

## Christ's Marvellous Giving

A Sermon

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Delivered by

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"Who gave himself for us."—[Titus 2:14.](#)

WE have once more, you see, the old subject. We still have to tell the story of the love of God towards man in the person of his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. When you come to your table you find a variety there. Sometimes there is one dish upon it, and sometimes another; but you are never at all surprised to find the bread there every time, and, perhaps, we might add that there would be a deficiency if there were not salt there every time too. So there are certain truths which cannot be repeated too often, and especially is this true of this master-truth, that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Why, this is the bread of life; "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This is the salt upon the table, and must never be forgotten, This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, "that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, even the chief."

Now we shall take the text, and use it thus: first of *all we shall ask it some questions*; then *we shall surround it with a setting of facts*; and when we have done that, *we will endeavour to press out of it its very soul as we draw certain inferences from it.* First then:—

I. WE WILL PUT THE TEXT INTO THE WITNESS-BOX, AND ASK IT A FEW QUESTIONS.

There are only five words in the text, and we will be content to let it go with four questions. "Who gave himself for us" The first question we ask the text is, *Who is this that is spoken of?* and the text gives the answer. It is "the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us." We had offended God; the dignity of divine justice demanded that offenses against so good and just a law as that which God had promulgated should not be allowed to go unpunished. But the attribute of justice is not the only one in the heart of God. God is love, and is, therefore, full Of mercy. Yet, nevertheless, he never permits one quality of his Godhead to triumph over another. He could not be too merciful, and so become unjust; he would not permit mercy to put justice to an eclipse. The difficulty was solved thus: God himself stooped from his loftiness and veiled his glory in a garb of our inferior clay. The Word—that same Word without whom was not anything made that was made—became

flesh, and dwelt amongst us; and his apostles, his friends, and his enemies, beheld him—the seed of the woman, but yet the Son of God, very God of very God, in all the majesty of deity, and yet man of the substance of his mother in all the weakness of our humanity, sin being the only thing which separated us from him, he being without sin, and we being full of it. It is, then, *God*, who "gave himself for us"; it is, then, *man*, who gave himself for us. It is Jesus Christ, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God; who made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, and, being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. It is Christ Jesus, the man, the God, "who gave himself for us." Now I hope we shall not make any mistakes here, for mistakes here will be fatal. We may be thought uncharitable for saying it, but we should be dishonest if we did not say it, that it is essential to be right here.

"Ye cannot be right in the rest  
Unless ye think rightly of him."

You dishonour Christ if you do not believe in his deity. He will have nothing to do with you unless you accept him as being God as well as man. You must receive him as being, without any diminution, completely and wholly divine, and you must accept him as being your brother, as being a man just as you are. This, this is the person, and, relying upon him, we shall find salvation; but, rejecting his deity, he will say to us, "You know me not, and I never knew you!"

The text has answered the question "Who?" and now, putting it in the witness-box again, we ask it another question—"What? What did he do?" The answer is, "*He gave himself for us.*" It was a gift. Christ's offering of himself for us was voluntary; he did it of his own will. He did not die because we merited that, he should love us to the death; on the contrary, we merited that he should hate us; we deserved that he should cast us from his presence obnoxious things, for we were full of sin. We were the wicked keepers of the vineyard, who devoured for our own profit the fruit which belonged to the King's Son, and he is that King's Son, whom we slew, with wicked hands ousting him out of the vineyard. But he died for us who were his enemies. Remember the words of Scripture, "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die; peradventure, for a good, a generous man, one might even dare to die; but God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly." He *gave* himself. We cannot purchase the love of God. This highest expression of divine love, the gift of his own Son, was, in the nature of things, unpurchaseable. What could we have offered that God should come into this world, and be found in fashion as a man, and should die? Why, the works of all the angels in heaven put together could not have deserved one pang from Christ. If for ever the angels had continued their ceaseless songs, and if all men had remained faithful, and could have heaped up their pile of merit to add to that of the angels, and if all the creatures that ever were, or ever shall be, could each bring in their

golden hemp of merit—yet could they ever deserve you cross? Could they deserve that the Son of God should hang bleeding and dying there? Impossible! It must be a gift, for it was utterly unpurchaseable; though all worlds were coined and minted, yet could they not have purchased a tear from the Redeemer; they were not worth it. It must be grace; it cannot be merit; he *gave* himself.

And the gift is so thoroughly a gift that no prep of any kind was brought to bear upon the Saviour. There was no necessity that he should die, except the necessity of his loving us. Ah! friends, we might have been blotted out of existence, and I do not know that there would have been any lack in God's universe if the whole race of man had disappeared. That universe is too wide and great to miss such chirping grasshoppers as we are. When one star is blotted out it may make a little difference to our midnight sky, but to an eye that sees immensity it can make no change. Know ye not that this little solar system, which we think so vast, and those distant fixed stars, and yon mighty masses of nebulae, if such they be, and yonder streaming comet, with its stupendous walk of grandeur—all these are only like a little corner in the field of God's great works? He taketh them all up as nothing, and considereth them mighty as they be, and beyond all human conception great—to be but the small dust of the balance which does not turn the scale; and if they were all gone to-morrow there would be no more loss than as if a few grains of dust were thrown to the summer's wind. But God himself must stoop, rather than we should die. Oh! what magnificence of love! And the more so because there was no need for it. In the course of nature God would have been as holy and as heavenly without us as he is with us, and the pomp of yonder skies would have been as illustrious had we been dashed into the flames of hell as it will be now. God hath gained nought, except the manifestation of a love beyond an angel's dream; a grace, the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths of which surpass all knowledge of all creatures. God only knows the love of God which is manifested in Jesus Christ. He gave himself. We will leave this point now, when it is fully understood that Christ's dying to save sinners, and giving himself for the ungodly, was a pure act of gratuitous mercy. There was nothing to compel God to give his Son, and nothing to lead the Son to die, except the simple might of his love to men. He would not see us die. He had a Father's love to us. He seemed to stand over our fallen race, as David stood over Absalom, and we were as bad as Absalom; and there he fled, and said, "My son, my son! Would God I had died for thee, my son, my son!" But he did more than this, for he did die for us. and all for love of Us who were his enemies!

"So strange, so boundless was the love,  
Which pitied dying man;  
The Father sent his equal Son  
To give them life again."  
'Twas all of love and of grace!

The third question is, "*What did he give?*" "Who gave himself for us," and here lies the glory of the text, that he gave not merely the crowns and royalties of heaven, though it was much to leave these, to come and don the humble garb of a carpenter's son; not the songs of seraphs, not the shouts of cherubim: 'twas something to leave them to come and dwell amongst the groans and tears of this poor fallen world; not the grandeur of his Father's court, though it was much to leave that to come and live with wild beasts, and men more wild than they, to fast his forty days and then to die in ignomy and shame upon the tree. No; there is little said about all this. He gave all this, it is true, but he gave *himself*. Mark, brethren, what a richness there is here! It is not that he gave his righteousness, though that has become our dress. It is not even that he gave his blood, though that is the fount in which we wash. It is that he gave himself—his Godhead and manhood both combined. All that that word "Christ" means he came to us and for us. He gave himself. Oh! that we could dive and plunge into—this unfathomed sea—himself! Omnipotence, Omniscience, Infinity—himself. He gave himself—purity, love, kindness, meekness, gentleness—that wonderful compound of all perfections, to make up one perfection—himself. You do not come to Christ's house and say, "He gives me this house, his church, to dwell in." You do not come to his table and merely say, "He gives me this table to feast at," but you go farther, and you take him by faith into your arms, and you say, "Who loved me, and gave *himself* for me." Oh! that you could get hold of that sweet word—himself! It is the love of a husband to his wife, who not only gives her all that she can wish, daily food and raiment, and all the comforts that can nourish and cherish her, and make her life glad, but who gives himself to her. So does Jesus. The body and soul of Jesus, the deity of Jesus, and all that that means, he has been pleased to give to and for his people. "Who gave himself for us."

There is another question which we shall ask the text, and that is, "*For whom did Christ give himself?*" Well, the text says, "For us." There be those who say that Christ has thus given himself for every man now living, or that ever did or shall live. We are not able to subscribe to the statement, though there is a truth in it, that in a certain sense he is "the Saviour of all men," but then it is added, "Specially of them that believe." At any rate, dear hearer, let me tell thee one thing that is certain. Whether atonement may be said to be particular or general, there are none who partake in its real efficacy but certain characters, and those characters are known by certain infallible signs. You must not say that he gave himself for you unless these signs are manifest in you, and the first sign is that of simple faith in the Lord Jesus. If thou believest in him, that shall be a proof to thee that he gave himself for thee. See, if he gave himself for all men alike, then he did equally for Judas and for Peter. Care you for such love as that? He died equally for those who were then in hell as for those who were then in heaven. Care you for such a doctrine as that? For my part, I desire to have a personal, peculiar, and special interest in the precious blood of Jesus; such an interest in it as shall lead me to his right hand, and enable me to say, "He hath washed me from my sins, in his blood."

Now I think we have no right to conclude that we shall have any benefit from the death of Christ unless we trust him, and if we do trust him, that trust will produce the following things:—"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity"—we shall hate sin; we shall fight against it; we shall be delivered from it? "and purify unto himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works." I have no right, therefore, to conclude that I shall be a partaker of the precious blood of Jesus unless I become in my life "zealous of good works," My good works cannot save me, cannot even help to save me; but they are evidences of my being saved, and if I am not zealous for good works, I lack the evidence of salvation, and I have no right whatever to conclude that I shall receive one jot of benefit from Christ's sufferings upon the tree. Oh! my dear hearer, I would to God that thou couldest trust the Man, the God, who died on Calvary! I would that thou couldest trust him so that thou couldest say, "He will save me; he has saved me." The gratitude which you would feel towards him would inspire you with an invincible hatred against sin. You would begin to fight against every evil way; you would conform yourselves, by his grace, to his law and his Word, and you would become a new creature in him! May God grant that you may yet be able to say, "Who gave himself for me"! I have asked the text enough questions, and there I leave them. For a few minutes only I am now going to use the text another way, namely:—

## II. PUT THE TEXT INTO A SETTING OF FACTS.

There was a day before all days when there was no day but the Ancient of Days; a time when there was no time, but when Eternity was all. Then God, in the eternal purpose, decreed to save his people. If we may speak so of things too mysterious for us to know them, and which we can only set forth after the manner of men, God had determined that his people should be saved, but he foresaw that they would sin. It was necessary, therefore, that the penalty due to their sins should be borne by someone. They could not be saved except a substitute were found who would bear the penalty of sin in their place and stead. Where was such a substitute to be found? No angel offered. There was no angel, for God dwelt alone, and even if there had then been angels, they could never have dared to offer to sustain the fearful weight of human guilt. But in that solemn council-chamber, when it was deliberated who should enter into bonds of suretyship to pay all the debts of the people of God, Christ came and gave himself a bondsman and a surety for all that was due—from them, or would be due from them, to the judgment-seat of God. In that day, then, he "gave himself for us."

But Time began, and this round world had made, in the mind of God, a few revolutions. Men said the world was getting old, but to God it was but an infant. But the fulness of time was come, and suddenly, amidst the darkness of the night, there was heard sweeter singing than ere had come from mortal lips, "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace; good will to men!" What lit up the sky with unwonted splendour and what had filled the air with *chorales* at the dead of night? See the Babe upon its mother's breast, there in Bethlehem's

manger! "He gave himself for us." That same one who had given himself a surety has come down to earth to be a man, and to give himself for us. See him! For thirty years he toils on, amidst the drudgery of the carpenters shop! What is he doing? The law needed to be fulfilled, and he "gave himself for us," and fulfilled the law. But now the time comes when he is thirty-two or thirty-three years of age, and the law demands that the penalty shall be paid. Do you see him going to meet Judas in the garden, with confident, but solemn step? He "gave himself for us." He could with a word have driven those soldiers into hell, but they bind him—he "gave himself for us." They take him before Pilate, and Herod and Caiaphas, and they mock at him, and jeer him, and pluck his cheeks, and flagellate his shoulders! How is it that he will smart at this rate? How is it that he bears so passively all the insults and indignities which they heap upon him? He gave himself for us. Our sins demanded smart; he bared his back and took the smart; he gave himself for us. But do you see that dreadful procession going through the streets of Jerusalem, along the rough pavement of the Via Dolorosa? Do you see the weeping women as they mourn because of him? How is it that he is willing to be led a captive up to the hill of Calvary? Alas! they throw him on the ground! They drive accursed iron through his hands and feet. They hoist him into the air! They dash the cross into its appointed place, and there he hangs, a naked spectacle of scorn and shame, derided of men, and mourned by angels. How is it that the Lord of glory, who made all worlds, and hung out the stars like lamps, should now be bleeding and dying there? He gave himself for us. Can you see the streaming fountains of the four wounds in his hands and feet? Can you trace his agony as it carves lines upon his brow and all down his emaciated frame? No you cannot see the griefs of his soul. No spirit can behold them. They were too terrible for you to know them. It seemed as though all hell were emptied into the bosom of the Son of God, and as though all the miseries of all the ages were made to meet upon him, till he bore:—

"All that incarnate God, could bear,  
With strength enough, but none to spare."

Now why is all this but that he gave himself for us till his head hung down in death, and his arms, in chill, cold death, hung down by his side, and they buried the lifeless Victor in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea? He gave himself for us!

What more now remaineth? He lives again; on the third day he cometh from the tomb, and even then he still gave himself for us! Oh! yes, beloved, he has gone up on high but he still gives himself for us, for up there he is constantly engaged in pleading the sinner's cause. Up yonder, amidst the glories of heaven, he has not forgotten us poor sinners who are here below, but he spreads his hands, and pleads before his Father's throne and wins for us unnumbered blessings, for he gave himself for us.

And I have been thinking whether I might not use the text in another way. Christ's servants wanted a subject upon which to preach, and so he "gave himself for us," to be the constant topic of our ministry. Christ's servants wanted a sweet companion to be with them

in their troubles, and he gave himself for us. Christ's people want comfort; they want spiritual food and drink, and so he gave himself for us—his flesh to be our meat, and his blood to be our spiritual drink. And we expect soon to go home to the land of the hereafter, to the realms of the blessed, and what is to be our heaven? Why, our heaven will be Christ himself, for he gave himself for Us. Oh! he is all that we want, all that we wish for! We cannot desire anything greater and better than to be with Christ, and to have Christ, to feed upon Christ, to lie in Christ's bosom, to know the kisses of his mouth, to look at the gleamings of his loving eyes, to hear his loving words, to feel him press us to his heart, and tell us that he has loved us from before the foundation of the world, and given himself for us.

I think we have put the text now into a setting of certain facts; do not forget them, but let them be your joy! And now the last thing we have to do is to:—

### III. TURN THE TEXT TO PRACTICAL ACCOUNT BY DRAWING FROM IT A FEW INFERENCES.

The first inference I draw is this—*that he who gave himself for his people will not deny them anything*. This is a sweet encouragement to you who practice the art of prayer. You know how Paul puts it, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not, with him, also freely give us all things?" Christ is all. If Christ gives himself to you, he will give you your bread and your water, and he will give you a house to dwell in. If he gives you himself, he will not let you starve on the road to heaven. Jesus Christ does not Give us himself and then deny us common things. Oh! child of God, go boldly to the throne of grace! Thou hast got the major; thou shalt certainly have the minor; thou hast the greater, thou canst not be denied the less.

Now I draw another inference, namely, that if Christ has already given himself in so painful a way as I have described, since there is no need that he should suffer any more, we *must believe that he is willing to give himself now unto the hearts of poor sinners*. Beloved, for Christ to come to Bethlehem is a greater stoop than for him to come into your heart. Had Christ to die upon Calvary? That is all done, and he need not die again. Do you think that he who is willing to die is unwilling to apply the results of his passion? If a man leaps into the water to bring out a drowning child, after he has brought the child alive on shore, if he happens to have a piece of bread in his pocket, and the child needs it, do you think that he who rescued the child's life will deny that child so small a thing as a piece of bread? And come, dost thou think that Christ died on Calvary, and yet will not come into thy heart if thou seekest him? Dost thou believe that he who died for sinners will ever reject the prayer of a sinner? If thou believest that thou thinkest hardly of him, for his heart is very tender. He feels even a cry. You know how it is with your children; if they cry through pain, why, you would give anything for someone to come and heal them; and if you cry because your sin is painful, the great Physician will come and heal you. Ah! Jesus Christ is much more easily moved by our cries and tears than we are by the woes of our fellow-creatures. Come,

poor sinner, come and put thy trust in my Master! Thou canst not think him hard-hearted. If he were, why did he die? Dost thou think him unkind? Then why did he bleed? Thou art inclined to think so hardly of him! Thou art making great cuts at his heart when thou thinkest him to be untender and ungenerous. "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but rather that he would turn unto me and live." This is the voice of the God whom you look upon as so sternly just! Did Jesus Christ, the tender one, speak in even more plaintive tones, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest"? You working men, you labouring men, Christ bids you come to him "all ye that labour." And you who are unhappy, you who know you have done wrong, and cannot sleep at nights because of it; you who are troubled about sin, and would fain go and hide your heads, and get:—

"Anywhere, anywhere out of the world,"

—your Father says to you one and all, "Run not from me, but come to me, my child!" Jesus, who died, says, "Flee not from me, but come to me, for I will accept you; I will receive you; I cast out none that come unto me. "Sinner, Jesus never did reject a coming soul yet, and he never will. Oh! try him! Try him! Now come, with thy sins about thee just as thou art, to the bleeding, dying Saviour, and he will say to thee, "I have blotted out thy sins; go and sin no more; I have forgiven thee." May God grant thee grace to put thy trust in him "who gave himself for us"!

There are many other inferences which I might draw if I had time, but if this last one we have drawn be so applied to your hearts as to be carried out, it will be enough. Now do not you go and try to do good worlds in order to merit heaven. Do not go and try to pray yourselves into heaven by the efficacy of praying. Remember, he "gave himself for us." The old proverb is that "there is nothing freer than a gift," and surely this gift of God, this eternal life, must be free, and we must have it freely, or not at all. I sometimes see put up at some of our doctors that they receive "gratis patients." That is the sort of patients my Master receives. He receives none but those who come gratis. He never did receive anything yet, and he never will, except your love and your thanks after he has saved you. But you must come to him empty-handed; came just as you are, and he will receive you now, and you shall live to sing to the praise and the glory of his grace who has accepted you in the Beloved, and "who gave himself for us" God help you to do it. Amen.