

GOOD CHEER FOR CHRISTMAS

NO. 846

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things,
a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well-refined.”
Isaiah 25:6.*

WE have nearly arrived at the great merry-making season of the year. On Christmas Day we shall find all the world in England enjoying themselves with all the good cheer which they can afford. Servants of God, you who have the largest share in the Person of Him who was born at Bethlehem, I invite you to the best of all Christmas fare—to nobler food than makes the table groan; bread from Heaven, food for your spirit! Behold how rich and how abundant are the provisions which God has made for the high festival which He would have His servants keep, not now and then, but all the days of their lives! God, in the verse before us, has been pleased to describe the provisions of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Although many other interpretations have been suggested for this verse, they are all stale and utterly unworthy of such expressions as those before us. When we behold the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed—when we see Him offered up upon the chosen mountain, we then discover a fullness of meaning in these gracious words of sacred hospitality, “The Lord shall make a feast of fat things, of fat things full of marrow.”

Our Lord Himself was very fond of describing His Gospel under the same image as that which is here employed. He spoke of the marriage supper of the king, who said, “My oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready.” And it did not seem as if He could even complete the beauty of the parable of the prodigal son without the killing of the fat calf, and feasting, and music, and dancing! As a festival on earth is looked forward to, and looked back upon as an oasis, and a desert of time, so the Gospel of Jesus Christ is to the soul its sweet release from bondage and distress—its mirth and joy! Upon this subject we intend to speak this morning, hoping to be helped by the great Master of the feast. Our first head will be *the feast*; the second will be the *banqueting hall in this mountain*; the third will be *the Host*—“The Lord shall make a feast”; and the fourth head shall be *the guests*—He shall make it “unto all people.”

I. First, then, we have to consider THE FEAST. It is described as consisting of provisions of the best, no, of the best of the best! They are fat things, but they are also fat things full of marrow; wines are provided of the most delicious and invigorating kind, wines on the lees, which retain their aroma, their strength, and their flavor—but these are most ancient and rare, having been so long kept that they have become well-refined; by long standing they have purified and clarified themselves, and brought themselves to the highest degree of brightness and excellence. The best of the best God has provided in the Gospel for the sons of men!

Let us attentively survey the blessings of the Gospel, and observe that they are fat things, and fat things full of marrow. One of the first Gospel blessings is that of complete Justification. A sinner, though guilty in himself, no sooner believes in Jesus than all his sins are pardoned! The Righteousness of Christ becomes *his* Righteousness, and he is accepted in the Beloved. Now, this is a delicious dish indeed! Here is something for the soul to feed upon; to think that I, though a deeply guilty sinner, am absolved of God, and set free from the bondage of the Law; to think that I, though once an heir of wrath, am now as accepted before God as Adam was when he walked in the Garden without a sin; no, *more*

accepted still, for the Divine righteousness of Christ belongs to me, and I stand complete in Him—beloved in the Beloved—and accepted in Him, too!

Beloved, this is such a precious Truth of God, that when the soul feeds on it, it experiences a quiet peace, a deep and heavenly calm to be found nowhere on earth. This is a kind of honey which never sours, to be assured by the Word of God, and by the witness of the Holy Spirit within you, that you are reconciled and brought near by the blood, and the Righteousness of Jesus Christ. This is a choice mercy! This is a fat thing indeed, but this is not all, it is a fat thing full of marrow. There is an inner lusciousness in it when you reach the heart and soul of the matter, transcendent in richness; remember that this Righteousness, this acceptance, this *Justification* becomes ours in a perfectly legal way—one against which Satan himself cannot raise an objection, for our Substitute has paid our debt, therefore we are righteously discharged. Christ has fulfilled the Law and made it honorable for us, therefore are we justly accepted in the Beloved. Here is marrow indeed, when we perceive the truth and reality of the Substitution of Jesus, and grasp with heart and soul the fact of our great Surety standing in our place at the bar of Justice, that we might stand in His place—in the place of honor and love! What bliss it is to cry with the Apostle, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ who died, yes, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” Come here, all you whose spiritual tastes are purified by Divine Grace, and feed upon this choice provision which shall be sweet to your taste, sweeter than honey and the honeycomb!

Meditate upon a second blessing of the Covenant of Grace, namely, that of *Adoption*. It is plainly revealed to us that as many as have believed in Christ Jesus unto the Salvation of their souls, they are the sons of God. “Beloved, now we are the sons of God.” Here indeed, is a fat thing! What? Shall a worm of the dust become a child of God; a rebel be adopted into the heavenly family; a condemned criminal not only forgiven, but actually made a *child of God*? Wonder of wonders! “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God!” “To which of the kings and princes of this earth did He ever say, You are My Son”? He has not spoken thus to the great ones, and to the mighty, but God has chosen the base things of this world, and things that are despised, yes, and things that are not, and made these to be of the seed royal! The wise and prudent are passed over, but babes receive the Revelation of His Love. Lord, why me? What am I, and what is my father’s house that you should speak of making *me* Your child? This gloriously fat thing is also “full of marrow”; there is an inner richness in Adoption for, “if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.”

Well does the Apostle remind us that if children, then heirs, for we are thus assured of our blessed heritage. “All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours. And you are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.” “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not, with Him, also freely give us all things?” Here are royal dainties of which the Word has said most truly, “They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Your house.” Passing on from the blessing of Adoption, let us remember that every child of God is the object of Eternal Love without beginning, and without end; this is one of the fat things full of marrow. Is it so, that I, a believer in Jesus, unworthy as I am, am the object of the *Eternal* Love of God? What transport lies in that thought! Long before the Lord began to create the world, He had thought of *me*; long before Adam fell, or Christ was born, and the angels sung their first choral over Bethlehem’s miracle, the eyes and the heart of God were towards His Elect people! He never *began* to love them—they were always “a people near unto Him.”

Is it not so written, “I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore, with loving kindness have I drawn you”? Some kick at the Doctrine of Election, but they are ill advised since they labor to overturn one of the noblest dishes of the feast. They would dam up one of the coolest streams that flow from Lebanon; they would cover over with rubbish one of the richest veins of golden ore that make the people of God rich! This Doctrine of a Love that has no commencement is the best wine of our Beloved, and

“that goes down sweetly, causing the lips of them who are asleep to speak.” How joyously does the heart exult and leap for very joy when this Truth of God is brought home by the witness of the Spirit of God; then the soul is satisfied with favor, and full with the blessing of the Lord! Equally delightful is the corresponding reflection that this Love which had no beginning shall have no end, for He is a God who changes not. “The gifts and Calling of God are without repentance.” When He has once set His heart of Love upon a man, He never turns away from doing him good; He says by the mouth of His servant the Prophet, that He hates putting away; though we sin against Him often, and provoke Him to jealousy, yet as the waters of Noah, so is His Covenant to us, for as the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth, so He swears that He will not be angry with us nor rebuke us. “The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the Covenant of My peace be removed, says the Lord that has mercy on you.” “I am the Lord, I change not, therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed.” “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, they may forget, yet will I not forget you. Behold, I have engraved you upon the palms of My hands; your walls are continually before Me.”

Why, Beloved, this indeed, is a fat thing! And I may add that it is full of marrow when you remember that not merely has the Lord *thought* of you from everlasting, but *loved* you. Oh, the depth of that word, “Love,” as it applies to the Infinite Jehovah, whose name, whose Essence, whose Nature is Love! He has loved you with all the Immutable intensity of His heart—never more and never less—loved you so much that He gave His only-begotten Son for you. He has loved you so well, that nothing could content Him but making you to be conformed into the Image of His dear Son, and causing you to partake of His Glory that you may be with Him where He is! Come, feed on this, you heirs of Eternal Life, for here are fat things full of marrow.

We would not, Beloved, have completed this list if we had omitted one precious Doctrine which needs a refined taste perhaps, but which when a man has once learned to feed on it, seems to him to be best of all—I mean the great Truth of *union* to Christ. We are plainly taught in the Word of God that as many as have believed are *one with Christ*—they are married to Him, there is a conjugal union based upon mutual affection. The union is closer still, for there is a vital union between Christ and His saints; they are in Him as the branches are in the vine; they are members of the body of which He is the Head; they are one with Jesus in such a true and real sense, that with Him they died, with Him they have been buried, with Him they are risen, with Him they are raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places. There is an indissoluble union between Christ and all His people: “I in them, and they in Me.” Thus the union may be described—Christ is in His people the hope of Glory, and they are dead, and their life is hid with Christ in God. This is a union of the most wonderful kind, which figures may faintly set forth, but which it were impossible for language completely to explain! Oneness to Jesus is one of the fat things full of marrow, for if it is so indeed, that we are one with Christ—then because He lives we must live also; because He was punished for sin, we also have borne the Wrath of God in Him; because He was Justified by His Resurrection, we also are Justified in Him; because He is rewarded and forever sits down at His Father’s right hand, we also have obtained the inheritance in Him—and by faith grasp it now, and enjoy its earnest.

Oh, can it be that this aching head already has a right to a celestial crown, that this palpitating heart has a claim to the rest which remains for the people of God, that these weary feet have a title to tread the sacred halls of the New Jerusalem? It is so, for if we are one with Christ, then all He has belongs to us, and it is but a matter of time, and of gracious arrangement when we shall come into the full enjoyment! Truly, in meditation upon this topic, we may, each of us, exclaim, “My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.” I cannot bring forth all the courses of my Lord’s banquet; one serving man cannot bear before you the riches of such a surpassing feast! But I would remind you of one more, and that is the Doctrine of Resurrection, and Everlasting Life. This poor world dimly guessed at the Immortality of the soul, but it knew nothing of the resurrection of the body—the Gospel of Jesus has brought Life and Immortality to light, and Jesus Himself has declared to

us that he who believes in Him shall never die. “He who believes in Me, though he were dead, yet should he live.”

Jesus *is* the Resurrection and the Life! Not the soul only, but the *body* also shall partake of Immortality, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed! We expect to die, but we are assured of living again. If the Lord comes not, we know that our bodies shall see corruption, but here is our comfort—we dread no annihilation, that dark shadow never crosses our spirits! We dread no Hell, no “purgatory,” no judgment—Christ has perfected forever them who are set apart, none can condemn whom He absolves. The saints shall judge the angels, and sit with their Lord in the day of the great assize! To us the coming of Christ will be a day of joy, and of rejoicing; we shall be caught up together with Him; His reign shall be our reign, His Glory our glory! Comfort one another with these words, and as you see your Brothers and Sisters departing one by one from among you, sorrow not as those who are without hope, but say unto each other, “They are not lost, but they have gone before us,” for, “blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.” Here are fat things full of marrow, for ours is a glorious hope, and full of Immortality!

Our expected Immortality is not that of mere existence; it is not the barren privilege of life without bliss, existence without happiness—it is full of glory! “We shall be like He when we shall see Him as He is.” We shall be with *God*, at whose right hand there is fullness of joy, and pleasures forevermore! He shall make us to drink of the river of His pleasures; songs and everlasting joy shall be upon our heads, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away!—

*“Oh, for the no more weeping,
Within that land of Love!
The endless joy of keeping
The bridal feast above!
Oh, for the hour of seeing
My Savior face to face!
The hope of ever being
In that sweet meeting place.”*

Thus I have set before you a few of the fat things full of marrow which the King of kings has set before His guests at the wedding feast of His Love.

Changing the run of the thought, and yet really keeping to the same subject, let me now bring before you the goblets of wine; “wines on the lees, wines on the lees well-refined.” These we shall consider as symbolizing the joys of the Gospel. What are these? I can only speak of those which I have myself been permitted to sip. One of the dearest joys of the Christian life is a sense of perfect peace with God. Oh, I tell you when one is quiet for a while, and the din and noise of business is out of one’s ears, it is one of the most delicious things in all the world to meditate upon God and to feel He is no enemy to me, and I am no enemy to Him! It is beyond comparison to feel I love Him; if there is anything that I can do to serve Him, I will do it; if there is any suffering which would honor Him, if He would give me the strength to endure it, it should be my happiness though it caused me to die a martyr’s death a thousand times! If I could but honor my God, my Father and my Friend, all should be acceptable to me; there is nothing between the Lord and me by way of difference or alienation. I am brought near through the blood of His dear and only-begotten Son; He is my God, my Father, and my All. And I am His child!

Some of us have tried the imaginary happiness of laughter—we have mixed with the giddy throng, and tasted the wines of the house of carnal merriment—but our honest experience is that one single draught from the cup of *Salvation* is worth rivers of worldly mirth—

*“Solid joys and lasting pleasures
Only Zion’s children know!”*

A quiet heart, resting in the Love of God, dwelling in perfect peace, has a royalty about it which cannot for a moment be matched by the fleeting joys of this world! Our joy sometimes flashes with a brighter light, but even then it is not less pure and safe. You may look upon this wine when it is red, when it

sparkles in the cup, when it moves itself aright, for there is no woe, no redness of the eyes reserved for those who drink even to inebriation of this sacred wine! This sacred exhilaration is caused by a sense of *security*. A child of God, when he has looked well to his Redeemer, and seen the merit of the precious blood, and the power of the never-ceasing plea, feels himself safe, perfectly safe. I do not understand the child of God reading his Bible, and yet being afraid of being cast into Hell; I can understand that the fear may cross his mind lest after all, he should prove a castaway, but as he approaches once again to the foot of the Cross, and looks up to Jesus, he feels that it cannot be. None were ever cast away who stood at the foot of the Cross! It is written, "Him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out." A child of God, with no hope but what he finds in Christ, has no cause to think his eternal state to be insecure! All are safe who are in Christ, even as all were safe who were in Noah's Ark. No flood, no storm could hurt the man of whom it was said, "The Lord shut him in."

The Lord has shut in all His people in Christ, and they are eternally safe in Christ; when the spirit knows that, "there is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus," then is it replenished with delight! When one feels that live or die, work or suffer, all is well, how free from care is the heart; how Divinely joyful to know that if one should lose all his earthly substance, the Lord will provide; that if one should be tempted, tempted greatly, yet with the temptation the way of escape shall be made. Here is assurance rich with consolation! When one feels that all is safe, all safe *eternally*, for life or death all secured, I tell you that this is wine on the lees, wine on the lees well-refined—and he who wins a draught need not envy the angels their celestial banquets! This joy of ours will sometimes rise to an elevation yet more sublime when it is caused by communion with God. Believers, while engaged in prayer and praise, in service and in suffering, are enabled by the Holy Spirit to hold high converse with their Lord. Do not imagine that Abraham's speech with God was an unusual privilege; the father of the faithful did but enjoy what all the faithful ones participate in according to the Divine Grace given them. We tell God our grief, discoursing upon our sorrows not in fiction, but declaring them in real conversation as when a man speaks with his neighbor, and meanwhile the Lord's Spirit whispers to us with the still small voice of the Promise such words as calm our minds, and guide our feet.

Yes, and when our Beloved takes us into the banqueting house of real conscious fellowship with Himself, and waves the love-banner over us, our holy joy is as much superior to all merely human mirth, as the heavens are above the earth! Then do we speak and sing with sacred zest, and feel as if we could weep for very joy of heart, for our Beloved is ours, and we are His! His left hand is under our head, and His right hand does embrace us, and our only fear is lest anything should grieve our Beloved, and cause Him to withdraw Himself from us—for it is Heaven on earth, and the fair foretaste of Heaven above to see His face, to taste His Love. Communion with Christ is as the wine on the lees well-refined. We will place on the table one more goblet of which you may drink as much as you will. We have provided for us the pleasures of hope—a hope most sure and steadfast, most bright and glorious, the hope that what we know today shall be outdone by what we shall know tomorrow; the hope that by-and-by what we now see, as in a glass darkly, shall be seen face to face. We shall say, in Heaven, as the Queen of Sheba did in Jerusalem, "The half has not been told us." We are looking forward to a speedy day when we shall be unburdened of this creaking tabernacle, and being absent from the body shall be present with the Lord!

Our hope of future bliss is elevated and confident. Oh, the Vision of His face! Oh, the sight of Jesus in His exaltation! Oh, the kiss of His lips—the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant," from that dear mouth, and then forever to lie in His bosom! Begone, you cares! Begone, you sorrows! If Heaven is so near, you shall not molest us; the inn may be a rough and poverty-stricken one, but we are only *travelers*, not tenants upon lease! This is not our place of resting! We are on our journey Home! Beloved, in the prospect of the quiet resting places in the land which flows with milk and honey, you have wines on the lees well-refined! If we were not limited to time this morning, as, alas, we are, I would have reminded you that these joys of the Believer are ancient in their origin, for that is shown in the text. Old wines are intended by "wines well-refined." They have stood long on the lees, have drawn

out all the virtue from them, and have been cleared of all the coarser material. In the East, wine will be improved by keeping even more than the wines of the West, and even so the Mercies of God are the sweeter to our meditations because of their antiquity. From old eternity, before ever the earth was, the Covenant engagements of Everlasting Love have been resting like wines on the lees, and today they bring to us the utmost riches of all the attributes of God!

I would also have reminded you of the fatness of their *excellence*, because the wine on the lees holds its flavor, and retains its aroma, and there is a fullness and richness about the blessings of Divine Grace which endears them to our hearts. The joys of Grace are not fantastical emotions, or transient flashes of a meteoric excitement—they are based on substantial Truths of God, they are reasonable, fit, and proper. They belong not to the superficial and frothy emotions of mere feeling, but are deep, solemn, earnest emotions justified by the clearest judgment. Our bliss is not of the foam and the surge—it dwells in the innermost caverns of our heart. I would also remind you of their refined nature. No sin is mingled with the joys of the Gospel and the delights of communion—they are well-refined! Gospel joys are elevating—they make men like angels! As *in* the Gospel, God comes down to men, so *by* the Gospel men go up to God! I might also have shown you how absolutely peerless are the provisions of Divine Grace; there is no feast like that of the Gospel, no meat like the flesh of Jesus, no drink like His blood, no joys like that which crowns the Gospel Feast!

II. I can say no more. The table is before you, and now we must pass on with great brevity to notice THE BANQUETING HALL. “*In this mountain*”; there is a reference here to three things, the same symbol bearing three interpretations. First *literally*, the mountain upon which Jerusalem is built. I do not doubt that the reference is here to the hill of the Lord upon which Jerusalem stood; the great transaction which was fulfilled at Jerusalem upon Calvary has made to all nations a great feast; it was there where that center Cross bore upon it One who joined Earth and Heaven in mysterious union; it was there where amidst thick darkness the Son of God was made a curse for men; it was there where sorrow culminated, and joy was consummated. It was there on that very mountain where Jews and Gentiles met together, and with clamorous wrath cried, “Let Him be crucified!” It was there in the giving up of the Only-Begotten, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed, that the Lord made a feast of things. Everything I have spoken of this morning is found in Christ! *He* is the Resurrection, and the Life—in Him we are Justified, Adopted, and made secure; every drop of joy we drink streams from His flowing veins.

A second meaning is *the Church*. Frequently Jerusalem is used as the symbol of the Church of God, and it is within the pale of the Church that the great feast of the Lord is made unto all nations. I am, in the truest sense, a very sound churchman; I am, indeed, a *high* churchman—a most determined stickler for the Church; I do not believe in Salvation outside of the pale of the Church; I believe that the Salvation of God is confined to the Church, and to the Church alone. “But,” says one, “what Church?” Yes! That’s the question! God forbid I should mean by that either the Baptist Church, or the Independent Church, or the Episcopalian Church, or the Presbyterian, or any other—I mean the *Church of Jesus Christ*—the company of God’s Chosen, the fellowship of the blood-bought, the family of Believers! Be they where they may, for *them* is provided the feast of fat things; whatever outward and visible Church they may have associated themselves with, they shall drink of the wines on the lees well-refined. But the feast is only to be found where they are found who put their trust in Jesus; there is but one Church in Heaven and Earth, composed of men called by the Holy Spirit, and made to live anew by His quickening Power; and it is through the ministry of *this* Church that an abundant feast is spread for all nations; a feast to which the nations are summoned by chosen herald, whom God calls to proclaim the good news of Salvation by Jesus Christ!

But, Brothers and Sisters, the mountain sometimes means the Church of God exalted to its latter-day glory. This mountain is to be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. This text will have its grandest fulfillment in the day of the appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Then shall the glory of the Gospel be unveiled more clearly than at this present time; men shall have a fuller

perception of the Glory of the Lord, and a deeper enjoyment of His Grace while happiness and peace shall reign with unmolested quiet. Soon shall come the golden age which has been so long foretold, for which we cry with unceasing expectation; the Lord send it speedily, and His be the praise!

III. Thirdly, let us think of *THE HOST of the feast*. “In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things.” Mark well the Truth of God that in the Gospel banquet there is not a single dish brought by *man!* The Lord makes it, and He makes it *all*. I know some would like to bring a little with them to the banquet; something at least by way of trimming and adornment, so that they might have a share of the honor, but it must not be! The Lord of Hosts makes the feast, and He will not even permit the guests to bring their own wedding garments, for they must stop at the door, and put on the robe which the Lord has provided, for Salvation is all Divine Grace from first to last, and all of Him who is wondrous in working, and who does all things according to the counsels of His will. Out of all the precious Truths of God which I spoke of at the beginning of this sermon, there is not one which comes from any source but a Divine one! And of all the joys which I tried feebly to picture, there is not one which takes its rise from earth’s springs—they all flow from the Eternal Fount! The Lord makes the feast, and observe, He does it, too, as Lord of Hosts, as a Sovereign, as a Ruler doing as He wills among the sons of men—preparing what He wills for the good of His creatures, and compelling whom He wills to come to the marriage feast. The Lord provides Sovereignly as Lord of Hosts, and All-Sufficiently as Jehovah.

It needed the All-Sufficiency of God to provide a feast for hungry sinners; no other than the infinite “I AM” could provide a feast substantial enough to supply the needs of immortal spirits, but HE has done it, and you may guess of the value of the provisions by the Nature of our Entertainer. If God spread the feast, it is not to be despised; if the Lord has put forth all the Omnipotence of His Eternal Power and Godhead in preparing the banquet for the multitude of the sons of men, then depend upon it, it is a banquet worthy of Him! It is one to which we may come with confidence, for it must be such a banquet as our souls require, and such as the world never saw before. O my Soul, rejoice in your God and King! If He provides the feast, let Him have all the glory of it. “Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Your name give glory.” O King Immortal, Eternal, Invisible, you fed Your children in the wilderness with manna which dropped from Heaven, and with water that flowed out of the flinty rock, and they gave thanks unto Your name, but now You fill us with *nobler* food! They did eat manna and are dead, but we live on the *Immortal* Bread, even Jesus, and therefore we can never die! They drank of the water which flowed from the rock, and yet they thirsted again, but we shall never thirst, but forever abide near to Yourself, while the Lamb that is in the midst of the Throne shall feed us, and lead us unto Living Fountains of water! Therefore, blessed be Your name, yes, a thousand times blessed be Your name, O Most High! Let all Heaven say, “Amen,” to the praises of our hearts, and let the multitude of Your children here on earth, for whom this feast is spread, laud and magnify, and bless Your name from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same!

IV. Lastly, a word or two upon THE GUESTS. The Lord has made this banquet, “*for all people.*” What a precious word this is, “for all people.” Then this includes not merely the chosen people, the Jews, whose were the oracles, but it encompasses the poor uncircumcised Gentiles who by Jesus are brought near! The barbarian is invited to this feast; the Scythian is not rejected; the polished Greek finds an open door; the hardy Roman shall meet with an equal welcome; Caesar’s household, if they come, shall receive a portion, and so shall the beggar’s kin. Blessed be God for that word, “unto all people,” for it permits missionary enterprise in every land; however degraded a race may be, we have here provision made for it; this feast of fat things is made as much for the Sudra as for the Brahmin; the Gospel is as much to be preached to the degraded Bushman as to the civilized Chinese! Dwell on that word, “*all people,*” and you will see it includes the rich—for there is a feast of fat things for them such as their gold could never buy; and it includes the *poor*, for they, being rich in faith, shall have fellowship with God! “All people.” This takes in the man of enlarged intelligence and extensive knowledge, but it equally encompasses the illiterate man who cannot read.

The Lord makes this feast “for all people”; for you old people, for if you come to Jesus, you shall find that He is suitable for you; for you young men and maidens, and you little children, for if you put your trust

in God's appointed Savior, there shall be much joy and happiness for you; "For all people!" I think if I were now seeking, and had not laid hold on Christ, this word, "all people," would be a great comfort to me because it gives hope to all who desire to come! None have ever been rejected of all who have ever come to Christ and asked for mercy; it is still true, "Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out." Some very odd people have come to Him; some very wicked people, some very hardened people; and the door was never closed in anyone's face. Why should Jesus begin hard dealings with *you*? He cannot, because He cannot change! If He says, "Him who comes to Me I will in no wise cast out," be one of the "hims" that come, and He cannot cast you out! There is another thought, namely that between the covers of the Bible there is no mention made of one person who may *not* come; there is no description given of a person who is forbidden to trust Christ. I should like you to look the Bible through, you who dream that Jesus will reject you, and find where it is said, "Such a one I will reject; such a one I will refuse." When you find such a rejecting clause, then you will have a right to be unbelieving—but till you do, I beseech you do not needlessly torment yourself! Why needlessly sow doubts and fears? There will be enough of them without your making them for yourself; do not limit what the Lord does not limit! I know He has an Elect people; I rejoice in it; I hope you will rejoice in it too, one day; and I know that His people have this marrow and fatness provided for them, and for them, alone—but still, this does not at all conflict with the other precious Truth of God that *whoever believes in the Son of God has Everlasting Life!*

If you believe in Jesus Christ, all these things are yours! Come, poor Trembler, the silver trumpet sounds, and this is the note it rings, "Come and welcome! Come and welcome! Come and welcome!" The harsher trumpet of the Law, which waxed exceedingly loud and long at Sinai had *this* for its note, "Set bounds about the mount; let none touch it lest they die." But the trumpet for Calvary sounds with the opposite note! It is, "Come and welcome! Come and welcome, Sinner, come! Come as you are! Come as sinful as you are, hardened as you are, careless as you think you are, and having no good thing whatever, come to your God in Christ!" O may you come to Him who gave His Son to bleed in the sinner's place—and casting yourself on what Christ has done, may you resolve, "If I perish, I will trust in Him; if I am cast away, I will rely on Him." You shall not perish, but for you there shall be the feast of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well-refined! The Lord bless you very richly, for His name's sake. Amen.

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