

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE MASTER.

A Sermon

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“She called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.”—John xi. 28.

I SUPPOSE by Martha’s whispering the word “the Master” in Mary’s ear that it was the common name by which the sisters spoke of our Lord to one another in his absence. Perhaps it was his usual name amongst all the disciples, for Jesus said, “Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.” It often happens that for persons whom we love we have some special title by which we speak of them familiarly when we are in the circle of those who join in our esteem of them. Instead of always using their official titles or their actual names, there is some one name which we have attached to them, which calls up happy associations, or reminds us of endearing traits in their character, and therefore it is very sweet in our mouths. So I suppose that most of the disciples called Jesus “The Master,” many of them coupling with it the word “Lord.” Mary, I should suppose, was peculiarly given to the use of the term, it was *her* name for the Lord. I fancy that she called him “*my* Master,” only, of course, Martha could not say to her, “your Master is come,” for that would have been to cast suspicion on her own loyalty to Jesus, and perhaps she did not feel exactly in a frame of mind to say, “our Master,” remembering that he was master of so many more besides, and half hoping that he might be Master over Death himself. She therefore said, “*The* Master.” It was an emphatic title, “*The* Master is come.” Very remarkable is it that minds of a kindred spirit to Mary have always loved this title of “the Master,” and more especially that

wondrous, sweet, mystic poet and dear lover of his Lord, George Herbert, who, whenever he heard the name of Jesus mentioned, would always say “my Master.” He has given us that quaint poem, called “The Odour,” which begins,

“How sweetly doth *my Master* sound, *my Master*.”

There must needs be something exceedingly precious about the title for a Mary and a Herbert thus to be enamoured of it above all others. Jesus has many names, all full of music; this must be choice indeed to be selected before them all as the title which his best beloved prefer to apply to him. There are many among us who are ourselves accustomed to speak of the Lord as the Master, and, though there are many other titles, such as “the Well-beloved,” “the Good Shepherd,” “the Friend,” “the Bridegroom,” “the Redeemer,” and “the Saviour,” yet we still cherish a very special affection for this one name, which gives forth to us “an oriental fragrancy,” with which “all day we do perfume our mind.”

You are aware that the word might just as well be translated the “Teacher,” the authoritative teacher, for that is the gist of its meaning. I am glad to pronounce it Master, because usage, and sweet association have enshrined the word, and also because we have still among us the custom of calling the Chief Teacher in a School or College *the Master*, but still, had our version given us “the Teacher is come” it would have been nearer the mark.

I. I shall speak a few words, first, upon THE DEEP PROPRIETY OF THIS TITLE AS APPLIED TO OUR LORD.

He is, indeed, the Master—the Teacher. What if I put the two together, and say the Master-Teacher? He has a peculiar fitness for this office. To be a master-teacher a man must have *a masterly mind*. Certainly all minds are not cast in the same mould, and are not possessed with the same vigour, depth, force, and quickness of action. Some mental organizations are princely by their very formation; though they may belong to ploughboys, the imperial stamp is on them. These minds cannot be smothered by a peasant’s smock-frock, nor kept down by the load of poverty; master minds are recognised by an innate superiority, and force their way to the front. I say nothing of the moral qualities of Napoleon, but a mind so vast as his could not have been for ever hidden away among the soldiers in the ranks; he must become a captain and a conqueror. So, too, a Cromwell or a Washington must rise to be *masters* among men, because the calibre of their minds was masterly. Such

men see a thing quickly; they hold it with a comprehensive grasp; and they have a way of infusing faith into others about it which, ere long, pushes them into a master's position, with the common consent of all around them. You cannot have for a master-teacher a man with a little soul. He may insinuate himself into the chair of the teacher, but every one will see that he is out of place; and no one will delight to think of him as his master. Many painters there are, but there have been few Raphaels, or Michael Angelos, few who could found schools to perpetuate their names. Many songsters have there been, but few poets have founded schools of tuneful thought in which they have been the beloved choirmasters. Many philosophers have there been, but a Socrates or an Aristotle will not be found every day; for great teachers must have great minds, and these are rare among men. The teacher of all teachers, the master of all the teachers must needs be a grand, colossal spirit, head and shoulders above other men. Such a soul Mary saw in her Lord Jesus Christ, and such we see there also, and we therefore challenge for our Lord the name of "the Master." There we have divinity itself, with its omniscience and infallibility, and at the same time a complete, full-orbed manhood, harmonious in all its qualities, a perfect equilibrium of excellence, in which there is no excess and no deficiency. You find in him a perfect mind, and that mind so human, as to be intensely manly, and sweetly womanly also. In Jesus there was all the tenderness and sympathy of woman, joined with the strength and courage of man. His love was feminine, but not effeminate; his heart was masculine, but not hard and stern. He was *the* complete man, unfallen manhood in its perfectness.

Our Lord was a man who impressed all who came near him, they either hated him intensely, or loved him fervently. Wherever he was, he was seen to be a prince among the sons of men. The devil recognised him, and tempted him beyond all others. He saw in him a foeman worthy of his steel, and took him into the wilderness to have a duel with him, hoping to defeat the race by vanquishing its manifest chief. Even scribes and Pharisees, who despised every one who made not broad the borders of his garment, could not despise this man; they could hate him, but their hate was the unconscious reverence which evil is forced to render to superlative goodness and greatness. Jesus could not be ignored and overlooked, he was a force in every place, a power wherever he might be. He is a master, yea, "the Master." There is a grandeur about his whole human nature, so that he stands out above all other

men, like some mighty Alpine peak, which overtops the minor hills, and casts its shadow all adown the vales.

But to make a master teacher a man must not only have a master mind, but he must have *a master knowledge* of that which he has to teach; and it is best if that be acquired by experience rather than by instruction. Such was the case with our Lord Jesus. He came to teach us the science of life, and in him was life; he experienced life in all its phases, and was tempted in all points like as we are, though without sin. The highest were not above him, the lowest he did not regard as beneath him, but he condescended to their infirmities and sorrows. There are no dreary glens of melancholy which his feet have not trodden, nor lofty peaks of joy which he has not scaled; wondrous was the joy as well as the sorrow of our Lord Jesus Christ. He leads his people through the wilderness, and, like Hobab of old, he knows where they should encamp in the wilderness, and understands all the way which they must traverse to reach the promised land. He was made “perfect through suffering.” He teaches us no truth as mere theory, but as matter of actual experiment on his own person. The remedy he gives to us he has tested. If there be bitterness for us, he has quaffed full bowls of it, and if there be sweetness in his cup he gives us of his joy; all things that have to do with this life and godliness, the whole science of salvation from the gates of hell up to the throne of God, he understands right well, by personal acquaintance therewith. There is not a single chapter of the book of revelation which he does not comprehend, nor a solitary page of the book of experience which he does not understand; and therefore he is fit to teach, having both a master mind and a master knowledge of that which he comes to inculcate.

Moreover, our great Master while here below had *a masterly way of teaching*, and this also is essential, for it is not every man of vast knowledge and great mind that can teach others. Aptness to teach is required. We know some whose utterances never seem to be in the tongue of ordinary men. If they have anything to say they say it in a jargon of their own, which they probably comprehend, and a few of their disciples, but it is Greek to commonplace people. Blessed is that teacher who teaches what he understands himself in a way which enables others to understand him. I like the style of old Cobbett when he said, “I not only speak so that men can understand me, but so that they *cannot misunderstand me*;” and such a teacher was Christ to his own

disciples. When they sat at his feet he made truth so clear that wayfar-
ing men, though fools, need not err therein. By homely parables and
phrases which caught the ear, and won the heart, he brought down ce-
lestial truths to ordinary comprehensions, when the Spirit of God had
once cleansed those comprehensions, and made them able to receive
the truth. He taught, moreover, not only plainly, but lovingly. So gently
did he open up things to his own disciples that it must have been a
pleasure to be ignorant, in order to require to be taught, and a greater
pleasure still to learn—to learn in such a way. The way in which he
taught was as sweet as the truth he taught. Everybody that came into
Christ’s school felt at home, felt pleased with their Master, and confi-
dent that if they could learn anywhere they must learn at his feet.

The Master gave, in connection with his teaching, a measure of the
Holy Spirit—not the full measure, for that was reserved until he had
ascended up on high, and the Spirit should baptise the church; but he
gave to each of his people a measure of the Spirit of God, by which
truths were not taught to their ears only but to their hearts also. Ah, my
brethren, we are not such teachers as Christ; for, when we have done
our best, we can only reach the ear. We cannot give the Holy Spirit,
but he can; and when the Spirit this day comes from Christ, and takes
of his things and reveals them unto us, then we see yet more of our
Lord’s masterly modes of teaching, and learn what a Master Jesus is,
who writes his lessons, not on the black board, but on the fleshy tablets
of the heart; who gives us school-books, nay, is himself the book; who
sets us lessons, yea, is himself the lesson; who performs before us that
which he would have us do, so that when we know him we know what
he has to teach, and when we imitate him we have followed the pre-
cepts which he gives. Our Lord’s way of embodying his instruction in
himself is a right royal one, and none can rival him in it. Do not chil-
dren learn infinitely more by example than ever they do by precept?
And this is how our Master teaches us. “Never man spake like this
man” is a grand Christian proverb; but it might be eclipsed by another:
“Never man *acted* like this man”; for this man’s deeds and words tally
with each other, the deeds embody and enforce the words, give them
life, and help us to understand them. He is a prophet like unto Moses,
because he is mighty both in word and in deed, and so he is of prophets
and teachers *the Master*.

Here is a master mind, a master experience, and a master mode of
teaching: well is he called “the Master.”

Withal, dear friends, there was, over and above this—if I have not comprehended it in what I have already said—a *master influence* which Jesus, as a teacher, had over those who came within his range. They did not merely see, but feel; they did not only know, but love; they did not merely prize the lesson, but they worshipped the teacher. What a master was this Christ, whose very self became the power by which sin was checked, and ultimately cast out, and by which virtue was implanted, and the new life commenced, nourished, and brought to perfection. To have one to teach you who is very dear to you is to make lessons easy. No child learns better than from a mother qualified to teach, who knows how to make her lessons sweet, by crystallising them in the sugar of her own affection. Then it is pleasure, as well as duty, to learn. But no mother ever won her child's heart (and there have been tender and affectionate mothers, too) so thoroughly as Jesus won the heart of Mary; or, I may say, as Jesus has won your heart and mine, if you feel as my heart feels to my Lord. From him we want no reasonings to prove what he says, he is himself instead of reason and of argument. His love is the logic which proves everything to us. With him we hold no debate, what he has done for us has answered every question we could raise. If he tells us what we do not understand, we believe it. We ask if we may understand it, and if he tells us "No," we stay where we are, and believe the mystery. We love him so that we are as glad not to know as to know, if such should be his will; we believe his silence to be as eloquent as his speech, and that which he conceals to be as kindly intended as that which he reveals. Because we love him he exercises such an influence over us that, straightway, we prize his teaching and receive it; and the more we know him, and the more his inexpressibly delightful influence dominates our nature, the more completely we yield up imagination, thought, reason, everything, to him. Men may call us fools for it, but we have learned at Jesus' feet that "the world by wisdom knew not God," and that except we be converted, and become as little children, we shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven, and therefore we are not confounded when the world thinks us childish and credulous. The world is growing more manly and more foolish, and we are growing more childlike and more wise. We reckon that to grow downward into our Lord Jesus is the surest and truest growth; and when we shall have grown clean down to nothing, and lower still, till we are less than nothing, then we shall be full grown in

the school of Jesus, and shall take a high degree in true learning, knowing the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

We may well call him Master who has a masterly mind, a masterly experience, and a masterly way of teaching; and, moreover, wields a masterly influence over his pupils, so that they are for ever bound heart and soul to him, and count him to be himself his own highest lesson, as well as the chief of all instructors.

Having proved that our beloved Lord is fairly entitled to the name, let me add that *he is by office the sole and alone Master of the church.*

There is in the Christian church no authority for a doctrine but Christ's word. The inspired book which he has left us, charging us never to diminish a letter or add a syllable, that is our code imperial, our authorised creed, our settled standard of belief. I hear a great deal said of sundry "Bodies of divinity," but my own impression is that there never was but one body of divinity, and there never will be but one, and that is Jesus Christ in whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." To the true church her body of divinity is Christ. Some churches refer to other standards, but we know no standard of theology but our Master. "I, if I be lifted up," saith he, "will draw all men unto me;" we feel no drawings towards any other master. He is the standard,—“Unto him shall the gathering of the people be.” We are not of those who will go no further than Martin Luther. Blessed be God for Martin Luther! God forbid that we should say a word in depreciation of him. But were we baptised unto Martin Luther? I trow not. Some can never budge an inch beyond John Calvin, whom I reverence first of all merely mortal men; but still John Calvin is not our master, but only a more advanced pupil in the school of Christ. He teaches, and, as far as he teaches as Christ taught, he is authoritative, but where Calvin goes apart from Jesus he is no more to be followed than Voltaire himself. There be brethren whose one reference for everything is to the utterances of John Wesley. "What would Mr. Wesley have said?" is a weighty question with them. We think it a small matter what he would have said, or what he did say for the guidance of Christians, now so many years after his departure; far better is it to enquire what Jesus says in his word. One of the grandest of men that ever lived was Wesley, but he is no master of ours. We were not baptised in the name of John Wesley, or John Calvin, or Martin Luther. "One is our Master, even Christ." And now the parliament of our country is about to set apart a learned judge to decide what is right in a so-called church

of Christ, and he is to say, "This garment you may wear, and that you shall not; hitherto your ritual shall go but no further." In his person the House of Commons is to be recognised as the creator and lord and master of the Church of England, to whom he will say, "Do this," and she will do it, or "Refrain," and she will stay her hand. She must crouch and bend, and take her meat like any dog from the hand that patronises her, and her collar, made of what brass or leather Cæsar chooseth to ordain, shall bear this motto, "His servants ye are whom ye obey." Why, the poorest minister in the most despised of our churches, whose poverty is thought to make him contemptible, but whose poverty is his glory if he bears it for Christ's sake, would scorn to have any spiritual act of his church submitted to the judgment of the state, and would sooner die than be dictated to in the matter of divine worship. What has the church to do with the state? Our Master and Lord has set up a kingdom which owns no other King but himself; and we cannot bow, and will not bow, before decrees of Parliament and lords and kings in spiritual things. Christ's church has but one head, and that is Christ, and the doctrines which the church has to teach cannot be tested by a Court of Arches, or a bench of bishops, or a synod of ministers, or a presbytery, or a conference. The Lord Jesus Christ has taught us this and that: if his teaching be contradicted, the contradiction is treason against his crown. Though the whole church were assembled, and that church the true one, if it should contradict the teaching of Christ, its decrees ought to be no more to a Christian than the whistling of the wind upon the mountain wilds, for Christ is Master, and none but Christ. Though an apostle or an angel from heaven preach any other doctrine than that of our Lord, let him be accursed. I would God that all Christians stood up for this. Then would

"Sects and names and parties fall,
And Jesus Christ be all in all."

He is the sole teacher and the sole legislator. A church has a right to execute Christ's laws, but she has no right to make a law. The ministers of Christ are bound to carry out the rules of Christ, and when they so do, what is bound on earth is bound in heaven; but if they have acted upon any rules but those of this book their laws are only worthy of contempt; be they what they may, they bind no Christian heart. The yoke Christ puts on us it shall be our joy to wear, but the yoke which prelates would thrust upon us it shall be our glory to trample on. "If the Son make you free, you shall be free indeed." "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled

again with the yoke of bondage.”

“*The Master.*” That is the name Christ should receive throughout the whole church, and he should be regarded always, and on all occasions, and in reference to all spiritual subjects, as the last Court of Appeal, whose inspired word is

“The judge that ends the strife
Where wit and reason fail.”

Thus much upon the propriety of the title.

II. But now, secondly, let us consider THE PECULIAR RECOGNITION WHICH MARY GAVE TO CHRIST AS THE MASTER.

How did she give that recognition? *She became his pupil*: she sat right reverently at his feet. Beloved, if he be our Master, let us do the same. Let us take every word of Jesus, weigh it, read it, mark it, learn it, feed on it and inwardly digest it. I am afraid we do not read our Bibles as we should, or attach such importance as we ought to every shade of expression which our Master uses. I should like to see a picture of Mary sitting at the Master’s feet. Great artists have painted the Virgin Mary so often that they might take a change, and sketch this Mary looking up with a deep, fixed gaze, drinking all in, and treasuring all up; sometimes startled by a new thought and a fresh doctrine, and then enquiringly waiting till her face beams with unspeakable delight as new light floods her heart. Her attentive discipleship proved how truly Jesus was her Master.

Then, mark, she was not only his disciple, but *she was a disciple of nobody else*. I do not know whether Gamaliel was in fashion then, but she did not sit at his feet. I dare say there was some Rabbi Ben Simon, or other famous doctor of the period, but Mary never spent an hour with him, for every moment she could set apart was joyously spent at the feet of a far dearer Rabbi. I wonder whether she was a little deaf, and so sat close to the teacher for fear of losing a word! Perhaps she feared she might be slow of heart, and so she got as near the preacher as others do who have a little deafness in their ears; any how her favourite place was close at his feet. That shows us, since we are always dull of hearing in our souls, that it is good to get very close to Jesus when we are hearing him, and commune while we listen. She did not change from him to some one else for variety’s sake. No, the Master, her Master, her only Master, was the Nazarene, whom others despised, but whom she called her Lord.

She was a willing scholar, for “Mary hath chosen the good part,”

said Jesus. Nobody sent her to sit at Jesu's feet. Jesus drew her, and she could not help coming, but she loved to be there. She was a willing and delighted listener. Never was she so happy as when she had her choice, that choice being always to learn of him. Children at school always learn well if they want to learn. If they are driven to school they learn but little comparatively, but when they want to go, and when they love the teacher, it is quick learning with them; and happy is the teacher who has a class that has chosen him to teach them. Mary could well call him "the Master," for she rendered him her sole attention, her loving and delighted attention. And, mark you, in choosing Christ for Master, *she perseveringly stuck to him*. Her choice was not taken away from her, and she did not give it up. Martha looked very cross one day. How was she to see to the roast meat and the boiled at once? How could she be expected to prepare the table, and to look to the fire in the kitchen too? Why could not Mary come? And she scowled, I do not doubt. But it did not signify. Mary sat there still. Perhaps she did not even notice Martha's face; I think she did not, for the saints do not notice other countenances when Christ's beauty is to be seen: there is something so absorbing about him; he takes you all into himself, and bears you right away, drawing not only all men, but all *of* men to himself, when he does draw; and so she sat there still, and listened on. Those children will learn who stick to their books, who come not sometimes to study, but are always learning. So Mary recognised the Lord Jesus Christ's master-teachership by giving to him that persevering attention which such a Master-teacher had a right to claim.

She went humbly to him; for while she sat at his feet for nearness, she sat there, too, out of deep humiliation of spirit. She felt it her highest honour to be sitting in the lowest place, for lowly was her mind. They shall learn most of Christ who think least of themselves. When a place at his feet seems to be too good for us, or at any rate we are more than content with it, then will his speech distil as the rain and drop as the dew, and we shall be as the tender herbs that drink in sweet refreshment, and our souls shall grow.

Blessed wert thou, O Mary! And blessed is each one of you, if you can call Christ your Master and prove it as she did. You shall have the good part which shall not be taken away from you.

III. Now I come to my third point, which is this—THE SPECIAL SWEETNESS OF THE NAME TO US. I have shown why it was peculiarly

recognised by Mary, and now I would show that it has a peculiar sweetness for us also. "*The Master*" or "*My Master*" or "*My Teacher*."

I love that name in my own soul, because it is *as a teacher* that *Jesus Christ is my Saviour*. The best illustration I can give you is that of one of those poor little boys in the street, an "Arab," without father and mother, or with parents worse than none; the poor child is covered with filth and rags, he is well known to the policemen, and has seen the inside of many a gaol; but a teacher of a ragged school has laid hold of him, and instructs him, and he is now washed and clothed, and happy. Now, that poor boy does not know the sweetness of "my father" or "my mother"; he does not recognise anything in those titles. Perhaps he never knew them, or only knew such a form of them as to disgust him. But with what a zest does he say, "*My teacher!*" These little children say, "My teacher" with quite as much affection as others speak of their mother. Where there has been a great moral change wrought by the influence of a teacher, the name "my teacher" has great sweetness in it. Now hear ye the parable of the ragged boy and his teacher! I was that ragged child. Truly, I did not think myself ragged, for I was foolish enough to think my rags were fine garments, and that my filth was my beauty. I knew not what I was. My teacher saw me, he knew how foul I was and how ragged I was, and he taught me to see myself, and also to believe that he could wash me whiter than the snow. Yea, he went further and actually washed me till I was clean before the Lord. My teacher showed me a wardrobe of snow-white linen garments, and clothed me in them. My teacher has taught me a thousand things, and wrought innumerable good works upon me; I owe my salvation wholly to my teacher, my master, my Lord. Cannot you say the same? I know you can if you are indeed disciples of Jesus. "My teacher" means to you "my Saviour," for he saved you by teaching you your disease and your remedy, teaching you how wrong you were, and making you right by his teaching. The word master or teacher has to us a delightful meaning, for it is by his teaching that we are saved.

Let me tell you how as a preacher I love that name "my Master." I like to feel that what I said to those people on Sunday was not mine. I preached my Master, and I preached what my Master told me. Some find fault with the doctrine; I do not mind that, because it was none of mine, it was my Master's. If I were a servant, and went to the front door with a message, and the gentleman to whom I took it did not like the message, I should say, "Do not be vexed with *me*, sir. I have told

you my master's message to the best of my ability, and I am not responsible for it. It is my master's word, not mine." When there are no souls converted it is dreary work, and one's heart is heavy, but it is sweet to go and tell your Master; and when souls are converted, and your heart is glad, it is a happy and a healthy thing to give all the glory to your Master. It must be an awkward thing to be an ambassador from the English court in some far-off land where there is no telegraph, and where the ambassador has to act on his own responsibility. He must feel it a serious burden. But, blessed be God, between every true minister and his Master there is a telegraphic communication; he need never do anything on his own account. He may imitate the disciples of John, who, when they had taken up the Baptist's mangled body, went and told Jesus. That is the thing to do. There are difficulties in all churches, troubles in all families, and cares in all businesses, but it is good to have a Master to whom you can go as a servant, feeling, "He has the responsibility of the whole concern—not I; I have only to do what he bids me." If we once step beyond our Lord's commands the responsibility rests on us, and our trouble begins, but if we follow our Lord we cannot go astray.

And is not this a sweet name to quote when you are troubled, dear friends? Perhaps some of you are in trouble now. How it removes fear when you find out that he who sent the trouble is the Teacher who teaches you by the trouble—the Master who has a right to use what form of teaching he likes. In our schools much is learned from the black board, and in Christ's school much is learned from affliction. You have heard the story often, but I venture to repeat it again, of the gardener who had preserved with great care a very choice rose; and one morning when he went into the garden it was gone, and he scolded his fellow servants, and felt very grieved, till some one said, "I saw the master coming through the garden this morning, and I believe he took the rose." "Oh, then," said he, "if the master took it, I am content." Have you lost a dear child, or a wife, or a friend? It was HE that took your flower. It belonged to him. Would you wish to keep what Jesus wants? We are asked to pray sometimes for the lives of good people, and I think we may, but I have not always exercised faith while pleading, because it seemed to me that Christ pulled one way and I pulled the other. I said, "Father, let them be here," and Jesus said, "Father, I will that they be with me where I am;" and one could not pull very hard then. Only feel that Christ is drawing the other way, and you give up

directly. You say, "Let the Master have it. The servant cannot oppose the Master." It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good. I was dumb with silence; I opened not my mouth because thou didst it. Our Master learned that lesson himself which he teaches to us. That is a very striking expression, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." It pleased God to pass by the wise and prudent, and therefore it pleased Christ that it should be so. It is well to have our hearts like that poor shepherd to whom a gentleman said, "I wish you a good day." Said he, "I never knew a bad day." "How is that, my friend?" "The days are such as God chooses to make them, and therefore they are all good." "Well," said the other, "but some days please you more than others?" "No," said he, "what pleases God pleases me." "Well, but have you not a choice?" said the other. "Yes, I have a choice, and that is, I choose that God should choose for me." "But have you not a choice whether you would live or die?" "No," said he, "for if I am here Christ will be with me, and if I am in heaven I shall be with him." "But suppose you had to choose?" "I would ask God to choose for me," said he. Oh, sweet simplicity which leaves everything with God; this is calling Jesus, Master, to perfection:

"Pleased with all the Lord provides,
Weaned from all the world besides."

Once again, dear friends, is it not sweet to us to call Jesus Master, because in so doing we take a position easy to reach, and yet most delightful. To call him bridegroom—what an honour is it to be so near akin to the Son of God! Friend is a familiar and honourable title; to call him Master, however, is often easier, and it is quite as sweet, for his service, if we take no higher place, is pure delight to us. If our hearts are right, to do the Lord's bidding is as much as we can ask for. Though we are sons now and not slaves, and therefore our service is of a different character from what it ever was before, yet service is delight. What will heaven be but perpetual service? Here we labour to enter into rest; there they enter into rest while they labour. Their rest is the perfect obedience of their fully sanctified spirits. Are you not panting for it? Will it not be one of your greatest joys in heaven to feel that you are his servants? The glorified ones are called his servants in heaven. "His servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads." Rid us of sin, and we should be in heaven

now; earth would be heaven to us.

I want you, dear brethren in Christ, to go away rolling this sweet word under your tongue—"My Master," "My Master." You will never hear better music than that—"My Master," "My Master." Go and live as servants should live. Mind you make him truly your Master, for he says, "If I be a Master where is my honour?" Speak well of him, for servants should speak well of a good Master, and no servant ever had so dear a Master as he is.

But there are some of you who cannot say this. I wish you could. Jesus is not your Master. Who is, then? You have a master somewhere, for "his servants you are whom ye obey." Now, if you obey the lusts of the flesh, your master is your flesh, and the wages will be corruption; for that is what flesh comes to, corruption, and nothing better. Or your master is the devil, and his wages must be death. Run away from such a master. Mostly when servants leave their masters they are bound to give notice, but here is a case in which no notice should ever be given. When the prodigal son ran away from feeding the swine he never stopped to give notice that he was going to leave the pigs, but started off directly, and I recommend every sinner to run by the grace of God straight away from his sins. Stopping to give notice is the ruin of many. They mean to be sober, but they must treat their good resolution to another glass or two; they intend to think about divine things, but they must go to the theatre once more; they would fain serve Christ, but tomorrow, not tonight. If I had such a master as you have—you who live in sin—I would up and away at once, by the grace of God, and say, "I will have Christ for my Lord." Look at your black master. Look at his cunning eyes! Can you not see that he is a flatterer? He means your ruin. He will destroy you as he has destroyed myriads already. That horrid leer of sin, that painted face, consider them and abhor them. Serve not a master who, though he gives you fair promises, labours for your destruction? Up and away, ye slaves of sin! Eternal Spirit, come and break their chains! Sweet star of liberty, guide them to the free country, and let them find in Jesus Christ their liberty! My Master rejoices to receive runaways. His door is open to vagrants and vagabonds, to the scum of the earth, and the off-scouring of all things, to men that are dissatisfied with themselves, to wretches who have no joy of their lives, and are ready to lie down and die. "This man receiveth sinners." He is like David, who went into Adullam, and every man that was in debt and discontented came to him, and he became a captain

over them. As Romulus and Remus gathered the first population of new Rome by harbouring escaped slaves and robbers, whom they trained into citizens and made to be brave soldiers, so my Master has laid the foundation of the new Jerusalem, and he looks for his citizens—ay, the noblest of them, over yonder there, where sin and Satan hold them captive; and he bids us sound out the silver trumpet, and tell the slaves of sin that if they flee to him he will never give them up to their old master, but he will emancipate them, make them citizens of his great city, sharers of his bounties, partakers in his triumphs; and they shall be his in the day when he makes up his jewels. I recollect preaching in this strain once, and an old sea captain told me after the sermon that he had served under the black flag for fifty years, and by the grace of God he would tear the old rag down, and run up the blood red cross at the mast-head. I recommended him not merely to change his flag, but to see that the vessel was repaired, but he wisely replied that repairing would be of no use to such an old water-logged hulk, and he had better scuttle the old ship, and have a new one. I reckon that is the best thing to do, to be dead indeed unto sin, and made alive in Christ Jesus; for you may do what you will with the old wreck of fallen nature, you will never keep it afloat. The old man must be crucified with Christ, it must be dead, and buried, and sunk fifty thousand fathoms deep, never to be heard of again. In the new vessel which Jesus launches in the day of our regeneration, with the blessed flag of atoning blood above us, we will sail to heaven convoyed by irresistible grace, giving God the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—John xi.

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