Him in His resurrection. In Him when He ascended with great triumph into His glory-home up yonder. In Him loved with an everlasting love. In Him saved with an everlasting salvation. In Christ as Christ is. "Herein is love with us made perfect." (1 John 4:17) The perfection of love is seen in the incarnation of God's Beloved, and known in the revelation of Him in our hearts. God's Christ in us is God's love to us, and gives us boldness in the day of judgment. When Satan, the world, and an evil heart judges, "there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, (Rom. 8:1) for as He is so are they in this world." He is away from all sin, and danger, and death; "so are we." Can you believe it? When you can, it is a time of rejoicing. When you cannot, it is a time of hope. Blessed truth. "He performeth all things for me." (Ps. 57:2)

III. THE PERFECTION "Accepted in the Beloved." What is it to be accepted? It is to be received with approval and bound to the Receiver. As I look at myself I feel that my due desert is rejection; but as I am blessed with spiritual and reviving views of the Father's Beloved, the Spirit's Beloved, the saint's Beloved, and the contrite sinner's Beloved, I rejoice in being accepted in Him. Accepted in the person, righteousness, and satisfaction of Jesus Christ. Accepted as He sings for me when my heart is too

sorrowful to sing. Accepted as He prays for me, when I know not how to pray, or what to pray for as I ought.

"My prayer His prayer to God for me."

Look at this precious word, "accepted," in its fullness of grace and truth. The simple meaning of the word is, "graced in the Beloved." Every grace treasured up in a precious Christ for us. The grace of election, redemption, regeneration, faith, repentance, introduction, and presentation, all in the Beloved. Do I say, "I am black?" He says, "Thou art comely." (Songs 1:5) Do I confess my vileness? He says, "Thou art all fair, My love, there is no spot in thee." (Songs 4:7) Do I mourn my imperfections? He says, "Thou art perfect in Christ Jesus." Do I weep over my faults? He says, "Without fault before the throne of God." (Rev. 14:5) Though I say, I am unholy and full of blame, He assures me that He chose me before the foundation of the world that I should be holy and without blame before Him. Was I an enemy in my mind by wicked works? He says, "Thou art reconciled to Me in the body of My dear Son's flesh, and He presents thee to Me, holy in My election, unblameable in His perfection, and unreprouceable by the sweet witnessing and gracious indwelling of My blessed Spirit."

May He add His blessing for His name's sake. Amen.

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