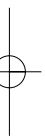


Christ Our Friend

by

**George
Whitefield**



CHRIST our FRIEND

A

SERMON

PREACHED IN THE ORPHAN-HOSPITAL PARK, ON *MONDAY* THE
26TH *OCTOBER*, BEFORE THE *SACRAMENT* AT *EDINBURGH*, UPON
CANTICLES, CHAP. V. VERSE 16.

This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend, O Daughters of Jerusalem!
Together with

A LECTURE, UPON II. KINGS, CHAP. IV. FROM THE BEGINNING, &c.

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TAKEN FROM HIS OWN MOUTH, AND PUBLISHED AT THE EARNEST REQUEST
OF MANY OF HIS HEARERS: AND CAREFULLY REVISED BY TWO EMINENT
DIVINES.

EDINBURGH:

Printed by R. DRUMMOND and Company, and sold at their
Printing-house: in Swan-Close. MDCCXLI.

Quinta Press

Quinta Press, Meadow View, Weston Rhyn, Oswestry, Shropshire,
England, SY10 7RN

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The text of this sermon is taken from a copy of the sermon held in the Lhe University
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CANTICLES, Chap. v. Verse 16.

This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend, O Daughters of Jerusalem.

AS we are very shortly, all of us, called to commemorate the Death of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, I think it my duty, tho' I cannot be present at the Solemnity with you, to discourse on such subjects which will engage your hearts to Christ. I fear many will go without any hearty love to Christ, or having a due sense of the Love of Christ to their Souls; and, if you go thus unprepared, your consciences will sting you, when God awakens your Souls.

The Sacrament is intended for none but Believers in Christ, that are ingrafted into Christ by faith, that have a sense of Christ's Love on their Souls, and can call Christ their Friend. That you may be better prepared, I have chosen the words of the text for our present meditation; they are the words of the Church, for Solomon's Song contains a dialogue betwixt Christ and his Church. The church had been commending Christ, had been telling what a glorious and blessed Saviour he was; and after she has done this, she did glory in the character, and her heart is so full of love to Christ, of being so nearly related to him, that, with humbleness of mind, she is obliged to cry out *This is my Beloved*. There is a peculiar emphasis to be put on. (*This.*) Was there ever a friend like him! She calls on all to admire him. I hope 'tis from a sense of love on my own soul, that I recommend the Lord Jesus Christ to to be your Friend: For 'tis the Lord Jesus Christ that is here called a Friend! O happy men and women that can say, Christ is our Friend,! I think I feel at present something of that which the Church felt when she cried our, *This is my Beloved*. O that I may now give vent to the meditations of my heart!

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I shall shew what a Friend he hath been to poor miserable wretched us, and what returns of Friendship we should make to him. But when shall I begin, when shall I make an end of speaking of the Friendship of our Lord Jesus Christ! When I think of Christ's being our Friend, I must bid you look high, far, and even to Eternity: For Christ's Friendship began *before the foundations of the world were laid*, and *before the heavens were spread out as a curtain*. His friendship is valuable and, if you look back, he has been a friend from all Eternity; before ever he spoke the word into a being, then had God and Christ thoughts of Friendship to cursed man. His friendship is everlasting love, notwithstanding that God saw that we would be enemies to him. Then was Christ our Friend. Then did Christ,—What did he? He entred into an eternal contract with the Father, that we might cry out, Our Friend, our Beloved! But then consider the peculiarity of his friendship; he was a Friend to us, let devils continue in their state, the fallen angels are left in chains of darkness but fallen men are taken into mercy. O distinguished friendship! O the height and the depth of the Love of God; which is in Christ Jesus! O! that Christ should take hold on the seed of Abraham, and not on the fallen angels! O what a Friend is this! Consider the time when Christ began to reveal his Friendship; it was when the devil began to ruin man. When *Adam and Eve* were flying and hiding themselves from God, then *our Beloved, our Friend*, appeared; then, when all was gone, then the seed of the woman was revealed. Think of his free Grace, and then cry, *This is my Beloved*. Let us consider, and come to Christ, and see what he hath done for us. Be astonished, O heavens, and wonder, O earth, that he who was rich, for our sakes became poor! He left his Father's bosom; and took on him our nature, that in that nature he might obey. Now God is ma-

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nifested in the flesh, not in a splendid pompous manner. One would have thought that he would have been born in a palace; but now, O how should I speak! see your Saviour stabled in a manger I see God incarnate in a stinking manger! O meditate on a God incarnate laid in a manger, and say, *This is my Beloved!* Consider the Life of Christ. What a painful, mean, persecuted life did Christ lead! For three years and an half he went about healing all manner of diseases; yet he was called a conjurer, Beelzebub, and one possessed with a devil, he was look'd on as a deceiver; and notwithstanding all his they came to stop Christ from going to preach

the glad tidings of salvation to them. *The foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but the son of man had not where to lay his head.* Think what he hath done, and then say, *This is my Beloved.* As you are going to receive the Sacrament, I would dwell on the sufferings of Christ; I could discourse on his agony in the garden; I might speak of his agony. Let me lead you to the garden; let me lead you, daughters, where you will find your Friend lying flat on the ground! See what an agony he is in! see what he felt! see him sweeting great drops of blood, the blood falling like showers from his holy cheeks; and yet rather than we should be damned, he said, *Not my will, but thine be done!* Think of the agony of Christ, see your suffering God and Redeemer; hark! his dying groans! the blood came out of his clothes!, he swat great drops of blood; and then say, *This is my Beloved.* Carry it further, and see your dear Redeemer now coming, out of the garden! and see one of his friends betraying him with a kiss! see your Friend betrayed by one of his disciples! a company of rude persons, tying, his hands behind his back! see him dragged all along from *Annas* to *Caiaphas*, dragged from place to place; he had his hands at last tied to a post, *there the plowers plowed on his back with long furrows;* then they tie him to the accursed tree; there he hangs, Behold, they

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that cried a little before, Hosannas, Hosannas to him, are now crying, *Crucify him, crucify him,* and put him on the cross. There they put him, betwixt two malefactors; he died unpitied; the people mock at him, and the divinity is drawn from him; so that he was made to cry out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.* See him bleeding, panting; see him giving up the Ghost, and say, *This is my Beloved, this is my agonising Friend, this is my dying Friend;* I call on all to admire your Friend. This love is stronger than death. No greater instance of love can be, than that a man lay down his life for his friends; but he died for our sins, and, as a token of his love, the first word he spoke after his resurrection was, *Peace, Peace be unto you;* he might have said, I will proclaim war against you. And when he came to his disciples, he said, *Peace to them;* and he first appeared unto *Mary Magdalene*, out of whom he had cast seven devils. Behold, he goes to heaven, and he hath sent down the Holy Ghost to inspire the holy Apostles; then, that we may not forget him, he hath appointed the Lord's supper, that we may never forget our Friend, O beloved, that your souls may feed on his blood, and meditate on his sufferings, that you may be filled with a sense of what he hath done for you, see how he passed

by all our infirmities; and when we come to glory, O how will our souls be ravished with love unto him! I have been telling you that Jesus hath suffered all this; and I could spend all eternity in telling of his friendship. The great question should be, Can you say with the Spouse, *This is my Friend?* What signifies what Christ hath done, if you cannot say, *This is my Friend*, with the Spouse, he hath suffered this for me? Many will hear of his sufferings, and yet will be damned. Whether can you apply Christ to your own heart? And this will lead me to show you the love and fellowship that we ought to return to the Lord Jesus Christ: He glories in this character; and I call on you to examine your heart, Is Christ your friend, can you say, Christ is my Friend? O what a friend is he that he
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should call us friends! If we are friends to him, we are as dear to him as himself; we should enquire whether Christ be our Friend, or if we are friends to Christ; where there is fellowship there is a familiarity, enmity is taken out on both sides; if you are friends to Christ the enmity is taken out of your heart. Are you reconciled to the person of Christ, to his offices, to the scheme of redemption? are you willing to receive Christ on his own terms? If this be the case, then you can say, *This is my friend*. If the enmity be not taken away, you may say he is my enemy. I told you, if Christ be your friend, there is a holy familiarity betwixt you, you can go and speak to your friend, you can have communion with your friend. Have you got fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, is Christ in your heart, and are you united to the Lord Jesus Christ by faith? Do you know what it is to have fellowship with the Holy Ghost? do you know any thing of the fellowship of the Holy Ghost? is the Holy Ghost in you? or is the devil in you? If you be a friend to him the Holy Ghost is in you, you may then say, *This is my Beloved*. You know if a friend be out of sight, if you love him, you will love to send letters to him, how will you rejoice to have a letter from him; if you be a friend to Christ you may send a letter on the wings of prayer, if you love Christ you will be sending letters to him, you will love to send your prayers to him, and you will be expecting answers, and you shall not want them. If you love a friend, you will embosom that friend, you will tell him all your secrets; if you love Christ there will be a sweet familiarity betwixt you; if any thing happen you, you will say, I will go and tell my Beloved; if you want advice you will go and consult your friend, you will not do any thing without your friend's advice, if you, are true friends you will go and show

him all your trouble, you will do so; but if you are strangers to these intercourses you cannot say, *This is my Beloved*. If you have got a familiarity

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ty with Christ you will be glad to converse with him, and if you love him, you will be glad to live with him; you will be glad to hear the word where Christ is preached; if you love him you will converse with him in ordinances. Can you be friends to Christ that never come to his table, and that never attend on him in his ordinances? You who love a friend, you will be glad to be in that friend's company, you will not desire to have Christ absent from you, you will not be quiet till your friend return unto your hearts. There are many that talk of assurance, but how can you be joyful if Christ be not your friend. If you love a person you will take care that you do not disobey that person, will do nothing that will ruffle his mind. If you love the Lord Jesus Christ, you will hate sin, which Christ hates. Can you call Christ your Friend, and yet remain murderers in your heart? If you pretend to have Christ for your Friend, you will abstain from every thing that Jesus hates. Will you not be studious to do every thing that will oblige that friend? If you are friends to Christ you will do every thing that Jesus commands you; *you are my friends; if ye do whatsoever I command you*. If you have got a friend, you will do any thing for him; if you are friends to Christ you will not only be universal but cheerful in your obedience, you will think it an honour to do any thing for Christ; if you are friends to Christ, you will think it an honour that Christ employs you. Would you not trust a friend with all your concerns? If Christ be your Friend, you will trust him with your all; what a cursed thing is it to mistrust Christ? if Christ be your Friend, why cannot you trust him with your all? If you have not an answer from your friend, you will think that little, you will say, I know he cannot deceive me; if you love him, you will say, he loved me with an everlasting love, and why should I not love him? You will love to speak of your friend; if Christ be your Friend, you will talk of Christ: How little talking have we of

Christ!

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Christ! The Church was so full of Christ, that she was made to cry out, *This is my Beloved*. She cannot keep it in. If Christ be your Friend, you will love to talk of him. Was there ever such a friend! You will be recommending the Lord Jesus Christ to all, after you have got a sense of Christ on your own souls. Does it not fill you with resentment against

that person who speaks ill of him that has done you good? Well, how can you hear of people cursing, swearing, and blaspheming, without speaking for your poor Friend? It will grieve your souls to have your friend's name evil spoke of; you will long to see your friend when absent from you a long time; will not you welcome him, would the news be acceptable to you? You would rejoice at the thoughts of death, and of the last judgment; it will take you to the enjoyment of your Friend. You will be glad, saying, Blessed be God, now I shall see my Friend. When you see that Friend, how would you clasp him in your arms! What joy will you have when Christ clasps you in his arms! and Christ will say, *This is my beloved*. O what sweet endearments will be betwixt the soul and its friend! and Christ will say, *Thou art my friend*. O blessed time will it be when you shall be friends to him, and then you will cry out, *This is my Friend*; and we will all join to admire this our Friend. What shall I say more? I hope, on the meditation of Christ's friendship, he is sweet to your souls, but it grieves me to think what enemies we have been to Christ; it grieves me to think that Christ should be despised. If I am your Friend, why do you use me so? why is it that I am, not trusted with your secrets? how is it that you never think of your Friend, and never read the letters that I have sent by my Apostles? how is it that you never take my part? how well may Christ say, I am wounded among you, why betray you me? *O this is my Beloved, this is my Friend!* But can you say, *This is my Friend?* Well, then I will address myself to you, Can

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you say that Jesus is your Friend? The faults that I have been guilty of since I knew Christ, have been more heavy on me than the sins I have committed before. We cannot forgive ourselves; O then let us humble ourselves under God, and let us be amazed at Christ, that he should become a Friend to such wretched sinners as we are. Are you friends with God? What, if all the world be your enemy, you may rejoice for God reigns. If Christ be your Friend, I exhort you to act faithfully to that character; if Christ be your Friend you are in safety, you will be a friend to self-denial, you will be crucified to the world, and the world to you. O that you may see your dear Christ in the Sacrament! then say, *This is my Beloved, this is my Friend*. What shall I say to you that are resolved to have Jesus for your Friend? If Christ be not your Friend, you are damned for ever more. Take heed, for *there is no other name under heaven by which you can be saved, but the name of Christ*. There is one thing more that comes

to my mind, if you love a friend, you will love one that is related to your friend; you will love all the friends of Christ, you will be friends to all that love the Lord Jesus Christ. I have told you *This is my Beloved*, and If I said otherwise I will deny all that God hath done for me; he hath loved me with an everlasting love; tho' I was an heir of hell, yet he hath destroyed that enmity that I had against him. I desire thus to recommend my Friend to you, I would not be out of my duty for ten thousand worlds, I would not exchange my station with the greatest Prince on earth. Let me only say, *This is my Friend*, I have enough, I have Christ. Let me recommend my Beloved to you, let me recommend Christ as the best of masters, let me recommend him to you, little lambs, he is a Friend to little children; let Christ be your Friend, choose him to be your Friend in time. Let me recommend him to you that are in fine dress, you will go to the devil, if you have not your hearts cleansed. But you

may

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may say, *What is there in thy Beloved more than in another beloved?* Come taste and try, and see him to be altogether lovely. I do not know what to say of him: I cannot help speaking for my Beloved; O *his love is sweet and stronger than death! This is my Beloved!* I see some soldiers here; let me recommend Christ to you; you will never serve a better master, you will never fight under the banner of a better Captain; Christ will stick closs to you, he will love you for ever: Will you not come to such a Friend as this, and then let his love recommend him unto you. Some may say, I have got such a heart that I cannot believe Christ is my Friend. Is he not a Friend to you, and yet he died for you? Can a man do more? What can Christ do more to show his willingness to be your Friend? *it is worthy of all acceptation, that Christ came to save sinners.* If you feel your misery, Jesus is willing to be a Friend unto you; will you not lay down your arms against the King of kings? if you will not have him to be your Friend, you will have him to be your enemy. I do beseech you, that you would be reconciled to God; the King of Kings is willing to enter into a truce with you, he is willing to be reconciled unto you; tho' you have murdered him, yet he says, I am willing to forgive all that come. Then, O come, my dear hearers! come to my Beloved, come to my dear Friend; come, O friend, eat of the bread of life, he is the bread of life. O that some poor soul may be wrought upon to come unto him. Do not be ungrateful to him; come, humble yourselves all of you, and you that are going to the Sacrament,

to which of you is it that our Lord says, You shall betray me? God forbid that it should be said to any of you.

Before I conclude, let me once more recommend my Friend to your poor souls; my soul melteth with love unto you. Why, *This is my Beloved*, do not let the world be your beloved. What will it do for you? The wages that the devil gives is hell, eternal death,

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where we shall be banished from God, the centre of all happiness. Come to this, my beloved, this is a precious Christ, who hath done so much for you. I pray God to make you willing to come to him, for Christ's sake, the Friend of sinners. I could still talk of Christ; but may God bless what has been said. *Amen.*

A

LECTURE

on

II. KINGS, CHAP. IV. FROM VERSE I. TO 8.

Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead, and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen, &c.

THE Lord Jesus Christ in one of his sermons, tells us, That every scribe that is rightly instructed in the things that belong to God's everlasting gospel, every gospel minister that preaches the gospel, he is like an housholder, when

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he bringeth out what may satisfy the different palates of men. They shall bring forth things new and old, to build up God's children in their most holy faith. There is a great deal of gospel in the Old Testament for Jesus is the *Alpha* and *Omega* the Beginning and the End of all the divine Revelations. I have chosen this passage of Scripture to lecture upon; for

it is an extraordinary passage, and it contains a miracle, wrought to help a poor woman related to a holy man: It will afford a great sight of the power of Christ; and therefore I beg your attention. *There cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the Prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead, and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord: and the creditor is come to take my two sons to be bondmen.* I would first remark the person that applied to *Elisha*; she was a poor widow, and being left alone, on account of her husband's death, she was brought into great straits; she applied to *Elisha*, who was the master of the college, he was a governor there; the woman knew very well that the credit of religion depended much on the honesty of the Prophets. See your extravagant clergy in our days, they live, so fine that they die in debt, and therefore Christ's religion must now suffer. She cried to God; it implies, that she felt her wants. When do you cry to God for your souls wants? You do not feel your misery; if you did, you would cry fast enough to him. O it is a blessed thing when you can look back and see that your friends really fear the Lord: *Thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord*, and therefore, for the Lord's sake, help me. I do not find that this woman was reduced to these circumstances by extravagance. *Elisha* knew this very well; she had not only lost her husband, but she was in danger of losing her sons; hard-hearted creditor to take her children. You that pinch the poor, and throw them into prison, if you do not take warning, such hard dealing will bring you to hell. The, credi-

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tor must have her son, she did not know what to do, we have *nothing but a pot of oyl*: but he would work a miracle for her life, rather than the posterity of a faithful man should perish. It is remarkable how he works the neatest way; when Christ was feeding the multitude, he would not make bread, but multiplied the bread. You that are poor, learn, after this, to be content. Perhaps all of you have got plenty in your houses. I do not find this woman mourning against God at all; he saw that she was a woman that had faith in Christ. Then said he unto her, *Go borrow vessels, borrow not a few.* He intended to give greatly unto her. *And when thou shalt come in, thou shalt shut the door.* Had she not had faith, she would have thought that this would not pay her debt. She had faith in God, and she knew that it would come to pass; *and she shut the door upon her, and her sons.* I am apt to believe that they retired to prayer. There was a heaven on earth in this family, a good man, a good wife and good children; her

sons had faith also. *And it came to pass when the vessels were filled, the oyl stayed;* he had bring another; and they said, *There is not a vessel more.* She came and told him of it. Then said he to her, *Go and sell thy oyl, and pay thy debt.* Here is a great lesson to all people; we should take care so to order our affairs, that, when we die, they may not speak reproachfully of religion. See how she was rewarded for her faith; she has not only enough, or only to pay her debt, but enough to live on and her children. If any of you are in want, have faith in God, go plead the promises, you have got the Lord God of *Elisha* to go to; and if you can wrestle with God by prayer, you will never want fresh supply from God. I know one that has lived on the promise of God for six or seven years. Goodness is the promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come. If we go to God by faith, whatever we ask we shall have it. It is said of *Luther*, That he might ask any thing of God. When

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you want anything, go and ask your heavenly Father, I am sure he will give it you; and he will continue the same for ever. Examine your selves, and see that this be not your fault; but look up to Christ, and plead his promises; and, if you go and lay hold on God, you shall be relieved. How frequently are you in distress: I speak for the comfort of you that are poor; trust and rely on God; go to God, saying, *I believe, help my unbelief.* The inference that I would draw from what hath been said, is, I infer, concerning our souls, The empty vessels represent our hearts, and this oyl represents the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ: You will observe that *Elisha* ordered the woman to get empty vessels; and if you would have his oyl poured into your hearts, you must come empty of your own righteousness; you must come poor, miserable, blind, as lost, as naked, and as quite undone. Come to Christ in this manner; and put your hearts under his blood; and the blood of Christ shall run unto them: As long as your hearts are capable of receiving, so long shall be poured into your souls. We are told the woman said, *Bring another vessel.* Had the woman brought vessels to this day, it might have run to this hour. Was our hearts opened, God is ready to pour into our hearts; but the oyl and Grace is stopt, we are constrained in our own hearts; open our hearts, and he will fill them; if our hearts are capricious, God will give you enough. We are afraid to ask any thing of God; God bids you receive of his goodness and therefore we are such dwarfs in religion; therefore we fall short of the full privileges that wait the people of God here. I'll now speak to you that have had some of this

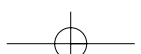
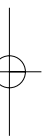
oyl poured into your hearts, this woman's case represents our case. By nature we owe a debt, and God comes to arrest us for our debt; How then will you pay this debt? You have nothing to pay. Soul and body must pay the debt. Here God hath provided a way to pay this debt; the holiness and righteousness of Christ is like this oyl; there is

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not only sufficient to pay your debt, but as much as will serve your souls to live on. Now, Christ hath not only paid the debt, but there is enough in Christ to our souls to live on. You that have felt something of Christ, and of his power, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, be not content with a little; Jesus would have you large in your demands. Would you have all that Christ hath purchased with his blood; come and open your hearts. O that God would drop some oyl into your hearts! O that God would strengthen you to run your spiritual race! O that he may strengthen the new creature in your heart! It will be so, if you are empty; if you come as poor naked empty sinners; if you have vessels empty, it will not stay. Come to Christ empty of self; as lost, undone creatures, and Christ shall take care of you. Did you know your condition; God is demanding payment of you; you have nothing to pay to God, all things must be sold, and you must be cast into hell. Fly away to Christ, and bring your empty vessels to the Redeemed, and he shall pay your debt. O that you would go and be obedient, as this poor woman was! I might preach long on this subject; but give up your souls to Christ. Surely, I believe, God does not let me speak in vain; But come empty every hour, saying, *Give, Give* me, still inlarge it. You must have all the graces of the Spirit. You should be endeavouring to be more like to God; and may the oyl be running in your hearts, until you are swallowed up in the boundless ocean of the Son of God. *May God bless what has been said.*

FINIS



CHRIST OUR FRIEND

