

THE EVER-LIVING PRIEST

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” — Hebrews 7:23-25.

THE apostle Paul is very much at home with his theme whenever he is extolling his Master. When handling the Jewish types and figures, with which he was so familiar, he was charmed to point out how far superior the Lord Jesus Christ is to any and all the priests of the Old Testament dispensation. In this case he is dwelling upon the special honor of our Lord, because his priesthood is without end, seeing, he himself is not put forth from the priesthood by reason of death. A common priest served from thirty to fifty years of age, and then his work was done: priests of the house of Aaron, who because high priests, held their office through life. Sometimes a high priest would continue in his office, therefore, for a considerable length of time, but in many cases he was cut off as other men are by premature death; hence there was priest after priest of the order of Aaron to go within the veil for the people. Our Lord is of another race, being a priest according to the order of Melchisedec, “having neither beginning of days nor end of life.” He was made a priest not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. He continueth to make intercession for the people of God by virtue of his eternal life and perpetual priesthood. In this respect the true Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, rises above all former priests: they were indeed but types and shadows of himself.

This superiority of our Lord Jesus Christ is a topic which will not interest everybody. To many persons it will seem a piece of devotional rapture, if not an idle tale. Yet there will ever be a remnant according to the election of grace to whom this meditation will be inexpressibly sweet. Who are the people that will be interested by this theme? They are indicated in the text: they that come unto God by Jesus Christ. The people who are in the habit of using Christ as their way of access to God are those who will value him beyond all price, and such persons will delight to hear him extolled in the highest terms.

We will begin our discourse, then, by the enquiry: Do we come unto God by Jesus Christ? Hearken, and answer for yourselves. Do we come unto God at all? Do we recognize the Lord our God as a person who should be approached? Are we now approaching to him? Are we among those who are always coming to God, to whom at the last the great Judge shall Say, "You have been coming, continue to come. Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you?" Or are we departing from God by forgetting him, or rebelling against him, so that we shall be among that number to whom the Judge shall say, "You have long been departing, continue to do so. Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire in hell, prepared for the devil and his angels?"

Are we coming to God? — that is the question. Is the direction of our lives towards God? We are either going to God or from God, and by this we may forecast our everlasting destiny. The direction in which the arrow is flying prophesies the target in which it will be fixed: the way the tree is inclining, that way foretells the place of its fall, and where the tree falleth, there it will lie. So let us judge ourselves this day: which way are we drifting? Have we ever come to God by sincere repentance of our wanderings? Have we come to him by faith, and are we reconciled to him? Do we come to him in prayer? Do we come to him day by day, speaking with him and desiring to walk with him? Do we come to God by communion with him, having fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ? Do we, in fact, know the meaning of what it is to draw nigh unto God? It is ill with us if we either have no God, or if he seems to be very far off, an almost unrecognizable phantom, an idea never fully realized, much less approached! Blessed are they that know the name of the Lord and that walk with him, rejoicing in the light of his countenance. It is to such that Jesus is precious as their way of access to the Father.

In the description there is a little word of distinction, for the people who are said to be saved by the great Intercessor are those who come unto God by him. Certain persons talk of coming to God as Creator, and Ruler, and even as Father, but they do not think of his dear Son as their way of approach. They forget or else deny the declaration of our Lord Jesus — “No man coming unto the Father, but by me.” Yet this saying is true. There is no true way of approach to God except through Jesus Christ, the one Mediator between God and man. A deep abyss divides us from God, and only that ladder which Jacob saw can bridge the gulf. Our Lord Jesus, being God and man in one person, reaches from side to side of the chasm. Coming near to us, this ladder stands at our foot in the human nature of our Lord, and it reaches right up to the infinite Majesty by reason of the divine nature of our Redeemer. God and man, in one person, unites God and man in one league of love. We come unto God by Jesus Christ. Prayers in which Christ is forgotten are insults to the God of revelation: faith in which Jesus is not the foundation of our hope is mere delusion. God cannot accept us if we will not accept his Son. O sinner, one door hath God opened in heaven: if thou wilt not go in by that door thou shalt never enter within the walls of the new Jerusalem. God bids thee come to him by one in whom he is well pleased; and if thou wilt not be pleased with Jesus thou canst not come to the Father. O ye who are daily users of this royal way to God, you will forgive me if I hide myself behind my Lord this day, and seek to do nothing more than, in all simplicity, to set forth his unchangeable priesthood and endless life. Pray the Lord to help me to extol the great high priest of our profession, and also to help you all to join in the praise of Jesus in the power of his Holy Spirit.

In the text there are four subjects for your consideration: they are joined together as links of a golden chain, and they are all full of encouragement for you. Here is a great Savior with an endless life, secondly, with an endless priesthood; thirdly, with an endless intercession; and fourthly, with an endless salvation: “He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

I. First, we have in our Lord Jesus Christ a priest with AN ENDLESS LIFE. I want you to think earnestly upon this very simple theme: it is in the simplicities that we find our greatest consolations. Our Lord Jesus is not as Aaron, who had to be stripped of his garments on the top of Mount Hor, and to die in the mount; neither is he like to any of the sons of Aaron who in due time suffered the infirmities of age, and at last bowed their heads to

inevitable death. He died once, but death hath no more dominion over him; it is witnessed of him that he liveth.

We clearly perceive that our Lord Jesus possesses endless life as God, for how shall Godhead expire? It is not possible for the Godhead to cease or to suspend its existence. Our Lord is "God over all, blessed for ever;" and in this respect he is necessarily everlasting as to his life.

But our Lord ever lives also in respect to his manhood. Though he died unto sin once, he soon rose again from the dead, his body never having seen corruption. He died in his priesthood and for his priesthood, but never from his priesthood. By his resurrection his manhood was fully restored to a life which dieth no more. We speak of him, as "he that liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore." This is a very sweet truth to those who are in Christ Jesus. The Lord Jesus Christ had lived one life as a man: Why did he not end that life as a man when he died on the cross? It shows his deep attachment to our manhood, that he retained the human nature after his great sacrifice had been presented and accepted. The fact that he again appeared as a man among men, and carried human nature into his glorified estate is clear evidence of his deep attachment to our humanity. If some glorious spirit from on high, angel or archangel, had loved a race of emmets, and had condescended for the salvation of these tiny creatures to assume their nature, and if in that nature he had died for them, you would naturally expect that at the conclusion of his labors and sufferings he would lay aside the form of his humiliation and return to the greatness of his former estate. But our Lord Jesus Christ, whose stoop of Condescension when he assumed our nature was greater than any archangel could have achieved, having taken our human nature, and having bled and died in it, continued to wear it after he had said, "It is finished," after he had risen from the dead, and after he had taken his seat at the divine right hand! He hath become so wedded to us, so truly one flesh with us, that he will not be divided from us in nature. He sits upon the throne of God, not in his pure Godhead, but as one that has been slain, clothed in a body like our own. What manner of love is this! What bliss to know that my kinsman liveth! Truly many waters could not quench his love to manhood, nor could death itself destroy it. The Son of God is still the Son of man. He whom angels worship is not ashamed to call us brethren, for as partaker of our nature he lives, and will live for ever.

He ever lives, then, as God and as man; and I prolong the blended thoughts by saying that he ever lives in his relationship to us. This you have already seen to be the case, because he lives in our nature: but now I beg you to note that he lives as God and men for us. I love to read these words — “He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” This is one great object for which he lives. To make intercession for those that come unto God by him is the business of his life. Is not this wonderful? If some influential and powerful person should say to you, “I live to promote your interest; wherever I go and whatever I do, whatever I seek and whatever I obtain, I live for you” — it would show great friendship, and excite in us great expectations. Would it not? Yet here is the Lord Jesus declaring that he lives for us: for us he appears in the presence of God, for us he has gone to the many mansions of the Father’s house, for us he constantly intercedes with God. Oh, the deep debt of gratitude we owe to this glorious One, who having died for us, now lives for us!

It is more than if a brother should say, “I live my whole life for you;” for, remember, this might be said to be the second life which our Lord gives to us. He lived for us here below a whole lifetime! He laid down that life for us, and now he lives again for us. I know not how to speak what I feel concerning the surpassing greatness of his love. He could not be content to give his life once for us, but he must needs take it again and shall give it over again for us. See how he loves us: he died for us! See how he loves us: he lives again for us! He lives for sinners, for he lives to intercede, and for whom is intercession but for those who need an advocate? “If any man sin we have an advocate.” May I say that Jesus lives two lives for us?

Yet more, it is said, “He ever liveth to make intercession for us;” so that the whole life of Christ throughout eternity, — his boundless, endless, glorified existence is still for his people. He glorifies the Father, and makes glad the hosts of heaven; but still this is the set purpose of his heart, to live for us. “He loved me, and gave himself for me” is true; but we may read it in the present tense if we like, and it is still true: “He loves me, and he gives himself for me.” Christ loved his church, and gave himself for it, and now he loves his church and gives himself to it. What inspiration lies in the endless life of Christ for us! Let our lives be lived wholly for him since he lives wholly for us.

This truth of the living Christ should be remembered in our greatest need. Dear friends, there is an almighty and divine One in heaven who ever lives

for our highest benefit. Let us adore him most lovingly. This should show us how great our need is, that we always want a living Savior to interpose for us. A dying Savior was not enough; we still require every moment of our lives a living Savior engrossed with the care of our spirits, interposing on our behalf in all manner of ways, and delivering us from all evil. Our hour of necessity is ever present, for Jesus is ever guardian us, and his work is never a superfluity. Herein should lie our great comfort: We should fall back upon this truth whenever our burden presses too sorely upon our shoulders. Jesus lives: my great Redeemer lives for me: lives in all fullness of power and glory, and devotes that life, with all that pertains to it, to the preservation of my soul from every ill. Can I not rest in this? With such a keeper why should I be afraid? Must I not be safe when One so vigilant and so vigorous devotes his life to my protection? What innumerable blessings must come to those for whom Jesus spends the strength of his endless life!

II. Secondly, I must carry you on to another and kindred subject: ENDLESS PRIESTHOOD. Our Lord is ordained unto an unchangeable priesthood; or rather; as the margin hath it, to a priesthood “which passeth not from one to another. “His office cannot be taken up by a successor: it is not transferable, but belongs to himself alone, seeing he ever liveth to carry it out in his own person. We have only one priest, and that one priest we have for ever.

In this we are not like Israel of old; for, as we have already seen, a high priest would die. I can conceive that to many Jewish believers the death of a priest was a great affliction. I could imagine an Israelite saying, “And so he is dead: that good man, that tender-spirited minister, that gentle and affectionate shepherd. I have told him all my heart, and now he is taken from me. I went to him in my youth in deep distress of conscience: he offered a sacrifice for me when I was unclean, and brought me near to the holy place. Since then I have gone to him when I have needed guidance; he has consulted the oracle on my behalf, and my way has been made plain. He knows the secrets of my family; he knows those delicate griefs which I have never dared to tell to anybody else. Alas! he is dead, and half my heart has perished. What a gap is made in my life by his decease!” The mourner would be told that his son had become his successor; but I think I hear him say, “Yes, I am aware of it: but the young man does not know what his father knew about me; and I could never again lay bare my heart. The son can never be in entire sympathy with all my sorrows as his good old father

was. No doubt he is a good man, but he is not the same person: I revered every hair in the grey beard of the old high priest. I have grown up with him, and he has helped me so many, many times; it is so sad that I shall see his face no more.” There would always be the feeling in some minds that the next high priest might not be quite so acceptable with God, or so tender towards the congregation, as he who had passed away. He might be a man superior in education, but inferior in affection: he might be more austere and less tender, he might have greater gifts and less fatherliness. At any rate, it would seem like having to begin again when one went for the first time to the new priest: it would be a break in the continuity of one’s comfort. The quiet flow of life would be marred, as when a river comes to its rapids, and an impassable fall causes a break in the navigation, and a necessary unloading of the vessel and a laborious portage instead of an easy passage down a gently flowing stream. “Oh,” says one good Israelite, “the venerable high priest who has just fallen asleep was my friend; we took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in company. He was in my house when my beloved child died; he was with me when the partner of my bosom, the light of my eyes, was taken away from me at a stroke. His long experience he used for my instruction and comfort: but, alas! it is all gone, for the saint of God is dead.” Beloved, here is our comfort: We have only one priest, and he ever liveth. He had no predecessor and he will have no successor, because he ever liveth personally to exercise the office of high priest on our behalf. My soul reposes in the faith of his one sacrifice, offered once and no more. There is but one presenter of that one sacrifice, and never can there be another, since the One is all-sufficient, and he never dies. Jesus reads my heart, and has always read it since it began to beat: he knows my griefs and has carried my sorrows from of old, and he will bear both them and me when old age shall shrivel up my strength. When I myself shall fall asleep in death he will not die, but will be ready to receive me into his own undying blessedness. Brethren, our Lord in glory

*“Looks like a lamb that has been slain,
And wears his priesthood still.”*

Do we not rejoice in the unbroken continuity and everlasting perpetuity of the priesthood of Christ?

Again, we are not as Israel is at this moment. Alas, poor Israel! after all her privileges of the past, where is she now? She is without a high priest; she

does not dare even to think of anointing one of her Cohens to that office. She is without an altar or a sacrifice. Once a year on the day of atonement she has something which bears the shadow of sacrifice; but it is a worship of her own devising and not after the law of Moses or the ordinances of God. She is left without priest, altar, temple, or sacrifice; and the outlook of her sons and daughters as to the future life is for the most part exceeding dark and dismal. I am assured that nothing is more unwelcome to a Jew than the thought of death; and it may well be so. Beloved, we are not without a priest. Our faith beholds Jesus passed into the heavens and abiding there in the glory of his once-offered sacrifice, ever living to intercede for us. Jesus is to my soul at this moment as living a person as I am myself, and even more so. I have come to look on friends and dear ones as passing shadows; I see written across their brows the word "mortal;" but Jesus is the one friend who only hath immortality, and therefore can never be lost to me. His sacrifice is for ever effectual, and his priesthood is for ever in exercise. Christ's priesthood remaineth without end. What bliss it is to be a believer in Jesus, and thus to have one priest, and never to desire another!

We are not as the votaries of Rome. That Babylon hath many priests within her borders. Some say that these priests are substitutes for Christ; if so, the assertion is a flat blasphemy against him who is a priest for ever, and needs no substitute. Others say they are the vicars of Christ, carrying on his work now that he is gone, by presenting the unbloody sacrifice of the mass. This also is clean contrary to the teaching of the apostle in this passage, wherein he proves that this man, because he continueth for ever, hath a priesthood which cannot be passed from one to another. In this he shows that our Lord is different from the Aaronic priests who had their office taken up by those who followed them, whereas Jesus, like Melchisedec, hath no successor, but exercises his office in his own proper person according to the power of an endless life. We know no priests on earth now, save that in a secondary sense the Lord Jesus hath made all believers to be kings and priests unto God. We have now no special order of persons set apart to represent their fellows before God. Under the Mosaic dispensation there were many priests not suffered to continue by reason of death; but under the Christian dispensation we have only one priest, who continueth ever in an untransferable priesthood, this is the apostle's argument. But this is not true if bishops and presbyters are priests in the sense in which they now claim to be so. I count the very thought of our having other sacrificing

priests than the Lord Jesus to be derogatory to the one unique, completely-accomplished sacrifice of our Great High Priest who abides alone in his personal office for ever and ever. Wherefore, brethren, despise in your very souls the pretensions of a human priesthood either in the Church of England or in the Church of Rome. If any man call himself a priest otherwise than as all the people of God are priests, we rate him at no higher value than Korah, Dathan and Abiram, to whom Moses said, “Ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi.” They claimed a priesthood which did not belong to them, as all men do who intrude into the priesthood in these days. Our Lord Jesus walks in that supreme, solitary majesty which was foreshadowed in Melchisedec — and in that spirit he fulfils a priesthood which renders all other priests a superfluity and a mockery. What have we to do with more sacrifices when the one sacrifice is offered once for all? Brethren, hold fast this precious truth and rejoice in it.

III. Now I conduct you, thirdly, to the fact of ENDLESS INTERCESSION. — “Seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

If I were to read this passage, “Seeing he ever liveth to interpose for them,” it would not be an incorrect reading. The Lord Jesus Christ in his perpetual priesthood lives on purpose to be the advocate, defender, patron, mediator, and interposer for his people. You that come to God by him will highly esteem this constant service rendered to you by your Lord. Whereas Christ by his death provided all that was necessary for your salvation, he, by his life, applies that provision which he made in his death. He lives on purpose to see brought home to you, and enjoyed by you, all those blessed boons and privileges which he purchased upon the tree, when he died in your room and stead. Had he not lived for you, his death for you would have miscarried. He would then have begun the work, and provided all the materials for its completion, but there would have been none to render those materials available, and to complete the building whose foundation had been laid in so costly a manner. We are pardoned by the death of Christ, but we are justified by his resurrection. We are saved because he died; but that salvation is brought home and secured to us because he sitteth at the right hand of God, and continually maketh intercession for us. I want you to-day to think as much of a living Christ as you have ever thought of a dead Christ. You have sat down at the foot of Calvary, your eyes suffused with tears, and you have said, how delightful it is to behold his love written out in crimson characters in yonder streams of blood,

which his very heart pours out for our redemption! I want you now to sit at the foot of his throne, and, as far as your dim eyes will permit, behold his splendor, and see how he spends his glory-life in perpetual intercession for you. He is as much ours on the throne as on the tree. He is ever living to apply to us with his own hands what he purchased by the nailing of those hands and the piercing of his heart upon the cross of our redemption.

Why is it so needful that Jesus ever-living should always be interceding for us? I answer, first, it is most becoming God-ward. The great principle which God would teach to men is this — that sin is so hateful to him that the sinner can only approach his justice through a Mediator. This truth is most clearly set forth in the fact that even now that we are washed in the blood of the Lamb, there is no approach unto God except through the intercession of Christ. Does not this teach the grand principle of the evil of sin, and teach it in the plainest manner? The distance which sin puts between the sinner and God, and the necessity of mediation in order that a just God may commune with the imperfect — are not these fully taught by the institution of the perpetual intercession of the Son of God? This is as much a declaration of the righteousness of God as was the substitutionary death on Calvary.

Moreover, the intercession of Christ is needful God-ward to illustrate the union, co-operation, and inter-communion of the divine Trinity in the work of our salvation. The Son of God intercedes in heaven, and the Holy Spirit intercedes on earth. If Jesus intercedes, it is of necessity that the Father be there with whom he may intercede. The Son pleads and the Father hears and answers, and in consequence conveys to us by the Holy Ghost the blessings purchased by his Son. Thus, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are brought before our minds as all concurring in the believer's salvation. A mediator who is not only man, but also one person of the blessed Trinity, continues to intercede for us, and thus we see how God remembers us.

Once again, our own communion with God is openly declared, while there sits on the throne of God a man who is also God, pleading with the Godhead. Man is always standing in glory in connection with God. The perpetual intercession of Christ is a perpetual recognition of the communion which now exists between God and once fallen, but now restored, manhood. We ought to look upon Christ pleading in glory as the sign, token, and evidence, that man is reconciled to God, that man speaks with God, that God speaks with man, and that once again the old dominion

is restored to man; for we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor.

The perpetual intercession is necessary God-ward. But it is even more necessary man-ward. Think, brethren and sisters, though we have been forgiven through the precious blood, yet we in many things offend, and therefore we need every day a fresh application of the blood of sprinkling. Conscience accuses us for daily flaws and faults, and it is therefore well for us that it is written, "He maketh intercession for the transgressors." Where would our hope be of continual preservation from the weaknesses and sins of our nature did not Jesus constantly plead for us? The way is rough, the world is sinful, our wanderings are many, our wants are incessant, and therefore we need the eternal intercession. We are never out of danger, and therefore always need the guardian prayer; we are never above weakness and folly, and therefore require the perpetual patronage of our protector. What man is there among you that is not full of wants? What woman is there among you that does not need to come to the mercy-seat many times a day? Jesus is always there, waiting to present our petitions; ever making our persons, our petitions, and our praise acceptable with God. Brethren, we are daily pressed, either with conflict with inbred sin or suffering in the body, with service of our Lord or sympathy for our brethren; and for all these we need help out of the holy place, help which can only come by way of the throne of the heavenly grace. We need an interposer, at whose feet we may lay down our burdens, into whose ears we may tell our sorrows: therefore Jesus ever liveth to make intercession for us.

Our great Intercessor also obtains for us those precious gifts and graces which are needful for our growth and usefulness. His is the hand which leads us onward to those attainments of the spiritual life which are needful for our serviceableness in this world, and for our meetness for the life to come. The higher virtues would be beyond our reach if his prayers did not bring us more and more of the Spirit of God to make us perfect in every good work to do his will.

Have you forgotten also that there is an enemy who is always alive and always full of malice? He acts as the accuser of the brethren, who accuseth them day and night before God; and were it not for our glorious Advocate, who for Zion's sake doth never hold his peace, what would become of us? This accuser is also a tempter, who subtly contrives plots for our overthrow. It is at times true of us as it was of Peter — "Simon, Simon,

Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee.” How often are we hidden from evil by the prayers of Jesus! We do not know, my brethren, how many poisoned arrows are caught upon the shield of our Lord’s intercession. The intercession of Christ as with ten thousand hands is always scattering benedictions. Job asks, “Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea?” Surely our Lord’s intercession is the source of an ocean of blessedness. If we had but eyes enlightened of the Holy Ghost we should see the mountain full of horses of fire, and chariots of fire round about the people of God. Who guides those horses? who directs those chariots? who is the captain of the hosts of spirits that encompass the camp of God? Who, but the Prince Immanuel, who by his all-powerful intercession ruleth all things for us.

The Lord Jesus by his unceasing pleas keeps all the powers of darkness in check, and moves all the powers of light for our rescue. His prayers form an atmosphere of blessing in which we live and move. We do not know, we cannot begin to calculate, the depths of our obligation to the ceaseless care of our unwearied Intercessor. Even when time shall be no more, and all the saints shall be saved, their continuance in bliss will be due to his endless intercession.

Think of it — Jesus always praying, never ceasing! His very appearance in heaven is a plea. The memory of his finished work is a plea. His constant thought of us is a pleading with God. Not with tears and cries will he pray, as he did in the days of his flesh; nor perhaps even with words will he plead; for his spirit speaks to the spirit of God without such vocal instrumentality as creatures require. This much we know, he is always praying, always prevailing, and consequently always showering down upon us blessings beyond all count, the most of which we scarcely recognize; and yet if they were withheld we should perish miserably. Lord Jesus, thy dying blood is well matched by thy living plea, and our hearts rejoice in this because of these two sure proofs of thy love and grace.

IV. That brings me to my fourth point, which is — For this cause, therefore, there is ENDLESS SALVATION in the power of Jesus. “He is able to save without end, or to the uttermost, them that come unto God by him.” That word “uttermost” includes within it a reference to time. Because our Lord Jesus never dies, he is endlessly able to save. At all times his power to save remains. He was able to save some of you forty years ago, but you would not come to him that you might have life: he is able to

save you now though you have passed your fourscore years in impenitence. If you come unto God by him, he will save you however multiplied your sins. Beloved, many years ago, as boys and girls, some of us put our trust in the Redeemer, and he forgave us our trespasses. Happy day! Happy day! We are much further advanced in life at this time, and our strength grows less as the shadows lengthen; but Jesus is evermore the same, and is still able to save to the full. No diminution has taken place as to his ability to save. He that helped us in the seven struggles of our youth, and the seventy burdens of our manhood, will help us to seventy times seven, if need be. We need not fear old age or death, seeing he always has the dew of his youth, and is always our friend, laying out his life for us, even as once he laid it down for us.

He is abundantly able to save: from the uttermost of evil to the uttermost of good he can save us. As he ever lives in the fullness of life, so he can save to the fullness of salvation. His name is Jesus — the Savior, and as Jesus, the Savior, he lives. He has not renounced his office, nor allowed any part of his life to run to another purpose: he lives to save.

The Lord Jesus Christ is now, “seeing he ever liveth,” able to save to the uttermost in point of our sin. Whatever the sin of any one here may be, if he come to God by Jesus Christ, it shall be forgiven him. God forbid I should try to make a list of human crimes; what purpose would it serve? The reading of the details of vice is very defiling: I will not therefore attempt a catalogue of crimes into which mortals sink. Sorry scoundrels come here at times; there may be dreadful characters at this moment mingled with this vast congregation, and truly I am not sorry that they are hearing the gospel: but whoever you may be, the text draws a circle of hope around you, as it says — “He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.” Whatever your offense, if you will now come to God, and confess it, and ask mercy through the name of Jesus, he is able to save you to the extreme limit of your need. If you have gone as far in sin as is possible, and are forced to own that if you could have gone farther you would have done so, yet there is forgiveness. O my hearer, though your hand were even red with murder, yet the blood of Christ could wash it clean. “All manner of sin and of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.” Yes, let the silver trumpet sound it out! Ye chief of sinners, hear the news! The Savior lives that to the uttermost he may save such as you. Come, then, to your living Lord, ye that groan under the load of deadly guilt, for he can take it all away.

So, too, he saves to the uttermost of our need and misery. One old divine says if we were to climb a great hill from which we could see wide fields of spiritual distress and poverty, and if all this represented our experience, yet the Lord is able to spread salvation all round the far-off horizon, and encompass all our wants. Come, poor trembler, climb the mountain, and look far over this terrible wilderness. As far as ever thou canst see, or foresee, of dreaded need in years to come, so far and much further can the salvation of Jesus reach. As far as with the telescope of apprehension thou canst spy out trials in life and woes in death, so far is Jesus able to save thee. The uttermost will never be reached by thee, but it has long ago been provided for by him. All thy capacious emptiness can ever need to fill it, he has provided. Though thy heart should like a horse-leech cry, "Give, give," Jesus can satisfy its hunger. Though like the sea that swallows up a navy and is not full, thy soul should never cease its cravings, yet Jesus can content thee. All that thou canst require he can surely give thee, since he ever liveth by the power of an endless life to be the fullness of every emptied soul.

Jesus can save you to the uttermost of your desires. I want you to think of all you would like to be in righteousness and true holiness; for all that will Jesus do unto you ere he has done with you. I asked a young convert the other day "Are you perfect yet?" "Oh dear, sir," she said, "No." I asked, "Would you not like to be?" Her eyes twinkled, as well they might, and she said, "That is what I long for." It will be heaven to be perfect. Jesus is able to make us perfect, and he has resolved to do it; as it is written, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." In that likeness he will cause us to awake if we come unto God through him. Jesus will save us to the highest degree.

The Lord Jesus Christ will also save us entirely: he will work out the salvation of the whole man, body, soul, and spirit. He ever lives to save his people to the utmost, that is to say, all his people, and all of every one of his people. Nothing essential to manhood shall be left to perish in the case of those whom he redeems. All that which the first Adam ruined the second Adam shall restore. The Canaan of manhood from Dan to Beersheba shall be conquered by our Joshua. As yet the body is dead because of sin, though the spirit is life because of righteousness; but the day comes when the body also shall be delivered from the bondage which sin has brought upon it. Not a bone, nor a piece of a bone, of a redeemed one shall be left in the hands of the enemy. God's deliverances are always complete. When

the Lord sent his angel to bring Peter out of prison, he said to the slumbering apostle, "Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me." That garment might be only a fisherman's cloak, but it must not be left in Herod's hands. He said also, "Bind on thy sandals;" for when the angel of the Lord sets a man free, he will not leave even a pair of old shoes behind him. The redemption of Christ is perfect: it reaches to the uttermost. He seems to say to sin, and Satan, and death, as the Lord said to Pharaoh: "Not a hoof shall be left behind." All that he hath redeemed by price he will also redeem by power, and to that end he makes ceaseless intercession before God.

"To the uttermost," from all our doubts and fears, and follies, and failures, Jesus will bring us by his endless intercession. "To the uttermost," from every consequence of the fall, and personal sin, and actual death, Jesus by his intercession will save us. "To the uttermost." Oh, think of it! To the resurrection life, to clearance at the judgment seat, and to the highest glories of heaven, and to boundless bliss throughout the ages he will save us. Right on while thou endurest, O eternity, the pleading of the High Priest shall save the chosen company, who for ever rising into something higher and yet higher, shall prove more and more the heights and depths of everlasting bliss! Because he lives we shall live also, and because he ever intercedes we shall for ever be glorified.

There I leave my subject, only coming back to the one enquiry, Do you come unto God by Jesus Christ? If so, the text speaks comfortably to you. It speaks not only of the church as a whole, but also of each individual believer: Jesus intercedes for each one of those who "come unto God by him." You, dear friend, though unknown to fame are known to Jesus. You, dear sister, hidden away in obscurity, are not hidden from the all-seeing eye of the divine Mediator. His breastplate bears your name, yea, he has graven it upon the palms of his hands, and he will never forget those whose memorials are thus perpetually with him. May the living blessing of the ever-living Savior be with you to-day and for ever! Amen.