

# Home Truths

---

BEING MISCELLANEOUS ADDRESSES AND TRACTS,

BY THE

REV. J. C. RYLE B.A.  
*Rector of Helmingham, Suffolk.*

---

ARRANGED, REVISED, AND CORRECTED SPECIALLY  
FOR THIS EDITION.

---

SEVENTH SERIES.

*“If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare  
himself to the battle?”* (1 Cor. xiv. 8.)

IPSWICH:  
WILLIAM HUNT, TAVERN STREET.

LONDON:  
WERTHEIM, MACINTOSH, AND HUNT,  
24, PATERNOSTER ROW, AND 23, HOLLES STREET,  
CAVENDISH SQUARE.

M.D.CCC.LIX.

# The True Church.\*

---

MATT. XVI. 18.

*“Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”*

We live in a world in which all things are passing away. Kingdoms, empires, cities, ancient institutions, families, all are liable to change and corruption. One universal law seems to prevail everywhere. In all created things there is a tendency to decay.

There is something saddening and depressing in this. What profit hath a man in the labour of his hands? Is there nothing that shall stand? Is there nothing that shall last? Is there nothing that shall endure? Is there nothing of which we can say—This shall continue for evermore? You have the answer to these questions in the words of our text. Our Lord Jesus Christ speaks of something which shall continue, and not pass away. There is one created thing which is an exception to the universal rule to which I have referred. There is one thing which shall never perish and pass away. That thing is the building founded upon the rock—the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. He declares, in the words you have heard tonight: “Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

There are five things in these words which demand your attention:—

I.—*You have a Building*: “My church.”

II.—*A Builder*: Christ says, “I will build My church.”

III.—*A Foundation*: “Upon this rock I will build My church.”

IV.—*Perils Implied*: “The gates of hell.”

V.—*Security Asserted*: “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

May God bless the words that shall be spoken. May we all search our own hearts tonight, and know whether or not we belong to this one church. May we all go home to reflect and to pray!

I.—You have, firstly, a *Building* mentioned in the text. The Lord Jesus Christ speaks of “My church.”

---

\* The following Sermon was preached at Weston-super-mare, in August 1858, on the occasion of the Aggregate Clerical Meeting, held there under the presidency of Archdeacon Law.

Now what is this church? Few inquiries can be made of more importance than this. For want of due attention to this subject, the errors that have crept into the church, and into the world, are neither few nor small.

The church of our text is no material building. It is no temple made with hands, of wood, or brick, or stone, or marble. It is a company of men and women. It is no particular visible church on earth. It is not the Eastern Church or the Western Church. It is not the Church of England, or the Church of Scotland;—much less is it the Church of Rome. The Church of our text is one that makes far less show in the eyes of man, but is of far more importance in the eyes of God.

The church of our text is made up of all true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. It comprehends all who have repented of sin, and fled to Christ by faith, and been made new creatures in Him. It comprises all God's elect, all who have received God's grace, all who have been washed in Christ's blood, all who have been clothed in Christ's righteousness, all who have been born again and sanctified by Christ's Spirit. All such, of every nation, and people, and tongue, compose the church of our text. This is the body of Christ. This is the flock of Christ. This is the bride. This is the Lamb's wife. This is "the holy Catholic Church" of the Apostle's Creed. This is the "blessed company of all faithful people," spoken of in the communion service of our Prayer-book. This is the church on the rock.

The members of this church do not all worship God in the same way, or use the same form of government. Our own 34th Article declares, "It is not necessary that ceremonies should be in all places one and alike." But they all worship with one heart. They are all led by one Spirit. They are all really and truly holy. They can all say "Alleluia," and they can all reply "Amen."

This is that church, to which all visible churches on earth are servants and handmaidens. Whether they are Episcopalian, Independent, or Presbyterian, they all serve the interests of the one true church. They are the scaffolding, behind which the great building is carried on. They are the husk, under which the living kernel grows. They have their various degrees of usefulness. The best and worthiest of them is that which trains up most members for Christ's true church. But no visible church has any right to say, "We are the only True Church. We are the men, and wisdom shall die with us." No visible church should ever dare to say, "We shall stand for ever. The gates of hell shall not prevail against me."

This is that church to which belong the Lord's precious promises of preservation, continuance, protection, and final glory. "Whatsoever," says Hooker, "we read in Scripture, concerning the endless love and saving mercy, which God showeth towards His churches, the only proper subject thereof is this church, which we properly term the mystical body of Christ." Small and despised as the true church may be in this world, it is precious

and honourable in the sight of God. The temple of Solomon in all its glory was mean and contemptible, in comparison with that church which is built upon a rock.

Men and brethren, see that you hold sound doctrine upon the subject of “the church.” A mistake here may lead on to dangerous and soul ruining errors. The church which is made up of true believers, is the church for which we, who are ministers, are specially ordained to preach. The church which comprises all who repent and believe the Gospel, is the church to which we desire you to belong. Our work is not done, and our hearts are not satisfied, until you are made new creatures, and are members of the one true church. Outside of this church there can be no salvation.

II.—I pass on to the second point, to which I proposed to call your attention. Our text contains not merely a building, but a *Builder*. The Lord Jesus Christ declares, “*I will build My church.*”

The true church of Christ is tenderly cared for by all the three persons of the blessed Trinity. In the economy of redemption, beyond all doubt, God the Father chooses, and God the Holy Ghost sanctifies, every member of Christ’s mystical body. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, three Persons and one God, co-operate for the salvation of every saved soul. This is truth, which ought never to be forgotten. Nevertheless, there is a peculiar sense in which the help of the church is laid on the Lord Jesus Christ. He is peculiarly and pre-eminently the Redeemer and the Saviour. Therefore it is, that we find Him saying in our text, “I will build,—the work of building is my special work.”

It is Christ who calls the members of the church in due time. They are “the called of Jesus Christ.” (Rom. i. 6.) It is Christ who quickens them. “The Son quickeneth whom He will.” (John v. 21.) It is Christ who washes away their sins. He “has loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.” (Rev. i. 5.) It is Christ who gives them peace. “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you.” (John xiv. 27.) It is Christ who gives them eternal life. “I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish.” (John x. 28.) It is Christ who grants them repentance. “Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance.” (Acts v. 31.) It is Christ who enables them to become God’s Children. “To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.” (John i. 12.) It is Christ who carries on the work within them when it is begun. “Because I live, ye shall live also.” (John xiv. 19.) In short, it has “pleased the Father that in Christ should all fulness dwell.” (Coloss. i. 19.) He is the author and finisher of faith. From Him every joint and member of the mystical body of Christians is supplied. Through Him they are strengthened for duty. By Him they are kept from falling. He shall preserve them to the end, and pre-

sent them faultless before the Father's throne with exceeding great joy. He is all things, and all in all to believers.

The mighty agent by whom the Lord Jesus Christ carries out this work in the number of His churches, is, without doubt, the Holy Ghost. He it is who applies Christ and His benefits to the soul. He it is who is ever renewing, awakening, convincing, leading to the cross, transforming, taking out of the world, stone after stone, and adding it to the mystical building.

But the great chief Builder, who has undertaken to execute the work of redemption and bring it to completion, is the Son of God, the Word who was made flesh. It is Jesus Christ who "builds."

In building the true church, the Lord Jesus condescends to use many subordinate instruments. The ministry of the Gospel, the circulation of the Scriptures, the friendly rebuke, the word spoken in season, the drawing influence of afflictions—all, all are means and appliances by which His work is carried on. But Christ is the great superintending architect, ordering, guiding, directing all that is done. What the sun is to the whole solar system, that Christ is to all the members of the true church. "Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God giveth the increase." Ministers may preach, and writers may write, but the Lord Jesus Christ alone can build. And except He builds, the work stands still.

Great is the wisdom wherewith the Lord Jesus Christ builds His church. All is done at the right time, and in the right way. Each stone in its turn is put in the right place. Sometimes He chooses great stones, and sometimes He chooses small stones. Sometimes the work goes on fast, and sometimes it goes on slowly. Man is frequently impatient, and thinks that nothing is doing. But man's time is not God's time. A thousand years in His sight are but as a single day. The great Builder makes no mistakes. He knows what He is doing. He sees the end from the beginning. He works by a perfect, unalterable and certain plan. The mightiest conceptions of architects, like Michael Angelo and Wren, are mere trifling child's play, in comparison with Christ's wise counsels respecting His church.

Great is the condescension and mercy, which Christ exhibits in building His church. He often chooses the most unlikely and roughest stones, and fits them into a most excellent work. He despises none, and rejects none, on account of former sins and past transgressions. He delights to show mercy. He often takes the most thoughtless and ungodly, and transforms them into polished corners of His spiritual temple.

Great is the power which Christ displays in building His church. He carries on His work in spite of opposition from the world, the flesh, and the devil. In storm, in tempest, through troublous times, silently, quietly, without noise, without stir, without excitement, the building progresses, like Solomon's temple. "I will work," He declares, "and none shall let it."

Brethren, the children of this world take little or no interest in the building of this church. They care little for the conversion of souls. What are broken spirits and penitent hearts to them? It is all foolishness in their eyes. But while the children of this world care nothing, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God. For the preserving of that church, the laws of nature have oftentimes been suspended. For the good of that church, all the providential dealings of God in this world are ordered and arranged. For the elect's sake, wars are brought to an end, and peace is given to a nation. Statesmen, rulers, emperors, kings, presidents, heads of governments, have their schemes and plans, and think them of vast importance. But there is another work going on of infinitely greater moment, for which they are all but as the axes and saws in God's hands. That work is the gathering in of living stones into the one true church. How little are we told in God's word about unconverted men compared with what we are told about believers! The history of Nimrod, the mighty hunter, is dismissed in a few words. The history of Abraham, the father of the faithful, occupies several chapters. Nothing in Scripture is so important as the concerns of the true church. The world takes up little of God's word. The church and its story take up much.

For ever let us thank God, my beloved brethren, that the building of the one true church is laid on the shoulders of One that is mighty. Let us bless God that it does not rest upon man. Let us bless God that it does not depend on missionaries, ministers, or committees. Christ is the almighty Builder. He will carry on His work, though nations and visible churches do not know their duty. Christ will never fail. That which He hath undertaken He will certainly accomplish.

III.—I pass on to the third point, which I proposed to consider—The *Foundation* upon which this church is built. The Lord Jesus Christ tells us, “Upon this Rock will I build my church.”

What did the Lord Jesus Christ mean, when He spoke of this foundation? Did He mean the apostle Peter, to whom He was speaking? I think assuredly not. I can see no reason, if He meant Peter, why He did not say, “Upon thee” will I build My church. If He had meant Peter, He would have said, I will build My church on thee, as plainly as He said, “to thee will I give the keys.” No! it was not the person of the apostle Peter, but the good confession which the apostle had just made. It was not Peter, the erring, unstable man; but the mighty truth which the Father had revealed to Peter. It was the truth concerning Jesus Christ himself which was the rock. It was Christ's Mediatorship, and Christ's Messiahship. It was the blessed truth, that Jesus was the promised Saviour, the true Surety, the real Intercessor between God and man. This was the rock, and this the foundation, upon which the church of Christ was to be built.

My brethren, this foundation was laid at a mighty cost. It needed that the Son of God should take our nature upon Him, and in that nature live, suffer, and die, not for His own sins, but for ours. It needed that in that nature Christ should go to the grave, and rise again. It needed that in that nature Christ should go up to heaven, to sit at the right hand of God, having obtained eternal redemption for all His people. No other foundation but this could have borne the weight of that church of which our text speaks. No other foundation could have met the necessities of a world of sinners.

That foundation once obtained, is very strong. It can bear the weight of the sin of all the world. It has borne the weight of all the sins of all the believers who have built on it. Sins of thought, sins of the imagination, sins of the heart, sins of the head, sins which every one has seen, and sins which no man knows, sins against God, and sins against man, sins of all kinds and descriptions,—that mighty rock can bear the weight of all these sins and not give way. The mediatorial office of Christ is a remedy sufficient for all the sins of all the world.

To this one foundation every member of Christ's true church is joined. In many things believers are disunited and disagreed. In the matter of their soul's foundation they are all of one mind. They are all built on the rock. Ask where they get their peace, and hope, and joyful expectation of good things to come. You would find that all flows from that one mighty truth, Christ the Mediator between God and man, and the office that Christ holds, as the High-priest and Surety of sinners.

Here is the point which demands our personal attention. Are we upon the rock? Are we really joined to the one foundation? What says that good old divine, Archbishop Leighton? "God has laid this precious stone for this very purpose, that weary sinners may rest upon it. The multitude of imaginary believers lie round about it, but they are none the better for that, any more than stones that lie loose in heaps, near a foundation, but not joined unto it. There is no benefit to us by Christ, without union with Him."

Look to your foundation, my beloved brethren, if you would know whether or not you are members of the one true church. It is a point that may be known to yourselves. Your public worship we can see, but we cannot see whether you are personally built upon the rock. Your attendance at the Lord's table we can see, but we cannot see whether you are joined to Christ, and one with Christ, and Christ in you. But all shall come to light one day. The secrets of all hearts shall be exposed. Perhaps you go to church regularly, you love your Prayer-book, you are constant in attending on every means of grace your church supplies. All this is right and good, so far as it goes. But all this time, see that you make no mistake about your own personal salvation. See that your own soul is upon the rock. Without this, all else is nothing. Without this, you will never stand in the day of

judgment. Better a thousand times in that day to be found in a cottage upon the rock, than in a palace upon the sand!

IV.—I proceed in the fourth place to speak of the *Implied Trials* of the church, to which our text refers. There is mention made of “the gates of hell.” By that expression we are meant to understand the power of the devil!

The history of Christ’s true church has always been one of conflict and war. It has been constantly assailed by a deadly enemy, Satan, the prince of this world. The devil hates the true church of Christ with an undying hatred. He is ever stirring up opposition against all its members. He is ever urging the children of this world to do his will, and injure and harass the people of God. If he cannot bruise the head, he will bruise the heel. If he cannot rob believers of heaven, he will vex them by the way.

For six thousand years this enmity has gone on. Millions of the ungodly have been the devil’s agents and done the devil’s work, though they knew it not. The Pharaohs, the Herods, the Neros, the Julians, the Dioclesians, the bloody Marys—what were they all but Satan’s tools, when they persecuted the disciples of Jesus Christ.

Warfare with the powers of hell has been the experience of the whole body of Christ. It has always been a bush burning, though not consumed—a woman fleeing into the wilderness, but not swallowed up. The visible churches have their times of prosperity and seasons of peace, but never has there been a time of peace for the true church. Its conflict is perpetual. Its battle never ends.

Warfare with the powers of hell is the experience of every individual member of the true church. Each has to fight. What are the lives of all the saints, but records of battles? What were such men as Paul, and James, and Peter, and John, and Polycarp, and Ignatius, and Augustine, and Luther, and Calvin, and Latimer, and Baxter, but soldiers engaged in a constant warfare? Sometimes their persons have been assailed, and sometimes their property. Sometimes they have been harassed by calumnies and slanders, and sometimes by open persecution. But in one way or another the devil has been continually warring against the church. The “gates of hell” have been continually assaulting the people of Christ.

Men and brethren, we who preach the Gospel can hold out to all who come to Christ, exceeding great and precious promises. We can offer boldly to you in our Master’s name, the peace of God which passeth all understanding. Mercy, free grace, and full salvation, are offered to every one who will come to Christ, and believe on Him. But we promise you no peace with the world, or with the devil. We warn you, on the contrary, that there must be warfare, so long as you are in the body. We would not keep you



back, or deter you from Christ's service. But we would have you "count the cost," and fully understand what Christ's service entails. Hell is behind you. Heaven is before you. Home lies on the other side of a troubled sea. Thousands, tens of thousands have crossed these stormy waters, and in spite of all opposition, have reached the haven where they would be. Hell has assailed them, but has not prevailed. Go forward, beloved brethren, and fear not the adversary. Only abide in Christ, and the victory is sure.

Marvel not at the enmity of the gates of hell. "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own." So long as the world is the world, and the devil the devil, so long there must be warfare, and believers in Christ must be soldiers. The world hated Christ, and the world will hate true Christians, as long as the earth stands. As the great reformer, Luther, said, "Cain will go on murdering Abel so long as the church is on earth."

Be prepared for the enmity of the gates of hell. Put on the whole armour of God. The tower of David contains a thousand bucklers, all ready for the use of God's people. The weapons of our warfare have been tried by millions of poor sinners like ourselves, and have never been found to fail.

Be patient under the enmity of the gates of hell. It is all working together for your good. It tends to sanctify. It keeps you awake. It makes you humble. It drives you nearer to the Lord Jesus Christ. It weans you from the world. It helps to make you pray more. Above all, it makes you long for heaven, and say with heart as well as lips, "Come, Lord Jesus."

Be not cast down by the enmity of hell. The warfare of the true child of God is as much a mark of grace as the inward peace which he enjoys. No cross, no crown! No conflict, no saving Christianity! "Blessed are ye," said our Lord Jesus Christ, "when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake."

V.—There remains one thing more to be considered: the *Security* of the true church of Christ. There is a glorious promise given by the mighty Builder, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." He who cannot lie has pledged His royal word, that all the powers of hell shall never overthrow His church. It shall continue, and stand, in spite of every assault. It shall never be overcome. All other created things perish and pass away, but not the church of Christ. The hand of outward violence, or the moth of inward decay, prevail over everything else, but not over the temple that Christ builds.

Empires have risen and fallen in rapid succession. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Tyre, Carthage, Rome, Greece, Venice—Where are all these now? They were all the creations of man's hand, and have passed away. But the church of Christ lives on.

The mightiest cities have become heaps of ruins. The broad walls of Babylon are sunk to the ground. The palaces of Nineveh are mounds of dust. The hundred gates of Thebes are only matters of history. Tyre is a place where fishermen hang their nets. Carthage is a desolation. Yet all this time the true church stands. The gates of hell do not prevail against it.

The earliest visible churches have in many cases decayed and perished. Where is the church of Ephesus and the church of Antioch? Where is the church of Alexandria and the church of Constantinople? Where are the Corinthian, and Philippian, and Thessalonian churches? Where, indeed, are they all? They departed from the Word of God. They were proud of their bishops, and synods, and ceremonies, and learning, and antiquity. They did not glory in the true cross of Christ. They did not hold fast the Gospel. They did not give Jesus His rightful office, or faith its rightful place. They are now among the things that have been. Their candlestick has been taken away. But all this time the true church has lived on.

Has the true church been oppressed in one country? It has fled to another. Has it been trampled on and oppressed in one soil? It has taken root and flourished in some other climate. Fire, sword, prisons, fines, penalties, have never been able to destroy its vitality. Its persecutors have died and gone to their own place, but the word of God has lived, and grown, and multiplied. Weak as this true church may appear to the eye of man, it is an anvil which has broken many a hammer in times past, and perhaps will break many more before the end. He that lays hands on it, is touching the apple of God's eye.

The promise of our text is true of the whole body of the true church. Christ will never be without a witness in the world. He has had a people in the worst of times. He had seven thousand in Israel even in the days of Ahab. There are some now, I believe, in the dark places of the Roman and Greek churches, who, in spite of much weakness, are serving Christ. The devil may rage horribly. The church may in some countries be brought exceedingly low. But the gates of hell shall never entirely prevail.

The promise of our text is true of every individual member of the church. Some of God's people have been brought very low, so that they despaired of their safety. Some have fallen sadly, as David and Peter did. Some have departed from the faith for a time, like Cranmer and Jewell. Many have been tried by cruel doubts and fears. But all have got safe home at last, the youngest as well as the oldest, the weakest as well as the strongest. And so it will be to the end. Can you prevent tomorrow's sun from rising? Can you prevent the tide in the Bristol Channel from ebbing and flowing? Can you prevent the planets moving in their respective orbits? Then, and then alone, can you prevent the salvation of any believer, however fee-

ble, of any living stone in that church which is built upon the rock, however small or insignificant that stone may appear.

The true church is Christ's body. Not one bone in that mystical body shall ever be broken.—The true church is Christ's bride. They whom God hath joined in everlasting covenant, shall never be put asunder.—The true church is Christ's flock. When the lion came and took a lamb out of David's flock, David arose and delivered the lamb from his mouth. Christ will do the same. He is David's greater son. Not a single sick lamb in Christ's flock shall perish. He will say to His Father in the last day, "Of those whom thou gavest me I have lost none."—The true church is the wheat of the earth. It may be sifted, winnowed, buffeted, tossed to and fro. But not one grain shall be lost. The tares and chaff shall be burned. The wheat shall be gathered into the barn.—The true church is Christ's army. The Captain of our salvation loses none of his soldiers. His plans are never defeated. His supplies never fail. His muster roll is the same at the end as it was at the beginning. Of the men that marched gallantly out of England a few years ago in the Crimean war, how many never came back! Regiments that went forth, strong and cheerful, with bands playing and banners flying, laid their bones in a foreign land, and never returned to their native country. But it is not so with Christ's army. Not one of His soldiers shall be missing at last. He Himself declares "They shall never perish."

The devil may cast some of the members of the true church into prison. He may kill, and burn, and torture, and hang. But after he has killed the body, there is nothing more that he can do. He cannot hurt the soul. When the French troops took Rome a few years ago, they found on the walls of a prison cell, under the Inquisition, the words of a prisoner. Who he was, we know not. But his words are worthy of remembrance. Though dead, he yet speaketh. He had written on the walls, very likely after an unjust trial, and a still more unjust excommunication, the following striking words: — "Blessed Jesus, they cannot cast me out of thy true church." That record is true. Not all the power of Satan can cast out of Christ's true church one single believer.

The children of this world may wage fierce warfare against the church, but they cannot stop the work of conversion. What said the sneering Emperor Julian, in the early ages of the church—"What is the carpenter's son doing now?" An aged Christian made answer, "He is making a coffin for Julian himself." But a few months passed away, when Julian, with all his pomp and power, died in battle. Where was Christ when the fires of Smithfield were lighted, and when Latimer and Ridley were burnt at the stake? What was Christ doing then? He was still carrying on His work of building. That work will ever go on, even in troublous times.

Fear not, beloved brethren, to begin serving Christ. He to whom you commit your souls has all power in heaven and earth, and He will keep you. He will never let you be cast away. Relatives may oppose. Neighbours may mock. The world may slander and sneer. Fear not! Fear not! The powers of hell shall never prevail against your soul. Greater is He that is for you, than all they that are against you.

Fear not for the church of Christ, my brethren, when ministers die, and saints are taken away. Christ can ever maintain His own cause. He will raise up better and brighter stars. The stars are all in His right hand. Leave off all anxious thought about the future. Cease to be cast down by the measures of statesmen, or the plots of wolves in sheep's clothing. Christ will ever provide for His own Church. Christ will take care that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. All is going on well, though our eyes may not see it. The kingdoms of this world shall yet become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ.

Suffer me now to say a few words of practical application of this sermon. I speak to many, whom I speak to for the first time. I speak, perhaps, to many whom I speak to for the last time. Let not this service conclude without an effort to press home the sermon on each heart.

1. My first word of application shall be a question. What shall that question be? Wherewith shall I approach you? What shall I ask? I ask you, whether you are a member of the one true church of Christ? Are you in the highest, the best sense, a "churchman" in the sight of God? You know what I mean. I look far beyond the Church of England. I speak of the church built upon the rock. I ask you, with all solemnity—Are you a member of that one church of Christ? Are you joined to the great Foundation? Have you received the Holy Ghost? Does the Spirit witness with your spirit, that you are one with Christ, and Christ with you? I beseech you, in the name of God, to lay to heart this question, and to ponder it well.

Take heed to yourselves, dear brethren, if you cannot give a satisfactory answer to my inquiry. Take heed, take heed, that you do not make shipwreck of faith. Take heed, lest at last the gates of hell prevail against you, the devil claim you as his own, and you be cast away for ever. Take heed, lest you go down to the pit from the land of Bibles, and in the full light of Christ's Gospel.

2. My second word of application shall be an invitation. I address it to all who are not yet true believers. I say to you, Come and join the one true church without delay. Come and join yourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ in an everlasting covenant not to be forgotten. Come to Christ and be saved. The day of decision must come some time. Why not this very evening?

Why not to-day, while it is called today?— Why not this very night, ere the sun rises to-morrow morning?—Come to Him, whose I am, and whom I serve. Come to my Master, Jesus Christ. Come, I say, for all things are now ready. Mercy is ready for you, heaven is ready for you, angels are ready to rejoice over you, Christ is ready to receive you. Christ will receive you gladly, and welcome you among his children. Come into the ark—the flood of God’s wrath will soon break upon the earth—come into the ark and be safe.

Come into the life-boat. The old world will soon break into pieces! Hear you not the tremblings of it? The world is but a wreck hard upon the sand-bank. The night is far-spent—the waves are beginning to rise —the winds are rising—the storm will soon shatter the old wreck. But the life-boat is launched, and we, the ministers of the Gospel, beseech you to come into the life-boat and be saved.

Dost thou ask, How can I come, my sins are so many? Dost thou ask how thou shalt come? Hear the words of that beautiful hymn:—

“Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bid’st me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God I come.”

That is the way to come to Christ. You should come, waiting for nothing, and tarrying for nothing. You should come, as a hungry sinner, to be filled,—as a poor sinner to be enriched,—as a bad, undeserving sinner to be clothed with righteousness. So coming, Christ would receive you. “Him that cometh” to Christ, He “will in no wise cast out.” Oh! come, come to Jesus Christ.

3. Last of all, let me give a word of exhortation to my believing hearers.

Live a holy life, my brethren. Walk worthy of the church to which you belong. Live like citizens of heaven. Let your light shine before men, so that the world may profit by your conduct. Let them know whose you are, and whom you serve. Be epistles of Christ, known and read of all men; written in such clear letters, that none can say, I know not whether he be a member of Christ or not.

Live a courageous life, my brethren. Confess Christ before men. Whatever station you occupy, in that station confess Christ. Why should you be ashamed of Him? He was not ashamed of you on the cross. He is ready to confess you now before His Father in heaven. Why should you be ashamed of Him? Be bold. Be very bold. The good soldier is not ashamed of his uniform. The true believer ought never to be ashamed of Christ.

Live a joyful life, my brethren. Live like men who look for that blessed hope—the second coming of Jesus Christ. This is the prospect to which we should all look forward. It is not so much the thought of going to heaven, as of heaven coming to us, that should fill our minds. There is a good time coming for all the people of God—a good time for all the church of Christ—a good time for all believers—a bad time for the impenitent and unbelieving—a bad time for them that will serve their own lusts, and turn their backs on the Lord, but a good time for true Christians. For that good time, let us wait, and watch, and pray.

The scaffolding will soon be taken down—the last stone will soon be brought out—the top-stone will be placed upon the edifice. Yet a little time, and the full beauty of the building shall be clearly seen.

The great master Builder will soon come himself. A building shall be shown to assembled worlds, in which there shall be no imperfection. The Saviour and the saved shall rejoice together. The whole universe shall acknowledge, that in the building of Christ's church all was well done.