

NO GOING OUT

A SERMON

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“You shall abide in him.” John 2:27

I HAD not thought to have taken these words as a text this morning, having gone through the preceding clauses of this same verse last Lord's day morning; but the words have abode with me, though other scriptures and other subjects have kindly opened up to me, and pressed themselves upon my mind; but still this seemed to abide very powerfully with me, and I thought, as it was the sum of all contained in the preceding clauses, it might not be unprofitable to have one more discourse upon these words, “You shall abide in him.” This is the sum of the lesson which that divine anointing spoken of in the preceding clauses, had taught Christians in that day; and it is the sum of the lesson which Christians are taught now; and it is the sum of the lesson which Christians will be taught down to the end of time. And there are several words that suggest themselves upon this matter of abiding in him. It seems, in the first place, to say, we must abide in him if we are safe. It seems, in the next place, to say that those who are thus taught are willing to abide in him; and in the next place, it seems to say that those who have this necessity and this willingness may abide in him; and it seems also to say that those who have this necessity, and willingness, and divine approbation, that there is a certainty in their position, they shall abide in him. Now, to abide in him is to abide in the faith, to abide in Jesus Christ, to abide in the love of God. Whenever this form of speech is used, it always means to abide in the faith of Christ. I will, therefore, this morning describe as carefully as I can *what it is to be a true believer in Jesus Christ.*

The apostle describes this very beautifully in the 1st chapter of Colossians; and I will take a paragraph there to enable me to set this all-important matter forth. And in that paragraph we have these things first, there is the faith of redemption and forgiveness of sins; secondly, there is the faith of the headship of the Savior; and third, there is the faith of permanent peace by him; and fourth, there is the faith of final presentation before God by the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence, then, to be in the faith is to be delivered from the power of darkness, and to be translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. But how am I to know that I am delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son? for this is nothing else than being in the faith. Now the apostle says of Christ there, “In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” Now one evidence of being delivered from the power of darkness and being translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, is to see the suitability of Christ's redemption. In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” This is a characteristic by which the apostle distinguishes the kingdom of Christ; that in that light, the light of that

kingdom, and in that kingdom, there is redemption through his blood. Now, if you are a true believer, you are brought to feel that you are in bondage to sin, and that you are in bondage to death, that you are in bondage to the law, and that there is a responsibility under which you are, that you never can meet, except by your being eternally lost. You can meet it only by being cast into hell, that is the only way you can meet that responsibility. And if this matter has been laid home to your heart, and let us look well to this, for if the foundation be wrong, it is all wrong; and so if I have not the life of God in my soul, the root of the matter in me, then my religion will someday wither; but if it has an incorruptible root in me, then it can never wither. Hence, then, those who are thus brought into this kingdom, they feel and see their need of Christ's redemption, and they see that by his precious blood he has wrought eternal redemption from sin, and from the curse, and, of course, from hell and the grave; and that he has taken all their legal responsibility upon him, that they come out from under that state altogether. And then, notice something else, that we have not only redemption, but also the forgiveness of sins; by the same precious atoning blood that we have eternal redemption, by the same precious atoning blood we have forgiveness of sins. And as the redemption is eternal, consequently the forgiveness is entire; there shall be no more conscience of sin, there shall be no more remembrance of sin. Here, then, is marvelous light, in which we see a marvelous redemption, in which we see wonderful mercy and wonderful grace, in which we see forgiveness; and this endears to us a covenant God. "You shall abide in him." What can be, even going no further than this, what can be a better position than thus to be brought by divine power to feel our need of this eternal redemption, and to find that we have by the same precious atoning blood even the forgiveness of sins; that God, out of infinite respect to his dear Son, passes by all our sins; out of infinite love to us provided such a ransom; and that Christ in the fulness of his love to us, thus put our sin away; and the Holy Spirit, one in the same matter, has testified of and reveals to us the same delightful truth? This is one view which the apostle there gives as a characteristic and as an evidence of our being thus delivered from the power of darkness. For we once did not see that redemption as we now see it; we once did not feel our need of that forgiveness which is by the precious blood of Christ, as we now feel it; we once did not love God by that eternal redemption, as we now do; and we once were altogether strangers to those sweet feelings of the soul when the word comes with power, melts down the heart, and gives us a little foretaste of that pardoning love which in perfection is to be enjoyed when time shall be no more. Then the apostle passes on to the headship of Christ, concerning which he says many things. First, that he "is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature" the image "of the invisible God." Adam was made in the moral image of God. Adam was holy, righteous, the moral image of God, and was in this a figure of the Lord Jesus Christ. And here you have what I have often called and repeat it, here you have the localization of God. God created the world; but in all the world he had created, we could not see him anywhere localized; we could not see his moral image anywhere. We could see his wisdom, and his power, and his greatness and goodness, but we could not see his moral image. Presently here is a man formed. Adam, and there you have a moral image of God. That moral image by sin was destroyed. Jesus Christ is the antitypical Adam; in Jesus Christ God has localized himself; there he dwells, there he is met; and Christ is the visible image of God, expressive of the holiness, and righteousness, and integrity of the most high God. And the people of God, and it makes one's soul glow with love to God when we think of it, the people of God are to be conformed to this lovely image, not by anything that we are to do, not by anything of a creature kind; we are to be conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ by receiving him as our sanctification. Oh, how entire that conformity must be then, if he is to be our sanctification! We are to be conformed to his image by receiving him as our sanctification; how

entire, then, must that conformity be! You are to appear in his holiness, he your sanctification; and appear in his righteousness, and appear in his integrity, for integrity is an essential part of the image of God; everywhere God is represented as a God of truth. And so, he brings that sworn covenant into your soul which he, at Calvary's cross, confirmed. There you stand, a living believer in Christ, in the faith of redemption, in the faith of sin's abolition, in the faith of conformity to Christ; he your sanctification, your justification, and your surety; receiving into the soul the suretyship responsibility of Christ, the immutable oath of the blessed God, you are thus in the faith, you are so far in the faith. And some of you little ones, can you question this? You know you see the suitability of this redemption, the forgiveness of sin, and you know that conformity to Jesus Christ must be by he himself being your sanctification, your justification, and your surety, must not leave that out. You will find, though I have no time today for false gospels, only give a hint, that's all, but you will find generally among the false gospels there is very little said about the suretyship responsibility of Christ, though the Scriptures dwell largely upon it, especially the Epistle to the Hebrews, his being the surety. Why do they dwell so little upon the suretyship responsibility of Christ? Why, if they were to bring much of this in, it would occupy so much space there would be no room for the golden calf of duty-faith; there would be no room for the figment of their duty-faith system; and so they are obliged to keep the suretyship responsibility of Christ somewhat at a distance, in order to make room for what they supposed to be the gospel suretyship responsibility of sinners; and this is nothing else but the craft of the devil. But we will go straight on, as straight as we, can, at least. Now let us hear what the apostle says again: that this same person, who is our Redeemer, that this same person, by whom we have forgiveness, that this same person, who is the pattern to which we are to be conformed, and by whom, as we shall presently see, we are to be presented, that "he is before all things;" that is, that he stands at the head of all these spiritual things; he is the head of the whole new creation of God. Hence the apostle says, "For by him were all things created." I want you to watch me rather narrowly here, "For by him were all things, created that are in heaven and that are in earth." Now the apostle does not say, By him all things were created, heaven and earth; just notice that. Why, say you, was it not so? The apostle is not there speaking of the literal heavens, visible heavens; nor is he there speaking of the literal earth; nor is he there speaking of temporal things at all; he is speaking there exclusively of the new creation, as I will presently prove. "For, by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him." The apostle is speaking of him there as the Head of the new creation. To create signifies to bring things into form and into order. Hence, we are created anew in Christ Jesus. Now, then, all the order, all the joy, and all the pleasures that we shall have in heaven were brought into order by Jesus Christ. Mercy and truth in heaven were brought together by Jesus Christ, and righteousness and peace in heaven kiss each other by Jesus Christ. And thus all things in heaven he has created, or brought into order; and all things on earth, the law and gospel, he has made to agree; the promise and the precept he has made to agree; the old and the new covenant he has made to agree, "visible and invisible." The ordinances of God are visible; preaching is a visible ordinance; baptism is a visible ordinance; the Lord's Supper is a visible ordinance; prayer is a visible ordinance. And take Jesus Christ away, where would these visibilities of the new creation be? There would then be no gospel to preach; there would be no death and resurrection to signify by baptism; there would be no atoning blood and bread of life to signify by the Lord's Supper. These are the visibilities. "And things invisible." The life in the soul is invisible; the peace in the soul is invisible; the joy in the soul is, to the natural man, invisible; and the things not yet revealed, or rather these same things in their eternal perfection, are, as yet,

invisible. We know not what we shall be, but this we know, we shall be like him, and see him as he is. Faith, then, unites the soul to Christ as our Redeemer, as the way of forgiveness, as the image of God, as the head of all things, and as having created all things essential; prepared heaven for us, prepared a place for us. I take that as the explanation; and all things in earth, visible, pertaining to his kingdom, he has formed; and things invisible. "Whether they be thrones." Said the Savior to his twelve apostles, "You shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." And so, they did. They will never judge the tribes of Israel again; the apostles have given their judgment; there are the Epistles written, and the Epistles are a kind of representative of all the rest. "I have finished my work." I have occupied my apostolic throne; I have, by the Holy Ghost, given my judgment. And so, they all did. And who created these thrones? Jesus Christ. Where are your human manufactories, then, to make parsons? Jesus Christ creates his own ministers and forms the thrones of office and dignity they shall occupy. And all the people of God, do not think me out of order in this matter, are represented as kings, as reigning on thrones. Where is there a true Christian that is altogether, in his experience, a stranger to the following description of experience? "He raises up the poor out of the dust, and lifts up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory." Now, says the apostle Paul, "He has raised us up, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." And these thrones of honor that we now enjoy with Christ, these were created by him. Take him away, and down go the testimonies, the truths of the gospel, that are your thrones, and raise you up. His blessed promises, shall I say, are our thrones, where grace reigns, and we reign, and must reign forever. "Whether they be thrones or dominions." Then comes our dominion. As soon as ever the sinner is enthroned in oneness with Christ Jesus, he says, Here I am, with the reigning grace of God, the reigning name of Christ, the reigning truth of God; here am I, by faith in this covenant God, reigning over sin, reigning over the devil, reigning over hell, reigning over death, reigning over all, and I shall never be conquered until God himself shall be conquered, and my song shall never cease to be, "Hallelujah, the Lord God omnipotent reigns." It is the faith, therefore, of redemption, forgiveness, conformity, and the headship of Christ, including in that headship of Christ this spiritual enthronement, and this glorious dominion; they therefore take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom, and shall reign forever, even for ever and ever. "Or principalities." I have my ministerial principality. Why, say some, you are a prince, then. Why, of course I am. His people are called princes. He is the Prince of Peace, "even with the princes of his people." I have my ministerial principality, and I have my gospel principality as a Christian, and so have you yours; you have your experience, and you have your enjoyment, and you have to keep your principality. "The angels left their first estate:" as the margin reads it, "left their principality." You have a gospel principality, hold it fast. Christ has created that for you. Take him away, and you never would have had this gospel principality; never would you been brought into the principality of Christ; there had been no Prince to bring you in, and no principality for you to possess. But now you have a royal possession, that possession, the promises of the gospel; as says David, "Your statutes have I taken unto me, to be my heritage forever." "Or powers so the Lord's people possess various powers, the power of God's sovereignty, the power of Christ's righteousness, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the power of the promises. And there is a great beauty, too, in the collocation of those sentences. It commences with enthronement, and terminates with what seems beautifully to illustrate our text, "You shall abide in him." "Whether they be thrones" there I see a sinner raised up to sit together with Christ Jesus; he is enthroned in grace here, that he may be enthroned in glory hereafter. "Or dominions there I see the same man living in that dominion. "Or principalities", there I see him possessing this gospel portion, principality. Then comes "powers" so whatever power we need we

are to have, to enable us to hold fast what the Lord has given us, to keep by our throne, to keep by our dominion, and to keep by our principality. "Powers", it terminates with "powers," and it is used in the plural too. Hence, then, whatever power we need we shall have: if I have unusual powers to meet, I shall have unusual power with which to meet those powers. So that in every sense in which we need power, we shall have that power for us. "As your day is, so shall your strength be." Thus, then, all these new creation matters were created by him and for him. It is the new creation the apostle is there naming. People are so everlastingly fond of mixing up the old with the new. Old nature will be thrusting itself in; the old man must have a finger in the pie, if possible. But, notwithstanding all this, he must be put out; the creature must be rejected, and the voice of him that spoke as never man spoke, must stand good. "Behold," said Jesus, this same Person; "Behold, I make all things new." All must be new. Let the old go, let it all pass away, you must have new heavens and a new earth, and new creatures to dwell in and forever enjoy the same.

But again, he is not only thus the head of the new creation, and he brings us into this, but he is also "the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead;" that is, the firstborn in holiness, for no one was ever born holy before; he was the first, and all the rest are holy by him. He is the firstborn. Second, he is the firstborn in place. No other person was ever before born under the law, to be a surety for others, but he was. He was therefore the firstborn in holiness, and the firstborn in place. He was made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law. Honor to his dear and blessed name, thus, to come to our benighted, lost souls, and bring us up from this horrible pit, and remove the curse by his own infinitely precious, precious blood! He is also the firstborn not only in holiness and place, but also in dignity. Of no other child could it be said that "he is the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." He was not the firstborn in the order of time, chronologically speaking, but he was the firstborn in the order of holiness, in the order of place, and in the order of dignity. What say you to such a Jesus Christ as this? Are not all these relations which he bears, endearing our God to our souls? "The beginning." "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men." In the beginning of when? The beginning (I think) of the gospel dispensation. In the beginning of the gospel dispensation was the Word. In the 19th chapter of the Revelation, Christ is called the Word. In the beginning of the gospel dispensation was the Word. And the Word, Christ Jesus, all his lifetime was with God; he never went from him, as you see; he never went from God; and he was with God in his death, and in his resurrection, and in his ascension; he is with God now, and will be with him to eternity. "And the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by him," all things that pertain to this new creation, this new heaven, this eternal glory, "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." You could not be made a Christian without him, could not be a promise made without him, could not be a precept made without him, could not be an ordinance made without him, could not be any light made without him. "Without him was not anything made that was made," in this new creation. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." He is the first that ever rose without seeing corruption. "You will not suffer your Holy One to see corruption." He is the first and the last that ever rose from the dead as the resurrection of others; he is the first and the last that ever rose from the dead to the universal and eternal defeat of Satan, to the eternal triumph and glory of all the saints of God. And here everything is united. "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." The word *fulness* there, *all fulness*, does not give us a very clear idea of the meaning, at least, not to my poor dull mind. May I then take the liberty

of saying, that the same word which there, in the 1st chapter of Colossians, is translated “fulness,” is in the next chapter translated “complete” You are complete in him,” the same word. Now, “it pleased the Father that in him should all completeness dwell,” that is, it pleased the Father that by him everything should be completed. You see whatever Jesus Christ took in hand, he completed it. It was God’s pleasure that Jesus Christ should take certain things in hand, and it was God’s pleasure that Jesus Christ should complete those things. And so he took the law in hand, completed that; he took sin in hand, and completed the termination of that; he took the curse in hand, and destroyed that; he took death in hand, and conquered that; and he takes our troubles in hand, and conquers them; and he takes the promises in hand, and fulfils them; and last and not least, he takes you in hand, and completes you; and I am sure that it is not a little work to turn such a poor, dying, corrupt moth as you are, and as we all by nature are, into kings and priests to God. Now “it pleased the Father that in him should all completeness dwell;” that Christ should carry out to perfection everything he took in hand. Honor to his blessed name! I can’t help saying so; I feel almost as though I should like to leave off speaking and sit down and think. I cannot say half I feel upon these matters. There is something so overwhelmingly endearing in the thought that while we are such poor, short-coming creatures, erring and stumbling at almost everything, the dear Savior carried out everything to completeness; not a spot, nor blemish, nor wrinkle; not a superfluity nor a deficiency there; all is right. Blessed Jesus, then blessed God, to make it his pleasure to commit the completion of all things to him that was sure to do the Father’s will. And how has he done it? Why, with infinitely more pleasure than we can either hear of it or receive it. “I delight, O God, to do your will; yes, your law is within my heart.” There he carried it; there it rests, like the law in the ark, magnified and made honorable forever.

But, again, he is not only, then, our redemption, and the head of the new creation, and the head of the body, the church, completing everything; but he is also our permanent peace; having made peace, having reconciled by his cross things that are in heaven, the perfections of God, and things that are in earth, as I have said, law and gospel, old covenant and new, seeming contradictions reconciled, tribulations and consolations, make them all lie straight before he has done with them. And then, after he has brought about harmony in heaven and harmony in earth for us, making all things work for good for us, making them work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; “You,” says the apostle, “that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has he reconciled;” he has now reconciled, and has obtained peace, or made peace, by his cross. Here is our permanent peace. Our peace with God can never be broken. Our peace in ourselves may be broken, is broken, interrupted in ten thousand ways; but the bond of peace in Christ Jesus can never, no, never, be broken. Such is the faith of the gospel. It brings a sinner thus into oneness with Christ in his redeeming and forgiving precious blood; brings a sinner into oneness with Christ as the foundation, the author, of the new creation; brings the soul into oneness with Christ as the head of the body, the church; one with him who has said, “Because I live, you shall live also;” brings us into oneness with him as our peace. And now notice the summing up. I think the summing up there cannot be surpassed. “To present you,” now, here comes the ultimate object of this glorious gospel, this precious faith, “in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblameable, and unreprouable in his sight.” Ah, Christian, when you die, Jesus Christ will take you holy into heaven; he will take you there by his cleansing blood; not a spot shall be found about you. And not only without blame and without reproof, but unreprouable. It will not be possible for any one to blame you, or for you to blame yourself even. “Unblameable and unreprouable.” Who shall lay anything to the charge of the man that is brought

to receive Christ as his Redeemer; brought to receive Christ as the head of the new creation; brought to receive Jesus Christ as the way of peace; brought to receive him as our life, our light, sanctification, justification, redemption, and everything, indeed? He is all in all, who shall lay anything to the charge of such a man as this? God help us, then, to march forward. There is nothing awaiting us but the holiness of Christ to present us; there is nothing awaiting us but the righteousness of Christ to make us unblameable; there is nothing awaiting us but the Spirit of truth, so conforming us to the truth as to make us unrepensible in his sight, presenting us before the eyes of his glory with exceeding joy.

But the apostle, while he was a cheerful, delightful writer, had in his soul all the elements of the deepest solemnity; and therefore, after laying before us this beautiful description of the faith of the gospel, knowing that persons come into profession without possession; knowing that persons, from various causes, may become professors, but at the same time not possessors; the apostle, therefore, throws in not a conditional, but a delineative *if*. All this shall be yours; his redeeming blood shall be your redemption, your sins forgiven; he your head, and you justified, and sanctified, and presented holy, and without blame, and unrepensible, “*if* you continue in the faith.” If you are real possessors, you will, if mere professors you will not. That is the reason the apostle puts in the *if*. “If you continue in the faith, grounded and settled.” I do like that doctrine. That scripture always seems to say to me, married and settled. And so, I am married to Christ, and settled. Some people are more unsettled after they are married than they were before; but here I am married to Christ and settled; I am married to this covenant order of things and settled. “Grounded and settled; and be not moved away from the gospel which you have heard.” You know what kind of gospel the apostle preached, and he would not have any other, not from the best dressed up human being that could be found; no, not from an angel from heaven. And “which,” says the apostle, “was preached to every creature which is under heaven.” What does the apostle mean when he says, “Which was preached to every creature which is under heaven”? I have my view of that scripture, and (if spared) upon that “all nations” question we will have a sermon, if I feel led by the Lord to preach upon it. But I must just have another word. What is that that the will formed of God has such an irresistible affinity for? I say to myself; I am willing to go to heaven; I am willing to serve God; I am willing; but is my willingness of the right kind? I come to the word of God, and I say, Well now, I will, if possible, ascertain there what that order of things is that the will of which God is the author has such an irresistible affinity for, and I will try myself by it, whether I have the same affinity to the same order of things. If I have, then I am right. Now, I will mention three scriptures; 23rd Psalm, “Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.” Ah, says the free-will heart, I don’t like that. And the duty-faith professor says, Yes, yes, I believe it. Yes, just as I am speaking now; you can’t believe without stammering, though; no. But the man that knows what a poor creature he is, and knows what Jesus Christ is, he says, Ah, I see. “I will.” You will what, David? Why, “I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever;” where this goodness will always follow me and overcome my badness; and where this mercy will be sure to follow me and overcome my misery. “I will.” So, will I, David; two of us, at any rate. “I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” There is an irresistible affinity between the new, divinely formed will, and the eternal certainty of goodness and mercy. Another scripture; 27th Psalm. Now, let us have your confidence David; let us have your creed, and then your attachment to it. Well, my creed is this, “In the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion;” that is one; “in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me;” that is two; “he shall set me up upon a rock;” that is three. Well, you ought to express your will three times, now, David, one for each part of your creed. Well, he says, so I will. “I will offer in his

tabernacle,” that is where he hides me, and where the mercy-seat is, “sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord.” There is a threefold creed, and a threefold affinity to it. So, there is David’s creed, a creed of certainty, and the irresistible affinity of the will. “You shall abide in him.” So that the soul says, I will; God says, You shall; and so our *will* and his *shall* meet; together; sunder them if you can.

One more scripture, 110th Psalm: “Your people shall be willing in the day of your power;” that is, when he ascended to heaven, that was the day of his power. All power in heaven and earth was given to him; and he has made his people willing from that day to this. “In the beauties of holiness” and he is the beauty of holiness, “from the womb of the morning” the morning of the resurrection, “you have the dew of your youth.” And now comes the subject to which the new formed will has an irresistible affinity, an inseparable affinity. “The Lord has sworn, and will not repent, You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” And here the will unites with God’s immutable oath, unites with Christ’s eternal priesthood; and then our text comes in and confirms the whole, “You shall abide in him,”

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