

THE UNSPEAKABLE GIFT

NO. 1550

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"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!"
2 Corinthians 9:15.

PAUL had spoken of the liberality of the Corinthian Believers and he had endeavored to stir them up to a prudent preparation for displaying it. "Now, therefore," he said, "perform the doing of it, that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance, also, out of that which you have." He closes his exhortation by this remarkable sentence—"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!"—intending, no doubt, to thereby give expression to his own hearty thankfulness and also to deliver a master stroke of argument for Christian liberality. Nothing can so excite God's people as to give to Him, as the remembrance of what God has given to them. "Freely you have received, freely give," is our Lord's own argument. Gospel Graces are best stimulated by Gospel motives.

It is wrong to appeal to Believers by reasons drawn from the Law of Works, for they are not under it. Children are to be ruled as children, not as oxen. Appeal should be made to renewed hearts by arguments distilled from the Law of love under which they live! Seeing God has loved them with an infinite love, this love has become the most mighty of forces within them—"The love of Christ constrains us." Nothing can move a man to complete consecration to God like the fact that He so loved us that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

The Gospel is founded upon giving and its spirit is giving. Buying and selling are unknown in spiritual things, unless we buy without money and without price. Payment is for the Law. Under the Gospel, everything is a gift. God gives us Jesus, gives us eternal life, gives us Grace and glory, gives us everything, in fact, and then, moved by love to Him, we give ourselves back to Him and to His people. As it is the glory of the sun that he gives light and heat to our world, so is it God's Glory that He gives mercy and peace to the sons of men. And, moreover, as the sun is the author of reflected heat and is all the more valued because his beams can be reflected, so is God glorified by that part of His goodness which we are able to impart to others. God is glorified in the thanksgiving which is excited by the gifts of His people to the poor, as well as by their personal thanksgivings for His own gifts. He gives to us and we thank Him. We give to others and they thank God for the kindness which He has inspired in us. Thus a round of thanksgiving *to God* is created by the spirit of giving which first of all displayed itself in the unspeakable gift of God! We are as cups filled at the spring and from us the thirsty drink and praise the fountain!

Paul had been boasting of the liberality of the Corinthians and he somewhat feared that by their delay he might be made ashamed. He seemed almost alarmed lest he had said too much about their gifts. He could speak upon that subject and say all that should be said, but he felt that he could not describe the liberality of *God*. The gifts of the Corinthians were such as he could speak of, but when he thought of what God had given, he could only cry, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!" You can readily put down in black and white and count up the largest contributions of the most self-sacrificing Believers—but you cannot estimate the gift of God. You cannot estimate the value of God's own dear Son—you could certainly give no expression to any estimate you had formed if it were in the least degree worthy of the subject. The love which is seen in Jesus is indescribable, infinite, unspeakable.

During this meditation I desire to aid you, as the Holy Spirit shall aid me, for in my case the power to speak of this unspeakable gift must, itself, be a gift. I trust it shall be given me in the same hour in which I shall speak. We will first consider that Christ Jesus is the unspeakable gift—but we are not going to be silent because of this—for our second head is Christ Jesus is a gift to be very much spoken of! The unspeakable gift is to be forever spoken of by way of gratitude—"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!"

I. First, then, the eternal Son of God given of God unto men, CHRIST JESUS IS THE UNSPEAKABLE GIFT and He is so in many ways. To begin with, no man can doctrinally lay down the whole meaning of the gift of Christ to men. The Church has produced thoughtful scholars whom it has called, “Divines,” and described as “eminent theologians.” From these teachers we have, no doubt, received much help in the exposition of the Word of God and yet if we put them all together they have never been able to unfold to us the entire meaning of the gift of the Son of God to men! The devout and studious have, themselves, cried out, “O the depths,” but they have not pretended to fathom this abyss of mystery.

Certain teachers have fallen far short of the mark and have done great mischief by their low estimate of the unspeakable gift. What they have said may have been true, but their sin has been one of omission—omission where none should have been possible. They have said far too little about Christ and have seemed to be afraid of extolling Him too highly. In the estimation of such persons, the gift of the Savior has been simply a display of God’s good will to the race and nothing more: Jesus was a Divine Philanthropist and nothing else according to their Gospel. This is to use other balances than those of the sanctuary and to give short weight to the great Householder! It is true that God commended His love to man by the death of His Son and none can say too much upon this point. But there is far more in the gift of Christ than mere goodwill. We are glad that these men admit the Divine Benevolence, but we wish they could see more than that—for that view of our Lord which sees in Him only a display of benevolence to men does but dimly discern His Character and value. Certainly He is “unspeakable” by those who only think of Him after this fashion.

Others have spoken of Christ as a wonderful declaration of God’s opposition to moral evil. The death of Christ has been received by them as a vague expression of Divine Displeasure against sin, of course not dissociating it from His Benevolence towards men. Herein is truth, also, for how shall we ever see the purity of God more fully vindicated than in the exhibition of sin’s result in the mortal agony and death throes of our Divine Lord? Yet, if this is all that any man has to say, he has failed to comprehend the gift of God, for the great Father has done far more for men by the gift of His Son than merely to intimate the kindness of His Nature and the results of moral evil. We admit that in the death of His Son the Lord has declared His love to man and His hatred of sin, but He has done infinitely more—the Cross is not only a school but a hospital—the Crucifixion not only reveals man’s evil, but provides a remedy for it. Christ is not merely a lesson, but a gift—an unspeakable gift.

Some of our brethren dwell very much, perhaps none too much, upon the general aspect of Christ’s death towards all mankind. It is a grand fact that the human race is spared because Jesus died and that it is not only reprieved, but lifted up from degradation and put in a position to hear messages of mercy which, if believed, will bring salvation. The Lord Jesus is described in Scripture as “the Savior of all men, specially of them that believe.” His mission is glad tidings both to Israel and to all people—all of Adam’s seed are affected by His death. They do well who freely proclaim the common salvation—they cannot dwell too much upon its freeness, though I would have them not overlook its fullness and Sovereignty.

We like well to hear of the effect of the Incarnation and the Atonement upon the entire human family as placing it under a Mediator, but we would also hear of the special application of redemption and its actual *results*. No one can say too much of the great Redemption, the matchless Propitiation—yes, though one should speak with the tongues of men and of angels concerning Jesus Christ in His relation to the human family—he need not fear that he would magnify the Lord too loftily. The sinner’s Friend, the mighty Savior, the gracious Pardoner cannot be too much spoken of, for under that aspect He is truly indescribable! We delight, in addition to this, to speak of Christ’s special relationship to His own people and we lay a great emphasis upon the fact of His Substitution in their behalf.

We rejoice to speak of His bearing the sin of many, His being numbered with the transgressors, His being made sin for us, though He knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Our heart expands, our eyes overflow whenever we dilate upon His suretyship and consequent Substitution. His wondrous condescending love in taking our place—His standing in the sinner’s place that we might stand in His place and be accepted in the Beloved—this carries our heart away and we never weary of the theme! O Divine Doctrine! Full of consolation! Teeming with highest hopes! Gladly would we preach forever the sublime Truth of God of the Substitution of our Lord for us!

Yet if this were our one theme we should still fail to express the unspeakable. We are apt to think that when we have laid down this doctrine clearly and distinctly and have admitted all that others have well said, that we have believed and taught all that can be known concerning the gift of Jesus Christ to men. But, Beloved, I am persuaded that it is not so.

Beside the purpose of declaring benevolence and censuring sin, of lifting up the race and of effectually saving the chosen, there is yet *more* to be subserved by the Incarnation and Atonement. The purposes of God are manifold and a wheel is ever within a wheel with Him. I will not, at this time, even *try* to speak doctrinally beyond what I have already attempted, for we must stop somewhere and I will pause here, at the truth of His vicarious suffering—the gift is unspeakable when we have spoken our very best and so let this suffice.

I bid you peer over the brink upon which I would set you. Look down into this abyss of love. Be you sure of this, that this depth is unfathomable! It is idle to attempt a definition of *infinity* and, therefore, vain to hope to declare how wide, how high, how deep, how broad is the wondrous gift of God to the sons of men! Theology can speak on many themes and she has much to say on this, but her voice fails to speak the whole. From the pulpit, when occupied by a gracious man, the confession freely comes that the heralds of the Cross are not able to tell all that is hidden in Christ Jesus! The gift is unspeakable for another reason—no man can ever set forth the manner of this gift. The way and method of the giving are unknown, perhaps unknowable and, therefore, unspeakable.

Just think awhile. Do you understand and could you possibly explain the manner of the Father's giving the Only-Begotten to us? For Jesus Christ is not only the Father's Son, but He is God Himself, one with God! The gift of the Son is virtually God's giving Himself to men! There can be no separation between God the Son and God the Father for, says Christ, "I and My Father are One." "Believe Me," He says, "that I am in the Father and the Father in Me." Do you understand this? Is it not indescribable? Do not, therefore, be drawing hard and fast lines and speaking of Christ as suffering and of the Father as scarcely participating in the Sacrifice, for this may grow into grievous error! It has been laid down by Divines that God is impassable and not capable of any form of suffering. It may be so, but I fail to see Scriptural authority for the statement.

That God can do what He pleases I do believe and therefore He can suffer, too, if He so wills. To me a God who has no feelings is a great deal farther off from me than my Father who is in Heaven, who can be grieved by my sin and can feel for my sorrow. It may be true that Scripture only speaks after the manner of men, but then it is as a *man* that I understand it—and it does seem to me to reveal not only a living God, but a *feeling* God. Is God glorified by being petrified? Read Paul's words to the Ephesian elders when he speaks of "the Church of *God*, which He has purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). The *blood of God*—is not that a mistake? Certainly not, since Inspiration thus speaks. Sometimes expressions which are mistakes in logic may be more accurate descriptions than the best arranged sentences. The expression which looks to be a contradiction may better express the Truth of God than that which is verbally accurate.

Scripture is Infallible and yet it uses none of the red tape of systematic theology. We swim in mysteries when we speak of the Father and the Son. How, then, could God give the Son to die, He being one with Himself—shall any man explain it? Or, if he *could* explain the mystery, can he tell us what it cost the Father to give His Son? Can a mother tell us how it pains her heart to part with her child? Can any father tell us the anguish of losing his only-begotten? What must it be to give up your well-beloved son to be despised and spit upon, maltreated and murdered? No. You do not *know* what it is and, therefore, you cannot tell what it is! You that have been bereaved of your dearest—you know the pang which tears the heart—but you cannot express your loss to others. Your grief is inexpressible. Who shall tell what the Father felt when He did, as it were, cast the Glory of the Well-Beloved to the dogs by sending Him among the wicked husbandmen, who said, "This is the heir, let us kill Him"?

Who shall tell what the Eternal felt when the brightness of His Glory, the express image of His Person, was bound like a felon and accursed like a criminal? When He was mocked as an impostor and scourged as a transgressor, rejected as vile and slain as worthy of death? To see His Well-Beloved hung up like a thief and made to bear infinite agony—what thought the Father of this? True, "it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him. He has put Him to grief," but not without great self-denial on the part of the great Father. All the agony of Abraham, when He unsheathed the knife to slay his son, was but a faint type of what it cost the Father when He gave the Only-Begotten that He might die for us!

A further sense of the unspeakableness of this gift will come over you if you attempt to measure our Lord's sufferings when He was made sin for us. None can declare the greatness of His sacrifice. Think of the Glory of Christ throughout all ages at the right hand of God and remember that all this was laid aside! What a descent from Heaven's majesty to Bethlehem's manger—from the Throne of Jehovah to the breast of Mary! Think of the perfect Nature of Christ's humanity and its consequent rest in God and yet He stooped out of His spirit's peace to endure the contradiction of sinners against

Himself! Think of His infinite perfections and boundless deservings and of the shameful contempt that was poured upon Him! The cruel asp of ingratitude stung Him and the serpent of malice bit Him—and all the while was He Lord of All.

Every step of His way of love is full of wonders! His becoming one with us according to the flesh is a great marvel. Imagine, if you can, of what it must mean that “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” Incarnation is but the first step, but of that first descent of love, who shall declare the mystery? And this was merely the beginning—He became a Man that He might go further and become man’s Substitute. Try, if you can, to conceive of Incarnate God as having sin imputed to Him, transgression laid upon Him! Why, the very idea must have been horror to His perfect spirit! Imagine of Justice with its iron rod, bruising and pounding the innocent Son of God with vicarious griefs borne for us!—

*“Much we talk of Jesus’ love,
But how little is understood!
Of His sufferings, so intense,
Angels have no perfect sense.”*

“Your unknown sufferings,” says the Greek Liturgy and unknown they must forever be. O Jesus, what a price it was that You paid! What griefs they were to which You bowed Yourself till You were covered with a bloody sweat! O Lord Jesus, the brightest spirit before Your Throne who has dwelt with You ever since Your Ascension cannot tell us what You endured! Your groans are an unspeakable gift!

How was it that He died who is the Resurrection and the Life? And how was it He bore sin, even He who is none other than eternal Perfection? None of us can speak here, for He is the unspeakable gift. I ask you to follow me in another line of thought while I still talk upon the unspeakable. None can describe the gifts which have come to us through the gift of Christ. Think of what we have been delivered from—think awhile of what you were by nature and what you would have continued to have been had not Grace interposed—and what you would have become if Jesus had not been given to save the lost. Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, we are fallen already, but the full results of the Fall are not seen on earth. The ripe result of sin is gathered in the dark region where castaways dwell forever, finally banished from hope!

They dwell where the ring of the Sabbath bell is never heard, for they rest not day nor night. They are where the voice of Mercy can never enter, for this doleful knell tolls through that dreary land with awful tone, “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still.” And you and I might have been there, now, and shall be there yet, if Jesus Christ is not ours. Yes, and the brightest saints in Heaven, upon whom the eternal light has risen never to set, would have been now in the outer darkness, weeping and wailing and gnashing their teeth if it had not been for this unspeakable gift! The distance between the unfathomable depth of deserved woe and the unutterable height of infinite Grace and Glory, an angel’s wing cannot measure! Therefore it will always be impossible to tell the height and depth of this unspeakable gift.

But now think, for a while, what are the gifts which we enjoy at this hour. There is, first of all, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His Grace. We are washed, washed in the blood, clothed in the righteousness of the Son of God, adopted into the family of the Eternal and, “if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ”! There comes to us, by way of adoption, all the provision, nurture, education and paternal love which the heavenly Father gives to all the children of His family. Brothers and Sisters, I have not time to mention, one by one, all the Covenant blessings. All things are in the Covenant, whether things present, or things to come, or life, or death—all things are yours and you are Christ’s and Christ is God’s—and all these things come to us through Christ. God spared not His own Son and, in giving Him to us, He has also freely given us all things.

Now, who is he that can speak of such a theme as this, for if he does but dwell upon the blessings which flow to us from Jesus Christ, he must be lost in wonder! Other gifts may amaze us, but this utterly overwhelms us! If the streams are fathomless, who shall find a plummet to measure the fountain? I preached last Lord’s-Day night to a great congregation that had come for many miles and, being faint and thirsty, they emptied many buckets of water which were set for them. Their thirst consumed a great quantity, yet an observer might soon have known how much they drank. But who shall tell what the earth drinks in during a single thunder shower? Who shall measure the floods which roll down the great rivers? Who shall compute the volume of the sea? Yet all these are finite and may be reckoned up in order—our Lord Jesus Christ is Infinite. Of man’s gifts to man we may readily make an estimate, but when you come to the gift of Christ, arithmetic is baffled and even imagination is outstripped.

Other themes we may hope to compass by study and careful speech, but before this we are dumb with astonishment. Boundless Grace, unutterable Mercy, Divine Love—these are heavenly things and tongues of clay can never fully declare them! Furthermore, the gift of God must always be unspeakable because when it is best realized, the effect it produces upon the emotions is so great that speech fails. I would not give much for the man who can at all times fluently talk about the love of God in Christ Jesus. When he feels most his obligations, his heart will check his lips! Utterance belongs not to the deepest emotion. Only believe in your heart that God has given Christ to you, and all that comes with Him, and you will rise from your bended knees weeping for joy! A sense of forgiven sin through the atoning Sacrifice will master you!

When Jesus bares His heart before you, can you speak? I will defy you to play the orator when love holds you beneath its spell! You will have a longing to tell the story, but an incapacity to fulfill your desire. Some feelings are too big for expression. The griefs that prattle are but small—great griefs are silent. Mercies which make us talk are common and no longer wondered at, but those which come with an unveiled Divinity about them are like Moses, too bright to look upon! A sense of Covenant Love binds a man to his place and makes him sit down like David before the Lord and bow his head and cry, “Why this to *me*? Is this according to the manner of man, O Lord God?” Yes, the gift must be unspeakable because the more it is appreciated the more are we silenced—the deeper our sense of its value the less is our power to impart it to others.

Power to speak of the love of Christ is not always to be taken as an evidence of true religion, nor is its absence a matter for alarm. I remember one dear lover of Christ who wished to join a certain Church but her testimony of experience was very slender. Indeed, she said too little to satisfy the Brothers who came to speak with her and they told her so. When, bursting through all bonds she finally cried out, “I cannot speak for Him, but I could die for Him.” Many are in the same plight and, in a measure, all true souls lie under the same difficulty. We could more easily die for Christ than hope to explain fully our sense of His dear love. He is a gift unspeakable! Heaven cannot match Him—how can earth describe Him? When this gift is best expressed, even when the Spirit of God helps men to speak upon it, they yet feel it to be unspeakable. When men sing like poets, or write like Apostles, they acknowledge that the wing of their thought cannot soar to the full height of this grand mystery—they have not even expressed what they have felt and they have not felt what they inwardly know they ought to have felt in connection with so Divine a theme.

He who before his fellow men has given the most vivid description of the love of God in Christ Jesus is the very man who best knows that it is inexpressible. You shall not be able to soar among the mysteries and bask in the eternal light of Jehovah’s face and then come back and say, “I can declare it all to you.” No, Paul said that, “he heard things which it were not lawful for a man to utter.” Joys revealed in the innermost place of holy fellowship are not to be commonly published—we would mar them in the attempt at their utterance. You can often feel what you cannot possibly describe to those who most eagerly listen to you. Often my preaching of the love of Christ is, to my own mind, when I have done, as sad a failure as if I had gilded gold or enameled the lily.

I was one day in the ruins of Nero’s palace and he who guided us there had a series of rods fitted in telescopic manner into one another. On the top of these was a candle and he held it high up to let us read the inscriptions on the arch of the overhead vault. We can do that with mortal things and so make men see them, but when we have done our best to describe the love of Christ, we have felt as though we had held aloft those silly rods with a farthing candle upon them to show the sun at noontime! God is very gracious to let His dear Son be seen at all through such poor narrow windows as we are. Poor, poor work is our best preaching concerning the adorable Lord Jesus! But this is one thing we can say with respect to Him from our very hearts—He has filled us to the fullest and satisfied us.

They said of Alexander that he had an ambition so vast that if his body had been as large as his soul, he would have stood with one foot on the sea and the other on the shore and would have grasped the east with his right hand and the west with his left. If our souls were thus boundless in desire, Christ’s love could fill them! Nothing else contents a man, but with Jesus we are satisfied. Though a man were, like Solomon, to get to himself all the wisdom and the riches of the world, “Vanity of vanities” would be his verdict. But he who wins Christ and has Christ’s love shed abroad in his heart has no vacant corner in his heart, no vacuum within his soul—Christ has filled him to running over. We can say, “filled with all the fullness of God,” but as to *containing* the fullness of God, he that has the most of it knows how impossible a thing it is!

You may frame the fairest picture that man ever painted, but you cannot frame the Alps. Though his daring pencil should cover many a yard, you may hang up the master's canvas upon your walls, but when you stand upon the mountain's brow and look over hill and vale and sea and shore, you dream not of frames and picture galleries, but leave the panorama in its own setting, or it cannot be encompassed by human invention. You may take the population of a city, a kingdom, or, if necessary, of the world and make a census thereof and set down the millions—but who shall take a census of the birds of Heaven, the insects which swarm the air, the fish which teem the sea, the stars which stud the sky and the sands which bound the main? All these things are countable by some sort of reckoning, but the love of Christ is Infinite! “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.” Thus have we dealt with the unspeakable. And we now feel, even more truly than when we began, that language fails us.

II. Let me have all your hearts for a few minutes while I now dwell on the other Truth of God, that CHRIST IS A GIFT OF GOD TO BE VERY MUCH SPOKEN OF. To be spoken of, first, by thanks to God. “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.” Brothers and Sisters, we do not thank as we ought for anything. We are not half as thankful as we ought to be. Luther was known to tell a story of two cardinals who were riding to the council of Constance. One of them stopped because he saw a shepherd sitting down in the meadow weeping. Dismounting, he tried to comfort him and asked him why he wept. The poor man was slow to answer, but being pressed he said, “Looking upon this toad I wept because I have never thanked God as I ought for making me a man possessed of reason and of excellent form and not a loathsome toad.”

The cardinal was amazed as he saw the piety of the peasant and as he went away he exclaimed, “O St. Augustine! How truly did you say the unlearned rise and take Heaven by force and we, with all our learning, rise not above flesh and blood.” Might not some of us faint under a like sense of ingratitude? Did you ever bless God for your creation, your reason, your continued life? I have known what it is to thank God with all my heart for being able to move my limbs and turn in bed. Perhaps you have always enjoyed good health—do you thank Him for that? To be out of the hospital, to be out of the lunatic asylum, to be out of prison, to be out of Hell—do we ever glorify God for these things? As for the unspeakable gift of *Christ*, who among us has ever worthily blessed the Lord on this account?

Brethren, if we have Jesus to be our salvation, when ought we to thank God for Him? Why, every morning when we awake! How long should we continue to praise God on this account? Till we go to sleep again! From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same His name is to be extolled. Let us praise God till sleep steepens our senses in a sweet forgetfulness. It is even pleasant to go on singing unto the Lord in the visions of our bed, as if the chords of grateful emotion vibrated after the hands of thought had ceased to play on them. It is good when even this wayward fancy of our dreams wanders towards the Well-Beloved, never rambling outside of holy ground. Let even the fairies of our night-dream sing hymns to Jesus and the cowslip bells of dream-land harbor imaginations of the fair plant of renown. Oh, to get into such a state that we shall be always praising Him—praising and praising and praising and never ceasing!

When we become low in spirit, it will be a sad reflection if we have to acknowledge that in fairer weather we forgot our Beloved. Let us give double praise while we can. While we are in good spirits and happy in the Lord let us pour forth our hymns. Tamerlane said to the mighty Bajazet, when he had overcome him in battle and taken him for a prisoner, “Did you ever give God thanks for making you so great an emperor?” Bajazet confessed that he had never thought of that. “Then,” said Tamerlane, “it is no wonder that so ungrateful a man should be made a spectacle of misery.” Conscience will taunt us when we are sorrowful by saying, “You did not praise God when you were in health and now you are ill and hoarse and cannot lift up your voice! You did not praise Him for His unspeakable gift when you knew you had it and now you are full of doubts about it and Satan has you upon the hip—you well deserve all the sorrow that your mind shall feel.”

Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, let us praise the Lord. Let us vow today that, His Grace helping us, we will praise Him, praise Him, praise Him and praise Him again and again and again and again, as long as we have any being, for His unspeakable gift! We shall never get to the end of this work—the unspeakable gift is forever telling and telling, yet never shall it all be told. Help us, all that know His salvation! Help us, angels! Help us, all you coming ages! Help us, all you stars of light! But still the thing shall be unspeakable even to the end.

Next, let us show our gratitude to God in deeds of praise. “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.” If we cannot speak it, let us try to do something that will show forth the praise of God. Actions speak more loudly than words.

If our words have failed, let us try actions. And the first thing to do is to give yourself to your Lord. Come, Beloved, if God has given you Jesus Christ, give Him yourself! You are not your own, you are bought with a price! Why not present your bodies as living sacrifices? Don't talk about it, but really do it—*live* for Him who died for you. Then, in consequence of having already given yourself, give of your substance to God and give freely. Give not the lame and the blind, but give the best of the flock. Let this be a great joy to you—not the payment of a tax, but the tribute of delighted love.

Give to God cheerfully, for He loves a cheerful giver. Buy Him the sweet cane with money and fill Him with the fat of your sacrifices. Nothing can be too good or great for our ever blessed Lord. Our loving Master will accept at our hands the alabaster box when we break it joyfully for His dear sake. Let deeds of holy consecration mark the whole of our lives, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased, when they are not brought as a price to purchase merit, but as a love token and tribute to His Grace. Think of this exhortation and carry it out abundantly—it shall turn to your temporal and eternal enrichment.

I am sure, however, that deeds of patience are among the thanks which best speak out our gratitude to God. Did it ever strike you that patience is a noble sort of Psalmody? Perhaps you will see this truth if I tell you an anecdote. In the old church stories we read of one called Didymus, a famous preacher who brought many souls to Christ. He was blind and Didymus grieved greatly over the loss of his sight. Those who heard him perceived that his blindness gave a mournful tinge to his discourses. A certain godly man named Alexander went to him and spoke to him in private after this fashion—"Didymus," he said, "does not your blindness cause you great sorrow?" "Brother Alexander," he said, "it is my constant grief that I have lost the light. I can scarcely endure my existence because I am always in the dark." Then Alexander said to him, "You are doing a work which an angel might envy and you have the honor of an Apostle in speaking for Jesus Christ and will you fret because you have lost that which rats and mice and brute beasts have in common with men?"

This was not a very tender thing to say, but it strengthened Didymus patiently to endure his trial and to bless God for his unspeakable gift. What is there, after all, that we have not, if we have Christ? If you have lost everything but Christ, yet if you have Christ left, what have you lost? Why fret for pins when God gives pearls? Why grieve over the loss of a few pence when God has heaped upon us talents of gold? Submit in gracious joy to the Divine will and let your patience say, "I will thank God, I will thank God for His unspeakable gift!" Now, dear Friends, there is one way in which I want you to thank God and show your gratitude for Christ and that is by always holding a thankful creed. Believe nothing which would rob God of thanks, or Christ of Glory. I set great store by a sound creed in these evil days when the Gospel is but little valued by many. Hold a creed of which the top and bottom is this, "Grace, Grace, Grace—salvation all of Grace."

Whenever you hear a preacher, no matter who he may be, making out that salvation is not completely of the Grace of God, just say in your hearts, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." Do not go an inch away from that standpoint. Salvation is altogether a gift—it is not of works, it is not of merit—it is of Grace and Grace alone. Turn away from the man who stutters when he says "Grace." He will never feed your soul. Hold a theology which magnifies Christ, a divinity which teaches that Christ is God's unspeakable gift! When a man gets to cutting down sin, paring down depravity and making little of future punishment, let him no longer preach to you. Some modern Divines whittle away the Gospel to the small end of nothing. They make our Divine Lord to be a sort of blessed nobody—they bring down salvation to mere savability, make certainties into probabilities and treat Truths of God as mere opinions.

When you see a preacher making the Gospel small by degrees and miserably less till there is not enough of it left to make soup for a sick grasshopper, get you gone! Such diminution and adulteration will not do for me—my heart cries, "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift!" These gentlemen, you know, are highly cultivated and can tell us all about it. They have a theology which is suited to their educated reason. To them, Divine Grace can be weighed in scales and the Atonement in balances—unless, indeed, both are as the drop of a bucket—not worthy of being mentioned at all. Every grand Truth of God with them is dwarfed and dwindled down into utter insignificance. The thought of the 19th century makes men the heirs of apes, while it declares their souls to be mortal and their sins to be trifles! Our Bibles are made to be mere human records and our hopes are treated as childish dreams! These pigmy thinkers shorten all things to their pigmy scale.

As for me, I believe in the colossal! A need deep as Hell and Grace as high as Heaven! I believe in a pit that is bottomless and in mercy above the heavens! I believe in an Infinite God and an Infinite Atonement, infinite love and infinite mercy, an Everlasting Covenant ordered in all things and sure, of which the substance and the seal is an Infinite Christ. Christ is all! Christ is unspeakable, the unspeakable gift of God! Hold to that, or you will not thank God as you should. Nor rest in a thoroughly sound creed, but try to bring others to accept God's unspeakable gift. You know how the birds stir up each other to sing? One bird in a cage will excite its fellow, who looks at him and seems to say, "You shall not outstrip me. I will sing with you." Then another joins the strain, saying, "I will sing with you," till all the little minstrels quiver with an ecstasy of song and form a choir of emulating songsters. Hark how the early morning of the spring is rendered musical by the full orchestra of birds!

One songster begins the tune and the rest hasten to swell the music! Let us be like these blessed birds. Let us try to lead our families to praise the Lord. Bless the Lord till you set the fashion and others bless Him with you! Seek out those who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ and tell them "the old, old story of Jesus and His love." Thus, if you cannot sing more yourself, nor praise God more yourself, you will have increased His praise by bringing in others to sing with you! See you to this and let this be, from now on, the motto of your lives. Write it over your doors! Emblazon it on the walls of your chambers! Let it hang over your bed by night, "THANKS BE UNTO GOD FOR HIS UNSPEAKABLE GIFT." O Holy Spirit, write this line of gratitude upon the tablets of our hearts. Amen.

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