

BLESSINGS MANIFOLD AND MARVELLOUS.

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“He delivered me, because he delighted in me.” — Psalm 18:19.

THE experience of believers has much in common. The language in which they are wont to express it bears a close resemblance. You may often take the language out of one good man’s mouth and put it into the mouth of another without committing any violence. The words of David will doubtless suit hundreds and thousands of you who fear the Lord. You will be able to lay hold of this sentence, full many of you, I hope, with the hand of appropriation, and be enabled, by God the Holy Spirit, to say, as he said, “He delivered me because he delighted in me.”

These words may suggest to us a pleasant fact to sing about: “He delivered me”; a precious truth to think about, “because he delighted in me”; and a proper course to set about; since his delight in me has issued in my deliverance, let my delight in him produce a response of gratitude. “He delivered me.” Here is: —

I. A FACT IN THE LIFE HISTORY OF THE SAINT which may well provoke the gratitude and inspire the song of him who has witnessed such amazing grace. We need not disentomb the tale of David’s rescue from peril; let us take our own narrative. And how can I revoke the memory of this better than by referring to some points in John Bunyan’s wonderful allegory? As pilgrims to the Celestial City, we have often had to sing, “He delivered me.” You remember well, when you resided in the City of Destruction, you breathed the same atmosphere, followed the same fashions, and indulged the same lusts of the flesh that others do. Prone to sin, and prompt to

participate in other men's sins, you mingled with them in their unhallowed pursuits. You were enemies to God, and yet you were on good terms with yourselves. You were at a distance from the great Sun of Righteousness, and, instead of sighing for light, you sought satisfaction in darkness. What you once were, an alien from God, and a stranger to his house, you would now be, had he not delivered you. It was divine grace which made you restless, and put it into your heart to be uneasy. You saw that the wrath of God must rest upon the ungodly. You heard a voice in your ears, "Escape; escape for thy life! look not behind thee; flee to the mountains lest thou be consumed." If you have forsaken the drunkard's haunts, if you have broken off the swearer's profane tongue, if the pleasures of sin have ceased their fascination, you must ascribe it to your Redeemer, and say, "He delivered me," for it is grace that has rescue you from the destroyers.

Dost mind the time when you first set out as a pilgrim for the better country? You ran as best you could. Bright hopes and cheery prospects enlivened you as you thought of entering into the Celestial City. On a sudden you are bewildered with doubts and fears. You had fallen into the Slough of Despond. In that miserable plight some of you remained for months. It was my misfortune to be there for nearly five years, and a terrible place I found it. Fears of dying haunted us, and equal fears of living; a dread of hell came over us, and a dreary apprehension that we should soon be swallowed up as those that went down alive into the pit. With what cold shudders, or with what hot tears some of you must recall that unhappy season, when you cried with Job, "O, that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even unto his seat!" You had become the companion of dragons and of owls, and your soul chose strangling rather than life. It is not so with you now. Your face shines; the oil of joy is upon it. Your throat is no longer hoarse with groaning; you can sing a song to your well-beloved touching your beloved. Who made the change? Why, dear heart, I am sure you can say, "He delivered me! 'Twas his kind hand snatched me from the mire, lifted me up out of the horrible pit, and set my feet upon a rock."

You have not forgotten, dear friends — in fact, the felicities of heaven can never efface from your memory the weight of that burden which pressed you down when your sins laid heavy on your soul. You walked despondingly enough along the road; Christian worship had no charms to enliven you. Did you come where God's people were singing? You said, "I would, but cannot sing." Or if they prayed, you likewise excused yourself,

“I would, but cannot pray.” Your sins were so harassing that they haunted your mind, vexed your brain, and terrified your imagination. What schemes to get rid of them, or to ease your heart of conscious guilt, you resorted to; and yet you got worse rather than better. You tried to condone your past bad works by doing some fresh good works; but their defects were so palpable that they only aggravated your sore. You resorted to ordinances and ceremonies, and you discovered that they were mere quackery, a vile empiricism, void of healing virtue, but full of deadly opiates. You seemed as if you would be bent double with your sins. You cried, “O God, my sins, my sins, my sins! how can I be delivered from them?” And now let me wake up your tender recollections. Do you remember how Christ was evidently set forth crucified before your eyes — how you saw One hanging upon a tree in agonies and blood — and how, as you looked to him, you felt the cords that bound you begin to crack, and the burden that oppressed you presently roll away — how you turned round to seek for it, and it was gone; you sought for it, and it could not be found. You saw, as it were, an open sepulcher, the very sepulcher where once the Savior lay; into that your sins had rolled; there had they been buried for ever. Oh! you can sing as you think of this, “He delivered me! He delivered me!” ‘Twas the mighty hand of the Savior that lifted that intolerable load from off you, and set you free, so that you could exultingly say, “I am forgiven; through the Savior’s precious blood I am forgiven; his death my ransom price has paid.”

Since that time your song has swollen and become more sweet and loud. You have added many fresh stanzas to it, but the refrain is still the same, “He delivered me! He delivered me!” A grievous distress befel you when, after you lost your burden, you met with one called “Adam the first,” or “Old Adam.” Do you recollect his inviting you to his house? With pleasant, winsome speech, he told you that the road you were going was very rough, that heavy toil and hard fare must be looked for through the whole course of the pilgrimage, and that he should recommend you to indulge yourself with the bounties of nature, rather than deny yourselves with the austerities of faith. He invited you to go home with him, and he could let you marry one of his three daughters, and then he would make you his heir. Did you not accept his invitation and go home with him, and see his three daughters? The wonder is that you did not marry one of teem. Their names ye know. The Lust of the Flesh; she was the eldest, and very agreeable in her manners. The Lust of the Eye; she was the second, and the more you

gazed at her the more she fascinated you; and the youngest born, but by far the most imposing in stature and deportment, was The Pride of Life. You went home to the old man's house, and when you saw these three daughters, your heart began to beat, and your thoughts were fixed on their dowries. Then he said, in his patronizing manner, "All these things will I give you, and you can be a pilgrim still. You can be a Christian without observing any strict vows of sanctity. Little blemishes and trivial inconsistencies will pass unnoticed if you clothe yourself with the mantle of a comely profession. Scruples of conscience may be easily quieted. If you are as good as your neighbors, they cannot upbraid you." But you had grace to run away. You shut your ears against the enticing words: you escaped. How was it, then, that you did not fall a victim to the lust of the flesh, to the lust of the eye, or to the pride of life? What reason can you assign but this, "He delivered me!"? How marvellous your deliverance! your steps had well-nigh gone; your feet had almost slipped, but in the moment when you would have perished, he interposed; therefore, let his name be praised.

Since that, do you recollect going through the Valley of Humiliation, and fighting with Apollyon? We have not merely to contend with a trinity of sensual dusts, but we have to wage war with Satan himself. Some of the younger disciples here do not know what this means, but the veterans in the army understand Bunyan's description. Well do some of us remember when we stood foot to foot with the great adversary, hour after hour, and how at last we fell, and his foot was upon us, and he said, "Now will I destroy thy soul." At that very moment, when the dragon's foot seemed to crush all life out of you, you were enabled to say, "Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; though I fall, yet shall I rise again." How was it that you escaped out of such a terrible conflict? Must you not sing very sweetly and very loudly, "He delivered me; he delivered me; blessed be his name!"

Amidst all your journeyings, have you never passed through the Valley of the Shadow of Death? Have you not experienced the gloom of darkness where your spirit was so desponding that you did not know what to do? Though you had been a Christian for many years, you could not discern the hope of your calling; though you had come to the full assurance of understanding, you could not take hold of one covenant promise with the slightest confidence; though you had been wont aforetime to sing, "My beloved; is mine, and I am his," he hid his face from you; you sought him, but you found him not. In sermons you found no refreshment; in prayer no

communion. You were reduced to such a low state of mind that you seemed as though you were counted with them that go down into the pit. So were you haunted with gloomy doubts and fears, that you cried out, "Thy wrath lieth hard upon me; and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves." Through that perilous and gloomy valley you walked; out of that valley at length you came into the bright clear sunshine, and when you sat down and looked back upon the place of dragons and the land of terrors, you could sing, "He delivered me." Yea, Lord, thou hast delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, and my feet from falling; unto thy name be all the praise!

Since then, my dear fellow-traveler on the road to Canaan, thou hast had many remarkable deliverances. Cover up thy face and be ashamed. I feel that I may well blush, as I confess to wandering in Bye-Path Meadow. Do you remember going over the stile because the road was rough? You thought, if you went just on the other side of the hedge, it would be so much pleasanter. Do you remember being lost at night? Do you remember, above all, the Giant Despair, who locked you up in his dungeon? Do you remember with sorrow, how wandering from the right way soon brought on sickness of heart and despair? You, Mr. Much-Afraid, have good reason to sing, "he delivered me, when you remember how you were fetched out of the dungeon. And you, Mr. Ready-to-Halt, you, too, lay shut up there, but he delivered you; he who slays despair and puts doubts to flight, he came to your rescue, even though your own sins had brought you into that sad plight. Laud his name as you recollect what wonders he has done for you, and what loving-kindness he has shown towards you.

And now, it may be, some of us are going through the enchanted ground. I sometimes think that such is the condition of a great majority of pilgrims now-a-days. The enchanted ground was a place where men felt drowsy, and had a tendency to slumber and sink into a long and eternal sleep. Is that your temptation, friend? I know it is mine. I have a sluggish, drowsy soul. I wish I could keep awake and vigorous in my Master's service, but the tendency of my drony spirit is to get cold and inert. And I suppose it is the same with most of you. How is it, then, that you have not gone to sleep, that you have not given up all diligence and lost all heart for God's ways? Surely you must say, "He delivered me."

I would not detain you longer, however, on this retrospect, except that I have two more scenes to bring before you. Did you ever stand and! look at

that hole in the hill, of which Bunyan speaks, and which he says was the back-door to hell? He says that, although Ignorance appeared to have gone almost all the way to heaven, he was bound and taken back. Some of us have seen in fact that which he so touchingly describes in metaphor. We have known members of Christian churches who have held an honorable position in the eyes of their fellow-men, for ten or twenty years, prove themselves to be detestable hypocrites, prone to manifold vices, and to every good work reprobate. They have not taken, like drunkards and swearers, the broad road down to the pit, but they have committed their transgressions in secret, worn the masks of profession, kept company with saints, and gone by the back door to meet the doom of sinners. I shudder as the procession passes before my mind's eye, of ministers, deacons, elders, and influential professors, who have gone through that back-door. What to say, I wot not. My soul is bowed down. "O God, I had gone there myself, hadst thou not delivered me!" I think you must all feel the same if you know anything of the corruptions of your own heart. Even you, my venerable brethren, who have been preserved so many years in the wilderness, if it were not for the grace of God, you, too, concerning faith, had made shipwreck, and so have perished, even in the harbour's mouth.

We shall soon reach the last struggle. Jordan is only a narrow stream which parts us from the land of spirits; and we shall soon pass through it; but its floods are chill, and it is not easy for flesh and blood to anticipate dying with complacency. "But be of good courage, "beloved," we have said up to this time. "He has delivered me." He who has been our helper will not forsake us. Be assured we shall sing that at the last, and should the angels who meet us on the other side ask how we endured the struggle of the death pang, we will each of us bear the same" He delivered me!

I said this was a hope to cultivate, that you might sing for joy in the article of death when heart and flesh fail. I hope that you will. Let me encourage you, Christian people, to sing a great deal more than you do. Of old London in the Puritan time, it was said that you might have heard songs and prayers in well-nigh every house as you walked at the breakfast hour from St. Paul's to Eastcheap. Family worship was then the prevailing custom. It would not be so now in any town in England; the more the pity. I hear the waggoner in the country, and the costermonger in the city, humming a tune or singing a song. Why should not you, my friends, enliven your listless intervals with a hymn? The world has its popular music; why should not we stir up some soul-inspiring melodies? Soldiers go to battle

with martial airs; let us go to our battle with the songs of Zion. When the sailors are tugging and pulling at the rope, and weighing the anchor, they send up a cheery shout, and they work better for it too. Christian friends, while you work lighten the toil with sacred song; serve God with gladness. I have often been charmed at eventide on the canals at Venice to hear the gondoliers sing in chorus some glorious old chant. So, Christians, as you steer your vessels to heaven, and tug at the oar, sing as you row, sing as you work; sing, for you have much to sing about. Be glad, and praise the Lord who has delivered you. And now we have: —

II. A PRECIOUS TRUTH TO THINK ABOUT, “He delighted in me.” He delivered me because he delighted in me.” Deliverance from sin, deliverance from evil propensities, deliverance from spiritual enemies — all each deliverance bears evidence of God’s love to us. Temporal mercies betoken the freeness of the divine bounty, but they are never bestowed as the earnest of God’s special love. Such inferior gifts he often lavishes in abundance upon those who are not his people. Spiritual blessings he reserves for his own redeemed, regenerate family. Their value is enhanced by their significance, because they are proofs of his eternal love towards us. While they grant us safe conduct through the wilderness, they guarantee to us eternal life when these pilgrimage days are over and done. If you have experienced the kinds of deliverance I have been describing, you have so many tokens of his good will and the tenderness with which he delights in you.

I shall not talk much about this, but I hope you will think much about it. How much he delights in you it is not possible to say. The Father delights in you, and looks upon you with doting love; like as a father takes pleasure in his child, so does he rejoice over you. And Jesus delights in you. He saw in you the recompense of his agonies, the purchase of his blood, the partakers of his glory. And the Holy Spirit delights in you. He has formed your heart anew, and made you a temple for him to dwell in; therefore, he watches you with jealous care. Does it not seem well-nigh incredible that God should ever take delight in his creatures? He is so eternally happy in himself, so infinitely blessed, so supremely glorious. Surely his delights cannot be enhanced or diminished by the welfare or the adversity of such ephemera as we are. Yet he certainly delighted in David, and he most surely does delight in every one of those who put their trust in him. Nor does he merely say that he delights in us now, but he assures us that he did delight in his people long before the world was made. He writ them in his

book; he ordained them; in his decrees he had them before his mind's eye, he delighted in them before ever he laid the foundation of the earth, or stretched the canopy of the skies. Why was this? Some suppose that it was because he foresaw they would be good and deserving of his esteem. I cannot see aught that is attractive in rebellious men, in sinful mortals. I dare say you can all join with me in echoing the sentiment of our hymn: —

*“What was there in me that could merit esteem,
Or give the Creator delight?
'Twas even so, Father, I ever must sing,
Because it seemed good in thy sight.”*

The reason of God's delight we cannot tell. It is hid in God's eternal breast. This only we do know, that he delights in us because we are the objects of his choice. From amongst the dense masses of mankind he chose them. In infinite sovereignty he said, “They shall be mine in the day when I make up my jewels.” He ordained them to be vessels of honor fitted for the Master's use, and he predestinated them to be conformed to the image of his Son. Moreover, he delights in them because, in addition to having chosen them, he has bought them. Christ has paid too dearly, for his people not to love them. When he looks into the face of the penitent sinner he sees the reflection of his own tears and languish, yea, and of his bloody sweat; he sees his own wounds there, and recollects the price they cost, and the purchase he paid.

They are precious to him, because of the power he has exerted upon them in making them his workmanship. We prize a thing sometimes that has not any intrinsic value, for the sake of the skill and workmanship bestowed upon it. The Holy Spirit has put out the force of his omnipotence to construct a Christian. It takes as much divine energy to make a saint as to create a world, and, therefore, God rejoices in every one of his elect as being the work of his hands; the very choice design of his heart.

Yet more, he delights in us because there is a relationship established whereby we are made partakers of a divine nature. This is a truth to be spoken of very reverently. The angels are not related to God; they are his creatures; but MAN is next-of-kin to the Deity. He whom the heavens adore as God over all “blessed for ever hath taken our nature, and is a man like ourselves. The Lord Jesus Christ, who counted it not robbery to be equal with God, took upon himself the form of a servant, and identified himself with our circumstances. The Son of Man is the Son of the Highest.

In Christ there is a relationship, a kindred, an affinity between man and God; the Creator and the creature whom he created in his own image. Hence the delight he takes in us.

But to go farther; there is an alliance yet closer predicted in Scripture, wherein Christ, being married to his Church, shall develop the great mystery, whereby, as husband and wife are one flesh, so there shall be an eternal indissoluble union between Christ and his Church. Oh! mysterious union! Blessed cause of delight! Like the head delights in the members, after such manner the Lord Jesus delights in every saved sinner who is vitally united to himself.

The day, beloved, comes on apace when Christ will prove his delight in all his people, by calling their bodies from the grave and reuniting their souls with their risen frames. They shall be clothed upon with his glorious majesty, and made to sit upon his throne with himself. Then the world will know that, though they were “despised and rejected of men,” as he was, they were the delight of God, and for ever he will delight in them. “Because he delighted in me, therefore he delivered me.” I cannot convey to you the full sense of these manifold and marvellous blessings; I can only talk about them; but I pray God the Holy Ghost to make the reflections as sweet to you as they have been to me. My heart seems to leap at the thought that the Most High should take any delight in me. I know he has delivered me, all honor to his name. I know I am no longer what I once was, glory be to his dear love. He has saved me from my sins, and I draw an inference, the correctness of which I cannot doubt, that he would not have delivered me if he had not delighted in me. Do draw that inference, each one of you, for yourselves. If God has delivered you, he delights in you. But there are some of you who never were delivered. You are still in bondage, still the slaves of sin. Yet, remember, the gospel is still preached to you. “Whosoever believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved.” Trust Christ, poor soul, and you shall be delivered, and that deliverance shall be to you the evidence that you were the objects of God’s electing love, and that you shall be written on his heart for ever. A word to the wise. One word to the wise is enough, though twenty words to the foolish would be of no avail. Here is: —

III. A RESOLUTION TO BE ACTED UPON.

You sang it just now; I want you to act it out in your lives: —

*“Loved of my God, for him again
With love intense I burn;
Chosen of him ere time began,
I choose him in return.”*

It is the least you can do if he delight in you, to delight in him. Brethren, I am afraid there are many of us who do not take a delight in our religion. Then I should advise you to challenge the quality of your profession, for though genuine religion does not always yield delight, that is only because of the infirmity of the creature. True grace in the heart, a conscience void of offense; in a word, the life of a consecrated man should be a perennial fountain of joy. Some people go to their place of worship because they think they ought. Their legality holds them in constant bondage. “Thou shalt not; thou shalt not,” is the burden of their creed. They never rejoice; their eye never sparkles; they never think of going up to the house of God with the festive joy of those that welcome the holiday. Ah! my dear friend, I advise thee to see whether thou hast a sound conversion, for those who truly love God do exalt in his name. What if they have their troubles, still their faith and their fellowship are the boon, not the bane, of their mortal existence. What if they have their cares and anxieties, still the cheer and palliatives are never wanting while they can cast their care upon him who careth for them. His service is their solace. Their sorrow is that they cannot serve him more. Christian, delight yourself in the Lord, and you shall have the desire of your heart.

But then your resolution will not only be to delight in God, but to show it. He delighted in you, and therefore he delivered you. You delight in him, and therefore do you serve him. What can you do to express your gratitude? You are saved; how can you extol his great salvation? Peradventure you are doing a little, but can you not do more? Is there not some fresh thing that you can do for Jesus? Can you not get new crowns for his head, beloved? Let us give him fresh praise, and if there is any fresh branch of usefulness, any new mode of serving him which we have not yet tried, let us ask for grace to try it now. And as for the good old works in which we have been engaged, oh! for fresh fire that we may do them better. I would that we served God with more vigor. It is not more preaching we want, but more fiery preaching. It is not merely to multiply the number of our prayers, but the want of more earnest pleadings, more fervent intercessions. The service that we render is too languid and heartless, we want to summon our whole heart, and soul, and strength in

unabating, untiring efforts to do his will and speed the triumph of his glorious gospel. By the vision of the thorn-crowned head; by the five wounds of him who died in agony; by the mangled, murdered body of your blessed Lord suffering unto death for you, I do implore you, the servants of God, to lay yourselves as living sacrifices upon the altar of Jesus Christ. You do, some of you, profess to love him, but you never speak of him. You say you serve him, but what do you do? You profess to “love your God with zeal so great that you could give him all,” and what, after all, do you give him? Oh! how much outward religion is nothing but inward hypocrisy! How much of our talk about religion is mere gossip! God save us from a vain loquacity, and impart to us a living energy, so that our deeds may proclaim our faith. Oh! may we spend and be spent in the Master’s service till we shall: —

*“Our body with our charge lay down,
And come at once to work and live.”*

As for those who know not God, they have no capacity to serve him. My prayer to God for you is that he may bring you to see Christ crucified. When you put your trust in him you shall be delivered. Then you shall sing, “He delivered me because he delighted in me.” And after that it shall be your welcome mission to go and tell what great things he has done for you. May this be the joyous occupation of everyone of us. Amen.

EXPOSITIONS BY C. H. SPURGEON.

EPHESIANS 2.

Verse 1. *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:*

These were your grave clothes. You were wrapped up in them. Nay, this was your sarcophagus. You were shut up in it, as in a great stone coffin: “Dead in trespasses and sins.”

2. *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.*

You were once no better than the workshop of the devil. He is the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience, as the smith works in his

forge. When you hear foul language, when you see bad actions, these are the sparks coming out of the chimney that let you know who is at work within, down below. What a dreadful thing it is — a man dead to all that is good, but alive through the indwelling of the devil that is within him. “The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.”

3. Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Not children of God, even as some profanely assert when they talk about the universal fatherhood of God. Ye were children of wrath, even as others. And the best of men were no better than ethers by nature. They were as dead, as much under the influence of Satan, as much under the influence of the lusts of the flesh as others are who are left where they are. It is only sovereign grace that makes us to differ. “*Were* by nature,” not by error; by nature, not by a mistake, not by a few actions, but by nature, the children of wrath, even as others. See what ye used to be. Let this make you humble. See what you would have been. Let this make you grateful. “*You* hath he quickened.” He has put life into you. He has made you quit your graves. He has made you come from under the dominion of Satan and the devices of your own heart. Will you not bless his name to-night?

4, 5. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ,

Wonder! The life that quickens. Christ quickens all the members of his mystical body, and this has come to us through the riches of God’s mercy. Whatever God has, he has in abundance, but of his mercy we read that he has riches of it; and truly all those riches of mercy he has shown in our case. We cannot but have riches of gratitude for such riches of mercy.

5. By grace ye are saved;

See, Paul puts that in a parenthesis. It was not necessary to the sense, but he knew that there would come a time when men would not like this doctrine, so he puts it in, “By grace are ye saved.” They cannot bear it, and therefore they shall have it. They shall have it when the sense does not seem to demand it. To make it quite clear, he will insert it. “By grace ye are saved.”

6. *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*

We are not only raised from the dead with Christ, but we are spiritually raised into the heavenly places with him. It is a great thing when a man learns to look up from earth to heaven. It is a greater thing when he learns to look down from heaven upon earth — to have you sitting at the right hand of God, and then to look down on all the things of this present life as far below you.

7. *That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.*

Brethren, we are to be a show, an exhibition case, in which God will exhibit the riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. Angels will count it a high joy to study the life of a regenerate man, to see him rise from death in sin to the glory of God in Christ Jesus. What is so precious in God's esteem ought to excite our praise continually.

8. *For by grace are ye saved*

There it is again. Paul rings that silver bell in the *deaf* ears of men. "By grace are ye saved."

8, 9. *Through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

We should be sure to boast if we could. We are a boasting people. Man is a poor mass of flesh, and he is largely given to the corruption of pride, He will boast if he can.

10. *For we are his workmanship,*

If there is any good thing in us, he put it there. It is not for us to boast. It is for him to boast if he *pleases*.

10, 11. *Created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Wherefore remember,*

Oh! that is a good word for *us*, "Remember"; we are so apt to forget. "Remember."

11, 12. *That ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ,*

Had you to do with Christ? The Jews call you uncircumcised dogs. What had you to do with the Messiah? Was not the Messiah for God's Israel? You did not belong to Israel.

12. *Being aliens from the commonwealth of Isreal, and strangers from the covenants of promise,*

The covenant was in Isaac. You are not the children of Isaac. You are not descended from Abraham. You were strangers from the covenants of promise.

12. *Having no hope,*

Either here or hereafter.

12, 13. *And without God in the world: But now*

Oh! what a contrast.

13. *In Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*

You are brought near to Israel. You are brought nearer still to Israel's God. Now you are not aliens. You are not strangers from the covenant. You have a hope, you have a God.

14, 15. *For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;*

There is no circumcision and uncircumcision now, for that is done away with. There is no Israel according to the flesh now, and Gentiles who are not of God, for there is a spiritual Israel, to which we belong, as well as those of Abraham's race. He has swept out of the way all the ordinances which divided us, and we are now one in him.

16, 17. *And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.*

To the Gentile and to the Jew, to the atrociously wicked, and to those who were religious after a fashion — he has brought them both in by the cross.

18. *For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.*

Here you have the Trinity in, a single line of Scripture, and it needs the Trinity to make an acceptable prayer. Through him (that is, Christ) we have access by one Spirit unto the Father, and now, to-day, the Church of God is one in prayer, whether Jew or Gentile. We come to God by the same Mediator, helped by the same Spirit. We have answers of peace from the same Father.

19. *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God:*

There are many here whom we do not know. We have not seen their faces before, but if they are in Christ and we are in Christ, we are very near of kin. There is an old proverb that blood is thicker than water, and depend upon it that when there is the blood of Christ sprinkled upon us, it makes very near kinship. When we are bought with the same price, quickened by the same life, and are on the way to the same heaven, we are very near of kin. We are no mere strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and all the household of God. They make a great fuss when they give a man the liberty of the City of London. There is a fine gold box to put it in. You have got the liberty of the new Jerusalem, and your faith, like a golden box, holds the deeds of your freemanship. Take care of them, and rejoice in them.

20, 21. *And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone: In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:*

The church is a framed house. It has an architect. Some seem to think that it is a load of bricks. They have no church-officers. There are none set apart to this work, and none to the other. It seems to be just a heap of stones thrown down anyhow. But a true church is, by the Spirit of God, a building fitly framed together. One is a door, another is a window. One lies low and hidden in the foundation. Another may have a more prominent position in the wall; and it should be so with us — that we should each have a place that God has appointed him, and keep to that place. Lord, build up thy Church upon earth at this time.

22. *In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

We are not builded to stand like a carcase. It is a ghastly sight to see houses in London nearly finished, but never occupied: but it is the glory of the Church of God that it is inhabited. It is a habitation of God through the Spirit. Holy Spirit, dwell in thy Church more evidently. Keep open house for all poor sinners that come to Christ, and glorify God.