

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

WITHOUT CHRIST - NOTHING.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 23RD, 1881 BY

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“Without Me ye can do nothing.”—John xv. 5.

THIS is not the language of a man of ordinary mould. No saint, no prophet, no apostle would ever have addressed a company of faithful men, and have said to them, “Without Me ye can do nothing.” Had Jesus Christ been, as some say, a good man, and nothing more, such language as this would have been unseemly and inconsistent. Among the virtues of a perfect man we must certainly reckon modesty, but this from a mere man would have been shamelessly immodest. It is impossible to conceive that Jesus of Nazareth, had He not been more than man, could ever have uttered the sentence, “Without Me ye can do nothing.” My brethren, I hear in this sentence the voice of that Divine Person without Whom was not anything made that was made. The majesty of the words reveals the Godhead of Him that uttered them. The “I am” comes out in the personal word “Me”, and the claim of all power unveils the Omnipotent. These words mean Godhead or nothing. The spirit in which we listen to this language is that of adoration. Let us bow our heads in solemn worship, and so unite with the multitude before the throne who ascribe power and dominion and might to Him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb.

In this adoring state of mind we shall be the better prepared to enter into the innermost soul of the text. I am not going to preach upon the moral inability of the unregenerate, although in that doctrine I most firmly believe; for that truth did not come in our Lord's way when He uttered these words, neither did He allude to it. It is quite true that unregenerate men, being without Christ, can do no spiritual action whatever, and can do nothing which is acceptable in the sight of God; but our Lord was not speaking to unregenerate men at all, nor speaking about them. He was surrounded by His apostles, the eleven out of whom Judas had been weeded, and it is to them as branches of the true vine that He says, “Without Me ye can do nothing.” The statement refers to such as are in the vine, and even to such as have been pruned, and have for a while been found abiding in the stem, which is Christ; even in such there is an utter incapacity

for holy produce if separated from Christ.

We are not called upon just now to speak upon all forms of doing, as beyond us, but of that form of it which is intended in the text. There are certain forms of doing in which men excel who know little or nothing of Christ; but the text must be viewed in its own connection, and the truth is clear. Believers are here described under the figure of branches in the vine, and the doing alluded to must therefore be the bearing of fruit. I might render it, "Apart from Me ye can produce nothing—make nothing, create nothing, bring forth nothing." The reference, therefore, is to that doing which may be set forth by the fruit of the vine branch, and therefore to those good works and graces of the Spirit which are expected from men who are spiritually united to Christ: it is of these that He says, "Without Me ye can do nothing." Our text is only another form of the fourth verse: "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye except ye abide in Me." I am therefore going to address myself to you who profess to know and love the Lord, and are anxious to glorify His name, and I have to remind you that union to Christ is essential; for only as you are one with Him, and continue to be so, can you bring forth the fruits which prove you to be truly His.

I. Reading again this solemn sentence, "Without Me ye can do nothing", it first of all excites in me AN ASPIRATION OF HOPE. There is something to be *done*, our religion is to have a grand practical outcome. I have been thinking of Christ as the vine, and of the myriads of branches in Him, and my heart has hoped for great things. From such a root what a vintage must come! Being branches in Him, what fruit we must produce! There can be nothing scanty or poverty-stricken in the fruitage of a vine so full of sap. Fruit of the best quality, fruit in the utmost abundance, fruit unrivalled, must be borne by such a vine. That word "*do*" has music in it. Yes, brethren, Jesus went about doing good, and, being in Him, we shall do good. Everything about Him is efficient, practical,—in a word, fruit-bearing; and being joined to Him much will yet be done by us. We have been saved by the almighty grace of God apart from all doings of our own, and now that we are saved we long to *do* something in return: we feel a high ambition to be of some use and service to our great Lord and Master. The text, even though there be a negative in it, yet raises in our soul the hope that ere we go hence and be no more we may even here on earth do something for Christ.

Beloved, there is the ambition and hope before us of doing something in the way of glorifying God by bringing forth *the fruits of holiness, peace, and love*. We would adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by love unfeigned, by every good and holy work we would show forth the praises of our God. Apart from the Lord Jesus we know we cannot be holy; but joined unto Him we overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, and walk with garments unspotted from the world. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, and all manner of holy conversation. For none of these things are we equal in and of ourselves, and yet by faith we say with Paul, "I can do all things through Christ Which strengtheneth me." We may be adorned with plentiful clusters, we may cause the Saviour to have joy in us that our joy may be full: great possibilities are before us.

We aspire not only to produce fruit in ourselves, but to bear much *fruit in the conversion of others*, even as Paul desired concerning the Romans, that he might have fruit among them. In

this matter we can do nothing whatever alone; but being united unto Christ we bring forth increase unto the Lord. Our Lord Jesus said, "The works that I do shall ye do also, and greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto the Father." Brethren, a hope springs up in our bosom that we may each one of us bring many souls to Jesus. Not because we have any power in ourselves, but because we are united to Jesus we joyfully hope to bring forth fruit in the way of leading others to the knowledge of the gospel.

My soul takes fire of hope, and I say to myself, If it be so, all these branches, and all alive, how much *fruit of further blessing* will ripen for this poor world. Men shall be blessed in us because we are blessed in Christ. What must be the influence of ten thousand godly examples! What must be the influence upon our country of thousands of Christian men and women practically advancing love, peace, justice, virtue, holiness! And if each one is seeking to bring others to Christ what numerous conversions there must be, and how largely must the church of God be increased. Do you not know that if there were only ten thousand real Christians in the world, yet if each one of these brought one other to Christ every year it would not need twenty years to accomplish the conversion of the entire population of the globe? This is a simple sum in arithmetic which any schoolboy can work out. Certainly it looks a small thing that each one should bring another to the Lord; and surely if we are one with Him we may hope to see it done. So I sit me down and dream right comfortably, according to the promise, "Your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." See these thousands of branches, proceeding from such a stem as Christ Jesus, and with such sap as the Holy Ghost flowing through them; why, surely, this vine must soon clothe the mountains with its verdure, and there shall not remain a single barren rock unadorned with the blessed foliage! Then shall the mountains drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. Not because of any natural fertility in the branches, but because of their glorious root, and stem, and sap, each one shall bear full clusters, and each fruitful bough shall run over the wall. Beloved friends in Christ, have you not strong desires to see some such consummation? Do you not long to take a share in the high enterprise of winning the world to Christ? Oh, ye that are young and full of spirits, do you not long to press to the front of this great crusade? Our souls pine to see the knowledge of the Lord covering the earth as the waters cover the sea. It is glad tidings to us that, joined unto Christ, we can do something in this great business, something upon which the Lord will smile, something which shall redound to the glory of His name. We are not condemned to inaction; we are not denied the joy of service, the superior blessedness of giving and of doing: the Lord hath chosen us and ordained us to go and bring forth fruit, fruit that shall remain. This is the aspiration which rises in our soul; the Lord grant that we may see it take actual form in our lives.

II. But now, in the second place, there passes through my heart a shudder,--- A SHUDDER OF FEAR. Albeit I glow and burn with strong desire, and rise upon the wing of a mighty ambition to do something great for Christ, yet I read the text, and a sudden trembling takes hold upon me. "Without Me"—it is possible, then, that I may be without Christ, and so may be utterly incapacitated for all good. Come, friends, I want you to feel, even though it cast a cold chill over you, that you may possibly be "without Christ". I would have you feel it in the very marrow of your bones, yea, in the centre of your hearts. You profess to be in Christ; but are you so? The large majority of those to whom I speak this morning are visible members of the visible

church of Christ; but what if you should *not be so in Him as to bring forth fruit*? Evidently there are branches which in a certain sense are in the vine, and yet bring forth no fruit! It is written, “Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away.” Yes, you are a member, perhaps an elder, perhaps a deacon, possibly a minister, and so you are in the vine; but are you bringing forth the fruits of holiness? Are you consecrated? Are you endeavouring to bring others to Jesus Christ? Or is your profession a thing apart from a holy life, and devoid of all influence upon others? Does it give you a name among the people of God and nothing more? Say, is it a mere natural association with the church, or is it a living, supernatural union with Christ? Let the thought go through you and prostrate you before Him Who looks down from heaven upon you, and lifts His pierced hand, and cries, “Without Me ye can do nothing.” My friend, if you are without Christ, what is the use of carrying on that Bible-class; for you can do nothing? What is the use of my coming to this pulpit if I am without Christ? What is the use of your going down into the Sunday-school this afternoon, if, after all, you are without Christ? Unless we have the Lord Jesus ourselves we cannot take Him to others. Unless within us we have the living water springing up unto eternal life, we cannot overflow so that out of our midst shall flow rivers of living water.

I will put the thought another way,—What if you should be in Christ, and *not so in Him as to abide in Him*? It appears from our Lord's words that some branches in Him are cast forth and are withered. “If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered.” Some who are called by His name, and reckoned among His disciples, whose names are heard whenever the muster-roll of the church is read, yet do not continue in Him. My hearer, what if it should happen that you are only in Christ on a Sunday, but in the world all the week! What if you are only in Christ at the communion table, or at the prayer-meeting, or at certain periods of devotion? What if you are off and on with Christ! What if you play fast and loose with the Lord! What if you are an outside saint and an inside devil! Ah me, what will come of such conduct as this? And yet some persist in attempting to hold an intermittent communion with Christ; in Christ to-day because it is the Sabbath; out of Christ to-morrow because it is the market, and obedience to Christ might be inconvenient when they buy and sell. This will not do. We must be so in Christ as to be always in Him, or else we are not living branches of the living vine, and we cannot produce fruit. If there were such a thing as a vine branch that was only occasionally joined to the stem, would you expect it to yield a cluster to the husbandman? So neither can you if you are off and on with Christ. You can do nothing if there be not constant union.

One year when I was travelling towards my usual winter resting-place I halted at Marseilles, and there was overtaken by great pain. In my room in the hotel I found it cold, and so I asked for a fire. I was sitting in a very desponding mood, when suddenly the tears came to my eyes, as if smitten with a great sorrow. I shall never forget the thoughts which stirred my heart. The porter came in to light the fire. He had in his hand a bundle of twigs. I called to him to let me look at it. He was about to push it into the stove as fuel with which to kindle the fire. As I took the bundle into my hand, I found it was made of vine branches—branches that had been cut off now that the pruning time was come. Ah me, I thought, will this be my portion? Here I am, away from home, unable to bear fruit, as I love to do. Shall I end with this as my portion? Shall I be gathered for the fire? Those vine shoots were parts of a good vine, no

doubt—branches that once looked fair and green; but now they were fuel for the flame. They had been cut off and cast off as useless things, and then men gathered them and tied them in bundles, and they were ignobly thrust into the fire. What a picture! There goes a bundle of ministers into the fire! There is a bundle of elders! There's another bundle of deacons, a bundle of church members, a bundle of Sunday-school teachers! “Men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.” Dear brothers and sisters, shall this be the lot of any of us who have named the name of Christ? Well did I say a shudder may go through us as we listen to those words, “without Me.” Our end without Christ will be terrible indeed. First, no fruit; then no life; and at last no place among the saints, no existence in the church of God. Without Christ we do nothing, we are nothing, we are worse than nothing. This is the condition of the heathen now, and it was our own condition once; God forbid that we should find it to be our condition now—“without Christ, having no hope!” Here is grave cause for heart-searching, and I leave the matter with you to that end.

III. Having come so far in our second head, under the third I behold A VISION OF TOTAL FAILURE. “Without Me,” says the text, “ye can do nothing”—ye can produce nothing. The visible church of Christ has tried this experiment a great many times already, and always with the same result. Separated from Christ, His church can do nothing which she was formed to do. She is sent into the world upon a high enterprise, with noble aims before her, and grand forces at her disposal; but if she could cease from communion with Christ she would become wholly incapable.

Now what are the outward signs of any community being apart from Christ? Answer, first, it may be seen in *a ministry without Christ in its doctrine*. This we have seen ourselves. Woe worth the day that it is so! History tells us that not only in the Romish church and the Anglican church, but among the Nonconformist churches, Christ has been at times forgotten. Not only among Unitarians, but among Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, all round, Jesus has been dishonoured. Attempts have been made to do something without Christ as the truth to be preached. Ah me, what folly it is! They preach up intellectualism, and hope that this will be the great power of God; but it is not. “Surely,” say they, “novelties of thought and refinements of speech will attract and win! The preachers aspire to be leaders of thought; will they not command the multitude and charm the intelligent? Add music and architecture, and what is to hinder success?” Many a young minister has given up his whole mind to this—to try and be exceedingly refined and intellectual; and what has he done with these showy means? The sum total is expressed in the text—“Nothing”: “Without Me ye can do nothing.” What emptiness this folly has created: when the pulpit is without Christ the pews are soon without people. I knew a chapel where an eminent divine was to be heard for years. A converted Jew coming to London to visit a friend, set out on Sunday morning to find a place of Christian worship, and he chanced to enter the chapel of this eminent divine. When he came back he said that he feared he had made a mistake; he had turned into a building which he hoped was a Christian place of assembly; but as he had not heard the name of Jesus all the morning, he thought perhaps he had fallen in with some other religionists. I fear that many modern sermons might just as fairly have been delivered in a Mahometan mosque as in a Christian church. We have too many preachers of whom we might complain, “they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have

laid Him.” Christianity without Christ is a strange thing indeed. And what comes of it where it is held up to the people? Why, by-and-by there are not enough people to support the ministry; empty benches are plentiful, and the thing gets pretty nearly wound up. Blessed be God for it! I am heartily glad that without Christ these pretended ministers cannot prosper. Leave Christ out of the preaching and you shall do nothing. Only advertize it all over London, Mr. Baker, that you are making bread without flour; put it in every paper, “Bread without flour”; and you may soon shut up your shop, for your customers will hurry off to other tradesmen. Somehow there is a strange prejudice in people’s minds in favour of bread made of flour, and there is also an unaccountable prejudice in the human mind which makes men think that if there be a gospel it must have Christ in it. A sermon without Christ as its beginning, middle, and end is a mistake in conception and a crime in execution. However grand the language it will be merely much-ado-about-nothing if Christ be not there. Ay, and I mean by Christ not merely His example and the ethical precepts of His teaching, but His atoning blood, His wondrous satisfaction made for human sin, and the grand doctrine of “believe and live.” If “Life for a look at the Crucified One” be obscured, all is dark; if justification by faith be not set in the very forefront in the full blaze of light, nothing can be accomplished. Without Christ in the doctrine ye shall do nothing.

Further, without acknowledging always *the absolute supremacy of Christ* we shall do nothing. Jesus is much complimented nowadays; but He is not submitted to as absolute Lord. I hear many pretty things about Christ from men who reject His gospel. “Lives of Christ” we have in any quantity. Oh for one which would set Him forth in His glory as God, as Head of the church and Lord of all. I should greatly like to see a “Life of Christ” written by one who knew Him by communion with Him and by reverently sitting at His feet. Most of the pretty things about Jesus which I read nowadays seem to have been written by persons who have seen Him through a telescope at a great distance, and know Him “according to Matthew”, but not according to personal fellowship. Oh for a “Life of Christ” by Samuel Rutherford or George Herbert, or by some other sweet spirit to whom the ever-blessed One is as a familiar friend. Certain modern praises of Jesus are written upon the theory that, on the whole, the Saviour has given us a religion that is tolerably suited to the enlightenment of the nineteenth century, and may be allowed to last a little longer. Jesus is commended by these critics, and somewhat admired as preferable to most teachers; but He is by no means to be blindly followed. It is fortunate for Jesus that He commends Himself to the “best thought” and ripest culture of the period; for, if He had not done so, these wise gentlemen would have exposed Him as being behind the times. Of course they have every now and then to rectify certain of His dogmas, especially such as justification by faith, or atonement, or the doctrine of election —these are old-fashioned things, which belong to an older and less enlightened period, and therefore they adapt them by tearing out their real meaning. The doctrines of grace, according to the infallible critics of the period, are out of date—nobody believes them now, and so they settle off old-fashioned believers as non-existent. Christ is rectified and squared, and His garment without seam is taken off, and He is dressed out in proper style, as by a West-End clothier; then He is introduced to us as a remarkable teacher, and we are advised to accept Him as far as He goes. For the present the wise ones tolerate Jesus; but there is no telling what is to come: the progress of this age is so astonishing that it is just possible we shall before long leave Christ and Christianity behind. Now, what will come of this foolish wisdom? Nothing but delusions,

mischief, infidelity, anarchy, and all manner of imaginable and unimaginable ills. The fact is, if you do not acknowledge Christ to be all, you have virtually left Him out, and are without Him. We must preach the gospel, because Christ has revealed it. "Thus saith the Lord", is to be our logic. We must preach the gospel as ambassadors delivering their message; that is to say, in the King's name, by an authority not their own. We preach our doctrines, not because we consider that they are convenient and profitable, but because Christ has commanded us to proclaim them. We believe the doctrines of grace, not because the enlightenment of the age sets its wonderful imprimatur upon them, but because they are true and are the voice of God. Age or no age has nothing to do with us. The world hates Christ and must hate Him: if it would boldly denounce Christ it would be to us a more hopeful sign than its deceitful Judas kiss. We keep simply to this,—the Lord hath said it, and we care not who approves or disapproves. Jesus is God and Head of the church, and we must do what He bids us, and say what He tells us: if we fail in this, nothing of good will come of it. If the church gets back to her loyalty she shall see what her Lord will do; but without Christ as absolute Lord, infallible Teacher, and honoured King, all must be failure even to the end.

Go a little further: you may have sound doctrine, and yet do nothing unless you have Christ *in your spirit*. I have known all the doctrines of grace to be unmistakably preached, and yet there have been no conversions; for this reason, that they were not expected and scarcely desired. In former years many orthodox preachers thought it to be their sole duty to comfort and confirm the godly few who by dint of great perseverance found out the holes and corners in which they prophesied. These brethren spoke of sinners as of people whom God might possibly gather in if He thought fit to do so; but they did not care much whether He did so or not. As to weeping over sinners as Christ wept over Jerusalem; as to venturing to invite them to Christ as the Lord did when He stretched out His hands all the day long; as to lamenting with Jeremiah over a perishing people, they had no sympathy with such emotions, and feared that they savoured of Arminianism. Both preacher and congregation were cased in a hard shell, and lived as if their own salvation was the sole design of their existence. If anybody did grow zealous and seek conversions, straightway they said he was indiscreet, or conceited. When a church falls into this condition it is, as to its spirit, "without Christ." What comes of it? Some of you know by your own observation what does come of it. The comfortable corporation exists and grows for a little while, but it comes to nothing in the long run; and so it must: there can be no fruit-bearing where there is not the spirit of Christ as well as the doctrine of Christ. Except the spirit of the Lord rests upon you, causing you to agonize for the salvation of men even as Jesus did, ye can do nothing.

But above all things we must have Christ with us in the power of *His actual presence*. Do we always think of this—"Without Me ye can do nothing"? We are going out this afternoon to teach the young; shall we be quite sure to take Christ with us? Or on the road shall we suddenly stop and say, "I am without my Master, and I must not dare to go another step"? The abiding consciousness of the love of Christ in our soul is the essential element of our strength. We can no more convert a sinner without Christ than we could light up new stars in the sky. Power to change the human will, power to enlighten the intellect as to the things of God, and to influence the mind as to repentance and faith, must come entirely from the Most High. Do we feel that? Or do we put our thoughts together for an address, and say, "Now, that is a strong

point, and that will produce effect"; and do we rest there? If so, we can do nothing at all. The power lies with the Master, not with the servant; the might is in the hand, not in the weapon. We must have Christ in these pews and in these aisles, and in this pulpit, and Christ down in our Sunday-school, and Christ at the street corner when we stand up there to talk of Him, and we must feel that He is with us even to the end of the world, or we shall do nothing.

We have, then, before us a vision of total failure if we attempt in any way to do without Christ. He says, "Without Me ye can do nothing": it is in the *doing* that the failure is most conspicuous. You may *talk* a good deal without Him; you may hold congresses, and conferences, and conventions; but *doing* is another matter. Without Jesus you can *talk* any quantity; but without Him you can *do* nothing. The most eloquent discourse without Him will be all a bottle of smoke. You shall lay your plans, and arrange your machinery, and start your schemes; but without the Lord you will do nothing. Immeasurable cloudland of proposals and not a spot of solid doing large enough for a dove's foot to rest on—such shall be the end of all! You may have all the money that generosity can lavish, all the learning that your universities can supply, and all the oratory that the most gifted can lay at your feet; but "without Me" saith Christ, "ye can do nothing." Fuss, flare, fireworks, and failure; that is the end of it. "Without Me ye can do nothing." Let me repeat those words again, "Do nothing." "Do nothing", and the world dying around us! Africa in darkness! China perishing! Hindostan sunk in superstition, and a church which can do nothing! No bread to be handed out to the hungry, and the multitude fainting and dying! The rock to be smitten and the water of life to leap out for the thirsty, but not a drop forthcoming, because Jesus is not there. Ministers, evangelists, churches, salvation armies, the world dies for want of you, and yet "ye can do nothing" if your Lord is away. The age shall advance in discovery, and men of science shall do their little best, but you shall do "nothing" without Christ, absolutely nothing! You shall not proceed a single inch upon your toilsome way, though you row till the oars snap with the strain; you shall be drifted back by winds and currents unless you take Jesus into the ship. Remember that all the while the great Husbandman is watching you, for His eye is on every vine-branch. He sees that you are producing no grapes, and He is coming round with that sharp knife of His, cutting here and there! What must become of you who produce nothing? It makes one's very soul to curdle within him to think that we should live to do nothing. Yet I fear that thousands of Christians get no further than this; they are not immoral, dishonest, or profane; but they do nothing. They think of what they would like to do, and they plan and they propose; but they *do* nothing. There are buds in plenty, but not a single grape is produced and all because they do not get into that vital, overflowing, effectual communion with Christ which would fill them with life, and constrain them to bring forth fruit unto the glory of God. There is a vision, then, of the failure all along the line if we try to do without Christ.

IV. But now, fourthly, I hear A VOICE OF WISDOM, a still small voice which speaks out of the text, and says to us who are in Christ, *let us acknowledge this*. Down on your knees, bow your mouths in the dust and say, "Lord, it is true: without Thee we can do nothing, nothing whatever that is good and acceptable in the sight of God. We have not ability of ourselves to think anything of ourselves, but our ability is of God." Now, do not speak thus, as if you paid a compliment which orthodoxy requires you to make; but from the deeps of your soul, smitten

with an absolute self-despair, own the truth unto God. “To will is present with me, but how to perform that which I would I find not.” Lord, I am a good-for-nothing do-nothing, a fruitless, barren, dry, rotten branch without Thee, and this I feel in my inmost soul. Be not far from me, but quicken me by Thy presence.

Next, *let us pray*. If without Christ we can do nothing, let us cry to Him that we may never be without Him. Let us with strong crying and tears entreat His abiding presence. He comes to those who seek Him: let us never cease seeking. In conscious fellowship with Him, let us plead that the fellowship should be unbroken evermore. Let us pray that we may be so knit and joined to Jesus that we may be one spirit with Him, never to be separated from Him again. Master and Lord, let the life floods of Thy grace never cease to flow into us, for we know that we must be thus supplied or we can produce nothing. Brethren, let us have much more prayer than has been usual among us. Prayer is appointed to convey the blessings God ordains to give; let us constantly use the appointed means, and may the result be ever increasing from day to day.

Next, *let us personally cleave to Jesus*. Let us not attempt a life of separation; for that were to seek the living among the dead. Do not let us depart from Him for a single minute. Would you like to be caught at any one second of your life in a condition in which you could do nothing? I must confess I should not like to be in that state—incapable of defence against my enemies, or of service for my Lord. If an awakened one should come before you under distress of mind, and you should feel quite incapable of doing any good to him, what a sad perplexity. Or if you did not *feel* incapable, and yet should really be so, and what if you should therefore talk on in a religious way, but know no power in it; would it not be a sad thing? May you never be in such a state that you would be a do-nothing, with opportunities afforded and yet without strength to utilize them! If you are divided from Christ you are divided from the possibility of doing good; cling, therefore, to the Saviour with your whole might, and let nothing take you off from Him; no, not for an hour.

Heartily submit yourselves, also, dear friends, to the Lord's headship and leadership, and ask to do everything in His style and way. He will not be with you unless you accept Him as your Master. There must be no quarrel about supremacy, but you must yield yourself up absolutely to Him, to be, to do, or to suffer, according to His will. When it is wholly so He will be with you, and you shall do everything that is required of you. Wonderful things will the Lord perform through you when once He is your all in all. Will we not have it so?

Once more; *joyfully believe in Him*. Though without Him you can do nothing, yet with Him all things are possible. Omnipotence is in that man who has Christ in him. Weakness itself you may be, but you shall learn to glory in that weakness because the power of Christ doth rest upon you if your union and communion with Christ are continually kept up. Oh for a grand confidence in Christ! We have not believed in Him yet up to the measure of the hem of His garment; for even that faith made the sick woman whole. Oh to believe up to the measure of His infinite Deity! Oh for the splendour of the faith which measures itself by the Christ in Whom it trusts! May God bring us there, then shall we bring forth much fruit to the glory of His name.

V. And now, lastly. While I was listening to my text as a child puts a shell to its ear and listens till it hears the deep sea rolling in its windings, I heard within my text A SONG OF

CONTENT. "Without Me ye can do nothing." My heart said, "Lord, what is there that I want to do without Thee? There is no pain in this thought to me. If I can do without Thee I am sorry to possess so dangerous a power. I am happy to be deprived of all strength except that which comes from Thee. It charms, it exhilarates, and delights my soul to think that Thou art my all. Thou hast made me penniless as to all wealth of my own, that I might dip my hand into Thy treasury; Thou hast taken all power away from every sinew and muscle of mine, that I may rest on Thy bosom." "Without Me ye can do nothing." Be it so. Brethren, are you not all agreed? Do you wish to have it altered, any of you that love His dear name? I am sure you do not; for suppose, dear friends, we could do something without Christ, then He would not have the glory of it. Who wishes that? There would be little crowns for our poor little heads, for we should have done something without Him; but now there is one great crown for that dear head which once was girt with thorns; for all His saints put together cannot do anything without Him. The goodly fellowship of the apostles, the noble army of martyrs, and the triumphant host of the redeemed by blood, all put together, can do nothing without Jesus. Let Him be crowned with majesty Who worketh in us both to will and to do of His own good pleasure. For our own sakes, for our Lord's sake, we are glad that it is so. All things are more ours by being His; and if our fruit is His rather than our own, it is none the less but all the more ours. Is not this rare music for a holy ear?

I feel so glad that without Christ we can do nothing because I fear that if the church could do something without Christ she would try to live without Him. If she could teach the school and bring the children to salvation without Christ, I am afraid Christ would never go into a Sunday-school again. If we could preach successfully without Jesus, I suspect that the Lord Jesus Christ would seldom stand on high among the people again. If our Christian literature could bless men without Christ, I am afraid we should set the printing-press going, and never think about the crucified One in the matter. If there could be work done by the church without Jesus, there would be rooms into which He would never be invited; and these would soon become a sort of Blue Beard's chambers, full of horror. A something that we could do without Christ! Why the mass of the church would get to working that machinery tremendously, and all the rest would be neglected, and so it is a blessed thing for the whole church that she must have Christ everywhere.

"Without Me ye can do nothing." As I listened to the song within these words I began to laugh: I wonder if you will laugh too. It was to myself I laughed, like Abraham of old. I thought of those who are going to destroy the orthodox doctrine from off the face of the earth. How they boast of the decline and death of old-fashioned evangelism. I have read once or twice that I am the last of the Puritans, the race is all dying out. To this I demur: I am willing to be esteemed last in merit, but not last as ending the race. There are many others who are steadfast in the faith. They say our old theology is decaying, and that nobody believes it. It is all a lie; but wise men say so, and therefore we are bound to consider ourselves obsolete and extinct. We are, in their esteem, as much out of date as antediluvians would be could they walk down our streets. Yes, they are going to quench our coal and blot us out from Israel. Newspapers and reviews and the general intelligence of the age all join to dance upon our graves. Put on your night-caps, ye good people of the evangelical order, and go home to bed and sleep the sleep of the righteous, for the end of you is come. Thus say the Philistines, but the armies of the Lord think not so. The

adversaries exult exceedingly; but Christ is not with them. They know very little about Him, they do not work in His spirit, nor cry Him up, nor extol the gospel of His precious blood, and so I believe that when they have done their little best it will come to nothing. “Without Me ye can do nothing”: if this be true of apostles, much more of opposers! If His friends can do nothing without Him, I am sure His foes can do nothing against Him. If they that follow His steps and lie in His bosom can do nothing without Him, I am sure His adversaries cannot, and so I laughed at their laughter and smiled at their confusion. I laughed, too, because I recollected a story of a New England service when the pastor one afternoon was preaching in his own solemn way, and the good people were listening or sleeping, as their minds inclined. It was a substantial edifice wherein they assembled, fit to outlive an earthquake. All went on peacefully in the meeting-house that afternoon till suddenly a lunatic started up, denounced the minister, and declared that he would at once pull down the meeting-house about their ears. Taking hold of one of the pillars of the gallery, this newly-announced Samson repeated his threatening. Everybody rose; the women were ready to faint; the men began to rush to the door, and there was danger that the people would be trodden on as they rushed down the aisles. There was about to be a great tumult; no one could see the end of it; when suddenly one cool brother sitting near the pulpit produced a calm by a single sentence. “Let him try!” was the stern sarcasm which hushed the tempest. Even so to-day the enemy is about to disprove the gospel and crush out the doctrines of grace. Are you distressed, alarmed, astounded? So far from that, my reply to the adversary's boast that he will pull down the pillars of our Zion is this only,—
LET HIM TRY! Amen.