Truth is a globe which no single explorer has as yet circumnavigated. It is only by the combined knowledge of those living on all sides of it that we begin to comprehend that which passeth knowledge. Claim, therefore, your inheritance, O Christian. All saints are yours; all teachers are your teachers; all truths as set forth by all preachers are yours, and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's.

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We have in this text a very plain and practical lesson in joint heirship. We remember this saying in Romans 8: “If children then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.” And here we have an inventory of our estate, a summary of our inheritance, a list of the spiritual goods that belong to us. It will be our task, at this time, to set before you a description of your property. All teachers of truth are ours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas. Referring back to the opening of the chapter, we see that Paul had complained of the sectarian spirit of the brethren. One said, “I am of Paul,” and another said, “I am of Apollos,” and so divisions and factions were created. Is not this a constant tendency? We identify the truth with the men who report it to us, and so call ourselves Calvinists or Lutherans or Wesleyans. These men preached the truth, but not one of them ever said as Jesus Christ said: “I am the Truth!” These men communicated spiritual light to the church, but not one of them ever said as Christ did: “I am the light of the world.” There are many planets, but one sun and
each planet shines only by the reflected light of the sun. So, as the disciples of Christ, we are bound to be one, however we differ. Perhaps the hostile sects of the East—the sun-worshippers and fire-worshippers and the followers of the Crescent—might like to carve up the sun or moon and divide it among themselves. But that is just what they cannot do, however much they hate to have anything in common. The fire-worshipper may kill the flame which he keeps perpetually burning; the moon-devotee may glory in the pale light of the Crescent; but both must own that all their light and all their fire come from one orb. “Now this I say,” writes the Apostle (1 Corinthians 1:12), “that every one of you saith, I am of Paul and I am of Apollos and I of Cephas and I of Christ. Is Christ divided?” No, not any more than the sun is sliced to pieces when it shines in the four corners of the heavens. Paul and Cephas and Apollos and James and Augustine and Calvin and Luther and Wesley and Chalmers and Spurgeon—all these reflected clear rays from the Sun of Righteousness. If therefore Christ is ours, they are ours. The light which they communicated is our light. The knowledge of the Gospel which they acquired is our knowledge, and we cannot afford to ignore any of them in summing up our spiritual wealth.

How inveterate is the temptation to monopolize the truth, and to set up an exclusive claim to some aspect of it, or to the great men who have taught it to us! There is baptism—the symbolic burial and resurrection of the believer with Christ—what a deep, comprehensive and graphic symbol it is. “But it is ours,” says the Baptist. “It is copyrighted, and our church holds the patent right to it. Join us and you may have a share of it, but not otherwise.” So some have spoken, as though we could create an ecclesiastical trust for holding precious doctrines in our own hands. And there is the doctrine of sanctification and the witness of the Spirit—“These are ours,” says the Methodist—“bequeathed to us by Wesley and Fletcher and Whitefield. You cannot get the genuine article except you come inside our ranks.” It is exactly this spirit that the Apostle is condemning in our text. Truth is a common property belonging to the whole church of God, and the teachers who have unfolded the truth are the common inheritance of the great body of believers. Tell me what you know of the globe upon which we live. You perhaps have never been out of the United States, and yet you know about Europe and Asia and Japan and the islands of the sea. And how do you know? Because all the great explorers are yours and all the wealth of discovery which they have brought—Franklin and Kane from the ice-bound regions of the north, Livingstone and Stanley from the torrid plains of Africa, Cook and Drake from the islands of the sea. It is their discoveries which have given us a map of the world. All these are ours. And so in the church of modern times, to go on further back. The spiritual illumination of George Fox the Quaker, the profound reasoning of Jonathan Edwards the Puritan, the evangelical fervor of John Wesley the Methodist, the rich Gospel simplicity of Charles Spurgeon the Baptist—all this has been woven into the fabric of our latter-day evangelical faith. Indeed, this is according to God’s way of working. Paul prays in the Holy Ghost “that ye may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge.” To comprehend with all saints! Truth is a globe which no single explorer has ever yet circumnavigated. It is only by the combined knowledge of those living on all sides of it that we begin to comprehend that which
passeth knowledge. Claim, therefore, your inheritance, O Christian! All saints are yours; all teachers are your teachers; all truths as set forth by all preachers are yours, and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's.

The world is ours. "Whether Paul or Apollos or the world"—I take this word in its largest sense—the material universe. I do not think we have half appreciated this portion of our inheritance in Christ. I would advise you to go out under the clear, starry heavens some cloudless night and count up your wealth. "Whether Paul or Apollos or the world." When you become disheartened from looking around, look up and get relief and cheer. If ever you despair when looking at the earth—volcanoes wiping out whole cities, floods bearing thousands of helpless beings into sudden ruin, tornadoes driving a whole village to wreck in less time than you can crush a dry leaf in your hand, fire consuming twenty prosperous and peaceful hamlets in a day; riots, strikes, wars and rumors of wars; the dagger at the king's heart and dynamite under the king's throne—enough to make one swoon with heartbreak when one stops to take it all in, why then look up and say with the Psalmist: "When I consider the heavens the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him?" This earth is only a pebble on the shore of the infinite universe, a grain of sand on the boundless beach of the ocean of space. If by wreck of revolution or the fires of judgment I should lose this earth, the stars are mine, planet upon planet, system upon system. "Let not your heart be troubled," says Jesus. "In my Father's house are many mansions . . . I go to prepare a place for you." Perhaps as you look up to the heavens in the evening you can see the mansion where your beloved ones are now dwelling and you may have a room already fitted up for your residence hereafter. I do not think such a conjecture at all improbable. God and Christ and the angels do not live in an infinite and boundless nowhere. "I go to prepare a place for you," says Jesus, and place has location and bounds and reality. It is somewhere and it may be in one of the myriad stars which you see at night. Why should it seem incredible?

And who made all those shining worlds? Listen: "All things were made by him and without him was not anything made which was made." If He made them He owns them; and if He owns them, we own them, for "all things are yours and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's." Here, my brethren, is the title deed to your real estate.

But the earth itself is ours if we are Christ's. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." This promise unquestionably refers to the present material globe. The Scriptures teach plainly that it is to be renovated by fire and overarched with a new heaven and that then it will become the millennial abode of the saints. Not simply does Christ remove the stain from human consciences, the death curse from human bodies, but the dragon curse from our groaning and suffering earth. His work will not be completed till He has wiped away every trace and taint of sin from the earth and turned a Paradise lost into a Paradise regained, replaced the groans of creation with the music of redemption.

Life and death are ours. That is, life is ours, because death is ours, having been conquered by Christ and compelled to yield up its prey. Here you see at once the distinction between the regenerate and unregenerate condition. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life." You cast a handful of grain into the earth and you discover that
ninety seeds out of the hundred spring up and bear fruit, and ten remain in the earth and rot there. If you ask the reason why, it may appear that ten of the seeds have been sterilized by frost or by heat and their life principle destroyed. We shall all go into the grave if the Lord tarry, but all will not spring up at the coming of Christ in glory to raise the dead. They that have Christ have life—that life which is the principle of the resurrection, and they that have not Christ have not life. In a word, our share in the first resurrection is dependent entirely on our being in Christ and having Christ in us. Hear how our Lord affirms and reiterates this in John 6: “And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” Faith in Christ, the condition of partnership in the first resurrection! “No man can come to me except the Father which sent me draw him; and I will raise him at the last day.” Only as we come to Christ now can we come with Christ in the first resurrection. “Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” Communion with Christ now is the condition of resurrection with Christ at His coming. Thus, as this refrain, “I will raise him up at the last day,” sounds in our ears again and again, it re-enforces the same lesson—no life out of Christ and no resurrection into life for those who live and die unregenerate.

Yes, this is it. Life is yours and ye are Christ’s. As the sap in the tree enters into the scion, when, by grafting, that scion has been incorporated with the tree, so this life of Christ becomes ours when by faith we have been united to Him. “He that hath the Son hath life.” This fact lies at the foundation of every privilege and possession which the

Gospel holds out to us. “To him that hath shall be given,” says Jesus, “and he that believeth on the Son hath life.” Therefore to him can be given. Growth is possible to him only if he has life. The tiniest seed has the advantage over a block of marble, though the marble were the finest ever cut from the quarries of Vermont. The seed can grow, the marble cannot.

Fruitfulness is possible only to him who has life. The commonest apple tree in your garden has precedence over the most majestic pillar in a European cathedral. It can bud with every returning spring: it can fashion its fruit with all the exquisite grace of tint and color and shape; it can ripen that fruit and cast it into the lap of the husbandman with each returning autumn. Wonderful significance is there in this saying: “Life is yours.” All of joy, of strength, of fruitfulness, and final conquest are wrapped up for us in these words. And when death comes, if it shall come, we may hear with our last gasp the words of the strong Son of God: “And I will raise him up at the last day.” Here is the crown and consummation of life. Considering its greatness and importance, what wonder that all the powers of darkness were brought to bear to prevent our Lord’s rising from the grave, and to prevent the world from believing in the fact after He was raised. John Bunyan, with his wonderful gift at personification, names death and dissolution “the terrible Captain Sepulcher and his standard bearer Corruption.” I think I hear these two talking together on the night when Christ was buried. “Hold fast to that man in Joseph’s tomb,” says Corruption to Sepulcher, “hold him fast till I can fasten on him with my teeth.” But though death holds Him fast through Friday night and Saturday, Corruption can get no hold on Him, for it had been declared by David, speaking by the
Holy Ghost: “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hades neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.” Hell from beneath was moved with affright and cried out to the sepulcher, “Hold fast to that man in Joseph’s tomb; if thou let this man go thou art not Satan’s friend.” And he that hath the power of death, that is the devil, lifts up his voice from the pit, “Oh, grave, hold fast thy prisoner: if he gets out he will make a breach in the wall through which all the rest will come forth.” But vain the watch, and vain the seal, and vain the resistance of the powers of darkness. “It was not possible that he should be holden of death.” After the two appointed days were over He came forth from the tomb. And what did He bring in His hands? “Life and immortality.” To every true believer He now says, “Life is yours.” Death may strike you down and hold you for a little while in his grip, but I will raise you up at the last day. And I will raise you up in no mortal, corruptible body, but in a body fashioned like unto my own—immortal, forever beyond the power of sin and sickness and decay. “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, for upon such the second death has no power.”

And things present and things to come are ours. I thank God that I am not to have all my good things in this life, for then I should have nothing to anticipate in glory; and I thank God I am not to have all my good things in the life to come, for then I should have nothing to enjoy in the present world. No, the Gospel in a wise and right sense is that which enables us “to make the most of both worlds.” You remember how distinctly the Lord puts His promise: “Manifold more in the present time and in the age to come, life everlasting” (Luke 18:29). But this manifold more in the present time is conditioned on our willingness to forsake houses and lands and kindred for Christ’s sake.