

SORROW AT THE CROSS TURNED INTO JOY.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 3RD, 1878, BY

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.”— John xvi. 20–22.

WE were singing just now a hymn in which the first verse started a difficult question—

“It is finish'd shall we raise
Songs of sorrow, or of praise?
Mourn to see the Saviour die,
Or proclaim his victory?”

The case is very well argued in the second and third verses—

“If of Calvary we tell,
How can songs of triumph swell?
If of man redeem'd from woe,
How shall notes of mourning flow?

“Ours the guilt which pierced his side,
Ours the sin for which he died;
But the blood which flow'd that day
Wash'd our sin and guilt away.”

The conclusion at which we arrived in the concluding verse seems to me to be the right one—

“Lamb of God! Thy death hath given
Pardon, peace, and hope of heaven:
'It is finish'd;' let us raise
Songs of thankfulness and praise!”

The chief thought connected with the Redeemer's death should be that of

grateful praise. That our Lord Jesus Christ died upon the cross is a very natural cause for sorrow, and well may they who pierced him, and we are all among the number, look unto him and mourn for their sin, and be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. Before we know that we are pardoned our grief may well be exceeding heavy, for till sin is put away we stand guilty of the Saviour's blood. While our souls are only conscious of our guilty share in the Redeemer's blood, we may well stand aghast at the sight of the accursed tree, but the case is altered when by faith we discern the glorious fruit of our Lord's sufferings, and know that on the cross he saved us and triumphed in the deed.

The feeling of sorrow at the sight of the crucified Saviour is one to be cultivated up to a certain point, especially if we take care to avoid mere sentiment and turn our grief into repentance: then it is "godly sorrow," which worketh after a godly sort, and it is likely to create in us an intense horror of sin, and a strong determination to purge ourselves from all fellowship with the works of darkness. We do not therefore condemn those who frequently preach upon the sufferings of our Lord, with the view of exciting emotions of grief in the hearts of their hearers, for such emotions have a softening and sanctifying influence if attended by faith, and directed by sound wisdom. There is, however, a middle path in everything, and this needs to be followed, for we believe that such preaching may be carried too far. It is most remarkable and instructive that the apostles do not appear in their sermons or epistles to have spoken of the death of our Lord with any kind of regret. The gospels mention their distress during the actual occurrence of the crucifixion, but after the resurrection, and especially after Pentecost, we hear of no such grief. I can scarcely find a passage from which I could preach a sermon upon sorrow on account of the death of Jesus, if I confine myself to the sayings and writings of the apostles; on the contrary, there are many expressions which treat of the crucifixion in the spirit of exulting joy. Remember the well-known exclamation of Paul—"God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." He had, no doubt, as vivid an idea of the agonies of our Lord as any of us have ever attained, and yet, instead of saying, "God forbid that I should cease to weep at the sight of my crucified Master," he declares that he glories in his cross. The death of Jesus was to him a thing to rejoice in, and even to glory in; he kept no black fasts to commemorate the world's redemption. Note well the exalted key in which he speaks of our Lord's death in the epistle to the Colossians: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it."

When you turn to John's epistles, where most of all pathos and tenderness would naturally abound, hear no weeping and wailing, but he

speaks of the cleansing blood, which is the very centre of the great sacrifice, in a calm, quiet, happy manner, which is far removed from bursting grief and flowing tears. He says, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." This allusion to the blood of atonement rather suggests joy and peace than woe and agony. "This is he," saith John, "that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood;" and it is evidently to him a theme of congratulation and delight rather than a cause for sorrow that Jesus did come by blood as well as by water. So Peter, also, when he mentions the death of his Lord and Master, speaks of "the precious blood of Christ," but not in words of sadness, and he describes our Lord's bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, but not in the language of lament. He says of those who suffered for the gospel, "Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers in Christ's sufferings." Now, if he finds joy in those sufferings of ours which are in fellowship with the sufferings of Christ, much more I gather did he find ground for rejoicing in the sufferings of Christ himself. I do not believe that the "three hours' agony," the darkened church, the altar in mourning, the tolling of a bell, and all the other mock funereal rites of superstition derive even the least encouragement from the spirit and language of the apostles. Those practical charades in which the crucifixion is mimicked in many churches on Good Friday are more worthy of the heathen women weeping for Thammuz, or of Baal's priests crying and cutting themselves with knives, than of a Christian assembly who know that the Lord is not here, for he is risen.

Let us mourn by all means, for Jesus died; but by no means let us make mourning the prominent thought in connection with his death, if we have obtained thereby the pardon of our sins. The language of our text allowed and yet forbade sorrow; it gave permission to weep, but only for a little while, and then it forbade all further weeping by the promise to turn the sorrow into joy. "Ye shall weep and lament," that is, his disciples, while he was dying, and dead and buried, would be sorely distressed. "And ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy;" their grief would end when they saw him risen from the dead; and so it did, for we read, "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." The sight of the cross to their unbelief was sadness, and sadness only, but now to the eye of faith it is the gladdest sight that ever the human eye can rest upon: the cross is as the light of the morning, which ends the long and dreary darkness which covered the nations. Oh, wounds of Jesus, ye are as stars, breaking the night of man's despair. Oh, spear, thou hast opened the fountain of healing for mortal woe. Oh, crown of thorns, thou art a constellation of promises. Eyes that were red with weeping sparkle with hope at the sight of thee, O bleeding Lord. As for thy tortured body, O Emmanuel, the blood

which dropped therefrom cried from the ground, and proclaimed peace, pardon, Paradise to all believers. Though laid in the grave by thy weeping friends, thy body, O divine Saviour, is no longer in Joseph's tomb, for thou art risen from the dead, and we find in the songs of resurrection and ascension an abundant solace for the griefs of thy death. Like a woman to whom a son is born, we forget the travail for the joy of the glorious birth which the church and the world may now gaze upon with the utmost delight as they behold in Jesus "the firstborn from the dead."

The subject for this morning, then, you will readily guess is, how far we should sorrow for the death of Jesus, and how much further we are permitted to rejoice therein. The first point will be, *the death of our Lord was and still is a theme for sorrow*; but secondly, *that sorrow is transmuted into joy*. When we have meditated upon these two points we shall for a little space notice *a general principle which underlies all holy sorrow as well as this particular form of it*.

I. First, then, THE DEATH OF OUR LORD WAS AND IS A THEME FOR SORROW. I make a point of saying it *was* so, because during the three days of the Saviour's burial there was more cause for distress than there can be now that he is risen. To the disciples first of all the death of Jesus was *the loss of his personal presence*. It was a great delight to that little family to have the Lord always among them as their father and their teacher, and it was a great grief to think that they should no more hear his loving voice, or catch the smile of his benignant countenance. It brought untold comforts to them to be able to go to him with all their questions, to fly to him in every moment of difficulty, to resort to him in every hour of sorrow. Happy, happy disciples to have such a Master always in their midst, communing with them in love, guiding them by his perfect example, animating them by his glorious presence, relieving all their wants and guarding them from all ills. Do you wonder that their hearts were heavy at the prospect of his going away from them? They felt that they would be sheep without a shepherd: orphan children bereft of their best friend and helper. Do you wonder, I say, that they wept and lamented when the Rock of their confidence, the delight of their eyes, the hope of their souls, was taken from them? What would you think if your best earthly friend was hurried away from you by a shameful death? They sorrowed not only because of their own personal loss by his removal, but because he himself was very dear to them. They could not bear that he should be gone in whom their hearts centred all their affection. Their sorrow showed that their hearts were loyal to their Beloved, and would never receive another occupant to sit upon the throne of their affections. They wept and they lamented because their bosom's Lord was gone and his seat was empty. They could not endure the absence of their best Beloved. As pines the dove for its mate, so mourned they for him whom their soul loved. Whom had they in heaven if Jesus were gone?

Certainly there was none upon earth that they could desire beside him. They were widowed, and they wept and refused to be comforted. Nothing could compensate them for Jesus' absence, for he was their all in all. For his sake they had left all and followed him, and now they cannot bear that they should lose him, and so lose more than all. You who have been bereaved of those whom you have dearly loved, and deeply revered, will be able to guess what kind of sorrow filled the hearts of the disciples when their Beloved said that he was about to go from them, and that they would not see him for awhile. This mourning was natural; and it is natural that we also should feel some regret that our Lord is away from us now, as to his bodily presence, though I trust we have by this time learned to see the expediency of his absence, and are so satisfied with it that we patiently wait, and quietly hope until his next appearing.

It added greatly to the disciples' sorrow that *the world would be rejoicing* because their Lord was gone. "The world shall rejoice." His eager enemies would hasten him off to Pilate's judgment-seat, and triumph when they forced an unwilling sentence from that time-serving ruler. They would rejoice when they saw him bearing his cross along the way of dolours. They would stand around the cross and mock him with their cruel gazes and with their ribald speeches, and when he was dead they would say, "This deceiver can speak no more; we have triumphed over him who set our pretensions at nought, and exposed us before the people." They thought that they had quenched the light which had proved painful to their darkened eyes, and therefore they were glad, and by their gladness swelled the torrent of the disciples' sorrow. Brethren, you know when you are in pain or in sorrow yourselves, how very bitter is the coarse laugh of an adversary who exults over your misery and extracts mirth from your tears. This made the disciples smart at their Lord's death. Why should the wicked rejoice over him? Why should the scornful Pharisee and priest insult over his dead body? This rubbed salt into the wounds of the downcast disciples, and infused a double gall and wormwood into the cup which was bitter enough already. You do not wonder, therefore, that they wept and lamented when their Lord was put to death by wicked hands. Magdalene weeping at the sepulchre acted as her gracious nature prompted her, and she was a fair sample of all the rest.

They had this also to make them sorrowful, that *his death was for a time the disappointment of all their hopes*. They at first had fondly looked for a kingdom—a temporal kingdom, such as their brother Jews expected. Even when our Lord had moderated their expectations and enlightened their views, so that they did not quite so much look for an actual temporal sovereignty, yet still that thought that "this was he that would have restored the kingdom to Israel" lingered with them. If any of them were so enlightened as to believe in a spiritual kingdom, as perhaps some of them

were in a measure, yet by Jesus' death it must have seemed that all their hopes were shattered. Without a leader, how could they succeed? How could a kingdom be set up when the King himself was slain? He who has been by coward hands betrayed, how can he reign? He that was to be the King has been spat upon and mocked, and nailed up like a felon to the gibbet of wood—where is his dominion? He is cut off out of the land of the living, who will now serve him? Clay cold his body lies in Joseph's tomb, and a seal is set upon the stone which shuts up the sepulchre; is there not an end of holy hopes, a final close to all holy ambitions? How can they be happy who have seen an end of their fairest life-dream? Poor followers of the dead monarch, how can they have hope for his cause and crown? Doubtless in their unbelief they sorrowed deeply because their hope seemed blasted and their faith o'erturned. They knew so little of the meaning of the present, and guessed so little of what the future would be, that sorrow filled their hearts, and they were ready to perish.

You must remember that added to this was *the sight* which many of them had *of their beloved Master in his agonies*. Who would not grieve to see him hurried away at dead of night from holy retirement to be falsely accused? Might not angels wish to weep in sympathy with him? Who can forbear to sorrow when Jesus stands insulted by menials, reviled by abjects, forsaken by his friends, blasphemed by his foes. It was enough to make a man's heart break to see the Lamb of God so roughly handled. Who can endure to see the innocent Saviour nailed up there in the midst of a scornful crew? Who could endure to see his pangs as they were mirrored in his countenance, or to hear his sorrows as they expressed themselves in his painful cries of "I thirst," and in the still sharper agonising exclamation, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It is little-marvel that it was said of the Virgin that the sword pierced through her heart, for surely there was never sorrow like unto Jesus' sorrow, nor grief which could be likened unto his grief. His heavy woes must have pierced through the heart of all right-minded men who beheld his unexampled miseries; and especially must all personal lovers of Christ have felt ready to die themselves when they saw him thus put to death. Oh deeps of sorrow which my Lord has suffered, shall there be no deeps to answer to you? When all God's waves and billows go over thee, O Jesus, shall not we be plunged into sorrow also? Yes, verily, we will drink of thy cup and be baptized with thy baptism. We will now sit down before thy cross and watch with thee one hour, while love and grief conjointly occupy our souls.

Now, even at the recollection of what our Lord endured, every Christian feels sympathy with him. You cannot read the four stories of the evangelists, and weave them into one by imagination and affection, without feeling that the minor key befits your voice at such a time, if you at all attempt to sing. There must be, it is natural that there should be, sorrow

because Christ has died.

One of the sharpest points about our sorrow at Jesus' death is this—that *we were the cause of it*. We virtually crucified the Lord, seeing it was because we were sinners that he must needs be made a sacrifice. Had none of us gone astray like lost sheep, then our wanderings would not have been gathered up and laid upon the shepherd's head. The sword which pierced his heart through and through was forged by our offences: the vengeance was due for sins which *we* had committed, and justice exacted its rights at his hands. What loving disciple will refuse to sorrow when he sees that he himself has put his Lord to death?

Now, putting all these things together, I think I see abundant reason why the disciples should be sorrowful, and why they should even express their sorrow by weeping and lamenting. They sorrowed as those do who attend a funeral: for weeping and lamenting abound at eastern funerals. Orientals are much more demonstrative than we are, and therefore at the deaths of relatives they make a far greater show of grief by loud cries and flowing tears. The disciples are represented as using the same forcible expressions to set forth their woe—"Ye shall weep and lament,"—a woe worthy of the buried One whom they mourned. "Ye shall weep and lament": there was a double vent for a double sorrow, eyes wept, and voices lamented. Christ's death was a true funeral to his followers, and caused a crushing sorrow as much as if they had each one been bereft of all his house. Who marvels that it was so?

"Sorrow hath filled your hearts," says Christ: they had no room to think of anything else but his death. Their heart was full to bursting with grief because he was taken from them, and that grief was so sharp as to be likened to one of the keenest pangs which nature is capable of bearing, the pangs of a travailing woman, pangs which seem as if they must bring death with them, and compared with which death itself might be a relief. The sharpness of their anguish in the hour of their trial was all that they could bear, more would have destroyed them. All this they felt, and it is no wonder if we feel in some degree as they did when we take a retrospect of what the Saviour endured on our behalf. So far we are bound to concede that the death of our Lord worketh sorrow: but there is a moderation even in the most justifiable mourning, and we are not to indulge excessive grief even at the foot of the cross, lest it degenerate into folly.

II. Now, secondly, the truth taught expressly in the text is that THIS SORROW IS CHANGED INTO JOY. "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy." Not exchanged for joy, but actually transmuted, so that the grief becomes joy, the cause of sorrow becomes the source of rejoicing.

Begin with what I said was a very sharp point of this sorrow, and you will see at once how it is turned into joy. That Jesus Christ died for our sins is a sharp sorrow: we lament that our crimes became the nails and our

unbelief the spear: and yet, my brethren, this is the greatest joy of all. If each one of us can say, "He loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*," we are truly happy. If you know by personal faith that Jesus took your sin and suffered for it on the tree, so that now your debt is paid and your transgression is blotted out for ever by his precious blood, you do not want half-a-dozen words from me to indicate that this, which was the centre of your grief, is also the essence of your joy. What were it to us if he had saved all the rest of mankind if he had not redeemed *us* unto God by his blood? We might have been glad from sheer humanity that others should be benefited, but what would have been our deep regret to be ourselves excluded from the grace. Blessed be the Saviour's name, we are not excepted: in proportion as we repentantly upbraid ourselves for Jesus' death in that same measure may we believingly exult in the fact that his sacrifice has for ever put away our sins, and therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Because God hath condemned sin in the flesh of Jesus Christ, therefore he will no more condemn us; but we are henceforth free, that the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. Heartily do we lament our sin, but we do not lament that Christ has put it away nor lament the death by which he put it away; rather do our hearts rejoice in all his atoning agonies, and glory at every mention of that death by which he has reconciled us unto God. 'Tis a sad thought that we committed the sin which burdened our Lord, but it is a joy to think that he has taken on himself our personal sin and carried it right away.

The next point of joy is that Jesus Christ has now suffered all that was required of him. That he should suffer was cause for grief, but that he has now suffered all is equal cause for joy. When a champion returns from the wars bearing the scars of conflict by which he gained his honours, does anyone lament over his campaigns? When he left the castle his wife hung about his neck and mourned that her lord must go to the wars, to bleed and perhaps to die; but when he returns with sounding trumpet and banner held aloft, bringing his trophies with him, honoured and exalted by reason of his victories in many lands, do his dearest friends regret his toils and sufferings? Do they keep fasts correspondent to the days in which he was covered with the sweat and dust of battle? Do they toll a bell on the anniversary of his conflict? Do they weep over the scars which are still upon him? Do they not glory in them as honourable memorials of his valour? They reckon that the marks the hero bears in his flesh are the noblest insignia of his glory, and the best tokens of his prowess. So let us not grieve today that Jesus' hands were pierced; behold they are now "as gold rings set with the beryl." Let us not lament that his feet were nailed to the tree, for his legs are now as "pillars of marble set upon sockets of fine gold." The face more marred than that of any man is now the more lovely

for its marring, and he himself, despite his agonies, is now endowed with a beauty, which even the ravished spouse in the song could only describe as “altogether lovely.” The mighty love which enabled him to endure his mighty passion has impressed upon him charms altogether inconceivable in their sweetness. Let us not mourn, then, for the agony is all over now, and he is none the worse for having endured it. There is no cross for him now, except in the sense that the cross honours and glorifies him; there remains for him no cruel spear nor crown of thorns now, except that from these he derives a revenue of honour and titles ever new, which exalt him higher and yet higher in the love of his saints. Glory be unto God, Christ has not left a pang unsuffered of all his substitutionary sorrows; of our dread ransom price he has paid the utmost farthing. The atoning griefs have all been endured, the cup of wrath is drunk quite dry, and because of this we, with all the hosts above, will rejoice for ever and ever.

We are glad, not only that the hour of travail is over, but that our Lord has survived his pains. He died a real death, but now he lives a real life. He did lie in the tomb, and it was no fiction that the breath had departed from him: it is equally no fiction that our Redeemer liveth. The Lord is risen indeed. He hath survived the death struggle and the agony, and he lives unhurt: he has come out of the furnace without so much as the smell of fire upon him. He is not injured in any faculty, whether human or divine. He is not robbed of any glory, but his name is now surrounded with brighter lustre than ever. He has lost no dominion, he claims superior rights and rules over a new empire. He is a gainer by his losses, he has risen by his descent. All along the line he is victorious at every point. Never yet was there a victory won but what it was in some respects a loss as well as a gain, but our Lord’s triumph is unmingled glory—to himself a gain as well as to us who share in it. Shall we not then rejoice? What, would ye sit and weep by a mother as she exultingly shows her new-born child? Would you call together a company of mourners to lament and to bewail when the heir is born into the household? This were to mock the mother’s gladness. And so today shall we use dreary music and sing dolorous hymns when the Lord is risen, and is not only unhurt, unharmed, and unconquered, but is far more glorified and exalted than before his death? He hath gone into the glory because all his work is done, shall not your sorrow be turned into joy in the most emphatic sense?

And there is this to add to it, that the grand end which his death was meant to accomplish is all attained. What was that end? I may divide it into three parts.

It was the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of himself, and that is complete. He hath finished transgression, he hath made an end of sin; he hath taken the whole load of the sin of his elect and hurled it into the bottomless abyss; if it be searched for it shall not be found, yea, it shall not

be, saith the Lord. He hath put away our sin as far from us as the east is from the west, and he has risen again to prove that all for whom he died are justified in him.

A second purpose was the salvation of his chosen, and that salvation is secured. When he died and rose again the salvation of all that were in him was placed beyond all hazard. He hath redeemed us unto God by his blood by an effectual redemption. None shall be enslaved who were by him redeemed; none shall be left in sin or cast into hell whose names are graven on the palms of his hands. He has gone into glory, carrying their names upon his heart, and he stands pleading there for them, and therefore he is able to save them to the uttermost. "I will," saith he, "that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory," and that effectual plea secures their being with him and like him when the end shall be.

The grand object, however, of his death was the glory of God, and truly God is glorified in the death of his Son, beyond anything that was known before or since; for here the very heart of God is laid open to the inspection of all believing eyes—his justice and his love, his stern severity which will not pass by sin without atonement, and his boundless love that gives his best self, his darling from his bosom, that he may bleed and die in our stead:—

"Here depths of wisdom shine,
Which angels cannot trace;
The highest rank of cherubim
Still lost in wonder gaze."

Yes, O Christ of God, "it is finished." Thou hast done all thou didst intend to do, the whole of thy design is achieved, not one purpose hath failed, nor even one part of it fallen through, and therefore shall we not rejoice? The child is born; shall we not be glad? The travail would have been a subject for great grief had the mother died, or had the child perished in the birth: but now that all is over, and all is well, why should we remember any more the anguish? Jesus lives, and his great salvation makes glad the sons of men. Wherefore should we tune the mournful string and mourn sore like doves? No! Ring out the clarion, for the battle is fought and the victory is won for ever. *Victory*, VICTORY, VICTORY! His own right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory! Though the champion died in the conflict, yet in his death he slew death and destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. Our glorious Champion has risen from his fall, for he could not be holden by the bands of death. He hath smitten his enemies, but, as for himself he hath come up from the grave, he hath risen as from the heart of the sea. Let us exult like Israel at the Red Sea when Pharaoh

was overthrown! With timbrel and dance let the daughters of Israel go forth to sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously, and utterly destroyed all our adversaries.

We have not yet completed this work of changing sorrow into joy till we notice that now the greatest possible blessings accrue to us, because he was made a curse for us. Through his death come pardon, reconciliation, access, acceptance: his blood “speaketh better things than that of Abel,” and invokes all heaven’s blessings upon our heads.

But Jesus is not dead. He is risen, and that resurrection brings justification, and the safeguard of his perpetual plea in heaven. It brings us his representative presence in glory, and the making all things ready for us in the many mansions: it brings us a share in that “all power which is given unto him in heaven and in earth,” in the strength of which he bids us go and teach all nations, baptizing them into his sacred name. Beloved, Pentecost comes to us because Jesus went away from us; the gifts of the Holy Spirit—illuminating, comforting, quickening—the power to proclaim the word, and the might which attends that word, all have come to us because he is no longer with us, but through the regions of the dead has passed to reach his crown.

And now today we have this great joy again that because he died there is a kingdom set up in the world, a kingdom which never can be moved, a kingdom whose power lies in weakness, and yet it is irresistible: a kingdom whose glory lies in suffering, and yet it cannot be crushed: a kingdom of love, a kingdom of unselfishness, a kingdom of kindness, truth, purity, holiness, and happiness. Jesus wears the imperial purple of a kingdom in which God loves men and men love God: having proved himself the prince of self-sacrificing love he is justly exalted to the throne amid the acclamations of all his saints. His kingdom, shapeless as it looks to carnal eyes, like a stone cut out of a mountain without hands, will, nevertheless, break all the kingdoms of this world to shivers in due time, and fill the whole earth. His kingdom will grow and extend till from a handful of corn upon the top of the mountains its fruit shall so increase that it shall shake like Lebanon; a kingdom which shall comprehend all ranks and conditions of men, men of all colours, of all lands and nations, encircling all even as the ocean surrounds many lands. The unsuffering kingdom of the suffering shepherd, inaugurated by his death, established by his resurrection, extended by the Pentecostal descent of the Holy Ghost, and secured by the eternal covenant, is hastening on. Every winged hour brings it nearer to its perfect manifestation. Yes, the kingdom comes: the kingdom whose foundation was laid in the blood of its King at Calvary. Happy are they who are helping it on, for when the Lord shall be revealed they also shall be manifested with him. The Chief among ten thousand and the ten thousand who were with him shall stand side by side in the day of victory, even as

they stood side by side in the hour of strife. Then, indeed, our sorrow shall be turned into joy.

There we must leave the subject, only noticing this one fact, that that joy is right hearty joy. "Your hearts shall rejoice," said the Saviour: ours is no superficial mirth, but heart-deep bliss. That joy is also abiding joy. "Your joy no man taketh from you." No, nor devil either. Nor time nor eternity can rob us of it. At the foot of the cross there wells up a flashing, sparkling fountain of joy, which never can be dried up, but must flow on for ever; in summer and in winter shall it be, and none shall be able to keep us back from the living flood, but we shall drink to the full for ever and ever.

III. And, now, my last point is to be THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE INVOLVED IN THIS ONE PARTICULAR INSTANCE.

The general principle is this, that in connection with Christ you must expect to have sorrow. "You shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice." But whatever sorrow you feel in connection with Jesus there is this consolation—the pangs are all birth-pangs, they are all the necessary preliminaries of an ever-increasing, abounding joy. Brethren, since you have come to know Christ you have felt a smarter grief on account of sin. Let it continue with you, for it is working holiness in you, and holiness is happiness. You have felt of late a keener sensibility on account of the sins of those around you, do not wish to be deprived of it, it will be the means of your loving them more, praying more for them, and seeking more their good, and you will be the better qualified to do them real service and to lead them to your Lord. Perhaps you have had to bear a little persecution, hard words, and the cold shoulder. Do not fret, for all this is needful to make you have fellowship with Christ's sufferings that you may know more of him and may become more like him. You sometimes see the cause of Christ as it were dead, and you are grieved about it, as well you may be. The enemy triumphs, false doctrine is advanced, Jesus seems to be crucified afresh, or hidden away in the grave, forgotten, as a dead man out of mind. It is well that you should feel this, but in that very feeling there should be the full persuasion that the truth of Christ cannot long be buried, but waits to rise again with power. Never did the gospel lie in the grave more than its three days. Never did a lion roar upon it but what it turned and rent the enemy, and found honey in its carcase in after days. Whenever truth seems to be repulsed, she does but draw back to take a more wondrous leap forward. As when the tide ebbs out very far, we expect it again to return in the fulness of its strength, so is it with the church. If we see a small fall in the tide we know that it will not rise very far, but when we see the stream sinking right away, and leaving the river-bed almost dry, we expect to see it roll in at flood tide till the banks overflow. Always look for the triumph of Christianity when others tell you it is defeated; expect to

find in the very quarter where it is covered with most obloquy and shame, that there it will win its most glorious laurels. The truth's superlative victories follow upon its worst defeats. Have faith in God. You tell me you have that; then, saith your Master, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." Believe in Christ, trust in him, rest in him, fight for him, labour for him, suffer for him, for he must conquer. Even now doth he sit as King upon the hill of Zion, and soon the heathen shall become his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth shall be his possession. Your sorrow shall be turned into joy in all these cases.

Whenever your sorrow is the result of your belonging to Christ always congratulate yourself upon it, since as the spring begetteth the summer so doth sorrow in connection with Christ bring forth to us joy in the Lord. By-and-by will come your last sorrow: unless the Lord should suddenly appear you will die. But be content to die. Look forward to it without the slightest alarm. Death is the gate of endless joy, and shall we dread to enter there? No, Jesus being with you, meet death joyfully, for to die is to burst the bonds of this death which everywhere surrounds us, and to enter into the true life of liberty and bliss. Even to the end sorrow shall be to you the birth-pang of your joy. Carry that thought with you and be always glad.

With one remark I finish. I will not dwell upon it, but leave it to abide in the memories of those whom it concerns. I present it to the minds of all those who are not believers in Christ. Did you notice that the Lord said, "Ye shall weep and lament, *but the world shall rejoice*: ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." Now, what is implied there to complete the sentence? Why, that the world's joy shall be turned into sorrow. Even so shall it be. There is not a pleasure which the ungodly man enjoys when he is indulging in sin but what will curdle into grief and be his sorrow for ever. Depend upon it that the wine of transgression will sour into the griping vinegar of remorse, which shall dissolve the rebel's soul. The sparks which now delight you shall kindle the flames of your eternal misery. Every sin, though sweet when it is like a green fig, is bitterness itself when it cometh to its ripeness. Woe unto you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. Woe unto you that now rejoice in sin, for ye shall gnash your teeth, and weep and wail because of that very Christ whom now you reject. All things will soon be turned upside down. Blessed are ye that mourn now, for ye shall be comforted, but woe unto you that are full this day, for ye shall hunger. The sun will soon be set for you that rejoice in sin. Sadness like a thick cloud is now descending to surround you eternally in its horrid gloom. Out of that cloud shall leap the flashes of eternal justice, and forth from it shall peal the thunder-claps of righteous condemnation. "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup." The Lord deliver you from such a doom by leading you now to yield to Jesus, and to

believe in his name. May he grant this prayer for Jesus' sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—John xvi.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—917, 301, 287.
