

THE  
ANTICIPATIONS  
OF  
CHRIST.

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Address

TO THE  
HOME COUNTIES BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,  
AT  
BUNYAN TABERNACLE, NORBITON,

*On OCTOBER 24th, 1894.*

BY  
CHARLES SPURGEON,  
(Moderator.)

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# THE ANTICIPATIONS OF CHRIST.

“FROM HENCEFORTH EXPECTING.”—*Heb.* x. 13.

A measure of progress and prosperity has marked the past year, and therefore praise pours forth from our grateful hearts. The fire was on the forge, and the metal in the flame when our Ex-Moderator (not a blacksmith, but a Frank Smith) left the foremanship, and it fell into another's hands. Alas! that Longfellow's description of “the smith” has not been verified in my case, for illness has marred the line “a mighty man is he.” Yet we may say amid “toiling, rejoicing, sorrowing” there has been “something attempted, something done.” I shall not be wrong in saying that never in the history of the Home Counties Baptist Association has there been a deeper and livelier interest taken in the work it seeks to accomplish than at the present time. Never has the bond of brotherhood been more firmly welded, and the glow of red-hot hearts more manifested. The sound of the hammers ringing on the anvils has not been only musical, but also indicative of real work done.

Our Meetings have been well attended, and even children coming home from school have looked in at the open door and caught the burning sparks of earnest zeal and warm-hearted love which have emanated from the gatherings.

To God be all the glory for these gracious signs—tokens of growing usefulness and increased success.

How often have we observed, to quote from a beloved authoress, Mrs. C. H. Spurgeon, “that plenty of shadows betoken the on-coming of a grand and glorious day.” Well, the shadow of a great loss fell darkly over us when the most brilliant and beneficent star that ever shone upon our future as an Association, was taken to shine in the firmament of the heavenlies. It happened in the early morning of our new day as the Home Counties Baptist Association, and we feared that the light of our joyous hopes might be put out, but amid the clouds of our bereavement and the gloom of our grief, we by faith discerned an edging of sunlight; nay, more, the whole sky was illumined by the effulgence of the fact, “God was not dead.” C. H. Spurgeon “was not, for God took him.”

We missed, oh! so much, the oracles that proceeded from our Aaron's mouth, and the manifestations of the masterly mind that our Moses so marvellously possessed and used. Never was there, surely, a more wonderful combination of inventive genius and administrative power, than that seen in the unique career of our departed chieftain. None could ever be his successor, and we felt this—felt it keenly and felt it deeply—so we had recourse to the Angel of the Covenant, and cast ourselves upon the Eternal God, the God of *my Father*. I ask no pardon, and make no apology for referring to our now glorified hero, for it is your wish, as it is mine, to keep his memory ever green, for as in the past his presence was an inspiration, so even to-day the thought of him kindles afresh the ardour of our zeal. We rejoice that he was ever numbered with us, and still feel proud to know that he, counting us faithful and true to the verities of the Word, sought and found a home amongst us. We heave a deep heart sigh while we say, "He is gone from us."

Yet whatever else we may not boast of, in this we glory, that even the Philistines are compelled to own that "God is come into our camp," and the ark of the Lord's presence is in our midst. Let us not sob over what might have been, but rather sing about what is.

Brethren, we have everything to encourage us!

We are not down-hearted, neither are we down-trodden, though there are some perhaps that would, if they dared, lift up their heel against us. We are content for a season to be little in Israel; but, under the blessing of the Lord, the day may yet come when we shall chase a thousand. It would not be the first time when the Lord's chosen, who seem to be as little and as brittle as a barley-cake, have bowled over the pavilions of presumptuous Midianites. Despondency will make even a Great-heart falter, while trustful expectancy will nerve a shepherd boy to face a giant. Hopeful men are mostly healthy men; and these are the kind God uses. Wooden swords, that are bendable and brittle and soon break may do for mimic warfare; King Shaddai employs blades of highly tempered steel. Keen edges and sharp points are not produced out of pithy and pliable reeds, but from hardened metal. Men full of keen expectations.

Personally I have a profound love for our Association, and think ever so much of the sturdy little band of soldiers that compose the gallant corps; and it is needful each man should think well of his comrades and himself too. It is possible to underrate your powers and minimise your responsibilities until every effort is crippled and every enterprise is paralysed. Truly we may not come up to some of the crack regiments of the Union in numbers or in name, but we'll take some beating yet, and if it were needful there's pluck enough amongst us to prove our merit to the title given the noble 57th Foot, viz., that of "The Die Hards." We are not ashamed to say there is a good deal of Puritan blood in our veins, and our composition has in it the stuff that went to make up the courageous Covenanters and the irresistible Ironsides. Gumption, grit, and grace, as a mixture, was not all used up when such men as honest Hugh Latimer and sturdy John Knox were given to the world, nor are those ancient qualities confined to such as stand out in bold relief upon the page of history, because of the fierce flames of persecution that kindled round them, or the equally fiery eloquence that made them the popular preachers of the day. I have a notion that our ordinary rank and file are men of like calibre, and our village Pastors are amongst those who are the heroes of the cross—Knights of Calvary, veritable martyrs in Christ's cause. I well remember my dear Father once asking me a riddle to this effect, "Why didn't the lions eat Daniel?" and the answer was given in his own laconic style, "Because he was two-thirds backbone, and the rest grit."

Believe me, that's one reason why the opponents of the Gospel have little to do with the Ministers of our smaller Churches, and when "the wicked, even our enemies come upon us to eat up our flesh," they find we become as gravel to their teeth.

I must confess to a strong liking and ever-increasing love for the noble and self-sacrificing work done by our brethren in the rural districts, and if there is any service which gives special delight to our Great Master, it is surely that which they render in out-of-the-way hamlets to His Holy Cause. I tell you it takes the genuine article to make country village Pastors; such must be, and thank God they are, men of inimitable patience and exemplary perseverance. We are not blind nor insensible to the

struggles and conflicts to be found in city and suburban Churches, they are, we grant most readily, of no mean order, and it takes men of real prowess to contend so as to be victorious. But let us not lose sight of the equally arduous campaign in which our country comrades are engaged. All honour to the valiant warriors who have stood their ground for years in villages where priestcraft is practiced, squiredom is rampant, and political partisanship holds its tyrannical jurisdiction. Neither the Sextus of sacerdotalism, which cries "Down with him;" nor the Porsena of political bullying which says, "Now yield thee to our grace," have made our rural and royal Horatius to flinch in keeping the Bridge of our Nonconformity in these brave days of old. If they were easily cowed, such spheres as those which many of our numbers occupy, would long ago have frightened them to flight, but it is otherwise. God uses them because their hope is in Him and their expectations are from Him. Surely I am not mistaken in my judgment, when I say I think the Spirit of hopefulness is in our midst, and we recognise more than ever that Jehovah is with us. Thank God, we are a band of "expectants," and our anticipations are bright with Divine hopefulness.

It is on this "expectancy" that I wish to address to you a few words. We are but following a Divine example when we look forward to better days and brighter successes. Our now glorified and exalted Christ shares with us these great anticipations. "From henceforth expecting" is the present condition of our risen Lord.

Those who undervalue the life and labours of Christ are ever trying to make out that His career was one of disappointment. It is true He did not fulfil the expectations either of His enemies or His patrons, but Christ was no failure. He passed among men as one of a sorrowful countenance, and His character may have worn a mien of dejection, this was the outward expression of the nobility of patience dwelling within, rather than that of despair. Our Lord could always afford to wait, for the ultimate issue was ever to His advantage. He always came out *best in the end*. Seeing through each event to its close, He was filled with the brightest anticipations, and the joy which springs from such expectancy made Him impervious to the ever-changing

climate of his circumstances and the variable weather of his surroundings.

Nor did this expectant spirit leave Him at death, for we find that now He is in glory He is filled with like anticipations, and it should be for every follower of His to share the same hopeful prospects.

It is the expectancy of the husbandman in relation to the coming harvest—the sowers are still scattering the seed and the time of reaping is not yet, even though in some places the fields are already white—He waits in fullest confidence for He knows that not a grain shall be lost, and He is “from henceforth expecting” that every sheaf will be safely garnered at last.

It is the expectancy of a successful warrior who anticipates the spoils of war with such certainty that he seems already to be sitting on a throne and his foes crouching beneath his feet, he finds for his footstool the necks of his enemies.

It is the expectancy of a strong Saviour as He sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied. Oh, for grace to share these “great expectations” with Him, then shall we strive to fulfil what He expects of us.

Nelson’s motto is a good one so far as it goes, “England expects every man to do his duty,” and when given doubtless proved an incentive to those who mounted guard on the oaken walls of old England; but surely we are moved by even a higher motive than this. What does our Redeemer expect of us? His claims supersede even national and social demands, dear as home and fatherland are: He has a prior right.

It has pleased Him to leave us here to bear witness who He is and what He is, and He expects us to be faithful. **LOYALTY TO HIS PERSON** is one matter, He counts upon our maintaining. “Whom say ye that I am?” Let there be no uncertain answer here. “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Pardon me if I seem to presume, but I feel that our blessed Lord, after leaving this earth, has from henceforth been expecting us to preach more definitely, and as a distinct doctrine, His divinity, until His enemies in this respect shall become His footstool. I am not so foolish as to found my conviction that Unitarianism is spreading upon the answer given by an infant in a School Board class “that Joseph was the father of Jesus,” but I do venture to say that

some of the notions of to-day held by adults concerning the teaching of Christ's divinity are as infantile. We are expected to defend His character in this respect against all assailants, and dethrone all usurpers to that Imperial position. And is not this the core, the marrow, the life of our expectancy? If Christ was not Divine, then is our hope a delusion and our faith a refuge of lies. To us, the babe of Bethlehem *is* King Jesus, the boy carpenter *is* the Prince of Peace, the immersed youth *is* the Beloved Son, the Man of Sorrows and the Crucified *is* our crowned Jehovah—Immanuel. "From henceforth" He expects that we should declare Him to be the Ordained Prophet, the Anointed Priest, and the Only Potentate, and as such, in all the glory of His Divine person and the majesty of His sacred offices, He demands of us all unswerving loyalty.

Never let us be afraid or weary of talking about Jesus. Preach much about Christ as the appointed and anointed one of God, much about the Lord as monarch and master. Whatever you preach about, always say something which will exalt Christ, until you become famous for a glorious monotony, and are criticised for the sacred tautology in your preaching. It is this that melts and fuses the spirit. Never mind breaking grammar if you can only break hearts. The devil knows the preaching of a Divine Christ will save souls, and so does the world, though it despises Him as the son of the carpenter. Even His enemies become His footstool, for they own to the power of the preached Christ. Renan says, "Whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed." John Stuart Mill, in his "Essays on Religion," remarks, "Whatever else may be taken from us by a rational criticism, Christ is still left a unique figure." If that is the testimony of our foes, with such a Christ let us preach Him in the full and joyful anticipation that His expectations will be realised, for, as Theodore Parker puts it, "Jesus spake for eternity. His truths ride on the wings of time, as He spoke for man; they are welcome, beautiful and blessed, wherever man is found, and so must be till time and man shall cease."

Old forms of thought, controversial tendencies, scepticism, obduracy, degeneracy, will fall into ruins, as they did in our Lord's time, if we proclaim Him. Let us never forget that the World's Redeemer is as young

to-day as ever. "Thy years, O God, do not fail." As one has put it:—

"The world seems old to us, because we are its newest realities, and it grows older only by our own ageing. But to the Holy Child Jesus, the world of to-day is very new. Yes, to Him it is as fresh and sweet as when He traversed it under cover, as the Angel of the Covenant; walking and talking step by step with Abraham across the emerald plains of Mamre. It is the same world into which He was born the Man of sorrows, which He redeemed from one of its hill tops, and which revolved a ponderous globe beneath His feet when He reversed gravitation and ascended to heaven. New flocks bleat over the plains of Bethlehem, new flowers bloom over the slopes of Galilee, new ripples quiver over the face of blue Gennesaret, new lichens cling to the rocks of Calvary, but Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever." The surging sea of centuries has rolled its boisterous billows up the strand of time, but has failed to obliterate His footprints, and the blast of years has beat upon the Rock of Ages without changing its impregnable condition. This is the Saviour for to-day. Let's preach *Him!*

Do not shrink from maintaining an incorruptible fidelity to the doctrine that Christ is God, and that as such He is to be worshipped. Be prepared if necessary to prove your faith in Him as the Divine Lord by fire, and you shall walk through the flames unsinged and unhurt, in company with the Son of God. How many dread the fire! Of what are they afraid? Fire is friendly to pure gold, but it consumes tinsel, and burns up the sham. If you are true, you need not shrink from the furnace, for the flames are only foes to flimsy finery—they favour the firm and faithful. The flare only made the martyrs the more conspicuous, and in the blaze they looked all-glorious. The interlacing of the tongues of flame made a frame or glowing setting for the living pictures of holy heroism and fearless fidelity. Clothed in the asbestos of conscientious conviction that you are complying with the desire of God in magnifying His well-beloved Son, you need not flinch from the scorching sarcasm and heated anger of the deniers of His divinity. Mayhap that even Nebuchadnezzar the king may see "the form of a fourth," and proclaim "there is no other God." "Those that honor Me I will honor," should be the inspiration of our fidelity

to His Person, and the incentive to our zeal in maintaining His position as the God-man who was manifested to take away the sins of the world. Let carping critics wreath their own intellectual brows with the fading laurels of self-praise, we'll bring forth the Royal Diadem and crown Him Lord of all.

“ For ever God, for ever man,  
My Jesus shall endure ;  
And fixed on Him, my hope remains  
Eternally secure.”

And furthermore, let Him not be disappointed. “ From henceforth ” he is expecting that alongside loyalty to His person, these shall be FIDELITY TO HIS WORD. We believe the Word is as divine as Himself, every part of it inspired ; and He expects we shall give it its righteous due. What the All-glorious Teacher desires us to do is to indoctrinate our hearers with the truth. Not fanciful human deductions from the Word, but the pure unadulterated Word itself. The preachers that have moved and held men have always preached doctrine, that is, they have taken the teachings of the heavenly Rabbi, and made them to be the fundamentals of their creed. You may label any set of dogmas what you please. We'll suppose they are called “ Calvinism ” ; unless *they* are *His* doctrines He does not expect us to promulgate them, good as Calvinism undoubtedly is. Do we find Him preaching on original sin, the sovereignty of God, Election, Atonement by blood, free grace and final perseverance, then as His disciples, students from Christ's College, we are expected to teach and to preach the same. As Ministers of the Word let us not fail to point out, distinctly and forcibly, man's absolute ruin by the fall, his guilty condition under the law, and his moral inability to deliver himself by any power or strength of his own ; preach emphatically free and full justification, through faith in the atoning blood and righteousness of the Redeemer, explain the nature of justifying faith, its fruits and evidences, declare the unique and sole agency of the Holy Spirit in the regeneration and sanctification of believers, and enforce the necessity of a renewed heart and of holiness of life ; not as a title to heaven, but as a meetness for its enjoyment, and finally, joyfully proclaim the eternal happiness that awaits the ransomed host,

and as solemnly speak of the everlasting punishment that becomes the portion of the impenitent.

As in the wilderness wanderings, God's chosen Israel were fed with manna, so have these doctrines been the food of Christian pilgrims in all ages, and this "bread which cometh down from heaven" has furnished a table for them in the desert. Our sires have lived upon such Scriptural teachings and they have died upon them too; is it likely we are going to cast away our confidence in these things, nay, God helping us, we will hold them faster and firmer than ever. Oh for holy courage to maintain such! And why should we not? Others have fought and won, may not we also achieve some such exploits and earn the reward of the faithful?

Has the age of chivalry in this department of Christian ethics gone by? Are there none to be found with Spartan pluck, who will brave all dangers, and heroically stand up for these old truths? Surely the race has not so far degenerated that it has no faithful representative of uncompromising orthodoxy? The very hoariness of the doctrines we advocate make them honourable, and their growing age renders them more venerable. It is our glory that we fight for the sacred tradition of our fathers, and wage war on behalf of all that was dear to holy men, long ago gone to their eternal rest. No new policy, nor novel practice, calls forth our ardent zeal for its defence or upholding; we stand by the old flag, and for the sake of God's gospel, our arm is nerved to wield the sword and sway the battle axe. When modern criticism shall have crumbled away, as the rocks and mountains decay and become no more in the final dissolution of all things, it shall be found that God-inspired doctrines shall remain, enduring as the Heavens and as gloriously firm as the Throne of the Eternal.

Listen to the words of Charles Haddon Spurgeon: "If you take away doctrine you have taken away the backbone of the manhood of Christianity, its sinew, muscle, strength, and glory. Those who object to doctrinal preaching remind one of Philip when he wished to enslave the men of Athens, and would have them give up their orators. Demosthenes replied, 'so said the wolves, they desired to have peace with the shepherds, but the dogs must first be given up.'"

Yes, this is one of the ways in which His enemies shall be brought under His feet. Let loose these dogs of war and our Holy Crusade shall soon be crowned with victory, and the expectations of the King of Truth be realized. We were proud to belong to the regiment of the "King's Own," and feel confident that the ranks of our enemies shall not only be reduced, but ere long totally routed, before the advancing phalanx of high principled men. Victory awaits the right, and although might seems awhile to be triumphant, the battle shall yet take a turn, and truth shall come off more than conqueror. Many are clamorous for us to adopt the "Branch theory," whose adherents aim at the union of different communions by mutual compromise. But oil cannot mix with water. Ours shall be to stand fast by "the faith once for all delivered to the saints," and ever cry "Ecce Homo! Ecce Deus!"

Then again Christ looks for so much from us, for He expects His reputation will be vindicated in our characters. OUR LIVES ARE TO BE LOYAL and true. Personal influence tells—as the shadow of Peter healed the sick. Every particle affects another particle. The lifting of a hand sends a shudder to the stars, and our Christ-like characters are the finest enconiums we can pay to our blessed Lord.

If we wish for truest success, let us remember that life does not consist in getting but in being. It is this which receives the "Well done" of Heaven's Monarch, and the unqualified approval of the enthroned Lamb. Let love to God, loyalty to truth, purity, honesty and humbleness be the silken threads woven into our every-day life, and a pattern of holy beauty shall stand out in bold relief, which shall please both God and man. The life of Jesus will then be distinctly traced in our characters and His expectation realized. Nor does He leave us without the power to fulfil His high anticipations, for have we not the gift of the Holy Ghost. The personal friendship of the Holy Spirit is to be our strength. The spiritual force, the enthusiastic daring of the disciples, their indomitable courage, bold speech, intelligent ideas, sterling faith, all are to be traced to Pentecostal power. Christ rightly expects all this of us, seeing "power from on high" is the chief legacy He bequeathed to the Church He loved unto the death. Down goes error when our sermons are supported and delivered with "Thus saith the Lord,"

and a life full of this Divine Elixir. There is no heroism like that which comes with heavenly inspiration, either manifested by lip or life. Our risen and expecting Lord claims all our forces and energies. We have read of the famous Damascus blades, formed by the welding of a thousand wires into one; their edges so keen that a gossamer can be cleft in twain, and so strong that a rod of iron can be severed thereby; so let us concentrate the manifold energies of our being, then forge them in the fires of consecration, until the perfect heat of a mighty purpose shall cause them to be melted into a single force; our lives then shall become invincible by aught except Almightyness itself.

I take it that our Master expects us to contradict by our lives the selfishness, pride, and worldliness of our day; and by a strong denunciation of every form of ungodliness testify that we are His. It becomes every loyal follower of the Holy Lord to fight against the prevailing iniquity, as Samson fought the Philistines; give the enemy "no quarter," but slay in the name of the Lord the priests of sin who hold carnival in the high places.

The watchmen on Zion's walls need to be more than ever wary and wakeful in these days of sophistry and cunning.

If I judge the signs rightly, sin is fashionable, and the painted harlot is oft mistaken for one of the king's daughters. Deeds are now done under guise of Charity, and the actors even don the robes of Christianity, which in days gone by would have been tabooed by those who made no profession of sanctity.

The very thought to speak or live for Christ—if there be not an uncommon strength of principle behind it, is crushed, almost before it is a thought, by the overwhelming pressure of worldliness. Vanity Fair is no myth or dream—it is a dread reality of the present hour, and the Lord of the Celestial Country expects Faithful Pilgrims to cry out against the orgies of this adulterous and untoward generation. Silence is sinful, for we are imperilling the honour of our dear Saviour by withholding our personal protest. Speak we must and speak we will, until Jezebel is flung down and sin is destroyed.

"From henceforth" our risen Redeemer expects that all who are on His side, will avow themselves, and even at the cost of friendship, emoluments, patronage, or

position, sacrifice all, and be staunch and true to Him and His blessed Word.

What matters it if we are censured by those who hobnob with traitors to the truth—such censure is an eulogy; and to be condemned by those who deny the verities we hold dear, is in fact the highest commendation possible.

Our fathers, if dead, are called fossils, and if alive are dubbed old fogies, because they believe the “ancient things” concerning the Eternal Word. Let men scorn the past as antiquated, and extol the modern as omnipotent, we are content to fulfil the expectations of our Jehovah Shaddai, and magnify both Him and His everlasting truth.

Pardon—nay, I ask for none—my anger is righteous, when it is kindled against such as make a golden calf out of the ornaments of “modern doubt,” and bow down thereunto and cry, “these be thy Gods O Israel.” I devoutly wish a great many more of God’s servants would lose their temper over the idolatry of to-day. The communism of such crime must end in a ruined cause and bring down the Imperial wrath of the King of kings. Let us lift up our voices against the Altars and Priests of Baal, and it will not be long before the fire shall fall and God shall be known as the Only and True God. I am no pessimist, nor do I wish to utter a Jeremiad, still the days are evil, and will grow darker if we do not shine as lights in the world.

“ Shall we grow weary in our watch,  
And murmur at the long delay,  
Impatient of our Father’s time,  
And His appointed way?

Alas ! a deeper test of faith,  
Than prison cell or martyr’s stake,  
The self-abasing watchfulness  
Of silent prayer may make !

We gird us bravely to rebuke  
Our erring brother in the wrong ;  
And in the ear of pride and power  
Our warning voice is strong.”

Blessed be God, through the simple preaching of the grand old Gospel that “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,” and the consecrated lives of hundreds of

the Lord's humble yet honorable ministers ; there is a line of light along the horizon, which is the sign of the Son of man, and though the morning of His Advent tarry, it is surely the harbinger of the day of His appearing.

Suffer me a few more moments. There are also expectations to be realised by Christ in which we His people are to share. His Father has promised Him so much, and we are joint-heirs. Think you not He anticipates the hour of His second Advent ! Was not all the sorrow of parting left on the earth-side of the cloud ? Surely as He ascended His joy grew, for He knew He was coming again. If we are "looking for that blessed hope, that glorious appearing of the kingdom of our Saviour Jesus Christ," what must be His anticipations.

The festive day is coming and the Heavenly Bridegroom is eagerly desiring the arrival of the hour when His nuptials shall be celebrated, and He shall take unto Himself His bride, the Church. Come Lord Jesus, Come quickly !

Remember, too, "from henceforth" he is expecting the time when all His blood-washed ones shall gather with Him in the glory. If we wish many to be among the number, do you think the one who longed for souls until He poured out His own for them will be satisfied with a few ?

Our Redeemer looks forward to the time when the Everlasting plains shall be thronged with the ransomed, and their songs shall ascend as the sound of many mighty waters. And we'll be there ! Hallelujah !

But this is not all ; the words are "from henceforth expecting *till his enemies be made his footstool.*" Here is unmistakable triumph indicated, and the conquest of Christ is going to be complete. Then shall anti-christ be unseated from the seven hills, the false prophet no longer delude his millions, and the idol gods shall fall and be broken in pieces ; then shall "He that sitteth in the heavens laugh : the Lord shall have them in derision." "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, He hath put all things under Him."

Angel escorts, horses of fire, the clouds his car, and the wind his chariot wheels, on comes our conquering Christ.

“ Look, ye saints the sight is glorious ;  
See the ‘ Man of Sorrows ’ now  
From the fight return victorious :  
Ev’ry knee to Him shall bow !

Hark the bursts of acclamation !  
Hark those loud triumphant chords !  
Jesus takes the highest station,  
Oh, what joy the sight affords !

Crown Him ! crown Him !  
Angels, crown Him !  
Crown the Saviour ‘ King of kings ! ’ ”