

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE ONE FOUNDATION.

A Sermon

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“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” – 1 Corinthians iii. 11.

UPBUILDING is very important, but the first question must always concern the foundation. However quickly, however cleverly a man may build, if the foundation be unsound he is a foolish builder; and however slowly, however laboriously a man may proceed, his building will not put him to shame if he has set his walls erect upon a firm basis. This is emphatically true in spiritual things, for there the foundation is of the utmost importance. The hearer of the word, who is not a doer also, comes to a fatal end, because, as the Saviour says, he has built upon the sand, and therefore his fabric in the day of storm and flood is swept away, while he who hears the word and does it is secure because he digs deep and lays his foundation upon a rock, and therefore his building survives the rains of trial from above, the floods of persecution from without, and the mysterious winds of Satanic temptation which howl from every quarter. The best masonry must crack and fall if the groundwork is unstable: the higher the pinnacle the speedier its fall if the base is insecure.

As to what the foundation is in the religion of Jesus Christ there is no question. This verse declares it to be decided beyond controversy. A man may build the superstructure in some measure according to his own taste and judgment, but it must be based upon the one foundation; there may be room for varieties of style in the upper building, but there can be no variety in the groundwork. That is fixed for ever by the unchanging God, who says, “Behold, *I lay* in Zion a foundation stone.” It must be acknowledged that all Christian minds and lives do not take exactly the same form and fashion: there are among the best of Christian builders certain grades of excellences, – one man builds with gold, another with silver, and a third with precious stones; but as to the foundation, all are on a level, Christ is all and in all. Whether the gracious life be rich as a golden palace, or pure as a temple of silver, or substantial as a tower of marble, whether it be public or obscure, wide or narrow, it must in every case be built upon the same basement of eternal rock: “for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid.”

You may say “we will agree to differ” about matters which concern the superstructure, but we must agree to agree as to the foundation; for if we are not at one with the plain statement of the text we are in the wrong.

The apostle is dogmatic to the very last degree: “Other foundation can no man lay.” “But,” saith one, “various teachers did lay other foundations.” The apostle will not admit that they were foundations: they were not worthy of the name, the imposture was too shallow to succeed. No builder if he looked upon a heap of sand poured into an excavation would admit that it was a foundation. If he saw a mass of decayed vegetation and garden rubbish heaped together no architect would for one moment allow it to be spoken of as a “foundation.” Paul declareth that there is but one foundation, and that there is none beside it, or beyond it; and that the one only, unalterable, immovable, everlasting foundation is Jesus Christ. It is not to be imagined that there are other foundations somewhat differing and only a little inferior to the Lord Jesus: there is no other, and no other can be laid. It is not a question of comparison, but of monopoly. All other groundworks and principles, whatever may be said in their praise, are mere falsehoods if they are set forth as foundations, for the Lord Jesus has exclusive possession of that title, and in him alone all that is fundamental is summed up; “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

And truly, when you think that God from all eternity has made his only-begotten Son to be the foundation and corner stone, it will be seen that this rock goes deep into the very nature of things, ay, deep as infinity itself; and, therefore, there cannot be two of the kind, for of whom else is it written that verily he was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world? Of whom else is it said, “I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was”? When you think that this foundation is nothing less than divine, for Christ is very God of very God, it is as impossible that there should be two foundations as that there should be two Gods. You must imagine two redemptions before you can conceive of two groundworks for our confidence. Who will dream of two atonements, two Saviours, two Christs? Yet must such a thing be ere there can be two foundations. None but Jesus, the divine Saviour, could sustain the weight of a single soul with all its sins, much less of all the souls which are built up into the temple or God. Jesus alone can sustain our eternal interests, deliver us from eternal wrath, or lift us into eternal bliss. “There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” His own words in prophecy are very positive – “I, even I, am the Lord, and beside me there is no Saviour”; and equally express is his personal declaration – “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

I will sketch out my discourse with these four lines, which I may not always be able to keep from intersecting each other, but they shall each be marked deeply and broadly, so that none can help seeing them. First, *no church but what is built on Christ*; secondly, *no gospel but what is built on Christ*; thirdly, *no hope of salvation but what is built on Christ*; and fourthly, *no Christian but what is built on Christ*.

I. First, there is NO CHURCH BUT WHAT IS BUILT ON CHRIST. I mean, of course, no true, no real church. There are many churches in the world, so called, but this may be laid down as a first principle that there is but one church, and that this one church is built upon

Christ alone. Whatever community, congregation, hierarchy, sect, or corporation may call itself a church, or even *the* church, if it is not built upon Christ it is not a church at all. No matter how great in numbers, nor how ancient, nor how wealthy, nor how learned, nor how pretentious, bigoted, dominant, or exclusive it may be, it is not Christ's church if it is not built upon Christ.

To begin with, *a foundation is the first portion* of a building; and so is the Lord Jesus first and foremost with his church, for his people were chosen in him. God has always had in his purpose and decree a chosen people, but he has had no such people apart from Christ. The apostle saith: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." We were chosen in Christ Jesus; he is "the first born among many brethren," and the Lord has "predestinated us to be conformed to the image of his Son." The first setting apart of the church and making it to be the peculiar inheritance of God was in connection with Christ.

"Christ, be my first elect,' he said,
Then chose our souls in Christ our head."

We were never otherwise chosen, nor otherwise beloved, nor otherwise appointed to eternal life than as regarded in Christ Jesus, and one with him. No single soul can be said to be elect otherwise than as it is considered in connection with Christ; much less then is there a church of God apart from the eternal purpose concerning Christ Jesus, the covenant head, and federal representative of his people. The foundation must be laid first, and so was our Lord Jesus Christ first appointed. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation." Jesus is called by the Father "Mine elect in whom my soul delighteth," and there are none elect except such as are in him in the eternal purpose of grace.

But next, *a foundation is the support of all*, and there is no church but that which derives all its support from Christ Jesus. If there be any company of people calling themselves a church who depend for salvation and eternal life upon anything beside, or beyond the merit of Christ's atoning blood, they are not a church. That all things are of God, and that he hath reconciled us unto himself by Christ Jesus, is a truth never to be doubted. The atoning Saviour is the corner-stone of the church. He is the one rock of our salvation, the one pillar of our strength. As living stones we are built up into a spiritual house, but we one and all rest and depend upon him, and upon no other. To us the word of the Lord has come with power, – "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." The great atoning sacrifice of Christ must be the sole reliance of the whole church as well as of each individual, and this must be set forth with great clearness and distinctness as its first and greatest doctrine – salvation by Christ Jesus: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." The atonement taken away, no church remains. Call the community a religious club if you like, but it is no church when once the atonement made by the Lord Jesus, through his death in the room and stead of his people, is denied or ignored.

Nor do we judge a community to be worthy of the name of a church which places its dependence for its present power and future progress anywhere but in the almighty Saviour. Jesus saith, "Because I live ye shall live also," and the church must draw its daily life from the immortality of her glorious Head. He that loved us and died for us and rose again is pledged to keep his own, and on that pledge let them repose their faith. Because all power is given unto him in heaven and in earth, therefore go we forth to teach the nations. He has said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," therefore have we strength to go forth for the conquest of the world. But if we depend upon an arm of flesh, upon the secular power, upon carnal wisdom, upon education, or eloquence, or prestige, or upon our own zeal and ardour, and not upon Christ, we are leaving the rock for the sand. We cannot thus build up Christ's church, nor ought we to attempt it. The strength of a living church is the living Christ. We must be very careful on this point, that when we are zealous in building we build only upon Christ and by Christ, for edifices otherwise erected will fall in heaps. We must as a church not only rely upon the Christ that died, but upon the Christ who is gone into the glory and sits at the right hand of God, ruling and reigning on our behalf, who also shall shortly come to gather together the scattered, and to reign amongst his own. The true church, like a vine, derives the life-sap of its branches from Jesus the stem, and from no other source. She can say of her glorious Redeemer, "My soul, wait thou only upon the Lord, for my expectation is from him." Other communities may lean on princes, but she comes up from the wilderness leaning on her Beloved; other congregations may look to human greatness for support, but her eyes are towards the hills whence cometh her help; her help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth.

Furthermore, *a foundation has the shaping of the building*, and the true church shapes and forms itself upon the Lord Jesus as its ground-plan and outline. The shape of a building must, to a very large extent, be determined by its foundation. If you have ever traced the foundations of an ancient abbey or castle, as they have appeared on a level with the soil, you have proceeded to infer the form of the building from the run of the ground line. Here was a sharp angle, there was a circular tower; there was a buttress, and there was a recess. The building must have followed the ground line, and so must every true church be built upon Christ, in the sense of following his word and ordinances to the best of its knowledge and understanding. The law of Christ is the law of the church. All the decrees of popes and councils, all the resolutions of assemblies, synods, presbyteries, and associations, and all the ordinances of men as individuals, however great they be, when they are all put together, if they at all differ from the law of Christ, are mere wind and waste paper, nay, worse, they are treasonable insults to the majesty of King Jesus. Those who build apart from the authority of Christ build off of the foundation, and their fabric will fall. There is no law and no authority in a true church but that of Christ himself; we who are his ministers are his servants and the servants of the church, and not lords or law-makers. To his law a faithful church brings all things as to the sure test. As churches we are not legislators, but subjects; it is not for us to frame constitutions, invent offices, and decree rites and ceremonies, but we are to take everything out of the mouth of Christ, and to do what he bids us, as he bids us, and when he bids us. Parliaments and kings have no authority, whatever in the church, but Christ alone rules therein. If any portion of a church be not based upon Christ it is a mere deforming

addition to the plan of the great Architect, and mars the temple which God has built, and not man. What a blessed thing it is to feel that you belong to a church which has a rock under it, because it is constituted by Christ's authority. We feel safe in following an ordinance which is of his commanding, but we should tremble if we had only custom and human authority for it. How secure we feel in believing a doctrine which is of our Lord's teaching, for we can say, "this is not mere opinion, this is not the judgment of a wise man, this is not the decree of councils, but this is the Master's own declaration." Not one of his words shall ever fall to the ground. There is in his authority no change, for ever is his word settled in heaven, and he is in himself the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Steadfast is that church which carefully follows his guiding line, but that which departeth from his fixed rule and authority hath left the foundation, and therein ceased to be a church.

A foundation is indispensable to a building, and so Christ is indispensable to a true church. In a house you could do without certain of the windows, you might close a door, and you might remove parts of the roof, and still it might be a house, but you cannot have a house at all if you take away the foundation; and so you cannot have a church of Christ if Jesus Christ be not there as the foundation and corner stone. When sermons are preached without so much as the mention of Christ's name, it takes more than charity, it requires you to tell a lie to say "That was a Christian sermon"; and if any people find their joy in a teaching which casts the Lord Jesus into the background, they are not his church, or else such teaching would be an abomination to them. Yet have I heard it said that from some ministries you may go away like Mary Magdalene from the sepulchre, exclaiming, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." One told me the other day that he had heard a discourse from a Christian pulpit which would have been applauded by Jews and Mahometans, for there was not a trace of Christ in it. Another declared that in another place he heard priests, and clergy, and sacraments so much puffed up that as for faith in the Lord Jesus it seemed to be a very small matter. Brethren, this is not so in the church of Christ. There the Lord Jesus is Alpha and Omega – first and last, beginning and end. True Christians make much of Christ, indeed, they make all of him: and as for priests and preachers they say, "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man"? O brethren, let us see to this. If anything be put into Christ's place we make it an antichrist, and we are not Christians, but anti-Christians. The true church saith, "Give us what learning and eloquence you will, but we cannot be content except Christ be glorified; preach us what you may, we will never be satisfied unless he who is the express image of the Father shall be set forth in our midst." Then, I say, she speaketh like the true bride of Christ, but if she can be content to see her Lord dishonoured she is no chaste spouse of Christ.

Let us put this, our first point, in a few sentences, it is not the union of men with men that makes a church if Jesus Christ be not the centre and the bond of the union. The best of men may come into bonds of amity, and they may form a league, or a federation, for good and useful purposes, but they are not a church unless Jesus Christ be the basis upon which they rest. He must be the ground and foundation of the hope of each and of all.

Neither can a church be created by a mere union to a minister. It is most good and pleasant to see brethren dwelling together in unity; it is most advantageous that between the pastor and his flock there should be perfect love, but the relationship must not be exaggerated

beyond due bounds. Brethren, there must be no glorying in men, nor blind following of them. A body formed of individuals whose religion lies in drinking in the theories and opinions of a religious teacher falls short of being a church of God. The church is not built on Paul, nor upon Apollos, nor upon Cephas, but upon the sole authority of Jesus Christ. We are not to be believers in Luther, Calvin, Wesley, or Whitefield, but in Christ. Of such believers a true church must be composed. Neither is a church made by the following of any particular form or rite. We have one Lord, one faith, one baptism; and we are bound to be loyal to Christ in his ordinances as in all else, but it is not the practice of an ordinance which constitutes a church. It is well to be united and bound together in loyalty to the faith once delivered to the saints, but, unless there is vital, personal union with the person of Christ on the part of the members of the church, their association may constitute a league for the defence of orthodoxy, or a confederation for the maintenance of a form of religious thought, but it is not a church. No, most blessed Lord, thou must be there, or nothing is there! Pastors, elders, deacons, teachers, evangelists, these are courses of precious stones in the heavenly temple, but without thee they are no church, for the foundation is wanting. All thy saints come to thee and rest on thee, O Christ; and in thee all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord. Thou, O Christ, art the seed-corn out of which the church grows, the stem from which it branches, the head in which it lives, the shepherd by whom it is fed, the captain by whom it is marshalled, the husband to whom it is married: thou art, indeed, the all in all of the church which thou hast redeemed with thine own blood.

“God hath a sure foundation given,
Fixed as the firm decrees of heaven
The changeless everlasting rock,
That braves the storm, and bides the shock,
There build: the gates of hell in vain
Against that rock their war maintain,
Christ is the rock, the corner stone,
God rears his beauteous house thereon.”

Thus far, then, we have declared that there is no church except that we which is built on Jesus Christ. This truth we assert in the face of all men, let them make what they will of it.

II. Secondly, we assert that there is NO GOSPEL BUT WHAT IS BUILT ON JESUS CHRIST. There are many pretended gospels in the world. Paul said once “another gospel,” and then he corrected himself, and said, “which is not another,” for strictly speaking there is only one gospel, and there cannot be two. The good news, God’s good news to men, is one. There never were two gospels, for there never were two Saviours or two redemptions, and there never will be; but a Saviour and a redemption are necessary to a gospel, and therefore there can be only one. The foundation of the gospel is one, namely Jesus Christ, and there is no other possible foundation. For, first, *there is but one Mediator, by whom God speaks words of grace.* “There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” If then, beloved, any man shall come to you and say, “God hath spoken to me, and bidden me

say to you somewhat other and above what Jesus hath said,” receive him not. If any man say unto you, “I have a revelation from heaven, and God bids me speak,” if he speak not according to the words of Christ Jesus he is a false prophet, and cometh not from God at all. Yea, moreover, if bishop, or council, or church spake otherwise than Christ has spoken, the truth is not in any of them. All that ever spoke from God, both before Christ and after Christ, have spoken after their manner and measure in the same fashion as Christ Jesus the Lord, for the voice of God is not two, but one, and the word of God is not two or three, but one; and now at this day ye may rest quite certain that, if God hath anything to say unto us, he hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son, and his own hand has closed and sealed the revelation of God. Woe unto us if we hear him not, and woe unto us if we listen to other voices. Indeed, if we be the sheep of Christ we shall not regard new voices, for our Lord hath said it, “A stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers.” The true gospel comes through Christ as the Mediator, and through him alone, and that which comes otherwise is not the gospel.

The true gospel has Christ’s divine person as its glory, and there can be no gospel without this. Christ is God, and in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. In the person of Christ the divinity has come down to us to heal our diseases and remove our griefs. Now, if you hear of a gospel which begins by saying that Christ is not the Only-begotten of the Father, or that he is not the Son of God, close your ears to it, for it is not the gospel of God. Unless Jesus be extolled as certainly God over all, blessed for ever, the preaching is not the gospel.

Jesus Christ is the essence of the gospel: he himself is the good news, as well as the medium of it. The good news is that God hath sent his only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. Eternal redemption has been obtained for us by the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and this is the gospel. There is pardon through his blood, justification through his righteousness, and sanctification through his Spirit. Complete salvation is freely provided for believers in him, and the grace of God through him is abundantly displayed to the very chief of sinners. God hath made him to be unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; in fact, all the blessings that are needed to lift man up into the favour of God, and keep him there for ever, are stored up in the person of Jesus, in whom God’s love hath displayed itself to the fullest degree. Jesus is the sum and substance, crown and glory of the gospel. If, then, you hear a gospel in which the freewill of man is spoken of as the main agent, in which the works of man, or the forms and ceremonies practised by priests, are set up as being fundamental things, reject such teaching, for it is not the good news from heaven. The one good news is this, – “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” Let others preach what they please; as for us, “we preach Christ crucified.” Jesus himself preached the very gospel of the gospel when he cried, “Come *unto me*, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

Now then, brethren, for I speak to many of you who teach the gospel, I beseech you to recollect my simple text of to-day, and henceforth teach nothing apart from Christ. The teaching of doctrines is not the teaching of the gospel if those doctrines be held in a dry, didactic style apart from Christ. Suppose I preach the doctrine of election – that is one thing;

but unless I preach that we are chosen in Christ I have left out the foundation, and my teaching crumbles to the ground: as a bowing wall shall it be, and as a tottering fence. Suppose I preach final perseverance, it is well; but I have not preached the gospel unless I show that it is because Jesus lives we shall live also, and that the preservation of the saints depends on their union with him. Suppose I am teaching justification, it is not the true justification unless it is the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus which I hold forth. Herein I commend to you the example of the earlier preachers of the church. From such of their writings as remain we gather that they dwelt much upon the actual events of the Redeemer's life. They are not always so clear as one could wish upon the great doctrines as Paul gives them to us, but there is one point in which they excel. You may not hear enough from them about justification by faith, but you hear a great deal concerning the precious blood of Christ: they do not always speak so clearly upon regeneration as we could desire, but they speak much of the resurrection of Christ, and of the newness of life which his saints enjoy in virtue thereof. Pardon to them is a washing in the blood of Christ: conversion is being called by Christ: resurrection is a risen Christ. Everything is brought out as a matter of fact arising from the actual life and death of the Saviour, and I am free to confess that I greatly admire this way of preaching the gospel. How does Paul put it? What was the gospel to him? Hear him: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures; and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve." Thus, you see, Paul's body of divinity was the life and death of that only embodied divinity, the Lord Jesus. My brethren, always set forth the gospel in close connection with your Lord, fetching it, as it were, out of him. The juice of the grape is pleasant, but if you would know what it is in all its purity keep the grapes near you, and press them in the vineyard where they grow. So the gospel is the wine of Christ, but it is sweetest when it flows fresh from the cluster. Preach Jesus Christ himself when you preach his doctrine, or else you may make the doctrine to be like the stone at the door of his sepulchre, whereas it ought to be like a throne of ivory on which, like another Solomon, your Lord sits resplendent.

Some preach experience, and they do well; but they should be exceedingly careful to keep Jesus very prominent. We have a school of brethren who preach little else than experience, and I do not condemn them; but what is the experience of a poor fellow-sinner to me? How does it help me to hear that he groans as I do, or sings as I do? It may be of some small service to me, but there are more excellent things. I want to know how Jesus felt, and what Christ can do for my brother and for me. Experience is admirable when Jesus Christ is set forth in it; but if you take up an experimental vein of things, whether of human corruption, or of human perfection, and Jesus Christ is put in the background, you are marring the gospel. Jesus is the one foundation, and there is no gospel apart from him.

So, too, with practice. By all means let us have practical preaching, and plenty of it, and let it come down sternly and faithfully on the vices of the times; but merely to preach against this and that vice, and extol this and that virtue, is a mission fit enough for Socrates or

Plato, but does not well beseem a minister of Jesus Christ. Set Jesus forth, my practical brother. His example shames vice and encourages virtue. Set him up as the mirror of all perfection, and in him men will see what they ought to be, and learn how to come at it. Jesus Christ, then, is the only gospel. We leave that point, being abundantly sure that you are persuaded of it.

III. Thirdly. THERE IS NO HOPE OF SALVATION BUT THAT WHICH IS BUILT UPON CHRIST. This is another point upon which I need not speak much. I will only spend a few minutes in talking upon certain other hopes. No doubt some think it must be well with them because they were brought up from their childhood most respectably, their parents were excellent Christian people, and they believe that they themselves, having never done anything very wrong, are no doubt safe. Ah, my dear hearers, if this is your only hope, you are lost, for you are dead in sin. That which is born of the flesh, – the best of flesh that ever was – is flesh, and flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. You must be born again, you must have a far better hope than any which can spring out of your birth and your relations. “Ay, but,” saith another, “I had all the ceremonies of the church performed upon me.” Yes, and it makes no difference to me what church it was. If you are building even upon rites which God has given, they will not suffice you; they cannot bear the weight of your soul. Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, or fifty thousand sacraments, if men were to make so many, would not help you one solitary inch. The only foundation for your soul’s hope must be Christ, and none of these outward things. “Ah,” saith another, “but I have diligently performed a great many good works.” I would to God you had ten times as many good works; but if you have committed one single sin no works can save you. All the good works of the best men that ever lived would make but a rotten foundation for them if they were to place reliance thereon. Abound in good works, but do not trust them. Human merit is a foundation of sand. “But I have had special spiritual feelings,” says one; “I have been broken down, I have been lifted up.” Yes, you may have been crushed down to hell’s door, and lifted up to heaven’s gate, but there is nothing in feelings and excitements which can be a ground of hope. “Why,” says one, “it has troubled me that I have not had these feelings.” Do not let it trouble you, but go to Jesus Christ and rest in him; feelings or no feelings. High frames and low frames are delusions all, if they be trusted in. We can no more be saved by our feelings than by our works. “Oh, but,” saith another, “I have confidence that I am saved, for I have had a wonderful dream, and, moreover, I heard a voice, and saw a vision.” Rubbish all! Dreams, visions, voices! Throw them all away. There is not the slightest reliance to be placed upon them. “What, not if I saw Christ?” No, certainly not, for vast multitudes saw him in the days of his flesh, and died and perished after all. “But surely a dream will save me.” It will give you a dreamy hope, and when you awake in the next world your dream will be gone. The one thing to rest upon is the more sure word of testimony, – Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and whosoever believeth in him is not condemned. I believe in him, and, therefore, I am not condemned. Why do I believe my sin to be forgiven? Because Jesus died to put away the sins of believers, and there is no condemnation to those who are in him. Why do I believe myself to be justified? Because he that believeth is justified; the word of God says so. How do I know that I am saved? Because Jesus Christ has declared that whosoever believeth in him is not

condemned. To believe in him is to trust in him, to make him my foundation. I do trust in him, he is my foundation, and I am saved, or else his word is not true. I know that his word is true, and therefore I am at rest. It is written, "He that believeth in him hath everlasting life." I believe in him, therefore I have everlasting life. I have his promise that I shall never perish, neither shall any pluck me out of his hand; therefore I shall never perish, neither shall any separate me from his love.

You see, then, there is no hope of salvation but what is fixed upon Christ alone; and I do invite and entreat you, if any of you have any hope which goes beyond Christ or beside Christ, get rid of it, throw it on a dunghill, and loathe it as an insult to God. Do as the man did with the bad bank note. When he found it was a forgery he buried it, and ran away as fast as he could, for fear anybody should think the note had ever been in his possession. So, if you are trusting in anything that is not of Christ, bury your faith, and run away from it, for it is a false confidence, and will work ill to your soul. Let your faith cry, "None but Christ": all-saving faith delights in that cry. For eternal salvation, "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid."

IV. Our last point is this, – there is NO CHRISTIAN BUT THE MAN BUILT ON JESUS CHRIST. Here is a Christian, and of one thing in him I am sure: I cannot tell whether he holds Arminian views or Calvinistic views, but if he is a Christian he has no foundation but Christ. Here is a person who reverences the Pope, here is another who glories in the name of Protestant, here is a third who is a Baptist: which is the Christian out of these? I answer, he is the Christian that is built on Christ, whoever he may be; but if he can do without Christ he is not worthy the name of Christian. What do we mean? Why this, I mean first, every man to be a Christian must *rest his whole soul upon Christ* as to eternal salvation. There must be no stuttering or stammering over that; there must be no mixing up the merits of Jesus with priests or ceremonies: no, it must be a clear, straight line, – Christ for me, Christ everything for me, my sole and only hope. Any deviation here is fatal. On the cross is written, *Spes unica*, and it remains the one only hope of a burdened soul.

Next, if you are to be a Christian, *Christ must be your model*; by the aid of his Holy Spirit, you must try to do what he would have done in your position and under your circumstances. You are not to say, "I cannot follow Christ in this": you are never to renounce his leadership. If you do you must give up being a Christian, because you are bound to take up his cross and follow him. He claims to be your King when he becomes your Saviour. A true Christian is a man who builds upon Christ as his model as walls are built on a foundation. A true Christian is one whose growing up is in Christ, for, strange to say, the temple of God grows. Nor need we wonder, for it is a living temple. I have seen magnificent pieces of architecture, masterpieces, and it has struck me when I looked at them that they must have grown. An ordinary, clumsy bit of work displays the mason and the carpenter, but perfect architecture looks as if it grew; and Christ's church does grow, for Christ's people grow. But all our up-growing must come out of Christ. When a man says, "Years ago I used to worship with these Christian people, and I felt very happy with them, but I have now more education and have got beyond them," he is guided by his pride and not by grace. No true Christian talks so. The higher he grows the more he grows into Christ; the wiser he is the more he shows the

wisdom of Christ. If he has begun aright he may advance as far as he can, but he never can advance beyond Christ; he will get to be less and Christ will be more and more to him, for he is not a Christian who does not still stick to this, – that the foundation goes as far as he means to go, and he builds never beyond that, but builds upward upon that, and upon that alone.

And he, again, is the true Christian who *lives for Christ*, to whom Christ's glory is the great object of his being. He is a Christian who reckons that time wasted which is not used for Jesus, that substance wasted which is not used in obedience to Jesus: who considers that he does not live except as Christ lives in him.

Brothers and sisters, I pray that you may all be Christians of this sort, only do let it be with you evermore Jesus Christ. I do not like to preach a sermon without feeling the presence of my Master. I have done so, but never to my own comfort. I cannot bear to come away from the Monday evening prayer-meeting without feeling that the Lord has been there, and he generally is. The true heart does not like to engage in any kind of enterprise without first consulting him, and doing it in his sight. We are a very busy church, and I want you, as a busy church doing a great deal, always to keep the Master near you. The most holy work gets to be mere routine, to be done mechanically, unless we enjoy his dear love, and sweet presence, and blessed smile in the doing of his will. Sit at Jesus' feet with Mary as well as work for him like Martha. May he be the foundation of everything, not only of the church, but of our hope, of our character, of every little thing we do. When you are laying the first stone of a new enterprise, lay it upon Christ with fair colours. Set it in the vermilion of his precious blood; perfume it with the oil of gratitude, and lay it upon him alone; so shall you build for eternity, and glorify his precious name.