

THE ETERNAL NAME

NO. 27

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, MAY 27, 1855
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AT EXETER HALL, STRAND

“His name shall endure for ever.”
Psalm 72:17

NO one here requires to be told that this is the name of Jesus Christ, which “shall endure for ever.” Men have said of many of their works, “They shall endure for ever,” but how much have they been disappointed! In the age succeeding the flood, they made the brick, they gathered the slime, and when they had piled old Babel’s tower, they said, “This shall last for ever.” But God confounded their language. They finished it not. By His lightnings, He destroyed it, and left it a monument of their folly.

Old Pharaoh and the Egyptian monarchs heaped up their pyramids, and they said, “They shall stand for ever,” and so indeed they do stand, but the time is approaching when age shall devour even these. So with all the proudest works of man, whether they have been his temples or his monarchs, he has written “everlasting” on them. But God has ordained their end and they have passed away.

The most stable things have been evanescent as shadows and the bubbles of an hour, speedily destroyed at God’s bidding. Where is Nineveh and where is Babylon? Where the cities of Persia? Where are the high places of Edom? Where are Moab and the princes of Ammon? Where are the temples or the heroes of Greece? Where are the millions that passed from the gates of Thebes? Where are the hosts of Xerxes or where the vast armies of the Roman emperors? Have they not passed away?

And though in their pride they said, “This monarchy is an everlasting one—this queen of the seven hills shall be called the eternal city,” its pride is dimmed and she who sat alone and said, “I shall be no widow, but a queen for ever,” she has fallen, has fallen, and in a little while she shall sink like a millstone in the flood, her name being a curse and a byword, and her site the habitation of dragons and of owls.

Man calls his work eternal—God calls them fleeting. Man conceives that they are built of rock—God says, “Nay, sand. Or worse than that—they are air.” Man says he erects them for eternity—God blows but for a moment and where are they? Like baseless fabrics of a vision, they are passed and gone forever.

It is pleasant, then, to find that there is one thing which is to last forever. Concerning that one thing we hope to speak tonight, if God will enable me to preach and you to hear, “His name shall endure for ever.” First, *the religion* sanctified by His name shall endure forever. Secondly, *the honor* of His name shall endure forever. And thirdly, *the saving, comforting power* of His name shall endure forever.

I. First, THE RELIGION OF THE NAME OF JESUS IS TO ENDURE FOREVER.

When impostors forged their delusions, they had hopes that peradventure they might, in some distant age, carry the world before them. And if they saw a few followers gather around their standard, who offered incense at their shrine, then they smiled and said, “My religion shall outshine the stars and last through eternity.”

But how mistaken have they been! How many false systems have started up and passed away! Why, some of us have seen, even in our short lifetime, sects that rose like Jonah’s gourd in a single night and passed away just as swiftly. We, too, have beheld prophets rise, who have had their hour—yes, they have had their day, as dogs all have, but like the dogs, their day has passed away and the impostor, where is he?

And the arch-deceiver, where is he? Gone and ceased. Specially might I say this of the various systems of infidelity. Within a hundred and fifty years, how has the boasted power of reason changed! It has piled up one thing, and then in another day it has laughed at its own handiwork, demolished its own castle, and constructed another, and the next day a third.

It has a thousand dresses. Once it came forth like a fool with its bells, heralded by Voltaire. Then it came out a braggart bully, like Tom Paine. Then it changed its course and assumed another shape, till finally we have it in the base, bestial secularism of the present day, which looks for nought but the earth, keeps its nose upon the ground, and like the beast thinks this world is enough or looks for another through seeking this.

Why, before one hair on this head shall be grey, the last secularist shall have passed away. Before many of us are fifty years of age, a new infidelity shall come and to those who say, "Where will saints be?" we can turn round and say, "Where are you?" And they will answer, "We have altered our names." They will have altered their name, assumed a fresh shape, put on a new form of evil, but still their nature will be the same, opposing Christ and endeavoring to blaspheme His truths.

On all their systems of religion, or non-religion—for that is a system too—it may be written, "Evanescient—fading as the flower, fleeting as the meteor, frail and unreal as a vapor." But of Christ's religion it shall be said, "His name shall endure for ever." Let me now say a few things—not to prove it, for that I do not wish to do—but to give you some hints whereby possibly I may one day prove it to other people, that Jesus Christ's religion must inevitably endure forever.

And first, we ask those who think it shall pass away, *when was there a time when it did not exist?* We ask them whether they can point their finger to a period when the religion of Jesus was an unheard-of thing. "Yes," they will reply, "before the days of Christ and His apostles." But we answer, "Nay, Bethlehem was not the birthplace of the Gospel, though Jesus was born there, there was a Gospel long before the birth of Jesus, and a preached one, too, although not preached in all its simplicity and plainness, as we hear it now. There was a Gospel in the wilderness of Sinai, although it might be confused with the smoke of the incense, and only to be seen through slaughtered victims, yet there was a Gospel there."

Yea, more, we take them back to the fair trees of Eden, where the fruits perpetually ripened and summer always rested, and amid these groves we tell them there was a Gospel, and we let them hear the voice of God, as He spoke to recreant man and said, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head."

And having taken them thus far back, we ask, "Where were false religions born? Where was their cradle?" They point us to Mecca, or they turn their fingers to Rome, or they speak of Confucius, or the dogmas of Buddha. But we say, you only go back to a distant obscurity. We take you to the primeval age. We direct you to the days of purity. We take you back to the time when Adam first trod the earth and then we ask you whether it is not likely that as the first-born, it will not also be the last to die?

And as it was born so early and still exists, whilst a thousand ephemera have become extinct, whether it does not look most probable, that when all others shall have perished like the bubble upon the wave, this only shall swim, like a good ship upon the ocean, and still shall bear its myriad souls, not to the land of shades, but across the river of death to the plains of heaven?

We ask next, supposing Christ's Gospel to become extinct, *what religion is to supplant it?* We inquire of the wise man who says Christianity is soon to die, "Pray, sir, what religion are we to have in its stead? Are we to have the delusions of the heathen, who bow before their gods and worship images of wood and stone? Will you have the orgies of Bacchus or the obscenities of Venus? Would you see your daughters once more bowing down before Thammuz or performing obscene rites as of old?"

Nay, you would not endure such things. You would say, "It would not be tolerated by civilized men." "Then what would you have? Would you have Romanism and its superstition?" You will say, "No, God help us, never." They may do what they please with Britain, but she is too wise to take old Popery back again while Smithfield lasts and there is one of the signs of martyrs there.

Ay, while there breathes a man who marks himself a freeman and swears by the constitution of Old England, we cannot take Popery back again. She may be rampant with her superstitions and her priestcraft, but with one consent my hearers reply, "We will not have Popery." Then what will you choose?

Shall it be Mohammedanism? Will you choose that, with all its fables, its wickedness, and lasciviousness? I will not tell you of it. Nor will I mention the accursed imposture of the West that has lately arisen. We will not allow Polygamy, while there are men to be found who love the social circle and cannot see it invaded. We would not wish, when God has given to man one wife, that he should drag in twenty, as the companions of that one. We cannot prefer Mormonism. We will not and we shall not.

Then what shall we have in the place of Christianity? "Infidelity!" you cry, do you, sirs? And would you have that? Then what would be the consequence? What do many of them promote? Communist views and the real disruption of all society as at present established. Would you desire reigns of terror here, as they had in France? Do you wish to see all society shattered and men wandering like monster icebergs on the sea, dashing against each other and being at last utterly destroyed? God save us from Infidelity!

What can you have, then? Nothing. There is nothing to supplant Christianity. What religion shall overcome it? There is not one to be compared with it. If we tread the globe round and search from Britain to Japan, there shall be no religion found, so just to God, so safe to man.

We ask the enemy once more, suppose a religion were to be found which would be preferable to the one we love, *by what means would you crush ours?* How would you get rid of the religion of Jesus? And how would you extinguish His name? Surely, sirs, you would never think of the old practice of persecution, would you?

Would you once more try the efficacy of stakes and fires, to burn out the name of Jesus? Would you try racks and thumbscrews? Would you give us the boots and instruments of torture? Try it, sirs and you shall not quench Christianity. Each martyr, dipping his finger in his blood, would write its honors upon the heavens as he died, and the very flame that mounted up to heaven would emblazon the skies with the name of Jesus. Persecution has been tried.

Turn to the Alps. Let the valleys of Piedmont speak. Let Switzerland testify. Let France, with its St. Bartholomew. Let England with all its massacres, speak. And if you have not crushed it yet, shall you hope to do it? Shall you? Nay, a thousand are to be found, and ten thousand if it were necessary, who are willing to march to the stake tomorrow, and when they are burned, if you could take up their hearts, you would see engraved upon each of them the name of Jesus. "His name shall endure for ever," for how can you destroy our love to it?

"Ah! but," you say, "we would try gentler means than that." Well, what would you attempt? Would you invent a better religion? We bid you do it and let us hear it. We have not yet so much as believed you capable of such a discovery. What then? Would you wake up one that would deceive us and lead us astray? We bid you do it, for it is not possible to deceive the elect. You may deceive the multitude, but God's elect shall not be led astray. They have tried us.

Have they not given us Popery? Have they not assailed us with Puseyism? Are they not tempting us with Arminianism by the wholesale? And do we therefore renounce God's truth? No. We have taken this for our motto and by it we will stand. "The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible," is still the religion of Protestants, and the selfsame truth which moved the lips of Chrysostom, the old doctrine that ravished the heart of Augustine, the old faith which Athanasius declared, the good old doctrine that Calvin preached, is our Gospel now, and God helping us, we will stand by it till we die. How will you quench it? If you wish to do it, where can you find the means? It is not in your power. Aha! Aha! Aha! We laugh you to scorn.

But you will quench it, will you? You will try it, do you say? And you hope you will accomplish your purpose? Yes, I know you will, when you have annihilated the sun, when you have quenched the

moon with drops of your tears, when you have dried up the sea with your drinking. Then shall you do it. And yet you say you will.

And next, I ask you, *suppose you did, what would become of the world then?* Ah! were I eloquent tonight, I might perhaps tell you. If I could borrow the language of a Robert Hall I might hang the world in mourning. I might make the sea the great chief mourner, with its dirge of howling winds, and its wild death-march of disordered waves. I might clothe all nature—not in robes of green, but in garments of somber blackness. I would bid hurricanes howl the solemn wailing—that death shriek of a world—for what would become of us, if we should lose the Gospel?

As for me, I tell you fairly, I would cry, “Let me be gone!” I would have no wish to be here without my Lord. And if the Gospel be not true, I should bless God to annihilate me this instant, for I would not care to live if you could destroy the name of Jesus Christ. But that would not be all, that only one man should be miserable, for there are thousands and thousands who can speak as I do.

Again, what would become of civilization if you could take Christianity away? Where would be the hope of a perpetual peace? Where governments? Where your Sabbath-schools? Where all your societies? Where everything that ameliorates the condition of man, reforms his manners, and moralizes his character? Where? Let echo answer, “Where?”

They would be gone and not a scrap of them would be left. And where, O men, would be your hope of heaven? And where the knowledge of eternity? Where a help across the river death? Where a heaven? And where bliss everlasting? All were gone if His name did not endure forever. But we are sure of it, we know it, we affirm it, we declare it. We believe and always will, that “His name shall endure for ever”—ay, forever! Let who will, try to stop it.

This is my first point. I shall have to speak with rather bated breath upon the second, although I feel so warm within as well as without, that I would to God I could speak with all my strength as I might do.

II. But secondly, as His religion, so THE HONOR OF HIS NAME IS TO LAST FOREVER.

Voltaire said he lived in the twilight of Christianity. He meant a lie. He spoke the truth. He did live in its twilight, but it was the twilight before the morning—not the twilight of the evening, as he meant to say. For the morning comes, when the light of the sun shall break upon us in its truest glory.

The scornors have said that we should soon forget to honor Christ and that one day no man should acknowledge Him. Now, we assert again, in the words of my text, “His name shall endure for ever,” as to the honor of it. Yes, I will tell you how long it will endure.

As long as on this earth there is a sinner, who has been reclaimed by Omnipotent grace, Christ’s name shall endure. As long as there is a Mary, ready to wash His feet with tears and wipe them with the hair of her head. As long as there breathes a chief of sinners, who has washed himself in the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. As long as there exists a Christian, who has put his faith in Jesus and found Him his delight, his refuge, his stay, his shield, his song, and his joy, there will be no fear that Jesus’ name will cease to be heard.

We can never give up that name. We let the Unitarian take his gospel without a Godhead in it. We let him deny Jesus Christ. But as long as Christians—true Christians, live, as long as we taste that the Lord is gracious, have manifestations of His love, sights of His face, whispers of His mercy, assurances of His affection, promises of His grace, hopes of His blessing, we cannot cease to honor His name.

But if all these were gone, if *we* were to cease to sing His praise, would Jesus Christ’s name be forgotten then? No. The stones would sing, the hills would be an orchestra, the mountains would skip like rams, and the little hills like lambs. For is He not their Creator?

And if the lips of all mortals were dumb at once, there are creatures enough in this wide world besides. Why, the sun would lead the chorus. The moon would play upon her silver harp and sweetly sing to her music. Stars would dance in their measured courses. The shoreless depths of ether would become the home of songs and the void immensity would burst out into one great shout, “Thou art the glorious Son of God! Great is Thy majesty and infinite Thy power!”

Can Christ's name be forgotten? No. It is painted on the skies. It is written on the floods. The winds whisper it. The tempests howl it. The seas chant it. The stars shine it. The beasts low it. The thunders proclaim it. Earth shouts it. Heaven echoes it.

But if that were all gone—if this great universe should all subside in God, just as a moment's foam subsides into the wave that bears it and is lost forever—would His name be forgotten then? No. Turn your eyes up yonder. See heaven's *terra firma*, "Who are these that are arrayed in white and whence came they?" "These are they that came out of great tribulation; they have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; therefore they are before the throne of God, and praise him day and night in his temple."

And if these were gone, if the last harp of the glorified had been touched with the last fingers, if the last praise of the saints had ceased, if the last hallelujah had echoed through the then deserted vaults of heaven, for they would be gloomy then—if the last immortal had been buried in his grave—if graves there might be for immortals—would His praise cease then?

No, by heaven! no. For yonder stand the angels. They, too, sing His glory. To Him the cherubim and seraphim do cry without ceasing, when they mention His name in that thrice holy chorus, "Holy, holy, holy, LORD God of armies." But if even these were perished—if angels had been swept away, if the wing of seraph never flapped the ether, if the voice of the cherub never sung his flaming sonnet, if the living creatures ceased their everlasting chorus, if the measured symphonies of glory were extinct in silence, would His name then be lost?

Ah! no. For as God upon the throne He sits, the everlasting One, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And if the universe were all annihilated, still would His name be heard, for the Father would hear it and the Spirit would hear it, and deeply engraven on immortal marble in the rocks of ages, it would stand—Jesus the Son of God, co-equal with His Father. "His name shall endure for ever."

III. And so shall the POWER OF HIS NAME.

Do you inquire what this is? Let me tell you. See you yonder thief hanging upon the cross? Behold the fiends at the foot thereof, with open mouths, charming themselves with the sweet thought that another soul shall give them meat in hell. Behold the death-bird, fluttering his wings o'er the poor wretch's head. Vengeance passes by and stamps him for her own. Deep on his breast is written "a condemned sinner." On his brow is the clammy sweat, expressed from him by agony and death. Look in his heart, it is filthy with the crust of years of sin. The smoke of lust is hanging within, in black festoons of darkness. His whole heart is hell condensed. Now, look at him. He is dying. One foot seems to be in hell, the other hangs tottering in life—only kept by a nail.

There is a power in Jesus' eye. That thief looks, he whispers, "Lord, remember me." Turn your eye again there. Do you see that thief? Where is the clammy sweat? It is not there. Where is that horrid anguish? Is it *not* there. Positively there is a smile upon his lips. The fiends of hell, where are they? There are none, but a bright seraph is present, with his wings outspread and his hands ready to snatch that soul, now a precious jewel, and bear it aloft to the palace of the great King.

Look within his heart, it is white with purity. Look at his breast, it is not written "condemned," but "justified." Look in the book of life, his name is graven there. Look on Jesus' heart, there on one of the precious stones, He bears that poor thief's name. Yea, once more, look! See that bright one amid the glorified, clearer than the sun and fair as the moon? That is the thief! That is the power of Jesus and that power shall endure forever.

He who saved the thief can save the last man who shall ever live. For still,

*"There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.*

The dying thief rejoic'd to see

*That fountain in his day;
O may I there, tho' vile as he,
Wash all my sins away.*

*Dear dying Lamb! That precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransom'd church of God
Is saved to sin no more."*

His powerful name shall endure forever.

Nor is that all the power of His name. Let me take you to another scene and you shall witness somewhat else. There on that deathbed lies a saint. No gloom is on his brow, no terror on his face, weakly, but placidly he smiles. He groans perhaps, but yet he sings. He sighs now and then, but oftener he shouts. Stand by him. "My brother, what makes you look in death's face with such joy?" "Jesus," he whispers. What makes you so placid and so calm? "The name of Jesus."

See, he forgets everything! Ask him a question. He cannot answer it—he does not understand you. Still he smiles. His wife comes, inquiring, "Do you know my name?" He answers, "No." His dearest friend requests him to remember his intimacy. "I know you not," he says. Whisper in his ear, "Do you know the name of Jesus?" and his eyes flash glory and his face beams heaven, and his lips speak sonnets, and his heart bursts with eternity, for he hears the name of Jesus, and that name shall endure forever.

He who landed one in heaven will land me there. Come on, death! I will mention Christ's name there. O grave! This shall be my glory, the name of Jesus! Hell dog! This shall be your death—for the sting of death is extracted—Christ our Lord. "His name shall endure for ever."

I had a hundred particulars to give you, but my voice fails, so I had better stop. You will not require more of me tonight, you perceive the difficulty I feel in speaking each word. May God send it home to your souls! I am not particularly anxious about my own name, whether that shall endure forever or not, provided it is recorded in my Master's book.

George Whitefield, when asked whether he would found a denomination, said, "No, brother John Wesley may do as he pleases, but let my name perish. Let Christ's name last forever." Amen to that! Let my name perish, but let Christ's name last forever. I shall be quite contented for you to go away and forget me. I shall not see the faces of half of you again, I dare say.

You may never be persuaded to step within the walls of an conventicle. You will think it perhaps not respectable enough to come to a Baptist meeting. Well, I do not say we are a very respectable people, we don't profess to be, but this one thing we do profess, we love our Bibles. And if it is not respectable to do so, we do not care to be had in esteem.

But we do not know that we are so disreputable after all, for I believe, if I may state my own opinion, that if Protestant Christendom were counted out of that door—not merely every real Christian, but every professor—I believe the Paedo-Baptists would have no very great majority to boast of. We are not, after all, such a very small disreputable sect. Regard us in England we may be, but take America, Jamaica, and the West Indies, and include those who are Baptists in principle, though not openly so, and we surrender to none, not even to the Established Church of this country, in numbers.

That, however, we care very little about. For I say of the Baptist name, let it perish, but let Christ's name last forever. I look forward with pleasure to the day when there will not be a Baptist living. I hope they will soon be gone. You will say, "Why?" Because when everybody else sees baptism by immersion, we shall be immersed into all sects and our sect will be gone. Once give us the predominance and we are not a sect any longer. A man may be a Churchman, a Wesleyan, or an Independent, and yet be a Baptist. So that I say I hope the Baptist name will soon perish, but let Christ's name last forever.

Yea, and yet again, much as I love dear old England, I do not believe she will ever perish. No, Britain! You shall never perish, for the flag of old England is nailed to the mast by the prayers of Christians, by the efforts of Sunday schools, and her pious men. But I say, let even England's name perish. Let her be merged in one great brotherhood. Let us have no England, and no France, and no Russia, and no Turkey, but let us have Christendom. And I say heartily, from my soul, let nations and national distinctions perish, but let Christ's name last forever.

Perhaps there is only one thing on earth that I love better than the last I have mentioned, and that is the pure doctrine of unadulterated Calvinism. But if that be wrong—if there be anything in that which is false—I for one say let that perish too and let Christ's name last forever. Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus, "Crown Him Lord of all!" You will not hear me say anything else. These are my last words in Exeter Hall for this time. Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! "Crown Him Lord of all."

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.