

His Name—The Counsellor

A Sermon

(No. 215)

Delivered on Sabbath Morning, September 26, 1858, by the

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at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor.”—[Isaiah 9:6](#).

LAST SABBATH MORNING we considered the first title, “His name shall be called Wonderful:” this morning we take the second word, “Counsellor.” I need not repeat the remark, that of course these titles belong only to the Lord Jesus Christ, and that we cannot understand the passage except by referring it to Messiah—the Prince. It was by a Counsellor that this world was ruined. Did not Satan mask himself in the serpent, and counsel the woman with exceeding craftiness, that she should take unto herself of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, in the hope that thereby she should be as God? Was it not that evil counsel which provoked our mother to rebel against her Maker, and did it not as the effect of sin, bring death into this world with all its train of woe? Ah! beloved, it was meet that the world should have a Counsellor to restore it, if it had a Counsellor to destroy it. It was by counsel that it fell and certainly, without counsel it never could have arisen. But mark the difficulties that surrounded such a Counsellor. ‘Tis easy to counsel mischief; but how hard to counsel wisely! To cast down is easy, but to build up how hard! To confuse this world, and bring upon it all its train of ills was, an easy thing. A woman plucked the fruit and it was done; but to restore order to this confusion, to sweep away the evils which brooded over this fair earth, this was work indeed, and “Wonderful” was that Christ who came forward to attempt the work, and who in the plentitude of his wisdom hath certainly accomplished it, to his own honor and glory, and to our comfort and safety.

We shall now enter upon the discussion of this title which is given to Christ, a title peculiar to our Redeemer; and you will see why it should be given to him and why there was a necessity for such a Counsellor.

Now, our Lord Jesus Christ is a Counsellor in a three-fold sense. First, he is *God’s Counsellor*; he sits in the cabinet council of the King of heaven; he has admittance into the privy chamber, and is the Counsellor with God. In the second place, Christ is a Counsellor in the sense which the Septuagint translation appends to this term. Christ is said to be *the angel of the great council*. He is a Counsellor in that he communicates to us in God’s behalf, what has been done in the great council before the foundation of the world. And thirdly, Christ is *a Counsellor to us and with us*, because we can consult with him, and he doth counsel and advise us as to the right way and the path of peace.

I. Beginning then, with the first point, Christ may well be called Counsellor, for he is a COUNSELLOR WITH GOD. And here let us speak with reverence, for we are about to enter upon a very solemn subject. It hath been revealed to us that before the world was, when as yet God had not made the stars, long ere space sprang into being, the Almighty God did hold a solemn conclave with himself; Father, Son and Spirit held a mystic council with each other, as to what they were about to do. That council, although we read but little of it in Scripture, was nevertheless most certainly held; we have abundant traces of it, for though it is a doctrine obscure through the effulgence of that light to which no man can approach, and not simply and didactically explained, as some other doctrines are, yet we have continual tracings and incidental mentionings of that great, eternal and wonderful council, which was held between the three glorious persons of Trinity before the world began. Our first question with ourselves is, why did God hold a council at all? And here, we must answer, that God did not hold a council because of any deficiency in his knowledge, for God understandeth all things from the beginning; his knowledge is the sum total of everything that is noble, and infinite is that sum total, infinitely above everything that is counted noble. Thou, O God, hast thoughts that are unsearchable, and thou knowest what no mortal ken can ever attain unto. Nor, again, did God hold any consultation for the increase of his satisfaction. Sometimes men, when they have determined what to do, will nevertheless seek counsel of their friends, because they say, "If their advice agrees with mine it adds to my satisfaction. and confirms me in my resolution." But God is everlastingly satisfied with himself, and Knoweth not the shadow of a doubt to cloud his purpose; therefore, the council was not held with any motive or intent of that sort. Nor, again, was it held with a view of deliberation; Men take weeks and months and sometimes years, to think out a thing that is surrounded with difficulties; they have to find the clue with much research; enveloped in folds of mystery, they have to take off first one garment and then another, before they find out the naked glorious truth. Not so God. God's deliberations are as flashes of lightning; they are as wise as if he had been eternally considering, but the thoughts of his heart, though swift as lightning, are as perfect as the whole system of the universe. The reason why God is represented as holding a council, if I think rightly, is this: that we might understand how wise God is. "In the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom." It is for us to think that in the council of the Eternal Three, each Person in the undivided Trinity being omniscient and full of wisdom, there must have been the sum total of all wisdom. And again, it was to show the unanimity and co-operation of the sacred persons: God the Father hath done nothing alone in creation or salvation. Jesus Christ hath done nothing alone; for even the work of his redemption, albeit that he suffered in some sense alone, needed the sustaining hand of the Spirit, and the accepting smile of the Father, before it could be completed. God said not, "I will make man," but "Let *us* make man in our own image." God saith not merely, "I will save," but the inference from the declarations of Scripture is, that the design of the

three persons of the blessed Trinity was to save a people to themselves, who should show forth their praise. It was, then, for our sakes, not for God's sake, the council was held—that we might know the unanimity of the glorious persons, and the deep wisdom of their devices.

Yet another remark concerning the council. It may be asked, "What were the topics deliberated upon at that first council, which was held before the day-star knew its place, and planets ran their round?" We reply, "The first topic was creation." We are told in the passage we have read, (Proverbs viii,) that the Lord Jesus Christ, who represents himself as Wisdom, was with God before the world was created, and we have every reason to believe that we are to understand this as meaning, that he was not only with God in company, but with God in co-operation. Besides, we have other Scriptures to prove that "all things were made by him and without him was not any thing made that was made." And to quote yet another passage that clinches this truth. God said, "Let *us* make *man*;" so that a part of the consultation was with reference to the making of worlds, and the creatures that should inhabit them. I believe that in the sovereign council of eternity, the mountains were weighed in scales, and the hills in balances; then was it fixed in sovereign council how far the sea should go, and where should be its bounds—when the sun should arise and come forth, like a giant from the chambers of his darkness, and when he should return again to his couch of rest. Then did God decree the moment when he should say, "Let there be light," and the moment when the sun should be turned into darkness, and the moon into a clot of blood. Then did he ordain the form and size of every angel, and the destinies of every creature; then did he sketch in his infinite thought, the eagle as he soared to heaven and the worm as he burrowed into the earth. Then the little as well as the great, the minute as well as the immense, came under the sovereign decree of God. There was that book written, of which Dr. Watts sings—

"Chained to his throne a volume lies,
With all the fates of men,
With every angel's form and size,
Drawn by th' eternal pen."

Christ was a Counsellor in the matter of creation; with none else took he counsel; none else instructed him. Christ was the Counsellor for all the wondrous works of God.

The second topic that was discussed in this council was the *work of Providence*. God does not act towards this world like a man who makes a watch, and lets it have its own way till it runs down; he is the controller of every wheel in the machine of providence. He has left nothing to itself. We talk of general laws, and philosophers tell us that the world is governed by laws, and then they put the Almighty out of the question. Now, how can a nation be governed by laws apart from a sovereign, or apart from magistrates and rulers to carry out the laws? All the laws may be in the statute book, but put all the police away, take away every magistrate, remove the high court of parliament, what is the use of laws? Laws cannot govern without active agency to carry them out; nor could nature proceed in its everlasting

cycles, by the mere force of law. God is the great motive-power of all things; he is in everything. Not only did he make all things, but by him all things consist. From all eternity, Christ was the Counsellor of his Father with regard to providence—when the first man should be born, when he should wander, and when he should be restored—when the first monarchy should rise, and when its sun should set—where his people should be placed, how long they should be placed, and where they should be moved. Was it not the Most High who divided to the nations their inheritance? Hath he not appointed the bounds of our habitation? Oh! heir of heaven, in the day of the great council Christ counselled his Father as to the weight of thy trials, as to the number of thy mercies, if they be numerable, and as to the time, the way, and the means whereby thou shouldst be brought to himself. Remember, there is nothing that happens in your daily life, but what was first of all devised in eternity, and counselled by Jesus Christ for your good and in your behalf, that all things might work together for your lasting benefit and profit. But, my friends, what unfathomable depths of wisdom must have been involved, when God consulted with himself with regard to the great book of providence! Oh, how strange providence seems to you and to me! Does it not look like a zig-zag line, this way and that way, backward and forward, like the journeyings of the children of Israel in the wilderness? Ah! my brethren, but to God it is a straight line. Directly, God always goes to his object. and yet to us, he often seems to go round about. Ah! Jacob, the Lord is about to provide for thee in Egypt, when there is a famine in Canaan, and he is about to make thy son Joseph great and mighty. Joseph must be sold for a slave; he must be accused wrongfully, he must be put into the pit, and in the round-house prison he must suffer. But God was going straight to his purpose all the while: he was sending Joseph before them into Egypt that they might be provided for, and when the good old patriarch said, “All these things are against me,” he did not perceive the providence of God, for there was not a solitary thing in the whole list that was against him, but everything was ruled for his weal. Let us learn to leave providence in the hand of the Counsellor, let us rest assured that he is too wise to err in his predestination, and too good to be unkind, and that in the council of eternity, the best was ordained that could have been ordained—that if you and I had been there, we could not have ordained half so well, but that we should have made ourselves eternal fools by meddling therewith. Rest certain, that in the end we shall see that all was well, and must be well for ever. He is “Wonderful, the Counsellor,” for he counselled in matters of providence.

And now with regard to *matters of grace*. These were also discussed in the everlasting council. When the Three Divine Persons in the solemn seclusion of their own loneliness consulted together with reference to the works of grace, one of the first things they had to consider was, how God should be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly—how the world should be reconciled unto God. Hence you read in the book of Zechariah, if you turn to the sixth chapter and the thirteenth verse, this passage—“The council of peace shall be between

them both.” The Son of God with his Father and the Spirit, ordained the council of peace. Thus was it arranged. The Son must suffer, he must be the substitute, must bear his people’s sins and be punished in their stead; the Father must accept the Son’s substitution and allow his people to go free, because Christ had paid their debts. The Spirit of the living God must then cleanse the people whom the blood had pardoned, and so they must be accepted before the presence of God, even the Father. That was the result of the great council. But O my brethren, if it had not been for that council, what a question would have been left unsolved? Neither you nor I could ever have thought how the two should meet together—how mercy and justice should kiss each other over the mountain of our sins. I have always thought that one of the greatest proofs that the gospel is of God, is its revelation that Christ died to save sinners. That is a thought so original, so new so wonderful; you have not got it in any other religion in the world; so that it must have come from God. As I remember to have heard an un-schooled and illiterate man say, when I first told him the simple story of how Christ was punished in the stead of his people: he burst out with an air of surprise, “Faith! that’s the gospel, I know; no man could have made that up; that must be of God.” That wonderful thought, that a God himself should die, that he himself should bear our sins, that so God the Father might be able to forgive and yet exact the utmost penalty, is super-human, super-angelic; not even the cherubim and seraphim could have been the inventors of it: but that thought was first struck out from the mind of God in the councils of eternity, when the “Wonderful, the Counsellor,” was present with his Father.

Again, another part of the great council was this—*who should be saved*, Now my friends, you that like not old Calvinistic doctrine will perhaps be horrified but that I cannot help; I will never modify a doctrine I believe to please any man that walks upon earth; but I will prove from Scripture that I have the warrant of God in this matter, and that it is not my own invention. I say that one part of the council of eternity was the predestination of those whom God had determined to save, and I will read you the passage that proves it. “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him that worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” The predestination of everyone of God’s people was arranged at the eternal council, where God’s will sat as the sovereign umpire and undisputed president. There was it said of each redeemed one, “At such an hour I will call him by my grace, for I have loved him with an everlasting love, and by my loving-kindness will I draw him.” There was it originated when the peace-speaking blood shall be laid to that elect one’s conscience, when the Spirit of the living God shall breathe joy and consolation into his heart. There was it settled how that chosen one should be “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation; and there was it determined and settled by two immutable things, wherein it is impossible for God to lie, that everyone of these should be eternally saved, beyond the shadow of a risk of perishing. The apostle Paul was not like some preachers, who are afraid to say a word about the everlasting council, for he says in his epistle

to the Hebrews—“God willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his council, confirmed it by an oath.” Now, you hear some talk about the immutability of the promise: that is good. But the immutability of God’s counsel,—that is to fathom to the very uttermost the doctrines of grace. The council of God from all eternity is immutable; not one purpose has he ever altered, not one decree has he ever changed, he has nailed his decrees against the pillars of eternity, and though the devils have sought to rend them down from the posts of his magnificent palace, yet, saith he, “have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion;” the decree shall stand; I will do all my pleasure. Thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth, thou, Lord, in the beginning hast made the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, thou hast determined thy plans and purposes, and they stand fast for ever and ever.

I think I have sufficiently declared how Christ was the Counsellor, in the transcendent affairs of nature, providence, and grace, in the everlasting council-chamber of eternity. But now I would have you notice what a mercy it was that there was such a Counsellor with God, and how fit Christ was to be the Counsellor. Christ himself is wisdom. He chargeth his angels with folly; but he is God only wise himself. If a fool undertake to be a counsellor, his counsel is folly, but when Christ counselled, his counsel was full of wisdom. But there is another qualification necessary for a counsellor. However wise a man be, he has no right to be a counsellor with a king, unless he has some dignity and standing. There may happen to be in my congregation some person of great talent, but if my friend should present himself at the cabinet council and give his advice, he would most probably be unceremoniously dismissed, for they would say, “Art thou of the king’s council; if not, what right hast thou to stand here?” Now Christ was glorious; he was equal with his Father, therefore he had a right to counsel God—to counsel with God. Had an angel offered his advice to God it would have been as insufferable impertinence; had the cherubim or seraphim volunteered to give so much as one word of counsel it would have been blasphemy. He would take no counsel from his creatures. Why should wisdom stoop from its throne, to counsel with created folly? But because Christ was far above all principalities and powers and every name that is named, therefore he had a right, not only from his wisdom, but from his rank, to be a Counsellor with God.

But there is one thing that is always necessary in a man, before we can rejoice in his being a counsellor. There are some counsellors concerning the legislation of our country in whom you or I could not rejoice much, because we feel that in their counsels the most of us would be forgotten. Our farming friends would probably rejoice in them; they will consult their interests, there is not much doubt; but whoever heard of a counsellor yet who counselled for the poor? or who has these many years heard as much as an inkling of the name of a man who really counselled for economy and for the good of his nation. We have plenty of men who promise us that they will counsel for us—abundance of men who, if we would but

return them to parliament would most assuredly pour forth such wisdom in our behalf that without doubt we should be the most happy and enlightened people in the world according to their promise. but alas! when they get into office they have no hearty sympathy with us; they belong to a different rank from the most of us, they do not sympathize with the wants and the desires of the middle class and of the poor. But, with regard to Christ, we can put every confidence in him, for we know that in that council from eternity he sympathized with man. He says, "My delights were with the sons of men." Happy men to have a counsellor who delights in them! Moreover, he then though he was not man, yet foresaw that he was to be "bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh," and therefore in the counsels of eternity he pleaded his own cause when he pleaded our cause, for he well knew that he was to be tempted in all points like as we are, and was to suffer our sufferings and to be our covenant head in union with ourselves. Sweet Counsellor! I love to think thou wast in the everlasting council, my friend, my brother born for adversity!

II. Having thus discussed the first point, I shall proceed to consider briefly the second, according to the translation of the Septuagint. Christ is THE ANGEL OF THE GREAT COUNCIL. Do you and I want to know what was said and done in the great council of eternity? Yes, we do. I will defy any man, whoever he may be, not to want to know something about destiny. What means the ignorance of the common people, when they appeal to the witch, the pretender? when they enquire of the astrologer, and read the book of the pretended soothsayer? Why, it means that man wants to know something about the everlasting council. And what mean all the perplexing researches of certain persons into the prophecies? I consider very often that the inferences drawn from prophecy are very little better, after all, than the guesses of the Norwood gipsy, and that some people who have been so busy in foretelling the end of the world, would have been better employed if they had foretold the end of their own books, and had not imposed on the public by predictions, assaying to interpret the prophecies, without the shadow of a foundation. But, from their credulity we may learn, that among the higher class as well as among the more ignorant, there is a strong desire to know the councils of eternity. Beloved, there is only one glass through which you and I can look back to the dim darkness of the shrouded past, and read the counsels of God, and that glass is the person of Jesus Christ. Do I want to know what God ordained with regard to the salvation of man from before the foundation of the world? I look to Christ; I find that it was ordained in Christ that he should be the first elect, and that a people should be chosen in him. Do you ask the way in which God ordained to save? I answer, he ordained to save by the cross. Do you ask how God ordained to pardon? The answer comes, he ordained to pardon through the sufferings of Christ, and to justify through his resurrection from the dead. Everything that you want to know with regard to what God ordained, everything that you ought to know, you can find out in the person of Jesus Christ. And again, do I long to know the great secret of destiny? I must look to Christ. What mean these wars, this confusion,

these garments rolled in blood? I see Christ born of a virgin, and then I read the world's history backwards, and I see that all this led to Christ's coming. I see that all these leaned one upon another, as I have sometimes seen clusters of rocks leaning on each other, and Christ the great leading rock bearing up the superincumbent mass of all past history. And if I want to read the future I look at Christ, and I learn that he who has gone up to heaven, is to come again from heaven in like manner as he went up to heaven. So all the future is clear enough to me. I do not know whether the Pope of Rome is to obtain universal empire or not; I do not mind whether the Russian empire is to swallow up all the nations of the continent; there is one thing I know, God will overturn, overturn, overturn, till he shall come whose right it is to reign; and I know that though the worms devour my body, yet when he shall stand in the latter day upon the earth, in my flesh shall I see God, and there is enough in that for me. All the rest of history is unimportant compared with its end, its issues, its purpose. The end of the first Testament is the first advent of Christ; the end of this second Testament of modern history is the second advent of the Saviour and then shall the book of time be closed. But none could open the Old Testament history and make it out, except through Christ. Abraham could understand it, for he knew that Christ was to come; Christ opened the book for him. And so modern history is never to be understood except through Christ. None but the Lamb can take the book and open every seal; but he who believeth in Christ and looks for his glorious advent, he may open the book and read therein, and have understanding, for in Christ there is a revelation of the eternal councils.

"Now," says one, "Sir, I want to know one thing, and if I knew that, I would not care what happened. I want to know whether God from all eternity ordained me to be saved." Well, friend, I will tell you how to find that out, and you may find it out to a certainty. "Nay," says one, "but how can I know that? You cannot read the book of fate; that is impossible." I have heard of some divine, of a very hyper school indeed, who said, "Ah! blessed be the Lord, there are some of God's dear people here; I can tell them by the very look of their faces. I know that they are among God's elect." He was not half so discreet as Rowland Hill, who when he was advised to preach to none but the elect, said, "He would certainly do so if some one would chalk them all on the back first." That was never attempted by anybody, so Rowland Hill went on preaching the gospel to every creature, as I desire to do. But you may find out whether you are among his chosen ones. "How?" says one. Why, Christ is the angel of the covenant, and you can find it out by looking to him. Many people want to know their election before they look to Christ. Beloved you cannot know your election, except as you see it in Christ. If you want to know your election, thus shall you assure your hearts before God.—Do you feel yourself this morning to be a lost, guilty sinner? go straightway to the cross of Christ, and tell Christ that, and tell him that you have read in the Bible, "That him that cometh unto him he will in no wise cast out." Tell him that he has said, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save

sinner of whom you are chief.” Look to Christ and believe on him, and you shall make proof of your election directly, for so surely as thou believest thou art elect. If thou wilt give thyself wholly up to Christ and trust him, then thou art one of God’s chosen ones; but if you stop and say, “I want to know first whether I am elect,” that is impossible. If there be something covered up, and I say, “Now, before you can see this you must lift the veil;” and you say, “Nay, but I want to see right through that veil,” you cannot. Lift the veil first and you shall see. Go to Christ guilty, just as you are. Leave all curious inquiry about thy election alone. Go straight away to Christ, just as you are, black, naked, penniless and poor, and say,

“Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling,”

and you shall know your election. The assurance of the Holy Spirit shall be given to you, so that you shall be able to say, “I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him.” Now do notice this. Christ was at the everlasting council: he can tell you whether you were chosen or not, but you cannot find that out anyhow else. You go and put your trust in him, and I know what the answer will be. His answer will be—“I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore in loving-kindness have I drawn thee.” There will be no doubt about his having chosen *you*, when you shall feel no doubt about having chosen *him*.

So much for the second point. Christ is the Counsellor. He is the angel of the council, because he tells out God’s secrets to us. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant.”

III. The last point was, Christ is A COUNSELLOR TO US. And here I shall want to give some practical hints to God’s people. Some how or other, brethren, it is not good for man to be alone. A lonely man must be, I think, a miserable man, and a man without a Counsellor, I think, must of necessity go wrong. “Where there is no counsellor,” says Solomon, “the people fall.” I think most persons will find it so. A man says, “Well, I’ll have my own way, and I will ask nobody.” Have it, sir,—have it—and you will find that in having your own way you have probably had the worst way you could. We all feel our need at times of a counsellor. David was a man after God’s own heart and dealt much with his God; but he had his Ahithophel, with whom he took sweet council, and they walked to the house of God in company. Kings must have some advisers. Woe unto the man that hath got a bad counsellor. Rehoboam took counsel of the young men, and not of the old men, and they counselled him so that he lost ten-twelfths of his empire. Some take counsel of stocks and stones. We know many who counsel at the hands of foolish charms, instead of going to Christ. They shall have to learn that there is but one Christ, who is to be trusted; and that however necessary a Counsellor may be, yet none other shall be found to fulfill the necessity, but Jesus Christ the Counsellor. Let me make a remark or two with regard to this Counsellor, Jesus Christ.

And, first, Christ is a *necessary Counsellor*. So sure as we do anything without asking counsel of God we fall into trouble. Israel made a league with Gibeon, and it is said, they took of their victuals, and they asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord, and they found out that the Gibeonites had deceived them. If they had asked counsel first, no cunning deception could have imposed on them in the matter. Saul, the son of Kish, died before the Lord upon the mountains of Gilboa, and in the book of Chronicles it is written, he died because he asked not counsel of God, but sought unto the wizards. Joshua, the great commander, when he was appointed to succeed Moses, was not left to go alone, but it is written, “And Eliezer the priest shall be his counsellor, and he shall ask counsel of the Lord for him.” And all the great men of olden times, when they were about to do an action, paused, and they said to the priest, “Bring hither the ephod,” and he put on the Urim and the Thummim, and appealed to God, and the answer came, and sound advice was vouchsafed. You and I will have to learn how necessary it is always to take advice of God. Did you ever seek God’s advice on your knees about a difficulty and then go amiss? Brethren, I can testify for my God that when I have submitted my will to his directing Spirit, I have always had reason to thank him for his wise counsel. But when I have asked at his hands, having already made up my own mind, I have had my own way, but like as he fed the Israelites with the quails of heaven, while the meat was yet in their mouth, the wrath of God came upon them. Let us take heed always that we never go before the cloud. He that goes before the cloud goes a fool’s errand, and will be glad to get back again. An old puritan used to say, “He that carves for himself will cut his fingers. Leave God to carve for you in providence, and all shall be well. Seek God’s guidance and nothing can go amiss.” It is necessary counsel.

In the next place, Christ’s counsel is *faithful counsel*. When Ahithophel left David, it proved that he was not faithful, and when Hushai went to Absalom and counselled him, he counselled him craftily, so that the good counsel of Ahithophel was brought to nought. Ah! how often do our friends counsel us craftily! We have known them do so. They have looked first to their own advantage, and then they have said, “If I can get him to do so-and-so it will be the best for me.” That was not the question we asked them. It was what would be best for ourselves. But we may trust Christ, that in his advice to us there never will be any self-interest. He will be quite certain to advise us with the most disinterested motives, so that the good shall be to us, and the profit to ourselves.

Again, Christ’s counsel is *heartly counsel*. I hate to go to a lawyer above all people, to talk with him upon matters of business. The worst kind of conversation is, I think, conversation with a lawyer. There is your case! Dear me, what an interest *you* feel in it! You spread it out before him, and he says, “There is a word upon the second page not quite correct.” You look at it, and you say, “Ah! that is totally unimportant; that does not signify.” He turns to another clause and he says, “Ah! there is a good deal here!” “My dear fellow, you any, “I do not care about those petty clauses, whether it says lands, properties, or hereditaments:

what I want you to do is to set this difficulty right in point of law.” “Be patient” he says; you must go through a great many consultations before he will come the point, and all the while your poor heart is boiling over because you feel such an interest in the main point. But he is as cool as possible; you think you are asking counsel of a block of marble. No doubt his advice will come out all right at last, and it is pretty certain it will be good for you; but it is not hearty. He does not enter into the sympathies of the matter with you. What is it to him whether you succeed or not—whether the object of your heart shall be accomplished or not. It is but a professional interest he takes. Now, Solomon says, “As ointment for perfume, so is hearty counsel.” When a man throws his own soul into your ease, and says, “My dear friend, I’ll do anything I can to help you. let me look at it,” and he takes as deep an interest in it as you do yourself. “If I were in your position,” he says, “I should do so-and-so, by-the-bye, there is a word wrong there.” Perhaps he tells you so, but he only tells you because he is anxious to have it all right; and you can see that his drift is always towards the same end you are seeking, and that he is only anxious for your good. Oh! for a Counsellor that could tie your heart into unison with his own! Now Christ is such a Counsellor as that. He is a hearty Counsellor. His interests and your interests are bound up together, and he is hearty with you.

But there is another kind of counsel still. David says of one, who afterwards became his enemy, “We took sweet counsel together.” Christian, do you know what sweet counsel is? You have gone to your Master in the day of trouble, and in the secret of your chamber you have poured out your heart before him. You have laid your case before him, with all its difficulties, as Hezekiah did Rabshakeh’s letter, and you have felt, that though Christ was not there in flesh and blood, yet he was there in spirit, and he counselled you. You felt that his was counsel that came from the very heart. But he was something better than that. There was such a sweetness coming with his counsel, such a radiance of love, such a fullness of fellowship, that you said, “Oh that I were in trouble every day, if I might have such sweet counsel as this!” Christ is the Counsellor whom I desire to consult every hour, and I would that I could sit in his secret chamber all day and all night long, because to counsel with him is to have sweet counsel, hearty counsel, and wise counsel, all at the same time. Why, you may have a friend that talks very sweetly with you, and you will say, “Well, he is a kind, good soul, but I really cannot trust his judgment.” You have another friend, who has a good deal of judgment, and yet you say of him, “Certainly, he is a man of prudence above a great many, but I cannot find out his sympathy; I never get at his heart, if he were ever so rough and untutored, I would sooner have his heart without his prudence, than his prudence without his heart,” But we go to Christ, and we get wisdom; we get love, we get sympathy, we get everything that can possibly be wanted in a Counsellor.

And now we must close by noticing that Christ has special councils for each of us this morning, and what are they? Tried child of God, your daughter is sick; your gold has melted

in the fire; you are sick yourself, and your heart is sad. Christ counsels you, and he says, “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, he will sustain thee; he will never suffer the righteous to be moved.” Young man, you that are seeking to be great in this world, Christ counsels you this morning. “Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not.” I shall never forget Midsummer Common. I was ambitious; I was seeking to go to college, to leave my poor people in the wilderness that I might become something great; and as I was walking there that text came with power to my heart—“Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not.” I suppose about forty pounds a year was the sum total of my income, and I was thinking how I should make both ends meet, and whether it would not be a great deal better for me to resign my charge and seek something for the bettering of myself, and so forth. But this text ran in my ears “Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not.” “Lord,” said I, “I will follow thy counsel and not my own devices;” and I have never had cause to regret it. Always take the Lord for thy guide, and thou shalt never go amiss. Backslider! thou that hast a name to live, and art dead, or nearly dead, Christ gives thee counsel. “I counsel thee to buy of me, gold tried in the fire and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed.” And sinner! thou that art far from God, Christ gives thee counsel. “Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” Depend on it, it is loving counsel. Take it. Go home and cast yourself upon your knees. Seek Christ, obey his counsel, and you shall have to rejoice that you ever listened to his voice, and heard it, and lived.