

Christ All in All

Christ All in All

What Christ Is Made to Believers

Philip Henry



Soli Deo Gloria Publications
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Christ All in All: What Christ Is Made to Believers
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BIOGRAPHICAL PREFACE

Philip Henry

Philip Henry (1631–1696) grew up in the English royal court and then served as a minister in the Church of England until ejected under the Act of Uniformity.¹ He was born at Whitehall, Westminster, on August 24, 1631, to John and Magdalen Henry, the fourth of eight children. His father, John (1590–1652), of Welsh descent, settled in England early in life. He kept the orchards at the royal palace and later was Page of the Back Stairs, a court attendant, to the Duke of York (James Stuart, the second son of the king). His mother, Magdalen Rochdale (c. 1599–1645), was a godly woman who catechized her son, prayed with him daily, and taught him from William Perkins’s *Foundation of Christian Religion in Six Principles*. As a

1. I am indebted in this preface to J. B. Williams, ed., *The Lives of Philip and Matthew Henry* (1825; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1974); Matthew Henry Lee, ed., *Diaries and Letters of Philip Henry* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Co., 1882); Matthew Henry, *An Account of the Life and Death of Mr. Philip Henry*, in *The Miscellaneous Works of the Rev. Matthew Henry* (London: Joseph Ogle Robinson, 1830), 9–150; Alexander Gordon, “Henry, Philip,” *Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (repr., London: Oxford, 1921), 9:575–77; Richard L. Greaves, “Henry, Philip,” *Oxford DNB*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 26:587–91; Joel R. Beeke and Randall J. Pederson, *Meet the Puritans, with a Guide to Modern Reprints* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2006), 334–38.

child, Philip played with Prince Charles (later King Charles I) and Prince James (later King James II). He later thanked God for delivering him from the temptations of riches and power, in part through the disruption of the court by the tragic civil war in 1642.

Henry received an early education in Latin at St. Martin-in-the-Field and went in 1643, at about twelve years of age, to Westminster School, where he first studied under Thomas Vincent (1634–1678). As an upperclassman, he studied under the Greek and Latin scholar Richard Busby (1606–1695), a devout Puritan, who regarded Henry as his favorite student and asked him to assist him in collecting material for a Greek grammar.

Henry's mother saw to it that her son attended the lectures (weekday sermons) at Westminster Abbey, hearing Puritans such as Stephen Marshall and Philip Nye. She died on March 6, 1645, saying shortly before her passing, "My head is in heaven and my heart is in heaven, 'tis but one step more and I shall be there too."² By April 1647, Henry's heart was in heaven too, for he records of that time that "the Lord was graciously pleased to bring me home effectually to himself by the means of my school-master, Mr. Richard Busby, at the time of the solemn preparation for the Communion then observed."³

On December 15, 1647, Henry entered Christ Church College at Oxford with the support of his godfather, the Earl of Pembroke. When visiting his father in Whitehall in January of 1649, Henry grieved to see the beheading of King Charles I. Henry received his bachelor's degree from Christ Church in 1651 and his master's degree in 1652. John Owen, then dean of Christ Church, arranged for him to serve as a tutor in the

2. Henry, *Diaries and Letters*, 9.

3. Henry, *Diaries and Letters*, 10.

college. His father's death in 1652 left the family in financial distress, which was relieved by the occasional gifts of friends.

Henry delivered his first sermon at South Hinksey, Oxfordshire, on January 9, 1653. For several months he tutored the sons of Judge John Paleston, of Emral Hall, Flintshire, while he also began preaching in the prosperous Worthenbury Chapel in the parish of Bangor-Is-Coed, Wales. He received Presbyterian ordination at Prees, Shropshire, on September 16, 1657, which he called "a day never to be forgotten,"⁴ and was settled at Worthenbury, where he remained for several years.

He made a strong Calvinistic confession, although he did not support the Presbyterian system of church government. In 1658, he helped organize a North Wales association of clergymen consisting of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Independents. He authored the section of the association's agreement that dealt with worship.

In 1660 Henry had married Katherine Matthews (1629–1707), only daughter and heir of Daniel Matthews of Broad Oak and Bronington, Flintshire. The marriage would be blessed with six children—two sons, John and Matthew (the famous commentator), and four daughters, Sarah, Katherine, Eleanor, and Ann, all of whom professed salvation in Christ alone. Uncommonly for that time, Philip and Katherine Henry lost no children in infancy and lived to witness the marriages of all six of their children.

Though Henry welcomed the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, he refused to conform to the usages of the Book of Common Prayer and would not receive ordination by the episcopacy. Consequently, he was repeatedly cited to appear before the authorities and finally ejected from his curacy at Worthenbury in October of 1661. On the one hand, Henry

4. Henry, *Diaries and Letters*, 58.

had strong royalist sympathies and rejected separation from the national church; on the other hand, he held to Puritan convictions against ceremonies that he deemed “popish,” such as making the sign of the cross in baptism. He was forced to leave Worthenbury in 1662 and moved to Broad Oak, Maelor Saesneg, just across the Welsh border from Whitchurch, Shropshire.

Henry’s years at Worthenbury yielded numerous conversions. His ministry was earnest and loving. His son Matthew Henry wrote:

He adapted his method and style to the capacities of his hearers, fetching his similitudes for illustration from those things which were familiar to them. He did not shoot the arrow of the word over their heads in high notions, or the flourishes of affected rhetoric; nor under their feet by blunt and homely expressions; but to their hearts in close and lively applications. His delivery was very graceful and agreeable, neither noisy and precipitate on the one hand, nor dull and slow on the other. His doctrine dropped as the dew, and distilled as the soaking rain, and came with a charming, pleasing power, such as many bore witness to, that have wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.⁵

When the Act of Uniformity took effect on St. Bartholomew’s Day, August 24, 1662, Henry was silenced as a minister. “Our sins have made Bartholomew-day, in the year 1662, the saddest day for England since the death of Edward the Sixth, but even this [is] for good,” he wrote.⁶ He gave up his house and left Worthenbury, moving his family to a property

5. Henry, *Account of the Life and Death of Mr. Philip Henry*, in *Miscellaneous Works*, 39.

6. Henry, *Diaries and Letters*, 119.

inherited by his wife at Broad Oak, Flintshire. With some brief intervals, Henry remained there for the last thirty-four years of his life, during which he taught theological students in his home.

Despite submitting for the most part to being silenced as a preacher, Henry was often harassed, arrested, fined, and even imprisoned for alleged breaches of the laws known as the Clarendon Code. In October 1663, Henry and thirteen other preachers were imprisoned for four days at Hanmer, Flintshire, on suspicion of fomenting insurrection. In March 1665, Henry was summoned to Malpas, Cheshire, for baptizing one of his own children. At the end of the month, he was treated as a layman and made sub-collector of taxes for the township of Iscoyd. The Five Mile Act of 1665 placed him in a quandary, for Broad Oak was only four miles away from Worthenbury. Henry thus moved to Whitchurch, Shropshire, where he regularly attended the local churches. In February 1668, he preached in the parish church of Betley, Staffordshire; distorted accounts of that event were reported to the House of Commons, and Henry had to wait until 1672 before he was licensed to preach in his home as a Presbyterian, though he continued to favor participation for orthodox nonconformists in the parish system. Although the royal declaration of indulgence was soon withdrawn, the local authorities allowed Henry to continue preaching without interference until 1681, when he was fined for holding unauthorized meetings for worship called “conventicles.”

Henry was publicly vocal on contemporary issues. In 1682, he engaged in public discussion with Quakers at Llanfyllin, Montgomeryshire. He participated in a debate on ordination at Oswestry, Shropshire, with William Lloyd, then bishop of St. Asaph, and Henry Dodwell. At the time of the Monmouth Rebellion in 1685, Henry was incarcerated in Chester Castle for

three weeks under a general order from the lord-lieutenant. He added his name to a cautiously worded address to James II in September 1687.

With the accession of William and Mary and the passing of the Act of Toleration in 1689, Henry was able to preach more openly to large congregations at Broad Oak and in neighboring towns, though continuing to worship at the Church of England chapel at Whitewell (Iscoyd), Maelor Saesneg. He accepted the terms of the Act of Toleration, but he would have preferred toleration without subscription.

Henry did not accept another pastoral call. He continued to work hard, but his health was declining. He succumbed to colic at Broad Oak on June 24, 1696. His last words were, “O death, where is thy [sting]?”⁷ He was buried in Whitchurch, where a marble tablet was erected in his memory. He was survived by his wife, Katherine, who outlived him by eleven years, as well as by several children and grandchildren.

Henry was noted for his exemplary, Christ-centered worship and godly conduct. “See your need of Christ more and more,” he once wrote to his son, “and live upon Him. No life like it; so sweet, so safe. My Savior is mine in all things. We cannot be discharged from the guilt of any evil we do, without His merit to satisfy; we cannot move in the performance of any good required, without His Spirit and grace to assist and enable for it; and when we have done all, that all is nothing, without His mediation and intercession to make it acceptable, so that every day in everything He is all in all.”⁸

Henry was deeply committed to seeking peace among his brethren at all personal cost. His entire demeanor breathed catholicity and love, even when he disagreed with others. His

7. Philip Henry, *Christ All in All* (repr., Swengel, Pa.: Reiner, 1970), ix.

8. Henry, *Diaries and Letters*, 345.

teaching and preaching displayed the reasonableness and pleasantness of vital Christianity. He was a truly happy man, despite being persecuted much in his life for upholding Christ's name. He loved biblical truth, taught and preached it ably, and died in the assurance of it. His own more famous son, Matthew Henry, was a great beneficiary of his father's profound influence. At his father's funeral, Matthew Henry said:

Those that have any sense of justice and gratitude, cannot but honour and respect a *father* that has been the instrument of their *being*; especially, if a kind and loving one;—cannot but respect a tutor, that has been the instrument of their learning; especially if a skilful and faithful one;—cannot but respect a minister that hath been a spiritual father, that hath been the instrument of their regeneration; especially, if continuing a tender and faithful overseer. Now, if any one of these three relations challenge such a profound regard, what may justly be expected when these meet in one and the same person? Surely, I ought to reckon such a one worthy of double, nay, treble honour.⁹

Shortly after his father's funeral, Matthew Henry wrote: "I bless God that I ever had such a father, whose temper was so very happy, and his gifts and graces so very bright; one that recommended religion, and the power of godliness, by a cheerful and endearing conversation...to that grace be the glory of all the benefit that my father was to me, and the comfort I was to him."¹⁰

Though not as prolific an author as his son Matthew, Philip Henry did do considerable writing. During his lifetime he published no books, but left a number of manuscripts with his

9. Williams, *Philip and Matthew Henry*, 291.

10. Williams, *Philip and Matthew Henry*, 65–66.

family, including sermons, an exposition of Genesis 1–11, and many volumes of his diaries. In his will, he bequeathed several of these handwritten manuscripts to his children, each of whom was to select one to be “transcribed into their hearts and lives.” In the nineteenth century, John B. Williams published several volumes from Henry’s manuscripts, including *Eighteen Sermons* (1816), *Skeletons of Sermons* (1834), *Expositions upon Genesis* (1839), *Remains* (1848), and *Diaries and Letters* (1882).

Christ All in All, reprinted several times in the last two centuries, has become Philip Henry’s best-known work. His daughter Sarah Savage (1664–1752) treasured its forty-one sermons from his manuscripts, then titled “What Christ Is Made of God to True Believers in Forty Particulars” (based on Colossians 3:11, “Christ is all and in all”). Savage wrote in her diary that the “sweet wholesome truths” of this book are “food for my poor soul. He being ‘dead yet speaketh.’ And what is it he says, but that which his heart was always full of? Christ. Christ. Christ. Methinks I hear him still: Oh, make Christ your all!”¹¹

Though not published until 1830 as an appendix to the second volume of the *Miscellaneous Works* of Matthew Henry, Henry’s forty-one sermons on the names and benefits of Christ soon appeared in both England and United States as a book published as *Christ All in All*. The new title was taken from the last two sermons on Colossians 3:11, which Henry named, “Christ is Our All.”

In this classic work of practical Christology, Henry expounds the riches of Christ in forty benefits that meet a believer’s every need: the foundation, food, root, raiment, head, hope, refuge, righteousness, light, life, peace, Passover,

11. J. B. Williams, ed., *Memoirs of the Life and Character of Mrs. Sarah Savage* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1845), 185; cf. Henry, *Christ All in All*, xi.

portion, propitiation, freedom, fountain, wisdom, way, ensign, example, door, dew, sun, shield, strength, song, horn, honor, sanctification, supply, resurrection, redemption, lesson, ladder, truth, treasure, temple, ark, altar, and all. The whole treatise makes for a compelling work on Christ's all-sufficiency.

The chapters are edifying and warmly experiential. Each chapter is based on the notes of a sermon; hence, incomplete sentences abound. The original wording is retained throughout. Bracketed subheadings and bracketed words are added occasionally for the sake of clarity. Obscure words or words that have changed in meaning are footnoted accordingly. All Scripture quotations are in the King James Version, with the abbreviations and references to the texts cited updated according to the standard style. Capitalization, spelling, and punctuation have been modernized for ease of reading. Archaic pronouns and verb forms have also been updated, except those directly addressing deity. Many thanks to Ryan Hurd for doing the bulk of the editorial work; it was easy to follow in his footsteps as the final editor. Many thanks too to our proofreading/typesetting couple, Gary and Linda den Hollander.

May God richly bless the reading of this volume for the glory of His precious name, the salvation of the lost, and the edification of His saints, so that they may grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ Jesus.

—Joel R. Beeke

CHAPTER 1

Christ Is the Foundation, and Believers Are the Building

*For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which
is Jesus Christ.*

—1 CORINTHIANS 3[:11]

It is not here alone but in many other scriptures both of the Old and New Testament that our Lord Jesus Christ is held forth to us under the notion of a foundation, and believers, the church of the firstborn, under the notion of a great building, reared upon that foundation. The explaining and applying of this will be our present work.

Doctrine: That our Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation, and believers are the building reared upon that foundation.

There is a like union and relation between Him and them as there is between a foundation and a building. Now that relation and union is very near and close. The closer the better. Such is that between Christ and His church. They that are joined to the Lord are one with Him (1 Cor. 6:17). “For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one,” of one piece (Heb. 2:11).

It is also very necessary and useful. The building cannot stand without it. A foundation may stand long enough without a building on it, but no building can stand without a foundation

under it—and they must be joined, united. So Christ might have been without us, but we cannot be without Him.

But are not the apostles and prophets the foundation (Eph. 2:20; cf. Matt. 16:18)?

I answer: It is not said, the foundation, the apostles, but the foundation of the apostles—that is, the foundation which they themselves rested on. Had the apostles and prophets been asked, one by one, Who is your foundation? On whom do you build for life and happiness? they would have said, “Jesus Christ.” He was their all in all and therefore should be ours.

Christ was the foundation which they reported and preached of to others. Paul says here, “I laid the foundation” ([1 Cor. 3:]10). Whom? Himself? No, no foundation but Christ (v. 11). The prophets prophesied of Him as to come. The apostles pointed at Him as already come. “Behold the Lamb of God,” said John the Baptist.

As for that place in Matthew [16:18], by “this rock” is not meant the person of Peter. A poor rock for the church to be built on. A rock shaking immediately (v. 22) and worse afterward (ch. 26). But it is the confession of Peter that is intended: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (16:16). “Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” [v. 18].

But is it not said that Jesus Christ is the cornerstone? The cornerstone is not the foundation!

I answer: His being the cornerstone does not hinder His being the foundation also. He is both in different respects. “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: he that believeth shall not make haste” (Isa. 28:16). The use of a cornerstone is to unite the sides of the building, yea, and of the foundation too. That Christ does by making Jew and Gentile one. “But now in Christ Jesus ye

who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us” (Eph. 2:13–14). He that could join those two distant sides and make them one can certainly (and we hope will in His own due time) reconcile lesser differences. The corner post is reckoned very material¹ in a timber fabric, and so the cornerstone. “The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner” (Ps. 118:22).

[Christ as a Foundation]

Show the properties of Christ as a foundation [and] what kind of foundation He is.

1. A laid foundation (Isa. 28:16). “I lay”—that is, God the Father, one that knew well enough how to do it, a God of infinite wisdom and power. The Lord Jesus did not take to Himself this honor of being a mediator. He was called to it, appointed of God for such a purpose. And this is our comfort and joy. He that could best tell what would best serve to satisfy His offended justice here fixed on His Son for that purpose: “Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom” (Job 33:24). “I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people” (Ps. 89:19).

2. A low foundation. Foundations are wont² to be laid low—the lower the surer. So here, the Lord Jesus Christ was laid very low that He might be a meet³ foundation for us (Phil. 2:8). He humbled Himself.

There were several steps of His humiliation:

-
1. *Material*: essential.
 2. *Wont*: accustomed to.
 3. *Meet*: fitting.

Into the human nature, to be made a man. That was a long step downward. That the Word should become flesh was more than if a star should turn into a clod.

Into subjection under the law. “When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Gal. 4:4)—the moral law, nay, the ceremonial law to be circumcised, presented in the temple, redeemed and ransomed with two turtles, bound to go up to all the feasts.

Into poverty and persecution, contempt and contradiction, to be spurned and trampled on.

To death itself, even the death of the cross, painful, shameful. It is called lifting up, but it was humiliation.

To the grave. When He was buried, He was, as other foundations, laid under the ground.

And there was a necessity for all this—without it, no atonement, no reconciliation.

3. A foundation of stone (Isa. 28:16). A stone is the most fit of all other things to make foundations of because [it is] hard and firm and yet easily hewn. Now Jesus Christ is a stone foundation, a rock. The Israelites “did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ” (1 Cor. 10:4).

4. A foundation out of sight. All foundations are so. We see the building, but we do not see the foundation. Now such a foundation is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is out of sight. Not below us, as He once was, under the earth, but above in glory.

His person is out of sight. Yet we love Him (1 Peter 1:8).

His presence is invisible. He is with us everywhere, especially in His ordinances, but it is in an invisible way. We feel it; we do not see it. “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20).

“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” ([28:]20).

His proceedings are invisible—the proceedings of His grace within, the proceedings of His providence without. “Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron” (Ps. 77:20).

5. A precious foundation (Isa. 28:16). Though all stones in their places are useful, yet they are not all precious stones. Few buildings are built on precious stones, but the church is. Christ is precious in Himself. He is of great worth, the fairest of ten thousands. He is precious in their account and esteem (1 Peter 2:7). To others, He is a stone of stumbling, but, to them that believe, He is precious.

6. A permanent foundation (Isa. 26:4), the Rock of ages, from everlasting to everlasting. The saints have been building on Him from the beginning and will be to the end of time. “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb. 13:8). His righteousness is everlasting righteousness. His promises, unchangeable promises.

7. An elect, chosen foundation (Isa. 28:16), chosen of God and precious.

8. An experienced, tried foundation. He was tried by God, who laid a load on Him; by men and devils, who did their best against Him, yet all to no purpose; by the saints, who have had occasion to make use of Him, and He never failed them

[Our Duty to This Foundation]

Show what is our duty in reference to this foundation.

1. To believe all this concerning Him: that God has laid Him purposely for a foundation, anointed and appointed Him to

be a prince and savior, given Him to the world that “whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” [John 3:16].

2. To behold and see our need of Him. There is no rearing a building without a foundation. We have each of us a building to rear, and what foundation have we? None in ourselves—no righteousness of our own to commend us to God, no strength or ability to anything that is good.

3. To renounce all other foundations. They are all but sand. He that builds on the sand, his building will fall. “Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it” (Matt. 7:24[–27]).

4. To repair to Him in the way of faithful and fervent prayer. Tell Him you are sensible of your need of Him, [and] you are undone without Him.

5. To build on Him. In the great business of justification, to roll and rest your soul by faith on His meritorious righteousness—none but Christ, none but Christ. In all our perils and dangers, personal or public, to fly to Him, to trust in Him, to rely on Him. Faithful is He that has promised. “Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defense; I shall not be

greatly moved” (Ps. 62:1–2; cf. 56:1). “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (46:1).

6. To beware what we build on this foundation in opinion, in practice. “Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward” (1 Cor. 3:12–14). If you build loose, vain, careless walking, your hopes built will be accordingly wood, hay, stubble.

[What Kind of Building This Is]

“Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. 2:20–22). “Ye are built,” says the apostle—you believing Ephesians, Christians, saints.

Show what kind of building the church is; what are the properties of it. There is a great deal of difference in buildings. The church is a none-such⁴ building.

1. It is a spiritual building. Other buildings are made of wood and stone and such like materials. But this building is made of men and women: “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5). What our Lord Jesus says of His kingdom is true of His building, that

4. *None-such*: something without equal [N.B., variously spelled throughout Henry’s work].

it is not of this world—in it, but not of it (John 15:19). It is a building of souls. Souls united to Him by faith are those that make up this building.

2. It is a spacious building; a building of large and vast extent; a great house, nay, a great city, nay, a great kingdom from the rising of the sun to the setting of the same—east, west, north, and south (Matt. 8:11). It is true, in comparison with the Devil’s building, it is but small, a remnant, a little, little flock. But in itself considered, it is exceedingly wide and comprehensive. “I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands” (Rev. 7:9).

3. It is a high building. Though part of it be here below, yet the top of it is as high as heaven. There it is that the glorious angels are and the spirits of just men made perfect—all of this building. And then for those that belong to it that are below, their aims and desires are high. Their hopes and expectations are high. Their affections and conversations are above. “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Phil. 3:20). They trample on the great things of the world as dirt, as Moses did. “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter” (Heb. 11:24).

4. It is a holy building (Eph. 2:21). “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Cor. 3:16). Every building is not a temple. The church is God’s temple. The temple was a place set apart for God—from all other uses for holy uses. So “the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself” [Ps. 4:3]. And it is our duty to set ourselves apart to be for Him, wholly, solely. This temple

is called a house of prayer (Isa. 56:7). Holiness to the Lord is written on the front of this building. It is the house that He dwells in. “His foundation is in the holy mountains. The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob” (Ps. 87:1–2). “For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it” (132:13–14).

5. It is a living building. No other is so. The same who are quickened are “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets” (Eph. 2:20). The foundation is a living foundation, and the superstructure is a living superstructure (1 Peter 1:4–5). All the materials in this building are men and women made spiritually alive—quickened with divine quickenings, such as once were dead in trespasses and sins but are now otherwise, alive to God. Oh, make this sure to yourselves.

6. It is a light building. This is one thing that makes a building pleasant and comfortable: many and large windows. All the world besides is in darkness. It is the church only that has the true light. As Egypt and Goshen: “Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light” [Eph. 5:8].

There are many things about which men are in the dark till they are in this building—as, about God, His glorious excellences and perfections; about the Lord Jesus, who He is, and what He is in Himself and to us; about the corruption of nature; about the evil of sin, the vanity of the creature; and [about] the reality of invisible things, heaven, hell. In all these grace enlightens. The Devil’s building is a dark building, called the kingdom of darkness (Col. 1:13).

7. It is a secure, a safe building. Other buildings are exposed to wind and weather and water, to fire, to assaults and batteries,

but this is safe from all peril and danger (Matt. 16:18). Men in all ages and generations have been heaving at the church of God and seeking to overthrow it, but it has hitherto been in vain and to no purpose, and will be so still (Psalm 2). The church of God is such a building as the ark was (1 Peter 3:20–21).

8. It is a spreading, growing building. “All the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord” [Eph. 2:21]. It grows larger by the addition of those to it who will be saved. It grows better as to light and knowledge, as to gifts and graces. Amen! The Lord increase it more and more. It increases slowly—church work is slow work—but sure, though amid much opposition, as in Ezra’s time.

In some places, where a while ago there were but two or three houses, there is now a great town. And is it not so (and would to the Lord it were so more and more) as to the growth and progress of religion? In many towns and families whose ignorance and profaneness ruled a few years since, now God is worshipped and Christ, and His truths and ways are owned and professed.

[Our Duty to This Building]

Show what is our duty in reference to this building.

1. To see that we have a secure place and standing in it. As it is a great privilege to be of that body and tree whereof Christ is the head and root, so it is a great privilege to be of that building whereof Christ is the foundation.

It is certain [that] all that adhere to it in an outward, visible profession are not of it. The moss and the ivy cleave close to the walls of a house, but they are not on the foundation. So the hypocrite. There is a great deal of difference between such a one and the true stones (1 John 2:19).

All the true stones in this building are living stones (1 Peter 2:5). What life have you? They are a habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. 2:22). Are you so? Rather, does not the unclean spirit dwell in you and rule in you (Luke 11:21–26)?

But, how may it be done?

I answer: We must be sure we are fetched out of the quarry of a natural condition by regenerating grace. There is much to do in this work—the dust flies in the face of him that hews, but it must be done. There is no other way.

We must by faith receive Christ Jesus the Lord, make Him our foundation, rest and rely on Him for righteousness, acceptance, and salvation, cleaving to Him with full purpose of heart.

Having done so, we must build up ourselves in our most holy faith, growing in grace, adding to faith, virtue. If we grow into Christ more and more, we are certainly in Him (Jude 20–21).

2. To seek as much as in us lies the good of the building. If we can do nothing else, we can pray for it (Ps. 122:3, 6), for “the peace of Jerusalem.” Peace within itself, that differences may be healed. The cement or mortar is love. It is said that all the stones in Solomon’s temple were so ordered that they looked like one stone. Peace from enemies, open, secret, covered, uncovered.

Our prayers must be seconded with our endeavors. Can we do nothing toward its enlargement, its establishment, its repair?

CHAPTER 2

Christ Is Our Food, and All True Believers Feed on Him and Are Fed with Him

I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

—JOHN 6:51

There are several things to be learned out of these words:

- I. That Jesus Christ is bread.
- II. That this bread has sundry¹ special properties which belong to it and to no other.
- III. That it is our duty to eat of this bread.
- IV. That they that truly eat of this bread will live forever.

Jesus Christ Is Bread

There are several things by which He is set forth in the Scriptures, and among the rest, [as] bread. Those who heard Him say that He was bread and that they must eat Him were offended. It was a hard saying, and they could not hear it (v. 60). The reason was they understood it carnally, and they should have understood it spiritually—just as the papists do by another of His sayings, “This is My body.” He says also, “I am

1. *Sundry*: various.

the vine,” [and,] “I am the door”—and must these be understood literally? It cannot be. He is the head of a great body and the foundation of a great house. Literally? No, spiritually. So He is bread. He Himself says so.

You know bread is some kind of corn, rye, or wheat or barley, or the like, thrashed and ground, kneaded and baked, and then it is food for us. We eat it and are nourished by it. So Christ: He is spiritual bread.

He was thrashed and ground in His suffering and dying, and that was necessary in order to Him being made bread for us: “I give my flesh.” “It behooved Christ to suffer” (Luke 24:46). It was necessary it should be so, in order to the satisfying of God’s justice, without which we could have no nourishment, no comfort to our souls. Without blood, no remission. There was death in the threatening, and therefore His heel must be bruised, or the serpent’s head would not have been broken. Therefore, it concerns us all to be acquainted with Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2). This was Paul’s chief study, and it should be ours.

The sufferings and death of Christ are the food of our souls. Everything that has life must have food to support that life. It cannot live without food. So it is with our souls. They can no more live without food than our bodies can. Take the food away, and you take the life away. Adam in innocency had all the trees in the garden given him, save one, that the fruit thereof might be food to him, that is, to his body. And as for his soul, God Himself immediately was the life and strength and maintenance of it. But when we find he fell from God, all supplies of that kind were forever cut off, and he must have perished everlastingly if some new nourishment had not been provided for him. Now that new nourishment was the seed of the woman bruised, and therefore God revealed it to him immediately, even before He pronounced sentence (Genesis 3).

[The Properties of the Bread]

Notice the properties of the bread:

1. It is the bread of God. “The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world” ([John 6:]33). Not the bread which God feeds on Himself, and yet in a sense He is so (Matt. 3:17; 17:5). He is satisfied in Him and with Him. But He is the bread which He has provided for us to feed on, as the Lamb of God (John 1:29). He knew we could never have thought of such a way of nourishment for ourselves. No, not if we had all the angels in heaven to help us, and therefore He did it (Gen. 22:13–14; Job 33:24; Ps. 89:10). As He is a foundation of God’s laying, so He is bread of God’s providing.

Was the bread made of corn for our bodies our own contrivance? No. Who could have devised such a thing? It is the appointment of our heavenly Father, and a wise and gracious appointment it is (Gen. 1:29). So Christ, the bread of life, is of God’s providing.

2. It is given bread. Given by God the Father—“My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven” ([John 6:]32). The same that contrived [also] gave freely and of His own accord, without our asking or seeking. It was a choice gift (John 3:16). It was the unspeakable gift (2 Cor. 9:15). Oh, be sensible of this love and give thanks. Forget not this above all His benefits! “Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” [Ps. 8:4].

This bread is given by the Son Himself. It was His own act and deed to give Himself to be bread for us. “My flesh which I will give for the life of the world.” It was a wonder He should ever yield to such a motion when it was made to Him, but He did it readily, at the first word. “Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart” [40:7–8]. Such love He had for us

and for our redemption and salvation (Eph. 5:2). And should not we then readily and cheerfully give ourselves to Him—all we are, have, or can do? Can we bestow ourselves better?

3. It is living bread. “I am the living bread that came down from heaven.” All other bread is a dead thing, but this bread lives. It was dead, but it is alive and lives forevermore (Rev. 1:18). And it is well for us that it is so, for He ever lives to make intercession for us. That is the work and business of His life (Heb. 7:25).

4. It is the bread of life ([John 6:]48). Not only living itself, but giving life to us. No other bread does so. Other bread maintains life, but where is the bread that gives life? This bread gives life. It makes those to live that were dead. It is no sooner received by a hand of faith but the man is alive—alive to God, which is the best life we can live in this world.

5. It is manna. Manna was the bread which God gave the Israelites from heaven, fresh every morning; and dainty bread it was. It came down in a dew. It was small, round, and white, and the time of gathering it was the morning.

This manna was a type of Christ, the true manna. As that came down from heaven, so did He; that in a dew, He in the dew of the gospel. As that was little, round, and white, so is He: little, in His humiliation; round, in His eternity, without beginning of days or end of life; white, in His spotless innocence. As the time for gathering that was in the morning, so of this: “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth” [Eccl. 12:1]. As that fed the Israelites while in the wilderness, so this feeds our souls while we are in the wilderness of this world. It ceases in Canaan.

6. It is meat indeed ([John 6:]55). It is solid and substantial meat. Not the shadow of meat, but true bread (v. 32). All the things in this world are, to a soul, like the picture of the world with which the Devil tempted our Lord Jesus—delusive and unsatisfactory. “Wherefore,” then, “do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.” Mix faith with this and labor accordingly (John 6:27).

It is suitable meat. It is no meat if it be not suitable. Every creature is maintained with food suited to it (Gen. 3:14). Now nothing is suitable food to our souls but Jesus Christ. Nothing else is suitable to their nature. Spiritual beings must have spiritual food. All things under the sun are carnal. He was a fool that bid his soul feast on what was in his barn (Luke 12:16). Nor is anything else suited to the necessities of our souls. Two things our souls have need of—righteousness and strength. And where are these to be had, but with Him (Isa. 45:24)? We have need of food that will be physic² too, and such food is Christ (Ezek. 47:12). Sweet meat (Song 2:3), the fruit of His death, resurrection, ascension (1 Peter 2:3), gracious, or sweet. Everything in Christ is sweet to a believing soul: His promises, pardons, offices, ordinances, comforts, communion. His word is sweeter than honey (Ps. 119:103). His love is sweeter than wine (Song 1:2). His presence is sweeter than marrow (Ps. 63:5). In a word, His mouth is sweetness, and all He is delights (Song 5:16).

[It is] satisfying meat. A man may surfeit³ with the world, but he can never be satisfied with the world. A man may be satisfied with Christ, but he can never be surfeited with Christ.

2. *Physic*: medicine.

3. *Surfeit*: be indulged.

Compare Isaiah 55:2 with Psalm 36:8—abundantly satisfied, satisfied and oversatisfied, satisfied and satisfied again. This is the excellency of spiritual dainties, that the more a man feeds on them, the more he would have, and yet he has a kind of satisfaction in what he has, such as causes him to say, “Return unto thy rest, O my soul” (Ps. 116:7). He has union with Christ, yet he would have more and nearer union. He longs to be with Him.

Now all this is said to draw out your desires and to provoke your appetite to this meat. And does it not prevail? Do you not feel your need of Christ? Are you not hungering and thirsting after righteousness? If you are, blessed are you, for you will be filled. If not, you will be sent away empty (Matt. 5:6; Luke 1:53).

[The Duty to Eat the Bread]

It is our duty to eat of this rare bread. “If any man eat”—implying, if we do not eat of it, we are like to be never the better for it. It will do us no good to hear of it only. We have heard a great deal of Christ, but what will that avail us, except we believe what we hear? It will do us no good to look on it only. Will looking on meat nourish us? No, we must eat if we will be nourished. Will looking on Christ and seeing others feed on Him feed and nourish you? No, though it is the best fare in the world.

What is meant by eating? I answer: believing ([John 6:]35). Of all the comparisons by which believing is set forth in Scripture, none is like this of eating Christ and feeding on Christ.

Before we eat, we feel a need of meat and have a desire toward it—an earnest desire [that] we must have it. Give a man what else you will, “No,” says he, “I must have meat.” As the Egyptians parted with all for bread, so it is with the soul. It sees its lost and undone condition in itself by reason of guilt,

and not sees it only but feels it, and thereupon must have Christ, as the prodigal (Luke 15).

As in eating there is the taking of the meat, putting it into the mouth, and chewing and digesting it whereby it is made my own and turned into blood and spirits in my body, so in believing there is a particular application made of Christ and His merit and righteousness (Gal. 2:21). We may see and hear and smell at a distance, but that which we eat must be near us; that which nourishes must be made one with us. “That Christ may dwell in your hearts” (Eph. 3:17).

As after eating there is strength and vigor (Ps. 104:15, the staff of life), the desire satisfied, the body recruited, made able for work and burden, so on believing there follows spiritual strength, peace, comfort, joy, ability for duty, walking with God, working for God, which they that do not believe have not.

How is it proved to be the duty thus to do? I answer:

1. From the many calls and invitations to it both in the Old Testament and in the New (Isa. 55:1; Matt. 11:28; John 7:37). If His mind were not [that] we should come and eat, He would not in this manner invite and call. See Mark 10:49. He calls; therefore, we may come.
2. From the many commands and injunctions to it, absolutely requiring it of us. He commands; therefore, we must come. We are under guilt, the greatest guilt of all other, if we do not (1 John 3:23). Oh, bethink yourself, and do as He commands. You have broken other commands; in this be obedient. It is to eat of the best meat that ever was prepared. When the serpent (namely, the Devil) assailed Eve, that which gave him advantage was that the thing he moved her to was only to eat, and the fruit was such as was pleasant. Yet all the persuasions of heaven and earth will not prevail with some people to eat of this fruit—not forbidden, but commanded fruit; not meat

that will poison, but meat that will save them. Oh, then take and eat. Receive Christ Jesus the Lord and believe in Him. Think [that] you hear Him saying to you, “Eat, oh friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved” (Song 5:1). Shall I inquire what bread do you live on? Bread of idleness, deceit, violence, carnal pleasure, your own duties and performances! It will be gravel (Prov. 20:17).

[The Profit of Eating This Bread]

They that truly eat of this bread will live forever. What more likely motive could possibly be used to prevail with us: eat, and live. Eat, and live forever! Everlasting life will certainly be the portion of all those that by a true and a lively faith receive Christ Jesus the Lord, who eat His flesh and drink His blood, feed on Him. But who says so? He that will certainly make it good—the Amen, the faithful and true Witness. It is repeated often ([John 6:]35, 46, 47) with a solemn asseveration. He has it. It is as surely His as if now in glory. Now, do you know what this living forever is, what it means? It is to be saved, delivered from the second death in hell and made eternally happy in heaven. And will not this allure us? God said to Adam, “In the day you eat, you will die the death, surely die.” Christ says to us, “In the day you eat, living you will live. You will surely live.” Eating ruined us; eating saves us.

Inference

1. Then the bread spoken of in this chapter is not sacramental bread nor the eating here spoken of sacramental eating, as the papists would have it, to prove transubstantiation. For the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper was not yet instituted when Christ spoke this. And, therefore, it had been impossible for His hearers to understand what He meant.

Many do eat the sacramental bread that do not live forever, as 1 Corinthians 10:4.

Many do live forever that never eat sacramental bread, as, besides all elect infants dying in infancy or childhood, the converted thief on the cross, and many another. Yet to eat the sacramental bread is certainly duty: "Do this." And for any that are adult to live in the neglect of it when they have a call to it and opportunity for it is a great sin and must be reckoned for. Nay, it is comfortable, sweet, profitable, gainful duty. It is a feast, and that is the reason our Lord Jesus has appointed the outward elements to be bread and wine, that by eating and drinking them by faith, might be sealed to us pardon of sin, peace with God, right and title to heaven.

2. Then see the reason why multitudes perish eternally. They will not eat of this bread. Their mouths are out of taste to it. They are filled with worldly trash. If he that eats lives eternally, he that does not eat dies eternally. This is gospel (Mark 16:16).

3. Then you that have eaten in God's name, take the comfort of it. (I mean, that are true believers.) Eternal life is yours.

4. Then be exhorted all of you to eat of this bread. We must eat often, daily.