

Accepted in the Beloved (1914)

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that believers are fully accepted by God through their union with Christ, the Beloved Son, whose perfect person, character, motive, and work secure their acceptance before the Father.

Scripture: Ephesians 1:6, John 1:29, Matthew 3:17, Isaiah 53:5, Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:14, John 15:5, Romans 8:38-39
Topics: "Christology", "Union with Christ", "Divine Acceptance"

Description

In this profound sermon, C.H. Spurgeon explores the rich theological truth of believers being 'Accepted in the Beloved' as found in Ephesians 1:6. He expounds on the perfect acceptability of Christ to the Father in His person, character, motives, and work, and explains how believers are united to Christ and thus share in His acceptance before God. Spurgeon's exposition offers deep comfort and assurance to Christians about their standing in Christ and the unbreakable union that secures their salvation.

Transcript

"Accepted in the Beloved." Ephesians 1:6.

I SHALL not attempt to do more than simply bring out the Truth of God and leave it with you. Fine words and gaudy sentences, with such a text as this, would be a vain attempt to "paint the lily and gild refined gold." Let this bell ring and there is a depth of silver sweetness in it which will make the sanctified ear and heart glad with the fullness of joy. "Accepted in the Beloved."

"The Beloved." We all know to whom this refers. Our Lord is the Beloved of God. God is Love, and Christ is God. He is One with the Eternal Father and we can never tell—it were impossible for us to guess—what love there is between the Father and the Son, in their essential Deity. Jesus is the Beloved of angels. It is their joy to sing praise unto "Him who was, and is, and is to come." He is the Beloved of all the white-robed band who have washed those robes in His blood and who sing, "Unto Him that has loved us, and washed us from our sins in His blood, to Him be glory." He is the Beloved of His saints, who are still wayfaring and warfaring here below. To Him their highest affections gather. He is dearer to them than all besides, "the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely." "The Beloved." Not only Beloved, but, "the Beloved." This is a name for all the saints—"beloved"—for as John the Divine often writes in his Epistles, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." All the family are beloved, but Christ, the Elder Brother, is "the Beloved." He is especially beloved, the choicest, the Chief, who in this has the preeminence. How many times did God testify concerning Him that He was "the Beloved," when He said, "This is my Beloved Son." These waters of Baptism remind us of the scene on Jordan's banks, when the Holy Spirit bore witness that

He was the Beloved Son of God. In later life, even in the depths of His humiliation, the Father testified that this was the Beloved Son. To us, the saints, He is our Beloved Spouse. We sing of Him, as the song has it, even "the Song of Songs which is Solomon's," "My Beloved is mine, and I am His." We delight to think of Him under that title, under which the Church of God of old addressed Him. He is Beloved in all His offices to us, Beloved in all His Characters, Beloved in the manger, Beloved in the shame and spitting, Beloved on the Cross, Beloved on the Throne! We cannot think of Him without our heart beginning to beat high and fast—

"He has engrossed my warmest love, No earthly charms my soul can move, I have a mansion in His heart, Nor death nor Hell can make us part."

Of all the titles that are given to Christ, there may be some that excel in splendor, and others in sublimity, but surely this is among the chief for sweetness and expressiveness! It has the finger which touches our heart strings. "The Beloved."

But now to the text. And the first thing I think I see in the text is that "the Beloved" is accepted of God. The second thing I see is that the saints are "in the Beloved." And the third thing, that the saints are "accepted in the Beloved." It is clear in the text that "the Beloved" is—

I. ACCEPTED OF GOD.

It will delight you if you try in meditation to get a hold of this thought, of how infinitely acceptable Christ must be to God the Father. All other forms of acceptance must have their limit and boundary—but the acceptability of the Son of God to the First Person of the Blessed Trinity must be altogether beyond either bottom or shore!

"The Beloved" must be acceptable to God in His own Person. Is He not God, Himself, and how should it be that one Person in the Indivisible Unity should be otherwise than acceptable to the other? He is also Man, but He is Man born after a wondrous birth. "The Son of the Highest." The Holy Spirit overshadowed the Virgin Mother. In His Godhead and in His Manhood, united as Mediator, He stands supreme in His Person. As Saul was head and shoulders above all the rest of the men of Israel, so has the Lord "anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows." Who can be likened to Him in Person? Beauty, where can you draw, if your fancy shall take all its range, anything that shall be comparable to Him? Designer of all things, the Most High God, "Wonderful, The Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." What acceptance must there be in such an One as He is to the Most High God! You know that sometimes, in the sending of ambassadors, it is well to calculate whether the person chosen to be an ambassador will be adoptable to the foreign court. Now if he is a man of mean origin, a man ill-esteemed at home, it will be an insult to send him as an ambassador to another country. But if he is a man eminent and distinguished, admirable and admired, a man of high standing with his own Court, then he is the very person to represent the sovereignty of his country at another Court. See, then, what kind of Representative we have to send up to the Father's Courts in Heaven—One who, while He is "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh," is, nevertheless, "God over all, blessed forever." My Soul, what better Ambassador could you have? To whom could you entrust your concerns one half as well as to One so inconceivably excellent, so superlatively blessed? He is, then, acceptable in His Person!

And then, secondly, to God He is equally acceptable in His Character. God is perfectly pure. He cannot bear the slightest trace of sin—and Jesus is "holy, harmless, and undefiled, and separate from sinners." God cannot look upon sin, as it is abhorrent to His Nature, but He can look upon Christ, for "in Him was no

sin." "The prince of this world comes," says He, "but has nothing on Me." "God is Love," and to be acceptable with God in Character, one must be full of love. Now Jesus is such! Was there ever One who had such pity on the ignorant and such "compassion on those that are out of the way"? Was there ever such a tender heart elsewhere as that which glowed in the Master's bosom and gleamed from His loving eyes? He was a mass of love! He was Love performing and Love suffering. Love made Him live as He did and love made Him die as He did! And love still pervades His Nature—now that He lives on high, still loving the sons of men. Since God is Love, then, and Christ is full of love, His Character is suitable to God. You shall not find anything in Christ Jesus that does not conform with the God-like and the Divine. See Him where you will, He is humble, meek and lowly—but He is still august and sublime. Even when He puts on the garb of the peasant, "woven from the top throughout," that garment shrouds the Deity and befits Him better than the purple robe befits Caesar on the throne! If He distributes alms, or says, "I thirst." If He is tempest-tossed on the Sea of Galilee, if He rebukes the waves, if He feels Himself willing to die where man's suffering and weakness is most apparent, yet there is it most consistent with the Character of God, for the Centurion, who stood beholding, said, "Certainly this was the Son of God." There is something congruous in the Nature of Christ to the Character of God and, therefore, His Character is always acceptable to the Most High.

Then, my Brothers and Sisters, God loves that which is incorruptible. Now our Savior was often tried, but He was never corrupted! He was tempted and bribed with the offer of a kingdom and, again, threatened with all the wrath of men—but He never started aside for a single moment from the straight line of integrity! His whole life was so pure, that although God "charges His angels with folly, and the heavens are not pure in His sight," yet in Jesus He sees no folly and no imperfection! He, even suffering as Savior, is pure, infinitely pure and incorruptible in the sight of God! So, Beloved, the Character of Christ is altogether acceptable to God, as well as His Person.

We may go a step further and say that the motive of Christ, as well as His outward Character, must have been infinitely acceptable to God. The motive of Jesus Christ, in coming here below, was altogether unselfish. "Though He was rich," and had nothing to gain, "yet for our sakes He became poor, that we" (not Himself) "through His poverty might be made rich." It can truly be said of Him, "He saved others. Himself He could not save." "Being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death." He emptied Himself out for us, and all out of pure love to those who had no love to Him—out of disinterested affection to those whose best return is but a feeble thanks, for what can such poor worms as we ever render at our very best for "love so amazing, so Divine"? Well does Dr. Watts say in one of our best hymns—

"Words are but air, and tongues but clay, But Your compassion is Divine."

Savior! You could have no motive to move You but that which is pure, and high, and lofty! Cleansed from everything like self, Jesus came that He might honor the Justice of God. He would have man saved, but in such a way as not to derogate from the Justice of the Most High. He would have no spots upon God's Law, no slur upon the Divine Character and, there, as He kneels amidst the olives of Gethsemane, or there, as He staggers beneath the Cross, or there, as He gives His hands to the nails and His feet to the cruel iron, He is vindicating the Eternal Justice and severity of God by His labors, by His griefs and by His Sacrifice of Himself to death! He must, then, moved by a motive so high as this, have been infinitely acceptable to Heaven!

He was, then, acceptable in His Person, acceptable in His Character and acceptable in His inner motive from which that outward Character sprang! And He was also acceptable in all His work which He did on Earth. Cast your eyes along that work for a minute. In the first part of His life that work was active. In the second part and also in the first, there was a passive work being carried on. There was an active work of obedience to the Father's will. And what obedience it was! Never for a moment asking to be excused from a command, or to have a release from the sacred Sacrifice—it was always work with all His heart, till He could say, "The zeal of Your house has eaten Me up."—

"Such was Your truth and such Your zeal, Such deference for Your Father's will. Such love and meekness so Divine, I would transcribe and make them mine." The whole life of is the paragon of perfection, the mirror in which every virtue is reflected! He could not be otherwise than acceptable to God in the active righteousness of His life. And when we come to His passive righteousness, what shall

I say of that? Track Him, my Brothers and Sisters, to the Garden and hear Him say, "Not as I will, but as You will." Watch Him before Pilate, when He obeys God by keeping silent, and "like a sheep before her shearers, He opened not His mouth." Follow Him then, and behold Him on the Cross and note how careful He is that the Scriptures may be fulfilled—how still, with whole-hearted consecration, He never starts back for a moment from the paying of the great ransom price which was to deliver His people from eternal bondage! There cannot be any doubt in your minds, but that the blessed Advocate and Surety of our souls must be accepted before the Lord—in the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of an acceptance that we can scarcely understand when we see Him giving up all the floods of His life, pouring them out like water before the Lord! In Person, in Character, in motive, in work, Jesus Christ is infinitely accepted!

Now that He was so accepted is not only clearly to be seen by these reflections, but the fact is proved by this, that the Father raised Him from the dead! He saw no corruption, but He must have remained in the tomb, or the work had not been finished. He was "justified in the Spirit by the Resurrection from the dead." His acceptance of God was proved when God brought Him from the dead! So, too, His ascending. His ascending up on high and leading captivity captive proves that He was accepted! His admission into Heaven proves that He was accepted! His sitting at the right hand of the Father proves that He has finished the work! And His present reigning over all the world in His mediatorial government is the reward of His sufferings—and His Second Advent, for which we look with devout anticipation—is to be a yet fuller declaration that He is "the Beloved" of God, and infinitely acceptable in the Father's sight!

Thus much, a few stirrings, as it were, of the surface of this great sea touching, as a swallow does, the waves. I have given you but these few hints. Think them over. And now, and very briefly— II. ALL BELIEVERS ARE IN CHRIST "ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED."

They are "in the Beloved," then, or in Christ. How are Believers in Christ? They are in Christ as their Representative. Just as the whole human race was in the loins of Adam, so the whole elect people were in the loins of Christ. It is said by the Apostle, "Levi was in the loins of Abraham when Melchisedec met him." So were all of us in the loins of Jesus Christ—always there in Him, for is it not written, "He shall see His seed"? And we are His seed! We spring in our new life from Him. He is the corn of wheat which was cast into the ground to die, that it might not abide alone, and now it brings forth much fruit. We are in Christ as the branch is in the vine, as the stone is in the building. We are in Christ as the members are in the head. He represents us. When we talk of counting heads, we mean counting the whole body, so Christ, the Head, represents all the members and He stands for us. We were in Christ, Beloved, according to the words of the Holy Spirit—we were in Christ in our election, "according as He has chosen us in Him." There

is a personal election of every child of God, but that personal election is connected with Christ—

"Christ is My first elect, He said,

Then chose our souls in Christ our Head."

We were in Christ in the suretyship engagements of the eternal Covenant. What Christ spoke before the world was, He spoke as for us. His prescient eye foresaw our existence, foreknew our ruin. He espoused us unto Himself, then, and stood in the Council Chambers of Eternity, the Surety and Sponsor of His people's souls!

We are in Christ, according to Scripture, by judicial dealing. That is to say, God deals with Christ as if He were dealing with us. "Awake, O sword"—against whom? Against the sinning sheep? No, "against the Shepherd, against the Man who is My Fellow, says the Lord." "For the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." "All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned, everyone, to his own way, and the Lord has laid upon Him the iniquity of us all." In Him in the choice, in Him in the Covenant, and then in Him in God's dealings with Christ as a Judge!

So now, further, blessed be His name, we are in Him by a vital union. There is a living unity between Christ and His people, as between the husband and the wife, as between the branch and the stem. We are one with Him by vital union. Have you realized this, Believer? Do you seek to live as one that is one with Jesus? Do you try to act as one that has learned his unity to the heavenly One, to the Second Adam? It is so. If you have believed, you are one with Him!

And we are one with Him by a fixed decree of God that never shall be broken. "Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?" Who shall tear one limb from the sacred body of Jesus? Who shall cut away one truly quickened branch from that celestial vine? He preserves those who are in Him! He covers us with His feathers and under His wings do we trust—His truth is our shield and buckler! You may divide and you must divide the dearest bonds of earth, but you shall never cut the knot that was tied in old eternity, which bound Christ to His people. "I in them, and they in Me, that they may be perfect in one." There shall never come a time when He will be ashamed to call them brethren, and never to one of them whom the Father has given Him shall there come a time when they shall refuse to call Him Master and Lord. We are "in" Him, then!

Now this is a great mystery. The Apostle always speaks of it as such. But it is one of the most blessed mysteries in the whole compass of Revelation. Dear Friend, never forget that God does not deal with you as an individual—He deals with you as in Christ. If you stood as an individual, you would perish, for you will be sure to fall. You are so weak and frail and apt to sin, that with the best resolutions and intentions, you would be sure to turn aside and, therefore, the blessed Father has put you in a safer place—He has put you in Christ! And now your interests are Christ's interests. As I have often told you, you cannot drown a man's foot unless you can drown his head—and if our Head is in Heaven, we are safe. And He, our Head, is there! When your vessel tosses in the storm, you may hear a voice that says, "Fear not, the boat is safe; you carry Jesus and all His fortune." Christ is one with His people—they must sink or swim together. Has He not, Himself, said it, "Because I live, you shall live also"? The saint, then, is "in" Him. Now we come to the full text, and that is, that—

III. THE SAINTS ARE "ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED."

Their persons are accepted. You know there are some persons that are not acceptable to you. You would sooner live in Heaven with them, forever, than you would like to live a quarter of an hour with them on earth! There are some people of that kind to whom we take a very natural objection. And I suppose it is not possible, although we would treat them always with kindness and so on, that we would ever desire them as companions. They are not acceptable to us. And now it does seem amazing that we, who have not any personal recommendation, but very much in us that might render us obnoxious to God, are nevertheless acceptable in our persons, through Jesus Christ our Lord! Yes, you with no talents, you with no wealth, no position, no great friends—you who can do so little when you do your best—you, though the garment you wear is not of the finest, but of the very lowliest material, are acceptable to God! God looks not according to the outward appearance, but He looks to the heart. And whenever He sees a simple trust in Jesus, which is a token of our being in Jesus, our person is acceptable to Him because, you see, He does not look at us as we are, but He looks at us through Christ! He looks through the wounds of Jesus upon us poor sinners, as a verse of one of our hymns runs—

"He in them the sinner sees, Looks through Jesus' wounds on me."

If one of you were away now in India, and after you had been living there for years, you saw a person very poor and ragged, who nevertheless said, "I used to be a servant to your mother," why, it would bring such recollections of that country homestead and of the dear old times when you were one of the happy family, that I am sure your heart would be touched and though there might be no reason whatever in the person why you should relieve him, yet because of his connection with that dear name of mother, perhaps in Heaven, you would put your hand into your purse at once! Now God sees such a connection between us and Christ that He esteems us for Christ's sake! "My Son loved that man," He says. "My Son died for that woman. My Son on the tree laid down His life for that poor, humble, penitent one. I love him for My Son's sake." Now will you try and get a hold, if you can, by faith, that sweet thought, that your person—you, you yourself, are accepted before God in the Beloved this night—and although you cannot accept yourself, but find much to complain of, yet, still, if you are in Jesus, you are—

"So near, so very near to God,

You cannot nearer be!

For in the Person of His Son,

You are as near as He.

So dear, so very dear to God,

You cannot dearer be—

The love wherewith He loves His Son,

Such is His love to thee!" "Such is His love to me," you may say.

Now, because the person is accepted, the next thing is our prayers and praises are "accepted in the Beloved." We sometimes kneel down to pray, but we cannot pray. Those that use a book and bring God dead prayers can always be alike, but that which comes from the heart varies—and there are times with living prayers when the most you can do is to groan. A sigh, a sob, is the most you can get out. But a mother would sooner hear her own child sob than another child sing. There is music about that dear child's

voice that moves her heart and touches her spirit. And so the inward meanings of a broken heart are music in the ears of the Infinite Jehovah, and He accepts the sincere prayers of His people, let them be as broken as they may! And as for our praise, well, we do not always sing our praises—we feel them, we talk them, and when we do sing them, our voices are not, perhaps, as sweet as we would desire. Never mind. Our Lord does not judge our hymns by the same tests as gentlemen of musical tastes would do! He hears the ring of the heart and if that is right, there may be a false note or two, perhaps, in the voice, but if the right note is in the heart, the praises are accepted, and the prayers are, "accepted in the Beloved," for our prayers do not come up before God as they are. It is with us, as it is with some poor men. They want to get up a petition. They come, perhaps, to us. They want us to petition to some great man for some help. "Well, write our your petition." They bring it. "Oh," we say, "it will never do to send that—here is this word spelt wrong, that sentence is ungrammatical. You have not addressed him at all in the right style. Come, I will take it, and I will make a fair copy of it for you, and send that with my name appended. It may have some weight." So does Christ do with us. He takes our poor blotted and blurred prayers and He just re-writes them, and then He presents them to His Father's Throne. He takes the incense we bring and puts it into His own golden censor. He puts in the coals of fire and then, as He swings that censor to and fro in His own Priesthood before the Throne of God, your prayers and mine, your praises and mine, smoke like sweet perfume before the Presence of the Most High, "accepted in the Beloved."

And, Brothers and Sisters, just so is it with all the work we do for Christ and all the gifts we bring. It happens on Sunday, perhaps, sometimes when the bread is bought and the supply got in for the family, that you have very little to give. "Well, here is a penny for the Orphanage." You must give God something, you think. You would give Him more if you could. You only wish you had tens of thousands of pounds you could give. Well, it is very little, and nobody knows who gives it, still, it is "accepted in the Beloved." If it is given for His sake, I tell you that every penny is "accepted in the Beloved." Does not the Lord say so? The two mites that make a farthing, which were the widow's living, were so accepted that He could not help speaking about them—and publishing to all the world in this Book, the Bible, to be handed down throughout all time—as long as there shall be a Bible in the Christian Church! The other night you talked with a little child, or you gave away a tract. You tried to do something—to lead someone to Christ. Well, that was all "accepted in the Beloved." You did it with a single eye to God's Glory. You thought you did it very badly and that there was much imperfection mingled with it—but Christ washed it all—and when it was all fair and clean, He presented it and it was accepted!

And here is a mercy (I will add only one other word to this line of thought)—the whole life of the Christian, so far as it is the outgrowth of the life within, is "accepted in the Beloved." That morning you awoke, when the heart rose up in prayer for keeping during the day. That bended knee at the bedside, when the soul commits itself to the Father of Spirits. That family gathering, when the prayer is offered that the household may be kept during the day. That blessing at the eating of bread. That thankful heart to God, when the morning's meal is finished. Those brief sudden prayers during the business of the day. That word put in for Christ when the conversation ran the other way. That thankful return home at night. That evening prayer. That lifting up of the soul to God in thankfulness to carry you through another day—all that, the humblest part of it, was all "accepted in the Beloved." Brothers and Sisters, it is very, very delightful to think that if I preach a sermon for Christ it is accepted, but I want you to think that if you housewives are about the house, doing your business there for your husband and children, you are as much accepted there as I am when I am preaching! That Prayer Meeting was very acceptable. Yes, and I know how acceptable it was when you sat up that night with a sick man. It was done for Jesus' sake. The man who addresses thousands is accepted, but he that sits down and talks, even to a little child, is just as much accepted, and

accepted in the same way, too, for it is only "in the Beloved" that either the big or the little can be at all! The bullock was offered and God accepted it. The kid was offered and God accepted that. And the reason was because they were both put upon the same altar, and both burnt with the same fire. Christ is the Altar, and Christ the Fire—and so our sacrifices are "accepted in the Beloved."

I think these words were the favorite words of that dear man of God, Mr. Harrington Evans, "Accepted in the Beloved." He used to often repeat them in his sermons and, if I remember rightly, when he was dying and his deacons needed a message to be given to the Church, to let them know what was the state of mind of their pastor at the time of death, he said, "Go and tell them I am accepted in the Beloved." Oh, dear Hearer can you say this? There is more eloquence in these words than in all the eloquence of Demosthenes, or in all the glowing periods of Caesar! To say, "I am accepted in the Beloved," is better than to be able to say, "I am the owner of the Indies, or the possessor of the world." "Accepted in the Beloved." Remember, there is many a religious person who is not "accepted in the Beloved," for the moralists, the religionists that like not Christ, are not accepted! They pray, and they read the Scriptures, and they attend their place of worship. They are baptized—they come to the altar—but it is all nothing if they do not come to Christ! All these things are nothing to any of them if they are not in Christ. We hold that we should baptize none but those who profess their belief in Christ. And it seems to us that apart from a saving faith in Christ, it is a mere mockery—and if given to children, or even to an unconverted person—it is more likely to make them think there is efficacy in the sacrament than to do them any kind of good. Thus we would have you touch nothing at the Lord's Table until you have first come to Jesus. Then the Baptism—and then the Lord's Table will be profitable helps to you in remembering Christ, and you will be accepted in them, "in the Beloved." But you must get "in" Him first, for Baptism is nothing, and the Lord's Supper nothing, without Christ! First, you must get the Substance, and then the shadow will follow. And these things are only shadows—they only set forth the Substance! And if any come to the shadow, tonight, who have not got the Substance, they have no business to come and on their heads will be the guilt. We must first be in Him. Whether you are an open sinner or outwardly moral, remember you are not accepted, otherwise, for it is not your conduct, not your outward life that will do apart from Christ. It is union to Christ—and faith brings us that! A simple trust in Jesus, and we are "in" Jesus and "accepted in" Jesus! But without that, we are "without Christ, without hope, and alien from the commonwealth of Israel."

The Lord bless this simple meditation to His people, and His shall be the praise forever! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: EPHESIANS1; 2:1.

Verses 1, 2. Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. He wishes them Divine Grace, first, and peace afterwards, which is the right and natural order. There is no lasting peace without Grace.

There is no peace worth having which does not spring from a work of Grace in the soul. "Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ How dear the Father is when we view Him in association with the Redeemer. Never do the saints seem to delight so much in God as when they behold Him in the Person of Jesus Christ. Then is He inexpressibly lovely to us and we preach Him with joy and delight. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

3. Who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ "Blessed," says he, "be God, who has blessed us." Well may we bless Him with our feeble thanks who has blest us with His mighty mercies! Nothing makes a man bless God like God's blessing him! "He has blessed us," says the Apostle, "with all spiritual blessings." The children of God have not only some blessings, but all they need! They are all theirs—for all time and for all eternity—but they are all in Christ. There is no blessing out of Christ. All the fullness of blessing dwells in Jesus and in Him only! And if you would be blessed, you must come to Christ for a blessing. He has "blest us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

4. According as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. The first great blessing of the Covenant of Grace is our election. We were chosen, but chosen in Christ—chosen not because we were holy, but chosen that we should be holy! The great objective of the Divine choice is our holiness. And let no man say that He is chosen of God unless God is working in Him to this Divine end, namely, holiness of character!

5. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. After election comes adoption. Men are not by nature the children of God—they are heirs of wrath. And this is very clear because a man never adopts his own children. But adoption in itself proves that by nature we are not the children of God—He adopts us. "Then are you begotten again unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Happy they who know the adoption—who feel in themselves the spirit of children and can cry, "Abba, Father," as they look up to God tonight! This is in Christ Jesus, for nothing comes to us except by Him.

6. To the praise of the glory of His Grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the beloved. Christ is so acceptable to God that that acceptance is sufficient to spread over all those who are in Him. And tonight every Believer here is accepted before God, but it is through Jesus Christ. Do notice that! Nothing comes but by that silver pipe. "He has made us accepted in the Beloved."

7. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace. Redemption by Christ, forgiveness by Christ, still everything through the Crucified! Those dear wounds of His are the five sacred founts from which a world of blessing flows to bless poor needy sinners. Well may we say, "None but Christ," for, indeed, there is none but Christ who can bless us!

8-10. Wherein He has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence. Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He has purposed in Himself: That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are on earth: even in Him. All the things that are in Christ are to be gathered together—believing Jews no longer to be divided from believing Gentiles. Today the Church of God is separated—disfigured and weakened by divers sects and parties, but it shall not be always so. There is a gathering under the Christ and He will, in the fullness of time, perfectly accomplish it.

11, 12. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will: That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ. Some people are dreadfully frightened at that word, "predestination." I am always astonished when members of the Church of England are so, for if they will turn to their own Articles, they will find that the high and comfortable Doctrine of Predestination is taught there. It is to be wisely handled, but it is not to be gagged and sent into a corner, as it is by some. Are there Truths in Scripture that are not to be taught? If any say so, then I charge them with being like the Jesuit who hides a

part of what he believes! No, the whole of God's Truth is to be declared, and whatever we find in this Book, that are we to state! The keeping back of precious Truths of God will be required of such as are guilty of it at the Last Great Day.

13-23; Chapter 2:1. In whom you also trusted, after that you heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory. Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power Which He worked in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. Far above all principality, and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. And has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, Which is His body, the fullness of Him that fills all in all And you has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. So that what He did for Christ, He has done for you! He raised Him and He has raised you. And having begun thus to quicken you, He will go on to lift you up and to exalt you till you sit with Him upon His Throne!

The only question, dear Friends, is this—Do we belong to those of whom Paul here speaks? We look to the first verse to see who they are and we find he is addressing the faithful in Christ Jesus. That is, those who are believing in Christ Jesus. If we are believing in Him, then all the privileges which are mentioned in this Chapter belong to us and we are quickened—and we shall be exalted even as Christ is, at the Father's right hand! So be it, gracious Lord!

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