

## **The Unchangeable Christ**

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A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S DAY, APRIL 29, 1894.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 23, 1888.

"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today and forever." [Hebrews 13:8](#).

LET me read to you the verse that comes before our text. It is always a good habit to look at texts in their connection. It is wrong, I think, to lay hold of small portions of God's Word and take them out of their connection as you might pluck feathers from a bird. It is an injury to the Word of God and, sometimes, a passage of Scripture loses much of its beauty, its true teaching and its real meaning, by being taken from the context. Nobody would think of mutilating Milton's poems by taking a few lines out of *Paradise Lost*, and then imagining that he could really get at the heart of the poet's power. So, always look at texts in the connection in which they stand. The verse before our text is this, "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation: Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

Observe, then, that God's people are a thoughtful people. If they are what they ought to be, they do a great deal of remembering and considering—that is the gist of this verse. If they are to remember and to consider their earthly leaders, much more are they to remember that Great Leader, the Lord Jesus, and all those matchless Truths which fell from His blessed lips. I wish, in these days, that professing Christians remembered and considered a great deal more, but we live in such a flurry, hurry and worry, that we do not give time for thought. Our noble forefathers of the Puritan sort were men with backbone, men of solid tread, independent and self-contained men who could hold their own in the day of conflict. And the reason was because they took time to meditate, time to keep a diary of their daily experiences, time to commune with God in secret. Take the hint and try and do a little more thinking—in this busy London and in these trying days—remember and consider.

My next remark is that God's people are an imitative people, for we are told, here, that they are to remember them who are their leaders, those who have spoken to them the Word of God, "whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." There is an itching, nowadays, after originality, striking out a path for yourself! When sheep do that, they are bad sheep. Sheep follow the shepherd and, in a measure, they follow one another when they are all together following the shepherd. Our Great Master never aimed at originality—He said that He did not even speak His own Words, but the Words that He had heard of His Father. He was docile and teachable. As the Son of God and the Servant of God, His ears

were open to hear the instructions of the Father and He could say, "I do always those things that please Him."

Now, that is the true path for a Christian to take, to follow Jesus and, in consequence, to follow all such true saints as may be worthy of being followed, imitating the godly so far as they imitate Christ! The Apostle puts it, "whose faith follow." Many young Christians, if they were to pretend to strike out a path for themselves, must infallibly fall into many sorrows. Whereas, by taking some note of the way in which more experienced and more instructed Christians have gone, they will keep by the way of the footsteps of the flock and they will also follow the footprints of the Shepherd. God's people are a thoughtful people and they are an imitative and humble people, willing to be instructed and willing to follow holy and godly examples.

One good reason, however, for imitating saints is given in our text—it is because our Lord and His faith are always the same—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever." You see, if the old foundation shifted, if our faith was always changing, then we could not follow any of the saints who have gone before us. If we have a religion especially for the 19th Century, it is ridiculous for us to imitate the men of the 1st Century—and Paul and the Apostles are just old

fogies who are left behind in the far distant ages. If we are to go on improving from century to century, I cannot point you to any of the Reformers, or the confessors, or the saints in the brave days of old, and say to you, "Learn from their example," because, if religion has altogether changed and improved, it is a curious thing to say, but we ought to set an example to our ancestors! Of course, they cannot follow it because they have gone from the earth, but as we know so much better than our fathers, we cannot think of learning anything from them! As we have left the Apostles all behind, and gone in for something quite new, it is a pity that we should not forget what they did, what they suffered and think that they were just a set of simpletons who acted up to their own light, but then they had not the light we have in this wonderful 19th Century!

O Beloved, it almost makes my lips blister to talk after the present evil fashion, for grosser falsehood never could be uttered than the insinuation that we have shifted the everlasting foundations of our faith! Verily, if these foundations were removed, we might ask in many senses, "What shall the righteous do? Whom shall they copy? Whom shall they follow? The landmarks having gone, what remains to us of the holy treasury of example with which the Lord enriches those who follow Christ?"

I. Coming to our text, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever," my first observation is that JESUS CHRIST, HIMSELF, IS ALWAYS THE SAME. He is, was, and will always be the same!

Changes of position and of circumstances there have been in our Lord, but He is always the same in His great love to His people, whom He loved before the earth was. Before the

first star was kindled, before the first living creature began to sing the praise of its Creator, He loved His Church with an everlasting love! He spied her in the glass of predestination, pictured her by His Divine foreknowledge and loved her with all His heart. And it was for this cause that He left His Father and became one with her, that He might redeem her. It was for this cause that He went with her through all this vale of tears, discharged her debts and bore her sins in His own body on the Cross. For her sake He slept in the tomb and with the same love that brought Him down, He has gone up, again, and with the same heart beating true to the same blessed betrothal, He has gone into Glory, waiting for the marriage day when He shall come, again, to receive His perfected spouse who shall have made herself ready by His Grace! Never for a moment, whether as God over all, blessed forever, or as God and Man in one Divine Person, or as dead and buried, or as risen and ascended—never has He changed in the love He bears to His chosen! He is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

Therefore, Beloved Brothers and Sisters, He has never changed in His Divine purpose towards His beloved Church. He resolved in eternity to become One with her, that she might become one with Him and, having determined upon this, when the fullness of time had come, He was born of a woman and made under the Law. He took upon Him the likeness of sinful flesh, "and being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." Yet He never abandoned His purpose—He set His face like a flint to go up to Jerusalem—even when the bitter cup was put to His lips and He seemed to stagger for a moment. He returned to it with a strong resolve, saying to His Father, "If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as You will." That purpose is strong upon Him, now, for Zion's sake He will not hold His peace and for Jerusalem's sake He will not rest until her righteousness goes forth as brightness and her salvation as a lamp that burns!

Jesus is still pressing on with His great work and He will not fail nor be discouraged in it. He will never be content till all whom He has bought with His blood shall become glorified by His power. He will gather all His sheep in the heavenly fold and they shall pass, again, under the hands of Him that counts them—every one of them being brought there by the Great Shepherd who laid down His life for them! Beloved, He cannot turn from His purpose—it is not according to His Nature that He should, for He is, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

He is also "the same yesterday, and today, and forever," in the holding of His offices for the carrying out of His purpose and giving effect to His love. He is still a Prophet. Men try to set Him on one side. Science, falsely so-called, comes forward and bids Him hold His tongue, but, "the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice; and a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." The teachings of the New Testament are as sound and true today as they were 1800 years ago—they have lost

none of their value, none of their absolute certainty— they stand fast like the everlasting hills! Jesus Christ was a Prophet and He is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

He is the same, too, as a Priest. Some now sneer at His precious blood—alas, that it should be so! But, to His elect, His blood is still their purchase price—by this they overcome, through the blood of the Lamb they win the victory—and they know that they shall praise it in Heaven when they have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb! They never turn away from this great Priest of theirs and His wondrous Sacrifice, once offered for the sins of men and perpetually efficacious for all the blood-bought race! They glory in His everlasting Priesthood before the Father's Throne. In this we rejoice, yes, and will rejoice, that Jesus Christ is our Priest, "the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

And as King He is always the same. He is supreme in the Church. Before You, O Jesus, all Your loyal subjects bow! All the sheaves make obeisance to Your sheaf—the sun and moon and all the stars obey and serve You, King of Kings and Lord of Lords! You are Head over all things to Your Church, which is Your body. Beloved, if there is any other office which our Lord has assumed for the accomplishment of His Divine purposes, we may say of Him, concerning every position, that He is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

So also, once more, He is the same in His relationship to all His people. I like to think that, as Jesus was the Husband of His Church ages ago, He is still her Husband, for He hates divorce. As He was the Brother born for adversity to His first disciples, He is still our faithful Brother. As He was a Friend that sticks closer than a brother to those who were sorely tried in the medieval times, He is equally a Friend to us upon whom the ends of the earth have come. There is no difference, whatever, in the relationship of the Lord Jesus Christ to His people at any time! He is just as ready to comfort us tonight as He was to comfort those with whom He dwelt when here below! Sister Mary, He is as willing to come down to your Bethany and help you in your sorrow about Lazarus, as He was when He came to Martha and Mary whom He loved! Jesus Christ is just as ready to wash your feet, my Brother, after another day's weary travel through the foul ways of this world. He is as willing to take the basin and the towel, and to give us a loving cleansing, as He was when He washed His disciples' feet! Just what He was to them, He is to us! Happy is it if you and I can truly say, "What He was to Peter, what He was to John, what He was to the Magdalene, that is Jesus Christ to me—the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

Beloved, I have seen men change—oh, how they change! A little frost turns the green forest to bronze and every leaf forsakes its hold and yields to it's winter's blast. So fade our friends and the most attached adherents drop away from us in the time of trial. But Jesus is to us what He always was. When we get old and gray-headed and others shut the door on men who have lost their former strength, and can serve their turn no longer, then will He say, "Even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made and I will bear; even I will carry, and

will deliver you," for He is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever." Thus much, Beloved, with regard to Jesus, Himself—He is always the same!

II. Now let us go a step farther. JESUS CHRIST IS ALWAYS THE SAME IN HIS DOCTRINE.

This text must refer to the Doctrine of Christ, since it is connected with imitating the saints' faith—"Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation: Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart is established with Grace." From the connection it is evident that our text refers to the teaching of Christ, who is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever." This is not according to the "development" folly. Theology, like every other science, is to grow, watered by the splendid wisdom of this enlightened age, fostered by the superlative ability of the gentlemen of light and leading of the present time, so much superior to all who came before them!

We think not so, Brothers and Sisters, for the Lord Jesus Christ was the perfect Revelation of God. He was the express image of the Father's Person and the brightness of His Glory. In previous ages, God had spoken to us by His Prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son. Now as to that which was a complete Revelation, it is blasphemous to suppose that there can be any more revealed than has been made known in the Person and work of Jesus Christ, the Son of God! He is God's ultimatum—last of all, He sends His Son. If you can conceive a brighter display of God than is to be seen in the Only-Begotten, I thank God that I am unable to follow you in any such imagination! To me, He is the last, the highest, the grandest Revelation of God! And as He shuts up the Book that contains the written Revelation, He bids you never dare to take from it, lest He should take your name out of the Book of Life! And never dare to add to it, lest He should add unto you the plagues that are written in this Book!

At this time, the salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ is the same as it was in all ages. Jesus Christ still saves sinners from the guilt, the power, the punishment and the defilement of sin. Still, "there is none other name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Jesus Christ still makes all things new. He creates new hearts and right spirits in the sons of men and engraves His Law upon the tablets which once were stone, but which He has turned into flesh. There is no new salvation! Some may talk as if there were, but there is not! Salvation means to you, today, just what it meant to Saul of Tarsus on the way to Damascus. If you think it has another meaning, you have missed it altogether!

And, again, salvation by Jesus Christ comes to men in the same way as it always did. They have to receive it, now, by faith. In Paul's day, men were saved by faith, and they are not now saved by works. They began in the Spirit in the Apostolic age, and we are not now to begin in the flesh. There is no indication in the Book and there is no indication in the experience of God's children, that there is ever to be any alteration as to the way in which

we receive Christ! All live by Him. "By Grace are you saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God"—the gift of God, today, as much as it ever was, for Jesus Christ—"is the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

Once more, this salvation is just the same as to the persons to whom it is sent. It is to be preached, now, as always, to every creature under Heaven. But it appeals with a peculiar power to those who are guilty and who, by God's Grace, confess their guilt. It appeals to hearts that are broken, to men who are weary and heavy laden. It is to these that the Gospel comes with great sweetness. I have quoted to you, before, those strange words of Joseph Hart—

"A sinner is a sacred thing The Holy Spirit has made him so." He is—the Savior is only for sinners! He did not come to save the righteous. He came to seek and to save the lost and still, "to you is the word of this salvation sent," and this declaration still stands true, "This Man receives sinners, and eats with them." There is no change in this statement, "the poor have the Gospel preached to them," and it comes to those who are farthest off from God and hope—and inspires them with Divine power and energy!

Beloved, I can bear witness that the Gospel is the same in its effects upon the hearts of men. Still it breaks and still it makes whole! Still it wounds and still it heals! Still it kills and still it quickens! Still it seems to hurl man down to Hell in their terrible experience of the evil of sin, but still it lifts them up into an ecstatic joy till they are exalted almost to Heaven when they lay hold upon it and feel its power in their souls! The Gospel that was a Gospel of births and deaths, of killing and making alive, in the days of John Bunyan, has the same effect upon our hearts to this day when it comes with the power that God has put into it by His Spirit! It produces the same results and has the same sanctifying influence as it ever had.

Looking beyond the narrow stream of death, we can say that the eternal results produced by the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ are the same as they always were. The promise is this day fulfilled to those who receive Him as much as to any who went before. Life eternal is their inheritance. They shall sit with Him upon His throne and, on the other hand, the threat is equally sure of fulfillment—"These shall go away into everlasting punishment." "He that believes not shall be damned." Christ has made no change in His words of promise or of threat, nor will His followers dare to do so, for His doctrine is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

If you were to try to think over this matter and imagine for a minute that the Gospel really did shift and change with the times, it would be very extraordinary. Look, here is the Gospel for the 1st Century—make a mark and note how far it goes. Then there is a Gospel for the 2nd Century—make another mark, but then remember that you must change the color to another shade! Either these people must have altered, or else a very different effect must have been produced in the same kind of minds. In eternity, when they all get to Heaven by these 19 gospels in the 19 centuries, there will be 19 sets of people and they will

sing 19 different songs, depend upon it, and their music will not blend! Some will sing of "Free Grace and dying love," while others will sing of "evolution." What a discord it would be and what a Heaven it would be, too! I should decline to be a candidate for such a place!

No, let me go where they praise Jesus Christ and Him, alone, singing, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." That is what the 1st Century saints sing—yes, and it is what the saints of every century will sing, without any exception! And there will be no change in this song forever. The same results will flow from the same Gospel till Heaven and earth shall pass away, for Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

III. We may sound the same note, again, for a moment, because JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME AS TO HIS MODES OF WORKING—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

How did Jesus Christ save souls in olden times? "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." And if you will look down through Church history, you will find that, wherever there has been a great revival of religion, it has been linked with the preaching of the Gospel! When the Methodists began to do so much good, what did they call the men who made such a stir? "Methodist preachers," did they not say? That was always the name, "Here comes a Methodist preacher." Ah, my dear Friends, the world will never be saved by Methodist doctors, or by Baptist doctors, or anything of the sort! But multitudes will be saved, by God's Grace, through preachers! It is the preacher to whom God has entrusted this great work! Jesus said, "Preach the Gospel to every creature."

But men are getting tired of the Divine Plan—they are going to be saved by the priest, going to be saved by the music, going to be saved by theatricals and who knows what! Well, they may try these things as long as they like, but nothing can ever come of the whole thing but utter disappointment and confusion—God dishonored, the Gospel travestied, hypocrites manufactured by thousands and the Church dragged down to the level of the world! Stand to your guns, Brothers, and go on preaching and teaching nothing but the Word of God, for it still pleases God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe! And this test still stands true, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

But remember that there must always be the prayers of the saints with the preaching of the Gospel. You must have often noticed that passage in the Acts concerning the new converts on the day of Pentecost, "They continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine"—they thought a great deal about doctrine in those days. "And fellowship"—they thought a good deal of being in Church fellowship in those days. "And in breaking of bread"—they did not neglect the blessed ordinance of the Lord's Supper in those days. "In breaking of bread." And then what follows? "And in prayers." Some say, nowadays, that Prayer Meetings are religious expedients pretty well worn out. Ah, dear me! What a religious expedient that was that brought about Pentecost, when they were all assembled with one accord in one place, and when the

whole Church prayed and suddenly the place was shaken, and they heard the sound as of a rushing mighty wind, that betokened the Presence of the Holy Spirit!

Well, you may try to do without Prayer Meetings if you like, but my solemn conviction is that, as these decline, the Spirit of God will depart from you and the preaching of the Gospel will be of small account. The Lord will have the prayers of His people to go with the proclamation of His Gospel if it is to be the power of God unto salvation—and there is no change in this matter since Paul's day! Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever." God is still to be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them—and He still grants blessings in answer to believing prayer.

Remember, too, that the Lord Jesus Christ has always been inclined to work by the spiritual power of His servants. Nothing comes out of a man that is not first in him. You will not find God's servants doing great things for Him unless God works mightily in them, as well as by them. You must first be endued with power from on high, or else the power will not manifest itself in what you do. Beloved, we need our Church members to be better men and better women. We need baby-Christians to become grownup-Christians and we need the grownup-Christians among us to be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." God will work by His servants when they are adapted to His service—and He will make His instruments fit for His work. It is not in themselves that they have any strength—their weakness becomes the reason why His strength is seen in them! Still, there is an adaptation, there is a fitness for His service, there is a cleanness that God puts upon His instruments before He works mighty things by them and Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever," in this matter, too.

All the good that is ever done in the world is worked by the Holy Spirit and, as the Holy Spirit honors Jesus Christ, so He puts great honor upon the Holy Spirit. If you and I try, either as a Church or as individuals, to do without the Holy Spirit, God will soon do without us. Unless we reverently worship Him and believingly trust in Him, we shall find that we shall be like Samson when his locks were shorn. He shook himself as he had done before, but when the Philistines were upon him, he could do nothing against them. Our prayer must always be, "Holy Spirit, dwell with me! Holy Spirit, dwell with Your servants!" We know that we are utterly dependent upon Him. Such is the teaching of our Master and Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

IV. I do not want to weary you, my dear Brothers and Sisters, but may I be helped, just for a few moments, to speak on a fourth point! JESUS CHRIST HAS ALWAYS THE SAME RESOURCES, for He is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

I will repeat what I said—Jesus Christ has always the same resources. We sit down, sometimes, very sorrowful, and we say, "The times are very dark." I do not think that we can very well exaggerate their darkness and they are full of threatening omens. And I do



not think that any of us can really exaggerate those omens, they are so terrible. But still is it true, "The Lord lives, and blessed be my Rock."

Does the Church feel her need of faithful men? The Lord can send us as many as ever! When the Pope ruled everywhere, nobody thought, I should imagine, that the first man to speak out for the old faith would be a monk—they thought they had taken stock of all the men that God had at His command and they certainly did not think that He had one of the leaders of the Reformation in a monastery! But there was Martin Luther, "the monk that shook the world," and though men dreamed not what he would do, God knew all about him. There was Calvin, also, writing that famous book of his Institutes. He was a man full of disease—I think he had 60 diseases at once in his body, and he suffered greatly. Look at his portrait—pale and wan. And as a young man he was very timid. He went to Geneva and he thought he was called to write books, but Farel said to him, "You are called to lead us in preaching the Gospel here in Geneva." "No," said Calvin, for he shrank from the task. But Farel said, "The blast of the Almighty God will rest upon you unless you come out and take your proper place."

Beneath the threat of that brave old man, John Calvin took his place, prompt and sincere in the work of God, in life and in death never faltering! Then there was Zwingli over there at Zurich. He had come out, too, and Oecolampadius, and Melancthon and their fellows—who ever expected them to do what they did? Nobody! "The Lord gave the Word, great was the company of them that published it." And so, today, He has only to give the Word and you shall see starting up all over the world earnest preachers of the everlasting Gospel, for He has the same resources as always! He is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

He has also the same resources of Grace. The Holy Spirit is quite as able to convert men, to quicken, enlighten, sanctify and instruct. There is nothing which He has done which He cannot do again! The treasures of God are as full and as running over, now, as they were in the beginning of the Christian age! If we do not see such great things, where lies the restraining force? It is in our unbelief. "If you believe, all things are possible to him that believes." Before this year has gone, God can make a wave of revival break over England, Scotland and Ireland—from one end to the other! Yes, and He can deluge the whole world with the Gospel if we will but cry to Him for it! And He wills to do it, for He is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever," in the resources of His Grace.

V. So I close my sermon with this fifth head, on which I will be very short, indeed. JESUS CHRIST IS ALWAYS

THE SAME TO ME—"yesterday, and today, and forever." I will not talk about myself except to help you to think about yourselves. How long have you known the Lord Jesus Christ? Perhaps only a short time. Possibly many years. Do you remember when you first

knew Him? Can you point out the spot of ground where Jesus met you? Now, what was He to you at first? I will tell you what He was to me.

Jesus was to me, at first, my only trust. I leaned on Him very hard, then, for I had such a load to carry. I laid myself and my load down at His feet. He was All in All to me. I had not a shred of hope outside of Him, nor any trust beyond Himself, crucified and risen for me. Now, dear Brothers and Sisters, have you got any further than that? I hope not! I know that I have not. I have not a shadow of a shade of confidence anywhere but in Christ's blood and righteousness! I leaned on Him very hard at the first, but I lean harder now! Sometimes, I faint away into His arms. I have died into His life. I am lost in His fullness! He is all my salvation and all my desire. I am speaking for myself, but I think that I am speaking for many of you, too, when I say that Jesus Christ is to me, "the same yesterday, and today, and forever." His Cross, before my failing eyes, shall be my dying comfort as it is my living strength.

What was Jesus Christ to me at the first? He was the object of my warmest love. Was it not so with you? Was He not chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely? What charms, what beauties were there in that dear face of His! And what a freshness, what a novelty, what a delight which set all our passions on fire! It was so in those early days when we went after Him into the wilderness. Though all the world around was barren, He was All in All to us. Very well, what is He today? He is fairer to us, now, than He ever was! He is the one gem that we possess—our other jewels have all turned

out to be but glass and we have flung them from the chest—but He is the Kohinoor that our soul delights in! He is all perfections joined together to make one absolute perfection! He is all the Graces adorning Him and overflowing to us! Is not that what we say of Him? "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

What was Jesus Christ to me at the first? Well, He was my highest joy. In my young days, how my heart did dance at the sound of His name! Was it not so with many of you? We may be huskier in voice, heavier in body and slower in moving our limbs, but His name has as much charm for us as it ever had! There was a trumpet that nobody could blow but one who was the true heir—and there is nobody who can ever fetch the true music out of us but our Lord to whom we belong! When He sets me to His lips, you would think that I was one of the trumpets of the seven angels! And there is no one else who can make me sound like that! I cannot produce such music as that by myself and there is no theme that can ravish my heart, there is no subject that can stir my soul until I get to Him! I think it is with me as it was with Rutherford when the Duke of Argyle called out, as he began to preach about Christ, "Now, Man, you are on the right string, keep to that!" The Lord Jesus Christ knows every key in our souls and He can wake up our whole being to harmonies of music which shall set the world ringing with His praises! Yes, He is our joy, our everything, "the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

Let us go forward, then, to the unchanging Savior, through the changing things of time and sense, and we shall meet Him soon in Glory, and He will be unchanged even there, as compassionate and loving to us when we shall get Home to Him and see Him in His splendor, as He was to His poor disciples when He had not where to lay His head and was a Sufferer among them.

Oh, do you know Him? Do you know Him? Do you know Him? If not, may He, this night, reveal Himself to you, for His sweet mercy's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: HEBREWS 13.

Verse 1. Let brotherly love continue. It is supposed to already be there—let it continue, not only love of a common kind, such as we are to have to all men, but that special "brotherly love" which Christians bear to one another as members of one family. "Let brotherly love continue."

2. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Abraham did and Lot did. They thought they were entertaining ordinary strangers and they washed their feet and prepared their food but it turned out that they had entertained angels! Some people will never entertain angels unawares, for they never entertain anybody. May we be given to hospitality, for that should be part of the character of saints.

3. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them. Christian people who have got into trouble through being Christians and persons who have been shut up in prison for righteousness' sake—there were many such in Paul's day. Sympathize with them, says the Apostle, "as bound with them."

3. And them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves, also, in the body. So that, if you are not, now, in adversity, you may be before long. Therefore, have a fellow feeling for those who are in trouble. If you are not, yourself, distressed, you are not out of the reach of such a thing—therefore be tender towards your afflicted Brothers and Sisters.

4, 5. Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have: for He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you. There is a fortune for you. There is a pension to fall back upon. You may very well be content to leave your temporal concerns in the hands of God, for He has said, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." Why, if you believe that one promise of God, He will be better to you than ten thousand friends who promise to provide for you! The Provider in Heaven is better than any provider on earth! A beautiful motto is that of the old house of Chester, "God's Providence is my inheritance."

6, 7. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. It seems that there were special persons who were leaders in the Church of God, who were to be re-

membered and thought upon, and considered. They were set apart for this world—"them which have the rule over you, who have

spoken unto you the Word of God." They were leaders among the saints and Paul would have the rank and file imitate them in their confident trust in the Lord Jesus Christ—"whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation."

8, 9. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. Do not believe one thing, today, and another thing, tomorrow. Be not carried about like the thistledown in the wind. Have a faith of your own—know what you believe and stand firmly to it.

9, 10. For it is a good thing that the heart is established with Grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. We have an altar. Yes, true religion cannot exist without an altar, but what kind of altar is it? Is it a material altar? Far from it! But "we have an altar"—

10, Whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. They have nothing to do with it, for they are still under the old ceremonial Law and those whose religion consists in outward rites and ceremonies can never eat of the spiritual altar whereat spiritual men eat, for they do not understand the Scripture and they still serve the Mosaic tabernacle.

11-13. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus, also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. Outside the gate was the place of Christ's atoning death. "Outside the camp," is the place where His servants will find themselves most at home.

14. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. We cannot stop in the condemned city—we must be outside its walls. Our Lord went out of the city to die and we must go outside the camp to live!

15, 16. By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name. But to do good and to communicate, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Christian people should be always doing good. As God is always doing good, so we can never say we have done all we ought to do and will do no more—"To do good and to communicate," that is, to communicate of your substance and of your charitable help, "forget not."

17-19. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner. The movements of God's servants may be controlled by prayer. You cannot tell how much of blessing will come to your own souls through the ministry if

you are in the habit of praying about it! The man who comes up to God's House, having prayed for God to bless the preacher, is not likely to go away unprofited.

20-25. Now the God of peace, that brought, again, from the dead, our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words. Know you that our brother, Timothy, is set at liberty; with whom, if he comes shortly, I will see you. Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you. Grace be with you all. Amen. Does not that blessing seem to come across the centuries as fresh as if we heard the Apostle speak it with his living lips? Oh, to feel it true tonight! "Grace be with you all. Amen."