

## The Faithfulness of Jesus

A Sermon

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"Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end."—John 13:1.

WE SHALL CONSIDER these words first in their evident relation to the apostles, and those who were the companions of Jesus during his sojourn on earth, and afterwards we shall take them in their broader signification, as relating to all the Lord's own whom he loves and will love even to the end.

*"Having loved his own."* Those four words are a brief but complete summary of the Savior's conduct towards his disciples. He always loved them. There was never a single action or word which was contrary to the rule of love. He loved them with a love of pity when he saw them in their lost estate, and he called them out of it to be his disciples; touched with a feeling of their infirmities he loved them with a tender and prudent affection, and sought to train and educate them, that after his departure they might be good soldiers of his cross; he loved them with a love of complacency as he walked and talked with them and found solace in their company. Even when he rebuked them he loved them. He subjected them to many trials: for his sake they renounced all that they had; they shared his daily cross-bearing and hourly persecution, but love reigned supreme and undiminished and it all. On Tabor or in Gethsemane he loved his own; alone or in the crowd his heart was true to them; in life and in death his affection failed not. He "loved his own which were in the world." It is a *multum in parvo*, a condensed life of Christ, a miniature of Jesus the Lover of souls. As you read the wonderful story of the four evangelists, you see how true it is that Jesus loved his own: let me cast in by way of interjection, this sentence, that when you come to read your own life's story in the light of the New Jerusalem, you will find it to be true also concerning your Lord and yourself. If you are indeed the Lord's own, he at all times deals lovingly with you, and never acts in unkindness or wrath.

"He may chasten and correct,  
But he never can neglect;  
May in faithfulness reprove,  
But he ne'er can cease to love."

Our Savior's faithfulness towards the chosen band whom he had elected into his fellowship was most remarkable. He had selected persons who must have been but poor companions for one of so gigantic a mind and so large a heart. He must have been greatly shocked at their worldliness. They groveled in the dust when he mounted to the stars. He was thinking of the baptism wherewith he was to be baptized, and he was straitened until it was accomplished, but they were disputing which among them should be the greatest. He was ready to deny himself that he might do his Father's will, and meanwhile they were asking to sit on his right hand and on his left hand in his kingdom. They often misunderstood him because of the carnality of their mind; and when he warned them of an evil leaven, they thought of the loaves, which they had forgotten. Earth-worms are miserable company for angels, moles but unhappy company for eagles, yet love made our great Master endure the society of his ignorant and carnal followers. They were but babes in Christ, and possessed but slight illumination, and yet for all that, he who knew all things and is the wisdom of God, condescended to call them his mother, and sister, and brother.

Worse than the fact of their natural worldliness perhaps, was the apparent impossibility of lifting them out of that low condition; for though never man spake as he spake, how little did they understand! and though he took them aside and said to them, "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God," yet after many and plain teachings he was compelled to say to one of the best of them, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" They were dull scholars. There is no teacher here who could have had patience with such heavy intellects, but our Lord and Master's love remained evermore at flood-tide, notwithstanding their incorrigible stupidity. His love was stronger than their unbelief and ignorance.

My brethren, when we love a person, we expect to have some little sympathy from him in the great design and aim of our life. I suppose it would be difficult to maintain any deep affection towards persons who had no sort of communion with us in our all-absorbing passion; and yet it was so, that our Lord loved disciples who could not be brought to enter at all into the spirit which ruled and governed him. They would have taken him and forced upon him a crown, while he sought only for a cross. They imagined and desired for him the worldly splendor of a terrestrial throne; but he foresaw the reality of glory in sweat of blood and cruel death. Our Lord was all for self-denial, employing himself and acting as the Servant of servants. They could not comprehend the rule of self-sacrifice which governed his actions, nor could they see what he aimed at. Had they dared, they would rather have thwarted than assisted him in his self-sacrificing mission. They were fools and slow of heart to understand, even though again he plainly told them of his decease. When he set his face steadfastly towards Jerusalem, humanly speaking he needed friends to have aided and abetted him in his high resolve, but he found no help in them. When, in that dark, that dreadful night, he bowed in prayer, and sweat the bloody sweat, he went backward and forward thrice, as if

seeking a little sympathy from men so dearly loved; but he had to complain of them, "What could ye not watch with me one hour?" Still, having loved them, neither their worldliness nor their stupidity, nor their want of sympathy with him could prevent him from loving them unto the end. Many waters could not quench his love, neither could the floods drown it.

The Redeemer's love was made to endure even sterner strains than these. On one or two occasions certain of them were even guilty of impertinence. It was no small trial to the Savior's affection when Peter took him and began to rebuke him. Peter rebuking his Master! Surely thy Lord will have done with thee, thou son of Jonas! The Lord turned him about and said, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" but after using that strong expression to rebuke a temptation which was evidently Satanic, his affection to Peter remained unabated. That was a stern trial, too, when at a later period than our text, "*all* the disciples forsook him and fled;" when not even the loving John remained constant to his Master in the hour of betrayal; when one, the boldest of them, with oaths and cursing said, "I know not the man." Carrying the text beyond its original position, we may say that over the head of all infirmities, ignorances, selfishnesses, desertions, and denials, Jesus Christ, who had loved his own that were in the world, loved them to the end. It was not possible for them, with all their follies, failings, and sins, to break through the magic circle of his affection; he had hedged them in once for all, bad bound them to himself with bonds firmer than brass, and stronger than triple steel, and neither could the temptations of hell, nor the suggestions of their own corruption's, tear them from his heart. The attachments of Jesus were abiding; fickleness and instability could never be charged on him. Others love for a little while and then grow cold; they profess eternal attachment and yet forsake; they admire and esteem us till a slight misunderstanding snaps every bond of friendship; but our Lord was the mirror of constancy, the pattern of fidelity, the paragon of unchanging love. As Jonathan clave to David, even so did Jesus cleave to his people.

The proofs which our Lord gave of his love to his people were very many, and for a little while we will ponder them: they will all go to prove that he loved his people, even to perfection, as the text may be read. Observe how our Master, having chosen to himself a people, proved his love by his continual companionship. He sought no other company than theirs among the sons of men. There were minds far deeper in philosophic lore, but he communed not with them; there were the great and mighty of this world, but our Savior did not court them; he was content to dwell among his own people; he had made his choice and to that choice he kept—fishermen and peasants were his bosom friends. You would not expect a master to find rest in the society of his scholars; you do not expect men of mind and mark affectionately to consort with those who are far beneath them in attainments; and yet herein was love, that Jesus, passing by angels, and kings, and sages, chose for his companions unlettered men and women. Those fishermen of Galilee were his companions at all times; and

only when he withdrew himself into the silent Mount, and the shadows of midnight, did he remove the link of companionship from them, and then only that he might make intercession for them with the eternal God. Yes, it was a deep proof of the unlimited love of Jesus, a sure sign of its going to the end and verge of possibilities, that he abode so long in affectionate fellowship with so poor, so illiterate, so earthbound a company of men.

He proved his love by being always ready to instruct them on all points. His teachings were very simple, because he loved them so well. The epistles of Paul are, in some respects, far deeper than the teachings of Jesus; for instance, Paul more explicitly lays down the doctrine of justification by faith, of total depravity, of election, and kindred truths. And why? Observe the humility and loving-kindness of the Master. He knew infinitely more than Paul, for he is essential wisdom, but he was pleased, because their weak eyes were not able at that time to bear the full blaze of light, to leave the fuller manifestation of gospel mysteries until the Spirit had been given, and then he raised up his servant Paul to write under his guidance the deep things of God. His love to his disciples is shown as clearly in what he kept back from them as in what he revealed to them. How loving it was on the part of the great Teacher to dwell so often upon the simpler truths, and the more practical precepts; it was as though a senior wrangler of the university should sit down in the family and teach boys and girls their alphabet day after day, or spend all his time in teaching village urchins simple addition and subtraction. A man who is thoroughly acquainted with the highest branches of knowledge finds it a terrible drudgery to go over and over the first principles—and yet this very thing our Lord did, and made no trouble of it; he, by the space of three years, taught the simplicities of the faith, and thus indisputably proved his condescending love to perfection towards his own which were in the world.

How willing he always was, all his life long, to render any kind of assistance to his followers! Whensoever they were in trouble, he was their willing and able friend. When the sea roared and was tempestuous, and he slept for awhile hard by the helm, they had but to wake him, and he rebuked the sea, and straightway the winds and waves were still. When Peter's wife's mother was sick of a fever, he did but enter the house and speak the word, and the fever left her; and when one of his dearest friends had passed beyond ordinary bounds of hope, and was not only dead, but had been four days buried, yet he loved even to that far-reaching end, and proved that he was the resurrection and the life by effectually crying, "Lazarus, come forth." Everywhere, at all times, he was at the beck and call of his disciples, whom he truly called his friends. They might freely express their desires—if these were right, they were granted; and if they were wrong, they were reprov'd with such gentleness that a refusal was better than a grant.

The Master displayed his love to his disciples throughout his life by the way in which he sought to comfort them when he foresaw that they would be cast down; especially was this true at the period before his passion—when one would have thought he might have

sought for comfort, he was busy distributing it. Those choice words which have flown like a dove into many a mourner's window bearing the olive branch of peace, were the fond utterances of a thoughtful heart. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions." Many such bottles of oil and wine did he apply to the wounds of his disciples. He would not have them suffer any kind of spiritual turmoil. "In the world ye shall have tribulation" said he, "but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." His peace he distributed right liberally, and left it as his last legacy: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you." In the private life of every one of those chosen men, there must have been incidents of matchless tenderness; but they are not recorded, because if all were written which Jesus did, even the world itself would not contain the things, which should have been written. Enough is written to let us see that no tenderness of mothers, or care of friends, could match the ever, generous forethought of the Friend of man.

That he loved his disciples to the end is seen further in the fact that he constantly pleaded for them when he poured out his strong cryings and tears. He watched them with an eye that was quick to perceive their perils, and before they knew their danger, he had already provided a refuge from it. Ere the poison was injected by the old serpent, the antidote was at hand. "Satan hath desired to have thee that he may sift thee as wheat:" the temptation had not reached the stage of actual fact, it was only a desire on Satan's part, but the Lord outran the enemy with his intercessions, and so saved poor Peter from the sieve. The High Priest, chosen from among men, pleaded in his midnight wrestlings for all his people, mentioning their names one by one before the Majesty of heaven, and so averting evils which otherwise had destroyed them. Surely those sacred pleadings brought down upon the apostolic band those matchless blessings which qualified them in after years to be the spiritual fathers of the church and the heralds of salvation to nations. Who doubts the love of such an Intercessor?

The text affords us one other illustration, for Jesus took the towel and washed his disciples' feet. This is, no doubt, marked out by our text as a clear proof of boundless love, in that he humbled himself, made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, and fulfilled a menial's office. But yet, beloved, all these things put together do not amount to so overwhelming a proof of abounding love as the fact that, after having lived out his love, the Lord Jesus then died to exhibit it yet more. From Gethsemane to Golgotha, along the blood—he sprinkled road, you see proof that having loved his own he loved them to the end. Not all the pains of death could shake his firm affection to his own. They may bind his hands, but his heart is not restrained from love; they may scourge him, but they cannot drive out of him his affection to his beloved; they may slanderously revile him, but they cannot compel him to say a word against his people; they may nail him to the accursed tree, and they may bid him come down from the cross, and they will believe on him, but they

cannot tempt him to forsake his work of love; he must press forward for his people's sake until he can say, "It is finished." Oh! that tragedy upon Calvary was a going to the end indeed, when, having yielded up comfort, reputation, liberty, he gave up even his last rag of covering, and then resigned his breath. Standing, as it were, at the world's end, at the grave's mouth, and at hell's door, the cross of Jesus reveals love to the utmost end, and is a grand display of the immutability and invincibility of the affection of the heart of Jesus.

I need not detain you longer on the text as it related to his people when he was here in the flesh, for I shall want your earnest attention for but a short time while, by the power of the Holy Ghost, I would set forth this precious truth as it relates to all his people, to all his saints.

We read that our Lord "Came unto *his own*, and his own received him not;" and here in this case we read, "Having loved *his own*." Now, the words are different in the original. In the first case it is a neuter noun—"He came to his own (things)"; but in this instance it is a masculine—"Having loved his own (persons)." Now, a man may part with his own things; he may sell his own house, or cattle, or merchandise; he may give away his own money; but a man cannot part with his own when it relates to persons; he cannot part with his own child, his own wife, his own father, or his own brother. We hold indisputable property in our own relatives; this is *real* property with an emphasis, our own freehold, our entail, our perpetual possession. The Lord Jesus has just such a property in his own people—they are his brethren, forever near of kin to him.

Now of these "own" persons. We read that our Lord, "Having loved his own that were in the world, loved them to the end." The text opens three windows for us, with three outlooks upon the past, the present, and the future.

1. And first, as to the past; let us with holy contemplation review it. He has loved his own people from of old. A most blessed fact! He has loved them eternally. There never was a time when he did not love them. His love is positively dateless: before the heavens and earth were made, and the stars were first touched with the torch of flame, Jesus had received his people from his Father, and written their names on his heart. This everlasting love has a speciality about it. Our Lord has a general love of benevolence towards all his creatures, for "God is love;" but he has a special place in his heart for his own peculiar ones. There is a discriminating and distinguishing power about that love that is spoken of in the text, for it is not said, "Having loved all men," but "Having loved *his own* which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." Jesus, before all the world, set the crown of his peculiar love upon those whom he foreordained unto his glory.

This love of his is infinite. Jesus does not love his own with a little of his love, nor regard them with some small degree of affection, but he says, "As the Father hath loved me, even so have I loved you," and the Father's love to the Son is inconceivably great, since they are one in essence, ineffably one. The Father cannot but love the Son infinitely, neither doth

the Son ever love his people less than with all his heart. It is an affection which no angelic mind could measure, inconceivable, unknown.

Jesus loved his people with a foresight of what they would be. Love is blind, they say, but not the Savior's love. He knew that "his own" would fall in Adam; he knew that as they lived personally each one would become a sinner; he understood that they would be hard to reclaim and difficult to retain, even after they had been reclaimed; he saw every sin that they would commit in the glass of the future, for from his prescient eye nothing can be hidden. And yet he loved his own over the head of all their sins, and their revoltings, and their shortcomings. Hence we see that he bears towards them an affection which cannot be changed, for nothing can occur which he has not foreseen, nothing therefore which has not already been taken into calculation in the matter of his choice. No new circumstance can shed unexpected light upon the case. No startling and unforeseen event can become an argument for a change. Hence Jesus' love is full of immutability. There are no ups and downs in the love of Christ towards his people. On their highest Tabors he loves them, but equally as well in their Gethsemanes. When they wander like lost sheep his great love goes after them, and when they come back with broken hearts his great love restores them. By day, by night, in sickness, in sorrow, in poverty, in famine, in prison, in the hour of death, that silver stream of love ripples at their side, never stayed, never diminished. Forever is the sea of divine grace at its flood; this sun never sets; this fountain never pauses.

The love of Christ is more than a passion. You and I are moved by passion, but the Son of God is not so. As man, he may be, but as God, he has no passion. Hence the love of Christ towards his people is a settled principle—self-created and self-sustained; not subject to changes like terrestrial things, but firm and stable, built on a rock. Glory be to God, there was something in the very nature of Christ which made him love us, something in the very character of that blessed divine Person which constrained him to manifest affection towards his people: it was nothing from without, that mighty love was born from within. Here again we come back to the same precious truth, that hence that love cannot be destroyed, because the source from which it comes is eternal, and is found within himself.

The love of Jesus Christ in the past has been attested by many deeds of love. That he loved us he proved by the fact that he stood surety for us when the covenant was made, and entered into stipulations on our behalf that he would fulfill the broken law, and that he would offer satisfaction to the justice of God, which had been provoked. In the fullness of time he took upon himself our nature. What higher proof of love than that? In that nature he lived a life of blameless service, in that nature he died a death in which all the weight of divine vengeance for sin was compressed into a few hours of bodily and spiritual anguish. Now that he lives exalted in the highest heaven, he is still his people's servant, interceding for them, representing them at the right hand of God, preparing a place for them, and by his mighty Spirit fetching them out from the mass of mankind, and preparing them for the

place which he has prepared for them in glory. All these proofs show indeed, my dear brethren and sisters, how in the past Jesus Christ has loved his people. Grasp it, I pray you, now, for a minute, grasp it! realize it by putting out the hand of individual faith, and saying, "He loved *me* in those hoary ages; he loved *me* ere time began to be counted, and days and years were first mapped out; he loved *me* ere he had made a star or given light to the sun; he loved *me*, yes, *me* in particular, *me* with a speciality, *me* as much as any of those on whom his heart is set." Dost thou believe in him this morning? Say, poor sinner, dost thou cast thyself upon him, and take him to be thine only trust and confidence? Then thou mayst take the text with full assurance as being thine—having loved his own, he loved you, even you. I always feel, when I speak upon this topic, as if I would rather sit down and be silent than speak, because it is not so much a theme for speech as for meditation. Expressive silence must sing this hymn in your soul's ears. Jesus did not merely think of you, and pity you, but loved you and betrothed you unto himself for ever. That an angel should love an emmet would be a remarkable stoop, but that Jesus should love you is a miracle of miracles, a wonder which never could be excelled. Let each one adoringly bless the name of the Lord, who doeth great wonders.

2. The second window looks out upon the present. The text saith, "Having loved his own *which were in the world*." It does not seem to strike one as an extraordinary thing that Jesus should love his own who are in heaven. See them yonder, white robed and fair to look upon, with melodious voices, without fault, before the eternal throne. Well may Jesus love them, for there is much beauty in them; his grace has made them lovable; but to love his own which are in the world is quite another and stranger thing, and yet it is the blessed fact to which the text calls attention. May you now by faith feed upon it—Jesus Christ loved those who were in the world when he was here, and he now loves his own who are in the world to-day. You are in the world, and, as you all too surely feel, temptations have shown you that you are not yet in heaven; you have sighed for a lodge in some vast wilderness, that you might cease from the troublers of earth, for what with the evil language which you hear, the corrupt practices which come under your notice, the temptations that are thrust in your own way, and the persecutions and the cruel mockings with which you are tried, you feel that this is a wretched world to live in. Now mark, Jesus loves his own who are in the world. You working men that have to work with so many bad fellows, you tradesmen who have to go in among many who shock you, you good work girls, who meet with so many tempters, if you are his, he loves his own which are in the world. "Behold," saith he, "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." Now, if the shepherd sends forth the sheep into the midst of wolves, you may rest assured that if he takes his eye off any sheep he will not remove it from them; he will have a peculiar regard, a watchful affection, for those who are exposed to peculiar perils through the sinfulness of the generation among whom they dwell. He loves his own which are in the world. "Oh!" says one, "I would not mind if it were only temptations,

and trials, and persecutions, but oh! I find I am in the world by the fact that I sin myself. If I could but keep my own nature clean, all would be well; but, alas! I fall. My angry temper betrays me; proud thoughts are indulged, vanities lodge with me. I have to come groaning up to the house of God this morning, and feel half ashamed to sit with the Lord's people, for I am less than the least of them all." This is the result of your being in the world, for so long as you are in this world, you will have to wrestle hard with the old nature and its inbred sins. Well, but Jesus loves his own which are in the world. He sees your imperfection, he knows what you have to struggle with, he understands well enough the uprisings of your nature, and he loves you notwithstanding all. "Ah!" says another, "I have come hither to-day, burdened with a very heavy trouble. The partner of my life is sick at home and near to death." "Alas!" cries another, "my dear child is dying, and I found it hard to tear myself away from the bedside." "Worse still," moans another, "I have a living cross to carry, one of my sons is breaking my heart." "Ah!" exclaims a fourth, "I have a bill to meet to-morrow, and I do not know how it will be done. I fear I shall be ruined." All these things go to show that we are yet in the world of sorrow. As the sparks fly upward, so were we born to trouble—why do we count it a strange thing? But Jesus loves his own which are in this dolorous world: this is the balm of our griefs, and I call upon you to hold to it, and not let the devil delude you into the idea that the Lord does not love you because affliction happens to you as it does to other men. Of course it must so happen so long as you are in the world. How can you expect exemption? Would you have a glass case made for you to keep you snug away from all the frosts and winds of this world? Would you have your heavenly Father indulge you with all the sweet things of this life, and spoil you for the life to come? Would you strike the root in this world and never be transplanted to the heavenly Eden? Do you wish to have your rest and portion in this life? Oh! no; you could not wish for that. Well, then, take what God sends to you, receive evil as well as good from Jehovah's hand, as Job aforetime did; but never let it be the thought of your heart that Jesus does not love you because you are subjected to evils which are necessary to the place in which, for wise reasons, he suffers you for a little to remain. He prizes his gold as much while it is in the furnace as when it is drawn forth. Believe in his love now. Do as Rutherford did: he tells us that when banished by his enemies, and shut up as it were in the world's dark cellar, he began to feel about him for the wine bottles (for God keeps his choice wines in the vaults of sorrow), and he soon found the wine of heavenly consolation, wines on the lees, well refined, and drank freely and was refreshed; so do you. When you are brought low, believe that there is always a comfort near. When you have much of this world's prosperity you may suspect some danger near. After a profound calm comes the terrible tempest. Whenever you are overwhelmed with great trouble, you may rest assured that choicest blessings are on the road to you. Jesus Christ will make your consolations to abound in proportion as your tribulations abound; if one

scale be heavy, the other shall balance it. While you are in the world, you shall be cheered with tokens of the Bridegroom's regard.

3. The third window of the text looks out to the future. Having loved his own he "loved them *unto the end*." He will love his people to the utmost end of their unloveliness. Their sinfulness cannot travel so far but what his love will travel beyond it; their unbelief even shall not be extended to so great a length but what his faithfulness shall still be wider and broader than their unfaithfulness. He never will suffer one of his chosen to fall into such deadly sin, or to go so far in it that he cannot yet outstrip all the strides, which his iniquities may have taken. If our sins be mountains, his love shall be like Noah's flood, and the tops of the mountains shall be covered, and not so much as a sin shall be found against us.

He will love his own to the end, that is, to the end of all their needs. Deep as their helpless miseries are shall be the extent of his grace. If their need of pardon abound, the blood shall be more able to pardon than their sins shall be able to defile. They may need more than this world can hold, and all that heaven can give, but Jesus will go to the end of all their necessities, and even beyond them, for he is "able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him." He will love them to the end of their lives; so long as they live here his love shall be with them; and as there shall be no end of their existence hereafter, he will continue still the same fondness to them. And what if I say he will love them to the end of his own life, if such thing were allowable? Until the eternal God shall die, his love shall never depart from any one of his beloved. Unless the heart of Jesus shall cease to beat, and the eternal Savior shall expire in death, that heart shall never fail in affection towards his people, nor shall his love ever depart from them. Oh! how charming it is to reflect that to the end Jesus loves, because you cannot raise any objection, or think of any difficulty, but what the text meets. If you go ever so far, still it is evident that when you are there you are not beyond the end, and Jesus' love will and must go up to the end, and that is as far as either the sin or the sorrow, the needs or the difficulties of his people can possibly go. The word translated end in the Greek frequently signifies to *perfection*—he loved them to perfection. Oh, the perfectness of the love of Jesus Christ. All that his love can do he will do for his people. None shall be able to say that he has omitted anything, which was good for them. "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." Out of all their wants and necessities there shall not be one left unsupplied, but from the first dawn of grace in them, even to the last, the perfection of Jesus' love shall be manifested.

What shall we say to all this in closing the sermon this morning? We shall only say this, if Jesus Christ thus loves to the end, *how ought we to persevere in our love to him*. Sometimes, dear brethren, we become warmed up, and we do a great deal very zealously, but soon, too soon, we grow cold again. It is one of my temptations, and I suppose it is yours, to begin to flag, to cease from one's earnestness, to say, "Well, the thing can go on pretty well without my being quite so fast and zealous." The true way of living for Christ is to live always at the

highest possible rate of force. Zealous, not now and then, but always, in a good thing for Christ. Sometimes you are very generous, prayerful, and earnest in looking after souls, why not always so? Suppose Jesus were sometimes loving to you, sometimes thoughtful of you; and imagine that there were intervals of forgetfulness on his part, as there are in your case, what a sorry matter it would be for us! Let us repent that we have been so spasmodic in our affection to him, and let us pray him that his Spirit may dwell in us, that he himself may abide with us, that we may be every day, as we are sometimes, "always abounding in the work of the Lord," steadfast, unmoveable. Beloved, I would have you always winning souls, always adorning the doctrine of God your Savior by holiness, always much in prayer, always in communion. Would God we were so! The constant faithfulness of our Lord should lead us to this.

The second practical remark will be, if these things be so, that Christ loves his own to the end, *let us not indulge the wicked thought that he will forsake us*. It is impossible that Jesus should leave a soul that hangs upon him. You may be brought very low, but still underneath you shall be the everlasting arms. You may feel as if you were crushed by the wheels of providence, your spirit may sink nearly into despair, but neither "things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate you from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus your Lord." Give not way to the fainting-fit of unbelief; believe in Christ, and not in your own feelings; believe in his promise and not in your own frames. What matters it whether it is day or night with you, whether it is winter or summer? Christ Jesus is the same, and he has said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Resort to your unfailing Friend; lean on the arm whose sinews cannot crack; cast your weight on the shoulders, which cannot grow weary. Play the man, and be of good courage, for the honor of the gospel; for if the gospel does not cheer us in time of trouble, what is the good of it? If it will not buoy us up when the floods are out, where is the service of it? But, my brethren and sisters, it will. We are not of those who have to deal with a vacillating Redeemer, who casts away his people for their sins, and rejects them for their backslidings, who loves his own to-day and hates them to-morrow—a Christ in whom I have no confidence, and in whose existence I do not believe; but we have to deal with one who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, one who never did flinch from his purpose, nor turn from his decree; and having to deal with such a one, let us not dishonor his name by wavering, and doubting, and fearing. Cast yourselves on the Lord, ye mourners, and rejoice in him; lean yourselves upon him, ye burdened ones, and take up your psalm of praise this morning, and go on your way rejoicing.

The last practical remark is, *what a misery it must be to be without such a Savior!* I scarcely know of any two words more sorrowful than these two—"without Christ;" and yet those words are applicable, I fear, to many in this congregation; you have no heavenly Friend into whose ear to whisper your sorrow; you have no faithful Brother, or mighty Savior, to

help you in your time of need. Your sins are upon you; your iniquities are written in the book of God, graven as with an iron pen, and written with the point of the diamond. The day of death will soon come, and you will have no one to help you over Jordan's swelling billows. You will stand before the tremendous throne, where the voice shall be as thunder, and the eyes of the Judge like lightning, and you shall have no advocate to plead your cause, no Redeemer to take your soul beneath his sheltering wing. There is still hope, for Jesus is the friend of sinners still. Come unto him, ye weary; hasten to him, ye laboring and heavy laden; for he shuts out none—he welcomes all who come to him, with broken hearts and downcast eyes, seeking pardon through his precious blood. O that you would come to him this morning! Ere another day shall pass away, may you have ended your career of rebellion, and commenced a course of obedience. Then will you sing with us of everlasting love; then will you rejoice with us in immutable grace; then shall our God be your God, and our heaven shall be your heaven.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Acts 3.