THE SPURGEON SERMON COLLECTION, VOL. 1

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Prophecy Insights Ministries
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THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD

SERMON NO. 1

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JANUARY 7TH, 1855,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."
— Malachi 3:6

It has been said by some one that "the proper study of mankind is man." I will not oppose the idea, but I believe it is equally true that the proper study of God's elect is God; the proper study of a Christian is the Godhead. The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy, which can ever engage the attention of a child of God, is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the doings, and the existence of the great God whom he calls his Father. There is something exceedingly improving to the mind in a contemplation of the Divinity. It is a subject so vast, that all our thoughts are lost in its immensity; so deep, that our pride is drowned in its infinity. Other subjects we can compass and grapple with; in them we feel a kind of self-content, and go our way with the thought, "Behold I am wise." But when we come to this master-science, finding that our plumb-line cannot sound its depth, and that our eagle eye cannot see its height, we turn away with the thought, that vain man would be wise, but he is like a wild ass's colt; and with the solemn exclamation, "I am but of yesterday, and know nothing." No subject of contemplation will tend more to humble the mind, than thoughts of God. We shall be obliged to feel —

"Great God, how infinite art thou,
What worthless worms are we!"

But while the subject humbles the mind it also expands it. He who often thinks of God, will have a larger mind than the man who simply plods

around this narrow globe. He may be a naturalist, boasting of his ability to dissect a beetle, anatomize a fly, or arrange insects and animals in classes with well nigh unutterable names; he may be a geologist, able to discourse of the megatherium and the plesiosaurus, and all kinds of extinct animals, he may imagine that his science, whatever it is, ennobles and enlarges his mind. I dare say it does, but after all, the most excellent study for expanding the soul, is the science of Christ, and him crucified, and the knowledge of the Godhead in the glorious Trinity. Nothing will so enlarge the intellect, nothing so magnify the whole soul of man, as a devout, earnest, continued investigation of the great subject of the Deity. And, whilst humbling and expanding, this subject is eminently consolatory. Oh, there is, in contemplating Christ, a balm for every wound; in musing on the Father, there is a quietus for every grief; and in the influence of the Holy Ghost, there is a balsam for every sore. Would you lose your sorrows? Would you drown your cares? Then go, plunge yourself in the Godhead's deepest sea; be lost in his immensity; and you shall come forth as from a couch of rest, refreshed and invigorated. I know nothing which can so comfort the soul; so calm the swelling billows of grief and sorrow; so speak peace to the winds of trial, as a devout musing upon the subject of the Godhead. It is to that subject that I invite you this morning. We shall present you with one view of it, — that is the immutability of the glorious Jehovah. "I am," says my text, "Jehovah," (for so it should be translated) "I am Jehovah, I change not: therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."

There are three things this morning. First of all, an unchanging God; secondly, the persons who derive benefit from this glorious attribute, "the sons of Jacob;" and thirdly, the benefit they so derive, they "are not consumed." We address ourselves to these points.

I. First of all, we have set before us the doctrine of THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD. "I am God, I change not." Here I shall attempt to expound, or rather to enlarge the thought, and then afterwards to bring a few arguments to prove its truth.

1. I shall offer some exposition of my text, by first saying, that God is Jehovah, and he changes not in his essence. We cannot tell you what Godhead is. We do not know what substance that is which we call God. It is an existence, it is a being; but what that is, we know not. However,

whatever it is, we call it his essence, and that essence never changes. The substance of mortal things is ever changing. The mountains with their snow-white crowns, doff their old diadems in summer, in rivers trickling down their sides, while the storm cloud gives them another coronation; the ocean, with its mighty floods, loses its water when the sunbeams kiss the waves, and snatch them in mists to heaven; even the sun himself requires fresh fuel from the hand of the Infinite Almighty, to replenish his ever burning furnace. All creatures change. Man, especially as to his body, is always undergoing revolution. Very probably there is not a single particle in my body which was in it a few years ago. This frame has been worn away by activity, its atoms have been removed by friction, fresh particles of matter have in the mean time constantly accrued to my body, and so it has been replenished; but its substance is altered. The fabric of which this world is made is ever passing away; like a stream of water, drops are running away and others are following after, keeping the river still full, but always changing in its elements. But God is perpetually the same. He is not composed of any substance or material, but is spirit — pure, essential, and ethereal spirit — and therefore he is immutable. He remains everlastingly the same. There are no furrows on his eternal brow. No age hath passed him; no years have marked him with the mementoes of their flight; he sees ages pass, but with him it is ever now. He is the great I AM — the Great Unchangeable. Mark you, his essence did not undergo a change when it became united with the manhood. When Christ in past years did gird himself with mortal clay, the essence of his divinity was not changed; flesh did not become God, nor did God become flesh by a real actual change of nature; the two were united in hypostatical union, but the Godhead was still the same. It was the same when he was a babe in the manager, as it was when he stretched the curtains of heaven; it was the same God that hung upon the cross, and whose blood flowed down in a purple river, the self-same God that holds the world upon his everlasting shoulders, and bears in his hands the keys of death and hell. He never has been changed in his essence, not even by his incarnation; he remains everlastingly, eternally, the one unchanging God, the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither the shadow of a change.

2. He changes not in his attributes. Whatever the attributes of God were of old, that they are now; and of each of them we may sing “As it was in the

beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, Amen." Was he powerful? Was he the mighty God when he spake the world out of the womb of nonexistence? Was he the Omnipotent when he piled the mountains and scooped out the hollow places for the rolling deep? Yes, he was powerful then, and his arm is unpalsied now, he is the same giant in his might; the sap of his nourishment is undried, and the strength of his soul stands the same for ever. Was he wise when he constituted this mighty globe, when he laid the foundations of the universe? Had he wisdom when he planned the way of our salvation, and when from all eternity he marked out his awful plans? Yes, and he is wise now; he is not less skillful, lie has not less knowledge; his eye which seeth all things is undimmed; his ear which heareth all the cries, sighs, sobs, and groans of his people, is not rendered heavy by the years which he hath heard their prayers. He is unchanged in his wisdom, he knows as much now as ever, neither more nor less; he has the same consummate skill, and the same infinite forecastings. He is unchanged, blessed be his name, in his justice. just and holy was he in the past; just and holy is he now. He is unchanged in his truth, he was promised, and he brings it to pass; he hath saith it, and it shall be done. He varies not in the goodness, and generosity, and benevolence of his nature. He is not become an Almighty tyrant, whereas he was once an Almighty Father; but his strong love stands like a granite rock, unmoved by the hurricanes of our iniquity. And blessed be his dear name, he is unchanged in his love. When he first wrote the covenant, how full his heart was with affection to his people. He knew that his Son must die to ratify the articles of that agreement. He knew right well that he must rend his best beloved from his bowels, and send him down to earth to bleed and die. He did not hesitate to sign that mighty covenant; nor did he shun its fulfillment. He loves as much now as he did then, and when suns shall cease to shine, and moons to show their feeble light, he shall love on for ever and for ever. Take any one attribute of God, and I will write semper idem on it (always the same). Take any one thing you can say of God now, and it may be said not only in the dark past, but in the bright future it shall always remain the same: "I am Jehovah, I change not."

3. Then again, God changes not in his plans. That man began to build, but was not able to finish, and therefore he changed his plan, as every wise man would do in such a case; he built upon a smaller foundation and

commenced again. But has it ever been said that God began to build but was not able to finish? Nay. When he hath boundless stores at his command, and when his own right hand would create worlds as numerous as drops of morning dew, shall he ever stay because he has not power? and reverse, or alter, or disarrange his plan, because he cannot carry it out? "But," say some, "perhaps God never had a plan." Do you think God is more foolish than yourself then, sir? Do you go to work without a plan? "No," say you, "I have always a scheme." So has God. Every man has his plan, and God has a plan too. God is a master-mind; he arranged everything in his gigantic intellect long before he did it; and once having settled it, mark you, he never alters it. "This shall be done," saith he, and the iron hand of destiny marks it down, and it is brought to pass. "This is my purpose," and it stands, nor can earth or hell after it. "This is my decree," saith he, promulgate it angles; rend it down from the gate of heaven ye devils; but ye cannot alter the decree; it shall be done. God altereth not his plans; why should he? He is Almighty, and therefore can perform his pleasure. Why should he? He is the All-wise, and therefore cannot have planned wrongly. Why should he? He is the everlasting God, and therefore cannot die before his plan is accomplished. Why should he change? Ye worthless atoms of existence, ephemera of the day! Ye creeping insects upon this bayleaf of existence! ye may change your plans, but he shall never, never change his. Then has he told me that his plan is to save me? If so, I am safe.

"My name from the palms of his hands
Eternity will not erase;
Impress'd on his heart it remains,
In marks of indelible grace."

4. Yet again, God is unchanging in his promises. Ah! we love to speak about the sweet promises of God; but if we could ever suppose that one of them could be changed, we would not talk anything more about them. If I thought that the notes of the bank of England could not be cashed next week, I should decline to take them; and if I thought that God's promises would never be fulfilled — it I thought that God would see it right to alter some word in his promises — farewell Scriptures! I want immutable things: and I find that I have immutable promises when I turn to the Bible: for, "by two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie," he hath signed, confirmed, and sealed every promise of his. The gospel is not

"yea and nay," it is not promising today, and denying tomorrow; but the gospel is "yea, yea," to the glory of God. Believer! there was a delightful promise which you had yesterday; and this morning when you turned to the Bible the promise was not sweet. Do you know why? Do you think the promise had changed? Ah, no! You changed; that is where the matter lies. You had been eating some of the grapes of Sodom, and your mouth was thereby put out of taste, and you could not detect the sweetness. But there was the same honey there, depend upon it, the same preciousness. "Oh!" says one child of God, "I had built my house firmly once upon some stable promises; there came a wind, and I said, O Lord, I am cast down and I shall be lost." Oh! the promises were not cast down; the foundations were not removed; it was your little "wood, hay, stubble" hut, that you had been building. It was that which fell down. You have been shaken on the rock, not the rock under you. But let me tell you what is the best way of living in the world. I have heard that a gentleman said to a Negro, "I can't think how it is you are always so happy in the Lord and I am often downcast." "Why Massa," said he, "I throw myself flat down on the promise — there I lie; you stand on the promise — you have a little to do with it, and down you go when the wind comes, and then you cry, 'Oh! I am down;' whereas I go flat on the promise at once, and that is why I fear no fall." Then let us always say, "Lord there is the promise; it is thy business to fulfill it." Down I go on the promise: and remember, every promise is a rock, an unchanging thing. Therefore, at his feet cast yourself, and rest there forever.

5. But now comes one jarring note to spoil the theme. To some of you God is unchanging in his threatenings. If every promise stands fast, and every oath of the covenant is fulfilled, hark thee, sinner! — mark the word — hear the death-knell of thy carnal hopes; see the funeral of thy fleshly trustings. Every threatening of God, as well as every promise shall be fulfilled. Talk of decrees! I will tell you of a decree: "He that believeth not shall be damned." That is a decree, and a statute that can never change. Be as good as you please, be as moral as you can, be as honest as you will, walk as uprightly as you may, — there stands the unchangeable threatening: "He that believeth not shall be damned." What sayest thou to that, moralist? Oh, thou wishest thou couldst alter it, and say, "He that does not live a holy life shall be damned." That will be true; but it does not

say so. It says, “He that believeth not.” Here is the stone of stumbling, and the rock of offense; but you cannot alter it. You must believe or be damned, saith the Bible; and mark, that threat of God is an unchangeable as God himself. And when a thousand years of hell’s torments shall have passed away, you shall look on high, and see written in burning letters of fire, “He that believeth not shall be damned.” “But, Lord, I am damned.” Nevertheless it says “shall be” still. And when a million ages have rolled away, and you are exhausted by your pains and agonies, you shall turn up your eye and still read “SHALL BE DAMNED,” unchanged, unaltered. And when you shall have thought that eternity must have spun out its last thread — that every particle of that which.we call eternity, must have run out, you shall still see it written up there, “SHALL BE DAMNED.” O terrific thought! How dare I utter it? But I must. Ye must be warned, sirs, “lest ye also come into this place of torment.” Ye must be told rough things; for if God’s gospel is not a rough thin and the law is a rough thing; Mount Sinai is a rough thing. Woe unto the watchman that warns not the ungodly! God is unchanging in his threatenings. Beware, O sinner, for “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

6. We must just hint at one thought before we pass away and that is — God is unchanging in the objects of his love — not only in his love, but in the objects of it.

“If ever it should come to pass,
That sheep of Christ might fall away.
My fickle, feeble soul, alas,
Would fall a thousand times a day.”

If one dear saint of God had perished, so might it all; if one of the covenant ones be lost, so may all be, and then there is no gospel promise true; but the Bible is a lie, and there is nothing in it worth my acceptance. I will be an infidel at once, when I can believe that a saint of God can ever fall finally. If God hath loved me once, then he will love me for ever.

“Did Jesus once upon me shine,
Then Jesus is for ever mine.”

The objects of everlasting love never change. Those whom God hath called, he will justify, whom he has justified, he will sanctify; and whom he sanctifies, he will glorify.

1. Thus having taken a great deal too much time, perhaps, in simply expanding the thought of an unchanging God, I will now try to prove that He is unchangeable. I am not much of an argumentative preacher, but one argument that I will mention is this: the very existence, and being of a God, seem to me to imply immutability. Let me think a moment. There is a God; this God rules and governs all things; this God fashioned the world: he upholds and maintains it. What kind of being must he be? It does strike me that you cannot think of a changeable God. I conceive that the thought is so repugnant to common sense, that if you for one moment think of a changing God, the words seem to dash, and you are obliged to say, "Then he must be a kind of man," and get a Mormonite idea of God. I imagine it is impossible to conceive of a changing God; it is so to me. Others may be capable of such an idea, but I could not entertain it. I could no more think of a changing God, than I could of a round square, or any other absurdity. The thing seems so contrary, that I am obliged, when once I say God, to include the idea of an unchanging being.

2. Well, I think that one argument will be enough, but another good argument may be found in the fact of God's perfection. I believe God to be a perfect being. Now, if he is a perfect being, he cannot change. Do you not see this? Suppose I am perfect tomorrow after the alteration? If I changed, I must either change from a good state to a better — and then if I could get better, I could not be perfect now — or else from a better state to a worse — and if I were worse, I should not be perfect then. If I am perfect, I cannot be altered without being imperfect. If I am perfect today, I must keep the same tomorrow if I am to be perfect then. So, if God is perfect, he must be the same; for change would imply imperfection now, or imperfection then.

3. Again, there is the fact of God's infinity, which puts change out of the question. God is an infinite being. What do you mean by that? There is no man who can tell you what he means by an infinite being. But there cannot be two infinities. If one thing is infinite, there is no room for anything else; for infinite means all. It means not bounded, not finite, having no end. Well, there cannot be two infinities. If God is infinite today, and then should change and be infinite tomorrow, there would be two infinities. But that cannot be. Suppose he is infinite and then changes, he must become finite, and could not be God; either he is finite and then changes, he must

become finite, and could not be God; either he is finite today and finite tomorrow — all of which suppositions are equally absurd. The fact of his being an infinite being at once quashes the thought of his being a changeable being. Infinity has written on its very brow the word “immutability.”

4. But then, dear friends, let us look at the past: and there we shall gather some proofs of God’s immutable nature. “Hath he spoken, and hath he not done it? Hath he sworn, and hath it not come to pass?” Can it not be said of Jehovah, “He hath done all his will, and he hath accomplished all his purpose?” Turn ye to Philistia; ask where she is. God said, “How Ashdod, and ye gates of Gaza, for ye shall fall;” and where are they? Where is Edom? Ask Petra and its ruined walls. Will they not echo back the truth that God hath said, “Edom shall be a prey, and shall be destroyed?” Where is Babel, and where Nineveh? Where Moab and where Ammon? Where are the nations God hath said he destroy? Hath he not uprooted them and cast out the remembrance of them from the earth? And hath God cast off his people? Hath he once been unmindful of his promise? Hath he once broken his oath and covenant, or once departed from his plan? Ah! no. Point to one instance in history where God has changed! Ye cannot sirs; for throughout all history there stands the fact that God has been immutable in his purposes. Methinks I hear some one say, “I can remember one passage in Scripture where God changed!” And so did I think once. The case I mean, is that of the death of Hezekiah. Isaiah came in and said, ‘Hezekiah, you must die, your disease is incurable, set your house in order.’ He turned his face to the wall and began to pray; and before Isaiah was in the outer court, he was told to go back and say, “Thou shalt live fifteen years more.” You may think that proves that God changes; but really I cannot see in it the slightest proof in the world. How do you know that God did not know that? Oh! but God did know it; he knew that Hezekiah would live. Then he did not change, for if he knew that, how could he change? That is what I want to know. But do you know one little thing? — that Hezekiah’s son Manasseh, was not born at that time, and that had Hezekiah died, there would have been no Manasseh, and no Josiah and no Christ, because Christ came from that very line. You will find that Manasseh was twelve years old when his father died; so that he must have been born three years after this. And do you not believe that God decreed the birth of Manasseh, and foreknew it? Certainly. Then he decreed that

Isaiah should go and tell Hezekiah that his disease was incurable, and then say also in the same breath, "But I will cure it, and thou shalt live." He said that to stir up Hezekiah to prayer. He spoke, in the first place as a man. "According to all human probability your disease is incurable, and you must die." Then he waited till Hezekiah prayed; then came a little "but" at the end of the sentence. Isaiah had not finished the sentence. He said, "You must put your house in order for there is no human cure; but" (and then he walked out. Hezekiah prayed a little, and then he came in again, and said) "But I will heal thee." Where is there any contradiction there, except in the brain of those who fight against the Lord, and wish to make him a changeable being.

II. Now secondly, let me say a word on THE PERSONS TO WHOM THIS UNCHANGEABLE GOD IS A BENEFIT. "I am God, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Now, who are "the sons of Jacob," who can rejoice in an immutable God?

1. First, they are the sons of God's election; for it is written, "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated, the children being not yet born neither having done good nor evil." It was written, "The elder shall serve the younger." "The sons of Jacob" —

"Are the sons of God's election,
Who through sovereign grace believe;
Be eternal destination
Grace and glory they receive."

God's elect are here meant by "the sons of Jacob," — those whom he foreknew and fore-ordained to everlasting salvation.

2. By "the sons of Jacob" are meant, in the second place, persons who enjoy peculiar rights and titles. Jacob, you know, had no rights by birth; but he soon acquired them. He changed a mess of pottage with his brother Esau, and thus gained the birthright. I do not justify the means; but he did also obtain the blessing, and so acquired peculiar rights. By 'the sons of Jacob" here, are meant persons who have peculiar rights and titles. Unto them that believe, he hath given the right and power to become sons of God. They have an interest in the blood of Christ; they have a right to "enter in through the gates into the city;" they have a title to eternal honors; they have a promise to everlasting glory; they have a right to call

themselves sons of God. Oh! there are peculiar rights and privileges belonging to the “sons of Jacob.

3. But, then next, these “sons of Jacob” were men of peculiar manifestations. Jacob had peculiar manifestations from his God, and thus he was highly honored. Once at night-time he lay down and slept; he had the hedges for his curtains, the sky for his canopy, a stone for his pillow, and the earth for his bed. Oh! then he had a peculiar manifestation. There was a ladder, and he saw the angels of God ascending and descending. He thus had a manifestation of Christ Jesus, as the ladder which reaches from earth to heaven, up and down which angels came to bring us mercies. Then what a manifestation there was at Mahanaim, when the angels of God met him; and again at Peniel, when he wrestled with God, and saw him face to face. Those were peculiar manifestations; and this passage refers to those who, like Jacob, have had peculiar manifestations.

Now then, how many of you have had personal manifestations? “Oh!” you say “that is enthusiasm; that is fanaticism.” Well, it is a blessed enthusiasm, too, for the sons of Jacob have had peculiar manifestations. They have talked with God as a man talketh with his friend; they have whispered in the ear of Jehovah; Christ hath been with them to sup with them, and they with Christ; and the Holy Spirit hath shone into their souls with such a mighty radiance, that they could not doubt about special manifestations. The “sons of Jacob” are the men, who enjoy these manifestations.

4. Then again, they are men of peculiar trials. Ah! poor Jacob! I should not choose Jacob’s lot if I had not the prospect of Jacob’s blessing; for a hard lot his was. He had to run away from his father’s house to Laban’s; and then that surly old Laban cheated him all the years he was there — cheated him of his wife, cheated him in his wages, cheated him in his flocks, and cheated him all through the story. By-and-bye he had to run away from Laban, who pursued him and overtook him. Next came Esau with four hundred men to cut him up root and branch. Then there was a season of prayer, and afterwards he wrestled, and had to go all his life with his thigh out of joint. But a little further on, Rachael, his dear beloved, died. Then his daughter Dinah is led astray, and the sons murder the Shechemites. Anon there is dear Joseph sold into Egypt, and a famine comes. Then

Reuben goes up to his couch and pollutes it; Judah commits incest with his own daughter-in-law; and all his sons become a plague to him. At last Benjamin is taken away; and the old man, almost broken-hearted, cries, "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away." Never was man more tried than Jacob, all through the one sin of cheating his brother. All through his life God chastised him. But I believe there are many who can sympathize with dear old Jacob. They have had to pass through trials very much like his. Well, cross-bearers! God says, "I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Poor tried souls! ye are not consumed because of the unchanging nature of your God. Now do not get fretting, and say, with the self-conceit of misery, "I am the man who hath seen affliction." Why "the Man of Sorrows" was afflicted more than you; Jesus was indeed a mourner. You only see the skirts of the garments of affliction. You never have trials like his. You do not understand what troubles means; you have hardly sipped the cup of trouble; you have only had a drop or two, but Jesus drunk the dregs. Fear not saith God, "I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob," men of peculiar trials, "are not consumed."

5. Then one more thought about who are the "sons of Jacob," for I should like you to find out whether you are "sons of Jacob," yourselves. They are men of peculiar character; for though there were some things about Jacob's character which we cannot commend, there are one or two things which God commends. There was Jacob's faith, by, which Jacob had his name written amongst the mighty worthies who obtained not the promises on earth, but shall obtain them in heaven. Are you men of faith, beloved? Do you know what it is to walk by faith, to live by faith, to get your temporary food by faith, to live on spiritual manna — all by faith? Is faith the rule of your life? if so, you are the "sons of Jacob."

Then Jacob was a man of prayer — a man who wrestled, and groaned, and prayed. There is a man up yonder who never prayed this morning & before coming up to the house of God. Ah! you poor heathen, don't you pray? No! he says, "I never thought of such a thing; for years I have not prayed." Well, I hope you may before you die. Live and die without prayer, and you will pray long enough when you get to hell. There is a woman: she did not pray this morning; she was so busy sending her children to the Sunday School, she had no time to pray. No time to pray?

Had you time to dress? There is a time for every purpose under heaven, and if you had purposed to pray, you would have prayed. Sons of God cannot live without prayer. They are wrestling Jacobs. They are men in whom the Holy Ghost so works, they can no more five without prayer than I can live without breathing. They must pray. Sirs, mark you, if you are living without prayer, you are living without Christ; and dying like that, your portion will be in the lake which burneth with fire. God redeem you, God rescue you from such a lot! But you who are "the sons of Jacob," take comfort, for God is immutable.

III. Thirdly, I can say only a word about the other point — THE BENEFIT WHICH THESE "SONS OF JACOB" RECEIVE FROM AN UNCHANGING GOD. "Therefore ye sons Jacob are not consumed." "Consumed?" How? how can man be consumed? Why, there are two ways. We might have been consumed in hell. If God had been a changing God, the "sons of Jacob" here this morning, might have been consumed in hell; but for God's unchanging love I should have been a faggot in the fire. But there is a way of being consumed in this world; there is such a things as being condemned before you die — "condemned already;" there is such a thing as being alive, and yet being absolutely dead. We might have been left to our own devices, and then where should we have been now? Revelling with the drunkard, blaspheming Almighty God. Oh? had he left you, dearly beloved, had he been a changing God, ye had been amongst the filthiest of the filthy, and the vilest of the vile. Cannot you remember in your life, seasons similar to those I have felt? I have gone right to the edge of sin; some strong temptation has taken hold of both my arms, so that I could not wrestle with it. I have been pushed alone, dragged as by an awful satanic power to the very edge of some horrid precipice. I have looked down, down, down, and seen my portion; I quivered on the brink of ruin. I have been horrified, as, with my hair upright, I have thought of the sin I was about to commit, the horrible pit into which I was about to fall. A strong arm hath saved me. I have started back and cried, O God! could I have gone so near sin, and yet come back again? Could I have walked right up to the furnace and not fallen down, like Nebuchadnezzar's strong men, devoured by the very heat? Oh! is it possible I should be here this morning, when I think of the sins I have committed, and the crimes which have crossed my wicked imagination? Yes, I am here, unconsumed, because the Lord changes not.

Oh! if he had changed, we should have been consumed by ourselves; for after all, Mr. Self is the worst enemy a Christian has. We should have proved suicides to our own souls; we should have mixed the cup of poison for our own spirits, if the Lord had not been an unchanging God, and dashed the cup out of our hands when we were about to drink it. Then we should have been consumed by God himself if he had not been a changeless God. We call God a Father; but there is not a father in this world who would not have killed all his children long ago, so provoked would he have been with them, if he had been half as much troubled as God has been with his family. He has the most troublesome family in the whole world — unbelieving, ungrateful, disobedient, forgetful, rebellious, wandering, murmuring, and stiffnecked. Well it is that he is longsuffering, or else he would have taken not only the rod, but the sword to some of us long ago. But there was nothing in us to love at first, so, there cannot be less now. John Newton used to tell a whimsical story, and laugh at it too, of a good woman who said, in order to prove the doctrine of Election, "Ah! sir, the Lord must have loved me before I was born, or else he would not have seen anything in me to love afterwards." I am sure it is true in my case, and true in respect most of God's people; for there is little to love in them after they are born, that if he had not loved them before then, he would have seen no reason to choose them since their good works did not win his affection, bad works cannot sever that affection; since their righteousness did not bind his love to them, so their wickedness cannot snap the golden links. He loved them out of pure sovereign grace, and he will love them still. But we should have been consumed by the devil, and by our enemies — consumed by the world, consumed by our sins, by our trials, and in a hundred other ways, if God had ever changed.

Well, now, time fails us, and I can say but little. I have only just cursorily touched on the text. I now hand it to you. May the Lord help you "sons of Jacob" to take home this portion of meat; digest it well, and feed upon it. May the Holy Ghost sweetly apply the glorious things that are written! And may you have "a feast of fit things, of wines on the less well refined!" Remember God is the same, whatever is removed. Your friends may be disaffected, your ministers may be taken away, every thing may change, but God does not. Your brethren my change and cast out your name as vile: but God will love you still. Let your station in life change,

and your property by gone; let your whole life be shaken, and you become weak and sickly; let everything flee away — there is one place where change cannot put his finger; there is one name on which mutability can never be written; there is one heart which never can alter; that heart is God's — that name Love.

"Trust him, he will ne'er deceive you.
Though you hardly of him deem;
He will never, never leave you,
Nor will let you quite leave him."

THE REMEMBRANCE OF CHRIST

SERMON NO. 2

DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, JANUARY 7TH, 1855,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"This do in remembrance of me." — 1 Corinthians 11:24.

IT SEEMS, then, that Christians may forget Christ. The text implies the possibility of forgetfulness concerning him whom gratitude and affection should constrain them to remember. There could be no need for this loving exhortation, if there were not a fearful supposition that our memories might prove treacherous, and our remembrance superficial in its character, or changing in its nature. Nor is this a bare supposition: it is, alas, too well confirmed in our experience, not as a possibility, but as a lamentable fact. It seems at first sight too gross a crime to lay at the door of converted men. It appears almost impossible that those who have been redeemed by the blood of the dying Lamb should ever forget their Ransomer; that those who have been loved with an everlasting love by the eternal Son of God, should ever forget that Son; but if startling to the ear, it is alas, too apparent to the eye to allow us to deny the fact. Forget him who ne'er forgot us! Forget him who poured his blood forth for our sins! Forget him who loved us even to the death! Can it be possible? Yes it is not only possible, but conscience confesses that it is too sadly a fault of all of us, that we can remember anything except Christ. The object which we should make the monarch of our hearts, is the very thing we are most inclined to forget. Where one would think that memory would linger, and unmindfulness would be an unknown intruder, that is the spot which is desecrated by the feet of forgetfulness, and that the place where memory too seldom looks. I appeal to the conscience of every Christian here: Can you deny the truth of what I utter? Do you not find yourselves forgetful

of Jesus? Some creature steals away your heart, and you are unmindful of him upon whom your affection ought to be set. Some earthly business engrosses your attention when you should have your eye steadily fixed upon the cross. It is the incessant round of world, world, world; the constant din of earth, earth, earth, that takes away the soul from Christ. Oh! my friends, is it not too sadly true that we can recollect anything but Christ, and forget nothing so easy as him whom we ought to remember? While memory will preserve a poisoned weed, it suffereth the Rose of Sharon to wither.

The cause of this is very apparent: it lies in one or two facts. We forget Christ, because regenerate persons as we really are, still corruption and death remain even in the regenerate. We forget him because we carry about with us the old Adam of sin and death. If we were purely new-born creatures, we should never forget the name of him whom we love. If we were entirely regenerated beings, we should sit down and meditate on all our Savior did and suffered; all he is; all he has gloriously promised to perform; and never would our roving affections stray; but centered, nailed, fixed eternally to one object, we should continually contemplate the death and sufferings of our Lord. But alas! we have a worm in the heart, a pest-house, a charnel-house within, lusts, vile imaginations, and strong evil passions, which, like wells of poisonous water, send out continually streams of impurity. I have a heart, which God knoweth, I wish I could wring from my body and hurl to an infinite distance; a soul which is a cage of unclean birds, a den of loathsome creatures, where dragons haunt and owls do congregate, where ever evil beast of ill-omen dwells; a heart too vile to have a parallel — “deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.” This is the reason why I am forgetful of Christ. Nor is this the sole cause; I suspect it lies somewhere else too. We forget Christ because there are so many other things around us to attract our attention. “But,” you say, “they ought not to do so, because though they are around us, they are nothing in comparison with Jesus Christ: though they are in dread proximity to our hearts, what are they compared with Christ?” But do you know, dear friends, that the nearness of an object has a very great effect upon its power? The sun is many, many times larger than the moon, but the moon has a greater influence upon the tides of the ocean than the sun, simply because it is nearer, and has a greater power of attraction. So I find

that a little crawling worm of the earth has more effect upon my soul than the glorious Christ in heaven; a handful of golden earth, a puff of fame, a shout of applause, a thriving business, my house, my home, will affect me more than all the glories of the upper world; yea, than the beatific vision itself: simply because earth is near, and heaven is far away. Happy day, when I shall be borne aloft on angels' wings to dwell for ever near my Lord, to bask in the sunshine of his smile, and to be lost in the ineffable radiance of his lovely countenance. We see then the cause of forgetfulness; let us blush over it; let us be sad that we neglect our Lord so much, and now let us attend to his word, "This do in remembrance of me," hoping that its solemn sounds may charm away the demon of base ingratitude.

We shall speak, first of all, concerning the blessed object of memory; secondly, upon the advantages to be derived from remembering this Person; thirdly, the gracious help, to our memory — "This do in remembrance of me;" and fourthly, the gentle command, " This do in remembrance of me." May the Holy Ghost open my lips and your hearts, that we may receive blessings.

I. First of all, we shall speak of the glorious and precious object of memory — "This do in remembrance of me." Christians have many treasures to lock up in the cabinet of memory. They ought to remember their election — "Chosen of God ere time began." They ought to be mindful of their extraction, that they were taken out of the miry clay, hewn out of the horrible pit. They ought to recollect their effectual calling, for they were called of God, and rescued by the power of the Holy Ghost. They ought to remember their special deliverances — all that has been done for them, and all the mercies bestowed on them. But there is one whom they should embalm in their souls with the most costly spices — one who, above all other gifts of God, deserves to be had in perpetual remembrance. One I said, for I mean not an act, I mean not a deed; but it is a Person whose portrait I would frame in gold, and hang up in the state-room of the soul. I would have you earnest students of all the deeds of the conquering Messiah. I would have you conversant with the life of our Beloved. But O forget not his person; for the text says, "This do in remembrance of me." It is Christ's glorious person which ought to be the object of our remembrance. It is his image which should be enshrined in every temple of the Holy Ghost.

But some will say, “How can we remember Christ’s person, when we never saw it? We cannot tell what was the peculiar form of his visage; we believe his countenance to be fairer than that of any other man — although through grief and suffering more marred — but since we did not see it, we cannot remember it. We never saw his feet as they trod the journeys of his mercy; we never beheld his hands as he stretched them out full of lovingkindness; we cannot remember the wondrous intonation of his language, when in more than seraphic eloquence, he awed the multitude, and chained their ears to him; we cannot picture the sweet smile that ever hung on his lips, nor that awful frown with which he dealt out anathemas against the Pharisees; we cannot remember him in his sufferings and agonies, for we never saw him.” Well, beloved, I suppose it is true that you cannot remember the visible appearance, for you were not then born; but do you not know that even the apostle said, though he had known Christ after the flesh, yet, thenceforth after the flesh he would know Christ no more. The natural appearance, the race, the descent, the poverty, the humble garb, were nothing in the apostle’s estimation of his glorified Lord. And thus, though you do not know him after the flesh, you may know him after the spirit; in this manner you can remember Jesus as much now as Peter, or Paul, or John, or James, or any of those favored ones who once trod in his footsteps, walked side by side with him, or laid their heads upon his bosom. Memory annihilates distance and over leapeth time, and can behold the Lord, though he be exalted in glory.

Ah! let us spend five minutes in remembering Jesus. Let us remember him in his baptism, when descending into the waters of Jordan, a voice was heard, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Behold him coming up dripping from the stream! Surely the conscious water must have blushed that it contained its God. He slept within its waves a moment, to consecrate the tomb of baptism, in which those who are dead with Christ are buried with him. Let us remember him in the wilderness, whither he went straight from his immersion. Oh! I have often thought of that scene in the desert, when Christ, weary and way-worn, sat him down, perhaps upon the gnarled roots of some old tree. Forty days that he fasted, he was an hungered, when in the extremity of his weakness there came the evil spirit. Perhaps he had veiled his demon royalty in the form of some aged pilgrim, and taking up a stone, said, “Way-worn

pilgrim, if thou be the Son of God command this stone to be made bread." Methinks I see him, with his cunning smile, and his malicious leer, as he held the stone, and said, "If," — blasphemous if, — "If thou be the Son of God, command that this stone shall become a meal for me and thee, for both of us are hungry, and it will be an act of mercy; thou canst do it easily; speak the word, and it shall be like the bread of heaven; we will feed upon it, and thou and I will be friends for ever." But Jesus said — and O how sweetly did he say it — "Man shall not live by bread alone." Oh! how wonderfully did Christ fight the tempter! Never was there such a battle as that. It was a duel foot to foot — a single-handed combat — when the champion lion of the pit, and the mighty lion of the tribe of Judah, fought together. Splendid sight! Angels stood around to gaze upon the spectacle, just as men of old did sit to see the tournament of noted warriors. There Satan gathered up his strength; here Apollyon concentrated all his satanic power, that in this giant wrestle he might overthrow the seed of the woman. But Jesus was more than a match for him; in the wrestling he gave him a deadly fall, and came off more than a conqueror. Lamb of God! I will remember thy desert strivings, when next I combat with Satan. When next I have a conflict with roaring Diabolus, I will look to him who conquered once for all, and broke the dragon's head with his mighty blows.

Further, I beseech you remember him in all his daily temptations and hourly trials, in that life-long struggle of his, through which he passed. Oh! what a mighty tragedy was the death of Christ! and his life too? Ushered in with a song, it closed with a shriek. "It is finished." It began in a manger, and ended on a cross; but oh, the sad interval between! Oh! the black pictures of persecution, when his friends abhorred him; when his foes frowned at him as he passed the streets; when he heard the hiss of calumny, and was bitten by the foul tooth of envy; when slander said he had a devil and was mad: that he was a drunken man and a wine-bibber; and when his righteous soul was vexed with the ways of the wicked. Oh! Son of God, I must remember thee; I cannot help remembering thee, when I think of those years of toil and trouble which thou didst live for my sake. But you know my chosen theme — the place where I can always best remember Christ. It is a shady garden full of olives. O that spot! I would that I had eloquence, that I might take you there. Oh! if the Spirit would

but take us, and set us down hard by the mountains of Jerusalem, I would say, see there runs the brook of Kedron, which the king himself did pass; and there you see the olive trees. Possibly, at the foot of that olive, lay the three disciples when they slept; and there, ah! there, I see drops of blood. Stand here, my soul, a moment; those drops of blood — dost thou behold them? Mark them; they are not the blood of wounds; they are the blood of a man whose body was then unwounded. O my soul picture him when he knelt down in agony and sweat, — sweat, because he wrestled with God, — sweat, because he agonized with his Father. "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." O Gethsemane! thy shades are deeply solemn to my soul. But ah! those drops of blood! Surely it is the climax of the height of misery; it is the last of the mighty acts of this wondrous sacrifice. Can love go deeper than that? Can it stoop to greater deeds of mercy? Oh! had I eloquence, I would bestow a tongue on every drop of blood that is there; that your hearts might rise in mutiny against your languor and coldness, and speak out with earnest burning remembrance of Jesus. And now, farewell, Gethsemane.

But I will take you somewhere else, where you shall still behold the "Man of Sorrows." I will lead you to Pilate's hall, and let you see him endure the mockeries of cruel soldiers: the smitings of mailed gloves; the blows of clenched fists; the shame; the spitting, the plucking of the hair: the cruel buffetings. Oh! can you not picture the King of Martyrs, stript of his garments; exposed to the gaze of fiend-like men? See you not the crown about his temples, each thorn acting as a lancet to pierce his head? Mark you not his lacerated shoulders, and the white bones starting out from the bleeding flesh? Oh, Son of Man! I see thee scourged and flagellated with rods and whips, how can I henceforward cease to remember thee? My memory would be more treacherous than Pilate, did it not every cry, Ecce Homo, — "Behold the man."

Now, finish the scene of woe by a view of Calvary. Think of the pierced hands and the bleeding side; think of the scorching sun, and then the entire darkness; remember the broiling fever and the dread thirst; think of the death shriek, "It is finished!" and of the groans which were its prelude. This is the object of memory. Let us never forget Christ. I beseech you, for the love of Jesus, let him have the chief place in your memories. Let not

the pearl of great price be dropped from your careless hand into the dark ocean of oblivion.

I cannot, however, help saying one thing before I leave this head: and that is, there are some of you who can very well carry away what I have said, because you have read it often, and heard it before; but still you cannot spiritually remember anything about Christ, because you never had him manifested to you, and what we have never known, we cannot remember. Thanks be unto God, I speak not of you all, for in this place there is a goodly remnant according to the election of grace, and to them I turn. Perhaps I could tell you of some old barn, hedge-row, or cottage; or if you have lived in London, about some garret, or some dark lane or street, where first you met with Christ; or some chapel into which you strayed, and you might say, "Thank God, I can remember the seat where first he met with me, and spoke the whispers of love to my soul, and told me he had purchased me."

"Dost mind the place, the spot of ground,
Where Jesus did thee meet?"

Yes, and I would love to build a temple on the spot, and to raise some monument there, where Jehovah-Jesus first spoke to my soul, and manifested himself to me. But he has revealed himself to you more than once — has he not? And you can remember scores of places where the Lord hath appeared of old unto you, saying, "Behold I have loved you with an everlasting love." If you cannot all remember such things, there are some of you that can; and I am sure they will understand me when I say, come and do this in remembrance of Christ — in remembrance of all his loving visitations, of his sweet wooing words, of his winning smiles upon you, of all he has said and communicated to your souls. Remember all these things tonight, if it be possible for memory to gather up the mighty aggregate of grace. "Bless the Lord. O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

II. Having spoken upon the blessed object of our memory, we say, secondly, a little upon the benefits to be derived from a loving remembrance of Christ.

Love never says, "Cui bono?" Love never asks what benefit it will derive from love. Love from its very nature is a disinterested thing. It loves; for

the creature's sake it loves, and for nothing else. The Christian needs no argument to make him love Christ; just as a mother needs no argument to make her love her child. She does it because it is her nature to do so. The new-born creature must love Christ, it cannot help it. Oh! who can resist the matchless charms of Jesus Christ? — the fairest of ten thousand fairs, the loveliest of ten thousand loves. Who can refuse to adore the prince of perfection, the mirror of beauty, the majestic Son of God? But yet it may be useful to us to observe the advantages of remembering Christ, for they are neither few nor small.

And first, remembrance of Jesus will tend to give you hope when you are under the burden of your sins. Notice a few characters here tonight. There comes in a poor creature. Look at him! He has neglected himself this last month; he looks as if he had hardly eaten his daily bread. What is the matter with you? "Oh!" says he, "I have been under a sense of guilt; I have been again and again lamenting, because I fear I can never be forgiven; once I thought I was good, but I have been reading the Bible, and I find that my heart is 'deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;' I have tried to reform, but the more I try, the deeper I sink in the mire, there is certainly no hope for me. I feel that I deserve no mercy; it seems to me that God must destroy me, for he has declared, 'The soul that sinneth it shall die;' and die I must, be damned I must, for I know I have broken God's law." How will you comfort such a man? What soft words will you utter to give him peace? I know! I will tell thee that there is one, who for thee hath made a complete atonement; if thou only believest on him thou art safe for ever. Remember him, thou poor dying, hopeless creature, and thou shalt be made to sing for joy and gladness. See, the man believes, and in ecstasy exclaims, "Oh! come all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul."

"Tell it unto sinners, tell,
I am, I am out of hell."

Hallelujah! God hath blotted out my sins like a thick cloud! That is one benefit to be derived from remembering Christ. It gives us hope under a sense of sin, and tells us there is mercy yet.

Now, I must have another character. And what does he say? "I cannot stand it any longer; I have been persecuted and ill-treated, because I love

Christ; I am mocked, and laughed at, and despised: I try to bear it, but I really cannot. A man will be a man; tread upon a worm and he will turn upon you; my patience altogether fails me; I am in such a peculiar position that it is of no use to advise me to have patience, for patience I cannot have; my enemies are slandering me, and I do not know what to do." What shall we say to that poor man? How shall we give him patience? What shall we preach to him? You have heard what he has to say about himself. How shall we comfort him under this great trial? If we suffered the same, what should we wish some friend to say to us? Shall we tell him that other persons have borne as much? He will say, "Miserable comforters are ye all!" No, I will tell him, "Brother, you are persecuted; but remember the words of Jesus Christ, how he spake unto us, and said, 'Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you." My brother! think of him, who, when he died, prayed for his murderers, and said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." All you have to bear, is as nothing compared with his mighty sufferings. Take courage; face it again like a man; never say die. Let not your patience be gone; take up your cross daily, and follow Christ. Let him be your motto; set him before your eyes. And, now, receiving this, hear what the man will say. He tells you at once — "Hail, persecution; welcome shame. Disgrace for Jesus shall be my honor, and scorn shall be my highest glory.

"'Now, for the love I bear his name,
What was my gain I count my loss,
I pour contempt on all my shame,
And nail my glory to his cross.'"

There is another effect, you see, to remembering Christ. It tends to give us patience under persecution. It is a girdle to brace up the loins, so that our faith may endure to the end.

Dear friends, I should occupy your time too much if I went into the several benefits; so I will only just run over one or two blessings to be received. It will give us strength in temptation. I believe that there are hours with every man, when he has a season of terrific temptation. There was never a vessel that lived upon the mighty deep but sometimes it had to do battle with a storm. There she is, the poor barque, rocked up and down on the mad waves. See how they throw her from wave to wave, and

toss her to mid heaven. The winds laugh her to scorn. Old Ocean takes the ship in his dripping fingers, and shakes it to and fro. How the mariners cry out for fear! Do you know how you can put oil upon the waters, and all shall be still? Yes. One potent word shall do it. Let Jesus come; let the poor heart remember Jesus, and steadily then the ship shall sail, for Christ has the helm. The winds shall blow no more, for Christ shall bid them shut their mighty mouths, and never again disturb his child. There is nothing which can give you strength in temptation, and help you to weather the storm, like the name of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God. Then again, what comfort it will give you on a sick bed — the name of Christ! It will help you to be patient to those who wait upon you, and to endure the sufferings which you have to bear; yea, it shall be so with you, that you shall have more hope in sickness than in health, and shall find a blessed sweetness in the bitterness of gall. Instead of feeling vinegar in your mouth, through your trouble, you shall find honey for sweetness, in the midst of all the trial and trouble that God will put upon you, “For he giveth songs in the night.”

But just to close up the advantages of remembering Christ, do you know where you will have the benefit most of all? Do you know the place where chiefly you will rejoice that you ever thought of him? I will take you to it. Hush! Silence! You are going up stairs into a lonely room. The curtains hang down. Some one stands there weeping. Children are around the bed, and friends are there. See that man lying? That is yourself. Look at him; his eyes are your eyes; his hands are your hands. That is yourself. You will be there soon. Man! that is yourself. Do you see it? It is a picture of yourself. Those are your eyes that soon will be closed in death — your hands, that will lie stiff and motionless — your lips that will be dry and parched, between which they will put drops of water. Those are your words that freeze in air, and drop so slowly from your dying lips. I wonder whether you will be able to remember Christ there. If you do not, I will picture you. Behold that man, straight up in the bed; see his eyes starting from their sockets. His friends are all alarmed; they ask him what he sees. He represses the emotion; he tells them he sees nothing. They know that there is something before his eyes. He starts again. Good God! what is that I see — I seem to see? What is it? Ah! one sigh! The soul is gone. The body is there. What did he see? He saw a flaming throne of

judgment; he saw God upon it, with his scepter; he saw books opened; he beheld the throne of God, and saw a messenger, with a sword brandished in the air to smite him low. Man! that is thyself; there thou wilt be soon. That picture is thine own portrait. I have photographed thee to the life. Look at it. That is where thou shalt be within a few years — ay, within a few days. But if thou canst remember Christ, shall I tell thee what thou wilt do? Oh! thou wilt smile in the midst of trouble. Let me picture such a man. They put pillows behind him; he sits up in bed, and takes the hand of the loved one, and says, "Farewell! weep not for me; the kind God shall wipe away all tears from every eye." Those round about are addressed, "Prepare to meet your God, and follow me to the land of bliss." Now he has set his house in order. All is done. Behold him, like good old Jacob, leaning on his staff, about to die. See how his eyes sparkle; he claps his hands; they gather round to hear what he has to say; he whispers "Victory!" and summoning a little more strength, he cries, "Victory!" and at last, with his final gasp, "Victory, through him that loved us!" and he dies. This is one of the great benefits to be derived from remembering Christ — to be enabled to meet death with blessed composure.

III. We are now arrived at the third portion of our meditation, which is a SWEET AID TO MEMORY.

At schools we used certain books, called "Aids to Memory." I am sure they rather perplexed than assisted me. Their utility was equivalent to that of a bundle of staves under a traveller's arm: true he might use them one by one to walk with, but in the mean time he carried a host of others which he would never need. But our Savior was wiser than all our teachers, and his remembrances are true and real aids to memory. His love tokens have an unmistakeable language, and they sweetly win our attention.

Behold the whole mystery of the sacred Eucharist. It is bread and wine which are lively emblems of the body and blood of Jesus. The power to excite remembrance consists in the appeal thus made to the senses. Here the eye, the hand, the mouth, find joyful work. The bread is tasted, and entering within, works upon the sense of taste, which is one of the most powerful. The wine is sipped — the act is palpable. We know that we are drinking, and thus the senses, which are usually clogs to the soul, become wings to lift the mind in contemplation. Again, much of the influence of

this ordinance is found in its simplicity. How beautifully simple the ceremony is — bread broken and wine poured out. There is no calling that thing a chalice, that thing a paten, and that a host. Here is nothing to burden the memory — here is the simple bread and wine. He must have no memory at all who cannot remember that he has eaten bread, and that he has been drinking wine. Note again, the mighty pregnancy of these signs — how full they are of meaning. Bread broken — so was your Savior broken. Bread to be eaten — so his flesh is meat indeed. Wine poured out, the pressed juice of the grape — so was your Savior crushed under the foot of divine justice: his blood is your sweetest wine. Wine to cheer your heart — so does the blood of Jesus. Wine to strengthen and invigorate you — so does the blood of the mighty sacrifice. Oh! make that bread and wine to your souls tonight a sweet and blessed help of remembrance of that dear Man who once on Calvary died. Like the little ewe lamb, you are now to eat your Master's bread and drink from his cup. Remember the hand which feeds you.

But before you can remember Christ well here, you must ask the assistance of the Holy Spirit. I believe there ought to be a preparation before the Lord's Supper. I do not believe in Mrs. Toogood's preparation, who spent a week in preparing, and then finding it was not the Ordinance Sunday, she said she had lost all the week. I do not believe in that kind of preparation, but I do believe in a holy preparation for the Lord's Supper: when we can on a Saturday if possible, spend an hour in quiet meditation on Christ, and the passion of Jesus; when, especially on the Sabbath afternoon, we can devoutly sit down and behold him, then these scenes become realities, and not mockeries, as they are to some. I fear greatly that there are some of you who will drink the wine, and not think of his blood: and vile hypocrites you will be while you do it. Take heed to yourselves, "He that eateth and drinketh" unworthily, eateth and drinketh — what? — "damnation to himself." This is a plain English word; mind what you are doing! Do not do it carelessly; for of all the sacred things on earth, it is the most solemn. We have heard of some men banded together by drawing blood from their arms and drinking it all round; that was most horrid, but at the same time most solemn. Here you are to drink blood from the veins of Christ, and sip the trickling stream which gushed from his own loving heart. Is not that a solemn thing? Ought anybody to trifle with it? To go to

church and take it for sixpence? To come and join us for the sake of getting charities? Out upon it! It is an awful blasphemy against Almighty God; and amongst the damned in hell, those shall be among the most accursed who dared thus to mock the holy ordinance of God. This is the remembrance of Christ. “This do in remembrance of me.” If you cannot do it in remembrance of Christ, I beseech you, as you love your souls, do not do it at all. Oh! regenerate man or woman, enter not into the court of the priests, lest Israel’s God resent the intrusion.

IV. And now to close up. Here is a sweet command: “This do in remembrance of me.” To whom does this command apply? “This do ye.” It is important to answer this question — “This do ye,” Who are intended? Ye who put your trust in me. “This do ye in remembrance of me.” Well, now, you should suppose Christ speaking to you tonight; and he says, “This do ye in remembrance of me.” Christ watches you at the door. Some of you go home, and Christ says, “I thought I said, ‘This do ye in remembrance of me.’“ Some of you keep your seats as spectators. Christ sits with you, and he says, “I thought I said, ‘This do ye in remembrance of me.’“ “Lord, I know you did.” “Do you love me then?” “Yes, I love thee; I love, Lord; thou knowest I do.” “But, I say, go down there — eat that bread, drink that wine.” “I do not like to, Lord; I should have to be baptized if I joined that church, and I am afraid I shall catch cold, or be looked at. I am afraid to go before the church, for I think they would ask some questions I could not answer.” “What,” says Christ, “is this all you love me? Is this all your affection to your Lord. Oh! how cold to me, your Savior. If I had loved you no more than this, you would have been in hell: if that were the full extent of my affection, I should not have died for you. Great love bore great agonies; and is this all your gratitude to me?” Are not some of you ashamed, after this? Do you not say in your hearts, “it is really wrong?” Christ says, “Do this in remembrance of me,” and are you not ashamed to stay away? I give a free invitation to every lover of Jesus to come to this table. I beseech you, deny not yourselves the privilege by refusing to unite with the church. If you still live in sinful neglect of this ordinance, let me remind you that Christ has said, “Whosoever shall be ashamed of me in this generation, of him will I be ashamed, when I come in the glory of my Father.” Oh, soldier of the cross, act not the coward’s part!

And not to lead you into any mistakes, I must just add one thing, and then I have done. When I speak of your taking the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, do not imagine that I wish you for one moment to suppose that there is anything saving in it. Some say that the ordinance of baptism is non-essential, so is the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, it is non-essential, if we look upon it in the light of salvation. Be saved by eating a piece of bread! Nonsense, confounded nonsense! Be saved by drinking a drop of wine! Why, it is too absurd for common sense to admit any discussion upon. You know it is the blood of Jesus Christ; it is the merit of his agonies; it is the purchase of his sufferings; it is what he did, that alone can save us. Venture on him; venture wholly, and then you are saved. Hearest thou, poor convinced sinner, the way of salvation? If I ever meet thee in the next world, thou mightest, perhaps, say to me, "I spent one evening, sir, in hearing you, and you never told me the way to heaven." Well, thou shalt hear it. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, trust in his righteousness, and thou art saved beyond the vengeance of the law, or the power of hell. But trust in thine own works, and thou art lost as sure as thou art alive.

Now, O ever glorious Son of God, we approach thy table to feast on the viands of grace, permit each of us, in reliance upon thy Spirit, to exclaim in the words of one of thine own poets:

"Remember thee, and all thy pains,
And all thy love to me —
Yes, while a pulse or breath remains,
I will remember thee.
And when these failing lips grow dumb,
And thought and memory flee;
When thou shalt in thy kingdom come,
Jesus, remember me!"

THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY GHOST

SERMON NO. 4

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JANUARY 21, 1855,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." — John 14:16-17

You will be surprised to hear me announce that I do not intend this morning to say anything about the Holy Spirit as the Comforter. I propose to reserve that for another discourse. In this discourse I shall endeavor to explain and enforce certain other doctrines, which I believe are plainly taught in this text, and which I hope God the Holy Ghost may make profitable to our souls. Old John Newton once said, that there were some books which he could not read — they were good and sound enough; but, said he, "they are books of halfpence; you have to take so much in quantity before you have any value; there are other books of silver and others of gold, but I have one book that is a book of bank-notes; and every leaf is a bank-note of immense value." So, I found with this text, that I had a bank-note of so large a sum that I could not tell it out all this morning. I should have to keep you several hours before I could unfold to you the whole value of this precious promise, one of the last which Christ gave his people.

I invite your attention to this passage because we shall find in it some instruction on four points: first, concerning the true and proper personality of the Holy Ghost; secondly, concerning the united agency of the glorious Three Persons in the work of our salvation; thirdly we shall find something to establish the doctrine of the in-dwelling of the Holy

Ghost in the souls of all believers; and, fourthly, we shall find out the reason why the carnal mind rejects the Holy Ghost.

I. First of all, we shall have some little instruction concerning the proper personality of the Holy Spirit. We are so much accustomed to talk about the influence of the Holy Ghost and his sacred operations and graces, that we are apt to forget that the Holy Spirit is truly and actually a person — that he is a subsistence — an existence; or, as we Trinitarians usually say, one person in the essence of the Godhead. I am afraid that, though we do not know it, we have acquired the habit of regarding the Holy Ghost as an emanation flowing from the Father and the Son, but not as being actually a person himself. I know it is not easy to carry about in our mind the idea of the Holy Spirit as a person. I can think of the Father as a person, because his acts are such as I can understand. I see him hang the world in ether; I behold him swaddling a new-born sea in bands of darkness; I know it is he who formed the drops of hail, who leadeth forth the stars by their hosts, and calleth them by their name; I can conceive of him as a person, because I behold his operations. I can realize Jesus, the Son of Man, as a real person, because he is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh. It takes no great stretch of my imagination to picture the babe in Bethlehem, or behold the "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," of the king of martyrs, as he was persecuted in Pilate's hall, or nailed to the accursed tree for our sins. Nor do I find it difficult at times to realize the person of my Jesus sitting on his throne in heaven; or girt with clouds and wearing the diadem of all creation, calling the earth to judgment, and summoning us to hear our final sentence. But, when I come to deal with the Holy Ghost, his operations are so mysterious, his doings are so secret, his acts are so removed from everything that is of sense, and of the body, that I cannot so easily get the idea of his being a person; but a person he is. God the Holy Ghost is not an influence, an emanation, a stream of something flowing from the Father; but he is as much an actual person as either God the Son, or God the Father. I shall attempt this morning a little to establish the doctrine, and to show you the truth of it — that God the holy Spirit is actually a person.

The first proof we shall gather from the pool of holy baptism. Let me take you down, as I have taken others, into the pool now concealed, but which I wish were always open to your view. Let me take you to the baptismal

font, where believers put on the name of the Lord Jesus, and you shall hear me pronounce the solemn words, “I baptize thee in the name, “ — mark, “in the name,” not names — “of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Every one who is baptized according to the true form laid down in Scripture, must be a Trinitarian: otherwise his baptism is a farce and a lie, and he himself is found a deceiver and a hypocrite before God. As the Father is mentioned, and as the Son is mentioned, so is the Holy Ghost; and the whole is summed up as being a Trinity in unity, by its being said, not the names, but the “name,” the glorious name, the Jehovah name, “of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Let me remind you that the same thing occurs each time you are dismissed from this house of prayer. In pronouncing the solemn closing benediction, we involve on your behalf the love of Jesus Christ, the grace of the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit; and thus, according to the apostolic manner, we make a manifest distinction between the persons, showing that we believe the Father to be a person, the Son to be a person, and the Holy Ghost to be a person. Were there no other proofs in Scripture, I think these would be sufficient for every sensible man. he would see that if the Holy Spirit were a mere influence, he would not be mentioned in conjunction with two, whom we all confess to be actual and proper persons. A second argument arises from the fact that the Holy Ghost has actually made different appearances on earth. The Great Spirit has manifested himself to man: he has put on a form, so that, whilst he has not been beheld by mortal men, he has been so veiled in an appearance that he was seen, so far as that appearance was concerned, by the eyes of all beholders. See you Jesus Christ our Savior? There is the river Jordan, with its shelving banks and its willows weeping at its side. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, descends into the stream, and the holy Baptist John plunges him into the waves. The doors of heaven are opened; a miraculous appearance presents itself; a bright light shineth from the sky, brighter than the sun in all its grandeur, and down in a flood of glory descends something which you recognize to be a dove. It rests on Jesus — it sits upon his sacred head, and as the old painters put a halo round the brow of Jesus, so did the Holy Ghost shed a resplendence around the face of him who came to fulfill all righteousness, and there fore commenced with the ordinance of baptism. The Holy Ghost was seen as a dove, to mark his purity and his gentleness, and he came down like a dove from heaven to show that it is from heaven

alone that he descendeth. Nor is this the only time when the Holy Ghost has been manifest in a visible shape. You see that company of disciples gathered together in an upper room; they are waiting for some promised blessing, and bye-and-bye it shall come. Hark! there is a sound as of a rushing, mighty wind; it fills all the house where they are sitting, and astonished, they look around them, wondering what will come next. Soon a bright light appears, shining upon the heads of each: cloven tongues of fire sat upon them. What were these marvelous appearances of wind and flame but a display of the Holy Ghost in his proper person? I say the fact of an appearance manifests that he must be a person. An influence could not appear — an attribute could not appear: we cannot see attributes — we cannot behold influences. The Holy Ghost must, then, have been a person; since he was beheld by mortal eyes, and he came under the cognizance of mortal sense.

Another proof is from the fact, that the personal qualities are in Scripture ascribed to the Holy Ghost. First, let me read to you a text in which the Holy Ghost is spoken of as having understanding. In the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. 2 you will read, “But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepare for them that love him.” But God have revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Here you see an understanding — a power of knowledge is ascribed to the Holy Ghost. Now, if there be any persons here whose minds are of so preposterous a complexion that they would ascribe on attribute to another, and would speak of a mere influence having understanding, then I give up all the argument. But I believe every rational man will admit, that when anything is spoken of as having an understanding, it must be an existence — it must, in fact, be a person. In the 12th chapter, v. 10, of the same Epistle, you will find a will ascribed to the Holy Spirit. “But all these worketh that one and the self-same spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.” So it is plain that the Spirit has a will. he does not come from God simply at God’s will, but he has a will of his own, which is always in keeping with the will of the infinite Jehovah, but is, nevertheless, distinct and separate; therefore, I say he is a

person. In another text, power is ascribed to the Holy Ghost, and power is a thing which can only be ascribed to an existence. In Romans 15:13, it is written,

> "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost."

I need not insist upon it, because it is self-evident, that wherever you find understanding, will, and power, you must also find an existence; it cannot be a mere attribute, it cannot be a metaphor, it cannot be a personified influence; but it must be a person.

But I have a proof, which, perhaps, will be more telling upon you than any other. Acts and deeds are ascribed to the Holy Ghost; there fore, he must be a person. You read in the first chapter of the Book of Genesis, that the Spirit brooded over the surface of the earth, when it was as yet all disorder and confusion. This world was once a mass of chaotic matter, there was no order; it was like the valley of darkness and of the shadow of death. God the Holy Ghost spread his wings over it; he sowed the seeds of life in it; the germs from which all beings sprang were implanted by him; he impregnated the earth so that it became capable of life. Now, it must have been a person who brought order out of confusion: it must have been an existence who hovered over this world and made it what it now is. But do we not read in Scripture something more of the Holy Ghost? Yes, we are told that "holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." When Moses penned the Pentateuch, the Holy Ghost moved his hand; when David wrote the Psalms, and discoursed sweet music on his harp, it was the Holy Spirit that gave his fingers their seraphic motion; when Solomon dropped from his lips the words of the proverbs of wisdom, or when he hymned the Canticles of love, it was the Holy Ghost who gave him the words of knowledge and hymns of rapture. Ah! and what fire was that which touched the lips of the eloquent Isaiah? What hand was that which came upon Daniel? What might was that which made Jeremiah so plaintive in his grief? or what was that which winged Ezekiel and made him, like an eagle, soar into mysteries aloft, and see the Mighty Unknown beyond our reach? Who was it that made Amos, the herdsman, a prophet? who taught the rugged Haggai to pronounce his thundering sentences? who

showed Habakkuk the horses of Jehovah marching through the waters? or who kindled the burning eloquence of Nahum? who caused Malachi to close up the book with the muttering of the word curse? Who was it in each of these save the Holy Ghost? and must it not have been a person who spake in and through these ancient witnesses? We must believe it. We cannot avoid believing it when we read that “holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

And when has the holy Ghost ceased to have an influence upon men? We find that still he deals with his ministers and with all his saints. Turn to the Acts, and you will find that the Holy Ghost said, “Separate me Paul and Barnabas for the work.” I never heard of an attribute saying such a thing. The Holy Spirit said to Peter, “Go to the Centurion, and what I have cleansed, that call not thou common.” The Holy Ghost caught away Philip after he had baptized the Eunuch, and carried him away to another place; and the Holy Ghost said to Paul; “Thou shalt not go into that city, but shall turn into another.” And we know that the Holy Ghost was lied unto by Ananias and Sapphira, when it was said, “Thou hast not lied unto man, but unto God.” Again, that power which we feel every day, who are called to preach — that wondrous spell which makes our lips so potent — that power which gives us thoughts which are like birds from a far-off region, not the natives of our soul — that influence which I sometimes strangely feel, which, if it does not give me poetry and eloquence, gives me a might I never felt before, and lifts me above my fellow-man — that majesty with which he clothes his ministers, till in the midst of the battle they cry aha! like the war-horse of Job, and move themselves like leviathans in the water — that power which gives us might over men, and causes them to sit and listen as if their ears were chained, as if they were entranced by the power of some magician’s wand — that power must come from a person; it must come from the Holy Ghost.

But is it not said in Scripture, and do we not feel it, dear brethren, that it is the Holy Ghost who regenerates the soul? It is the Holy Ghost who quickens us. “You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.” It is the Holy Spirit who imparts the first germ of life, convincing us of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come. And is it not the Holy Spirit, who, after that flame is kindled, still fans it with the breath of his mouth and keeps it alive? Its author is its preserver. Oh! can it be said that

it is the Holy Ghost who strives in men's souls; that it is the Holy Ghost who brings them into the sweet place that is called Calvary — can it be said that he does all these things, and yet is not a person? It may be said, but it must be said by fools; for he never can be a wise man who can consider these things can be done by any other than a glorious person — a divine existence.

Allow me to give you one more proof, and I shall have done. Certain feelings are ascribed to the Holy Ghost, which can only be understood upon the supposition that he is actually a person. In the 4th chapter of Ephesians, v. 30, it is said that the Holy Ghost can be grieved: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of Go, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." In Isaiah, chap. 63:10, it is said that the Holy Ghost can be vexed:

> "But they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit; therefore he was turned to be their enemy., and he fought against them."

In Acts, chap. 7:51, you read that the Holy Ghost can be resisted:

> "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye."

And in the 5th chapter, v. 9, of the same book, you will find that the Holy Ghost may be tempted. We are informed that Peter said to Ananias and Sapphira, "How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?" Now, these things could not be emotions which might be ascribed to a quality or an emanation; they must be understood to relate to a person; an influence could not be grieved, it must be a person who can be grieved, vexed, or resisted.

And now, dear brethren, I think I have fully established the point of the personality of the Holy Ghost; allow me now, most earnestly, to impress upon you the absolute necessity of being sound on the doctrine of the Trinity. I knew a man, a good minister of Jesus Christ he is now, and I believe he was before he turned his eyes unto heresy — he began to doubt the glorious divinity of our blessed Lord, and for years did he preach the heterodox doctrine, until one day he happened to hear a very eccentric old minister preaching from the text, "But there the glorious Lord shall be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. Thy tacklings are loosed; they

could not well strengthen their mast, they could not spread the sail." "Now," said the old minister, "you give up the Trinity, and your tacklings are loosed, you cannot strengthen your masts. Once give up the doctrine of three persons, and your tacklings are all gone; your mast, which ought to be a support to your vessel, is a rickety one, and shakes." A gospel without the Trinity! it is a pyramid built upon its apex. A gospel without the Trinity! it is a rope of sand that cannot hold together. A gospel without the Trinity! then, indeed, Satan can overturn it. But give me a gospel with the Trinity, and the might of hell cannot prevail against it; no man can any more overthrow it than a bubble could split a rock, or a feather break in halves a mountain. Get the thought of the three persons, and you have the marrow of all divinity. Only know the Father, and know the Son, and know the Holy Ghost to be one, and all things will appear clear. This is the golden key to the secrets of nature; this is the silken clue of the labyrinths of mystery, and he who understands this, will soon understand as much as mortals e'er can know.

II. Now for our second point — the united agency of the three persons in the work of our salvation. Look at the text, and you will find all the three persons mentioned. "I" — that is the Son — "will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter." There are the three persons mentioned, all of them doing something for our salvation. "I will pray," says the Son. "I will send," says the Father. "I will comfort," says the Holy Ghost. now, let us, for a few moments, discourse upon this wondrous theme — the unity of the three persons with regard to the great purpose of the salvation of the elect. When God first made man, he said, "Let us make man," not let me, but, "Let us make man in our own image." The covenant Elohim said to each other, "Let us unitedly become the creator of man." So, when in ages far gone by, in eternity, they said, "Let us save man:" it was not the Father who said, "Let me save man, "but the three persons conjointly said, with one consent, "Let us save man." It is to me a source of sweet comfort to think that it is not one person of the Trinity that is engaged for my salvation; it is not simply one person of the Godhead who vows that he will redeem me; but it is a glorious trio of Godlike ones, and the three declare, unitedly, "We will save man."

Now, observe here, that each person is spoken of as performing a separate office. "I will pray," says the Son; that is intercession. "I will send," says

the Father; that is donation. “I will comfort,” says the Holy Spirit; that is supernatural influence. O! if it were possible for us to see the three persons of the Godhead, we should behold one of them standing before the throne, with outstretched hands, crying day and night, “O, Lord, how long?” We should see one girt with Urim and Thummim, precious stones, on which are written the twelve names of the tribes of Israel; we should behold him, crying unto his Father, “Forget not thy promises, forget not thy covenant;” we should hear him make mention of our sorrows, and tell forth our griefs on our behalf, for he is our intercessor. And could we behold the Father, we should not see him a listless and idle spectator of the intercession of the Son, but we should see him with attentive ear listening to every word of Jesus, and granting every petition. Where is the Holy Spirit all the while? Is he lying idle? O no; he is floating over the earth, and when he seas a weary soul, he says, “Come to Jesus, he will give you rest;” when he beholds an eye filled with tears, he wipes away the tears, and bids the mourner look for comfort on the cross; when he sees the tempest-tossed believer, he takes the helm of his soul and speaks the word of consolation; he helpeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds; and, ever on his mission of mercy, he flies around the world, being everywhere present. Behold, how the three persons work together. Do not then say, “I am grateful to the Son” — so you ought to be, but God the Son no more saves you that God the Father. Do not imagine that God the Father is a great tyrant, and that God the Son had to die to make him merciful. It was not to make the Father’s love towards his people. Oh, no. One loves as much as the other; the three are conjoined in the great purpose of rescuing the elect from damnation.

But you must notice another thing in my text, which will show the blessed unity of the three — the one person promises to the other. The Son says, “I will pray the Father.” “Very well,” the disciples may have said, “we can trust you for that.” “And he will send you.” You see, here is the Son signing a bond on behalf of the Father. “He will send you another Comforter.” There is a bond on behalf of the Holy Spirit too. “And he will abide with you forever.” One person speaks for the other, and how could they, if there were any disagreement between them? If one wished to save, and the other not, they could not promise on another’s behalf. But whatever the Son says, the Father listens to; whatever the Father

promises, the Holy Ghost works; and, whatever the Holy Ghost injects into the soul, that God the Father fulfills. So, the three together mutually promise on one another's behalf. There is a bond with three names appended — Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. By three immutable things, as well as by two, the Christian is secured beyond the reach of death and hell. A Trinity of securities, because there is a Trinity of God.

III. Our third point is, the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in believers. Now, beloved, these first two things have been matters of pure doctrine; this is the subject of experience. The indwelling of the Holy Ghost I a subject so profound, and so having to do with the inner man, that no soul will be able truly and really to comprehend what I say, unless it has been taught of God. I have heard of an old minister, who told a fellow of one of the Cambridge colleges, that he understood a language that he never learned in all his life. "I have not," he said, "even a smattering of Greek, and I know no Latin, but thank God, I can talk the language of Canaan, and that is more than you can." So, beloved, I shall now have to talk a little of the language of Canaan. If you cannot comprehend me, I am much afraid it is because you are not of Israelitish extraction; you are not a child of God, nor an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.

We are told in the text, that Jesus would send the Comforter, who would abide in the saints forever; who would dwell with them, and be in them. Old Ignatius, the martyr, used to call himself Theophorus, or Godbearer, "because," said he, "I bear about with me the Holy Ghost." And truly every Christian is a Godbearer. "Know ye not that ye are the temples of the Holy Ghost? for he dwelleth in you.? That man is no Christian who is not the subject of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; he may talk well, he may understand theology, and be a sound Calvinist; he will be the child of nature finely dressed, but not the living child. He may be a man of so profound an intellect, so gigantic a soul, so comprehensive a mind, and so lofty an imagination, that he may dive into all the secrets of nature, may know the path which the eagle's eye hath not seen, and go into depths where the ken of mortals reacheth not, but he shall not be a Christian with all his knowledge, he shall not be a son of God with all his researches, unless he understands what it is to have the Holy Ghost dwelling in him and abiding in him; yea, and that for ever.

Some people call this fanaticism, and they say, “You are a Quaker; why not follow George Fox?” Well, we would not mind that much: we would follow any one who followed the Holy Ghost. Even he, with all his eccentricities, I doubt not, was, in many cases, actually inspired by the Holy Spirit; and whenever I find a man in whom there rests the Spirit of God, the spirit within me leaps to hear the spirit within him, and we feel that we are one. The Spirit of God in one Christian soul recognizes the Spirit in another. I recollect talking with a good man, as I believe he was, who was insisting that it was impossible for us to know whether we had the Holy Spirit within us or not. I should like him to be here this morning, because I would read this verse to him, “But ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” Ah! you think you cannot tell whether you have the Holy Spirit or not. Can I tell whether I am alive or not? If I were touched by electricity, could I tell whether I was or not? I suppose I should; the shock would be strong enough to make me know where I stood. So, if I have God within me — if I have Deity tabernacling in my breast — if I have God the Holy Ghost resting in my heart, and making a temple of my body, do you think I shall know it? Call it fanaticism if you will, but I trust that there are some of us who know what it is to be always, or generally, under the influence of the Holy Spirit — always in one sense, generally in another. When we have difficulties, we ask the direction of the Holy Ghost. When we do not understand a portion of Holy Scripture, we ask God the Holy Ghost to shine upon us. When we are depressed, the Holy Ghost comforts us. You cannot tell what the wondrous power of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost is; how it pulls back the hand of the saint when he would touch the forbidden thing; how it prompts him to make a covenant with his eyes; how it binds his feet, lest they should fall in a slippery way; how it restrains his heart, and keeps him from temptation. O ye, who know nothing of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, despise it not. O despise not the Holy Ghost, for it is the unpardonable sin. “He that speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him, but he that speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall never be forgiven him, either in this life, or that which is to come.” So saith the Word of God. Therefore tremble, lest in anything ye despise the influences of the Holy Spirit.

But before closing this point, there is one little word that pleases me very much, that is “forever.” You knew I should not miss that; you were certain I could not let it go without observation. “Abide with you forever.” I wish I could get an Armenian here to finish my sermon. I fancy I see him taking that word “forever.” He would say, “for — forever;” he would have to stammer and stutter; for he could never get it out all at once. He might stand and pull it about, and at last he would have to say, “The translation is wrong.” And I suppose the poor man would have to prove that the original was wrong too. Ah! but blessed be God we can read it — “He shall abide with you forever.” Once give me the Holy Ghost, and I shall never lose him till “forever” has run out; till eternity has spun its everlasting rounds.

IV. Now we have to close up with a brief remark on the reason why the world rejects the Holy Ghost. It is said, “Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him.” You know what is sometimes meant by “the world” — those whom God in his wondrous sovereignty passed over when he chose his people: the preterite ones; those passed over in God’s wondrous preterition — not the reprobates who were condemned to damnation by some awful decree; but those passed over by God, when he chose out his elect. These cannot receive the Spirit. Again, it means all in a carnal state are not able to procure themselves this divine influence; and, thus it is true, “Whom the world cannot receive.”

The unregenerate world of sinners despises the Holy Ghost, “because it seeth him not.” Yes, I believe this is the great secret why many laugh at the idea of the existence of the Holy Ghost — because they see him not. You tell the worldling, “I have the Holy Ghost within me.” He says, “I cannot see it.” He wants it to be something tangible — a thing he can recognize with his senses. Have you ever heard the argument used by a good old Christian against an infidel doctor? The doctor said there was no soul, and asked, “Did you ever see a soul?” “No,” said the Christian. “Did you ever hear a soul?” “No.” “Did you ever smell a soul?” “No.” “Did you ever taste a soul?” “No.” “Did you ever feel a soul?” “Yes,” said the man — “I feel I have one within me.” “Well,” said the doctor, “there are four senses against one; you only have one on your side.” “Very well,” said the Christian, “Did you ever see a pain?” “No.” “Did you ever hear a pain?”

"No." "Did you ever smell a pain?" "No." "Did you ever taste a pain?" "No." "Did you ever feel a pain?" "Yes." "And that is quite enough, I suppose, to prove there is a pain?" "Yes." So the worldling says there is no Holy Ghost, because he cannot see it. Well, but we feel it. You say that is fanaticism, and that we never felt it. Suppose you tell me that honey is bitter, I reply, "No, I am sure you cannot have tasted it; taste it and try." So with the Holy Ghost; if you did but feel his influence, you would no longer say there is no Holy Spirit, because you cannot see it. Are there not many things, even in nature, which we cannot see? Did you ever see the wind? No; but ye know there is wind, when you behold the hurricane tossing the waves about, and rending down the habitations of men; or when, in the soft evening zephyr, it kisses the flowers, and maketh dew-drops hang in pearly coronets around the rose. Did ye ever see electricity? No; but ye know there is such a thing, for it travels along the wires for thousands of miles, and carries our messages; though you cannot see the thing itself, you know there is such a thing. So you must believe there is a Holy Ghost working in us, both to will and to do, even though it is beyond our senses.

But the last reason why worldly men laugh at the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, is, because they do not know it. If they know it by heartfelt experience and if they recognized its agency in the soul; if they had ever been touched by it; if they had been made to tremble under a sense of sin; if they had had their hearts melted, they would never have doubted the existence of the Holy Ghost.

And now, beloved, it says, "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." We will close up with that sweet recollection — the Holy Ghost dwells in al believers and shall be with them.

One word of comment and advice to the saints of God, and to sinners, and I have done. Saints of the Lord! ye have this morning heard that God the Holy Ghost is a person; ye have had it proved to your souls. What follows from this? Why, it followeth how earnest ye should be in prayer to the Holy Spirit, as well as for the Holy Spirit. Let me say that this is an inference that you should lift up your prayers to the Holy Ghost: that you should cry earnestly unto him; for he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all you can speak or think. See this mass of people. What is to

convert it? See this crowd? Who is to make my influence permeate through the mass? You know this place now has a mighty influence, and, God blessing us, it will have an influence not only upon this city, but upon England at large; for we now employ the press as well as the pulpit; and certainly, I should say, before the close of the year, more than two hundred thousand of my productions will be scattered through the land — words uttered by my lips, or written by my pen. But how can this influence be rendered for good? How shall God's glory be promoted by it? Only by incessant prayer for the Holy Spirit; by constantly calling down the influence of the Holy Ghost upon us; we want him to rest upon every page that is printed, and upon every word that is uttered. Let us then be doubly earnest in pleading with the Holy Ghost, that he would come and own our labors; that the whole church at large may be revived thereby, and not ourselves only, but the whole world share in the benefit.

Then, to the ungodly, I have this one closing word to say. Ever be careful how you speak of the Holy Ghost. I do not know what the unpardonable sin is, and I do not think any man understands it; but it is something like this: "He that speaketh a word against the Holy Ghost, it shall never be forgiven him." I do not know what that means; but tread carefully! There is danger; there is a pit which our ignorance has covered by sand; tread carefully! you may be in it before the next hour. If there is any strife in your heart to-day, perhaps you will go to the ale-house and forget it. Perhaps there is some voice speaking in your soul, and you will put it away. I do not tell you will be resisting the Holy Ghost, and committing the unpardonable sin; but it is somewhere there. Be very careful. O, there is no crime on earth so black as the crime against the Holy Spirit! Ye may blaspheme the Father, and ye shall be damned for it, unless ye repent; ye may blaspheme the Son, and hell shall be your portion, unless ye are forgiven; but blaspheme the Holy Ghost, and thus saith the Lord: "There is no forgiveness, either in this world nor in the world which is to come." I cannot tell you what it is; I do no profess to understand it; but there it is. It is the danger signal; stop! man, stop! If thou has despised the Holy Spirit — if thou hast laughed at his revelations, and scorned what Christians call his influence., I beseech thee, stop! This morning seriously deliberate. Perhaps some of you have actually committed the unpardonable sin; stop! Let fear stop you; sit down. Do not drive on so rashly as you

have done, Jehu! O slacken your reins! Thou who are such a profligate in sin — thou who hast uttered such hard words against the Trinity, stop! Ah! it makes us all stop. It makes us all draw up, and say, “Have I not perhaps so done?” Let us think of this; and let us not at any time stifle either with the words or the acts of God the Holy Ghost.

THE COMFORTER

SERMON NO. 5

DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, JANUARY 21, 1855,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." — John 14:26.

Good old Simeon called Jesus the consolation of Israel; and so he was. Before his actual appearance, his name was the day-star; cheering the darkness, and prophetic of the rising sun. To him they looked with the same hope which cheers the nightly watcher, when from the lonely castle-top he sees the fairest of the stars, and hails her as the usher of the morn. When he was on earth, he must have been the consolation of all those who were privileged to be his companions. We can imagine how readily the disciples would run to Christ to tell him of their griefs, and how sweetly, with that matchless intonation of his voice, he would speak to them, and bid their fears be gone. Like children, they would consider him as their Father; and to him every want, every groan, every sorrow, every agony, would at once be carried; and he, like a wise physician, had a balm for every wound; he had mingled a cordial for their every care; and readily did he dispense some mighty remedy to allay all the fever of their troubles. Oh! it must have been sweet to have lived with Christ. Surely, sorrows were then but joys in masks, because they gave an opportunity to go to Jesus to have them removed. Oh! would to God, some of us may say, that we could have lain our weary heads upon the bosom of Jesus, and that our birth had been in that happy era, when we might have heard his kind voice, and seen his kind look, when he said, "Let the weary ones come unto me."

But now he was about to die. Great prophecies were to be fulfilled; and great purposes were to be answered; therefore, Jesus must go. It behoved him to suffer, that he might be made a propitiation for our sins. It behoved

him to slumber in the dust awhile, that he might perfume the chamber of the grave to make it —

"No more a charnel house to fence
The relics of lost innocence."

It behoved him to have a resurrection, that we, who shall one day be the dead in Christ, might rise first, and in glorious bodies stand upon earth. And if behoved him that he should ascend up on high, that he might lead captivity captive; that he might chain the fiends of hell; that he might lash them to his chariot-wheels, and drag them up high heaven's hill, to make them feel a second overthrow from his right arm, when he should dash them from the pinnacles of heaven down to the deeper depths beneath. "It is right I should go away from you," said Jesus, "for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come." Jesus must go. Weep, ye disciples; Jesus must be gone. Mourn, ye poor ones, who are to be left without a Comforter. But hear how kindly Jesus speaks: "I will not leave you comfortless, I will pray the Father, and he shall send you another Comforter, who shall be with you, and shall dwell in you forever." He would not leave those few poor sheep alone in the wilderness; he would not desert his children, and leave them fatherless. Albeit that he had a mighty mission which did fill his heart and hand; albeit he had so much to perform, that we might have thought that even his gigantic intellect would be overburdened; albeit he had so much to suffer, that we might suppose his whole soul to be concentrated upon the thought of the sufferings to be endured. Yet it was not so; before he left, he gave soothing words of comfort; like the good Samaritan, he poured in oil and wine, and we see what he promised: "I will send you another Comforter — one who shall be just what I have been, yea, even more; who shall console you in your sorrows, remove your doubts, comfort you in your afflictions, and stand as my vicar on earth, to do that which I would have done had I tarried with you."

Before I discourse of the Holy Ghost as the Comforter, I must make one or two remarks on the different translations of the word rendered "Comforter." The Rhenish translation, which you are aware is adopted by Roman Catholics, has left the word untranslated, and gives it "Paraclete." "But the Paraclete, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things." This is the original Greek word, and it has some other meanings besides "Comforter." Sometimes it means

the monitor or instructor: “I will send you another monitor, another teacher.” Frequently it means “Advocate;” but the most common meaning of the word is that which we have here: “I will send you another Comforter.” However, we cannot pass over those other two interpretations without saying something upon them.

“I will send you another teacher.” Jesus Christ had been the official teacher of his saints whilst on earth. They called no man Rabbi except Christ. They sat at no men’s feet to learn their doctrines; but they had them direct from the lips of him who “spake as never man spake.” “And now,” says he, “when I am gone, where shall you find the great infallible teacher? Shall I set you up a pope at Rome, to whom you shall go, and who shall be your infallible oracle? Shall I give you the councils of the church to be held to decide all knotty points?” Christ said no such thing. “I am the infallible paraclete, or teacher, and when I am gone, I will send you another teacher, and he shall be the person who is to explain Scripture; he shall be the authoritative oracle of God, who shall make all dark things light, who shall unravel mysteries, who shall untwist all knots of revelation, and shall make you understand what you could not discover, had it not been for his influence.” And, beloved, no man ever learns anything aright, unless he is taught of the Spirit. You may learn election, and you may know it so that you shall be damned by it, if you are not taught of the Holy Ghost; for I have known some who have learned election to their soul’s destruction; they have learned it so that they said they were of the elect, whereas, they had no marks, no evidences, and no works of the Holy Ghost in their souls. There is a way of learning truth in Satan’s college, and holding it in licentiousness; but if so, it shall be to your souls as poison to your veins and prove your everlasting ruin. No man can know Jesus Christ unless he is taught of God. There is no doctrine of the Bible which can be safely, thoroughly, and truly learned, except by the agency of the one authoritative teacher. Ah! tell me not of systems of divinity; tell me not of schemes of theology; tell me not of infallible commentators, or most learned and most arrogant doctors; but tell me of the Great Teacher, who shall instruct us, the sons of God, and shall make us wise to understand all things. He is the Teacher; it matters not what this man or that man says; I rest on no man’s boasting authority, nor will you. Ye are not to be carried

away with the craftiness of men, nor sleight of words; this is the authoritative oracle — the Holy Ghost resting in the hearts of his children.

The other translation is advocate. Have you ever thought how the Holy Ghost can be said to be an advocate? You know Jesus Christ is called the wonderful, the counsellor, the mighty God; but how can the Holy Ghost be said to be an advocate? I suppose it is thus; he is an advocate on earth to plead against the enemies of the cross. How was it that Paul could so ably plead before Felix and Agrippa? How was it that the Apostles stood unawed before the magistrates, and confessed their Lord? How has it come to pass, that in all times God's ministers have been made fearless as lions, and their brows have been firmer than brass; their hearts sterner than steel, and their words like the language of God? Why, it was simply for this reason; that it was not the man who pleaded, but it was God the Holy Ghost pleading through him. Have you never seen an earnest minister, with hands uplifted and eyes dropping tears, pleading with the sons of men? Have you never admired that portrait from the hand of old John Bunyan? — a grave person with eyes lifted up to heaven, the best of books in his hand, the law of truth written on his lips, the world behind his back, standing as if he pleaded with men, and a crown of gold hanging over his head. Who gave that minister so blessed a manner, and such goodly matter? Whence came his skill? Did he acquire it in the college? Did he learn it in the seminary? Ah, no. He learned it of the God of Jacob; he learned it of the Holy Ghost; for the Holy Ghost is the great counsellor who teaches us how to advocate his cause aright.

But, beside this, the Holy Ghost is the advocate in men's hearts. Ah! I have known men reject a doctrine until the Holy Ghost began to illuminate them. We, who are the advocates of the truth, are often very poor pleaders; we spoil our cause by the words we use; but it is a mercy that the brief is in the hand of a special pleader, who will advocate successfully, and overcome the sinner's opposition. Did you ever know him fail once? Brethren, I speak to your souls; has not God in old times convinced you of sin? Did not the Holy Ghost come and prove that you were guilty, although no minister could ever get you out of your self-righteousness? Did he not advocate Christ's righteousness? Did he not stand and tell you that your works were filthy rags? And when you had well-nigh still refused to listen to his voice, did he not fetch hell's drum and make it

sound about your ears; bidding you look through the vista of future years, and see the throne set, and the books open, and the sword brandished, and hell burning, and fiends howling, and the damned shrieking forever? And did he not convince you of the judgment to come? He is a mighty advocate when he pleads in the soul — of sin, of righteousness, and of the judgment to come. Blessed advocate! Plead in my heart; plead with my conscience. When I sin, make conscience bold to tell me of it; when I err, make conscience speak at once; and when I turn aside to crooked ways, then advocate the cause of righteousness, and bid me sit down in confusion, knowing by guiltiness in the sight of God.

But there is yet another sense in which the Holy Ghost advocates, and that is, he advocates our cause with Jesus Christ, with groanings that cannot be uttered. O my soul! thou art ready to burst within me. O my heart! thou art swelled with grief. The hot tide of my emotion would well-nigh overflood the channels of my veins. I long to speak, but the very desire chains my tongue. I wish to pray, but the fervency of my felling curbs my language. There is a groaning within that cannot be uttered. Do you know who can utter that groaning? who can understand it, and who can put it into heavenly language, and utter it in a celestial tongue, so that Christ can hear it? O yes; it is God the Holy spirit; he advocates our cause with Christ, and then Christ advocates it with his Father. He is the advocate who maketh intercession for us, with groanings that cannot be uttered.

Having thus explained the Spirit's office as a teacher and advocate, we now come to the translation of our version — the Comforter; and here I shall have three divisions: first, the comforter; secondly, the comfort; and thirdly, the comforted.

I. First, then, the COMFORTER. Briefly let me run over in my mind, and in your minds too, the characteristics of this glorious Comforter. Let me tell you some of the attributes of his comfort, so that you may understand how well adapted he is to your case.

And first, we will remark, that God the Holy Ghost is a very loving Comforter. I am in distress, and I want consolation. Some passer-by hears of my sorrow, and he steps within, sits down, and essays to cheer me; he speaks soothing words, but he loves me not; he is a stranger; he knows me

not at all; he has only come in to try his skill. And what is the consequence? His words run o'er me like oil upon a slab of marble — they are like the pattering rain upon the rock; they do not break my grief; it stands unmoved as adamant, because he has no love for me. But let some one who loves me dear as his own life, come and plead with me, then truly his words are music; they taste like honey; he knows the password of the doors of my heart, and my ear is attentive to every word; I catch the intonation of each syllable as it falls, for it is like the harmony of the harps of heaven. Oh! there is a voice in love, it speaks a language which is its own; it has an idiom and a brogue which none can mimic; wisdom cannot imitate it; oratory cannot attain unto it; it is love alone which can reach the mourning heart; love is the only handkerchief which can wipe the mourner's tears away. And is not the Holy Ghost a loving comforter? Dost thou know, O saint, how much the Holy Spirit loves thee? Canst thou measure the love of the Spirit? Dost thou know how great is the affection of his soul towards thee? Go measure heaven with thy span; go weigh the mountains in the scales; go take the ocean's water, and tell each drop; go count the sand upon the sea's wide shore; and when thou hast accomplished this, thou canst tell how much he loveth thee. He has loved thee long, he has loved thee well, he loved thee ever, and he still shall love thee; surely he is the person to comfort thee, because he loves. Admit him, then, to your heart, O Christian, that he may comfort you in your distress.

But next, he is a faithful Comforter. Love sometimes proveth unfaithful. "Oh! sharper than a serpent's tooth" is an unfaithful friend! Oh! far more bitter than the gall of bitterness, to have a friend turn from me in my distress! Oh! woe of woes, to have one who loves me in my prosperity, forsake me in the dark day of my trouble. Sad indeed; but such is not God's Spirit. He ever loves, and loves even to the end — a faithful Comforter. Child of God, you are in trouble. A little while ago, you found him a sweet and loving Comforter; you obtained relief from him when others were but broken cisterns; he sheltered you in his bosom, and carried you in his arms. Oh, wherefore dost thou distrust him now? Away with thy fears; for he is a faithful Comforter. "Ah!, but," thou sayest, "I fear I shall be sick, and shall be deprived of his ordinances." Nevertheless he shall visit thee on thy sick bed, and sit by thy side, to give thee consolation. "Ah! but I have distresses greater than you can conceive of;

wave upon wave rolleth over me; deep calleth unto deep, at the noise of the Eternal's waterspouts." Nevertheless, he will be faithful to his promise. "Ah! but I have sinned." So thou hast, but sin cannot sever thee from his love; he loves thee still. Think not, O poor downcast child of God, because the scars of thine old sins have marred thy beauty, that he loves thee less because of that blemish. O no! He loved thee when he foreknew thy sin; he loved thee with the knowledge of what the aggregate of thy wickedness would be; and he does not love thee less now. Come to him in all boldness of faith; tell him thou hast grieved him, and he will forget thy wandering, and will receive thee again; the kisses of his love shall be bestowed upon thee, and the arms of his grace shall embrace thee. He is faithful; trust him, he will never deceive you; trust him, he will never leave you.

Again, he is an unwearied Comforter. I have sometimes tried to comfort persons, and have been tired. You, now and then, meet with a case of a nervous person. You ask, "What is your trouble?" You are told; and you essay, if possible, to remove it; but while you are preparing your artillery to battle the trouble, you find that it has shifted its quarters, and is occupying quite a different position. You change your argument and begin again; but lo, it is again gone, and you are bewildered. You feel like Hurcules, cutting off the evergrowing heads of the Hydra, and you give up your task in despair. You meet with persons whom it is impossible to comfort, reminding one of the man who locked himself up in fetters, and threw the key away, so that nobody could unlock him. I have found some in the fetters of despair. "O, I am the man," say they, "that has seen affliction; pity me, pity me, O, my friends;" and the more you try to comfort such people, the worse they get; and, therefore, out of all heart, we leave them to wander alone among the tombs of their former joys. But the Holy Ghost is never out of heart with those whom he wishes to comfort. He attempts to comfort us, and we run away from the sweet cordial; he gives us some sweet draught to cure us, and we will not drink it; he gives some wondrous potion to charm away all our troubles, and we put it away from us. Still be pursues us; and though we say that we will not be comforted, he says we shall be, and when he has said, he does it; he is not to be wearied by all our sins, nor by all our murmurings.

And oh, how wise a Comforter is the Holy Ghost. Job had comforters, and I think he spoke the truth when he said, “Miserable comforters are ye all.” But I dare say they esteemed themselves wise; and when the young man Elihu rose to speak, they thought he had a world of impudence. Were they not “grave and reverend seigniors?” Did not they comprehend his grief and sorrow? If they could not comfort him, who could? But they did not find out the cause. They thought he was not really a child of God, that he was self-righteous, and they gave him the wrong physic. It is a bad case when the doctor mistakes a disease and gives a wrong prescription, and so perhaps kills the patient. Sometimes, when we go and visit people, we mistake their disease; we want to comfort them on this point, whereas they do not require any such comfort at all, and they would be better left alone, than spoiled by such unwise comforters as we are. But oh, how wise the Holy Spirit is! He takes the soul, lays it on the table, and dissects it in a moment; he finds out the root of the matter, he sees where the complaint is, and then he applies the knife where something is required to be taken away, or puts a plaster where the sore is; and he never mistakes. O how wise is the blessed Holy Ghost; from ever comforter I turn, and leave them all, for thou art he who alone givest the wisest consolation.

Then mark, how safe a Comforter the Holy Ghost is. All comfort is not safe, mark that. There is a young man over there very melancholy. You know how he became so. He stepped into the house of God and heard a powerful preacher, and the word was blessed, and convinced him of sin. When he went home, his father and the rest found there was something different about him, “Oh,” they said, “John is mad, he is crazy;” and what said his mother? “Send him into the country for a week; let him go to the ball or the theater.” John, did you find any comfort there? “Ah no; they made me worse, for while I was there I thought hell might open and swallow me up.” Did you find any relief in the gayeties of the world? “No,” say you, “I thought it was idle waste of time.” Alas! this is miserable comfort, but it is the comfort of the worldling; and, when a Christian gets into distress, how many will recommend him this remedy and the other. “Go and hear Mr. So-and-so preach;” “have a few friends at you house;” “Read such-and-such a consoling volume;” and very likely it is the most unsafe advice in the world. The devil will sometimes come to men’s souls as a false comforter; and he will say to the soul, “What need is

there to make all this ado about repentance? you are no worse than other people;" and he will try to make the soul believe, that what is presumption, is the real assurance of the Holy Ghost; thus he deceives many by false comfort. Ah! there have been many, like infants, destroyed by elixirs, given to lull them to sleep; many have been ruined by the cry of "peace, peace," when there is no peace; hearing gentle things, when they ought to be stirred to the quick. Cleopatra's asp was brought in a basket of flowers; and men's ruin often lurks in fair and sweet speeches. But the Holy Ghost's comfort is safe, and you may rest on it. Let him speak the word, and there is a reality about it; let him give the cup of consolation, and you may drink it to the bottom; for in its depths there are no dregs, nothing to intoxicate or ruin, it is all safe.

Moreover, the Holy Ghost is an active Comforter; he does not comfort by words, but by deeds. Some comfort by, "Be ye warmed, and be ye filled, giving nothing." But the Holy Ghost gives, he intercedes with Jesus; he gives us promises, he gives us grace, and so he comforts us. Mark again, he is always a successful Comforter; he never attempts what he cannot accomplish.

Then, to close up, he is an ever-present Comforter, so that you never have to send for him. Your God is always near you; and when you need comfort in your distress, behold the word is nigh thee; it is in thy mouth, and in thy heart. He is an ever-present help in time of trouble. I wish I had time to expand these thoughts, but I cannot.

II. The second thing is the COMFORT. Now there are some persons who make a great mistake about the influence of the Holy Spirit. A foolish man, who had a fancy to preach in a certain pulpit, though in truth he was quite incapable of the duty, called upon the minister, and assured him solemnly, that it had been revealed to him by the Holy Ghost that he was to preach in his pulpit. "Very well," said the minister, "I suppose I must not doubt your assertion, but as it has not been revealed to me that I am to let you preach, you must go your way, until it is." I have heard many fanatical persons say the Holy Spirit revealed this and that to them. Now, that is very generally revealed nonsense. The Holy Ghost does not reveal anything fresh now. He brings old things to our remembrance. "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever

I have told you." The canon of revelation is closed, there is no more to be added; God does not give a fresh revelation, but he rivets the old one. When it has been forgotten, and laid in the dusty chamber of our memory, he fetches it out and cleans the picture, but does not paint a new one. There are no new doctrines, but the old ones are often revived. It is not, I say, by any new revelation that the Spirit comforts. He does so by telling us old things over again; he brings a fresh lamp to manifest the treasures hidden in Scripture; he unlocks the strong chests in which the truth has long lain, and he points to secret chamber filled with untold riches; but he coins no more, for enough is done. Believer! there is enough in the Bible for thee to live upon forever. If thou shouldst outnumber the years of Methuselah, there would be no need for a fresh revelation; if thou shouldst live till Christ should come upon the earth, there would be no need for the addition of a single word; if thou shouldst go down as deep as Jonah, or even descend as David said he did into the belly of hell, still there would be enough in the Bible to comfort thee without a supplementary sentence. But Christ says, "He shall take of mine, and show it unto you." Now, let me just tell you briefly what it is the Holy Ghost tells us.

Ah! does he not whisper to the heart, "Saint, be of good cheer; there is one who died for thee; look to Calvary, behold his wounds, see the torrent gushing from his side — there is thy purchaser, and thou art secure. He loves thee with an everlasting love, and this chastisement is meant for thy good; each stroke is working thy healing; by the blueness of the wound thy soul is made better." "Whom he loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Doubt not his grace, because of thy tribulation; but believe that he loveth thee as much in seasons of trouble, as in times of happiness. And then, moreover, he says, "What is all thy suffering compared with that of thy Lord's? or what, when weighed in the scales of Jesus' agonies, is all thy distress? And especially at times does the Holy Ghost take back the veil of heaven, and lets the soul behold the glory of the upperworld! Then it is that the saint can say, "O thou art a Comforter to me!"

"Let cares like a wild deluge come,
And storms of sorrow fall;
May I but safely reach my home,
My God, my heaven, my all."

Some of you could follow, were I to tell of manifestations of heaven. You, too, have left sun, moon, and stars at your feet, while, in you flight, outstripping the tardy lightning, you have seemed to enter the gates of pearl, and tread the golden streets, borne aloft on wings of the Spirit. But here we must not trust ourselves; lest, lost in reverie, we forget our theme.

III. And now, thirdly, who are the comforted persons? I like, you know, at the end of my sermon to cry out, “Divide! divide!” There are two parties here — some who are comforted, and others who are the comfortless ones — some who have received the consolations of the Holy Ghost, and some who have not. Now let us try and sift you, and see which is the chaff and which is the wheat; and may God grant that some of the chaff may, this night, be transformed into his wheat!

You may say, “How am I to know whether I am a recipient of the comfort of the Holy Ghost?” You may know it by one rule. If you have received one blessing from God, you will receive all other blessings too. Let me explain myself. If I could come here as an auctioneer, and sell the gospel off in lots, I should dispose of it all. If I could say, here is justification through the blood of Christ — free; giving away, gratis; many a one would say, “I will have justification; give it to me; I wish to be justified; I wish to be pardoned.” Suppose I took sanctification, the giving up of all sin, a thorough change of heart, leaving off drunkenness and swearing; many would say, “I don’t want that; I should like to go to heaven, but I do not want that holiness; I should like to be saved at last, but I should like to have my drink still; I should like to enter glory, but then I must have an oath or two on the road.” Nay, but, sinner, if thou hast one blessing, thou shalt have all. God will never divide the gospel. He will not give justification to that man, and sanctification to another — pardon to one, and holiness to another. No, it all goes together. Whom he call, them he justifies; whom he justifies, them he sanctifies; and whom he sanctifies, them he also glorifies. Oh; if I could lay down nothing but the comforts of the gospel, ye would fly to them as flies do to honey. When ye come to be ill, ye send for the clergyman. Ah! you all want your minister then to come and give you consoling words. But, if he be an honest man, he will not give some of you a particle of consolation. He will not commence pouring oil, when the knife would be better. I want to make a man feel his sins before I dare tell him anything about Christ. I want to probe into his soul and make

him feel that he is lost before I tell him anything about the purchased blessing. It is the ruin of many to tell them, “Now just believe on Christ, and that is all you have to do.” If, instead of dying, they get better, they rise up white-washed hypocrites — that is all. I have heard of a city missionary who kept a record of two thousand persons who were supposed to be on their death-bed, but recovered, and whom he should have put down as converted persons had they died; and how many do you think lived a Christian life afterwards out of the two thousand? Not two. Positively he could only find one who was found to live afterwards in the fear of God. Is it not horrible that when men and women come to die, they should cry, “Comfort, comfort?” and that hence their friends conclude that they are children of God, while, after all, they have no right to consolation, but are intruders upon the enclosed grounds of the blessed God. O God, may these people ever be kept from having comfort when they have no right to it! Have you the other blessings? Have you had the conviction of sin? Have you ever felt your guilt before God? Have your souls been humbled at Jesus’ feet? And have you been made to look to Calvary alone for your refuge? If not, you have no right to consolation. Do not take an atom of it. The Spirit is a convincer before he is a Comforter; and you must have the other operations of the Holy Spirit, before you can derive anything from this.

And now I have done. You have heard what this babbler hath said once more. What has it been? Something about the Comforter. But let me ask you, before you go, what do you know about the Comforter? Each one of you, before descending the steps of this chapel, let this solemn question thrill through your souls — What do you know of the Comforter? O! poor souls, if ye know not the Comforter, I will tell you what you shall know — You shall know the Judge! If ye know not the Comforter on earth, ye shall know the Condemner in the next world, who shall cry, “Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire in hell.” Well might Whitefield call out, “O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord!” If ye were to live here forever, ye might slight the gospel; if ye had a lease of your lives, ye might despise the Comforter. But, sirs, ye must die. Since last we met together, probably some have gone to their long last home; and ere we meet again in this sanctuary, some here will be amongst the glorified above, or amongst the damned below. Which will it be? Let you soul answer. If to-night you

fell down dead in your pews, or where you are standing in the gallery, where would you be? in heaven or in hell? Ah! deceive not yourselves; let conscience have its perfect work; and if in the sight of God, you are obliged to say, “I tremble and fear lest my portion should be with unbelievers,” listen one moment, and then I have done with thee. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.” Weary sinner, hellish sinner, thou who art the devil’s castaway, reprobate, profligate, harlot, robber, thief, adulterer, fornicator, drunkard, swearer, Sabbath-breaker — list! I speak to thee as well as to the rest. I exempt no man. God hath said there is no exemption here. “Whosoever believeth on the name of Jesus Christ shall be saved.” Sin is no barrier; thy guilt is no obstacle. Whosoever — though he were as black as Satan, though he were filthy as a fiend — whosoever this night believes, shall have every sin forgiven, shall have every crime effaced; shall have ever iniquity blotted out; shall be saved in the Lord Jesus Christ, and shall stand in heaven safe and secure. That is the glorious gospel. God apply it to your hearts, and give you faith in Jesus!

“We have listened to the preacher —
Truth by him has now been shown;
But we want a GREATER TEACHER,
From the everlasting throne;

APPLICATION Is the work of God alone.”

SWEET COMFORT FOR FEEBLE SAINTS

SERMON NO. 6

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 4, 1855,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory" — Matthew 12:20.

Babbling fame ever loves to talk of one man or another. Some there be whose glory it trumpets forth, and whose honor it extols above the heavens. Some are her favorites, and their names are carved on marble, and heard in every land, and every clime. Fame is not an impartial judge; she has her favorites. Some men she extols, exalts, and almost deifies; others, whose virtues are far greater, and whose characters are more deserving of commendation, she passes by unheeded, and puts the finger of silence on her lips. You will generally find that those persons beloved by fame are men made of brass or iron, and cast in a rough mould. Fame caresseth Caesar, because he ruled the earth with a rod of iron. Fame loves Luther, because he boldly and manfully defied the Pope of Rome, and with knit brow dared laugh at the thunders of the Vatican. Fame admires Knox; for he was stern, and proved himself the bravest of the brave. Generally, you will find her choosing out the men of fire and mettle, who stood before their fellow-creatures fearless of them; men who were made of courage; who were consolidated lumps of fearlessness, and never knew what timidity might be. But you know there is another class of persons equally virtuous, and equally to be esteemed — perhaps even more so — whom fame entirely forgets. You do not hear her talk of the gentle-minded Melancthon — she says but little of him — yet he did as much, perhaps, in the Reformation, as even the mighty Luther. You do not hear fame talk much of the sweet and blessed Rutherford, and of the heavenly words that

distilled from his lips; or of Archbishop Leighton, of whom it was said, that he was never out of temper in his life. She loves the rough granite peaks that defy the storm-cloud: she does not care for the more humble stone in the valley, on which the weary traveler resteth; she wants something bold and prominent; something that courts popularity; something that stands out before the world. She does not care for those who retreat in shade. Hence it is, my brethren, that the blessed Jesus, our adorable Master, has escaped fame. No one says much about Jesus, except his followers. We do not find his name written amongst the great and mighty men; though, in truth, he is the greatest, mightiest, holiest, purest, and best of men that ever lived; but because he was "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild," and was emphatically the man whose kingdom is not of this world; because he had nothing of the rough about him, but was all love; because his words were softer than butter, his utterances more gentle in their flow than oil; because never man spake so gently as this man; therefore he is neglected and forgotten. He did not come to be a conqueror with his sword, nor a Mohammed with his fiery eloquence; but he came to speak with a "still small voice," that melteth the rocky heart; that bindeth up the broken in spirit, and that continually saith, "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden;" "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Jesus Christ was all gentleness; and this is why he has not been extolled amongst men as otherwise he would have been. Beloved! our text is full of gentleness; it seems to have been steeped in love; and I hope I may be able to show you something of the immense sympathy and the mighty tenderness of Jesus, as I attempt to speak from it. There are three things to be noticed: first, *mortal frailty;* secondly, *divine compassion;* and thirdly, *certain triumph* — "till he send forth judgment unto victory."

I. First, we have before us a view of MORTAL FRAILTY — bruised reed and smoking flax — two very suggestive metaphors, and very full of meaning. If it were not too fanciful — and if it is I know you will excuse me — I should say that the *bruised reed is an emblem of a sinner in the first stage of his conviction.* The work of God's Holy Spirit begins with bruising. In order to be saved, the fallow ground must be ploughed up; the hard heart must be broken; the rock must be split in sunder. An old divine

says there is no going to heaven without passing hard by the gates of hell — without a great deal of soul-trouble and heart-exercise. I take it then that the bruised reed is a picture of the poor sinner when first God commences his operation upon the soul; he is as a bruised reed, almost entirely broken and consumed; there is but little strength in him. *The smoking flax I conceive to be a backsliding Christian;* one who has been a burning and a shining light in his day, but by neglect of the means of grace, the withdrawal of God's Spirit, and falling into sin, his light is almost gone out — not quite — it never can go out, for Christ saith, "I will not quench it;" but it becomes like a lamp when ill supplied with oil — almost useless. It is not quite extinguished — it smokes — it was a useful lamp once, but now it has become as smoking flax. So I think these metaphors very likely describe the contrite sinner as a bruised reed, and the backsliding Christian as smoking flax. However, I shall not choose to make such a division as that, but I shall put both the metaphors together, and I hope we may fetch out a few thoughts from them.

And first, the encouragement offered in our text applies to *weak ones.* What in the world is weaker than the bruised reed, or the smoking flax? A reed that groweth in the fen or marsh, let but the wild duck light upon it, and it snaps; let but the foot of man brush against it and it is bruised and broken; every wind that comes howling across the river makes it shake to and fro, and well nigh tears it up by the roots. You can conceive of nothing more frail or brittle, or whose existence depends more upon circumstances that a bruised reed. Then look at smoking flax — what is it? It has a spark within it, it is true, but it is almost smothered; an infant's breath might blow it out; or the tears of a maiden quench it in a moment; nothing has a more precarious existence than the little spark hidden in the smoking flax. *Weak things,* you see, are here described. Well, Christ says of them, "The smoking flax I will not quench; the bruised reed I will not break." Let me go in search of the weaklings. Ah! I shall not have to go far. There are many in this house of prayer this morning who are indeed weak. Some of God's children, blessed be his name, are made strong to do mighty works for him; God hath his Samsons here and there who can pull up Gaza's gates, and carry them to the top of the hill; he hath here and there his mighty Gideons, who can go to the camp of the Midianites, and overthrow their hosts; he hath his mighty men, who can go into the pit in winter, and slay

the lions; but the majority of his people are a timid, weak race. They are like the starlings that are frightened at every passer by; a little fearful flock. If temptation comes, they fall before it; if trial comes, they are overwhelmed by it; their frail skiff is danced up and down by every wave; and when the wind comes, they are drifted along like a sea-bird on the crest of the billows; weak things, without strength, without force, without might, without power. Ah! dear friends, I know I have got hold of some of your hands now, and your hearts too; for you are saying, "Weak! Ah, that I am. Full often I am constrained to say, I would, but cannot sing; I would, but cannot pray; I would, but cannot believe." You are saying that you cannot do anything; your best resolves are weak and vain; and when you cry, "My strength renew," you feel weaker than before. You are weak, are you? Bruised reeds and smoking flax? Blessed be God, this text is for you then. I am glad you can come in under the denomination of weak ones, for here is a promise that he will never break nor quench them, but will sustain and hold them up. I know there are some very strong people here — I mean strong in their own ideas. I often meet with persons who would not confess any such weakness as this. They are strong minds. They say, "Do you think that we go into sin, sir? Do you tell us that our hearts are corrupt? We do not believe any such thing; we are good, and pure, and upright; we have strength and might." To you I am not preaching this morning; to you I am saying nothing; but take heed — your strength is vanity, your power is a delusion, your might is a lie — for however much you may boast in what you can do, it shall pass away; when you come to the real contest with death, you shall find that you have no strength to grapple with it: when one of these days of strong temptation shall come, it will take hold of you, moral man, and down you will go; and the glorious livery of your morality will be so stained, that though you wash your hands in snow water, and make yourselves never so clean, you shall be so polluted that your own clothes shall abhor you. I think it is a blessed thing to be weak. The weak one is a sacred thing; the Holy Ghost has made him such. Can you say, "No strength have I?" Then this text is for you.

Secondly, the things mentioned in our text are not only weak, but *worthless* things. I have heard of a man who would pick up a pin as he walked along the street, on the principle of economy; but I never yet heard of a man who would stop to pick up bruised reeds. They are not worth

having. Who would care to have a bruised reed — a piece of rush lying on the ground? We all despise it as worthless. And smoking flax, what is the worth of that? It is an offensive and noxious thing; but the worth of it is nothing. No one would give the snap of a finger either for the bruised reed or smoking flax. Well, then, beloved, in our estimation there are many of us who are worthless things. There are some here, who, if they could weigh themselves in the scales of the sanctuary, and put their own hearts into the balance of conscience, would appear to be good for nothing — worthless, useless. There was a time when you thought yourselves to be the very best people in the world — when if any one had said that you had more than you deserved, you would have kicked at it, and said, "I believe I am as good as other people." You thought yourselves something wonderful — extremely worthy of God's love and regard; but you now feel yourselves to be worthless. Sometimes you imagine God can hardly know where you are, you are such a despicable creature — so worthless — not worth his consideration. You can understand how he can look upon an animalcule in a drop of water, or upon a grain of dust in the sunbeam, or upon the insect of the summer evening; but you can hardly tell how he can think of you, you appear so worthless — a dead blank in the world, a useless thing. You say, "What good am I? I am doing nothing. As for a minister of the gospel, he is of some service; as for a deacon of the church, he is of some use; as for a Sabbath-school teacher, he is doing some good; but of what service am I?" But you might ask the same question here. What is the use of a bruised reed? Can a man lean upon it? Can a man strengthen himself therewith? Shall it be a pillar in my house? Can you bind it up into the pipes of Pan, and make music come from a bruised reed? Ah! no; it is of no service. And of what use is smoking flax? the midnight traveler cannot be lighted by it; the student cannot read by the flame of it. It is of no use; men throw it into the fire and consume it. Ah! that is how you talk of yourselves. You are good for nothing, so are these things. But Christ will not throw you away because you are of no value. You do not know of what use you may be, and you cannot tell how Jesus Christ values you after all. There is a good woman there, a mother, perhaps, she says, "Well, I do not often go out — I keep house with my children, and seem to be doing no good." Mother, do not say so, your position is a high, lofty, responsible one; and in training up children for the Lord, you are doing as much for his name as yon eloquent Apollos, who so valiantly preached the

word. And you, poor man, all you can do is to toil from morning till night, and earn just enough to enable you to live day by day, you have nothing to give away, and when you go to the Sabbath-school, you can just read, you cannot teach much — well, but unto him to whom little is given of him little is required. Do you not know that there is such a thing as glorifying God by sweeping the street crossing? If two angels were sent down to earth, one to rule an empire, and the other to sweep a street, they would have no choice in the matter, so long as God ordered them. So God, in his providence, has called you to work hard for your daily bread; do it to his glory. "Whatsoever ye do, whether ye eat or drink, do all to his honor." But, ah! I know there are some of you here who seem useless to the Church. You do all you can; but when you have done it, it is nothing; you can neither help us with money, nor talents, nor time, and, therefore, you think God must cast you out. You think if you were like Paul or Peter you might be safe. Ah! beloved, talk not so; Jesus Christ saith he will not quench the useless flax, nor break the worthless bruised reed; he has something for the useless and for the worthless ones. But mark you, I do not say this to excuse laziness — to excuse those that can do, but do not; that is a very different thing. There is a whip for the ass, a scourge for idle men, and they must have it sometimes. I am speaking now of those who cannot do it; not of Issacher, who is like a strong ass, crouching down between two burdens, and too lazy to get up with them. I say nothing for the sluggard, who will not plough by reason of the cold, but of the men and women who really feel that they can be of little service — who cannot do more; and to such, the words of the text are applicable.

Now we will make another remark. The two things here mentioned are *offensive* things. A bruised reed is offensive, for I believe there is an allusion here to the pipes of Pan, which you all know are reeds put together, along which a man moves his mouth, thus causing some kind of music. This is the organ, I believe which Jubal invented, and which David mentions, for it is certain that the organ we use was not then in use. The bruised reed, then, would of course spoil the melody of all the pipes; one unsound tube would so let the air out, as to produce a discordant sound, or no sound at all, so that one's impulse would be to take the pipe out and put in a fresh one. And, as for smoking flax, the wick of a candle or anything of that kind, I need not inform you that the smoke is offensive.

To me no odour in all the world is so abominably offensive as smoking flax. But some say, “How can you speak in so low a style?” I have not gone lower than I could go myself, nor lower than you can go with me; for I am sure you are, if God the Holy Ghost has really humbled you, just as offensive to your own souls, and just as offensive to God as a bruised reed would be among the pipes, or as smoking flax to the eyes and nose. I often think of dear old John Bunyan, when he said he wished God had made him a toad, or a frog, or a snake, or anything rather than a man, for he felt he was so offensive. Oh! I can conceive a nest of vipers, and I think that they are obnoxious; I can imagine a pool of all kinds of loathsome creatures, breeding corruption, but there is nothing one half so worthy of abhorrence as the human heart. God spares from all eyes but his own that awful sight — a human heart; and could you and I but once see our heart, we should be driven mad, so horrible would be the sight. Do you feel like that? Do you feel that you must be offensive in God’s sight — that you have so rebelled against him, so turned away from his commandments, that surely you must be obnoxious to him? If so, my text is yours.

Now, I can imagine some woman here this morning who has departed from the paths of virtue; and, while she is standing in the throng up there, or sitting down, she feels as if she had no right to tread these hallowed courts, and stand among God’s people. She thinks that God might almost make the chapel break down upon her to destroy her, she is so great a sinner. Never mind, broken reed and smoking flax! Though thou art the scorn of man, and loathsome to thyself, yet Jesus saith to thee, “Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.” There is some man here who hath something in his heart that I know not of — who may have committed crimes in secret, that we will not mention in public; his sins stick like a leech to him, and rob him of all comfort. Here you are young man, shaking and trembling, lest your crime should be divulged before high heaven; you are broken down, bruised like a reed, smoking like flax. Ah! I have a word for thee too. Comfort! comfort! comfort! Despair not; for Jesus saith he will not quench the smoking flax, he will not break the bruised reed.

And yet, my dear friends, there is one thought before I turn away from this point. Both of these articles, however worthless they may be, *may yet be of some service*. When God puts his hand to a man, if he were

worthless and useless before, he can make him very valuable. You know the price of an article does not depend so much upon the value of the raw material to begin with — bruised reeds and smoking flax; but by Divine workmanship both these things become of wondrous value. You tell me the bruised reed is good for nothing; I tell you that Christ will take that bruised reed and mend it up, and fit it in the pipes of heaven. Then when the grand orchestra shall send forth its music, when the organs of the skies shall peal forth their deep-toned sounds, we shall ask, "What was that sweet note heard there, mingling with the rest?" And some one shall say, "It was a bruised reed." Ah! Mary Magdalene's voice in heaven, I imagine, sounds more sweet and liquid than any other; and the voice of that poor thief, who said "Lord, remember me," if it is a deep bass voice, is more mellow and more sweet than the voice of any other, because he loved much, for he had much forgiven him. This reed may yet be of use. Do not say you are good for nothing; you shall sing up in heaven yet. Do not say you are worthless; at last you shall stand before the throne among the blood-washed company, and shall sing God's praise. Ay! and the smoking flax too, what good can that be? I will soon tell you. There is a spark in that flax somewhere; it is nearly out, but still a spark remaineth. Behold the prairie on fire! See you the flames come rolling on? See you stream after stream of hot fire deluging the plain till all the continent is burnt and scorched — till heaven is reddened with the flame. Old night's black face is scarred with the burning, and the stars appear affrighted at the conflagration. How was that mass ignited? By a piece of smoking flax dropped by some traveler, fanned by the soft wind, till the whole prairie caught the flame. So one poor man, one ignorant man, one weak man, even one backsliding man, may be the means of the conversion of a whole nation. Who knows but that you who are nothing now, may be of more use than those of us who appear to stand better before God, because we have more gifts and talents? God can make a spark set a world on fire — he can light up a whole nation with the spark of one poor praying soul. You may be useful yet; therefore be of good cheer. Moss groweth upon gravestones; the ivy clingeth to the mouldering pile; the mistletoe groweth on the dead branch; and even so shall grace, and piety, and virtue, and holiness, and goodness, come from smoking flax and bruised reeds.

II. Thus, then, my dear friends, I have tried to find out the parties for whom this text is meant, and I have shown you somewhat of mortal frailty;

Now I mount a step higher — to DIVINE COMPASSION.

"The bruised reed he will not break,
the smoking flax he will not quench."

Notice what is first of all stated, and then let me tell you that Jesus Christ means a great deal more than he says. First of all, what does he say? He says plainly enough that he will not break the bruised reed. There is a bruised reed before me — a poor child of God under a deep sense of sin. It seems as if the whip of the law would never stop. It keeps on, lash, lash, lash; and though you say, "Lord, stop it, and give me a little respite," still comes down the cruel thong, lash, lash, lash. You feel your sins. Ah! I know what you are saying this morning: "If God continues this a little longer my heart will break: I shall perish in despair; I am almost distracted by my sin; if I lie down at night I cannot sleep; it appears as if ghosts were in the room — ghosts of my sins — and when I awake at midnight, I see the black form of death staring at me, and saying, 'Thou art my prey, I shall have thee;' while hell behind seems to burn." Ah! poor bruised reed, he will not break you; conviction shall be too strong; it shall be great enough to melt thee, and to make thee go to Jesus' feet; but it shall not be strong enough to break thy heart altogether, so that thou shouldst die. Thou shalt never be driven to despair; but thou shalt be delivered; thou shalt come out of the fire, poor bruised reed, and shalt not be broken.

So there is a backslider here this morning; he is like the smoking flax. Years gone by you found such happiness in the ways of the Lord, and such delight in his service, that you said, "There I would for ever stay.

'What peaceful hours I then enjoyed;
How sweet their memory still!
But they have left an aching void,
The world can never fill."

You are smoking, and you think God will put you out. If I were an Arminian, I should tell you that he would; but being a believer in the Bible, and nothing else, I tell you that he will not quench you. Though you are

smoking, you shall not die. Whatever your crime has been, the Lord says, "Return ye backsliding children of men, for I will have mercy upon you." He will not cast thee away, poor Ephriam; only come back to him — he will not despise thee, though thou hast plunged thyself in the mire and dirt, though thou art covered from head to foot with filthiness; come back, poor prodigal, come back, come back! Thy father calls thee. Hearken poor backslider! Come at once to him whose arms are ready to receive thee.

It says he will not quench — he will not break. But there is more under cover than we see at first sight. When Jesus says he will not break, he means more than that; he means, "I will take that poor bruised reed; I will plant it hard by the rivers of waters, and (miracle of miracles) I will make it grow into a tree whose leaf shall not wither; I will water it every moment; I will watch it; there shall be heavenly fruits upon it; I will keep the birds of prey from it; but the birds of heaven, the sweet songsters of paradise shall make their dwellings in the branches." When he says that he will not break the bruised reed, he means more; he means that he will nourish, that he will help, and strengthen, and support and glorify — that he will execute his commission on it, and make it glorious for ever. And when he says to the backslider that he will not quench him, he means more than that — he means that he will fan him up to a flame. Some of you, I dare say, have gone home from chapel and found that your fire had gone nearly out; I know how you deal with it; you blow gently at the single spark, if there is one, and lest you should blow too hard, you hold your finger before it; and if you were alone and had but one match, or one spark in the tinder, how gently would you blow it. So, backslider, Jesus Christ deals with thee; he does not put thee out; he blows gently; he says, "I will not quench thee;" he means, "I will be very tender, very cautious, very careful;" he will put on dry material, so that by-and-by a little spark shall come to a flame, and blaze up towards heaven, and great shall be the fire thereof.

Now I want to say one or two things to Little-Faiths this morning. The little children of God who are here mentioned as being bruised reeds or smoking flax are just as safe as the great saints of God. I wish for a moment to expand this thought, and then I will finish with the other head. These saints of God who are called bruised reeds and smoking flax are just as safe as those who are mighty for their Master, and great in strength, for several reasons. First of all, *the little saint is just as much God's elect as the*

great saint. When God chose his people, he chose them all at once, and altogether; and he elected one just as much as the other. If I choose a certain number of things, one may be less than the rest, but one is as much chosen as the other; and so Mrs. Fearing and Miss Despondency are just as much elected as Great-Heart, or Old Father Honest. Again: *the little ones are redeemed equally with the great ones!* the feeble saints cost Christ as much suffering as the strong ones; the tiniest child of God could not have been purchased with less than Jesus' precious blood; and the greatest child of God did not cost him more. Paul did not cost any more than Benjamin — I am sure he did not — for I read in the Bible that "*there is no difference.*" Besides, when of old they came to pay their redemption-money, every person brought a shekel. The poor shall bring no less, and the rich shall bring no more than just a shekel. The same price was paid for the one as the other. Now then little child of God, take that thought to thy soul. You see some men very prominent in Christ's cause — and it is very good that they should be — but they did not cost Jesus a farthing more than you did; he paid the same price for you that he paid for them. Recollect again, *you are just as much a child of God as the greatest saint.* Some of you have five or six children. There is one child of yours, perhaps, who is very tall and handsome, and has, moreover, gifts of mind; and you have another child who is the smallest of the family, perhaps has but little intellect and understanding. But which is the most your child? "The most!" you say; "both alike are my children, certainly, one as much as the other." And so, dear friends, you may have very little learning, you may be very dark about divine things, you may but "see men as trees walking," but you are as much the children of God as those who have grown to the stature of men in Christ Jesus. Then remember, poor tried saint, that *you are just as much justified as any other child of God.* I know that I am completely justified.

His blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress.

I want no other garments, save Jesus' doings, and his imputed righteousness.

The boldest child of God wants no more; and I who am "less than the least of all saints," can be content with no less, and I shall have no less. O Ready-to-Halt, thou art as much justified as Paul, Peter, John the Baptist,

or the loftiest saint in heaven. There is no difference in that matter. Oh! take courage and rejoice.

Then one thing more. *If you were lost, God's honor would be as much tarnished as if the greatest one were lost.* A queer thing I once read in an old book about God's children and people being a part of Christ and in union with him. The writer says — "A father sitteth in his room, and there cometh in a stranger; the stranger taketh up a child on his knee, and the child hath a sore finger; so he saith, 'My child, you have a sore finger;' 'Yes!' 'Well, let me take it off, and give thee a golden one!' The child looketh at him and saith, 'I will not go to that man any more, for he talks of taking off my finger; I love my own finger, and I will not have a golden one instead of it.'" So the saint saith, "I am one of the members of Christ, but I am like a sore finger, and he will take me off and put a golden one on." "No," said Christ, "no, no; I cannot have any of my members taken away; if the finger be a sore one, I will bind it up; I will strengthen it." Christ cannot allow a word about cutting his members off. If Christ lose one of his people, he would not be a whole Christ any longer. If the meanest of his children could be cast away, Christ would lack a part of his fullness; yea, Christ would be incomplete without his Church. If one of his children must be lost, it would be better that it should be a great one, than a little one. If a little one were lost, Satan would say, "Ah! you save the great ones, because they had strength and could help themselves; but the little one that has no strength, you could not save him." You know what Satan would say; but God would shut Satan's mouth, by proclaiming, "They are all here, Satan, in spite of thy malice, they are all here; every one is safe; now lie down in thy den for ever, and be bound eternally in chains, and smoke in fire!" So shall *he* suffer eternal torment, but not one child of God ever shall.

One thought more and I shall have done with this head. *The salvation of great saints often depends upon the salvation of little ones.* Do you understand that? You know that my salvation, or the salvation of any child of God, looking at second causes, very much depends upon the conversion of some one else. Suppose your mother is the means of your conversion, you would, speaking after the manner of men, say, that your conversion depended upon hers; for her being converted, made her the instrument of bringing you in. Suppose such-and-such a minister to be the means of your

calling; then your conversion, in some sense, though not absolutely, depends upon his. So it often happens, that the salvation of God's mightiest servants depends upon the conversion of little ones. There is a poor mother; no one ever knows anything about her; she goes to the house of God, her name is not in the newspapers, or anywhere else; she teaches her child, and brings him up in the fear of God; she prays for that boy; she wrestles with God, and her tears and prayers mingle together. The boy grows up. What is he? A missionary — a William Knibb — a Moffat — a Williams. But you do not hear anything about the mother. Ah! but if the mother had not been saved, where would the boy have been? Let this cheer the little ones; and may you rejoice that he will nourish and cherish you, though you are like bruised reeds and smoking flax.

Now, to finish up, there is a CERTAIN VICTORY.

"Till he send forth judgment unto victory."

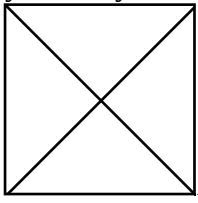
Victory! There is something beautiful in that word. The death of Sir John Moore, in the Peninsular war, was very touching; he fell in the arms of triumph; and sad as was his fate, I doubt not that his eye was lit up with lustre by the shout of victory. So also, I suppose, that Wolfe spoke a truth when he said, "I die happy," having just before heard the shout, "they run, they run." I know victory even in that bad sense — for I look not upon earthly victories as of any value — must have cheered the warrior. But oh! how cheered the saint when he knows that victory is his! I shall fight during all my life, but I shall write "*vici*" on my shield. I shall be "more than conqueror through him that loved me." Each feeble saint shall win the day; each man upon his crutches; each lame one; each one full of infirmity, sorrow, sickness, and weakness, shall gain the victory. "They shall come with singing unto Zion; as well the blind, and lame, and halt, and the woman with child, together." So saith the Scripture. Not one shall be left out; but he shall "send forth judgment unto victory." Victory! victory! victory! This is the lot of each Christian; he shall triumph through his dear Redeemer's name.

Now a word about this victory. I speak first to aged men and women. Dear brethren and sisters, you are often, I know, like the bruised reed. Coming events cast their shadows before them; and death casts the shadow of old age on you. You feel the grasshopper to be a burden; you feel full of

weakness and decay; your frame can hardly hold together. Ah! you have here a special promise. “The bruised reed I will not break.” “I will strengthen thee.” “When thy heart and thy flesh faileth, I will be the strength of thy heart and thy portion for ever.”

Even down to old age, all my people shall prove
My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love;
And when hoary hairs shall their temples adorn,
Like lambs they shall still in my bosom be borne.

Tottering on thy staff, leaning, feeble, weak, and wan; fear not the last hour; that last hour shall be thy best; thy last day shall be a consummation devoutly to be wished. Weak as thou art, God will temper the trial to thy weakness; he will make thy pain less, if thy strength be less; but thou shalt sing in heaven, Victory! victory! victory! There are some of us who could wish to change places with you, to be so near heaven — to be so near home. With all your infirmities, your grey hairs are a crown of glory to you; for you are near the end as well as in the way of righteousness.



A word with you middle-aged men, battling in this life’s rough storm. You are often bruised reeds, your religion is so encumbered by your worldly callings, so covered up by the daily din of business, business, business, that you seem like smoking flax; it is as much as you can do to serve your God, and you cannot say that you are “fervent in spirit” as well as “diligent in business.” Man of business, toiling and striving in this world, he will not quench thee when thou art like smoking flax; he will not break thee when thou art like the bruised reed, but will deliver thee from thy troubles, thou shalt swim across the sea of life, and shalt stand on the happy shore of heaven, and shalt sing, “Victory” through him that loved thee.

Ye youths and maidens! I speak to you, and have a right to do so. You and I ofttimes know what the bruised reed is, when the hand of God blights our fair hopes. We are full of giddiness and waywardness, it is only the rod of affliction that can bring folly out of us, for we have much of it in us. Slippery paths are the paths of youths, and dangerous ways are the ways

of the young, but God will not break or destroy us. Men, by their over caution, bid us never tread a step lest we fall; but God bids us go, and makes our feet like hind's feet that we may tread upon high places. Serve God in early days; give your hearts to him, and then he will never cast you out, but will nourish and cherish you.

Let me not finish without saying a word to little children. You who have never heard of Jesus, he says to you, "The bruised reed I will not break; the smoking flax I will not quench." I believe there is many a little prattler, not six years old, who knows the Savior. I never despise infantile piety; I love it. I have heard little children talk of mysteries that grey-headed men knew not. Ah! little children who have been brought up in the Sabbath-schools, and love the Savior's name, if others say you are too forward, do not fear, love Christ still.

Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Still will look upon a child;
Pity thy simplicity,
And suffer thee to come to him.

He will not cast thee away; for smoking flax he will not quench, and the bruised reed he will not break.

CHRIST CRUCIFIED

SERMON NO. 7-8

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 11, 1855,

AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

"But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."
— 1 Corinthians 1:23-24

That contempt hath God poured upon the wisdom of this world! How hath he brought it to nought, and made it appear as nothing. He has allowed it to word out its own conclusions, and prove its own folly. Men boasted that they were wise; they said that they could find out God to perfection; and in order that their folly might be refuted once and forever, God gave them the opportunity of so doing. He said, "Worldly wisdom, I will try thee. Thou sayest that thou art mighty, that thine intellect is vast and comprehensive, that thine eye is keen, and thou canst find all secrets; now, behold, I try thee; I give thee one great problem to solve. Here is the universe; stars make its canopy, fields and flowers adorn it, and the floods roll o'er its surface; my name is written therein; the invisible things of God may be clearly seen in the things which are made. Philosophy, I give thee this problem — find me out. Here are my works — find me out. Discover in the wondrous world which I have made, the way to worship me acceptably. I give thee space enough to do it — there are data enough. Behold the clouds, the earth, and the stars. I give thee time enough; I will give thee four thousand years, and I will not interfere; but thou shalt do as thou wilt with thine own world. I will give thee men enough; for I will make great minds and vast, whom thou shalt call lords of earth; thou shalt have orators, thou shalt have philosophers. Find me out, O reason; find me out, O wisdom; find me out, if thou canst; find me out unto perfection; and if thou canst not, then shut thy mouth forever, and then will I teach thee that the wisdom of God is wiser than the wisdom of man; yea, that the

foolishness of God is wiser than men." And how did the wisdom of man work out the problem? How did wisdom perform her feat? Look upon the heathen nations; there you see the result of wisdom's researches. In the time of Jesus Christ, you might have beheld the earth covered with the slime of pollution, a Sodom on a large scale — corrupt, filthy, depraved; indulging in vices which we dare not mention; revelling in lust too abominable even for our imagination to dwell upon for a moment. We find the men prostrating themselves before blocks of wood and stone, adoring ten thousand gods more vicious than themselves. We find, in fact, that reason wrote out her lines with a finger covered with blood and filth, and that she forever cut herself out from all her glory by the vile deeds she did. She would not worship God. She would not bow down to him who is "clearly seen," but she worshipped any creature — the reptile that crawled, the viper — everything might be a god; but not, forsooth, the God of heaven. Vice might be made into a ceremony, the greatest crime might be exalted into a religion; but true worship she knew nothing of. Poor reason! poor wisdom! how art thou fallen from heaven; like Lucifer — thou son of the morning — thou art lost; thou hast written out thy conclusion, but a conclusion of consummate folly. "After that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

Wisdom had had its time, and time enough; it had done its all, and that was little enough; it had made the world worse than it was before it stepped upon it, and "now," says God, "Foolishness shall overcome wisdom; now ignorance, as ye call it, shall sweep away science; now, humble, child-like faith shall crumble to the dust all the colossal systems your hands have piled." He calls his armies. Christ puts his trumpet to his mouth, and up come the warriors, clad in fishermen's garb, with the brogue of the lake of Galilee — poor humble mariners. Here are the warriors, O wisdom, that are to confound thee; these are the heroes who shall overcome thy proud philosophers; these men are to plant their standard upon thy ruined walls, and bid them to fall forever; these men and their successors are to exalt a gospel in the world which ye may laugh at as absurd, which ye may sneer at as folly, but which shall be exalted above the hills, and shall be glorious even to the highest heavens. Since that day, God has always raised up successors of the apostles; not by any lineal descent, but because I have

the same roll and charter as any apostle, and am as much called to preach the gospel as Paul himself; if not as much owned by the conversion of sinners, yet, in a measure, blessed of God; and, therefore, here I stand, foolish as Paul might be, foolish as Peter, or any of those fishermen; but still with the might of God I grasp the sword of truth, coming here to "preach Christ and him crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

Before I enter upon our text, let me very briefly tell you what I believe preaching Christ and him crucified is. My friends, I do not believe it is preaching Christ and him crucified, to give people a batch of philosophy every Sunday morning and evening, and neglect the truths of this Holy Book. I do not believe it is preaching Christ and him crucified, to leave out the main cardinal doctrines of the Word of God, and preach a religion which is all a mist and a haze, without any definite truths whatever. I take it that man does not preach Christ and him crucified, who can get through a sermon without mentioning Christ's name once; nor does that man preach Christ and him crucified, who leaves out the Holy Spirit's work, who never says a word about the Holy Ghost, so that indeed the hearers might say, "We do not so much as know whether there be a Holy Ghost." And I have my own private opinion, that there is no such thing as preaching Christ and him crucified, unless you preach what now-a-days is called Calvinism. I have my own ideas, and those I always state boldly. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism. Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else. I do not believe we can preach the gospel, if we do not preach justification by faith without works; not unless we preach the sovereignty of God in his dispensation of grace; nor unless we exalt the electing, unchangeable, eternal, immutable, conquering love of Jehovah; nor, I think, can we preach the gospel, unless we base it upon the peculiar redemption which Christ made for his elect and chosen people; nor can I comprehend a gospel which lets saints fall away after they are called, and suffers the children of God to be burned in the fires of damnation, after having believed. Such a gospel I abhor. The gospel of the Bible is not such a gospel as that. We preach Christ and him crucified in a different fashion, and to all gainsayers we reply, "We have not so learned Christ."

There are three things in the text: first, a gospel rejected, “Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumblingblock, and to the Greeks foolishness”; secondly, a gospel triumphant, “unto those who are called, both Jews and Greeks”; and thirdly, a gospel admired; it is to them who are called “the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

I. First, we have here A GOSPEL REJECTED. One would have imagined that, when God sent his gospel to men, all men would meekly listen, and humbly receive its truths. We should have thought that God’s ministers had but to proclaim that life is brought to light by the gospel, and that Christ is come to save sinners, and every ear would be attentive, every eye would be fixed, and every heart would be wide open to receive the truth. We should have said, judging favorably of our fellow-creatures, that there would not exist in the world a monster so vile, so depraved, so polluted, as to put so much as a stone in the way of the progress of truth; we could not have conceived such a thing; yet that conception is the truth. When the gospel was preached, instead of being accepted and admired, one universal hiss went up to heaven; men could not bear it; its first preacher they dragged to the brow of the hill, and would have sent him down headlong; yea, they did more — they nailed him to the cross, and there they let him languish out his dying life in agony such as no man hath borne since. All his chosen ministers have been hated and abhorred by worldlings; instead of being listened to they have been scoffed at; treated as if they were the offscouring of all things, and the very scum of mankind. Look at the holy men in the old times, how they were driven from city to city, persecuted, afflicted, tormented, stoned to death, wherever the enemy had power to do so. Those friends of men, those real philanthropists, who came with hearts big with love, and hands full of mercy, and lips pregnant with celestial fire, and souls that burned with holy influence; those men were treated as if they were spies in the camp, as if they were deserters from the common cause of mankind; as if they were enemies, and not, as they truly were, the best of friends. Do not suppose, my friends, that men like the gospel any better now than they did then. There is an idea that you are growing better. I do not believe it. You are growing worse. In many respects men may be better — outwardly better; the heart within is still the same. The human heart of today dissected, would be like the human heart a thousand years ago; the gall of bitterness within that breast of yours, is just as bitter as the

gall of bitterness in that of Simon of old. We have in our hearts the same latent opposition to the truth of God; and hence we find men, even as of old, who scorn the gospel.

I shall, in speaking of the gospel rejected, endeavor to point out the two classes of persons who equally despise truth. The Jews make it a stumblingblock, and the Greeks account it foolishness. Now these two very respectable gentlemen — the Jew and the Greek — I am not going to make these ancient individuals the object of my condemnation, but I look upon them as members of a great parliament, representatives of a great constituency, and I shall attempt to show that, if all the race of Jews were cut off, there would be still a great number in the world who would answer to the name of Jews, to whom Christ is a stumblingblock; and that if Greece were swallowed up by some earthquake, and ceased to be a nation, there would still be the Greek unto whom the gospel would be foolishness. I shall simply introduce the Jew and the Greek, and let them speak a moment to you, in order that you may see the gentlemen who represent you; the representative men; the persons who stand for many of you, who as yet are not called by divine grace.

The first is a Jew; to him the gospel is a stumblingblock. A respectable man the Jew was in his day; all formal religion was concentrated in his person; he went up to the temple very devoutly; he tithed all he had, even to the mint and the cummin. You would see him fast twice in the week, with a face all marked with sadness and sorrow. If you looked at him, he had the law between his eyes; there was the phylactery, and the borders of his garments of amazing width, that he might never be supposed to be a Gentile dog; that no one might ever conceive that he was not an Hebrew of pure descent. He had a holy ancestry; he came of a pious family; a right good man was he. He could not like those Sadducees at all, who had no religion. He was thoroughly a religious man; he stood up for his synagogue; he would not have that temple on Mount Gerizim; he could not bear the Samaritans, he had no dealings with them; he was a religionist of the first order, a man of the very finest kind; a specimen of a man who is a moralist, and who loves the ceremonies of the law. Accordingly, when he heard about Christ, he asked who Christ was. “The Son of a Carpenter.” Ah! “The son of a carpenter, and his mothers’s name was Mary, and his father’s name was Joseph.” “That of itself is presumption enough,” said

he; “positive proof, in fact, that he cannot be the Messiah.” And what does he say? Why, he says, “Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.” “That won’t do.” Moreover, he says, “It is not by the works of the flesh that any man can enter into the kingdom of heaven.” The Jew tied a double knot in his phylactery at once; he thought he would have the borders of his garment made twice as broad. He bow to the Nazarene! No, no; and if so much as a disciple crossed the street, he thought the place polluted, and would not tread in his steps. Do you think he would give up his old father’s religion, the religion which came from Mount Sinai, that old religion that lay in the ark and the overshadowing cherubim? He give that up! not he. A vile imposter — that is all Christ was in his eyes. He thought so. “A stumblingblock to me; I cannot hear about it; I will not listen to it.” Accordingly, he turned a deaf ear to all the preacher’s eloquence, and listened not at all. Farewell, old Jew! Thou sleepest with thy fathers, and thy generation is a wandering race, still walking the earth. Farewell! I have done with thee. Alas! poor wretch, that Christ, who was thy stumbling-block, shall be thy judge, and on thy head shall be that loud curse. “His blood be on us and on our children.” But I am going to find out Mr. Jew here in Exeter Hall — persons who answer to his description — to whom Jesus Christ is a stumblingblock. Let me introduce you to yourselves, some of you. You were of a pious family too, were you not? Yes. And you have a religion which you love; you love it so far as the chrysalis of it goes, the outside, the covering, the husk. You would not have one rubric altered, nor one of those dear old arches taken down, nor the stained glass removed, for all the world; and any man who should say a word against such things, you would set down as a heretic at once. Or, perhaps, you do not go to such a place of worship, but you love some plain old meeting-house, where your forefathers worshipped, called a dissenting chapel. Ah! it is a beautiful plain place; you love it, you love its ordinances, you love its exterior; and if any one spoke against the place, how vexed you would feel. You think that what they do there, they ought to do everywhere; in fact, your church is a model one; the place where you go is exactly the sort of place for everybody; and if I were to ask you why you hope to go to heaven, you would perhaps say, “Because I am a Baptist,” or, “Because I am an Episcopalian,” or whatever other sect you belong to. There is yourself; I know Jesus Christ will be to you a stumblingblock. If I come and tell you, that all your going to the house of

God is good for nothing; if I tell you that all those many times you have been singing and praying, all pass for nothing in the sight of God, because you are a hypocrite and a formalist. If I tell you that your heart is not right with God, and that unless it is so, all the external is good for nothing, I know what you will say, — "I shan't hear that young man again." It is a stumblingblock. If you had stepped in anywhere where you had heard formalism exalted: if you had been told "this must you do, and this other must you do, and then you will be saved," you would highly approve of it. But how many are there externally religious, with whose characters you could find no fault, but who have never had the regenerating influence of the Holy Ghost; who never were made to lie prostrate on their face before Calvary's cross; who never turned a wistful eye to yonder Savior crucified; who never put their trust in him that was slain for the sons of men. They love a superficial religion, but when a man talks deeper than that, they set it down for cant. You may love all that is external about religion, just as you may love a man for his clothes — caring nothing for the man himself. If so, I know you are one of those who reject the gospel. You will hear me preach; and while I speak about the externals, you will hear me with attention; whilst I plead for morality, and argue against drunkenness, or show the heinousness of Sabbath-breaking, but if once I say, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye can in no wise enter into the kingdom of God"; if once I tell you that you must be elected of God: that you must be purchased with the Savior's blood — that you must be converted by the Holy Ghost — you say, "He is a fanatic! Away with him, away with him! We do not want to hear that any more." Christ crucified, is to the Jew — the ceremonialist — a stumblingblock.

But there is another specimen of this Jew to be found. He is thoroughly orthodox in his sentiments. As for forms and ceremonies, he thinks nothing about them. He goes to a place of worship where he learns sound doctrine. He will hear nothing but what is true. He likes that we should have good works and morality. He is a good man, and no one can find fault with him. Here he is, regular in his Sunday pew. In the market he walks before men in all honesty — so you would imagine. Ask him about any doctrine, and he can give you a disquisition upon it. In fact, he could write a treatise upon anything in the Bible, and a great many things besides. He knows almost everything: and here, up in this dark attic of the head, his religion

has taken up its abode; he has a best parlor down in his heart, but his religion never goes there — that is shut against it. He has money in there — Mammon, worldliness; or he has something else — self-love, pride. Perhaps he loves to hear experimental preaching; he admires it all; in fact, he loves anything that is sound. But then, he has not any sound in himself; or rather, it is all sound and there is no substance. He likes to hear true doctrine; but it never penetrates his inner man. You never see him weep. Preach to him about Christ crucified, a glorious subject, and you never see a tear roll down his cheek; tell him of the mighty influence of the Holy Ghost — he admires you for it, but he never had the hand of the Holy Spirit on his soul; tell him about communion with God, plunging in Godhead's deepest sea, and being lost in its immensity — the man loves to hear, but he never experiences, he has never communed with Christ; and accordingly, when you once begin to strike home; when you lay him on the table, take out your dissecting knife, begin to cut him up, and show him his own heart, let him see what it is by nature, and what it must become by grace — the man starts, he cannot stand that; he wants none of that — Christ received in the heart, and accepted. Albeit that he loves it enough in the head, `tis to him a stumblingblock, and he casts it away. Do you see yourselves here, my friends? See yourselves as God sees you? For so it is, here be many to whom Christ is as much a stumblingblock now as ever he was. O ye formalists! I speak to you; O ye who have the nutshell, but abhor the kernel; O ye who like the trappings and the dress, but care not for that fair virgin who is clothed therewith; O ye who like the paint and the tinsel, but abhor the solid gold, I speak to you; I ask you, does your religion give you solid comfort? Can you stare death in the face with it, and say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth?" Can you close your eyes at night, singing as your vesper song —

"I to the end must endure
As sure as the earnest is given"?

Can you bless God for affliction? Can you plunge in, accounted as ye are, and swim through all the floods of trial? Can you march triumphant through the lion's den, laugh at affliction, and bid defiance to hell? Can you? No! Your gospel is an effeminate thing — a thing of words and sounds, and not of power. Cast it from you, I beseech you; it is not worth your keeping; and when you come before the throne of God, you will find

it will fail you, and fail you so that you shall never find another; for lost, ruined, destroyed, ye shall find that Christ, who is now "a stumblingblock," will be your Judge.

I have found out the Jew, and I have now to discover the Greek. He is a person of quite a different exterior to the Jew. As to the phylactery, to him it is all rubbish; and as to the broad hemmed garment, he despises it. He does not care for the forms of religion; he has an intense aversion, in fact, to broad-brimmed hats, or to everything which looks like outward show. He likes eloquence; he admires a smart saying; he loves a quaint expression; he likes to read the last new book; he is a Greek, and to him the gospel is foolishness. The Greek is a gentleman found everywhere, now-a-days; manufactured sometimes in colleges, constantly made in schools, produced everywhere. He is on the exchange, in the market; he keeps a shop, rides in a carriage; he is noble, a gentleman; he is everywhere, even in court. He is thoroughly wise. Ask him anything, and he knows it. Ask for a quotation from any of the old poets, or any one else, and he can give it you. If you are a Mohammedan, and plead the claims of your religion, he will hear you very patiently. But if you are a Christian, and talk to him of Jesus Christ, "Stop your cant," he says, "I don't want to hear anything about that." This Grecian gentleman believes all philosophy except the true one; he studies all wisdom except the wisdom of God; he likes all learning except spiritual learning; he loves everything except that which God approves; he likes everything which man makes, and nothing which comes from God; it is foolishness to him, confounded foolishness. You have only to discourse about one doctrine in the Bible, and he shuts his ears; he wishes no longer for your company — it is foolishness. I have met this gentleman a great many times. Once, when I saw him, he told me he did not believe in any religion at all; and when I said I did, and had a hope that when I died I should go to heaven, he said he dared say it was very comfortable, but he did not believe in religion, and that he was sure it was best to live as nature dictated. Another time he spoke well of all religions, and believed they were very good in their place, and all true; and he had no doubt that, if a man were sincere in any kind of religion, he would be alright at last. I told him I did not think so, and that I believed there was but one religion revealed of God — the religion of God's elect, the religion which is the gift of Jesus. He then said I was a begot, and wished me good

morning. It was to him foolishness. He had nothing to do with me at all. He either liked no religion, or every religion. Another time I held him by the coat button, and I discussed with him a little about faith. He said, “It is all very well, I believe that is true Protestant doctrine.” But presently I said something about election, and he said, “I don’t like that; many people have preached that and turned it to bad account.” I then hinted something about free grace; but that he could not endure, it was to him foolishness. He was a polished Greek, and thought that if he were not chosen, he ought to be. He never liked that passage, “God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, and the things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.” He thought it was very discreditable to the Bible and when the book was revised, he had no doubt it would be cut out. To such a man — for he is here this morning, very likely come to hear this reed shaken of the wind — I have to say this: Ah! thou wise man, full of worldly wisdom; thy wisdom will stand thee here, but what wilt thou do in the swellings of Jordan? Philosophy may do well for thee to learn upon whilst thou walkest through this world; but the river is deep, and thou wilt want something more than that. If thou hast not the arm of the Most High to hold thee up in the flood and cheer thee with promises, thou wilt sink, man; with all thy philosophy, thou wilt sink; with all thy learning, thou shalt sink, and be washed into that awful ocean of eternal torment, where thou shalt be forever. Ah! Greeks, it may be foolishness to you, but ye shall see the man your judge, and then shall ye rue the day that e’er ye said that God’s gospel was foolishness.

II. Having spoken thus far upon the gospel rejected, I shall now briefly speak upon the GOSPEL TRIUMPHANT. “Unto us who are called, both Jews and Greeks, it is the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” Yonder man rejects the gospel, despises grace, and laughs at it as a delusion. Here is another man who laughed at it, too; but God will fetch him down upon his knees. Christ shall not die for nothing. The Holy Ghost shall not strive in vain. God hath said, “My word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be abundantly satisfied.” If one sinner is not saved, another shall be. The Jew and the Greek shall never depopulate heaven. The choirs of glory shall not lose a

single songster by all the opposition of Jews and Greeks; for God hath said it; some shall be called; some shall be saved; some shall be rescued.

"Perish the virtue, as it ought, abhorred,
And the fool with it, who insults his Lord.
The atonement a Redeemer's love has wrought
Is not for you — the righteous need it not.
See'st thou yon harlot wooing all she meets,
The worn-out nuisance of the public streets
Herself from morn till night, from night to morn,
Her own abhorrence, and as much your scorn:
The gracious shower, unlimited and free,
Shall fall on her, when heaven denies it thee.
Of all that wisdom dictates, this the drift,
That man is dead in sin, and life a gift."

If the righteous and good are not saved, if they reject the gospel, there are others who are to be called, others who shall be rescued; for Christ will not lose the merits of his agonies, or the purchase of his blood.

"Unto us who are called." I received a note this week asking me to explain that word "called"; because in one passage it says, "Many are called but few are chosen," while in another it appears that all who are called must be chosen. Now, let me observe that there are two calls. As my old friend, John Bunyan, says, the hen has two calls, the common cluck, which she gives daily and hourly, and the special one, which she means for her little chickens. So there is a general call, a call made to every man; every man hears it. Many are called by it; all you are called this morning in that sense, but very few are chosen. The other is a special call, the children's call. You know how the bell sounds over the workshop, to call the men to work — that is a general call. A father goes to the door and calls out, "John, it is dinner time" — that is the special call. Many are called with the general call, but they are not chosen; the special call is for the children only, and that is what is meant in the text, "Unto us who are called, both Jews and Greeks, the power of God and the wisdom of God." That call is always a special one. While I stand here and call men, nobody comes; while I preach to sinners universally, no good is done; it is like the sheet lightning you sometimes see on the summer's evening, beautiful, grand; but whoever heard of anything being struck by it? But the special call is the forked flash from heaven; it strikes somewhere; it is the arrow sent in between the joints of the harness. The call which saves is like that of Jesus, when he

said “Mary,” and she said unto him “Rabonni.” Do you know anything about that special call, my beloved? Did Jesus ever call you by name? Canst thou recollect the hour when he whispered thy name in thine ear, when he said, “Come to me”? If so, you will grant the truth of what I am going to say next about it — that it is an effectual call; there is no resisting it. When God calls with his special call, there is no standing out. Ah! I know I laughed at religion; I despised, I abhorred it; but that call! Oh, I would not come. But God said, “Thou shalt come. All that the Father giveth to me shall come.” “Lord, I will not.” “But thou shalt,” said God. And I have gone up to God’s house sometimes almost with a resolution that I would not listen, but listen I must. Oh, how the word came into my soul! Was there a power of resistance? No; I was thrown down; each bone seemed to be broken; I was saved by effectual grace. I appeal to your experience, my friends. When God took you in hand, could you withstand him? You stood against your minister times enough. Sickness did not break you down; disease did not bring you to God’s feet; eloquence did not convince you; but when God puts his hand to the work, ah! then what a change. Like Saul, with his horses going to Damascus, that voice from heaven said, “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.” “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” There was no going further then. That was an effectual call. Like that, again, which Jesus gave to Zaccheus, when he was up in the tree; stepping under the tree, he said, “Zaccheus, come down, today I must abide in thy house.” Zaccheus was taken in the net; he heard his own name; the call sank into his soul; he could not stop up in the tree, for an almighty impulse drew him down. And I could tell you some singular instances of persons going to the house of God and having their characters described, limned out to perfection, so that they have said, “He is painting me, he is painting me.” Just as I might say to that young man here, who stole his master’s gloves yesterday, that Jesus calls him to repentance. It may be that there is such a person here; and when the call comes to a peculiar character, it generally comes with a special power. God gives his ministers a brush, and shows them how to use it in painting life-like portraits, and thus the sinner hears the special call. I cannot give the special call; God alone can give it, and I leave it with him. Some must be called. Jew and Greek may laugh, but still there are some who are called, both Jews and Greeks.

Then, to close up this second point, it is a great mercy that many a Jew has been made to drop his self righteousness; many a legalist has been made to drop his legalism, and come to Christ; and many a Greek has bowed his genius at the throne of God's gospel. We have a few such. As Cowper says:

"We boast some rich ones whom the gospel sways,
And one who wears a coronet, and prays;
Like gleanings of an olive tree they show,
Here and there one upon the topmost bough."

III. Now we come to our third point, A GOSPEL ADMIRED; unto us who are called of God, it is the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Now, beloved, this must be a matter of pure experience between your souls and God. If you are called of God this morning, you will know it. I know there are times when a Christian has to say,

"Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought;
Do I love the Lord or no?
Am I his, or am I not?"

But if a man never in his life knew himself to be a Christian, he never was a Christian. If he never had a moment of confidence, when he could say, "Now I know in whom I have believed," I think I do not utter a harsh thing when I say, that that man could not have been born again; for I do not understand how a man can be killed and then made alive again, and not know it; how a man can pass from death unto life, and not know it; how a man can be brought out of darkness into marvellous liberty without knowing it. I am sure I know it when I shout out my old verse,

"Now free from sin, I walk at large,
My Savior's blood's my full discharge;
At his dear feet content I lay,
A sinner saved, and homage pay."

There are moments when the eyes glisten with joy and we can say, "We are persuaded, confident, certain." I do not wish to distress any one who is under doubt. Often gloomy doubts will prevail; there are seasons when you fear you have not been called, when you doubt your interest in Christ. Ah! what a mercy it is that it is not your hold of Christ that saves you, but his hold of you! What a sweet fact that it is not how you grasp his

hand, but his grasp of yours, that saves you. Yet I think you ought to know, sometime or other, whether you are called of God. If so, you will follow me in the next part of my discourse, which is a matter of pure experience; unto us who are saved, it is “Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”

The gospel is to the true believer a thing of power. It is Christ the power of God. Ay, there is a power in God’s gospel beyond all description. Once, I, like Mazeppa, bound on the wild horse of my lust, bound hand and foot, incapable of resistance, was galloping on with hell’s wolves behind me, howling for my body and my soul, as their just and lawful prey. There came a mighty hand which stopped that wild horse, cut my bands, set me down, and brought me into liberty. Is there power, sir? Ay, there is power, and he who has felt it must acknowledge it. There was a time when I lived in the strong old castle of my sins, and rested in my works. There came a trumpeter to the door, and bade me open it. I with anger chide him from the porch, and said he ne’er should enter. There came a goodly personage, with loving countenance; his hands were marked with scars, where nails were driven, and his feet had nail-prints too; he lifted up his cross, using it as a hammer; at the first blow the gate of my prejudice shook; at the second it trembled more; at the third down it fell, and in he came; and he said, “Arise, and stand upon thy feet, for I have loved thee with an everlasting love.” A thing of power! Ah! it is a thing of power. I have felt it here, in this heart; I have the witness of the Spirit within, and know it is a thing of might, because it has conquered me; it has bowed me down.

“His free grace alone, from the first to the last,
Hath won my affection, and held my soul fast.”

The gospel to the Christian is a thing of power. What is it that makes the young man devote himself as a missionary to the cause of God, to leave father and mother, and go into distant lands? It is a thing of power that does it — it is the gospel. What is it that constrains yonder minister, in the midst of the cholera, to climb up that creaking staircase, and stand by the bed of some dying creature who has that dire disease? It must be a thing of power which leads him to venture his life; it is love of the cross of Christ which bids him do it. What is that which enables one man to stand up before a multitude of his fellows, all unprepared it may be, but determined

that he will speak nothing but Christ and him crucified? What is it that enables him to cry, like the war-horse of Job in battle, Aha! and move glorious in might? It is a thing of power that does it — it is Christ crucified. And what emboldens that timid female to walk down that dark lane in the wet evening, that she may go and sit beside the victim of a contagious fever? What strengthens her to go through that den of thieves, and pass by the profligate and profane? What influences her to enter into that charnel-house of death, and there sit down and whisper words of comfort? Does gold make her do it? They are too poor to give her gold. Does fame make her do it? She shall never be known, nor written among the mighty women of this earth. What makes her do it? Is it love of merit? No; she knows she has no desert before high heaven. What impels her to it? It is the power of the gospel on her heart; it is the cross of Christ; she loves it, and she therefore says —

"Were the whole realm of nature mine.
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

But I behold another scene. A martyr is going to the stake; the halberd men are around him; the crowds are mocking, but he is marching steadily on. See, they bind him, with a chain around his middle, to the stake; they heap faggots all about him; the flame is lighted up; listen to his words: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name." The flames are kindling round his legs; the fire is burning him even to the bone; see him lift up his hands and say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and though the fire devour this body, yet in my flesh shall I see the Lord." Behold him clutch the stake and kiss it, as if he loved it, and hear him say, "For every chain of iron that man girdeth me with, God shall give me a chain of gold; for all these faggots, and this ignominy and shame, he shall increase the weight of my eternal glory." See all the under parts of his body are consumed; still he lives in the torture; at last he bows himself, and the upper part of his body falls over; and as he falls you hear him say, "Into thy hands I commend my Spirit." What wondrous magic was on him, sirs? What made that man strong? What helped him to bear that cruelty? What made him stand unmoved in the flames? It was the thing of power; it was the cross of Jesus crucified. For "unto us who are saved it is the power of God."

But behold another scene far different. There is no crowd there; it is a silent room. There is a poor pallet, a lonely bed: a physician standing by. There is a young girl: her face is blanched by consumption; long hath the worm eaten her cheek, and though sometimes the flush came, it was the death flush of the deceitful consumption. There she lieth, weak, pale, wan, worn, dying, yet behold a smile upon her face, as if she had seen an angel. She speaketh, and there is music in her voice. Joan of Arc of old was not half so mighty as that girl. She is wrestling with dragons on her death-bed; but see her composure, and hear her dying sonnet:

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high!
Hide me, O my Savior, hide,
Till the storm of life is past,
Safe into the haven guide,
O receive my soul at last!"

And with a smile she shuts her eye on earth, and opens it in heaven. What enables her to die like that? It is the thing of power; it is the cross; it is Jesus crucified.

I have little time to discourse upon the other point, and it be far from me to weary you by a lengthened and prosy sermon, but we must glance at the other statement: Christ is, to the called ones, the wisdom of God as well as the power of God. To a believer, the gospel is the perfection of wisdom, and if it appear not so to the ungodly, it is because of the perversion of judgement consequent on their depravity.

An idea has long possessed the public mind, that a religious man can scarcely be a wise man. It has been the custom to talk of infidels, atheists, and deists, as men of deep thought and comprehensive intellect; and to tremble for the Christian controversialist, as if he must surely fall by the hand of his enemy. But this is purely a mistake; for the gospel is the sum of wisdom; an epitome of knowledge; a treasure-house of truth; and a revelation of mysterious secrets. In it we see how justice and mercy may be married; here we behold inexorable law entirely satisfied, and sovereign love bearing away the sinner in triumph. Our meditation upon it enlarges the mind; and as it opens to our soul in successive flashes of glory, we

stand astonished at the profound wisdom manifest in it. Ah, dear friends! if ye seek wisdom, ye shall see it displayed in all its greatness; not in the balancing of the clouds, nor the firmness of earth's foundations; not in the measured march of the armies of the sky, nor in the perpetual motions of the waves of the sea; not in vegetation with all its fairy forms of beauty; nor in the animal with its marvellous tissue of nerve, and vein, and sinew: nor even in man, that last and loftiest work of the Creator. But turn aside and see this great sight! — an incarnate God upon the cross; a substitute atoning for mortal guilt; a sacrifice satisfying the vengeance of Heaven, and delivering the rebellious sinner. Here is essential wisdom; enthroned, crowned, glorified. Admire, ye men of earth, if ye be not blind; and ye who glory in your learning bend your heads in reverence, and own that all your skill could not have devised a gospel at once so just to God, so safe to man.

Remember, my friends, that while the gospel is in itself wisdom, it also confers wisdom on its students; she teaches young men wisdom and discretion, and gives understanding to the simple. A man who is a believing admirer and a hearty lover of the truth as it is in Jesus, is in a right place to follow with advantage any other branch of science. I confess I have a shelf in my head for everything now. Whatever I read I know where to put it; whatever I learn I know where to stow it away. Once when I read books, I put all my knowledge together in glorious confusion; but ever since I have known Christ, I have put Christ in the center as my sun, and each science revolves round it like a planet, while minor sciences are satellites to these planets. Christ is to me the wisdom of God. I can learn everything now. The science of Christ crucified is the most excellent of sciences, she is to me the wisdom of God. O, young man, build thy studio on Calvary! there raise thine observatory, and scan by faith the lofty things of nature. Take thee a hermit's cell in the garden of Gethsemane, and lave thy brow with the waters of Silo. Let the Bible be thy standard classic — thy last appeal in matters of contention. Let its light be thine illumination, and thou shalt become more wise than Plato, more truly learned than the seven sages of antiquity.

And now, my dear friends, solemnly and earnestly, as in the sight of God, I appeal to you. You are gathered here this morning, I know, from different motives; some of you have come from curiosity; others of you are my

regular hearers; some have come from one place and some from another. What have you heard me say this morning? I have told you of two classes of persons who reject Christ; the religionist, who has a religion of form and nothing else; and the man of the world, who calls our gospel foolishness. Now, put your hand upon your heart, and ask yourself this morning, "Am I one of these?" If you are, then walk the earth in all your pride; then go as you came in: but know that for all this the Lord shall bring thee unto judgement; know thou that thy joys and delights shall vanish like a dream, "and, like the baseless fabric of a vision," be swept away forever. Know thou this, moreover, O man, that one day in the halls of Satan, down in hell, I perhaps may see thee amongst those myriad spirits who revolve forever in a perpetual circle with their hands upon their hearts. If thine hand be transparent, and thy flesh transparent, I shall look through thy hand and flesh, and see thy heart within. And how shall I see it? Set in a case of fire — in a case of fire! And there thou shalt revolve forever with the worm gnawing within thy heart, which ne'er shall die — a case of fire around thy never-dying, ever-tortured heart. Good God! let not these men still reject and despise Christ; but let this be the time when they shall be called.

To the rest of you who are called, I need say nothing. The longer you live, the more powerful will you find the gospel to be; the more deeply Christ-taught you are, the more you live under the constant influence of the Holy Spirit, the more you will know the gospel to be a thing of power, and the more also will you understand it to be a thing of wisdom. May every blessing rest upon you; and may God come up with us in the evening!

"Let men or angels dig the mines
Where nature's golden treasure shines;
Brought near the doctrine of the cross,
All nature's gold appears but dross.
Should vile blasphemers with disdain
Pronounce the truths of Jesus vain,
We'll meet the scandal and the shame,
And sing and triumph in his name."

THE PECULIAR SLEEP OF THE BELOVED

SERMON NO. 12

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 4, 1855,

AT EXTER HALL, STRAND.

"For so he giveth his beloved sleep." — Psalm 127:2.

The sleep of the body is the gift of God. So said Homer of old, when he described it as descending from the clouds and resting on the tents of the warriors around old Troy. And so sang Virgil, when he spoke of Palinurus falling asleep upon the prow of his ship. Sleep is the gift of God. We think that we lay our heads upon our pillows, and compose our bodies in a peaceful posture, and that, therefore we naturally and necessarily sleep. But it is not so. Sleep is the gift of God; and not a man would close his eyes, did not God put his fingers on his eyelids; did not the Almighty send a soft and balmy influence over his frame which lulled his thoughts into quiescence, making him enter into that blissful state of rest which we call sleep. True, there be some drugs and narcotics whereby men can poison themselves well nigh to death, and then call it sleep; but the sleep of the healthy body is the gift of God. He bestows it; he rocks the cradle for us every night; he draws the curtain of darkness; he bids the sun shut up his burning eyes; and then he comes and says, "Sleep, sleep, my child; I give thee sleep." Have you not known what it is at times to lie upon your bed and strive to slumber? and as it is said of Darius, so might it be said of you: "The king sent for his musicians, but his sleep went from him." You have attempted it, but you could not do it; it is beyond your power to procure a healthy repose. You imagine if you fix your mind upon a certain subject until it shall engross your attention, you will then sleep; but you find yourself unable to do so. Ten thousand things drive through your brain as if the whole earth were agitated before you. You see all things you

ever beheld dancing in a wild phantasmagoria before your eyes. You close your eyes, but still you see; and there be things in your ear, and head, and brain, which will not let you sleep. It is God alone, who alike seals up the sea boy's eyes upon the giddy mast, and gives the monarch rest: for with all appliances and means to boot, he could not rest without the aid of God. It is God who steeps the mind in lethe, and bids us slumber, that our bodies may be refreshed, so that for tomorrow's toil we may rise recruited and strengthened. O my friends, how thankful should we be for sleep. Sleep is the best physician that I know of. Sleep hath healed more pains of wearied bones than the most eminent physicians upon earth. It is the best medicine; the choicest thing of all the names which are written in all the lists of pharmacy. There is nothing like to sleep! What a mercy it is that it belongs alike to all! God does not make sleep the boon of the rich man, he does not give it merely to the noble, or the rich, so that they can keep it as a peculiar luxury for themselves; but he bestows it upon all. Yea, if there be a difference, the sleep of the laboring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much. He who toils, sleeps all the sounder for his toil. While luxurious effeminacy cannot rest, tossing itself from side to side upon a bed of eider down, the hard-working laborer, with his strong and powerful limbs, worn out and tired, throws himself upon his hard couch and sleeps: and waking, thanks God that he has been refreshed. Ye know not, my friends, how much ye owe to God, that he gives you rest at night. If ye had sleepless nights, ye would then value the blessing. If for weeks ye lay tossing on your weary bed, ye then would thank God for this favor. But as it is the gift of God, it is a gift most precious, one that cannot be valued until it is taken away; yea, even then we cannot appreciate it as we ought.

The Psalmist says there are some men who deny themselves sleep. For purposes of gain, or ambition, they rise up early and sit up late. Some of us who are here present may have been guilty of the same thing. We have risen early in the morning that we might turn over the ponderous volume, in order to acquire knowledge; we have sat at night until our burned-out lamp has chidden us, and told us that the sun was rising; while our eyes have ached, our brain has throbbed, our heart has palpitated. We have been weary and worn out; we have risen up early, and sat up late, and have in that way come to eat the bread of sorrow. Many of you business men are toiling in that style. We do not condemn you for it; we do not forbid rising

up early and sitting up late; but we remind you of this text: — “It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.” And it is of this sleep, that God gives to his beloved, that we mean to speak this morning, as God shall help us — a sleep peculiar to the children of God — a sleep which he gives to “his beloved.”

Sleep is sometimes used in a bad sense in the Word of God, to express the condition of carnal and worldly men. Some men have the sleep of carnal ease and sloth: of whom Solomon tells us, they are unwise sons that slumber in the harvest, causing shame; so that when the harvest is spent, and the summer is ended, they are not saved. Sleep often expresses a state of sloth, of deadness, of indifference, in which all ungodly men are found, according to the words, “It is time for us to awake out of sleep. — “Let us not sleep as do others, but let us who are of the day be sober.” There be many who are sleeping the sluggard’s sleep, who are resting upon the bed of sloth; but an awful waking shall it be to them, when they shall find that the time of their probation has been wasted; that the golden sands of their life have dropped unheeded from the hourglass; and that they have come into that world where there are no acts of pardon passed, no hope, no refuge, no salvation.

In other places you find sleep used as the figure of carnal security, in which so many are found. Look at Saul, lying asleep in fleshly security — not like David, when he said, “I will lay me down and sleep, for thou Lord makest me to dwell in safety.” Abner lay there, and all the troops lay around him, but Abner slept. Sleep on, Saul, sleep on. But there is an Abishai standing at thy pillow, and with a spear in his hand he says, “Let me smite him even to the earth at once.” Still he sleeps; he knows it not. Such are many of you, sleeping in jeopardy of your soul; Satan is standing, the law is ready, vengeance is eager, and all saying, “Shall I smite him? I will smite him this once, and he shall never wake again.” Christ says, “Stay, vengeance, stay.” Lo, the spear is even now quivering — “Stay, spare it yet another year, in the hope that he may yet wake from the long sleep of his sin.” Like Sisera, I tell thee, sinner, thou art sleeping in the tent of the destroyer; thou mayest have eaten butter and honey out of lordly dish; but thou art sleeping on the doorstep of hell; even now the enemy is lifting up the hammer and the nail, to smite thee through thy temples, and

fasten thee to the earth, that there thou mayest lie for ever in the death of everlasting torment — if it may be called a death.

Then there is also mentioned in the Scripture, a sleep of lust, like that which Samson had when he lost his locks, and such sleep as many have when they indulge in sin, and wake to find themselves stripped, lost, and ruined. There is also the sleep of negligence, such as the virgins had, when it is said, "they all slumbered and slept;" and the sleep of sorrow, which overcame Peter, James, and John. But none of these are the gifts of God. They are incident to the frailty of our nature; they come upon us because we are fallen men; they creep over us because we are the sons of a lost and ruined parent. These sleeps are not the benisons of God; nor does he bestow them on his beloved. We now come to tell you what those sleeps are, which he does bestow.

I. First, there is a miraculous sleep which God has sometimes given to his beloved — which he does not now vouchsafe. Into that kind of miraculous sleep, or rather trance, fell Adam, when he slept sorrowfully and alone; but when he awoke he was no more so, for God had given him that best gift which he had then bestowed on man. The same sleep Abram had, when it is said that a deep sleep came on him, and he laid him down, and saw a smoking furnace and a burning lamp, while a voice said to him, "Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Such a hallowed sleep also was that of Jacob, when, with a stone for his pillow, the hedges for his curtains, he laid him down and slumbered. Dreaming, he saw a ladder set upon the earth, the top of which reached to heaven, the angels of God ascending and descending upon it. Such a sleep had Joseph, when he dreamed that the other sheaves made obeisance to his sheaf, and that the sun, moon, and seven stars were subject unto him. So ofttimes did David rest, when his sleep was sweet unto him, as we have just read. And such a sleep was that of Daniel, when he said, "I was asleep upon my face, and behold the Lord said unto me, Arise, and stand upon thy feet." And such, moreover, was the sleep of the reputed father of our blessed Lord, when in a vision of the night, an angel said to him, "Arise, Joseph, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him." These are miraculous slumbers. God's angel hath touched his servants with the magic wand of sleep, and they have slept, not simply as we do, but slept a wondrous sleep; they have dived

into the tenfold depths of slumber; they have plunged into a sea of sleep, where they have seen the invisible, talked with the unknown, and heard mystic and wondrous sounds: and when they awoke, they have said, "What a sleep! Surely, my sleep was sweet unto me." "So he giveth his beloved sleep."

But, now-a-days, we do not have such sleeps as these. Many persons dream very wonderful things, but most people dream nonsense. Some persons put faith in dreams: and, certainly God doth warn us in dreams and visions even now. I am sure he does. There is not a man but can mention one or more instances of a warning, or a benefit, he has received in a dream. But we never trust dreams. We remember what Rowland Hill said to a lady, who knew she was a child of God, because she dreamed such-and-such a thing: "Never mind, ma'am, what you did when you were asleep; let us see what you will do when you are awake." That is my opinion of dreams. I never will believe a man to be a Christian merely because he has dreamed himself one; for a dreamy religion will make a man a dreamer all his life — and such dreamers will have an awful waking at last, if that is all they have to trust in.

II. He gives his beloved, in the second place, the sleep of a quiet conscience. I think most of you saw that splendid picture, in the Exhibition of the Royal Academy — the Sleep of Argyle — where he lay slumbering on the very morning before his execution. You saw some noblemen standing there, looking at him, almost with compunction; the jailer is there, with his keys rattling; but positively the man sleeps, though tomorrow morning his head shall be severed from his body, and a man shall hold it up, and say, "This was the head of a traitor." He slept because he had a quiet conscience: for he had done no wrong. Then look at Peter. Did you ever notice that remarkable passage, where it is said that Herod intended to bring out Peter on the morrow; but, behold, as Peter was sleeping between two guards, the angel smote him? Sleeping between two guards, when on the morrow he was to be crucified or slain! He cared not, for his heart was clear; he had committed no ill. He could say, "If it be right to serve God or man, judge ye;" and, therefore, he laid him down and slept. O sirs! do ye know what the sleep of a quiet conscience is? Have you ever stood out and been the butt of calumny — pelted by all men; the object of scorn — the laugh, the song of drunkards? And have ye known

what it is, after all, to sleep, as if you cared for nothing, because your heart was pure? Ah! ye who are in debt — ah! ye who are dishonest — ah! ye who love not God, and love not Christ — I wonder ye can sleep, for sin doth put pricking thorns in the pillow. Sin puts a dagger in a man's bed, so that whichever way he turns it pricks him. But a quiet conscience is the sweetest music that can lull the soul to sleep. The demon of restlessness does not come to that man's bed who has a quiet conscience — a conscience right with God — who can sing —

With the world, myself, and thee,
I, ere I sleep, at peace shall be.
"So he giveth his beloved sleep."

But let me tell you who have no knowledge of your election in Christ Jesus, no trust in the ransom of a Savior's blood — you, who have never been called by the Holy Ghost — you, who were never regenerated and born again — let me tell you that you do not know this slumber. You may say your conscience is quiet; you may say, you do no man any wrong, and that you believe at the bar of God you shall have little to account for. But, sirs, you know that the soul that sinneth, if it sins but once, must die. If the picture has a single flaw, it is not a perfect one. If ye have sinned but once, ye shall be damned for it, unless ye have something to take away that one sin. Ye do not know this sleep, but the Christian does, for all his sins were numbered on the "scape-goat's head of old." Christ has died for all his sins however great or enormous; and there is not now a sin written against him in the Book of God. "I, even I," says God, "am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my name's sake, and I will not remember thy sins." Now thou mayest sleep; for "so he giveth his beloved sleep."

III. Again: there is the sleep of contentment which the Christian enjoys. How few people in this world are satisfied. No man ever need fear offering a reward of a thousand pounds to a contented man; for if any one came to claim the reward, he would of course prove his discontent. We are all in a measure, I suspect, dissatisfied with our lot; the great majority of mankind are always on the wing; they never settle; they never light on any tree to build their nest; but they are always fluttering from one to the other. This tree is not green enough, that is not high enough, this is not beautiful enough, that is not picturesque enough; so they are ever on the wing, and

never build a peaceful nest at all. The Christian builds his nest; and as the noble Luther said, “Like yon little bird upon the tree, he hath fed himself tonight — he knoweth not where his breakfast is tomorrow. He sitteth there while the winds rock the tree; he shuts his eyes, puts his head under his wing, and sleeps; and, when he awakes in the morning sings,

Mortals cease from toil and sorrow;
God provideth for the morrow.”

How few there are who have that blessed contentment — who can say, “I want nothing else; I want but little here below — yea, I long for nothing more — I am satisfied — I am content.” You sung a beautiful hymn just now; but I suspect that many of you had no right to it, because you did not feel it.

With thy will I leave the rest,
Grant me but this one request;
Both in life and death to prove
Tokens of thy special love.

Could you say there was nothing you wanted on earth, save Jesus? Did you mean that you are perfectly content — that you had the sleep of contentment? Ah! no. You, who were apprentices, are sighing till you shall be journeymen; you who are journeymen, are groaning to be masters; masters are longing till they shall retire from business, and when they have retired, they are longing that all their children shall be settled in life. Man always looks for a yet-beyond; he is a mariner who never gets to port; an arrow which never reaches the target. Ah! the Christian hath this text and communed with it: — “So he giveth his beloved sleep.” In my reverie, as I was on the border of the land of dreams, methought I was in a castle. Around its massive walls there ran a deep moat. Watchmen paced the walls both day and night. It was a fine old fortress, bidding defiance to the foe; but I was not happy in it. I thought I lay upon a couch; but scarcely had I closed my eyes, ere a trumpet blew, “To arms! To arms!” and when the danger was overpast I lay me down again. “To arms! To arms! once more resounded, and again I started up. Never could I rest. I thought I had my armor on, and moved about perpetually clad in mail, rushing each hour to the castle top, aroused by some fresh alarm. At one time a foe was coming from the west; at another from the east. I thought I had a treasure somewhere down in some deep part of the castle, and all my care was to

guard it. I dreaded, I feared, I trembled lest it should be taken from me. I awoke, and I thought I would not live in such a tower as that for all its grandeur. It was the castle of discontent, the castle of ambition, in which man never rests. It is ever "To arms! To arms! To arms!" There is a foe here or a foe there. His dear-loved treasure must be guarded. Sleep never crosses the drawbridge of the castle of discontent. Then I thought I would supplant it by another reverie. I was in a cottage. It was in what poets call a beautiful and pleasant place, but I cared not for that. I had no treasure in the world, save one sparkling jewel on my breast; and I thought I put my hand on that and went to sleep, nor did I wake till morning light. That treasure was a quiet conscience and the love of God — "the peace that passeth all understanding." I slept, because I slept in the house of content, satisfied with what I had. Go ye, overreaching misers! Go ye, grasping ambitious men! I envy not your life of inquietude. The sleep of statesmen is often broken; the dream of the miser is always evil; the sleep of the man who loves gain is never hearty; but God "giveth," by contentment, "his beloved sleep."

IV. Once more: God giveth his beloved the sleep of quietness of soul as to the future. O that dark future! that future! The present may be well; but ah! the next wind may wither all the flowers, and where shall I be? Clutch thy gold, miser; for "riches make to themselves wings and fly away." Hug that babe to thy breast, mother; for the rough hand of death may rob thee of it. Look at thy fame and wonder at it, O thou man of ambition! But one slight report shall wound thee to the heart, and thou shalt sink as low as e'er thou hast been lifted high by the voices of the multitude. The future! All persons have need to dread the future, except the Christian. God giveth to his beloved sleep with regard to the events of coming time.

What may be the future lot,
High or low concerns me not;
This doth set my heart at rest,'
What my God appoints is best.

Whether I am to live or die is no matter to me; whether I am to be the "offscouring of all things," or "the man whom the king delighteth to honor," matters not to me. All is alike, provided my Father doth but give it. "So he giveth his beloved sleep." How many of you have arrived at that happy point that you have no wish of your own at all? It is a sweet thing

to have but one wish; but it is a better thing to have no wish at all — to be all lost in the present enjoyment of Christ and the future anticipation of the vision of his face. O my soul! what would the future be to thee, if thou hadst not Christ? If it be a bitter and a dark future, what matters it, so long as Christ thy Lord sanctifies it, and the Holy Ghost still gives thee courage, energy, and strength? It is a blessed thing to be able to say with Madame Guyon —

To me 'tis equal, whether love ordained,
My life or death, appoint me pain or ease;
My soul perceives no real ill in pain,
In ease or health, no real good she sees.
One good she covets, and that good alone,
To choose thy will, from selfish bias free,
And to prefer a cottage to a throne,
And grief to comfort, if it pleases thee.
That we should bear the cross is thy command —
Die to the world, and live to sin no more;
Suffer unmoved beneath the rudest hand,
As pleased when shipwrecked, as when safe on shore.

It is a happy condition to attain. "So he giveth his beloved sleep." Ah! if you have a self-will in your hearts, pray to God to uproot it. Have you self-love? Beseech the Holy Spirit to turn it out; for if you will always will to do as God wills, you must be happy. I have heard of some good old woman in a cottage, who had nothing but a piece of bread and a little wafer, and lifting up her hands, she said, as a blessing, "What! all this, and Christ too?" It is "all this," compared with what we deserve. And I have read of some one dying, who was asked if he wished to live or die; and he said, "I have no wish at all about it." "But if you might wish, which would you choose?" "I would not choose at all." "But if God bade you choose?" "I would beg God to choose for me, for I should not know which to take." Happy state! happy state! to be perfectly acquiescent —

To lie passive in his hand,
And to know no will but his.
"So he giveth his beloved sleep."

V. In the fifth place: there is the sleep of security. Solomon slept with his armed men round his bed, and thus slumbered securely; but Solomon's father slept one night on the bare ground — not in a palace — with no moat round his castle wall, — but he slept quite as safely as his son, for he

said, “I laid me down and slept, and I awaked, for the Lord sustained me.” Now, some persons never feel secure in this world at all; I query whether one half of my hearers feel themselves so. Suppose I burst out in a moment, and sing this —

I to the end shall endure,
As sure as the earnest is given;
More happy, but not more secure,
Are the glorified spirits in heaven.

You would say, that is too high doctrine; and I would reply, very likely it is for you, but it is the truth of God, and it is sweet doctrine for me. I love to know, that if I am predestinated according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, I must be saved; if I was purchased by the Son’s blood, I cannot be lost, for it would be impossible for Jesus Christ to lose one whom he has redeemed, otherwise he would be dissatisfied with his labors. I know that where he has begun the good work he will carry it on. I never fear that I shall fall away, or be lost; my only fear is, lest I should not have been right at first; but, provided I am right, if I be really a child of God, I might believe that the sun would be smitten with madness, and go reeling through the universe like a drunken man — I might believe that the stars would urn form their courses, and instead of marching with their measured tramp, as now they do, whirl on in wild courses like the dance of Bacchanals — I could even conceive that this great universe might all subside in God, “even as a moment’s foam subsides again upon the wave that bears it;” but neither reason, heresy, logic, eloquence, nor a conclave of divines, shall make me pay a moment’ attention to the vile suggestion that a child of God may ever perish. Hence I tread this earth with confidence. Arguing a little while ago with an Arminian, he said, “Sir, you ought to be a happy man; for if what you say be true, why you are as secure of being in heaven as if you were there.” I said, “Yes, I know it.” “Then you ought to live above cares and tribulations, and sing happily from morning to night.” I said, “So I ought, and so I will, God helping me.” This is security. “He giveth his beloved sleep.” To know that if I died I should enter heaven — to be as sure as I am of my own existence that God, having loved me with an everlasting love, and he being immutable, will never hate me if he has once loved me — to know that I must enter the kingdom of glory — is not this enough to make all burdens light, and give me the hind’s feet

wherewith I may stand upon my high places. Happy state of security! "So he giveth his beloved sleep."

And there is a sleep, my dear friends, of security, which is enjoyed on earth even in the midst of the greatest troubles. Do you remember that passage in the book of Ezekiel, where it is said, "They shall dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods?" A queer place to sleep in! "In the woods." There is a wolf over yonder; there is a tiger in the jungle; and eagle is soaring in the air; a horde of robbers dwell in the dark forest. "Never mind," says the child of God:

He that hath made his refuge God,
Shall find a most secure abode;
Shall walk all day beneath his shade,
And there at night shall rest his head.

I have often admired Martin Luther, and wondered at his composure. When all men spoke so ill of him, what did he say? Turn to that Psalm — "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble; therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." In a far inferior manner, I have been called to stand up in the position of Martin Luther, and have been made the butt of slander, a mark for laughter and scorn; but it has not broken my spirit yet; not will it, while I am enabled to enjoy that quiescent state of — "So he giveth his beloved sleep." But thus far I beg to inform all those who choose to slander or speak ill of me, that they are very welcome to do so till they are tired of it. my motto is cedo nulli — I yield to none. I have not courted any man's love; I asked no man to attend my ministry; I preach what I like, and when I like, and as I like. Oh! happy state — to be bold, though downcast, and distressed — to go and bend my knee and tell my Father all, and then to come down from my chamber, and say —

If on my face, for thy dear name,
Shame and reproach shall be;
I'll hail reproach, and welcome shame,
For thou'lt remember me.

VI. The last sleep God giveth his beloved is the sleep of a happy dismission. I have stood by the graves of many servants of the Lord. I have buried some of the excellent of the earth; and when I bid farewell to

my brother down below there slumbering in his coffin, I usually commence my speech with those words, “So he giveth his beloved sleep.” Dear servants of Jesus! There I see them! What can I say of them, but that “so he giveth his beloved sleep?” Oh! happy sleep! This world is a state of tossing to and fro; but in that grave they rest. No sorrows there; no sighs, no groans, to mingle with the songs that warble from immortal tongues. Well may I address the dead thus: — “My brother, oftentimes hast thou fought the battles of this world; thou hast had thy cares, thy trials, and thy troubles; but now thou art gone — not to worlds unknown, but to yonder land of light and glory. Sleep on, brother! Thy soul sleepeth not, for thou art in heaven; but thy body sleepeth. Death hath laid thee in thy last couch; it may be cold, but it is sanctified; it may be damp, but it is safe; and on the resurrection morning, when the archangel shall set his trumpet to his mouth, thou shalt rise. `Blessed are they dead that die in the Lord: yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.’ Sleep on in thy grave, my brother, for thou shalt rise to glory.” “So he giveth his beloved sleep.”

Some of you fear to die, and have good reason to do so, for death for you would be the beginning of sorrows; and on its approach ye might hear the voice of the angel of the Apocalypse: “One woe is past, but behold two woes more are to come.” If, sirs, ye were to die unprepared, and unconverted, and unsaved, “There remaineth nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.” I need not speak like a Boanerges, for it is to you a well known truth, that without God, without Christ, “strangers from the commonwealth of Israel,” your portion must be amongst the damned — the fiends — the tortured — the shrieking ghosts — the wandering souls who find no rest —

On waves of burning brimstone toss’d,
For ever, O for ever lost!
“The wrath to come!” “The wrath to come!” “The wrath to come!”

But beloved Christian brother, wherefore dost thou fear to die? Come let me take thy hand:

To you and me by grace ‘tis given,
To know the Savior’s precious name;
And shortly we shall meet in heaven,
Our end, our hope, our way the same.

Do you know that heaven is just across that narrow stream? Are you afraid to plunge in and swim across? Do you fear to be drowned? I feel the bottom — it is good. Dost thou think thou shalt sink? Hear the voice of the Spirit: “Fear not, I am with thee; be not dismayed, I am thy God: when thou passest through the river, I will be with thee, and the floods shall not overflow thee.” Death is the gate of endless joys, and dost thou dread to enter there? What! fear to be emancipated from corruption? Oh! say not so! but rather, gladly lay down and sleep in Jesus, and be blessed.

I have finished expounding my subject. There is only one question I want to ask of you before you pass out of those doors. Do you seriously and solemnly believe that you belong to the “beloved” here mentioned? I may be impertinent in asking such a question; I have been accused of that before now, but I have never denied it. I rather take the credit of it than not. But seriously and solemnly I ask you — Do you know yourselves to be amongst the beloved? And if it happens that you want a test, allow me to give you three tests, very briefly, and I have done. It has been said that there are three kinds of preachers — doctrinal preachers, experimental preachers, and practical preachers. Now I think there are three things that make up a Christian — true doctrine, real experience, and good practice.

Now, then, as to your doctrine. You may tell whether you are the Lord’s beloved partly by that. Some think it matters not what a man believes. Excuse me: truth is alway precious, and the least atom of truth is worth searching out. Now- a-days the sects do not clash so much as they did. Perhaps that is good; but there is one evil about it. People do not read the Bibles so much as they did. They think we are all right. Now, I believe we may be all right in the main, but we cannot be all right where we contradict one another; and it becomes every man to search the Bible to see which is right. I am not afraid to submit my Calvinism, or my doctrine of believer’s baptism, to the searching of the Bible. A learned lord, an infidel, once said to Whitfield, “Sir I am an infidel, I do not believe the Bible, but if the Bible be true, you are right, and your Arminian opponents are wrong. If the Bible be the Word of God, the doctrines of grace are true;” adding that if any man would grant him the Bible to be the truth, he would challenge him to disprove Calvinism. The doctrines of original sin, election, effectual calling, final perseverance, and all those great truths which are called Calvinism — though Calvin was not the author of them, but simply an

able writer and preacher upon the subject — are, I believe, the essential doctrines of the Gospel that is in Jesus Christ. Now, I do not ask you whether you believe all this — it is possible you may not; but I believe you will before you enter heaven. I am persuaded, that as God may have washed your hearts, he will wash your brains before you enter heaven. He will make you right in your doctrines. But I must enquire whether you read your Bibles. I am not finding fault with you this morning for differing from me, I may be wrong; but I want to know whether you search the Scriptures to find what is truth. And, if you are not a reader of the Bible, if you take doctrines second-hand, if you go to chapel, and say, "I do not like that:' what matters your not liking it, provided it is in the Bible? Is it Biblical truth, or is it not? If it is God's truth, let us have it exalted. It may not suit you; but let me remind you, that the truth that is in Jesus never was palatable to carnal men, and I believe never will be. The reason you love it not, is because it cuts too much at your pride; it lets you down too low. Search yourselves, then, in doctrine.

Then take care that you remember the experimental test. I am afraid there is very little experimental religion amongst us; but where there is true doctrine, there ought always to be a vital experience. Sirs, try yourselves by the experimental test. Have you ever had an experience of your wretchedness, of your depravity, your inability, your death in sin? Have you ever felt life in Christ, an experience of the light of God's countenance, of wrestling with corruption? Have you had a grace-given Holy Ghost-implanted experience of a communion with Christ? If so, then you are right on the experimental test.

And, to conclude, take care of the practical test. "Faith without works is dead, being alone." He that walketh in sin is a child of the devil; and he that walketh in righteousness is a child of light. Do not think, because you believe the right doctrines, therefore you are right. There are many that believe right, act wrong, and they perish. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

I have done. Now let me beseech thee, you, by the frailty of your own lives — by the shortness of time — by the dreadful realities of eternity — by the sins you have committed — by the pardon that you need — by the blood and wounds of Jesus — by his second coming to judge the world in

righteousness — by the glories of heaven — by the awful horrors of hell — by time — by eternity — by all that is good — by all that is sacred — let me beg of you, as you love your own souls, to search and see whether ye are amongst the beloved, to whom he giveth sleep. God bless you.

CONSOLATION PROPORTIONATE TO SPIRITUAL SUFFERINGS

SERMON NO. 13

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 11, 1855,

AT EXTER HALL, STRAND.

"For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." — 2 Corinthians 1:5.

SEEK ye rest from your distresses ye children of woe and sorrow ? This is the place where ye may lighten your burden, and lose your cares. Oh, son of affliction and misery, wouldst thou forget for a time thy pains and griefs? This is the Bethesda the house of mercy; this is the place where God designs to cheer thee, and to make thy distresses stay their never ceasing course; this is the spot where his children love to be found, because here they find consolation in the midst of tribulation, joy in their sorrows, and comfort in their afflictions. Even worldly men admit that there is something extremely comforting in the sacred Scriptures, and in our holy religion; I have even heard it said of some, that after they had, by their logic, as they thought, annihilated Christianity, and proved it to be untrue, they acknowledged that they had spoilt an excellently comforting delusion, and that they could almost sit down and weep to think it was not a reality. Ay, my friends, if it were not true, ye might weep. If the Bible were not the truth of God — if we could not meet together around his mercy seat, then ye might put your hands upon your loins and walk about as if ye were in travail. If ye had not something in the world beside your reason, beside the fleeting joys of earth — if ye had not something which God had given to you, some hope beyond the sky, some refuge that should be more than terrestrial, some deliverance which should be more than earthly, then ye might weep; — ah! weep your heart out at your eyes, and let your

whole bodies waste away in one perpetual tear. Ye might ask the clouds to rest on your head, the rivers to roll down in streams from both your eyes, for your grief would "have need of all the watery things that nature could produce." But, blessed be God, we have consolation, we have joy in the Holy Ghost. We find it nowhere else. We have raked the earth through, but we have discovered ne'er a jewel; we have turned this dunghill-world o'er and o'er a thousand times, and we have found nought that is precious; but here, in this Bible, here in the religion of the blessed Jesus we the sons of God, have found comfort and joy; while we can truly say, "As our afflictions abound, so our consolations also abound by Christ."

There are four things in my text to which I invite your attention: the first is the sufferings to be expected — "The sufferings of Christ abound in us;" secondly, the distinction to be noticed — they are the sufferings of Christ; thirdly, a proportion to be experienced — as the sufferings of Christ abound, so our consolations abound; and fourthly, the person to be honored — "So our consolation aboundeth by CHRIST."

I. Our first division then is, THE SUFFERINGS TO BE EXCPECTED. Our holy Apostle says "The sufferings of Christ abound in us." Before we buckle on the Christian armor we ought to know what that service is which is expected of us. A recruiting sergeant often slips a shilling into the hand of some ignorant youth, and tells him that. Her Majesty's Service is a fine thing, that he has nothing to do but walk about in his flaming colors, that he will have no hard service — in fact, that he has nothing to do but to be a soldier, and go straight on to glory. But the Christian sergeant when he enlists a soldier of the cross, never deceives him like that. Jesus Christ himself said, "Count the cost." He wished to have no disciple who was not prepared to go all the way — "to bear hardness as a good soldier." I have sometimes heard religion described in such a way that its high coloring displeases me. It is true "her ways are ways of pleasantness;" but it is not true that a Christian never has sorrow or trouble. It is true that light-eyed cheerfulness, and airy-footed love, can go through the world without much depression: and tribulation: but it is not true that Christianity will shield a man from trouble; nor ought it to be so represented. In fact, we ought to speak of it in the other-way. Soldier of Christ, if thou enlisteth, thou wilt have to do hard battle. There is no bed of down for thee; there it no riding to heaven in a chariot; the rough way must be trodden; mountains must be

climbed, rivers must be forded, dragons must be fought, giants must be slain, difficulties must be overcome, and great trials must be borne. It is not a smooth road to heaven, believe me; for those who have gone but a very few steps therein have found it to be a rough one. It is a pleasant one; it is the most delightful in all the world, but it is not easy in itself; it is only pleasant because of the company, because of the sweet promises on which we lean, because of our Beloved who walks with us through all the rough and thorny brakes of this vast wilderness. Christian, expect trouble: "Count it not strange concerning the fiery trial, and as though some strange thing had happened unto thee;" for as truly as thou art a child of God, thy Savior hath left thee for his legacy, — "In the world, ye shall have tribulation; in me ye shall have peace." If I had no trouble I would not believe myself one of the family. If I never had a trial I would not think myself a heir of heaven. Children of God must not, shall not, escape the rod. Earthly parents may spoil their children but the heavenly Father never shall his. "Whom he loveth he chasteneth," and scourgeth every son whom he hath chosen. His people must suffer; therefore, expect it Christian; if thou art a child of God believe it, look for it, and when it comes, say, "Well suffering, I foresaw thee; thou art no stranger; I have looked for thee continually." You cannot tell how much it will lighten your trials, if you await them with resignation. In fact, make it a wonder if you get through a day easily. If you remain a week without persecution, think it a remarkable thing; and if you should, perchance, live a month without heaving a sigh from your inmost heart, think it a miracle of miracles. But when the trouble comes, say, "Ah! this is what I looked for; it is marked in the chart to heaven; the rock is put down; I will sail confidently by it; my Master has not deceived me."

"Why should I complain of want or distress,
Temptation or pain? he told me no less."

But why must the Christian expect trouble? Why must he expect the sufferings of Christ to abound in him? Stand here a moment, my brother, and I will show thee four reasons wherefore thou must endure trial. First look upward, then look downward, then look around thee, and then look within thee; and thou wilt see four reasons why the sufferings of Christ should abound in thee.

Look upward. Dost thou see thy heavenly Father, a pure and holy being, spotless, just, perfect? Dost thou know that thou art one day to be like him? Thinkest thou that thou wilt easily come to be conformed to his image? Wilt thou not require much furnace work, much grinding in the mill of trouble, much breaking with the pestle in the mortar of affliction, much being broken under the wheels of agony? Thinkest thou it will be an easy thing for thy heart to become as pure as God is? Dost thou think thou canst so soon get rid of thy corruptions, and become perfect, even as thy Father which is in heaven is perfect?

Lift up thine eye again; dost thou discern those bright spirits clad in white, purer than alabaster, more chaste, more fair than Parian marble? Behold them as they stand in glory. Ask them whence their victory came. Some of them will tell you they swam through seas of blood. Behold the scars of honor on their brows; see, some of them lift up their hands and tell you they were once consumed in fire; while others were slain by the sword, rent in pieces by wild beasts; were destitute afflicted, tormented. 0 ye noble army of martyrs, ye glorious hosts of the living God. Must ye swim through seas of blood, and shall I hope to ride to heaven wrapped in furs and ermine? Did ye endure suffering, and shall I be pampered with the luxuries of this world? Did ye fight and then reign, and must I reign without a battle. Oh, no. By God’s help I will expect that as ye suffered so must I, and as through much tribulation ye entered the kingdom of heaven, so shall I.

Next, Christian, turn thine eyes downward. Dost thou know what foes thou hast beneath thy feet? There are hell and its lions against thee. Thou wast once a servant of Satan and no king will willingly lose his subjects. Dost thou think that Satan be pleased with thee? Why, thou hast changed thy country. Thou wast once a liege servant of Apollyon, but now thou art become a good soldier of Jesus Christ; and dost thou think the devil is pleased with thee? I tell thee nay. If thou hadst seen Satan the moment thou wast converted, thou wouldst have beheld a wondrous scene. As soon as thou gavest thy heart to Christ, Satan spread his bat-like-wings: down he flew into hell, and summoning all his councilors, he said “Sons of the pit, true heirs of darkness; ye who erst were clad in light, but who fell with me from high dignities, another of my servants has forsaken me; I have lost another of my family; he is gone over to the side of the Lord of

Hosts. Oh ye, my compeers, ye fellow-helpers of the powers of darkness, leave no stone unturned to destroy him. I bid you all hurl all your fiercest darts at him; plague him; let hell-dogs bark at him; let fiends besiege him; give him no rest, harrass him to the death; let the fumes of our corrupt and burning lake ever rise in his nostrils; persecute him; the man is a traitor; give him no peace; since I cannot have him here to bind him in chains of adamant, since I ne'er can have him here to torment and afflict him, as long as ye can, till his dying day, I bid you howl at him; until he crosses the river, afflict him, grieve him, torment him; for the wretch has turned against me, and become a servant of the Lord." Such may have been the scene in hell, that very day when thou didst love the Lord. And dost thou think Satan loves thee better now? Ah! no. He will always be at thee, for thine enemy, "like a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour." Expect trouble therefore, Christian, when thou lookest beneath thee.

Then, man of God, look around thee. Do not be asleep. Open thine eyes, and look around thee. Where art thou? Is that man a friend next to thee? No; thou art in an enemy's country. This is a wicked world. Half the people, I suppose, profess to be irreligious, and those who profess to be pious, often are not. "Cursed is he that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm." — Blessed is he that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is." — "As for men of low degree, they are vanity;" the voice of the crowd is not worth having; and as for "men of high degree, they are a lie," which is worse still. The world is not to be trusted in, not to be relied upon. The true Christian treads it beneath his feet, with "all that earth calls good or great." Look around thee my brother; thou wilt see some good hearts, strong and valiant; thou wilt see some true souls, sincere and honest; thou wilt see some faithful lovers of Christ; but I tell thee O child of light, that where thou meetest one sincere man, thou wilt meet twenty hypocrites; where thou wilt find one that will lead thee to heaven, thou wilt find a score who would push thee to hell. Thou art in a land of enemies, not of friends. Never believe the world is good for much. Many people have burned their fingers by taking hold of it. Many a man has been injured by putting his hand into a nest of the rattlesnake — the world; thinking that the dazzling hues of the sleeping serpent were securities from harm. O Christian! the world is not thy friend. If it is, then thou art not God's friend; for he who is the friend of the world is the enemy of God;

and he who is despised of men, is often loved of Jehovah. Thou art in an enemy's country, man: therefore, expect trouble: expect that the man who "eats thy bread will lift up his heel against thee;" expect that thou shalt be estranged from those that love thee; be assured that since thou art in the land of the foe, thou shalt find foemen everywhere. When thou sleepest, think that thou sleepest on the battle-field; when thou walkest believe that there is an ambush in every hedge. Oh! take heed, take heed: this is no good world to shut thine eyes in. Look around thee, man; and when thou art upon the watch-tower, reckon surely that trouble cometh.

But then, look within thee. There is a little world in here, which is quite enough to give us trouble. A Roman once said he wished he had a window to his heart, that all people might see what was going on there. I am very glad I have not; if I had I would shut it up as closely as Apsley House used to be; I would take care to have all the shutters up. Most of us would have great need of shutters if we had such a window. However, for one moment, peep into the window of thine heart, to observe what is there. Sin is there — original sin and corruption; and what is more, self is still within. Ah! if thou hadst no devil to tempt thee, thou wouldest tempt thyself; it there were no enemies to fight thee, thyself would be thy worst foe; if there were no world, still thy self would be bad enough; for "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Look within thee, believer; know that thou bearest a cancer in thy very vitals; that thou carriest within thee a bomb-shell, ready to burst at the slightest spark of temptation; know that thou hast inside thy heart an evil thing, a coiled-up viper, ready to sting thee and bring thee into trouble, and pain, and misery unutterable. Take heed of your heart, Christian; and when thou findest sorrow, trouble, and care, look within and say, "Verily, I may well receive this, considering the evil heart of unbelief which I carry about with me." Now dost thou see, brother Christian? No hope to escape trouble, is there. What shall we do then? There is no chance for us. We must bear suffering and affliction; therefore, let us endure it cheerfully. Some of us are the officers in God's regiments, and we are the mark of all the riflemen of the enemy. Standing forward, we have to bear all the shots. What a mercy it is that not one of God's officers ever fall in battle! God always keeps them. When the arrows fly fast, the shield of faith catches them all; and when the enemy is most angry, God is most pleased. So, for aught we care, the

world may go on, the devil may revile, flesh may rise; “for we are more than conquerors through him that hath loved us.” Therefore, all honor be unto God alone. Expect suffering — this is our first point.

II. Now, secondly, there is A DISTINCTION TO BE NOTICED. Our sufferings are said to be the sufferings of Christ. Now, suffering in itself is not an evidence of Christianity. There are many people who have trials and troubles who are not children of’ God. I have heard some poor whining people come and say, “I know I am a child of God because I am in debt, because I am in poverty, because I am in trouble.” Do you indeed? I know a great many rascals in the same condition; and I don’t believe you are a child of God any the more because you happen to be in poor circumstances. There are abundance who are in trouble and distress besides God’s children. It is not the peculiar lot of God’s family; and if I had no other ground of my hope as a Christian, except my experience of trials, I should have but very poor ground indeed. But there is a distinction to be noticed. Are these sufferings the sufferings of Christ, or are they not? A man is dishonest, and is put in jail for it; a man is a coward and men hiss at him for it; a man is insincere, and, therefore, persons avoid him. Yet he says he is persecuted. Persecuted! Not at all; it serves him right. He deserves it. But such persons will comfort themselves with the thought, that they are “the dear people of God,” because other people avoid them; when it so happens that they just deserve it. They do not live as they ought to do; therefore the world’s punishment is their desert. Take heed, beloved, that your sufferings are true sufferings of Christ; be sure they are not your own sufferings; for if they are, you will get no relief. It is only when they are the sufferings of Jesus that we may take comfort.

“Well,” you say, “What is meant by our sufferings being the sufferings of Christ?” You know the word “Christ” in the Bible sometimes means the whole Church with Christ, as in 1 Corinthians 12:12, and several other passages which I cannot just now remember; but you will call to mind a scripture where it says, “I fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ, for his body’s sake, which is the Church.” Now, as Christ, the head, had a certain amount of suffering to endure, so the body must also have a certain weight laid upon it. Our afflictions are the sufferings of Christ mystical, the sufferings of Christ’s body, the sufferings of Christ’s church; for you know that if a man could be so tall as to have his head in

heaven and his feet at the bottom of the sea, it would be the same body, and the head would feel the sufferings of the feet. So, though my head is in heaven, and I am on earth, my griefs are Christ's griefs; my trials are Christ's trials, my afflictions, he suffers.

"I feel at my heart all thy sighs and thy groans,
For thou art most near me, my flesh and my bones;
In all thy distresses, thy Head feels the pain,
Yet all are most needful, not one is in vain."

The trials of a true Christian are as much the sufferings of Christ, as the agonies of Calvary.

Still you say, "We want to discern whether our troubles are the trials of Christ." Well, they are the trials of Christ, if you suffer for Christ's sake. If you are called to endure hardness for the sake of the truth, then those are the sufferings of Christ. If you suffer for your own sake, it may be a punishment for your own sins; but if you endure for Christ's sake, then they are the trials of Christ. "But," say some, "is there any persecution now-a-days? Do any Christians have to suffer for Christ's sake now?" Suffer, sirs! Yes. "I could a tale unfold" this morning, if I pleased, of bigotry insufferable, of persecution well nigh as bad as that in the days of Mary; only our foes have not the power and the law on their side. I could tell you of some who, from the simple fact, that they choose to come and hear this despised young man, this ranting fellow, are to be looked upon as the offscouring of all things. Many are the persons who come to me, who have to lead a miserable and unhappy life, simply because from my lips they heard the word of truth. Still, despite of all that is said, they will hear it now. I have, I am sure, many before me, whose eyes would drop with tears, if I were to tell their history — some who have privately sent me word of how they have to suffer for Christ's sake, because they choose to hear whom they please. Why, is it not time that men should choose to do as they like. If I do not care to do just as other ministers do, have not I a right to preach as I please? If I havn't I will — that is all. And have not other parties a right to hear me if they like, without asking the lords and governors of the present day, whether the man is really clerical or not. Liberty! liberty! Let persons do as they please. But liberty — where is it? Ye say it is in Britain. It is, in a measure, but not thoroughly. However, I rejoice that there are some who say, "Well, my soul is profited: and let

men say what they will, I will hold hard and fast to truth, and to the place where I hear the word to my soul's edification." So, dear hearts, go on, go on; and if ye suffer for Christ's sake, they are Christ's sufferings. If ye came here simply because ye gained anything by it, then your sufferings would be your own; but since there is nothing to gain but the profit of our own souls, still hold on; and whate'er is said, your persecution will but win you a brighter crown in glory.

Ah! Christian, this ennobles us. My brethren, this makes us proud and happy to think that our trials are the trials of Jesus. Oh! I think it must have been some honor to the old soldier, who stood by the Iron Duke in his battles, to be able to say, "We fight under the good old Duke, who has won so many battles: and when he wins, part of the honor will be ours." Christian, thou fightest side by side with Jesus; Christ is with thee; every blow is a blow aimed at Christ; every slander is a slander on Christ; the battle is the Lord's; the triumph is the Lord's, therefore, still on to victory! I remember a story of a great commander, who, having won many glorious victories, led his troops into a defile, and when there, a large body of the enemy entirely surrounded him. He knew a battle was inevitable on the morning, he therefore went round to all the tents, to hear in what condition his soldier's minds were — whether they were dispirited or not. He came to one tent, and as he listened, he heard a man say, "There is our general; he is very brave, but he is very unwise this time; he has led us into a place where we are sure to be beaten; there are so many of the enemy's cavalry, so many infantry:" and then the man counted up all the troops on their own side, and made them only so many. Then the commander, after he had heard the tale, gently drew aside a part of the tent, and said, "How many do you count me for? You have counted the infantry and cavalry; but how many do you count me for — me, your mighty captain, who have won so many victories." Now, Christian, I say, how many do you count one? He is not one, nor a thousand: he is the "chief among ten thousand." But he is more than that. Oh! put him down for a high figure; and when thou countest up thine aids and auxiliaries, put down Christ for all in all, for in him victory is certain — the triumph is secure.

III. Our third point is, A PROPORTION TO BE EXPERIENCED. As the sufferings of Christ abound in us so the consolations of Christ abound. Here is a blessed proportion. God always keeps a pair of scales — in this

side he puts his people's trials and in that he puts their consolations. When the scale of trial is nearly empty, you will always find the scale of consolation in nearly the same condition; and when the scale of trials is full, you will find the scale of consolation just as heavy for as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, even so shall consolation abound by Christ. This is a matter of pure experience. Some of you do not know anything at all about it. You are not Christians, you are not born again, you are not converted; ye are unregenerate, and, therefore, ye have never realized this wonderful proportion between the sufferings and the consolations of a child of God. Oh! it is mysterious that, when the black clouds gather most, the light within us is always the brightest. When the night lowers and the tempest is coming on, the heavenly captain is always closest to his crew. It is a blessed thing, when we are most cast down, then it is that we are most lifted up by the consolations of Christ. Let me show you how.

The first reason is, because trials make more room, for consolation. There is nothing makes a man have a big heart like a great trial. I always find that little, miserable people, whose hearts are about the size of a grain of mustard-seed, never have had much to try them. I have found that those people who have no sympathy for their fellows — who never weep for the sorrows of others — very seldom have had any woes of their own. Great hearts can only be made by great troubles. The spade of trouble digs the reservoir of comfort deeper, and makes more room for consolation. God comes into our heart — he finds it full — he begins to break our comforts and to make it empty; than there is more room for grace. The humbler a man lies, the more comfort he will always have. I recollect walking with a ploughman one day — a man who was deeply taught, although he was a ploughman; and really ploughmen would make a great deal better preachers than many college gentlemen — and he said to me, "Depend upon it, my good brother, if you or I ever get one inch above the ground, we shall get just that inch too high." I believe it is true; for the lower we lie, the nearer to the ground we are — the more our troubles humble us — the more fit we are to receive comfort; and God always gives us comfort when we are most fit for it. That is one reason why consolations increase in the same ratio as our trials.

Then again, trouble exercises our graces, and the very exercise of our graces tends to make us more comfortable and happy. Where showers fall most, there the grass is greenest. I suppose the fogs and mists of Ireland make it "the Emerald Isle;" and wherever you find great fogs of trouble, and mists of sorrow, you always find emerald green hearts: full of the beautiful verdure of the comfort and love of God. O Christian, do not thou be saying, "Where are the swallows gone? they are gone: they are dead." They are not dead; they have skimmed the purple sea, and gone to a far off land; but they will be back again by-and-by. Child of God, say not the flowers are dead; say not the winter has killed them, and they are gone. Ah! no; though winter hath coated them with the ermine of its snow; they will put up their heads again, and will be alive very soon. Say not, child of God, that the sun is quenched, because the cloud hath hidden it. Ah! no; he is behind there, brewing summer for thee; for when he cometh out again, he will have made the clouds fit to drop in April showers, all of them mothers of the sweet May flowers. And oh! above all, when thy God hides his face, say not, that he has forgotten thee. He is but tarrying a little while to make thee love him better; and when he cometh, thou shalt have joy in the Lord, and. shalt rejoice with joy unspeakable. Waiting, exercises our grace; waiting, tries our faith; therefore, wait on in hope; for though the promise tarry, it can never come too late.

Another reason why we are often most happy in our troubles is this — then we have the closest dealing with God. I speak from heart knowledge and real experience. We never have such close dealings with God as when we are in tribulation. When the barn is full, man can live without God; when the purse is bursting with gold, we somehow can do without so much prayer. But once take your gourds away, you want your God; once cleanse away the idols out of the house, then you must go and honor Jehovah. Some of you do not pray half as much as you ought. If you are the children of God, you will have the whip, and when you have that whip, you will run to your Father. It is a fine day, and the child walks before its father; but there is a lion in the road, now he comes and takes his father's hand. He could run half-a-mile before him when all was fine and fair; but once bring the lion, and it is "father! father!" as close as he can be. It is even so with the Christian. Let all be well, and he forgets God. Jeshurun waxes fat, and he begins to kick against God; but take away his

hopes, blast his joys, let the infant lie in the coffin, let the crops be blasted, let the herd be cut off from the stall, let the husband's broad shoulder lie in the grave, let the children be fatherless — then it is that God is a God indeed. Oh, strip me naked; take from me all I have; make me poor, a beggar, penniless, helpless: dash that cistern in pieces; crush that hope; quench the stars; put out the sun; shroud the moon in darkness, and place me all alone in space, without a friend, without a helper; still, "Out of the depths will I cry unto thee, O God." There is no cry so good as that which comes from the bottom of the mountains; no prayer half so hearty as that which comes up from the depths of the soul, through deep trials and afflictions. Hence they bring us to God, and we are happier; for that is the way to be happy — to live near to God. So that while troubles abound, they drive us to God, and then consolations abound.

Some people call troubles weights. Verily they are so. A ship that has large sails and a fair wind, needs ballast. Troubles are the ballast of a believer. The eyes are the pumps which fetch out the bilge-water of his soul, and keep him from sinking. But if trials be weights I will tell you of a happy secret. There is such a thing as making a weight lift you. If I have a weight chained to me, it keeps me down; but give me pulleys and certain appliances, and I can make it lift me up. Yes, there is such a thing as making troubles raise me towards heaven. A gentlemen once asked a friend, concerning a beautiful horse of his, feeding about in the pasture with a clog on its foot, "Why do you clog such a noble animal?" "Sir," said he, "I would a great deal sooner clog him than lose him: he is given to leap hedges." That is why God clogs his people. He would rather clog them than lose them; for if he did not clog them, they would leap the hedges and be gone. They want a tether to prevent their straying, and their God binds them with afflictions, to keep them near to him, to preserve them, and have them in his presence. Blessed fact — as our troubles abound, our consolations also abound.

IV. Now we close up with our last point; and may the Holy Ghost once more strengthen me to speak a word or two to you. THERE IS A PERSON TO BE HONORED. It is a fact that Christians can rejoice in deep distress; it is a truth, that put them in prison, and they still will sing; like many birds, they sing best in their cages. It is true that when waves roll over them, their soul never sinks. It is true they have a buoyancy about them which

keeps their heads always above the water, and helps them to sing in the dark, dark night, “God is with me still.” But to whom shall we give the honor? To whom shall the glory be given? Oh! to Jesus, to Jesus; for the text says it is all by Jesus. It is not because I am a Christian that I get joy in my trouble — not necessarily so; it is not always the fact that troubles bring their consolations; but it is Christ who comes to me. I am sick in my chamber; Christ cometh up stairs, he sitteth by my bedside, and he talketh sweet words to me. I am dying; the chilly cold waters of Jordan have touched my foot, I feel my blood stagnate and freeze. I must die; Christ puts his arms around me, and says, “Fear not, beloved; to die is to be blessed; the waters of death have their fountain head in heaven; they are not bitter, they are sweet as nectar, for they flow from the throne of God.” I wade in the stream, the billows gather around me, I feel that my heart and flesh fail but there is the same voice in my ears, “Fear not, I am with thee! be not dismayed; I am thy God.” Now, I come to the borders of the infinite unknown, that country “from whose bourne no traveler returns;” I stand almost affrighted to enter the realm of shades; but a sweet voice says, “I will be with thee whithersoever thou goest; if thou shouldst make thy bed in Hades I will be with thee;” and I still go on, content to die, for Jesus cheers me; he is my consolation and my hope. Ah! ye who know not that matchless name, Jesus, ye have lost the sweetest note which e’er can give melody. Ah! ye who have never been entranced by the precious sonnet contained in that one word Jesu, ye who know not that Jesu means, I-ES-U, (“I ease you”); ye have lost the joy and comfort of your lives, and ye must live miserable and unhappy. But the Christian can rejoice, since Christ will never forsake him, never leave him, but will be with him.

A word or two to characters — First, I have a word with you who are expecting troubles, and are very sad because you are looking forward to them. Take the advice of the common people, and “never cross a bridge till you get to it.” Follow my advice: never bring your troubles nearer than they are, for they will be sure to come down upon you soon enough. I know that many persons fret themselves about their trials before they come. What on earth is the good of it? If you will show me any benefit in it, I will say go on; but to me it seems quite enough for the Father to lay the rod on the child without the child chastising itself. Why should you do so? You, who are afraid of trouble, why should you be so? The trial may

never overtake you; and if it does come, strength will come with it. Therefore, up with thee, man, who are sitting down groaning, because of forebodings.

"Religion never was designed
To make our pleasures less."

Out on thee! Up! up! Why wilt thou sit down and be frozen to death? When trouble comes, then fight it; with manful heart and strong, plunge into the stream, accoutred as thou art, and swim it through; but oh! do not fear it before it comes.

Then Christian in trouble, I have a word to say with thee. So my brother, thou art in trouble; thou art come into the waves of afflitio, art thou? No strange thing, is it brother? Thou hast been there many times before. "Ah," but sayest thou, "this is the worst I ever had. I have come up here this morning with a millstone round my neck; I have a mine of lead in my heart: I am miserable, I am unhappy, I am cast down exceedingly." Well, but brother, as thy troubles abound, so shall thy consolation. Brother, hast thou hung thy harp upon the willows? I am glad thou hast not broken the harp altogether. Better, to hang it on the willows than to break it; be sure not to break it. Instead of being distressed about thy trouble, rejoice in it; thou wilt then honor God, thou wilt glorify Christ, thou wilt bring sinners to Jesus, if thou wilt sing in the depths of trouble, for then they will say, "There must be something in religion after all, otherwise the man would not be so happy."

Then one word with you who are almost driven to despair. I would stretch my hands out, if I could, this morning — for I believe a preacher ought to be a Briareus, with a thousand hands to fetch out his hearers one by one, and speak to them. There is a man here quite despairing — almost every hope gone. Brother, shall I tell thee what to do? Thou hast fallen off the main deck, thou art in the sea, the floods surround thee; thou seemest to have no hope; thou catchest at straws; what shalt thou do now? Do? why lie upon the sea of trouble, and float upon it; be still, and know that God is God, and thou wilt never perish. All thy kicking and struggling will sink thee deeper; but lie still, for behold the life-boat cometh; Christ is coming to thy help; soon he will deliver thee, and fetch thee out of all thy perplexities.

Lastly, some of you have no interest in this sermon at all. I never try to deceive my hearers by making them believe that all I say belongs to all who hear me. There are different characters in God's word; it is yours to search your own hearts this day, and see whether ye are God's people, or not. As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, there are two classes here. I do not own the distinction of aristocratic and democratic; in my sight, and in God's sight, every man is alike. We are made of one flesh and blood; we do not have china gentlemen and earthenware poor people; we are all made of the same mould of fashion. There is one distinction, and only one. Ye are all either the children of God, or children of the devil; ye are all either born again, or dead in trespasses and sins. It is yours to let the question ring in your ears: "Where am I? Is yon black tyrant, with his fiery sword, my king; or do I own Jehovah-Jesus as my strength, my shield, my Savior?" I shall not force you to answer it; I shall not say anything to you about it. Only answer it yourselves; let your hearts speak; let your souls speak. All I can do is to propose the question. God apply it to your souls! I beseech him to send it home! and make the arrow stick fast!

"Is Jesus mine! I am now prepared,
To meet with what I thought most hard;
Yes, let the winds of trouble blow,
And comforts melt away like snow,
No blasted trees, nor failing crops,
Can hinder my eternal hopes;
Tho' creatures change, the Lord's the same;
Then let me triumph in his name.

THE BIBLE

SERMON NO. 15

DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, MARCH 18, 1855,

AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

"I have written to him the great things of my law;
but they were counted as a strange thing."--Hosea 8:12

THIS is God's complaint against Ephraim. It is no mean proof of his goodness, that he stoops to rebuke his erring creatures; it is a great argument of his gracious disposition, that he bows his head to notice terrestrial affairs. He might, if he pleased, wrap himself with might as with a garment; he might put the stars around his wrist for bracelets, and bind the suns around his brow for a coronet; he might dwell alone, far, far above this world, up in the seventh heaven, and look down with calm and silent indifference upon all the doings of his creatures; he might do as the heathens supposed their Jove did, sit in perpetual silence, sometimes nodding his awful head to make the fates move as he pleased, but never taking thought of the little things of earth, disposing of them as beneath his notice, engrossed with his own being, swallowed up within himself, living alone and retired; and I, as one of his creatures, might stand by night upon a mountain-top, and look upon the silent stars and say, "Ye are the eyes of God, but ye look not down on me; your light is the gift of his omnipotence, but your rays are not smiles of love to me. God, the mighty Creator, has forgotten me; I am a despicable drop in the ocean of creation, a sear leaf in the forest of beings, an atom in the mountain of existence. He knows me not; I am alone, alone, alone." But it is not so, beloved. Our God is of another order. He notices every one of us; there is not a sparrow or a worm but is found in his decrees. There is not a person upon whom his eye is not fixed. Our most secret acts are known to him. Whatsoever we do, or bear, or suffer, the eye of God still rests upon us, and we are

beneath his smile — for we are his people; or beneath his frown — for we have erred from him.

Oh! how ten-thousand-fold merciful is God, that, looking down upon the race of man, he does not smite it our of existence. We see from our text that God looks upon man; for he says of Ephraim, "I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing." But see how, when he observes the sin of man, he does not dash him away and spurn him with his foot; he does not shake him by the neck over the gulf of hell, until his brain doth reel and then drop him forever; but rather, he comes down from heaven to plead with his creatures; he argues with them; he puts himself, as it were, upon a level with the sinner — states his grievances and pleads his claim. O Ephraim, I have written unto thee the great things of my law, but they have been unto thee as a strange thing! I come here to-night in God's stead, my friends, to plead with you as God's ambassador, to charge many of you with a sin; to lay it to your hearts by the power of the Spirit, so that you may be convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of a judgment to come. The crime I charge you with is the sin of the text. God has written to you the great things of his law, but they have been unto you as a strange thing. It is concerning this blessed book, the Bible, that I mean to speak tonight. Here lies my text — this Word of God. Here is the theme of my discourse, a theme which demands more eloquence than I possess; a subject upon which a thousand orators might speak at once; a mighty, vast, and comprehensive theme, which might engross all eloquence throughout eternity, and still it would remain unexhausted.

Concerning the Bible, I have three things to say to-night, and they are all in my text. First, its author, "*I* have written;" secondly, its subjects — the great things of God's law; and thirdly, its common treatment — it has been accounted by most men a strange thing.

I. First, then, concerning this book: Who is *the author?* The text says that it is God. "*I* have written to him the great things of my law." Here lies my Bible — who wrote it? I open it, and find it consists of a series of tracts. The first five tracts were written by a man called Moses; I turn on, and I find others. Sometimes I see David is the penman, at other times Solomon. Here I read Micah, then Amos, then Hosea. As I turn further on, to the

more luminous pages of the New Testament, I see Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, Paul, Peter, James, and others; but when I shut up the book; I ask myself, who is the author of it? Do these men jointly claim the authorship? Are they the compositors of this massive volume? Do they between themselves divide the honor? Our holy religion answers, No! This volume is the writing of the living God; each letter was penned with an Almighty finger; each word in it dropped from the everlasting lips; each sentence was dictated by the Holy Spirit. Albeit, that Moses was employed to write his histories with his fiery pen, God guided that pen. It may be that David touched his harp, and let sweet Psalms of melody drop from his fingers; but God moved his hands over the living strings of his golden harp. It may be that Solomon sang canticles of love, or gave forth words of consummate wisdom, but God directed his lips, and made the preacher eloquent. If I follow the thundering Nahum, when his horses plough the waters, or Habakkuk, when he sees the tents of Cushan in affliction; if I read Malachi, when the earth is burning like an oven; if I turn to the smooth page of John, who tells of love, or the rugged, fiery chapters of Peter, who speaks of fire devouring God's enemies; if I turn to Jude, who launches forth anathemas upon the foes of God, everywhere I find God speaking; it is God's voice, not man's; the words are God's words, the words of the Eternal, the Invisible, the Almighty, the Jehovah of this earth. This Bible is God's Bible, and when I see it, I seem to hear a voice springing up from it, saying, "I am the book of God; man, read me. I am God's writing; open my leaf, for I was penned by God; read it, for he is my author, and you will see him visible and manifest everywhere." "I have written to him the great things of my law."

How do you know that God wrote the book? That is just what I shall not try to prove to you. I could if I pleased, demonstrate it, for there are arguments enough, there are reasons enough, did I care to occupy your time to-night in bringing them before you; but I shall do no such thing. I might tell you, if I pleased, that the grandeur of the style is above that of an mortal writing, and that all the poets who have ever existed could not, with all their works united, give us such sublime poetry and such mighty language as is to be found in the Scriptures. I might insist upon it, that the subjects of which it treats are beyond the human intellect; that man could never have invented the grand doctrines of a Trinity in the Godhead; man

could not have told us anything of the creation of the universe; he could never have been the author of the majestic idea of Providence — that all things are ordered according to the will of one great Supreme Being, and work together for good. I might enlarge upon its honesty, since it tells the faults of its writers; its unity, since it never belies itself; its master simplicity, that he who runs may read it; and I might mention a hundred more things, which would all prove, to a demonstration, that the book is of God. But I come not here to prove it. I am a Christian minister, and you are Christians, or profess to be so; and there is never any necessity for Christian ministers to make a point of bringing forward infidel arguments in order to answer them. It is the greatest folly in the world. Infidels, poor creatures, do not know their own arguments till we tell them, and then they glean their blunted shafts to shoot them at the shield of truth again. It is follow to bring forward these firebrands of hell, even if we are well prepared t quench them. Let men of the world learn error of themselves; do not let us be propagators of their falsehoods. True, there are some preachers who are short of stock, and want to fill them up; but God's own chosen men need not do that; they are taught of God, and God supplies them with matter, with language, with power. There may be some one here to-night who has come without faith, a man of reason, a freethinker. With him I have no argument at all. I profess not to stand here as a controversialist, but as a preacher of things that I know and feel. But I too, have been like him. There was an evil hour when I once shipped the anchor of my faith; I cut the cable of my belief; I no longer moored myself hard by the coasts of Revelation; I allowed my vessel to drift before the wind; I said to reason, "Be thou my captain;" I said to my own brain, "Be thou my rudder;" and I started on my mad voyage. Thank God, it is all over now; but I will tell you its brief history. It was one hurried sailing over the tempestuous ocean of free thought. I went on, and as I went, the skies began to darken; but to make up for that deficiency, the waters were brilliant with coruscations of brilliancy. I saw sparks flying upward that pleased me, and I thought, "If this be free thought, it is a happy thing." My thoughts seemed gems, and I scattered stars with both my hands; but anon, instead of these coruscations of glory, I saw grim fiends, fierce and horrible, start up from the waters, and as I dashed on, they gnashed their teeth, and grinned upon me; they seized the prow of my ship and dragged me on, while , in part, gloried at the rapidity of my motion, but yet

shuddered at the terrific rate with which I passed the old landmarks of my faith. As I hurried forward, with an awful speed, I began to doubt my very existence; I doubted if there were a world, I doubted if there was such a thing as myself. I went to the very verge of the dreary realms of unbelief. I went to the very bottom of the sea of Infidelity. I doubted everything. But here the devil foiled himself: for the very extravagance of the doubt, proved its absurdity. Just when I saw the bottom of that sea, there came a voice which said, "And can this doubt be true?" At this very thought I awoke. I started from that deathdream, which, God knows might have damned my soul, and ruined this, my body, if I had not awoke. When I arose, faith took the helm; from that moment I doubted not. Faith steered me back; faith cried, "Away, away!" I cast my anchor on Calvary; I lifted my eye to God; and here I am, "alive, and out of hell." Therefore, I speak what I do know. I have sailed that perilous voyage; I have come safe to land. Ask me again to be an infidel! No; I have tried it; it was sweet at first, but bitter afterwards. Now, lashed to God's gospel more firmly than ever, standing as on a rock of adamant, I defy the arguments of hell to move me; for "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him." But I shall neither plead nor argue this night. You profess to be Christian men, or else you would not be here. Your professions may be lies; what you *say* you are, may be the very contrary to what you *really* are; but still I suppose you all admit that this is the Word of God. A thought or two then upon it. "I have written to him the great things of my law."

First, my friends, stand over this volume, and *admire its authority.* This is no common book. It is not the sayings of the sages of Greece; here are not the utterances of philosophers of past ages. If these words were written by a man, we might reject them; but O let me think the solemn thought, that this book is God's handwriting — that these words are God's! Let me look at its date; it is dated from the hills of heaven. Let me look at its letters; they flash glory on my eye. Let me read the chapters; they are big with meaning and mysteries unknown. Let me turn over the prophecies; they are pregnant with unthought-of wonders. Oh, book of books! And wast thou written by my God? Then will I bow before thee. Thou book of vast authority! thou art a proclamation from the Emperor of Heaven; far be it from me to exercise my reason in contradicting thee. Reason, thy

place is to stand and find out what this volume means, not to tell what this book ought to say. Come thou, my reason, my intellect, sit thou down and listen, for these words are the words of God. I do not know how to enlarge on this thought. Oh! if you could ever remember that this Bible was actually and really written by God. Oh! if ye had been let into the secret chambers of heaven, if ye had beheld God grasping his pen and writing down these letters — then surely ye would respect them; but they are just as much God's handwriting as if you had seen God write them. This Bible is a book of authority; it is an authorized book, for God has written it. Oh! tremble, lest any of you despise it; mark its authority, for it is the Word of God.

Then, since God wrote it, mark *its truthfulness.* If I had written it, there would be worms of critics who would at once swarm upon it, and would cover it with their evil spawn; Had I written it, there would be men who would pull it to pieces at once, and perhaps quite right too. But this is the Word of God; come, search, ye critics, and find a flaw; examine it, from its Genesis to its Revelation, and find an error. This is a vein of pure gold, unalloyed by quartz, or any earthly substance. This is a star without a speck; a sun without a blot; a light without darkness; a moon without its paleness; a glory without a dimness. O Bible! it cannot be said of any other book, that it is perfect and pure; but of thee we can declare all wisdom is gathered up in thee, without a particle of folly. This is the judge that ends the strife, where wit and reason fail. This is the book untainted by any error; but is pure, unalloyed, perfect truth. Why? Because God wrote it. Ah! charge God with error if ye please; tell him that his book is not what it ought to be. I have heard men, with prudish and mock-modesty, who would like to alter the Bible; and (I almost blush to say it) I have heard ministers alter God's Bible, because they were afraid of it. Have you never heard a man say, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not" — what does the Bible say? — "Shall be *damned.*" But that does not happen to be polite enough, so they say, "Shall be *condemned.*" Gentlemen, pull the velvet out of your mouths; speak God's word; we want none of your alterations. I have heard men in prayer instead of saying, "Make your calling and *election* sure," say "Make your calling and *salvation* sure." Pity they were not born when God lived far — far back that they might have taught God how to write.

Oh, impudence beyond all bounds! Oh full-blown self-conceit! To attempt to dictate to the All-wise — to teach the Omniscient and instruct the Eternal. Strange that there should be men so vile as to use the penknife of Jehoiakim to cut passages out of the word, because they are unpalatable. O ye who dislike certain portions of Holy Writ, rest assured that your taste is corrupt, and that God will not stay for you little opinion. Your dislike is the very reason why God wrote it, because you out not to be suited; you have no right to be pleased. God wrote what you do not like; he wrote the truth. Oh! let us bend in reverence before it, for God inspired it. It is pure truth. Here from this fountain gushes *aqua vitae* — the water of life — without a single particle of earth; here from this sun cometh forth rays of radiance, without the mixture of darkness. Blessed Bible! thou art all truth.

Yet once more, before we leave this point, let us stop and consider *the merciful nature of God*, in having written us a Bible at all. Ah! he might have left us without it, to grope our dark way, as blind men seek the wall; he might have suffered us to wander on with the star of reason as our only guide. I recollect a story of Mr. Hume, who so constantly affirmed that the light of reason is abundantly sufficient. Being at a good minister's house one evening, he had been discussing the question, and declaring his firm belief in the sufficiency of the light of nature. On leaving, the minister offered to hold him a candle to light him down the steps. He said "No; the light of nature would be enough; the moon would do." It so happened that the moon was covered with a cloud, and he fell down the steps. "Ah!" said the minister, "you had better have had a little light from above, after all, Mr. Hume." So, supposing the light of nature to be sufficient, we had better have a little light from above too, and then we shall be sure to be right. Better have two lights than only one. The light of creation is a bright light. God may be seen in the stars; his name is written in gilt letters on the brow of night; you may discover his glory in the ocean waves, yea, in the trees of the field; but it is better to read it in two books than in one. You will find it here more clearly revealed; for he has written this book himself, and he has given you the key to understand it, if you have the Holy Spirit. Ah, beloved, let us thank God for this Bible; let us love it; let us count it more precious than much fine gold.

But let me say one thing, before I pass on to the second point. If this be the Word of God, what will become of some of you who have not read it

for the last month? “Month, sir! I have not read it for this year.” Ay, there are some of you who have not read it at all. Most people treat the Bible very politely . They have a small pocket volume, neatly bound; they put a white pocket-handkerchief round it and carry it to their places of worship; when they get home, they lay it up in a drawer till next Sunday morning; then it comes out again for a little bit of a treat, and goes to chapel; that is all the poor Bible gets in the way of an airing. That is your style of entertaining this heavenly messenger. There is dust enough on some of your Bibles to write “damnation” with your fingers. There are some of you who have not turned over your Bibles for a long, long while, and what think you? I tell you blunt words, but true words. What will God say at last? When you shall come before him, he shall say, “Did you read my Bible?” *“No.”* “I wrote you a letter of mercy; did you read it?” *“No.”* “Rebel! I have sent thee a letter inviting thee to me; didst thou ever read it?” *“Lord, I never broke the seal; I kept it shut up.”* “Wretch!” says God, “then, thou deservest hell, if I sent thee a loving epistle, and thou wouldst not even break the seal; what shall I do unto thee?” Oh, let it not be so with you. Be Bible-readers; be Bible

II. Our second point is: *The subjects on which the Bible treats.* The words of the text are these: “I have written to him the great things of my law.” The Bible treats of great things, and of great things only. there is nothing in this Bible which is unimportant. Every verse in it has a solemn meaning; and if we have not found it out yet, we hope yet to do it. You have seen mummies, wrapped round and round with folds of linen. Well, God’s Bible is like that; it is a vast roll of white linen, woven in the loom of truth; so you will have to continue unwinding it, roll after roll, before you get the real meaning of it from the very depth; and when you have found, as you think, a part of the meaning, you will still need to keep on unwinding, unwinding, and all eternity you will be unwinding the words of this great volume. Yet there is nothing in the Bible but great things. Let me divide, so as to be more brief. First, all things in this Bible are great; but, secondly, some things are the greatest of all.

All things in the Bible are great. Some people think it does not matter what doctrines you believe; that it is immaterial what church you attend; that all denominations are alike. Well, I dislike Mrs. Bigotry above almost all people in the world, and I never give her any compliment or praise; but

there is another woman I hate equally as much, and that is Mrs. Latitudinarianism — a well-known character, who has made the discovery that all of us are alike. Now, I believe that a man may be saved in any church. Some have been saved in the Church of Rome — a few blessed men whose names I could mention here. I know, blessed be God, what multitudes are saved in the Church of England; she has a host of pious, praying men in her midst. I think that all sections of Protestant Christians have a remnant according to the election of grace; and they had need to have, some of them, a little salt, for otherwise they would go to corruption. But when I say that, do you imagine that I think them all on a level? Are they all alike truthful? One sect says infant baptism is right; another says it is wrong; yet you say they are both right. I cannot see that. One teaches we are saved by free grace; another say us that we are not, but are saved by free will; and yet you believe they are both right. I do not understand that. One says that God loves his people, and never leaves off loving them; another says that he did not love his people before they loved him — that he often loves them, and then ceases to love them, and turns them away. They may both be right in the main; but can they both be right when one says "Yes," and the other says "No?" I must have a pair of spectacles, to enable me to look backwards and forwards at the same time, before I can see that. It cannot be, sirs, that they are both right. But some say they differ upon non-essentials. This text says, "I have written to him the *great* things of my law." There is nothing in God's Bible which is not great. Did ever any of you sit down to see which was the purest religion? "Oh," say you, "we never took the trouble. We went just where our father and mother went." Ah! that is a profound reason indeed. You went where you father and mother did. I thought you were sensible people; I didn't think you went where other people pulled you, but went of your own selves. I love my parents above all that breathe, and the very thought that they believe a thing to be true, helps me to think it is correct; but I have not followed them; I belong to a different denomination, and I thank God that I do. I can receive them as Christian brethren and sisters; but I never thought that, because they happened to be one thing, I was to be the same. No such thing. God gave me brains, and I will use them; and if you have any intellect, use it too. Never say it doesn't matter. Whatever God has put here is of eminent importance; he would not have written a thing that was indifferent. Whatever is here is of some value; therefore, search all

questions, try all by the Word of God. I am not afraid to have what I preach tried by this book. Only give me a fair field and no favor, and this book; if I say anything contrary to it, I will withdraw it the next Sabbath-day. By this I stand, by this I fall. Search and see; but don't say, "it does not matter." If God says a thing, it always must be of importance.

But, while all things in God's word are important, *all are not equally important.* There are certain fundamental and vital truths which must be believed, or otherwise no man would be saved. If you want to know what you must believe, if ye would be saved, you will find the great things of God's law between these two covers; they are all contained here. As a sort of digest or summary of the great things of law, I remember an old friend of mine once saying, "Ah! you preach the three R's, and God will always bless you." I said, "What are the three R's?" and he answered, "Ruin, redemption, and regeneration." They contain the sum and substance of divinity. R for ruin. We were all ruined in the fall; we were lost when Adam sinned, and we were all ruined by our own transgressions; we are all ruined by our own evil hearts, and our own wicked wills; and we all shall be ruined, unless grace saves us. Then there is a second R for redemption. We are ransomed by the blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish and without spot; we are rescued by his power; we are ransomed by his merits; we are redeemed by his strength. then there is R for regeneration. If we would be pardoned, we must also be regenerated; for no man can partake of redemption unless he is regenerate. Let him be as good as he pleases; let him serve God, as he imagines, as much as he likes; unless he is regenerate, and has a new heart, a new birth, he will still be in the first R, that is ruin. These things contain an epitome of the gospel. I believe there is a better epitome in the five points of Calvinism; — Election according to the foreknowledge of God; the natural depravity and sinfulness of man; particular redemption by the blood of Christ; effectual calling by the power of the Spirit; and ultimate perseverance by the efforts of God's might. I think all those need to be believed, in order to salvation; but I should not like to write a creed like the Athanasian, beginning with "Whosoever shall be saved, before all things it is necessary that he should hold the Catholic faith, which faith is this," — when I got so far, I should stop, because I should not know what to write. I hold the Catholic faith of the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible. It is not for me to

draw up creeds; but I ask you to search the Scriptures, for this is the word of life.

God says, "I have written to him the great things of my law." Do you doubt their greatness? Do ye think they are not worth your attention? Reflect a moment, man. Where art thou standing now?

"Lo on a narrow neck of land,
'Twixt two unbounded seas I stand;
An inch of time, a moment's space,
May lodge me in yon heavenly place,
Or shut me up in hell."

I recollect standing on a seashore once, upon a narrow neck of land, thoughtless that the tide might come up. The tide kept continually washing up on either side, and, wrapped in thoughts, I stood there, until at last there was the greatest difficulty in getting on shore. You and I stand each day on a narrow neck, and there is one wave coming up there; see, how near it is to your foot; and lo! another follows at every tick of the clock; "Our hearts, like muffled drums, are beating funeral marches to the tomb." We are always tending downwards to the grave each moment that we live. *This book* tells me that if I am converted, when I die, there is a heaven of joy and love to receive me; it tells me that angels' pinions shall be stretched, and I, borne by strong cherubic wings, shall out-soar the lightning, and mount beyond the stars, up to the throne of God, to dwell forever.

"Far from a world of grief and sin,
With God eternally shut in."

Oh! it makes the hot tear start from my eye, it makes my heart too big for this my body, and my brain whirls at the thought of

"Jerusalem, my happy home,
Name ever dear to me."

Oh! that sweet scene beyond the clouds; sweet fields arrayed in living green, and rivers of delight. Are not these great things? But then, poor unregenerate soul, the Bible says if thou are lost, thou art lost forever; it tells thee that if thou diest without Christ, without God, there is no hope for thee; that there is no place without a gleam of hope, where thou shalt read, in burning letters, "Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not;" it tells

you, that ye shall be driven from his presence with a "depart, ye cursed." Are these not great things? Yes, sirs, as heaven is desirable, as hell is terrible, as time is short, as eternity is infinite, as the soul is precious, as pain is to be shunned, as heaven is to be sought, as God is eternal, and as his words are sure, these are great things, things ye ought to listen to.

III. Our last point is: *The treatment which the poor Bible receives in this world*; it is accounted a strange thing. What does that mean — the Bible accounted a strange thing? In the first place, it means that it is very strange to some people, because *they never read it.* I remember reading, on one occasion, the sacred story of David and Goliath, and there was a person present, positively grown up to years of maturity, who said to me, "Dear me! what an interesting story; what book is that in?" And I recollect a person once coming to me in private; I spoke to her about her soul, she told me how deeply she felt, how she had a desire t serve God, but she found another law in her members. I turned to a passage in Romans, and read to her, "The good that I would I do not; and the evil which I would not that I do!" She said, "Is that in the Bible? I did not know it." I did not blame her, because she had no interest in the Bible till then; but I did not wonder that there could be found persons who knew nothing about such a passage. Ah! you know more about your ledgers than your Bible; you know more about your day-books than what God has written; many of you will read a novel from beginning to end, and what have you got? A mouthful of froth when you have done. But you cannot read the Bible; that solid, lasting, substantial, and satisfying food goes uneaten, locked up in the cupboard of neglect; while anything that man writes, a catch of the day, is greedily devoured. "I have written to him the great things of my law, *but* they were counted as a strange thing." Ye have never read it. I bring the broad charge against you. Perhaps, ye say, I ought not to charge you with any such thing. I always think it better to have a worse opinion of you than too good an one. I charge you with this: you do not read your Bibles. Some of you have never read it through. I know I speak what your heart must say is honest truth. You are not Bible readers. You say you have the Bible in your houses; do I think you are such heathens as not to have a Bible? But when did you read it last? How do you know that your spectacles, which you have lost, have not been there for the last three years? Many people have not turned over its pages for a long time, and

God might say unto them, “I have written unto you the great things of my law, but they have been accounted unto you a strange thing.”

Others there be who read the Bible; but when they read it, *they say it is so horribly dry.* That young man over there says it is a “bore;” that is the words he uses. He says, “My mother says to me, when you go up to town, read a chapter every day. Well, I thought I would please her, and I said I would. I am sure I wish I had not. I did not read a chapter yesterday, or the day before. We were so busy, I could not help it.” You do not love the Bible, do you? “No, there is nothing in it which is interesting.” Ah, I thought so. But a little while ago *I* could not see anything in it. Do you know why? Blind men cannot see, can they? But when the Spirit touches the scales of the eyes, they fall off; and when he puts eye-salves on, the Bible becomes precious. I remember a minister who went to see an old lady, and he thought he would give her some precious promises out of the word of God. Turning to one, he saw written in the margin “P.,” and he asked, “What does this mean?” “That means precious, sir.” Further down, he saw “T. and P.,” and he asked what the letters meant. “That,” she said, “means tried and proved, for I have tried and proved it.” If you have tried God’s word and proved it — if it is precious to your soul. then you are Christians; but those persons who despise the Bible, have “neither part nor lot in the matter.” If it is dry to you, you will be dry at last in hell. If you do not esteem it as better than your necessary food, there is no hope for you; for you lack the greatest evidence of your Christianity.

Alas! alas! the worst case is to come. *There are some people who hate the Bible,* as well as despise it. Is there such an one stepped in here? Some of you said, “Let us go and hear what the young preacher has to say to us.” This is what he has to say to you: “Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish.” This is what he hath to say to you: “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all that forget God.” And this, again he has to say to you: “Behold, there shall come in the last days, mockers, like yourselves, walking after your own lusts.” But more: he tells you to-night that if you are saved, you must find salvation here. Therefore, despise not the Bible; but search it, read it, and come unto it. Rest thee will assured, O scorner, that thy laughs cannot alter truth, thy jests cannot avert thine inevitable doom. Though in thy hardihood thou shouldst make a league with death, and sign a covenant with hell — yet swift justice shall o’ertake thee, and

strong vengeance strike the low. In vain dost thou jeer and mock, for eternal verities are mightier than thy sophistries, nor can thy smart sayings alter the divine truth of a single word of this volume of Revelation. Oh! why dost thou quarrel with thy best friend, and ill-treat thy only refuge? There yet remains hope, even for the scorner. Hope in a Savior's veins. Hope in the Father's mercy. Hope in the Holy Spirit's omnipotent agency.

I have done when I have said one word. My friend, the philosopher, says it may be very well for me to urge people to read the Bible; but he thinks there are a great many sciences far more interesting and useful than theology. *Extremely obliged to you for your opinion, sir.* What science do you mean? The science of dissecting beetles and arranging butterflies? "No," you say, "certainly not." The science, then, of arranging stones, and telling us of the strata of the earth? "No, not exactly that." Which science, then? "Oh, all sciences," say you, "are better than the science of the Bible." Ah! sir, that is your opinion; and it is because you are far from God, that you say so. But the science of Jesus Christ is the most excellent of sciences. Let no one turn away from the Bible because it is not a book of learning and wisdom. It is. Would ye know astronomy? It is here: it tells you of the Sun of Righteousness and the Star of Bethlehem. Would you know of botany? It is here: it tells you of the plant of renown — the Lily of the Valley, and the rose of Sharon. Would you know geology and mineralogy? You shall learn it here: for you may read of the Rock of Ages, and the White Stone with the name engraven thereon, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. Would ye study history? Here is the most ancient of all the records of the history of the human race. Whate'er your science is, come and bend o'er this book; your science is here. Come and drink out of this fair fount of knowledge and wisdom, and ye shall find yourselves made wise unto salvation. Wise and foolish, babes and men, gray-headed sires, youths and maidens — I speak to you, I plead with you, I beg of you respect your Bibles, and search them out, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and these are they which testify of Christ.

I have done. Let us go home and practice what we have heard. I have heard of a woman, who, when she was asked what she remembered of the minister's sermon, said, "I don't recollect anything of it. It was about short weights and bad measures, and I didn't recollect anything but to go

home and burn the bushel.” So, if you will remember to go home and burn the bushel, if you will recollect to go home and read your Bibles, I shall have said enough. And may God, in his infinite mercy, when you read your Bibles, pour into your souls the illuminating rays of the Sun of Righteousness, by the agency of the ever-adorable Spirit; then you will read to your profit and to your soul’s salvation.

We may say of THE BIBLE:

“God’s cabinet of revealed counsel ‘t is!
Where weal and woe, are ordered so
That every man may know which shall be his;
Unless his own mistake, false application make.

“It is the index to eternity.
He cannot miss of endless bliss.
That takes this chart to steer by,
Nor can he be mistook that speaketh by this book.

“It is the book of God. What if I should
Say, God of books, let him that looks
Angry at that expression, as too bold,
His thoughts in silence smother, till he find such another.”

PAUL'S FIRST PRAYER

SERMON NO. 16

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 25TH, 1855,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"For behold he prayeth" — Acts 9:11.

GOD has many methods of quenching persecution. He will not suffer his church to be injured by its enemies, or overwhelmed by its foes; and he is not short of means for turning aside the way of the wicked, or of turning it upside down. In two ways he usually accomplishes his end; sometimes by the confusion of the persecutor, and at others in a more blessed manner, by his conversion. Sometimes, he confuses and confounds his enemies; he makes the diviner mad; he lets the man who comes against him be utterly destroyed, suffers him to drive on to his own destruction, and then at last turns round in triumphant derision upon the man who hoped to have said aha! aha! To the church of God. But at other times, as in this case, he converts the persecutor. Thus, he transforms the foe into a friend; he makes the man who was a warrior against the gospel a soldier for it. Out of darkness he bringeth forth light; out of the eater he getteth honey; yea, out of stony hearts he raiseth up children unto Abraham. Such was the case with Saul. A more furious bigot it is impossible to conceive. He had been bespattered with the blood of Stephen, when they stoned him to death; so officious was he in his cruelty, that the men left their clothes in the charge of a young man named Saul. Living at Jerusalem, in the college of Gamaliel, he constantly came in contact with the disciples of the Man of Nazareth; he laughed at them, he reviled them as they passed along the street; he procured enactments against them, and put them to death; and now, as a crowning point, this were-wolf, having tasted blood, becomes exceeding mad, determines to go to Damascus, that he may glut himself with the gore of men and women; that he may bind the Christians, and bring them to Jerusalem, there to suffer what he considered to be a just punishment for

their heresy, and departure from their ancient religion. But oh, how marvelous was the power of God! Jesus stays this man in his mad career; just as with his lance in rest he was dashing against Christ. Christ met him, unhorsed him, threw him on the ground, and questioned him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" He then graciously removed his rebellious heart — gave him a new heart and a right spirit — turned his aim and object — led him to Damascus — laid him prostrate for three days and nights — spoke to him — made mystic sounds go murmuring through his ears — set his whole soul on fire; and when at last he started up from that three days' trance, and began to pray, then it was that Jesus from heaven descended, came in a vision to Ananias, and said, "Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus; for, behold, he prayeth."

First, our text was an announcement; "Behold, he prayeth." Secondly, it was an argument; "For, behold, he prayeth." Then, to conclude, we will try to make an application of our text to your hearts. Though application is the work of God alone, we will trust that he will be pleased to make that application while the word is preached this morning.

I. First, here was AN ANNOUNCEMENT; "Go to the house of Saul of Tarsus; for behold, he prayeth." Without any preface, let me say, that this was the announcement of a fact which was noticed in heaven; which was joyous to the angels; which was astonishing to Ananias, and which was a novelty to Saul himself.

It was the announcement of a fact which was noticed in heaven. Poor Saul had been led to cry for mercy, and the moment he began to pray, God began to hear. Do you not notice, in reading the chapter, what attention God paid to Saul? He knew the street where he lived; "Go to the street that is called Straight." He knew the house where he resided; "inquire at the house of Judas." He knew his name; it was Saul. He knew the place where he came from; "Inquire for Saul of Tarsus." And he knew that he had prayed. "Behold, he prayeth." Oh! It is a glorious fact, that prayers are noticed in heaven. The poor broken-hearted sinner, climbing up to his chamber, bends his knee, but can only utter his wailing in the language of sighs and tears. Lo! That groan has made all the harps of heaven thrill with music; that tear has been caught by God, and put into the lachrymatory of

heaven, to be perpetually preserved. The supplicant, whose fears prevent his words, will be well understood by the Most High. He may only shed one hasty tear; but "prayer is the falling of a tear." Tears are the diamonds of heaven; sighs are a part of the music of Jehovah's throne; for though prayers be

"The simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;"
so are they likewise the
"Sublimest strains that reach The majesty on high."

Let me dilate on this thought a moment. Prayers are noticed in heaven. Oh! I know what is the case with many of you. You think, "If I turn to God, if I seek him, surely I am so inconsiderable a being, so guilty and vile, that it cannot be imagined he would take any notice of me." My friends, harbor no such heathenish ideas. Our God is no god who sits in one perpetual dream; nor doth he clothe himself in such thick darkness that he cannot see; he is not like Baal who heareth not. True, he may not regard battles; he cares not for the pomp and pageantry of kings; he listens not to the swell of martial music; he regards not the triumph and the pride of man; but wherever there is a heart big with sorrow, wherever there is an eye suffused with tears, wherever there is a lip quivering with agony, wherever there is a deep groan, or a penitential sigh, the ear of Jehovah is wide open; he marks it down in the registry of his memory; he puts our prayers, like rose leaves, between the pages of his book of remembrance, and when the volume is opened at last there shall be a precious fragrance springing up therefrom. Oh! Poor sinner, of the blackest and vilest character, thy prayers are heard, and even now God hath said of thee, "Behold, he prayeth." Where was it — in a barn? Where was it — in the closet? Was it at thy bedside this morning, or in this hall? Art thou now glancing thine eye to heaven? Speak, poor heart; did I hear thy lips just now mutter out, "God have mercy upon me, a sinner?" I tell thee, sinner, there is one thing which doth outstrip the telegraph. You know we can now send a message and receive an answer in a few moments; but I read of something in the Bible more swift than the electric fluid. "Before they call I will answer, and while they are speaking I will hear." So, then, poor sinner, thou art noticed; yea, thou art heard by him that sitteth on the throne.

Again; this was the announcement of a fact joyous to heaven. Our text is prefaced with “Behold,” for doubtless, our Savior himself regarded it with joy. Once only do we read of a smile resting upon the countenance of Jesus, when, lifting up his eye to heaven, he exclaimed, “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.” The shepherd of our souls rejoices in the vision of his sheep securely folded, he triumphs in spirit when he brings a wanderer home. I conceive that when he spoke these words to Ananias, one of the smiles of Paradise must have shone from his eyes. “Behold,” I have won the heart of my enemy, I have saved my persecutor, even now he is bending the knee at my footstool, “behold, he prayeth.” Jesus himself led the song, rejoicing over the new convert with singing. Jesus Christ was glad, and rejoiced more over that lost sheep than over ninety and nine that went not astray. And angels rejoiced too. Why, when one of God’s elect is born, angels stand around his cradle. He grows up, and runs into sin: angels follow him, tracking him all his way; they gaze with sorrow upon his many wanderings; the fair Peri drops a tear whene’er that loved one sins. Presently the man is brought under the sound of the gospel. The angel says, “Behold, he begins to hear.” He waits a little while, the word sinks into his heart, a tear runs down his cheek, and at last he cries from his inmost soul, “God have mercy upon me!” See! The angel claps his wings, up he flies to heaven, and says, “Brethren angels, list to me, ‘Behold, he prayeth.’“ Then they set heaven’s bells ringing; they have a jubilee in glory; again they shout with gladsome voices, for verily I tell you, “there is joy in heaven among the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” They watch us till we pray, and when we pray, they say, “Behold, he prayeth.”

Moreover, my dear friends, there may be other spirits in heaven that rejoice, besides the angels. Those persons are our friends who have gone before us. I have not many relations in heaven, but I have one whom I dearly love, who, I doubt not, often prayed for me, for she nursed me when I was a child and brought me up during part of my infancy, and now she sits before the throne in glory — suddenly snatched away. I fancy she looked upon her darling grandson, and as she saw him in the ways of sin, and vice, and folly, she could not look with sorrow, for there are no tears

in the eyes of glorified ones; she could not look with regret, because they cannot know such a feeling before the throne of God; but ah! That moment when, by sovereign grace, I was constrained to pray, when all alone I bent my knee and wrestled, methinks I see her as she said, “Behold, he prayeth; behold, he prayeth.” Oh! I can picture her countenance. She seemed to have two heavens for a moment, a double bliss, a heaven in me as well as in herself — when she could say, “Behold, he prayeth.” Ah! young man, there is your mother walking the golden streets. She is looking down upon you this hour. She nursed you; on her breast you lay when but a child, and she consecrated you to Jesus Christ. From heaven, she has been watching you with that intense anxiety which is compatible with happiness; this morning she is looking upon you. What sayest thou, young man? Does Christ by his Spirit say in thine heart, “Come unto me?” Dost thou drop the tear of repentance? Methinks I see thy mother as she cries, “Behold, he prayeth.” Once more she bends before the throne of God and says, “I thank thee, O thou ever gracious One, that he who was my child on earth, has now become thy child in light.”

But, if there is one in heaven who has more joy than another over the conversion of a sinner, it is a minister, one of God’s true ministers. O, my hearers, ye little think how God’s true ministers do love your souls. Perhaps ye think it is easy work to stand here and preach to you. God knows, if that were all, it were easy work; but when we think that when we speak to you, your salvation or damnation, in some measure, depends upon what we say — when we reflect that if we are unfaithful watchmen, your blood will God require at our hands — O, good God! When I reflect that I have preached to thousands in my lifetime, many thousands and have perhaps said many things I ought not to have said, it startles me, it makes me shake and tremble. Luther said he could face his enemies, but could not go up his pulpit stairs without his knees knocking together. Preaching is not child’s play; it is not a thing to be done without labor and anxiety; it is solemn work; it is awful work, if you view it in its relation to eternity. Ah! How God’s minister prays for you! If you might have listened under the eaves of his chamber window, you would have heard him groaning every Sunday night over his sermons because he had not spoken with more effect; you would have heard him pleading with God, “Who hath believed our report? To whom is the arm of the Lord

revealed?" Ah, when he observes you from his rest in heaven — when he sees you praying, how will he clap his hands and say, "Behold the child thou hast given me! Behold, he prays." I am sure when we see one brought to know the Lord, we feel very much like one who has saved a fellow-creature from being drowned. There is a poor man in the flood; he is going down, he is sinking, he must be drowned; but I spring in, grasp him firmly, lift him on the shore, and lay him on the ground; the physician comes; he looks at him, he puts his hand upon him, and says, "I am afraid he is dead." We apply all the means in our power, we do what we can to restore life. I feel that I have been that man's deliverer, and oh, how I stoop down and put my ear beside his mouth! At last I say, "He breathes! He breathes!" What pleasure there is in that thought! He breathes; there is life still. So when we find a man praying, we shout — he breathes; he is not dead, he is alive; for while a man prays he is not dead in trespasses and sins, but is brought to life, is quickened by the power of the Spirit. "Behold, he prayeth." This was joyful news in heaven, as well as being noticed by God.

Then, in the next place, this was an event most astonishing to men. Ananias lifted up both his hands in amazement. "O my Lord, I should have thought anybody would pray but that man! Is it possible?" I do not know how it is with other ministers, but sometimes I look upon such-and-such individuals in the congregation, and I say, "Well, they are very hopeful; I think I shall have them. I trust there is a work going on, and hope soon to hear them tell what the Lord has done for their souls." Soon, perhaps, I see nothing of them, and miss them altogether; but instead thereof, my good Master sends me one of whom I had no hope — an outcast, a drunkard, a reprobate, to the praise of the glory of his grace. Then I lift up my hands in astonishment, thinking "I should have thought of anybody rather than you." I remember a circumstance which occurred a little while ago. There was a poor man about sixty years old; he had been a rough sailor, one of the worst men in the village; it was his custom to drink, and he seemed to be delighted when he was cursing and swearing. He came into the chapel, however, one Sabbath day, when one nearly related to me was preaching from the text concerning Jesus weeping over Jerusalem. And the poor man thought, "What! did Jesus Christ ever weep over such a wretch as I am?" He thought he was too bad for Christ to care

for him. At last he came to the minister, and said, “Sir, sixty years have I been sailing under the standard of the devil; it is time I should have a new owner; I want to scuttle the old ship and sink her altogether! then I shall have a new one, and I shall sail under the colors of Prince Immanuel.” Ever since that moment that man has been a praying character, walking before God in all sincerity. Yet, he was the very last man you would have thought of. Somehow God does choose the last men; he does not care for the diamond, but he picks up the pebble-stones, for he is able, out of “stones, to raise up children unto Abraham.” God is more wise than the chemist: he not only refines gold, but he transmutes base metal into precious jewels; he takes the filthiest and the vilest, and fashions them into glorious beings, makes them saints, whereas they have been sinners, and sanctifies them, whereas they have been unholy.

The conversion of Saul was a strange thing; but, beloved, was it stranger than that you and I should have been Christians? Let me ask you if anybody had told you, a few years ago, that you would belong to a church and be numbered with the children of God what would you have said? “Stuff and nonsense! I am not one of your canting Methodists; I am not going to have any religion; I love to think and do as I like.” Did not you and I say so? And how on earth did we get here? When we look at the change that has passed over us, it appears like a dream. God has left many in our families who were better than we were, and why has he chosen us? Oh! Is it not strange? Might we not lift up our hands in astonishment, as Ananias did, and say, “Behold, behold, behold: it is a miracle on earth, a wonder in heaven?”

The last thing I have to say here, is this — this fact was a novelty to Saul himself. “Behold he prayeth.” What is there novel in that? Saul used to go up to the temple twice a day, at the hour of prayer. If you could have accompanied him, you would have heard him speak beautifully, in words like these: “Lord, I thank thee I am not as other men are; I am not an extortioner, nor a publican; I fast twice in the week, and give tithes of all I possess;” and so on. Oh! You might have found him pouring out a fine oration before the throne of God. And yet it saith, “Behold, he prayeth.” What! Had he never prayed before? No, never. All he had ever done before went for nothing; it was not prayer. I have heard of an old gentleman, who was taught when a child to pray, “Pray God bless my father and mother,”

and he kept on praying the same thing for seventy years, when his parents were both dead. After that it pleased God, in his infinite mercy, to touch his heart, and he was led to see that notwithstanding his constancy to his forms, he had not been praying at all; he often said his prayers, but never prayed. So it was with Saul. He had pronounced his magniloquent orations, but they were all good-for-nothing. He had prayed his long prayers for a pretense; it had all been a failure. Now comes a true petition, and it is said, "Behold, he prayeth." Do you see that man trying to obtain a hearing from his Maker? How he stands! He speaks Latin and blank verse before the Almighty's throne; but God sits in calm indifference, paying no attention. Then the man tries a different style; procures a book, and bending his knee again, prays in a delightful form the best old prayer that could ever be put together; but the Most High disregards his empty formalities. At last the poor creature throws the book away, forgets his blank verse, and says, "O Lord, hear, for Christ's sake." "Hear him," says God, "I have heard him." There is the mercy thou hast sought. One hearty prayer is better than ten thousand forms. One prayer coming from the soul is better than a myriad cold readings. As for prayers that spring from the mouth and head only, God abhors them; he loves those that come deep from the heart. Perhaps I should be impudent if I were to say that there are hundreds here this morning who never prayed once in their lives. There are some of you who never did. There is one young man over there, who told his parents when he left them, that he should always go through his form of prayer every morning and night. But he is ashamed, and he has left it off. Well, young man, what will you do when you come to die? Will you have "the watchword at the gates of death?" Will you "enter heaven by prayer?" No, you will not; you will be driven from his presence, and be cast away.

II. Secondly, we have here AN ARGUMENT. "For, behold he prayeth." It was an argument, first of all, for Ananias' safety. Poor Ananias was afraid to go to Saul; he thought it was very much like stepping into a lion's den. "If I go to his house," he thought, "the moment he sees me, he will take me to Jerusalem at once, for I am one of Christ's disciples; I dare not go." God says, "Behold, he prayeth." "Well," says Ananias, "that is enough for me. If he is a praying man, he will not hurt me; if he is a man of real devotion, I am safe." Be sure you may always trust a praying man. I do not know

how it is, but even ungodly men always pay a reverence to a sincere Christian. A master likes to have a praying servant after all; if he does not regard religion himself, he likes to have a pious servant, and he will trust him rather than any other. True, there are some of your professedly praying people that have not a bit of prayer in them. But whenever you find a really praying man, trust him with untold gold; for if he really prays, you need not be afraid of him. He who communes with God in secret, may be trusted in public. I always feel safe with a man who is a visitor at the mercy-seat. I nave heard an anecdote of two gentlemen traveling together, somewhere in Switzerland. Presently they came into the midst of the forests; and you know the gloomy tales the people tell about the inns there, how dangerous it is to lodge in them. One of them, an infidel, said to the other, who was a Christian, “I don’t like stopping here at all; it is very dangerous indeed.” “Well,” said the other, “let us try.” So they went into a house; but it looked so suspicious that neither of them liked it; and they thought they would prefer being at home in England. Presently the landlord said, “Gentlemen, I always read and pray with my family before going to bed; will you allow me to do so to-night?” “Yes,” they said, “with the greatest pleasure.” When they went up-stairs, the infidel said, “I am not at all afraid now.” “Why?” said the Christian. “Because our host has prayed.” “Oh!” said the other, “then it seems, after all, you think something of religion; because a man prays, you can go to sleep in his house.” And it was marvelous how both of them did sleep. Sweet dreams they had, for they felt that where the house had been roofed by prayer, and walled with devotion, there could not be found a man living that would commit an injury to them. This, then, was an argument to Ananias, that he might go with safety to Saul’s house.But more than this. Here was an argument for Paul’s sincerity. Secret prayer is one of the best tests of sincere religion. If Jesus had said to Ananias, “Behold, he preacheth,” Ananias would have said, “that he may do, and yet be a deceiver.” If he had said, “He has gone to a meeting of the church,” Ananias would have said, “He may enter there as a wolf in sheep’s clothing.” But when he said, “Behold, he prays,” that was argument enough. A young person comes and tells me about what he has felt and what he has been doing. At last I say, “kneel down and pray.” “I would much rather not.” “Never mind, you shall.” Down he falls on his knees, he has hardly a word to say; he begins groaning and crying, and there he stays on his knees till at last he

stammers out, “Lord, have mercy upon me a sinner; I am the greatest of sinners; have mercy upon me!” Then I am a little more satisfied, and I say, “I did not mind all your talk, I wanted your prayers.” But oh! If I could trace him home; if I could see him go and pray alone, then I should feel sure; for he who prays in private is a real Christian. The mere reading of a book of daily devotion will not prove you a child of God; if you pray in private, then you have a sincere religion; a little religion, if sincere, is better than mountains of pretense. Home piety is the best piety. Praying will make you leave off sinning, or sinning will make you leave off praying. Prayer in the heart proves the reality of conversion. A man may be sincere, but sincerely wrong. Paul was sincerely right. “Behold, he prayeth,” was the best argument that his religion was right. If any one should ask me for an epitome of the Christian religion, I should say it is in that one word — “prayer.” If I should be asked, “What will take in the whole Christian experience?” I should answer, “prayer.” A man must have been convinced of sin before he could pray; he must have had some hope that there was mercy for him before he could pray. In fact, all the Christian virtues are locked up in that word, prayer. Do but tell me you are a man of prayer, and I will reply at once, “Sir, I have no doubt of the reality, as well as the sincerity, of your religion.”

But one more thought, and I will leave this subject. It was a proof of this man’s election, for you read directly afterwards, “Behold, he is a chosen vessel.” I often find people troubling themselves about the doctrine of election. Every now and then I get a letter from somebody or other taking me to task for preaching election. All the answer I can give is, “There it is in the Bible; go and ask my Master why he put it there. I cannot help it. I am only a serving man, and I tell you the message from above. If I were a footman, I should not alter my master’s message at the door. I happen to be an ambassador of heaven, and I dare not alter the message I have received. If it is wrong, send up to head-quarters. There it is, and I cannot alter it.” This much let me say in explanation. Some say, “How can I discover whether I am God’s elect? I am afraid I am not God’s elect.” Do you pray? If it can be said, “Behold, he prayeth,” it can also be said, Behold, he is a chosen vessel.” Have you faith? If so, you are elect. Those are the marks of election. If you have none of these, you have no grounds for concluding that you belong to the peculiar people of God. Have you a

desire to believe? Have you a wish to love Christ? Have you the millionth part of a desire to come to Christ? And is it a practical desire? Does it lead you to offer earnest, tearful supplication? If so, never be afraid of non-election; for whoever prays with sincerity, is ordained of God before the foundation of the world, that he should be holy and without blame before Christ in love.

III. Now for the APPLICATION. A word or two with you, my dear friends, before I send you away this morning. I regret that I cannot better enter into the subject; but my glorious Master requires of each of us according to what we have, not according to what we have not. I am deeply conscious that I fail in urging home the truth so solemnly as I ought; Nevertheless, "my work is with God and my judgement with my God," and the last day shall reveal that my error lay in judgment, but not in sincere affection for souls.

First, allow me to address the children of God. Do you not see, my dear brethren, that the best mark of our being sons of God is to be found in our devotion? "Behold, he prayeth." Well, then, does it not follow, as a natural consequence, that the more we are found in prayer the brighter will our evidences be? Perhaps you have lost your evidence this morning; you do not know whether you are a child of God or not; I will tell you where you lost your confidence — you lost it in your closet. I speak what I have felt. I have often gone back from God — never so as to fall finally, I know, but I have often lost that sweet savor of his love which I once enjoyed. I have had to cry,

"Those peaceful hours I once enjoyed,
How sweet their memory still!
But they have left an aching void,
The world can never fill."

I have gone up to God's house to preach, without either fire or energy; I have read the Bible, and there has been no light upon it; I have tried to have communion with God, but all has been a failure. Shall I tell where that commenced! It commenced in my closet. I had ceased, in a measure, to pray. Here I stand, and do confess my faults; I do acknowledge that whenever I depart from God it is there it doth begin. O Christians, would

you be happy? Be much in prayer. Would ye be victorious? Be much in prayer.

"Restraining prayer, we cease to fight,
Prayer makes the Christian's armor bright."

Mrs. Berry used to say, "I would not be hired out of my closet for a thousand worlds." Mr. Jay said, "If the twelve apostles were living near you, and you had access to them, if this intercourse drew you from the closet, they would prove a real injury to your souls." Prayer is the ship which bringeth home the richest freight. It is the soil which yields the most abundant harvest. Brother, when you rise in the morning your business so presses, that with a hurried word or two, down you go into the world, and at night, jaded and tired, you give God the fag end of the day. The consequence is, that you have no communion with him. The reason we have not more true religion now, is because we have not more prayer. Sirs, I have no opinion of the churches of the present day that do not pray. I go from chapel to chapel in this metropolis and I see pretty good congregations; but I go to their prayer-meetings on a week evening, and I see a dozen persons. Can God bless us, can he pour out his Spirit upon us, while such things as these exist? He could, but it would not be according to the order of his dispensations, for he says, "When Zion travails she brings forth children." Go to your churches and chapels with this thought, that you want more prayer. Many of you have no business here this morning. You ought to be in your own places of worship. I do not want to steal away the people from other chapels; there are enough to hear me without them. But though you have sinned this morning, hear while you are here, as much to your profit as possible. Go home and say to your minister, "Sir, we must have more prayer." Urge the people to more prayer. Have a prayer-meeting, even if you have it all to yourself; and if you are asked how many were present, you can say, "Four." "Four! How so?" "Why, there was myself, and God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; and we have had a rich and real communion together." We must have an outpouring of real devotion, or else what is to become of many of our churches? O! May God awaken us all, and stir us up to pray, for when we pray we shall be victorious. I should like to take you this morning, as Samson did the foxes, tie the firebrands of prayer to you, and send you in among the shocks of corn till you burn the whole up. I should like to make

a conflagration by my words, and to set all the churches on fire, till the whole has smoked like a sacrifice to God's throne. If you pray, you have a proof that you are a Christian; the less you pray, the less reason have you to believe your Christianity; and if you have neglected to pray altogether, then you have ceased to breathe, and you may be afraid that you never did breathe at all.

And now, my last word is to the ungodly. O, sirs! I could fain wish myself anywhere but here; for if it be solemn work to address the godly, how much more when I come to deal with you. We fear lest, on the one hand, we should so speak to you as to make you trust in your own strength; while, on the other hand, we tremble lest we should lull you into the sleep of sloth and security. I believe most of us feel some difficulty as to the most fit manner to preach to you — not that we doubt but that the gospel is to be preached — but our desire is so to do it, that we may win your souls. I feel like a watchman, who, while guarding a city, is oppressed with sleep; how earnestly does he strive to arouse himself, while infirmity would overcome him. The remembrance of his responsibility bestirs him. His is no lack of will, but of power; and so I hope all the watchmen of the Lord are anxious to be faithful, while, at the same time, they know their imperfection. Truly, the minister of Christ will feel like the old keeper of Eddystone lighthouse; life was failing fast, but, summoning all his strength, he crept round once more to trim the lights before he died. O may the Holy Spirit enable us to keep the beacon-fire blazing, to warn you of the rocks, shoals, and quicksands, which surround you, and may we ever guide you to Jesus, and not to free-will or creature merit. If my friends knew how anxiously I have sought divine direction in the important matter of preaching to sinners, they would not feel as some of them do, when they fancy I address them wrongly. I want to do as God bids me, and if he tells me to speak to the dry bones and they shall live, I must do it, even if it does not please others; otherwise I should be condemned in my own conscience, and condemned of God. Now, with all the solemnity that man can summon, let me say that a prayerless soul is a Christless soul. As the Lord liveth, you who never prayed are without God, without hope, and strangers from the commonwealth of Israel. You who never know what a groan is, or a falling tear, are destitute of vital godliness. Let me ask you, sirs, whether you have ever thought in what an awful state you are? You

are far from God, and therefore God is angry with you; for "God is angry with the wicked every day." O, sinner! Lift thine eyes and behold the frowning countenance of God, for he is angry with you. And I beseech you, as you love yourselves, just for one moment contemplate what will become of you, if living as you are, ye should at last die without prayer. Don't think that one prayer on your deathbed will save you. Deathbed prayer is a deathbed farce generally, and passes for nothing; it is a coin that will not ring in heaven, but is stamped by hypocrisy, and made of base metal. Take heed sirs. Let me ask you, if you have never prayed, what will you do? It were a good thing for you, if death were an eternal sleep; but it is not. If you find yourself in hell, oh, the racks and pains! But I will not harrow up your feelings by attempting to describe them. May God grant you never may feel the torments of the lost. Only conceive that poor wretch in the flames who is saying, "O for one drop of water, to cool my parched tongue!" See how his tongue hangs from between his blistered lips! How it excoriates and burns the roof of his mouth, as if it were a firebrand. Behold him crying for a drop of water. I will not picture the scene. Suffice it for me to close up by saying, that the hell of hells will be to thee, poor sinner, the thought that it is to be forever. Thou wilt look up there on the throne of God, and it shall be written "forever!" When the damned jingle the burning irons of their torments, they shall say "forever!" When they howl, echo cries "forever!"

"'Forever' is written on their racks,
'Forever' on their chains;
'Forever' burneth in the fire,
'Forever' ever reigns."

Doleful thought! "If I could but get out, then I should be happy. If there were a hope of deliverance, then I might be peaceful; but I am here forever!" Sirs, if ye would escape eternal torments, if ye would be found amongst the numbers of the blessed, the road to heaven can only be found by prayer — by prayer to Jesus, by prayer for the Spirit, by supplication at his mercy seat. "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die, O house of Israel? As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but had rather that he should turn unto me and live." "The Lord is gracious and full of compassion." Let us go unto him and say, "He shall heal our backslidings, he shall love us freely and forgive us graciously, for his Son's name's sake." Oh! If I may but win one soul to-day, I will go home

contented. If I may but gain twenty, then I will rejoice. The more I have, the more crowns I shall wear. Wear! No, I will take them all at once, and cast them at Jesus' feet, and say, "Not unto me, but unto thy name be all the glory, forever."

"Prayer was appointed to convey
The blessings god designs to give;
Long as they live, should Christians pray,
For only while they pray, they live.
"And wilt thou still in silence lie,
When Christ stands waiting for thy prayer?
My soul, thou hast a friend on high,
Arise, and try thine interest there.
"'Tis prayer supports the soul that's weak,
Though thought be broken, language lame;
Pray, if thou canst, or canst not speak,
And pray with faith in Jesus' name."

JOSEPH ATTACKED BY THE ARCHERS

SERMON NO. 17

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 1, 1855,

AT EXETER HALL, STRAND

"The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; but his bow abode in strength; and the arms of his hands wer made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel." — Genesis 49:23,24.

It must have been a fine sight to see the hoary-headed Jacob sitting up in his bed whilst he bestowed his parting benediction upon his twelve sons. He had been noble in many instances during his life — at the sleeping place of Bethel, the brook of Jabbok, and the halting of Peniel. He had been a glorious old man; one before whom we might bow down with reverence, and truly say, "There were giants in those days." But his closing scene was the best. I think if ever he stood out more illustrious than at any other time, if his head was at any one season more than another, encircled with a halo of glory, it was when he came to die. Like the sun at setting, he seemed then to be the greater in brilliance, tinging the clouds of his weakness with the glory of grace within. Like good wine, which runs clear to the very bottom, unalloyed by dregs, so did Jacob till his dying hour continue to sing of love, of mercy, and of goodness, past and future. Like the swan, which (as old writers say) singeth not all its life until it comes to die, so the old patriarch remained silent as a songster for many years; but when he stretched himself on his last couch of rest, he stayed himself up in his bed, turned his burning eye from one to another, and although with a hoarse and faltering voice, he sang a sonnet upon each of his offspring, such as earthly poets, uninspired, cannot attempt to imitate. Looking upon his son Reuben, a tear was in his eye, for he recollected Reuben's sin; he passed over Simeon and Levi, giving some slight rebuke; upon the others

he sung a verse of praise, as his eyes saw into the future history of the tribes. By-and-by his voice failed him, and the good old man, with long-drawn breath, with eyes pregnant with celestial fire, and heart big with heaven, lifted his voice to God, and said, “I have waited for thy salvation, O God,” rested a moment on his pillow, and then again sitting up, recommenced the strain, passing briefly by the names of each. But oh! when he came to Joseph, his youngest son but one — when he looked on him, I picture that old man as the tears ran down his cheeks. There stood Joseph, with all his mother Rachel in his eyes — that dear loved wife of his — there he stood, the boy for whom that mother had prayed with all the eagerness of an Eastern wife. For a long twenty years she had tarried a barren woman and kept no house, but then she was a joyful mother, and she called her son “Increase.” Oh! how she loved the boy; and for that mother’s sake, though she had been buried for some years, and hidden under the cold sod, old Jacob loved him too. But more than that, he loved him for his troubles. He was parted from him to be sold into Egypt. His father recollected Joseph’s trials in the round-house and the dungeon, and remembered his royal dignity as prince of Egypt; and now, with a full burst of harmony, as if the music of heaven had united with his own, as when the widened river meets the sea, and the tide coming up doth amalgamate with the stream that cometh down, and swelleth into a broad expanse, so did the glory of heaven meet the rapture of his earthly feelings, and giving vent to his soul , he sung, “Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall; the archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel); even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb; the blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors, unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.” What a splendid stanza with which to close! He has only one more blessing to give; but surely this was the richest which he conferred on Joseph.Joseph is dead, but the Lord has his Josephs now. There are some still who understand by experience — and that is the

best kind of understanding — the meaning of this passage, "The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob."

There are four things for us to consider this morning. First of all, the cruel attack — "the archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him;" secondly, the shielded warrior — "but his bow abode in strength;" thirdly, his secret strength — "the arms of his hands were made strong by the mighty power of the God of Jacob;" and fourthly, the glorious parallel drawn between Joseph and Christ — "from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel."

I. First, then, we commence with THE CRUEL ATTACK. "The archers have sorely grieved him." Joseph's enemies were archers. The original has it, "masters of the arrows;" that is, men who were well skilled in the use of the arrows. Though all weapons are alike approved by the warrior in his thirst for blood, there seems something more cowardly in the attack of the archer than in that of the swordsman. The swordsman plants himself near you, foot to foot, and lets you defend yourself, and deal your blows against him; but the archer stands at a distance, hides himself in ambuscade, and, without you knowing it, the arrow comes whizzing through the air, and perhaps penetrates your heart. Just so are the enemies of God's people. They very seldom come foot to foot with us; they will not show their faces before us; they hate the light, they love darkness; they dare not come and openly accuse us to our face, for then we could reply; but they shoot the bow from a distance, so that we cannot answer them; cowardly and dastardly as they are, they forge their arrow-heads, and aim them, winged with hell-birds feathers, at the hearts of God's people. The archers sorely grieved poor Joseph. Let us consider who are the archers who so cruelly shot at him. First, there were the archers of envy; secondly, the archers of temptation; and thirdly, the archers of slander and calumny.

1. First, Joseph had to endure the archers of ENVY. When he was a boy, his father loved him. The youth was fair and beautiful; in person he was to be admired; moreover, he had a mind that was gigantic, and an intellect that was lofty; but, best of all, in him dwelt the Spirit of the living God. He

was one who talked with God; a youth of piety and prayerfulness; beloved of God, even more than he was by his earthly father. O! how his father loved him! for in his fond affection, he made him a princely coat of many colors, and treated him better than the others — a natural but foolish way of showing his fondness. Therefore his brethren hated him. Full often did they jeer at the youthful Joseph, when he retired to his prayers; when he was with them at a distance from his father's house, he was their drudge, their slave; the taunt, the jeer, did often wound his heart, and the young child endured much secret sorrow. On an ill day, as it happened, he was with them at a distance from home, and they thought to slay him; but upon the entreaty of Reuben, they put him into a pit, until, as Providence would have it, the Ishmaelites did pass that way. They then sold him for the price of a slave, stripped him of his coat, and sent him naked, they knew not, and they cared not, whither, so long as he might be out of their way, and no longer provoke their envy and their anger. Oh! the agonies he felt — parted from his father, losing his brethren, without a friend, dragged away by cruel man-sellers, chained upon a camel it may be, with fetters on his hands. Those who have borne the gyves and fetters, those who have felt that they were not free men, that they had not liberty, might tell how sorely the archers grieved him when they shot at him the arrows of their envy. He became a slave, sold from his country, dragged from all he loved. Farewell to home and all its pleasures — farewell to a father's smiles and tender cares. He must be a slave, and toil where the slave's task-master makes him; he must be stripped in the streets, he must be beaten, he must be scourged, he must be reduced from the man to the animal, from the free man to the slave. Truly the archers sorely shot at him. And, my brethren, do you hope, if you are the Lord's Josephs, that you shall escape envy? I tell you, nay; that green-eyed monster, envy, lives in London as well as elsewhere, and he creeps into God's church, moreover. Oh! it is hardest of all, to be envied by one's brethren. If the devil hates us, we can bear it; if the foes of God's truth speak ill of us, we buckle up our harness, and say, "Away, away, to the conflict." But when the friends within the house slander us; when brethren who should uphold us, turn our foes; and when they try to tread down their younger brethren; then, sirs, there is some meaning in the passage, "The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him." But, blessed be God's name, it is sweet to be informed that "his bow abode in strength." None of you can be the people

of God without provoking envy; and the better you are, the more you will be hated. The ripest fruit is most pecked by the birds, and the blossoms that have been longest on the tree, are the most easily blown down by the wind. But fear not; you have naught to do with what man shall say of you. If God loves you, man will hate you; if God honors you, man will dishonor you. But recollect, could ye wear chains of iron for Christ's sake, ye should wear chains of gold in heaven; could ye have rings of burning iron round your waists, ye should have your brow rimmed with gold in glory; for blessed are ye when men shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for Christ's name's sake; for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you. The first archers were the archers of envy.

2. But a worse trial than this was to overtake him. The archers of TEMPTATION shot at him. Here I know not how to express myself. I would that some one more qualified to speak were here, that he might tell you the tale of Joseph's trial, and Joseph's triumph. Sold to a master who soon discovered his value, Joseph was made the bailiff of the house, and the manager of the household. His wanton mistress fixed her adulterous love on him; and he, being continually in her presence, was perpetually, day by day, solicited by her to evil deeds. Constantly did he refuse; still enduring a martyrdom at the slow fire of her enticements. On one eventful day she grasped him, seeking to compel him to crime; but he, like a true hero as he was, said to her, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" Like a wise warrior, he knew that in such a case fleeing was the better part of valor. He heard a voice in his ears: "Fly, Joseph, fly; there remains no way of victory but flight;" and out he fled, leaving his garment with his adulterous mistress. Oh, I say in all the annals of heroism there is not one that shall surpass this. You know it is opportunity that makes a man criminal; and he had abundant opportunity; but importunity will drive most men astray. To be haunted day by day by solicitations of the softest kind — to be tempted hour by hour — oh! it needs a strength super-angelic, a might more that human, a strength which only God can grant, for a young man thus to cleanse his way, and take heed thereto according to God's word. He might have reasoned within himself, "Should I submit and yield, there lies before me a life of ease and pleasure; I shall be exalted, I shall be rich. She shall prevail over her husband, to cover me with honors; but should I still adhere to my integrity, I shall be cast into prison, I shall

be thrown into the dungeon; there awaits me nothing but shame and disgrace.” Oh! there was a power indeed within that heart of his; there was an inconceivable might, which made him turn away with unutterable disgust, with fear and trembling, while he said, “How can I? how can I — God’s Joseph — how can I — other men might, but how can I do this great wickedness and sin against God.” Truly the archers sorely grieved him and shot at him; but his bow abode in strength.

3. Then another host of archers assailed him; these were the archers of MALICIOUS CALUMNY. Seeing that he would not yield to temptation, his mistress falsely accused him to her husband, and his lord, believing the voice of his wife, cast him into prison. It was a marvelous providence that he did not put him to death; for Potiphar, his master, was the chief of the slaughtermen; he had only to call in a soldier, who would have cut him in pieces on the spot. But he cast him into prison. There was poor Joseph. His character ruined in the eyes of man, and very likely looked upon with scorn even in the prison-house; base criminals went away from him as if they thought him viler than themselves, as if they were angels in comparison with him. Oh! it is no easy thing to feel your character gone, to think that you are slandered, that things are said of you that are untrue. Many a man’s heart has been broken by this, when nothing else could make him yield. The archers sorely grieved him when he was so maligned — so slandered. O child of God, dost thou expect to escape these archers? Wilt thou never be slandered? Shalt thou never be calumniated? It is the lot of God’s servants, in proportion to their zeal, to be evil spoken of. Remember the noble Whitefield, how he stood and was the butt of all the jeers and scoffs of half an age; while his only answer was a blameless life.

“And he who forged, and he who threw the dart,
Had each a brother’s interest in his heart.”

They reviled him and imputed to him crimes that Sodom never knew. So shall it be always with those who preach God’s truth, and all the followers of Christ — they must all expect it; but, blessed be God, they have not said worse things of us than they said of our Master. What have they laid to our charge? They may have said, “he is drunken and a wine-bibber;” but they have not said, “he hath a devil.” They have accused us of being mad, so was it said of Paul. Oh, holy infatuation, heavenly furor, would that we could bite others until they had the same madness. We think, if to go to

heaven be mad, we will not choose to be wise; we see no wisdom in preferring hell; we can see no great prudence in despising and hating God's truth. If to serve God be vile, we purpose to be viler still. Ah! friends, some now present know this verse by heart, "The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him." Expect it; do not think it a strange thing; all God's people must have it. There are no royal roads to heaven — they are paths of trial and trouble; the archers will shoot at you as long as you are on this side the flood.

II. We have seen these archers shoot their flights of arrows; we will now go up the hill a little, behind a rock, to look at the SHIELDED WARRIOR and see how his courage is while the archers have sorely grieved him. What is he doing? "His bow abideth in strength." Let us picture God's favorite. The archers are down below. There is a parapet of rock before him; now and then he looks over it to see what the archers are about, but generally he keeps behind. In heavenly security he is set upon a rock, careless of all below. Let us follow the track of the wild goat and behold the warrior in his fastness.

First, we notice that he has a bow himself, for we read that "his bow abode in strength." He could have retaliated if he pleased, but he was very quiet and would not combat with them. Had he pleased, he might have drawn his bow with all his strength, and sent his weapon to their hearts with far greater precision that they had ever done to him. But mark the warrior's quietness. There he rests, stretching his mighty limbs; his bow abode in strength; he seemed to say, "Rage on, aye, let you arrows spend themselves, empty your quivers on me, let your bow-strings be worn out, and let the wood be broken with its constant bending; here am I, stretching myself in safe repose; my bow abides in strength; I have other work to do besides shooting at you; my arrows are against yon foes of God, the enemies of the Most High; I cannot waste an arrow on such pitiful sparrows as you are; ye are birds beneath my noble shot; I would not waste an arrow on you." Thus he remains behind the rock and despises them all. "His bow abideth in strength."

Mark well his quietness. His bow "abideth." It is not rattling, it is not always moving, but it abides, it is quite still; he takes no notice of the attack. The archers sorely grieved Joseph, but his bow was not turned

against them, it abode in strength. He turned not his bow on them. He rested while they raged. Doth the moon stay herself to lecture every dog that bayeth at her? Doth the lion turn aside to rend each cur that barketh at him? Do the stars cease to shine because the nightingales reprove them for their dimness? Doth the sun stop in its course because of the officious cloud which veils it: Or doth the river stay because the willow dippeth its leaves into its waters? Ah! no; God's universe moves on, and if men will oppose it, it heeds them not. It is as God hath made it; it is working together for good, and it shall not be stayed by the censure nor moved on by the praise of man. Let your bows, my brethren, abide. Do not be in a hurry to set yourselves right. God will take care of you. Leave yourselves alone; only be very valiant for the Lord God of Israel; be steadfast in the truth of Jesus and your bow shall abide.

But we must not forget the next word. "His bow abode IN STRENGTH." Though his bow was quiet it was not because it was broken. Joseph's bow was like that of William the Conqueror; no man could bend it but Joseph himself; it abode in "strength." I see the warrior bending his bow — how with his mighty arms he pulls it down and draws the string to make it ready. His bow abode in strength; it did not snap, it did not start aside. His chastity was his bow, and he did not lose that; his faith was his bow, and that did not yield, it did not break; his courage was his bow, and that did not fail him; his character, his honesty was his bow, nor did he cast it away. Some men are so very particular about reputation. They think, "surely, surely, surely they shall lose their character." Well, well, if we do not lose them through our own fault, we never need care about anybody else. You know there is not a man that stands at all prominent, but what any fool in the world can set afloat some bad tale against him. It is a great deal easier to set a story afloat than to stop it. If you want truth to go round the world you must hire an express train to pull it; but if you want a lie to go round the world, it will fly: it is as light as a feather, and a breath will carry it. It is well said in the old proverb, "A lie will go round the world while truth is pulling its boots on." Nevertheless, it does not injure us; for if light as feather it travels as fast, its effect is just about as tremendous as the effect of down, when it is blown against the walls of a castle; it produces no damage whatever, on account of its lightness and littleness. Fear not, Christian. Let slander fly, let envy send forth its

forked tongue, let it hiss at you, your bow shall abide in strength. Oh! shielded warrior, remain quiet, fear no ill; but, like the eagle in its lofty eyrie, look thou down upon the fowlers in the plain, turn thy bold eye upon them and say, “Shoot ye may, but your shots will not reach half-way to the pinnacle where I stand. Waste your powder upon me if ye will; I am beyond your reach.” Then clap your wings, mount to heaven, and there laugh them to scorn, for ye have made your refuge God, and shall find a most secure abode.

III. The third thing in our text is THE SECRET STRENGTH. “The arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.” First, notice, concerning his strength, that it was real strength. It says, “the arms of his hands,” not his hands only. You know some people can do a great deal with their hands, but then it is often fictitious power; there is no might in the arm — there is no muscle; but of Joseph it is said; “the arms of his hands were made strong. It was real potency, true muscle, real sinew, real nerve. It was not simply sleight of hand — the power of moving his finger very swiftly — but the arms of his hands were made strong. Now that strength which God gives to his Josephs is real strength; it is not a boasted valor, a fiction, a thing of which men talk, an airy dream, an unsubstantial unreality, but it is real strength. I should not like to have a combat with one of God’s Josephs. I should find their blows very heavy. I fear a Christian’s strokes more than any other man’s for he has bone and sinew, and smites hard. Let the foes of the church expect a hard struggle if they attack an heir of life. Mightier than giants are men of the race of heaven; should they once arouse themselves to battle they could laugh at the spear and the habergeon. But they are a patient generation, enduring ills without resenting them suffering scorn without reviling the scoffer. Their triumph is to come when their enemies shall receive the vengeance due; then shall it be seen by an assembled world that the “little flock” were men of high estate, and the “offscouring of all things” were verily men of real strength and dignity.

Even though the world perceive it not, the favored Joseph has real strength, not in his hands only, but in his arms — real might, real power. O ye foes of God, ye think God’s people are despicable and powerless; but know that they have true strength from the omnipotence of their Father, a might substantial and divine. Your own shall melt away, and droop and

die, like the snow upon the low mountain top, when the sun shines upon it, it melteth into water; but our vigor shall abide like the snow on the summit of the Alps, undiminished for ages. It is real strength.

Then observe that the strength of God's Joseph is divine strength. His arms were made strong by God. Why does one of God's ministers preach the gospel powerfully? Because God gives him assistance. Why does Joseph stand against temptation? Because God gives him aid. The strength of a Christian is divine strength. My brethren, I am more and more persuaded every day that the sinner has no power of himself, except that which is given him from above. I know that if I were to stand with my foot upon the golden threshold of heaven's portal, if I could put this thumb upon the latch, I could not open that door, after having gone so far towards heaven, unless I had still supernatural power communicated to me in that moment. If I had a stone to lift, to work my own salvation, without God's help to do that, I must be lost, even though it were so little. There is naught that we can do without the power of God. All true strength is divine. As the light cometh from the sun, as the shower from heaven; so doth spiritual strength come from the Father lights, with whom there is neither variableness nor shadow of a turning.Again: I would have you notice in the text in what a blessedly familiar way God gives this strength to Joseph. It say, "the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob." Thus it represents God as putting his hands on Joseph's hands, placing his arms on Joseph's arms. In old times, when every boy had to be trained up to archery, if his father were worth so many pounds a year, you might see the father putting his hands on his boy's hands and pulling the bow for him, saying, "there, my son, in this manner draw the bow." So the text represents God as putting his hand on the hand of Joseph, and laying his broad arm along the arm of his chosen child, that he might be made strong. Like as a father teacheth his children; so the Lord teaches them that fear him. He puts his arms upon them. As Elijah laid with his mouth upon the child's mouth, with his hand upon the child's hand, with his foot upon the child's foot, so does "God put his mouth to his children's mouth, his hand to his ministers' hand, his foot to his people's foot; and so he makes us strong. Marvelous condescension! Ye stars of glory, have ye ever witnessed such stoops of love? God Almighty, Eternal, Omnipotent, stoops from his throne and lays his hand

upon the child's hand, stretching his arm upon the arm of Joseph, that he may be made strong.

One more thought, and I have done. The strength was covenant strength, for it is said, "The arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob." Now, wherever you read of the God of Jacob in the Bible, you may know that that respects God's covenant with Jacob. Ah! I love to talk about God's everlasting covenant. Some of the Arminians cannot bear it, but I love a covenant salvation — a covenant not made with my father, not between me and God, but between Christ and God. Christ made the covenant to pay a price, and God made the covenant that he should have the people. Christ has paid the price and ratified the covenant; and I am quite sure that God will fulfill his part of it, by giving every elect vessel of mercy into the hands of Jesus. But, beloved, all the power, all the grace, all the blessings, all the mercies, all the comforts, all the things we have, we have through the covenant. If there were no covenant; if we could rend the everlasting charter up; if the king of hell could cut it with his knife, as the king of Israel did the roll of Baruck, then we should fail indeed; for we have no strength, except that which is promised in the covenant. Covenant mercies, covenant grace, covenant promises, covenant blessings, covenant help, covenant everything — the Christian must receive, if he would enter into heaven.

Now, Christian, the archers have sorely grieved you, and shot at you, and wounded you; but your bow abides in strength, and the arms of your hands are made strong. But do you know, O believer, that you are like your Master in this?

IV. That is our fourth point — A GLORIOUS PARALLEL. "From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel." Jesus Christ was served just the same; the shepherd, the stone of Israel, passed through similar trials; he was shot at by the archers, he was grieved and wounded, but his bow abode in strength; his arms were made strong by the God of Jacob, and now every blessing rests "upon the crown of the head of him who was separated from his brethren." I shall not detain you long, but I have a few things to tell you; first about Christ as the shepherd, and then about Christ the stone.

Christ came into the world as a shepherd. As soon as he made his appearance, the Scribes and Pharisees said, "Ah! we have been the

shepherds until this hour; now we shall be driven from our honors, we shall lose all our dignity, and our authority." Consequently, they always shot at him. As for the people, they were a fickle herd; I believe that many of them respected and admired Christ, though, doubtless, the vast majority hated him, for wherever he went he was a popular preacher; the multitude always thronged him and crowded round him, crying, "Hosanna." I think, if you had walked up to the top of that hill of Calvary, and asked one of those men who cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him," "What do you say that for? Is he a bad man?" "No," he would have said, "he went about doing good." "Then why do you say 'crucify him?'" "Because Rabbi Simeon gave me a shekel to help the clamor." So the multitude were much won by the money and influence of the priests. But they were glad to hear Christ after all. It was the shepherds that hated him, because he took away their traffic, because he turned the buyers and sellers out of the temple, diminished their dignity and ignored their pretensions; therefore, they could not endure him. But the Shepherd of Israel mounted higher and higher; he gathered his sheep, carried the lambs in his bosom; and he now stands acknowledged as the great shepherd of the sheep, who shall gather them into one flock and lead them to heaven. Rowland Hill tells a curious tale, in his "Village Dialogues," about a certain Mr. Tiplash, a very fine intellectual preacher, who, in one of his flights of oratory, said, "O Virtue, thou art so fair and lovely, if thou wert to come down upon earth, all men would love thee," with a few more pretty, beautiful things. Mr. Blunt, and honest preacher, who was in the neighborhood, was asked to preach in the afternoon, and he supplemented the worthy gentleman's remarks, by saying, "O Virtue, thou didst come on earth, in all thy purity and loveliness; but instead of being beloved and admired, the archers sorely shot at thee and grieved thee; they took thee, Virtue, and hung thy quivering limbs upon a cross; when thou didst hang there dying they hissed at thee, they mocked thee, they scorned thee; when thou didst ask for water they gave thee vinegar to drink, mingled with gall; yea, when thou diedst thou hadst a tomb from charity, and that tomb, sealed by enmity and hatred." The Shepherd of Israel was despised, incarnate virtue was hated and abhorred; therefore fear not, Christians, take courage; for if your Master passed through it, surely you must.

To conclude: the text calls Christ the stone of Israel. I have heard a story — I cannot tell whether it is true or not — out of some of the Jewish rabbis; it is a tale, concerning the text, "The stone which the builders refused, the same is become the headstone of the corner." It is said that when Solomon's temple was building, all the stones were brought from the quarry ready cut and fashioned, and there were to be put. Amongst the stones was a very curious one; it seemed of no describable shape, it appeared unfit for any portion of the building. They tried it at this wall, but it would not fit; they tried it in another, but it could not be accommodated; so, vexed and angry, they threw it away. The temple was so many years building, that this stone became covered with moss, and grass grew around it. Everybody passing by laughed at the stone; they said Solomon was wise, and doubtless all the other stones were right; but as for that block, they might as well send it back to the quarry, for they were quite sure it was meant for nothing. Year after year rolled on, and the poor stone was still despised, the builders constantly refused it. The eventful day came when the temple was to be finished and opened, and the multitude was assembled to see the grand sight. The builders said, "Where is the top-stone? Where is the pinnacle?" They little thought where the crowning marble was, until some one said, "Perhaps that stone which the builders refused is meant to be the top-stone." They then took it, and hoisted it to the top of the house; and as it reached the summit they found it well adapted to the place. Loud hosannas made the welkin ring, as the stone which the builders refused, thus became the headstone of the corner. So is it with Christ Jesus. The builders cast him away. He was a plebeian; he was of poor extraction; he was a man acquainted with sinners, who walked in poverty and meanness; hence the worldly-wise despised him. But when God shall gather together, in one, all things that are in heaven and that are in earth, then Christ shall be the glorious consummation of all things.

"Christ reigns in heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise."

He shall be exalted; he shall be honored; his name shall endure as long as the sun, and all nations shall be blessed in him, yea, all generations shall call him blessed.

THE TOMB OF JESUS

SERMON NO. 18

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 8, 1855,

AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

"Come, see the place where the Lord lay." — Matthew 28:6.

Every circumstance connected with the life of Christ is deeply interesting to the Christian mind. Wherever we behold our Savior, he is well worthy of our notice.

"His cross, his manger, and his crown,
Are big with glories yet unknown."

All his weary pilgrimage, from Bethlehem's manger to Calvary's cross, is, in our eyes, paved with glory. Each spot upon which he trod is, to our souls, consecrated at once, simply because there the foot of earth's Savior and our own Redeemer once was placed. When he comes to Calvary, the interest thickens; then our best thoughts are centered on him in the agonies of crucifixion, nor does our deep affection permit us to leave him, even when, the struggle being over, he yields up the ghost. His body, when it is taken down from the tree, still is lovely in our eyes — we fondly linger around the motionless clay. By faith we discern Joseph of Arimathea, and the timid Nicodemus, assisted by those holy women, drawing out the nails and taking down the mangled body; we behold them wrapping him in clean, white linen, hastily girding him round with belts of spices; then putting him in his tomb, and departing for the Sabbath rest. We shall, on this occasion, go where Mary went on the morning of the first day of the week, when waking from her couch before the dawn, she aroused herself to be early at the sepulcher of Jesus. We will try, if it be possible, by the help of God's Spirit, to go as she did — not in body, but in soul — we will stand at that tomb; we will examine it, and we trust we shall hear some truth-speaking voice coming from its hollow bosom which will comfort

and instruct us, so that we may say of the grave of Jesus when we go away, “It was none other than the gate of heaven” — a sacred place, deeply solemn, and sanctified by the slain body of our precious Savior.

I. AN INVITATION GIVEN. I shall commence my remarks this morning by inviting all Christians to come with me to the tomb of Jesus. “Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” We will labor to render the place attractive, we will gently take your hand to guide you to it; and may it please our Master to make our hearts burn within us while we talk by the way.

Away, ye profane — ye souls whose life is laughter, folly, and mirth! Away, ye sordid and carnal minds who have no taste for the spiritual, no delight in the celestial. We ask not your company; we speak to God’s beloved, to the heirs of heaven, to the sanctified, the redeemed, the pure in heart — and we say to them, “Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” Surely ye need no argument to move your feet in the direction of the holy sepulcher; but still we will use the utmost power to draw your spirit thither. Come, then, for ‘tis the shrine of greatness, ‘tis the resting-place of the man, the Restorer of our race, the Conqueror of death and hell. Men will travel hundreds of miles to behold the place where a poet first breathed the air of earth; they will journey to the ancient tombs of mighty heroes, or the graves of men renowned by fame; but whither shall the Christian go to find the grave of one so famous as was Jesus? Ask me the greatest man who ever lived — I tell you the man Christ Jesus was “anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellow.” If ye seek a chamber honored as the resting-place of genius, turn in hither; if ye would worship at the grave of holiness, come ye here; if ye would see the hallowed spot where the choicest bones that e’er were fashioned lay for awhile, come with me, Christian, to that quiet garden, hard by the walls of Jerusalem.

Come with me, moreover, because it is the tomb of your best friend. The Jews said of Mary, “she goeth unto his grave to weep there.” Ye have lost your friends, some of you, ye have planted flowers upon their tombs, ye go and sit at eventide upon the green sward, bedewing the grass with your tears, for there your mother lies, and there your father or your wife. Oh! in pensive sorrow come with me to this dark garden of our Savior’s burial; come to the grave of your best friend — your brother, yea, one who “sticketh closer than a brother.” Come thou to the grave of thy dearest

relative, O Christian, for Jesus is thy husband, “Thy maker is thy husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name.” Doth not affection draw you? Do not the sweet lips of love woo you? Is not the place sanctified where one so well-beloved slept, although but for a moment ? Surely ye need no eloquence; if it were needed I have none. I have but the power, in simple, but earnest accents, to repeat the words, “Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” On this Easter morning pay a visit to his grave, for it is the grave of you best friend.

Yea, more, I will further urge you to this pious pilgrimage. Come, for angels bid you. Angels said, “Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” The Syriac version reads, “Come, see the place where our Lord lay.” Yes, angels put themselves with those poor women, and used one common pronoun — our. Jesus is the Lord of angels as well as of men. Ye feeble women — ye have called him Lord, ye have washed his feet, ye have provided for his wants, ye have hung upon his lips to catch his honeyed sentences, ye have sat entranced beneath his mighty eloquence; ye call him Master and Lord, and ye do well; “But,” said the seraph, “he is my Lord too;” bowing his head, he sweetly said, “Come, see the place where our Lord lay.” Dost fear then, Christian, to step into that tomb? Dost dread to enter there, when the angel pointeth with his finger and saith, “Come, we will go together, angels and men, and see the royal bedchamber?” Ye know that angels did go into his tomb, for they sat one at his head and the other at his foot in holy meditation. I picture to myself those bright cherubs sitting there talking to one another. One of them said, “It was there his feet lay;” and the other replied, “and there his hands, and there his head;” and in celestial language did they talk concerning the deep things of God; then they stooped and kissed the rocky floor, made sacred to the angels themselves, not because there they were redeemed, but because there their Master and their monarch, whose high behests they were obeying, did for awhile become the slave of death, and the captive of destruction. Come, Christian, then, for angels are the porters to unbar the door; come, for a cherub is thy messenger to usher thee into the death-place of death himself. Nay, start not from the entrance; let not the darkness affright thee; the vault is not damp with the vapors of death, nor doth the air contain aught of contagion. Come, for it is a pure and healthy place. Fear not to enter that tomb. I will admit that catacombs are not the places where we,

who are full of joy, would love to go. There is something gloomy and noisome about a vault. there are noxious smells of corruption; oft-times pestilence is born where a dead body hath lain; but fear it not, Christian, for Christ was not left in hell — in Hades — neither did his body see corruption. Come, there is no scent, yea, rather a perfume. Step in here, and, if thou didst ever breathe the gales of Ceylon, or winds from the groves of Araby, thou shalt find them far excelled by that sweet, holy fragrance left by the blessed body of Jesus; that alabaster vase which once held divinity, and was rendered sweet and precious thereby. Think not thou shalt find aught obnoxious to thy senses. Corruption Jesus never saw; no worms ever devoured his flesh; no rottenness ever entered into his bones; he saw no corruption. Three days he slumbered, but no long enough to putrefy; he soon arose, perfect as when he entered, uninjured as when his limbs were composed for their slumber. Come then, Christian, summon up thy thoughts, gather all thy powers; here is a sweet invitation, let me press it again. Let me lead thee by the hand of meditation, my brother; let me take thee by the arm of thy fancy, and let me again say to thee, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay."

There is yet one reason more why I would have thee visit this royal sepulcher — because it is a quiet spot. Oh! I have longed for rest, for I have heard this world's rumors in my ears so long, that I have begged for

"A lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade,"

where I might hide myself forever. I am sick of this tiring and trying life; my frame is weary, my soul is mad to repose herself awhile. I would I could lay myself down a little by the edge of some pebbly brook, with no companion save the fair flowers or the nodding willows. I would I could recline in stillness, where the air brings balm to the tormented brain, where there is no murmur save the hum of the summer bee, no whisper save that of the zephyrs, and no song except the caroling of the lark. I wish I could be at ease for a moment. I have become a man of the world; my brain is racked, my soul is tired. Oh! wouldst thou be quiet, Christian? Merchant, wouldst thou rest from thy toils? wouldst thou be calm for once? Then come hither. It is in a pleasant garden, far from the hum of Jerusalem; the noise and din of business will not reach thee there; "Come, see the place where the Lord lay." It is a sweet resting spot, a withdrawing room for thy

soul, where thou mayest brush from thy garments the dust of earth and muse awhile in peace.

II. ATTENTION REQUESTED. Thus I have pressed the invitation; now we will enter the tomb. Let us examine it with deep attention, noticing every circumstance connected with it.

And, first, mark that it is a costly tomb. It is no common grave; it is not an excavation dug out by the spade for a pauper, in which to hide the last remains of his miserable and overwearied bones. It is a princely tomb; it was made of marble, cut in the side of a hill. Stand here, believer, and ask why Jesus had such a costly sepulcher. He had no elegant garments; he wore a coat without seam, woven from the top throughout, without an atom of embroidery. He owned no sumptuous palace, for he had not where to lay his head. His sandals were not rich with gold, or studded with brilliants. He was poor. Why, then does he lie in a noble grave? We answer, for this reason: Christ was unhonored till he had finished his sufferings; Christ's body suffered contumely, shame, spitting, buffeting, and reproach, until he had completed his great work; he was trampled under foot, he was "despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;" but the moment he had finished his undertaking, God said, "No more shall that body be disgraced; if it is to sleep, let it slumber in an honorable grave; if it is to rest, let nobles bury it; let Joseph, the councillor, and Nicodemus, the man of Sanhedrim, be present at the funeral; let the body be embalmed with precious spices, let it have honor; it has had enough of contumely, and shame, and reproach, and buffeting; let it now be treated with respect." Christian, dost thou discern the meaning? Jesus, after he had finished his work, slept in a costly grave; for now his Father loved and honored him, since his work was done.

But, though it is a costly grave, it is a borrowed one. I see over the top of it, "Sacred to the memory of the family of Joseph of Arimathea;" yet Jesus slept there. Yes, he was buried in another's sepulcher. He who had no house of his own, and rested in the habitation of other men; who had no table, but lived upon the hospitality of his disciples; who borrowed boats in which to preach, and had not anything in the wide world, was obliged to have a tomb from charity. Oh! should not the poor take courage? They dread to be buried at the expense of their neighbors, but if their poverty be

unavoidable, wherefore should they blush, since Jesus Christ himself was interred in another's grave? Ah! I wish I might have had Joseph's grave to let Jesus be buried in it. Good Joseph thought he had cut it out for himself, and that he should lay his bones there. He had it excavated as a family vault, and lo, the Son of David makes it one of the tombs of the kings. But he did not lose it by lending it to the Lord; rather, he had it back with precious interest. He only lent it three days; then Christ resigned it; he had not injured, but perfumed and sanctified it, and make it far more holy, so that it would be an honor in future to be buried there. It was a borrowed tomb; and why? I take it, not to dishonor Christ, but in order to show that, as his sins were borrowed sins, so his burial was in a borrowed grave. Christ had no transgressions of his own; he took ours upon his head; he never committed a wrong, but he took all my sin, and all yours, if ye are believers; concerning all his people, it is true, he bore their griefs and carried their sorrows in his own body on the tree; therefore, as they were others' sins, so he rested in another's grave; as they were sins imputed, so that grave was only imputedly his. It was not his sepulcher; it was the tomb of Joseph.

Let us not weary in this pious investigation, but with fixed attention observe everything connected with this holy spot. The grave, we observe, was cut in a rock. Why was this? the rock of Ages was buried in a rock — a Rock within a rock. But why? Most persons suggest that it was so ordained, that it might be clear that there was no covert way by which the disciples or others could enter and steal the body away. Very possibly it was the reason; but O! my soul, canst thou find a spiritual reason? Christ's sepulcher was cut in a rock. It was not cut in mould that might be worn away by the water, or might crumble and fall into decay. The sepulcher stands, I believe, entire to this day; if it does not naturally, it does spiritually. The same sepulcher which took the sins of Paul, shall take my iniquities into his bosom, for if I ever lose my guilt, it must roll off my shoulders into the sepulcher. It was cut in a rock, so that if a sinner were saved a thousand years ago, I too can be delivered, for it is a rocky sepulcher where sin was buried — it was a rocky sepulcher of marble where my crimes were laid forever — buried never to have a resurrection.

You will mark, moreover, that tomb was one wherein no other man had ever lain. Christopher Ness says, when Christ was born, he lay in a

virgin's womb, and when he died, he was placed in a virgin tomb; he slept where never man had slept before. The reason was that none might say that another person rose, for there never had been any other body there, thus a mistake of persons was impossible. Nor could it be said that some old prophet was interred in the place, and that Christ rose because he had touched his bones. You remember where Elisha was buried; and as they were burying a man, behold he touched the prophet's bones and arose. Christ touched no prophet's bones, for none had ever slept there; it was a new chamber where the monarch of the earth did take his rest for three day and three nights.

We have learned a little, then, with attention; but let us stoop down once more before we leave the grave, and notice something else. We see the grave, but do you notice the grave-clothes, all wrapped and laid in their places, the napkin being folded up by itself? Wherefore are the grave-clothes wrapped up? The Jews said robbers had abstracted the body; but if so, surely they would have stolen the clothes; they would never have thought of wrapping them up an laying them down so carefully; they would be too much in haste to think of it. Why was it then? To manifest to us that Christ did not come out in a hurried manner. He slept till the last moment; then he awoke; he came not in haste. They shall not come out in haste, neither by flight, but at the appointed moment shall his people come to him. So at the precise hour, the decreed instant, Jesus Christ leisurely awoke, took off his cerements, left them all behind him, and came forth in his pure and naked innocence, perhaps to show us that as clothes were the offspring of sin — when sin was atoned for by Christ, he left all raiment behind him — for garments are the badges of guilt: if we had not been guilty we should never have needed them.

Then the napkin, mark you, was laid by itself. The grave-clothes were left behind for every departed Christian to wear. The bed of death is well sheeted with garments of Jesus, but the napkin was laid by itself, because the Christian, when he dies, does not need that; it is used by the mourners, and the mourners only. We shall all wear grave-clothes, but we shall not need the napkin. When our friends die, the napkin is laid aside for us to use; but do our ascended brethren and sisters use it? No; the Lord God hath wiped away all tears from their eyes. We stand and view the corpses of the dear departed, we moisten their faces with our tears, letting whole

showers of grief fall on their heads; but do they weep? Oh, no. Could they speak to us from the upper spheres they would say, "Weep not for me, for I am glorified. Sorrow not for me; I have left a bad world behind me, and have entered into a far better." They have no napkin — they weep not. Strange it is that those who endure death weep not; but those who see them die, are weepers. When the child is born it weeps while others smile, (say the Arabs,) and when it dies it smiles while others weep. It is so with the Christian. O blessed thing! The napkin is laid by itself, because Christians will never want to use it when they die.

III. Emotion excited. We have thus surveyed the grave with deep attention, and, I hope, with some profit to ourselves. But that is not all. I love a religion which consists, in a great measure, of emotion. Now, if I had power, like a master, I would touch the strings of your hearts, and fetch a glorious tune of solemn music from them, for this is a deeply solemn place into which I have conducted you.

First, I would bid you stand and see the place where the Lord lay with emotions of deep sorrow. Oh cone, my beloved brother, thy Jesus once lay there. He was a murdered man, my soul, and thou the murderer.

"Ah, you my sins, my cruel sins,
His chief tormentors were,
Each of my crimes became a nail,
And unbelief the spear."
"Alas! and did my Savior bleed?
And did my Sov'reign die?"

I slew him — this right hand struck the dagger to his heart. My deeds slew Christ. Alas! I slew my best beloved; I killed him who loved me with an everlasting love. Ye eyes, why do you refuse to weep when ye see Jesus' body mangled and torn? Oh! give vent to your sorrow, Christians, for ye have good reason to do so. I believe in what Hart says, that there was a time in his experience when he could so sympathize with Christ, that he felt more grief at the death of Christ than he did joy. It seemed so sad a thing that Christ should have to die; and to me it often appears too great a price for Jesus Christ to purchase worms with his own blood. Methinks I love him so much, that if I had seen him about to suffer, I should have been as bad as Peter, and have said, "That be far from thee, Lord;" but then he would have said to me, "Get thee behind me, Satan", for he does not

approve of that love which would stop him from dying. “The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” But I think, had I seen him going up to his cross, I could fain have pressed him back and said “Oh! Jesus, thou shalt not die; I cannot have it. Wilt thou purchase my life with a price so dear?” It seems too costly for him who is the Prince of Life and Glory to let his fair limbs be tortured in agony; that the hands which carried mercies should be pierced with accursed nails; that the temples that were always clothed with love should have cruel thorns driven through them. It appears too much. Oh! weep, Christian, and let your sorrow rise. Is not the price all but too great, that your beloved should for you resign himself? Oh! I should think, if a person were saved from death by another, he would always feel deep grief if his deliverer lost his life in the attempt. I had a friend, who, standing by the side of a piece of frozen water, saw a young lad in it, and sprang upon the ice in order to save him. After clutching the boy, he held him in his hands and cried out, “Here he is! Here he is! I have saved him.” But, just as they caught hold of the boy, he sank himself, and his body was not found for some time afterwards, when he was quite dead. Oh! it is so with Jesus. My soul was drowning. From heaven’s high portals he saw me sinking in the depths of hell; he plunged in:

“He sank beneath his heavy woes,
To raise me to a crown;
There’s ne’er a gift his hand bestows,
But cost his heart a groan.”
Ah! we may indeed regret our sin, since it slew Jesus.

Now, Christian, change thy note a moment. “Come, see the place where the Lord lay,” with joy and gladness. He does not lie there now. Weep, when ye see the tomb of Christ, but rejoice because it is empty. Thy sin slew him, but his divinity raised him up. Thy guilt hath murdered him, but his righteousness hath restored him. Oh! he hath burst the bonds of death, he hath ungirt the cerements of the tomb, and hath come out more than conqueror, crushing death beneath his feet. Rejoice, O Christian, for he is not there — he is risen.

“Come, see the place where the Lord lay.”

One more thought, and then I will speak a little concerning the doctrines we may learn from this grave. “Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” with solemn awe for you and I will have to lie there too.

“Hark! from the tomb a doleful sound,
Mine ears, attend the cry,
Ye living men, come view the ground
Where ye must shortly lie.”
“Princes, this clay must be your bed,
In spite of all your powers.
The tall, the wise, the reverend head,
Must lie as low as ours.”

It is a fact we do not often think of, that we shall all be dead in a little while. I know that I am made of dust, and not of iron; my bones are not brass, nor my sinews steel; in a little while my body must crumble back to its native elements. But do you ever try to picture to yourself the moment of your dissolution? My friends, there are some of you who seldom realize how old you are, how near you are to death. One way of remembering our age, is to see how much remains. Think how old eighty is, and then see how few years there are before you will get there. We should remember our frailty. Sometimes I have tried to think of the time of my departure. I do not know whether I shall die a violent death or not; but I would to God that I might die suddenly; for sudden death is sudden glory. I would I might have such a blessed exit as Dr. Beaumont, and die in my pulpit, laying down my body with my charge, and ceasing at once to work and live. But it is not mine to choose. Suppose I lie lingering for weeks, in the midst of pains, and griefs, and agonies; when that moment comes, that moment which is too solemn for my lips to speak of, when the spirit leaves the clay — let the physician put it off for weeks, or years, as we say he does, though he does not — when that moment comes, O ye lips, be dumb, and profane not its solemnity. When death comes, how is the strong man bowed down! How doth the mighty man fall! They may say they will not die, but there is no hope for them; they must yield, the arrow has gone home. I knew a man who was a wicked wretch, and I remember seeing him pace the floor of his bedroom saying “O God, I will not die, I will not die.” When I begged him to lie on his bed, for he was dying, he said he could not die while he could walk, and he would walk till he did die. Ah! he expired in the utmost torments, always shrieking, “O God, I will not

die.” Oh! that moment, that last moment. See how clammy is the sweat upon the brow, how dry the tongue, how parched the lips. The man shuts his eyes and slumbers, then opens them again: and if he be a Christian, I can fancy that he will say:

“Hark! they whisper: angels say,
Sister spirit, come away.
What is this absorbs me quite —
Steals my senses — shuts my sight —
Drowns my spirit — draws my breath?
Tell me, my soul, can this be death?”

We know not when he is dying. One gentle sigh, and the spirit breaks away. We can scarcely say, “he is gone,” before the ransomed spirit takes its mansion near the throne. Come to Christ’s tomb, then, for the silent vault must soon be your habitation. Come to Christ’s grave, for ye must slumber there. And even you, ye sinners, for one moment I will ask you to come also, because ye must die as well as the rest of us. Your sins cannot keep you from the jaws of death. I say, sinner, I want thee to look at Christ’s sepulcher too, for when thou diest it may have done thee great good to think of it. You have heard of Queen Elizabeth, crying out that she would give an empire for a single hour. Or have you heard the despairing cry of the gentleman on board the “Arctic,” when it was going down, who shouted to the boat, “Come back! I will give you £30,000 if you will come and take me in.” Ah! poor man, it were but little if he had thirty thousand worlds, if he could thereby prolong his life: “Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath, will he give for his life.” Some of you who can laugh this morning, who came to spend a merry hour in this hall, will be dying, and then ye will pray and crave for life, and shriek for another Sabbath-day. Oh! how the Sabbaths ye have wasted will walk like ghosts before you! Oh! how they will shake their snaky hair in your eyes! How will ye be made to sorrow and weep, because ye wasted precious hours, which, when they are gone, are gone too far to be recalled. May God save you from the pangs of remorse.

IV. INSTRUCTION IMPARTED. And now, Christian brethren, “Come, see the place where the Lord lay,” to learn a doctrine or two. What did you see when you visited “the place where the Lord lay?” “He is not here; for he is risen.” The first thing you perceive, if you stand by his empty tomb, is his

divinity. The dead in Christ shall rise first at the resurrection: but he who rose first — their leader, rose in a different fashion. They rise by imparted power. He rose by his own. He could not slumber in the grave, because he was God. Death had no more dominion over him. There is no better proof of Christ's divinity that that startling resurrection of his, when he rose from the grave, by the glory of the Father. O Christian, thy Jesus is a God; his broad shoulders that hold thee up are indeed divine; and here thou hast the best proof of it — because he rose from the grave.

A second doctrine here taught well may charm thee, if the Holy Spirit apply it with power. Behold his empty tomb, O true believer: it is a sign of thine acquittal, and thy full discharge. If Jesus had not paid the debt, he ne'er had risen from the grave. He would have lain there till this moment if he had not cancelled the entire debt, by satisfying eternal vengeance. O beloved, is not that an overwhelming thought?

"It is finished, it is finished,
Hear the rising Savior cry."

The heavenly turnkey came, a bright angel stepped from heaven and rolled away the stone; but he would not have done so if Christ had not done all: he would have kept him there, he would have said, "Nay,nay, thou art the sinner now; thou hast the sins of all thine elect upon thy shoulder, and I will not let thee go free till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." In his going free I see my own discharge.

"My Jesu's blood's my full discharge."

As a justified man, I have not a sin now against me in God's book. If I were to turn over God's eternal book, I should see every debt of mine receipted and cancelled.

"Here's pardon for transgressions past,
It matter not how black their cast,
And O my soul, with wonder view,
For sins to come, here's pardon too.
Fully discharged by Christ I am,
From Christ's tremendous curse and blame."

One more doctrine we learn, and with that we will conclude — the doctrine of the resurrection. Jesus rose, and as the Lord our Savior rose, so all his followers must rise. Die I must — this body must be a carnival for worms;

it must be eaten by those tiny cannibals; peradventure it shall be scattered from one portion of the earth to another; the constituent particles of this my frame will enter into plants, from plants pass into animals, and thus be carried into far distant realms; but, at the blast of the archangel's trumpet, every separate atom of my body shall find its fellow; like the bones lying in the valley of vision, though separated from one another, the moment God shall speak, the bone will creep to its bone; then the flesh shall come upon it; the four winds of heaven shall blow, and the breath shall return. So let me die, let beasts devour me, let fire turn this body into gas and vapor, all its particles shall yet again be restored; this very self-same, actual body shall start up from its grave, glorified and made like Christ's body, yet still the same body, for God hath said it. Christ's same body rose; so shall mine. O my soul, dost thou now dread to die? Thou wilt lose thy partner body a little while, but thou wilt be married again in heaven; soul and body shall again be united before the throne of God. The grave — what is it? It is the bath in which the Christian puts the clothes of his body to have them washed and cleansed. Death — what is it? It is the waiting-room where we robe ourselves for immortality; it is the place where the body, like Esther, bathes itself in spices that it may be fit for the embrace of its Lord. Death is the gate of life; I will not fear to die, then, but will say,

"Shudder not to pass the stream;
Venture all thy care on him;
Him whose dying love and power
Stilled its tossing, hushed its roar,
Safe in the expanded wave;
Gentle as a summer's eve.
Not one object of his care
Ever suffered shipwreck there."

Come, view the place then, with all hallowed meditation, where the Lord lay. Spend this afternoon, my beloved brethren, in meditating upon it, and very often go to Christ's grave, both to weep and to rejoice. Ye timid ones, do not be afraid to approach, for 'tis no vain thing to remember that timidity buried Christ. Faith would not have given him a funeral at all; faith would have kept him above ground, and would never have let him be buried; for it would have said, it would be useless to bury Christ if he were to rise. Fear buried him. Nicodemus, the night disciple, and Joseph of

Arimathea, secretly, for fear of the Jews, went and buried him. Therefore, ye timid ones, ye may go too. Ready-to-halt, poor Fearing, and thou, Mrs. Despondency, and Much-afraid, go often there; let it be your favorite haunt, there build a tabernacle, there abide. And often say to your heart, when you are in distress and sorrow, “Come, see the place where the Lord lay.”

THE CARNAL MIND ENMITY AGAINST GOD

SERMON NO. 20

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 22, 1855,

AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

"The carnal mind is enmity against God" — Romans 8:7.

This is a very solemn indictment which the Apostle Paul here prefers against the carnal mind. He declares it to be enmity against God. When we consider what man once was, only second to the angels, the companion of God, who walked with him in the garden of Eden in the cool of the day; when we think of him as being made in the very image of his Creator, pure, spotless, and unblemished, we cannot but feel bitterly grieved to find such an accusation as this preferred against us as a race. We may well hang our harps upon the willows, while we listen to the voice of Jehovah solemnly speaking to his rebellious creature. "How art thou fallen from heaven, thou son of the morning!" "Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering — the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so; thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee, and thou hast sinned; therefore, I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God; and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire."

There is much to sadden us in a view of the ruins of our race. As the Carthaginian, who might tread the desolate site of his much-loved city, would shed many tears when he saw it laid in heaps by the Romans; or as the Jew, wandering through the deserted streets of Jerusalelm, would

lament that the ploughshare had marred the beauty and the glory of that city which was the joy of the whole earth; so ought we to mourn for ourselves and our race, when we behold the ruins of that goodly structure which God had piled, that creature, matchless in symmetry, second only to angelic intellect, that mighty being, man — when we behold how he is "fallen, fallen, fallen, from his high estate," and lies in a mass of destruction. A few years ago a star was seen blazing out with considerable brilliance, but soon disappeared; it has since been affirmed that it was a world on fire, thousands of millions of miles from us, and yet the rays of the conflagration reached us; the noiseless messenger of light gave to the distant dwellers on this globe the alarm of "A world on fire!" But what is the conflagration of a distant planet, what is the destruction of the mere material of the most ponderous orb, compared with this fall of humanity, this wreck of all that is holy and sacred in ourselves? To us, indeed, the things are scarcely comparable, since we are deeply interested in one, though not in the other. The fall of Adam was OUR fall; we fell in and with him; we were equal sufferers; it is the ruin of our own house that we lament, it is the destruction of our own city that we bemoan, when we stand and see written, in lines too plain for us to mistake their meaning, "The carnal mind" — that very self-same mind which was once holiness, and has now become carnal — "is enmity against God." May God help me, this morning, solemnly to prefer this indictment against all! Oh! that the Holy Spirit may so convince us of sin, that we may unanimously plead "guilty" before God.

There is no difficulty in understanding my text; it needs scarcely any explanation. We all know that the word "carnal" here signifies fleshly. The old translators rendered the passage thus; "The mind of the flesh is enmity against God" — that is to say, the natural mind, that soul which we inherit from our fathers, that which was born within us when our bodies were fashioned by God. The fleshly mind, the phronema sarkos, the lusts, the passions of the soul; it is this which has gone astray from God, and become enmity against him.

But, before we enter upon a discussion of the doctrine of the text, observe how strongly the Apostle expresses it. "The carnal mind," he says, "is ENMITY against God." He uses a noun, and not an adjective. He does not say it is opposed to God merely, but it is positive enmity. It is not black,

but blackness; it is not at enmity, but enmity itself; it is not corrupt, but corruption; it is not rebellious, it is rebellion; it is not wicked, it is wickedness itself. The heart, though it be deceitful, is positively deceit; it is evil in the concrete, sin in the essence; it is the distillation, the quintessence of all things that are vile; it is not envious against God, it is envy; it is not at enmity, it is actual enmity.

Nor need we say a word to explain that it is "enmity against God." It does not charge manhood with an aversion merely to the dominion, laws, or doctrines of Jehovah; but it strikes a deeper and surer blow. It does not strike man upon the head; it penetrates into his heart; it lays the axe at the root of the tree, and pronounces him "enmity against God," against the person of the Godhead, against the Deity, against the mighty Maker of this world; not at enmity against his Bible or against his gospel, though that were true, but against God himself, against his essence, his existence, and his person. Let us, then, weigh the words of the text, for they are solemn words. They are well put together by that master of eloquence, Paul, and they were moreover, dictated by the Holy Spirit, who telleth man how to speak aright. May he help us to expound, as he has already given us the passage to explain.

We shall be called upon to notice, this morning, first, the truthfulness of this assertion; secondly, the universality of the evil here complained of; thirdly, we will still further enter into the depths of the subject, and press it to your hearts, by showing the enormity of the evil; and after that, should we have time, we will deduce one or two doctrines from the general fact.

I. First, we are called upon to speak of the truthfulness of this great statement. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." It needs no proof, for since it is written in God's word, we, as Christian men, are bound to bow before it. The words of the Scriptures are words of infinite wisdom, and if reason cannot see the ground of a statement of revelation, it is bound, most reverently, to believe it, since we are well assured, even should it be above our reason, that it cannot be contrary thereunto. Here I find it written in the Scriptures, "The carnal mind is enmity against God;" and that of itself is enough for me. But did I need witnesses, I would conjure up the nations of antiquity; I would unroll the volume of ancient history; I would tell you

of the awful deeds of mankind. It may be I might move your souls to detestation, if I spake of the cruelty of this race to itself, if I showed you how it made the world an Aceldama, by its wars, and deluged it with blood by its fightings and murders; if I should recite the black list of vices in which whole nations have indulged, or even bring before you the characters of some of the most eminent philosophsers, I should blush to speak of them, and you would refuse to hear; yea, it would be impossible for you, as refined inhabitants of a civilized country, to endure the mention of the crimes that were committed by those very men who, now-a-days, are held up as being paragons of perfection. I fear, if all the truth were written, we should rise up from reading the lives of earth's mightiest heroes and proudest sages, and would say at once of all of them, "They are clean gone out of the way; they are altogether become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

And, did not that suffice, I would point you to the delusions of the heathen; I would tell you of their priestcraft, by which their souls have been enthralled in superstition; I would drag their gods before you; I would let you witness the horrid obscenities, the diabolical rites which are to these besotted men most sacred things. Then after you had heard what the natural religion of man is, I would ask what must his irreligion be? If this is his devotion, what must be his impiety? If this be his ardent love of the Godhead, what must his hatred thereof be? Ye would, I am sure, at once confess, did ye know what the race is, that the indictment is proven, and that the world must unreservedly and truthfully exclaim, "guilty."

A further argument I might find in the fact, that the best of men have been always the readiest to confess their depravity. The holiest men, the most free from impurity, have always felt it most. He whose garments are the whitest, will best perceive the spots upon them. He whose crown shineth the brightest, will know when he hath lost a jewel. He who giveth the most light to the world, will always be able to discover his own darkness. The angels of heaven veil their faces; and the angels of God on earth, his chosen people, must always veil their faces with humility, when they think of what they were. Hear David: he was none of those who boast of a holy nature and a pure disposition. He says, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Hear all those holy men who have written in the inspired volume, and ye shall find them all confessing that

they were not clean, no not one; yea, one of them exclaimed, “O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

And more, I will summon one other witness to the truthfulness of this fact, who shall decide the question; it shall be your conscience. Conscience, I will put thee in the witness-box, and cross-examine thee this morning! Conscience, truly answer! Be not drugged with the laudanum of self-security! Speak the truth! Didst thou never hear the heart say, “I wish there were no God?” Have not all men, at times, wished that our religion were not true? Though they could not entirely rid their souls of the idea of the Godhead, did they not wish that there might not be a God? Have they not had the desire that it might turn out that all these divine realities were a delusion, a farce, and an imposture? “Yea,” saith every man; “that has crossed my mind sometimes. I have wished I might indulge in folly; I have wished there were no laws to restrain me; I have wished, as the fool, that there were no God.” That passage in the Psalms, “The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God,” is wrongly translated. It should be, “The fool hath said in his heart, no God.” The fool does not say in his heart there is no God, for he knows there is a God; but he says, “No God — I don’t want any; I wish there were none.” And who amongst us has not been so foolish as to desire that there were no God? Now, conscience, answer another question! Thou hast confessed that thou hast at times wished there were no God; now, suppose a man wished another dead, would not that show that he hated him? Yes, it would. And so, my friends, the wish that there were no God, proves that we dislike God. When I wish such a man dead and rotting in his grave; when I desire that he were non est, I must hate that man; otherwise I should not wish him to be extinct. So that wish — and I do not think there has been a man in this world who has not had it — proves that “the carnal mind is enmity against God.”

But, conscience, I have another question! Has not thine heart ever desired, since there is a God, that he were a little less holy, a little less pure, so that those things which are now great crimes might be regarded as venial offenses, as peccadillos? Has thy heart never said, “Would to God these sins were not forbidden! Would that he would be merciful and pass them by without an atonement! Would that he were not so severe, so rigorously just, so sternly strict to his integrity.” Hast thou never said that, my heart? Conscience must reply, “Thou hast.” Well, that wish to change God,

proves that thou art not in love with the God that now is, the God of heaven and earth; and though thou mayest talk of natural religion, and boast that thou dost reverence the God of the green fields, the grassy meads, the swelling flood, the rolling thunder, the azure sky, the starry night, and the great universe — though thou lovest the poetic beau ideal of Deity, it is not the God of Scripture, for thou hast wished to change his nature, and in that hast thou proved that thou art at enmity with him. But wherefore, conscience, should I go thus round about? Thou canst bear faithful witness, if thou wouldst speak the truth, that each person here has so transgressed against God, so continually broken his laws, violated his Sabbath, trampled on his statutes, despised his gospel, that it is true, aye, most true, that "the carnal mind is enmity against God."

II. Now Secondly, we are called upon to notice the universality of this evil. What a broad assertion it is. It is not a single carnal mind, or a certain class of characters, but "the carnal mind." It is an unqualified statement, including every individual. Whatever mind may properly be called carnal, not having been spiritualized by the power of God's Holy Ghost, is "enmity against God."

Observe then, first of all, the universality of this as to all persons. Every carnal mind in the world is at enmity against God. This does not exclude even infants at the mothers' breast. We call them innocent, and so they are of actual transgression, but as the poet says, "Within the youngest breast there lies a stone." There is in the carnal mind of an infant, enmity against God; it is not developed, but it lieth there. Some say that children learn sin by imitation. But no; take a child away, place it under the most pious influences, let the very air it breathes be purified by piety; let it constantly drink in draughts of holiness; let it hear nothing but the voice of prayer and praise; let its ear be always kept in tune by notes of sacred song; and that child, notwithstanding, may still become one of the grossest of transgressors; and though placed apparently on the very road to heaven, it shall, if not directed by divine grace, march downwards to the pit. Oh! how true it is that some who have had the best of parents, have been the worst of sons; that many who have been trained up under the most holy auspices, in the midst of the most favorable scenes for piety, have nevertheless, become loose and wanton! So it is not by imitation, but it is by nature, that the child is evil. Grant me that the child is carnal, and my

text says, “the carnal mind is enmity against God.” The young crocodile, I have heard, when broken from the shell, will in a moment begin to put itself in a posture of attack, opening its mouth as if it had been taught and trained. We know that young lions, when tamed and domesticated, still will have the wild nature of their fellows of the forest, and were liberty given them, would prey as fiercely as others. So with the child; you may bind him with the green withes of education, you may do what you will with him, since you cannot change his heart, that carnal mind shall still be at enmity against God; and notwithstanding intellect, talent, and all you may give to boot, it shall be of the same sinful complexion as every other child, if not as apparently evil; for “the carnal mind is enmity against God.”

And if this applies to children, equally does it include every class of men. There be some men that are born into this world master-spirits, who walk about it as giants, wrapped in mantles of light and glory. I refer to the poets, men who stand aloft like Colossi, mightier than we, seeming to be descended from celestial spheres. There be others of acute intellect, who, searching into mysteries of science, discover things that have been hidden from the creation of the world; men of keen research, and mighty erudition; and yet of each of these — poet, philosopher, metaphysician, and great discoverer — it shall be said, “The carnal mind is enmity against God.” Ye may train him up, ye may make his intellect almost angelic, ye may strengthen his soul until he shall take what are riddles to us, and unravel them with his fingers in a moment; ye may make him so mighty, that he can grasp the iron secrets of the eternal hills and grind them to atoms in his fist; ye may give him an eye so keen, that he can penetrate the arcana of rocks and mountains; ye may add a soul so potent, that he may slay the giant Sphinx, that had for ages troubled the mightiest men of learning; yet, when ye have done all, his mind shall be a depraved one, and his carnal heart shall still be in opposition to God. Yea, more, ye shall bring him to the house of prayer; ye shall make him sit constantly under the clearest preaching of the word, where he shall hear the doctrines of grace in all their purity, attended by a holy unction; but if that holy unction does not rest upon him, all shall be vain; he shall still come most regularly, but, like the pious door of the chapel, that turneth in and out, he shall still be the same; having an outside superficial religion, and his carnal mind shall still be at

enmity against God. Now, this is not my assertion, it is the declaration of God's word, and you must leave it if you do not believe it; but quarrel not with me, it is my Master's message; and it is true of every one of you — men, women, and children, and myself too — that if we have not been regenerated and converted, if we have not experienced a change of heart, our carnal mind is still at enmity against God.

Again, notice the universality of this at all times. The carnal mind is at all times enmity against God. "Oh," say some, "it may be true that we are at times opposed to God, but surely we are not always so." "There be moments," says one, "when I feel rebellious; at times my passions lead me astray; but surely there are other favorable seasons when I really am friendly to God, and offer true devotion. I have (continues the objector), stood upon the mountain-top, until my whole soul has kindled with the scene below, and my lips have uttered the song of praise, —

"These are thy glorious works, parent of good,
Almighty, thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair; thyself how wondrous then!"

Yes, but mark, what is true one day is not false another; "the carnal mind is enmity against God" at all times. The wolf may sleep, but it is a wolf still. The snake with its azure hues, may slumber amid the flowers, and the child may stroke its slimy back, but it is a serpent still; it does not change its nature, though it is dormant. The sea is the house of storms, even when it is glassy as a lake; the thunder is still the mighty rolling thunder, when it is so much aloft that we hear it not. And the heart, when we perceive not its ebullitions, when it belches not forth its lava, and sendeth not forth the hot stones of its corruption, is still the same dread volcano. At all times, at all hours, at every moment, (I speak this as God speaketh it), if ye are carnal, ye are each one of you enmity against God.

Another thought concerning the universality of this statement. The whole of the mind is enmity against God. The text says, "The carnal mind is enmity against God." That is, the entire man, every part of him — every power, every passion. It is a question often asked, "What part of man was injured by the fall?" Some think that the fall was only felt by the affections, and that the intellect was unimpaired; this they argue from the wisdom of man, and the mighty discoveries he has made, such as the law

of gravitation, the steam-engine, and the sciences. Now, I consider these things as being a very mean display of wisdom, compared with what is to come in a hundred years, and very small compared with what might have been, if man's intellect had continued in its pristine condition. I believe that the fall crushed man entirely, albeit, when it rolled like an avalanche upon the mighty temple of human nature, some shafts were still left undestroyed, and amidst the ruins you find here and there, a flute, a pedestal, a cornice, a column, not quite broken, yet the entire structure fell, and its most glorious relics are fallen ones, levelled in the dust. The whole of man is defaced. Look at our memory; is it not true that the memory is fallen? I can recollect evil things far better than those which savor of piety. I hear a ribald song; that music of hell shall jar in my ear when gray hairs shall be upon my head. I hear a note of holy praise; alas! it is forgotten! For memory graspeth with an iron hand ill things, but the good she holdeth with feeble fingers. She suffereth the glorious timbers from the forest of Lebanon to swim down the stream of oblivion, but she stoppeth all the draff that floateth from the foul city of Sodom. She will retain evil, she will lose good. Memory is fallen. So are the affections. We love everything earthly better than we ought; we soon fix our heart upon a creature, but very seldom on the Creator; and when the heart is given to Jesus, it is prone to wander. Look at the imagination, too. Oh! how can the imagination revel, when the body is in an ill condition? Only give man something that shall well nigh intoxicate him; drug him with opium; and how will his imagination dance with joy! Like a bird uncaged, how will it mount with more than eagles' wings! He sees things he had not dreamed of even in the shades of night. Why did not his imagination work when his body was in a normal state — when it was healthy? Simply because it is depraved; and until he had entered a foul element — until the body had begun to quiver with a kind of intoxication — the fancy would not hold its carnival. We have some splendid specimens of what men could write, when they have been under the accursed influence of ardent spirits. It is because the mind is so depraved that it loves something which puts the body into an abnormal condition; and here we have a proof that the imagination itself has gone astray. So with the judgement — I might prove how ill it decides. So might I accuse the conscience, and tell you how blind it is, and how it winks at the greatest follies. I might review all our powers,

and write upon the brow of each one, “Traitor against heaven! traitor against God!” The whole “carnal mind is enmity against God.”

Now, my hearers, “the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants;” but whenever I find a certain book much held in reverence by our Episcopalian brethren, entirely on my side, I always feel the greatest delight in quoting from it. Do you know I am one of the best churchmen in the world; the very best, if you will judge me by the articles, and the very worst, if you measure me in any other way. Measure me by the articles of the Church of England, and I will not stand second to any man under heaven’s blue sky in preaching the gospel contained in them; for if there be an excellent epitome of the gospel, it is to be found in the articles of the Church of England. Let me show you that you have not been hearing strange doctrine. Here is the 9th article, upon Original or Birth Sin: “Original Sin standeth not in the following of Adam; (as the Pelagians do vainly talk); but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and, therefore, in every person born into this world, it deserveth God’s wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in the Greek, phronema sarkos, which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire, of the flesh, is not subject to the Law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin.” I want nothing more. Will any one who believes in the Prayer Book dissent from the doctrine that “the carnal mind is enmity against God?”

III. I have said that I would endeavor, in the third place, to show the great enormity of this guilt. I do fear, my brethren, that very often when we consider our state, we think not so much of the guilt as of the misery. I have sometimes read sermons upon the inclination of the sinner to evil, in which it has been very powerfully proved, and certainly the pride of human nature has been well humbled and brought low; but one thing always strikes me, if it is left out, as being a very great omission; viz. — the doctrine that man is guilty in all these things. If his heart is against God, we ought to tell him it is his sin; and if he cannot repent, we ought to

show him that sin is the sole cause of his disability — that all his alienation from God is sin — that as long as he keeps from God it is sin. I fear many of us here must acknowledge that we do not charge the sin of it to our own consciences. Yes, say we, we have many corruptions. Oh! yes. But we sit down very contented. My brethren, we ought not to do so. The having those corruptions is our crime which should be confessed as an enormous evil; and if I, as a minister of the gospel, do not press home the sin of the thing, I have missed what is the very virus of it. I have left out the very essence, if I have not shown that it is a crime. Now, "The carnal mind is enmity against God." What a sin it is! This will appear in two ways. Consider the relation in which we stand to God, and then remember what God is; and after I have spoken of these two things, I hope you will see, indeed, that it is a sin to be at enmity with God.What is God to us? He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth; he bears up the pillars of the universe; his breath perfumes the flowers; his pencil paints them; he is the author of this fair creation; "we are the sheep of his pasture; he hath made us, and not we ourselves." He stands to us in the relationship of a Maker and Creator; and from that fact he claims to be our King. He is our legislator, our law-maker; and then, to make our crime still worse and worse, he is the ruler of providence; for it is he who keeps up from day to day. He supplys our wants; he keeps the breath within our nostrils; he bids the blood still pursue its course through the veins; he holdeth us in life, and preventeth us from death; he standeth before us, our creator, our king, our sustainer, our benefactor, and I ask, is it not a sin of enormous magnitude — is it not high treason against the emperor of heaven — is it not an awful sin, the depth of which we cannot fathom with the line of all our judgment — that we, his creatures, dependent upon him, should be at enmity with God?But the crime may seem to be worse when we think of what God is. Let me appeal personally to you in an interrogatory style, for this has weight with it. Sinner! why art thou at enmity with God? God is the God of love; he is kind to his creatures; he regards you with his love of benevolence; for this very day his sun hath shone upon you, this day you have had food and raiment, and you have come up here in health and strength. Do you hate God because he loves you? Is that the reason? Consider how many mercies you have received at his hands all you life long! You are born with a body not deformed; you have had a tolerable share of health; you have been recovered many times from sickness; when

lying at the gates of death, his arm has held back your soul from the last step to destruction. Do you hate God for all this? Do you hate him because he spared your life by his tender mercy? Behold his goodness that he hath spread before you! He might have sent you to hell; but you are here. Now, do you hate God for sparing you? Oh, wherefore art thou at enmity with him? My fellow creature, dost thou not know that God sent his Son from his bosom, hung him on the tree, and there suffered him to die for sinners, the just for the unjust? And dost thou hate God for that? Oh, sinner! is this the cause of thine enmity? Art thou so estranged that thou givest enmity for love? And when he surroundeth thee with favors, girdeth thee with mercies, encircleth thee with loving kindness, dost thou hate him for this? He might say, as Jesus did to the Jews, "For which of these works do ye stone me?" For which of these works do ye hate God? Did an earthly benefactor feed you, would you hate him? Did he clothe you, would you abuse him to his face? Did he give you talents, would you turn those powers against him? Oh, speak! Would you forge the iron and strike the dagger into the heart of your best friend? Do you hate you mother, who nursed you on her knee? Do you curse your father, who so wisely watched over you? Nay, ye say, we have some little gratitude towards earthly relatives. Where are your hearts, then? Where are your hearts, that ye can still despise God, and be at enmity with him? Oh! diabolical crime! Oh! satanic enormity! Oh! iniquity for which words fail in description! To hate the all-lovely — to despise the essentially good — to abhor the constantly merciful — to spurn the ever beneficent — to scorn the kind, the gracious one; above all, to hate the God who sent his son to die for man! Ah! in that thought — "The carnal mind is enmity with God;" there is something which may make us shake; for it is a terrible sin to be at enmity with God. I would I could speak more powerfully, but my Master alone can impress upon you the enormous evil of this horrid state of heart.

IV. But there are one or two doctrines which we will try to deduce from this. Is the carnal mind at enmity against God? Then salvation cannot be by merit; it must be by grace. If we are at enmity with God, what merit can we have? How can we deserve anything from the being we hate? Even if we were pure as Adam, we could not have any merit; for I do not think Adam had any desert before his Creator. When he had kept all his Master's law he was but an unprofitable servant; he had done no more

than he ought to have done; he had no surplus, no balance. But since we have become enemies, how much less can we hope to be saved by works! Oh! no; but the whole Bible tells us, from beginning to end, that salvation is not by the works of the law, but by the deeds of grace. Martin Luther declared that he constantly preached justification by faith alone, "because," said he, "the people would forget it; so that I was obliged almost to knock my Bible against their heads, to send it into their hearts." So it is true; we constantly forget that salvation is by grace alone. We always want to be putting in some little scrap of our own virtue; we want to be doing something. I remember a saying of old Matthew Wilkes: "Saved by you works! you might as well try to go to America in a paper boat!" Saved by your works! It is impossible! Oh! no, the poor legalist is like a blind horse going round and round the mill, or like the prisoner going up the treadwheel, and finding himself no higher after all he has done; he has no solid confidence, no firm ground to rest upon. He has not done enough — "never enough;" conscience always says, "this is not perfection; it ought to have been better," Salvation for enemies must be by an ambassador, — by an atonement, — yea, by Christ.

Another doctrine we gather from this is, the necessity of an entire change of our nature. It is true, that by birth we are at enmity with God. How necessary then it is that our nature should be changed! There are few people who sincerely believe this. They think that if they cry, "Lord, have mercy upon me," when they lay a-dying, they shall go to heaven directly. Let me suppose an impossible case for a moment. Let me imagine a man entering heaven without a change of heart. He comes within the gates. He hears a sonnet. He starts! It is to the praise of his enemy. He sees a throne, and on it sits one who is glorious; but it is his enemy. He walks streets of gold, but those streets belong to his enemy. He sees hosts of angels; but those hosts are the servants of his enemy. He is in an enemy's house; for he is at enmity with God. He could not join the song, for he would not know the tune. There he would stand, silent, motionless; till Christ would say, with a voice louder than ten thousand thunders, "What dost thou here? Enemies at a marriage banquet? Enemies in the children's house? Enemies in heaven? Get thee gone? 'Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire in hell!'" Oh! sirs, if the unregenerate man could enter heaven, I mention once more the oft-repeated saying of Whitefield, he would be so unhappy

in heaven, that he would ask God to let him run down to hell for shelter. There must be a change, if ye consider the future state; for how can enemies to God ever sit down at the banquet of the Lamb?

And to conclude, let me remind you — and it is in the text after all — that this change must be worked by a power beyond your own. An enemy may possibly make himself a friend; but enmity cannot. If it be but an adjunct of his nature to be an enemy, he may change himself into a friend; but if it is the very essence of his existence to be enmity, positive enmity, enmity cannot change itself. No, there must be something done more than we can accomplish. This is just what is forgotten in these days. We must more preaching of the Holy Spirit, if we are to have more conversion work. I tell you, sirs, if you change yourselves, and make yourselves better, and better, and better, a thousand times, you will never be good enough for heaven, till God's Spirit has laid his hand upon you; till he has renewed the heart, till he has purified the soul, till he has changed the entire spirit and new-made the man, there can be no entering heaven. How seriously, then, should each stand and think. Here am I, a creature of a day, a mortal born to die, but yet an immortal! At present I am at enmity with God. What shall I do? Is it not my duty, as well as my happiness, to ask whether there be a way to be reconciled to God?

Oh! weary slaves of sin, are not your ways the paths of folly? Is it wisdom, O my fellow-creatures, is it wisdom to hate your Creator? Is it wisdom to stand in opposition against him? Is it prudent to despise the riches of his grace? If it be wisdom, it is hell's wisdom; if it be wisdom, it is a wisdom which is folly with God. Oh! may God grant that you may turn unto Jesus with full purpose of heart! He is the ambassador; he it is who can make peace through his blood; and though you came in here an enemy, it is possible you may go out through that door a friend yet, if you can but look to Jesus Christ, the brazen serpent which was lifted up.

And now, it may be, some of you are convinced of sin, by the Holy Spirit. I will now proclaim to you the way of salvation. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Behold, O trembling penitent, the means of thy deliverance. Turn thy tearful eye to yonder Mount of Calvary! See the victim of justice — the

sacrifice of atonement for your transgression. View the Savior in his agonies, with streams of blood purchasing thy soul, and with intensest agonies enduring thy punishment. He died for thee, if now thou dost confess thy guilt. O come, thou condemned one, self-condemned, and turn thine eye this way, for one look will save. Sinner! thou art bitten. Look! It is naught but “Look!” It is simply “Look!” If thou canst but look to Jesus, thou art safe. Hear the voice of the Redeemer: “look unto me, and be ye saved.” Look! Look! Look! O guilty souls.

“Venture on him, venture wholly,
Let no other trust intrude;
None but Jesus, kind and loving,
Can do helpless sinners good.”

May my blessed Master help you to come to him, and draw you to his Son, for Jesu’s sake. Amen and Amen.

A CAUTION TO THE PRESUMPTUOUS

SERMON NO. 22

DELIVERED ON MAY 13, 1855

AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."
— 1 Corinthians 10:12

IT is a singular fact, but nevertheless most certain, that the vices are the counterfeits of virtues. Whenever God sends from the mint of heaven a precious coin of genuine metal, Satan will imitate the impress, and utter a vile production of no value. God gives love; it is his nature and his essence. Satan also fashioneth a thing which he calls love, but it is lust. God bestows courage; and it is a good thing to be able to look one's fellow in the face, fearless of all men in doing our duty. Satan inspires fool-hardiness, styles it courage, and bids the man rush to the cannon's mouth for "bubble reputation." God creates in man holy fear. Satan gives him unbelief, and we often mistake the one for the other. So with the best of virtues, the saving grace of faith, when it comes to its perfection it ripens into confidence, and there is nothing so comfortable and so desirable to the Christian, as the full assurance of faith. Hence, we find Satan, when he sees this good coin, at once takes the metal of the bottomless pit, imitates the heavenly image and superscription of assurance, and palms upon us the vice of presumption.

We are astonished, perhaps, as Calvinistic Christians, to find Paul saying, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall;" but we need not be astonished, for though we have a great right to believe that we stand, if we think we stand through the power of God — though we cannot be too confident of the might of the Most High, there is a thing so near akin to true confidence, that unless you use the greatest discernment you cannot

tell the difference. Unholy presumption — it is against that which I am to speak this morning. Let me not be misunderstood. I shall not utter one word against the strongest faith. I wish all Little-Faiths were Strong-Faiths, that all Fearings were made Valiants-for-Truth, and the Ready-to-Halts Asahel's Nimble-of-Foot, that they might all run in their Master's work. I speak not against strong faith or full assurance; God giveth it to us; it is the holiest, happiest thing that a Christian can have, and there is no state so desirable as that of being able to say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him." It is not against that I speak, but I warn you against that evil thing, a false confidence and presumption which creepeth over a Christian, like the cold death-sleep on the mountain-top, from which, if he is not awakened, as God will see that he shall be, death will be the inevitable consequence. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

I shall this morning attempt first, *to find out the character;* secondly, *to show the danger;* and thirdly, *to give the counsel.* The character is, the man who thinks he stands; the danger is, that he may fall; and the counsel is, "let him take heed."

I. My first business shall be to FIND OUT THE CHARACTER intended by the presumptuous man, the man who thinks he stands. I could find a multitude of such if I might search the wide world o'er. I could find men in business filled with an arrogant hardihood, who, because they have in one speculation been successful will wade far out into the stormy sea of this contending life, risk their all — and lose it too. I might mention others who, presuming upon their health, are spending their years in sin and their lives in iniquity, because they think their bones iron and their nerves steel, and "all men mortal but themselves." I might speak of men who will venture into the midst of temptation, confident in their boasted power, exclaiming with self-complacency, "Do you think I am so weak as to sin? Oh! no; I shall stand. Give me the glass; I shall never be a drunkard. Give me the song; you will not find me a midnight reveller. I can drink a little and then I can stop." Such are presumptuous men. But I am not about to find them there; my business this morning is with God's church. The fanning must begin with the floor; the winnowing must try the wheat. So we are to winnow the church this morning to discover the presumptuous.

We need not go far to find them. There are in every Christian church men who think they stand, men who vaunt themselves in fancied might and power, children of nature finely dressed, but not the living children of the living God; they have not been humbled or broken in spirit, or if they have, they have fostered carnal security until it has grown to a giant and trampled the sweet flower of humility under its foot. They think they stand. I speak now of real Christians, who, notwithstanding, have grown presumptuous, and indulge in a fleshly security. May my Master arouse such, while in preaching I endeavor to go to the core and root of the matter. For a little while I will expatiate upon the frequent causes of presumption in a Christian.

1. And first, a very common cause, is continued *worldly prosperity.* Moab is settled on his lees, he hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel. Give a man wealth; let his ships bring home continually rich freights; let the winds and waves appear to be his servants to bear his vessels across the bosom of the mighty deep; let his lands yield abundantly; let the weather be propitious to his crops, and the skies smile pleasantly upon his enterprise; let the bands of Orion be loosed for him; let the sweet influence of the Pleiades descend upon him; let uninterrupted success attend him; let him stand among men as a successful merchant, as a princely Dives, as a man who is heaping up riches to a large extent, who is always prospering: or, if not wealth, let him enjoy continued health; let him know no sickness; allow him with braced nerve and brilliant eye, to march through the world, and live happily; give him the buoyant spirit; let him have the song perpetually on his lips, and his eye be ever sparkling with joy: — the happy, happy man who laughs at care, and cries, “Begone, dull care, I prithee begone from me.” I say the consequence of such a state to a man, let him be the best Christian who ever breathed, will be presumption; and he will say, “I stand.” “In my prosperity,” says David, “I said, I shall never be moved.” And we are not much better than David, nor half as good. If God should always rock us in the cradle of prosperity — if we were always dandled on the knees of fortune — if we had not some stain on the alabaster pillar, if there were not a few clouds in the sky, some specks in our sunshine — if we had not some bitter drops in the wine of this life, we should become intoxicated with pleasure, we should dream “we stand;” and stand we should, but it would be upon a pinnacle; stand

we might, but hike the man asleep upon the mast, each moment we should be in jeopardy. We bless God, then, for our afflictions; we thank him for our depressions of spirit; we extol his name for the losses of our property; for we feel that had it not so happened to us, had he not chastened us every morning, and vexed us every evening, we might have become too secure. Continued worldly prosperity is a fiery trial. If it be so with any of you, apply this proverb to your own state, "As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold: so is a man to his praise."

2. Again, *light thoughts of sin* will engender presumption. When we are first converted, our conscience is so very tender, that we are afraid of the slightest sin. I have known young converts almost afraid to proceed a step, lest they should put their feet in the wrong direction. They will ask advice of their minister, and difficult cases of moral casuistry will they bring before us, such as we hardly know how to answer. They have a holy timidity, a godly fear, lest they should offend against God. But alas! very soon the fine bloom upon these first ripe fruits is removed by the rough handling of the surrounding world. The sensitive plant of young piety turns into a willow in after life, too pliant, too easily yielding. It is sadly true, that even a Christian will grow by degrees so callous, that the sin which once startled him and made his blood run cold, does not alarm him in the least. I can speak from my own experience. When first I heard an oath, I stood aghast, and knew not where to hide myself; yet now I can hear an imprecation or blasphemy against God, and though a shudder still runs through my veins, there is not that solemn feeling, that intense anguish, which I felt when first I heard such evil utterances. By degrees we get familiar with sin. The ear in which the cannon has been booming will not notice slight sounds. The men who work in those huge vessels, the hammering of which causes immense noise, cannot at first sleep, for the continual din in their ears; but by-and-by, they, when they are used to it, think nothing of it. So with sin. First, a little sin doth startle us. Soon we say, "Is it not a little one?" like Lot did of Zoar. Then there comes another, larger, and then another, until by degrees we begin to regard it as but a little ill; and then you know, there comes an unholy presumption, and we think we stand. "We have not fallen," say we, "we only did such a little thing; we have not gone astray. True, we tripped a little, but we stood upright in the main. We might have uttered one unholy word, but as for the most of

our conversation, it was consistent." So we palliate sin; we throw a gloss over it, we try to hide it. Christian, beware! when thou thinkest lightly of sin, then thou hast become presumptuous. Take heed, lest thou shouldst fall. Sin — a little thing! Is it not a poison! Who knows its deadliness? Sin — a little thing! Do not the little foxes spoil the vines? Sin — a little thing! Doth not the tiny coral insect build a rock that wrecks a navy? Do not little strokes fell lofty oaks? Will not continual droppings wear away stones? Sin — a little thing! It girded *his* head with thorns that now is crowned with glory. Sin — a little thing! It made *him* suffer anguish, bitterness, and woe, till he endured "All that incarnate God could bear, with strength enough, and none to spare." It is not a little thing, sirs. Could you weigh it in the scales of eternity, you would fly from it as from a serpent, and abhor the least appearance of evil. But alas! loose thoughts of sin often beget a presumptuous spirit, and we think we stand.

3. A third reason often is, *low thoughts of the value of religion.* We none of us value religion enough. Religious furor, as it is called, is laughed at everywhere; but I do not believe there is such a thing as religious furor at all. If a man could be so enthusiastic as to give his body to be burned at the stake, could he pour out his drops of blood and turn each drop into a life, and then let that life be slaughtered in perpetual martyrdom, he would not love his God too much. Oh, no! when we think that this world is but a narrow space; that time will soon be gone, and we shall be in the for-ever of eternity; when we consider we must be either in hell or in heaven throughout a never-ending state of immortality, how sirs, can we love too much? how can we set too high a value on the immortal soul? Can we ask too great a price for heaven? Can we think we do too much to serve that God who gave himself for our sins? Ah! no; and yet my friends, most of us do not sufficiently regard the value of religion. We cannot any of us estimate the soul rightly; we have nothing with which to compare it. Gold is sordid dust; diamonds are but small lumps of congealed air that can be made to melt away. We have nought with which to compare the soul; therefore we cannot tell its value. It is because we do not know this, that we presume. Doth the miser who loves his gold let it be scattered on the floor that his servant may steal it? Doth he not hide it in some secret place where no eye shall behold it? Day after day, night after night, he counteth out his treasure because he loves it. Doth the mother trust her babe by the

river-side? Doth she not in her sleep think of it? and when it is sick, will she leave it to the care of some poor nurse, who may suffer it to die? Oh! no; what we love, we will not wantonly throw away; what we esteem most precious, we will guard with the most anxious care. So, if Christians knew the value of their souls, if they estimated religion at its proper rate, they never would presume; but low thoughts of Christ, low thoughts of God, mean thoughts of our souls' eternal state — these things tend to make us carelessly secure. Take heed, therefore, of low ideas of the gospel, lest ye be overtaken by the evil one.

4. But again, this presumption often springs from *ignorance of what we are, and where we stand.* Many Christians have not yet learned what they are. It is true, the first teaching of God is to shew us our own state, but we do not know that thoroughly till many year s after we have known Jesus Christ. The fountains of the great deep within our hearts are not broken up all at once; the corruption of our soul is not developed in an hour. "Son of man," said the angel of Ezekiel, "I will show thee the abominations of Israel." He then took him in at one door, where he saw abominable things, and stood aghast. "Son of man, I will show thee greater abominations than these;" then he takes him into another chamber, and Ezekiel says, "Surely I have now seen the worst." "No," says the angel, "I will show thee greater things than these." So, all our life long the Holy Spirit reveals to us the horrid abomination of our hearts. I know there are some here who do not think anything about it; they think they are good-hearted creatures. Good hearts, have you? Good hearts! Jeremiah had a better heart than you, yet he said, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" No; the black lesson cannot be learned in a night. God alone knows the evil of the heart; and Young says, "God spares all eyes but his own that awful sight — the vision of a human heart." If we could but see it, we should stand aghast. Well, it is ignorance of this that makes us presume. We say, "I have a good nature, I have a noble disposition; I have none of those hot and angry passions that some have; I can stand secure; I have not that dry, tindery heart that is on fire in a moment; my passions are weakened; my powers for evil are somewhat taken down, and I may stand safely." Ah! ye little know that it is when ye talk like this, that ye presume. O worm of the dust, thou art not yet free from an evil nature, for sin and corruption remain in the heart even of the regenerate;

and it is strangely true, though it appears a paradox, as Ralph Erskine said, that a Christian sometimes thinks himself

"To good and evil equal bent
And both a devil and a saint."

There is such corruption in a Christian, that while he is a saint in his life, and justified through Christ, he seems a devil sometimes in imagination, and a demon in the wishes and corruptions of his soul. Take heed, Christian, thou hast need to be upon the watch tower; thou hast a heart of unbelief; therefore watch thou both night and day.

5. But to finish this delineation of a presumptuous *man — Pride is* the most pregnant cause of presumption. In all its various shapes it is the fountain of carnal security. Sometimes it is *pride of talent.* God has endowed a man with gifts; he is able to stand before the multitude, or to write for the many; he has a discerning mind, he has a judgment, and such like things. Then says he, " As for the ignorant, those who have no talent, they may fall; my brother ought to take care: but look at me. How am I wrapped in grandeur!" And thus in his self-complacency he thinks he stands. Ah! those are the men that fall. How many that flamed like comets in the sky of the religious world have rushed into space and been quenched in darkness! How many a man who has stood like a prophet before his fellows, and who would exclaim as he wrapped himself in his conceit, "I, only I am alive, I am the only prophet of God;" and yet that only prophet fell; his lamp was quenched, and his light put out in darkness. How many have boasted of their might and dignity, and have said, "I have built this mighty Babylon," but then they thought they stood, and they fell at once. "Let him that thinketh he standeth," with the proudest talents, "take heed lest he fall."

Others have the *pride of grace.* That is a curious fact; but there is such a thing as being proud of grace. A man says, "I have great faith, I shall not fall; poor little faith may, but I never shall." " I have fervent love," says another man, "I can stand, there is no danger of my going astray; as for my brother over there, he is so cold and slow, he will fall, I dare say." Says another, "I have a most burning hope of heaven, and that hope will triumph; it will purge my soul from sense and sin, as Christ the Lord is pure. I am safe." He who boasts of grace, has little grace to boast of. But

there are some who do that, who think their graces can keep them, knowing not that the stream must flow constantly from the fountain head, else the bed of the brook shall soon be dry, and ye shall see the pebbles at the bottom. If a continuous stream of oil come not to the lamp, though it burn brightly to-day, it shall smoke to-morrow, and noxous will be the scent thereof. Take heed that thou neither gloriest in thy talents nor in thy graces.

Many are worse still; they think they shall not fall because of their *privileges.* "I take the sacrament, I have been baptized in an orthodox manner, as written in God's word; I attend such and such a ministry; I am well fed; I am fat and flourishing in the courts of my God. If I were one of those starved creatures who hear a false gospel, possibly I might sin; but oh! our minister is the model of perfection; we are constantly fed and made fat; surely we shall stand." Thus in the complacency of their priviledges they run down others, exclaiming, "My mountain standeth firm, I shall never be moved." Take heed, presumption, take heed. Pride cometh before a fall; and a haughty spirit is the usher of destruction. Take heed; watch thy footsteps; for where pride creepeth in, it is the worm at the root of the gourd, causing it to wither and die. "Let him that thinketh he standeth," because of pride of talent, or grace, or privilege, "take heed lest he fall."

I hope I have touched some here; I trust the lancet has been sharp; I have taken the scalpel, and I hope I have discovered something. O ye presumptuous ones, I speak to you; and I shall do so while next I warn you of your danger.

II. I shall be more brief on the second point — THE DANGER. He who thinks he stands is in danger of a fall. The true Christian cannot possibly suffer a final fall, but he is very much disposed to a foul fall. Though the Christian shall not stumble so as to destroy his life, he may break his limb. Though God has given his angels charge over him, to keep him in all his ways, yet there is no commission to keep him when he goes astray; and when he is astray he may thrust himself through with many sorrows.

1. I must now try and give you the reason why a man who thinks he stands is more exposed to the danger of falling than any other. First, because *such a man in the midst of temptation will be sure to be more or less careless.* Make a man believe he is very strong, and what will he do?

The fight is thickening around him; yet he has his sword in his scabbard. “Oh,” saith he, “ my arm is nimble and strong; I can draw it out and strike home.” So perhaps he lies down in the field, or sloth-fully sleeps in his tent; “for,” saith he, “when I hear enemies approaching, such is my prowess and such my might, that I can mow them down by thousands. Ye sentinels watch the weak; go to the Ready-to-halts and the Fearings, and arouse them. But I am a giant; and let me once get this old Toledo blade in my hand, it will cut through body and soul. Whenever I meet my enemies I shall be more than conqueror.” The man is careless in battle. He lifteth up his helmet, as it is said Goliath did, and then a stone pierceth his forehead; he throws away his shield, and then an arrow penetrateth his flesh; he will put his sword into his scabbard, then the enemy smiteth him, and he is ill prepared to resist. The man who thinks he is strong, is off his guard; he is not ready to parry the stroke of the evil one, and then the poignard entereth his soul.

2. Again, *the man who thinks he stands will not be careful to keep out of the way of temptation, but* rather will run into it. I remember seeing a man who was going to a place of worldly amusement — he was a professor of religion — and I called to him, “What doest thou there, Elijah?” “Why do you ask me such a question as that?” said he. I said, “What doest thou here, Elijah? Thou art going there.” “Yes,” he replied, with some sort of blush, “but I can do that with impunity.” “I could not,” said I; “if I were there I know I should commit sin. I should not care what people said about it; I always do as I like, so far as I believe it to be right; I leave the *saying* to anybody who likes to talk about me. But it is a place of danger, and I could not go there with impunity.” “Ah!” said he, “I could; I have been before, and I have had some sweet thoughts there. I find it enlarges the intellect. You are narrow-minded; you do not get these good things. It is a rich treat I assure you. I would go if I were you.” “No,” I said, “it would be dangerous for me: from what I hear, the name of Jesus is profaned there; and there is much said that is altogether contrary to the religion we believe. The persons who attend there are none of the best, and it will surely be said that birds of a feather flock together.” “Ah, well,” he replied, “perhaps you young men had better keep away; I am a strong man, I can go;” and off he went to the place of amusement. That man, sirs, was an apple of Sodom. He was a professor of religion. I guessed there was

something rotten at the core from that very fact; and I found it so by experience, for the man was a downright sensualist even then. He wore a mask, he was a hypocrite, and had none of the grace of God in his heart. Presumptuous men will say they can go into sin, they are so full of moral strength; but when a man tells you he is so good, always read his words backwards, and understand him to mean that he is as bad as he can be. The self-confident man is in danger of falling because he will even run into temptation in the confidence that he is strong, and able to make his escape.

3. Another reason is, that *these strong men sometimes will not use the means of grace*, and therefore they fall. There are some persons here, who never attend a place of worship very likely; they do not profess to be religious; but I am sure they would be astonished if I were to tell them, that I know some professedly religious people who are accepted in some churches as being true children of God, who yet make it a habit of stopping away from the house of God, because they conceive they are so advanced that they do not want it. You smile at such a thing as that. They boast such deep experience within; they have a volume of sweet sermons at home, and they will stop and read them; they need not go to the house of God, for they are fat and flourishing. They conceit themselves that they have received food enough seven years ago to last them the next ten years. They imagine that old food will feed their souls now. These are your presumptuous men. They are not to be found at the Lord's table, eating the body and drinking the blood of Christ, in the holy emblems of bread and wine. You do not see them in their closets; you do not find them searching the Scriptures with holy curiosity. They think they stand — they shall never be moved; they fancy that means are intended for weaker Christians; and leaving those means, they fall. They will not have the shoe to put upon the foot, and therefore the flint cutteth them; they will not put on the armor, and therefore the enemy wounds them — sometimes well-nigh unto death. In this deep quagmire of neglect of the means, many a haughty professor has been smothered.

4. Once more, the man who is self-confident runs a fearful hazard, *because God's Spirit always leaves the proud*. The gracious Spirit delights to dwell in the low places. The holy dove came to Jordan; we read not that it ever rested on Bashan. The man upon the white horse rode among the myrtle trees, not among the cedars. The myrtle trees grew at the foot of the

mountains; the cedars on the summit thereof. God loves humility. He who walks with fear and trembling, fearing lest he should go astray, that man the Spirit loves; but when once pride creeps in, and the man declares, "Now I am in no danger," away goes the dove; it flies to heaven and will have nought to do with him. Proud souls, ye quench the Spirit. Ye arrogant men, ye grieve the Holy Ghost. He leaves every heart where pride dwelleth; that evil spirit of Lucifer he abhors; he will not rest with it; he will not tarry in its company. Here is your greatest danger, ye proud ones — that the Spirit leaves those who deny their entire dependence on him.

III. The third point is THE COUNSEL. I have been expounding the text; now I want to enforce it. I would, if my Lord would allow me, speak home to your souls, and so picture the danger of a presumptuous man, that I would make you all cry out to heaven that sooner might you die than presume; that sooner might you be found amongst those who lie prostrate at the foot of Christ, trembling all their lives, than amongst those who think they stand, and therefore fall. Christian men, the counsel of Scripture is — " Take heed."

1. First, take heed, because so *many have fallen.* My brother, could I take thee into the wards of that hospital where lie sick and wounded Christians, I could make you tremble. I would show you one, who, by a sin that occupied him not a single moment, is so sore broken, that his life is one continued scene of misery. I could show you another one, a brilliant genius, who served his God with energy, who is now — not a priest of the devil it is true, but almost that — sitting down in despair, because of his sin. I could point you to another person, who once stood in the church, pious and consistent, but who now comes up to the same house of prayer as if he were ashamed of himself, sits in some remote corner, and is no longer treated with the kindness he formerly received, the brethren themselves being suspicious, because he so greatly deceived them, and brought such dishonor upon the cause of Christ. Oh! did ye know the sad pain which those endure who fall. Could ye tell how many have fallen, (and have not perished, it is true,) but still have dragged themselves along, in misery, throughout their entire existence, I am sure ye would take heed. Come with me to the foot of the mountain of presumption. See there the maimed and writhing forms of many who once soared with Icarian wings in the airy regions of self-confidence; yet there they lie with their bones

broken, and their peace destroyed. There lies one who had immortal life within him; see how full of pain he appears, and he looks a mass of helpless matter. He is alive, it is true, but just alive. Ye know not how some of those enter heaven who are saved, “so as by fire.” One man walks to heaven; he keeps consistent; God is with him, and he is happy all his journey through. Another says, “I am strong, I shall not fall.” He runs aside to pluck a flower; he sees something which the devil has laid in his way; he is caught first in this gin, and then in that trap; and when he comes near the river, instead of finding before him that stream of nectar of which the dying Christian drinks, he sees fire through which he has to pass, blazing upon the surface of the water. The river is on fire, and as he enters it he is scorched and burned. The hand of God is lifted up saying, “Come on, come on;” but as he dips his foot in the stream, he finds the fire kindling around him, and though the hand clutches him by the hair of the head, and drags him through, he stands upon the shore of heaven, and cries, “ I am a monument of divine mercy, for I have been saved so as by fire.” Oh! do you want to be saved by fire, Christians? Would ye no rather enter heaven, singing songs of praises? Would ye not glorify him on earth, and then give your last testimony with, “Victory, victory, victory, unto him that loved us;” then shut your eyes on earth, and open them in heaven? If you would do so, presume not. “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”

2. Once more, my brother, take heed, because *a fall will so much damage the cause of Christ.* Nothing has hurt religion one-half, or one thousandth part, so much as the fall of God’s people. Ah! when a true believer sins, how will the world point at him. “That man was a deacon, but he knows how to charge exorbitantly. That man was a professor, but he can cheat as well as his neighbors. That man is a minister, and he lives in sin.” Oh! when the mighty fall — it is rejoice fir tree, for the cedar has fallen — how does the world exult! They chuckle over our sin; they rejoice over our faults; they fly around us, and if they can see one point where we are vulnerable, how will they say, “See these holy people are no better than they should be.” Because there is one hypocrite, men set down all the rest the same. I heard one man say, a little while ago, that he did not believe there was a true Christian living, because he had found out so many hypocrites. I reminded him that there could be no hypocrites if there were

no genuine ones. No one would try to forge bank notes if there were no genuine ones. No one would think of passing a bad sovereign if there were no sterling coin. So the fact of their being some hypocrites proves that there are some genuine characters. But let those who are so, take heed; let them always, in their conduct, have the ring of true gold. Let your conversation be such as to become the gospel of Christ, lest by any means the enemy get the advantage over us, and slander the name of Jesus.

And especially is this incumbent upon the members of our own denomination, for it is often said that the doctrines we believe have a tendency to lead us to sin. I have heard it asserted most positively, that those high doctrines which we love and which we find in the Scriptures, are licentious ones. I do not know who has the hardihood to make that assertion, when they consider that the holiest of men have been believers in them. I ask the man who dares to say that Calvinism is a licentious religion, what he thinks of the character of Augustine, or Calvin, or Whitfield, who in successive ages were the great exponents of the system of grace; or what will he say of those Puritans, whose works are full of them? Had a man been an Arminian in those days, he would have been accounted the vilest heretic breathing; but now we are looked upon as the heretics, and they the orthodox. *We* have gone back to the old school; *we can* trace our descent from the Apostles. It is that vein of free grace running through the sermonising of Baptists, which has saved us as a denomination. Were it not for that, we should not stand where we are. We can run a golden link from hence up to Jesus Christ himself, through a holy succession of mighty fathers, who all held these glorious truths; and we can say of them, where will you find holier and better men in the world? We are not ashamed to say of ourselves, that however much we may be maligned and slandered, ye will not find a people who will live closer to God than those who believe that they are saved not by their works, but by free grace alone. But, oh! ye believers in free grace, be careful. Our enemies hate the doctrine; and if one falls, “Ah there,” say they, “see the tendency of your principles.” Nay, we might reply, see what is the tendency of *your doctrine*. The exception in our case proves the rule is true, that after all, our gospel does lead us to holiness. Of all men, those have the most disinterested piety, the sublimest reverence, the most ardent devotion, who believe that they are saved by grace, without works, through faith,

and that not of themselves, it is the gift of God. Christian take heed, lest by any means Christ should be crucified afresh, and should be put unto an open shame.

And now what more can I say ? Oh ye, my beloved, ye my brethren, think not that ye stand, lest ye should fall. Oh ye fellow heirs of everlasting life and glory, we are marching along through this weary pilgrimage; and I, whom God hath called to preach to you, would turn affectionately to you little ones, and say, take heed lest ye fall. My brother, stumble not. There lieth the gin, there the snare. I am come to gather the stones out of the road, and take away the stumbling blocks. But what can I do unless, with due care and caution, ye yourselves walk guardedly. Oh, my brethren; be much more in prayer than ever. Spend more time in pious adoration. Read the Scriptures more earnestly and constantly. Watch your lives more carefully. Live nearer to God. Take the best examples for your pattern. Let your conversation be redolent of heaven. Let your hearts be perfumed with affection for men's souls. So live that men may take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus, and have learned of him; and when that happy day shall come when he whom you love shall say, "Come up higher," let it be your happiness to hear him say, "Come my beloved, thou hast fought a good fight, thou hast finished thy course, and henceforth there is laid up for thee a crown of righteousness that fadeth not away". On, Christian, with care and caution! On, with holy fear and trembling! On yet, with faith and confidence, for thou shalt not fall. Read the next verse of this very chapter: "He will not suffer you to be tempted above that which ye are able to bear, but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape."

But I have some here, perhaps, who may never hear my voice again; and I will not let my congregation go, God helping me, without telling them the way of salvation. Sirs, there are some of you who know ye have not believed in Christ. If ye were to die where ye now sit ye have no hope that ye would rise amongst the glorified in bliss. How many are there here who if their hearts could speak, must testify that they are without God, without Christ, and strangers from the common-wealth of Israel. Oh, let me tell you then, what ye must do to be saved. Does your heart beat high? Do ye grieve over your sins? Do ye repent of your iniquities? Will ye turn unto the living God? If so, this is the way of salvation; "Whosoever believeth and is baptised shall be saved." I cannot reverse my Master's

order — he says, “believeth,” and then “baptised;” and he tells me that “he that believeth not shall be damned.” Oh, my hearers, your works cannot save you. Though I have spoken to Christians, and exhorted them to live in good works, I talk not so to you. I ask ye not to get the flower before ye have the seed. I will not bid you get the roof of your house before ye lay the foundation. Believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved. Whosoever here will now cast himself as a guilty worm flat on Jesus — whoever will throw himself into the arms of everlasting love, that man shall be accepted; he shall go from that door justified and forgiven, with his soul as safe as if he were in heaven, without the danger of its ever being lost. All this is through belief in Christ.

Surely ye need no argument. If I thought ye did I would use it. I would stand and weep till ye came to Christ. If I thought I was strong enough to fetch a soul to Jesus, if I thought that moral suasion could win you, I would go round to each of your seats and beg of you in God’s name to repent. But since I cannot do that, I have done my duty when I have prophesied to the dry bones. Remember we shall meet again. I boast of neither eloquence nor talent, and I cannot understand why ye come here; I only speak right on, and tell you what I feel; but mark me, when we meet before God’s bar, however ill I may have spoken, I shall be able to say, that I said to you, “Believe on the name of Jesus, and ye shall be saved.” Why will ye die, O house of Israel? Is hell so sweet, is everlasting torment so much to be desired, that therefore ye can let go the glories of heaven, the bliss of eternity? Men, are ye to live for ever? or, are ye to die like brutes? “Live!” say you, Well, then, are you not desirous to live in a state of bliss? Oh, may God grant you grace to turn to him with full purpose of heart! Come, guilty sinner, come! God help you to come, and I shall be well repaid, if but one soul be added to the visible fold of Jesus, through aught I may have said.

THE POWER OF THE HOLY GHOST

SERMON NO. 30

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JUNE 17, 1855,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"The power of the Holy Ghost." — Romans 15:13.

POWER is the special and peculiar prerogative of God, and God alone. "Twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God." God is God; and power belongeth to him. If he delegates a portion of it to his creatures, yet still it is his power. The sun, although he is "like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run his race," yet has no power to perform his motions except as God directs him. The stars, although they travel in their orbits, and none could stay them, yet have neither might nor force, except that which God daily infuses into them. The tall archangel, near his throne, who outshines a comet in its blaze, though he is one of those who excel in strength, and hearken to the voice of the commands of God, yet has no might except that which his Maker gives to him. As for Leviathan, who so maketh the sea to boil like a pot, that one would think the deep were hoary; as for Behemoth, who drinketh up Jordan at a draught, and boasteth that he can snuff up rivers; as for those majestic creatures that are found on earth, they owe their strength to him who fashioned their bones of steel, and made their sinews of brass. And when we think of man, if he has might or power, it is so small and insignificant, that we can scarcely call it such; yea, when it is at its greatest — when he sways his scepter, when he commands hosts, when he rules nations — still the power belongeth unto God; and it is true, "Twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God." This exclusive prerogative of God, is to be found in each of the three persons of the glorious Trinity. The Father hath power; for by his word were the heavens made, and all the

hosts of them; by his strength all things stand, and through him they fulfill their destiny. The Son hath power; for, like his Father, he is the Creator of all things; "Without him was not anything made that was made," and "by him all things consist." And the Holy Spirit hath power. It is concerning the power of the Holy Ghost that I shall speak this morning; and may you have a practical exemplification of that attribute in your own hearts, when you shall feel that the influence of the Holy Ghost is being poured out upon me, so that I am speaking the words of the living God to your souls, and bestowed upon you when you are feeling the effects of it in your own spirits.

We shall look at the power of the Holy Ghost in three ways this morning. First, the outward and visible displays of it; second, the inward and spiritual manifestations of it; and third, the future and expected works thereof. The power of the Spirit will thus, I trust, be made clearly present to your souls.

I. First, then, we are to view the power of the Spirit in the OUTWARD AND VISIBLE DISPLAYS OF IT. The power of the Sprit has not been dormant; it has exerted itself. Much has been done by the Spirit of God already; more than could have been accomplished by any being except the Infinite, Eternal, Almighty Jehovah, of whom the Holy Spirit is one person. There are four works which are the outward and manifest signs of the power of the Spirit; creation works; resurrection works; works of attestation, or of witness; and works of grace. Of each of these works I shall speak very briefly.1. First, the Spirit has manifested the omnipotence of his power in creation works; for though not very frequently in Scripture, yet sometimes creation is ascribed to the Holy Ghost, as well as to the Father and the Son. The creation of the heavens above us, is said to be the work of God's Spirit. This you will see at once by referring to the sacred Scriptures, Job 26, 13th verse, "By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent." All the stars of heaven are said to have been placed aloft by the Spirit, and one particular constellation called the "crooked serpent," is specially pointed out as his handiwork. He looseth the bands of Orion; he bindeth the sweet influences of the Pleiades, and binds Arcturus with his suns. He made all those stars that shine in heaven. The heavens were garnished by his hands, and he formed the crooked serpent by his might. So, also, in those continued acts

of creation which are still performed in the world; as the bringing forth of man and animals, their birth and generation. These are ascribed also to the Holy Ghost. If you look at the 104th Psalm, at the 29th verse you will read, “Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled; thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the face of the earth.” So that the creation of every man is the work of the Spirit; and the creation of all life, and all flesh-existence in this world, is as much to be ascribed to the power of the Spirit, as the first garnishing of the heavens, or the fashioning of the crooked serpent. But if you look in the first chapter of Genesis, you will there see more particularly set forth that peculiar operation of power upon the universe which was put forth by the Holy Spirit; you will then discover what was his special work. In the 2d verse of the first chapter of Genesis, we read, “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” We know not how remote the period of the creation of this globe may be — certainly many millions of years before the time of Adam. Our planet has passed through various stages of existence, and different kinds of creatures have lived on its surface, all of which have been fashioned by God. But before that era came, wherein man should be its principal tenant and monarch, the Creator gave up the world to confusion. He allowed the inward fires to burst up from beneath, and melt all the solid matter, so that all kinds of substances were commingled in one vast mass of disorder. The only name you could give to the world, then, was that it was a chaotic mass of matter; what it should be, you could not guess or define. It was entirely “without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.” The Spirit came, and stretching his broad wings, bade the darkness disperse, and as he moved over it, all the different portions of matter came into their places, and it was no longer “without form, and void;” but became round, like its sister planets, and moved, singing the high praises of God — not discordantly, as it had done before, but as one great note in the vast scale of creation. Milton very beautifully describes this work of the Spirit, in thus bringing order out of confusion, when the King of Glory, in his powerful Word and Spirit, came to create new worlds: —

"On heavenly ground they stood; and from the shore
They viewed the vast, immeasurable abyss,
Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild,
Up from the bottom turned by furious winds
And surging waves, as mountains, to assault
Heaven's height, and with the center mix the pole.
"Silence, ye troubled waves, and thou deep, peace,
Said then the Omnific Word; your discord end.
Then on the watery calm,
His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspread
And vital virtue infused, and vital warmth
Throughout the fluid mass."

This you see, then, is the power of the Spirit. Could we have seen that earth all in confusion, we should have said, "Who can make a world out of this?" The answer would have been, "The power of the Spirit can do it. By the simple spreading of his dove-like wings, he can make all the things come together. Upon that there shall be order where there was naught but confusion." Nor is this all the power of the Spirit. We have seen some of his works in creation. But there was one particular instance of creation in which the Holy Spirit was more especially concerned; viz., the formation of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though our Lord Jesus Christ was born of a woman, and made in the likeness of sinful flesh, yet, the power that begat him was entirely in God the Holy Spirit — as the Scriptures express it, "The Holy One of Israel shall overshadow thee." He was begotten, as the Apostles' Creed says, begotten of the Holy Ghost. "That holy thing which is born of thee shall be called the Son of the Highest." The corporeal frame of the Lord Jesus Christ was a master-piece of the Holy Spirit. I suppose his body to have excelled all others in beauty; to have been like that of the first man, the very pattern of what the body is to be in heaven, when it shall shine forth in all its glory. That fabric, in all its beauty and perfection, was modeled by the Spirit. "In his book were all the members written, when as yet there were none of them." He fashioned and formed him; and here again we have another instance of the creative energy of the Spirit.

2. A second manifestation of the Holy Spirit's power is to be found in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. If ye have ever studied this subject, ye have perhaps been rather perplexed to find that sometimes the resurrection of Christ is ascribed to himself. By his own power and

godhead he could not be held by the bond of death, but as he willingly gave up his life he had power to take it up again. In another portion of Scripture, you find it ascribed to God the Father: “He raised him up from the dead:” “Him hath God the Father exalted.” And many other passages of similar import. But, again, it is said in Scripture that Jesus Christ was raised by the Holy Spirit. Now, all these things were true. He was raised by the Father Because the Father said, “Loose the prisoner — let him go. Justice is satisfied. My law requires no more satisfaction — vengeance has had its due — let him go.” Here he gave an official message which delivered Jesus from the grave. He was raised by his own majesty and power, because he had a right to come out; and he felt he had, and therefore “burst the bonds of death: he could be no longer holden of them.” But he was raised by the Spirit as to that energy which his mortal frame received, by the which it rose again from the grave after having lain there for three days and nights. If you want proofs of this you must open your Bibles again, 1 Peter 3:18. “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but quickened by the Spirit.” And a further proof you may find in Romans 8:11 — (I love sometimes to be textual, for I believe the great fault of Christians is that they do not search the Scriptures enough, and I will make them search them when they are here if they do not do so anywhere else.) — “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

The resurrection of Christ, then, was effected by the agency of the Spirit! And here we have a noble illustration of his omnipotence. Could you have stepped, as angels did, into the grave of Jesus, and seen his sleeping body, you would have found it cold as any other corpse. Lift up the hand; it falls by the side. Look at the eye; it is glazed. And there is a death-thrust which must have annihilated life. See his hands: the blood distills not from them. They are cold and motionless. Can that body live? Can it start up? Yes; and be an illustration of the might of the Spirit. For when the power of the Spirit came on him, as it was when it fell upon the dry bones of the valley, “he arose in the majesty of his divinity, and, bright and shining, astonished the watchmen so that they fled away; yea, he arose no more to die, but to live forever, King of kings and Prince of the kings of the earth.”

3. The third of the works of the Holy Spirit, which have so wonderfully demonstrated his power, are attestation works. I mean by this — works of witnessing. When Jesus Christ went into the stream of baptism in the river Jordan, the Holy Spirit descended upon him like a dove, and proclaimed him God's beloved son. That was what I style an attestation work. And when afterwards Jesus Christ raised the dead, when he healed the leper, when he spoke to diseases and they fled apace, when demons rushed in thousands from those who were possessed of them, it was done by the power of the Spirit. The Spirit dwelt in Jesus without measure, and by that power all those miracles were worked. These were attestation works. And when Jesus Christ was gone, you will remember that master attestation of the Spirit, when he came like a rushing mighty wind upon the assembled apostles, and cloven tongues sat upon them; and you will remember how he attested their ministry, by giving them to speak with tongues as he gave them utterance; and how, also, miraculous deeds were wrought by them, how they taught, how Peter raised Dorcas, how he breathed life into Enticus, how great deeds were wrought by the apostles as well as their Master — so that "mighty signs and wonders were done by the Holy Ghost, and many believed thereby." Who will doubt the power of the Holy Spirit after that? Ah! Those Socinians who deny the existence of the Holy Ghost and his absolute personality, what will they do when we get them on creation, resurrection, and attestation? They must rush in the very teeth of Scripture. But mark! It is a stone upon which if any man fall he shall be bruised; but if it fall upon him, as it will do if he resists it, it shall grind him to powder. The Holy Spirit has power omnipotent, even the power of God.

4. Once more, if we want another outward and visible sign of the power of the Spirit, we may look at the works of grace. Behold a city where a soothsayer hath the power — who has given out himself to be some great one, a Philip enters it and preaches the Word of God; straightway a Simon Magus loses his power and himself seeks for the power of the Spirit to be given to him, fancying it might be purchased with money. See, in modern times, a country where the inhabitants live in miserable wigwams, feeding on reptiles and the meanest creatures; observe them bowing down before their idols and worshiping their false gods, and so plunged in superstition, so degraded and debased, that it became a question whether they had souls

or not; behold a Moffat go with the Word of God in his hand, hear him preach as the Spirit gives him utterance, and accompanies that Word with power. They cast aside their idols — they hate and abhor their former lusts; they build houses, wherein they dwell; they become clothed, and in their right mind. They break the bow, and cut the spear in sunder; the uncivilized become civilized; the savage becomes polite; he who knew nothing begins to read the Scriptures: thus out of the mouths of Hottentots, God attests the power of his mighty Spirit. Take a household in this city — and we could guide you to many such — the father is a drunkard; he has been the most desperate of characters; see him in his madness, and you might just as well meet an unchained tiger as meet such a man. He seems as if he could rend a man to pieces who should offend him. Mark his wife. She, too, has a spirit in her, and when he treats her ill she can resist him; many broils have been seen in that house. And often has the neighborhood been disturbed by the noise created there. As for the poor little children — see them in their rags and nakedness, poor untaught things. Untaught, did I say? They are taught and well taught in the devil's school, and are growing up to be the heirs of damnation. But some one whom God has blessed by his Spirit is guided to the house. He may be but an humble city missionary, perhaps, but he speaks to such a one: "Oh!" says he, "come and listen to the voice of God." Whether it is by his own agency, or a minister's preaching, the Word, which is quick and powerful, cuts to the sinner's heart. The tears run down his cheeks — such as had never been seen before. He shakes and quivers. The strong man bows down — the mighty man trembles — and those knees that never shook begin to knock together. That heart which never quailed before now begins to shake before the power of the Spirit. He sits down on an humble bench by the penitent; he lets his knees bend, whilst his lips utter a child's prayer; but, whilst a child's prayer, a prayer of a child of God. He becomes a changed character. Mark the reformation in his house! That wife of his becomes the decent matron. Those children are the credit of the house, and in due time they grow up like olive branches round his table, adorning his house like polished stones. Pass by the house — no noise or broils, but songs of Zion. See him — no drunken revelry; he has drained his last cup, and, now forswearing it, he comes to God and is his servant. Now, you will not hear at midnight the bacchanalian shout; but should there be a noise, it will be the sound of the solemn hymn of praise to God.

And, now, is there not such a thing as the power of the Spirit? Yes! And those must have witnessed it, and seen it. I know a village, once perhaps the most profane in England — a village inundated by drunkenness and debauchery of the worst kind, where it was impossible almost for an honest traveler to stop in the public house without being annoyed by blasphemy; a place noted for incendiaries and robbers. One man, the ringleader of all, listened to the voice of God. That man's heart was broken. The whole gang came to hear the gospel preached, and they sat and seemed to reverence the preacher as if he were a God, and not a man. These men became changed and reformed; and every one who knows the place affirms that such a change had never been wrought but by the power of the Holy Ghost. Let the gospel be preached and the Spirit poured out, and you will see that it has such power to change the conscience, to ameliorate the conduct, to raise the debased, to chastise and to curb the wickedness of the race, that you must glory in it. I say, there is naught like the power of the Spirit. Only let that come, and, indeed, everything can be accomplished.

II. Now for the second point, THE INWARD AND SPIRITUAL POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. What I have already spoken of may be seen; what I am about to speak of must be felt, and no man will apprehend what I say with truth unless he has felt it. The other, even the infidel must confess; the other, the greatest blasphemer cannot deny, if he speaks the truth; but this is what the one will laugh at as enthusiasm, and what the other will say is but the invention of our fevered fancies. However, we have a more sure word of testimony than all that they may say. We have a witness within. We know it is the truth, and we are not afraid to speak of the inward spiritual power of the Holy Ghost. Let us notice two or three things wherein the inward and spiritual power of the Holy Ghost is very greatly to be seen and extolled.

1. First, in that the Holy Ghost has a power over men's hearts. Now, men's hearts are very hard to affect. If you want to get at them for any worldly object, you can do it. A cheating world can win man's heart; a little gold can win man's heart; a trump of fame and a little clamor of applause can win man's heart. But there is not a minister breathing that can win man's heart himself. He can win his ears and make them listen; he can win his eyes, and fix those eyes upon him; he can win the attention,

but the heart is very slippery. Yes! The heart is a fish that troubles all gospel fishermen to hold. You may sometimes pull it almost all out of the water; but, slimy as an eel, it slippeth between your fingers, and you have not captured it after all. Many a man has fancied that he has caught the heart, but has been disappointed. It would take a strong hunter to overtake the hart on the mountains. It is too fleet for human foot to approach. The Spirit alone has power over man's heart. Do you every try your power on a heart? If any man thinks that a minister can convert the soul, I wish he would try. Let him go and be a Sabbath School teacher. He shall take his class, he shall have the best books that can be obtained, he shall have the best rules, he shall draw his lines of circumvallation about his spiritual Sebastopol, he shall take the best boy in his class, and if he is not tired in a week I shall be very much mistaken. Let him spend four or five Sabbaths in trying; but he will say, "the young fellow is incorrigible." Let him try another. And he will have to try another, and another and another before he will manage to convert one. He will soon find "it is not by might nor power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." Can a minister convert? Can he touch the heart? David said, "Your hearts are as fat as grease." Aye, that is quite true; and we cannot get through so much grease at all. Our sword cannot get at the heart, it is encased in so much fatness; it is harder than a nether millstone. Many a good old Jerusalem blade has been blunted against the hard heart. Many a piece of the true steel that God has put into the hand of his servants has had the edge turned by being set up against the sinner's heart. We cannot reach the soul, but the Holy Spirit can. "My beloved can put in his hand by the hole in the door, and my bowels will move for sin." He can give a sense of blood-bought pardon that shall dissolve a heart of stone. He can

"Speak with that voice which wakes the dead
And bids the sinner rise;
And makes the guilty conscience dread
The death that never dies."

He can make Sinai's thunders audible; yea, and he can make the sweet whisperings of Calvary enter into the soul. He has power over the heart of man. And here is a glorious proof of the omnipotence of the Spirit that he has rule over the heart.

2. But if there is one thing more stubborn than the heart, it is the will. “My lord Will-be-will,” as Bunyan calls him in his “Holy War,” is a fellow who will not easily be bent. The will, especially in some men, is a very stubborn thing; and in all men, if the will is once stirred up to opposition, there is nothing can be done with them. Free-will somebody believes in. Free-will many dream of. Free-will! Wherever is that to be found? Once there was Free-will in Paradise, and a terrible mess Free-will made there; for it spoiled all Paradise and turned Adam out of the garden. Free-will was once in heaven; but it turned the glorious archangel out, and a third part of the stars of heaven fell into the abyss. I want nothing to do with Free-will, but I will try to see whether I have got a Free-will within. And I find I have. Very free will to evil but very poor will to that which is good. Free-will enough when I sin, but when I would do good, evil is present with me, and how to do that which I would I find not. Yet some boast of Free-will. I wonder whether those who believe in it have any more power over persons’ wills than I have? I know I have not any. I find the old proverb very true, “One man can bring a horse to the water but a hundred cannot make him drink.” I find that I can bring you all to the water, and a great many more than can get into this chapel; but I cannot make you drink; and I don’t think a hundred ministers could make you drink. I have read old Rowland Hill, and Whitefield, and several others, to see what they did; but I cannot discover a plan of turning your will. I cannot coax you, and you will not yield by any manner of means. I do not think any man has power over his fellow-creature’s will, but the Spirit of God has. “I will make them willing in the day of my power.” He maketh the unwilling sinner so willing that he is impetuous after the gospel; he who was obstinate now hurries to the cross. He who laughed at Jesus now hangs on his mercy; and he who would not believe is now made by the Holy Spirit to do it, not only willingly, but eagerly; he is happy, is glad to do it, rejoices in the sound of Jesus’ name, and delights to run in the way of God’s commandments. The Holy Spirit has power over the will.

3. And yet there is one thing more which I think is rather worse than the will. You will guess what I mean. The will is somewhat worse than the heart to bend, but there is one thing that excels the will in its naughtiness, and that is the imagination. I hope that my will is managed by Divine Grace. But I am afraid my imagination is not at times. Those who have a

fair share of imagination know what a difficult thing it is to control. You cannot restrain it. It will break the reins. You will never be able to manage it. The imagination will sometimes fly up to God with such a power that eagles' wings cannot match it. It sometimes has such might that it can almost see the King in his beauty, and the land which is very far off. With regard to myself, my imagination will sometimes take me over the gates of iron, across the infinite unknown, to the very gates of pearl, and discover the blessed glorified. But, if it is potent one way, it is another: for my imagination has taken me down to the vilest kennels and sewers of earth. It has given me thoughts so dreadful, that, while I could not avoid them, yet I was thoroughly horrified at them. These thoughts will come; and when I feel in the holiest frame, the most devoted to God, and the most earnest in prayer, it often happens that that is the very time when the plague breaks out the worst. But I rejoice and think of one thing, that I can cry out when this imagination comes upon me. I know it is said in the Book of Leviticus, when an act of evil was committed, if the maiden cried out against it, then her life was to be spared. So it is with the Christian. If he cries out, there is hope. Can you chain your imagination? No; but the power of the Holy Ghost can. Ah, it shall do it! And it does do it at last, it does it even on earth.

III. But the last thing was, THE FUTURE AND DESIRED EFFECTS; for, after all, though the Holy Spirit has done so much, he cannot say, "It is finished." Jesus Christ could exclaim concerning his own labor — "It is finished." But the Holy Spirit cannot say that. He has more to do yet: and until the consummation of all things, when the Son himself becomes subject to the Father, it shall not be said by the Holy Spirit, "It is finished." What, then, has the Holy Spirit to do?

1. First, he has to perfect us in holiness. There are two kinds of perfection which a Christian needs: one is the perfection of justification in the person of Jesus; and the other is, the perfection of sanctification worked in him by the Holy Spirit. At present corruption still rests even in the breasts of the regenerate. At present the heart is partially impure. At present there are still lusts and evil imaginations. But, oh! My soul rejoices to know that the day is coming when God shall finish the work which he has begun; and he shall present my soul, not only perfect in Christ, but perfect in the Spirit, without spot or blemish, or any such thing. And is it true that this poor

depraved heart is to become as holy as that of God? And is it true that this poor spirit, which often cries, “O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this sin an death!” shall get rid of sin and death? I shall have no evil things to vex my ears, and no unholy thoughts to disturb my peace. Oh happy hour! May it be hastened! Just before I die sanctification will be finished; but not till that moment shall I ever claim perfection in myself. But at that moment when I depart, my spirit shall have its last baptism in the Holy Spirit’s fire. It shall be put in the crucible for its last trying in the furnace; and then, free from all dross, and fine, like a wedge of pure gold, it shall be presented at the feet of God without the least degree of dross or mixture. O glorious hour! O blessed moment! Methinks I long to die if there were no heaven, if I might but have that last purification come up from Jordan’s stream most white from the washing. Oh! To be washed white, clean, pure, perfect! Not an angel more pure than I shall be — yea, not God himself more holy! And I shall be able to say, in a double sense, “Great God, I am clean — through Jesus’ blood I am clean, through the Spirit’s work I am clean too!” Must you not extol the power of the Holy Ghost in thus making us fit to stand before our Father in heaven?

2. Another great work of the Holy Spirit, which is not accomplished, is the bringing on of the latter-day glory. In a few more years — I know not when, I know not how — the Holy Spirit will be poured out in a far different style from the present. There are diversities of operations; and during the last few years it has been the case that the diversified operations have consisted in very little pouring out of the Spirit. Ministers have gone on in dull routine, continually preaching — preaching — preaching, and little good has been done. I do hope that perhaps a fresh era has dawned upon us, and that there is a better pouring out of the Spirit even now. For the hour is coming, and it may be even now is, when the Holy Ghost shall be poured out again in such a wonderful manner, that many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased — the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the surface of the great deep; when his kingdom shall come, and his will shall be done on earth even as it is in heaven. We are not going to be dragging on forever like Pharoah, with the wheels off his chariot. My heart exults, and my eyes flash with the thought that very likely I shall live to see the outpouring of the Spirit;

when “the sons and the daughters of God again shall prophesy, and the young men shall see visions and the old men shall dream dreams.” Perhaps there shall be no miraculous gifts — for they will not be required; but yet there shall be such a miraculous amount of holiness, such an extraordinary fervor of prayer, such a real communion with God, and so much vital religion, and such a spread of the doctrines of the cross, that every one will see that verily the Spirit is poured out like water, and the rains are descending from above. For that let us pray; let us continually labor for it, and seek it of God.

3. One more work of the Spirit, which will especially manifest his power — the general resurrection. We have reason to believe from Scripture, that the resurrection of the dead, whilst it will be effected by the voice of God and of his Word(the Son), shall also be brought about by the Spirit. The same power which raised Jesus Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies. The power of the resurrection is, perhaps, one of the finest proofs of the works of the Spirit. Ah! My friends, if this earth could but have its mantle torn away for a little while, if the green sod could be cut from it, and we could look about six feet deep into its bowels, what a world it would seem! What should we see? Bones, carcasses, rottenness, worms, corruption. And you would say, Can these dry bones live? Can they start up? Yes! “In a moment! In the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, the dead shall be raised.” He speaks; they are alive! See them scattered! Bone comes to his bone! See them naked; flesh comes upon them! See them still lifeless; “Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain!” When the wind of the Holy Spirit comes, they live; and they stand upon their feet an exceeding great army.

I have thus attempted to speak of the power of the Spirit, and I trust I have shown it to you. We must now have a moment or two for practical inference. The Spirit is very powerful, Christian! What do you infer from that fact? Why, that you never need distrust the power of God to carry you to heaven. O how that sweet verse was laid to my soul yesterday!

“His tried Almighty arm
is raised for your defense;
Where is the power can reach you there?
Or what can pluck you thence?”

The power of the Holy Spirit is your bulwark, and all his omnipotence defends you. Can your enemies overcome omnipotence? Then they can conquer you. Can they wrestle with Deity, and hurl him to the ground? Then they might conquer you. For the power of the Spirit is our power; the power of the Spirit is our might.

Once again, Christians, if this is the power of the Spirit, why should you doubt anything? There is your son. There is that wife of yours, for whom you have supplicated so frequently; do not doubt the Spirit's power. "Though he tarry, wait for him." There is thy husband, O holy woman! And thou hast wrestled for his soul. And though he is ever so hardened and desperate a wretch, and treats thee ill, there is power in the Spirit. And, O ye who have come from barren churches, with scarcely a leaf upon the tree, do not doubt the power of the Spirit to raise you up. For it shall be a "pasture for flocks, a den of wild asses," open but deserted, until the Spirit is poured out from on high. And then the parched ground shall be made a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water; and in the habitations of dragons, where each lay shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And, O ye members of Park Street! Ye who remember what your God has done for you especially, never distrust the power of the Spirit. Ye have seen the wilderness blossom like Carmel, ye have seen the desert blossom like the rose, trust him for the future. Then go out and labor with this conviction, that the power of the Holy Ghost is able to do anything. Go to your missionary enterprise; go to your preaching in your rooms, with the conviction that the power of the Spirit is our great help.

And now, lastly, to you sinners: — What is there to be said to you about this power of the Spirit? Why, to me, there is some hope for some of you. I cannot save you; I cannot get at you. I make you cry sometimes — you wipe your eyes, and it is all over. But I know my Master can. That is my consolation. Chief of sinners, there is hope for thee! This power can save you as well as anybody else. It is able to break your heart, though it is an iron one; to make your eyes run with tears, though they have been like rocks before. His power is able this morning, if he will, to change your heart, to turn the current of all your ideas; to make you at once a child of God, to justify you in Christ. There is power enough in the Holy Spirit. Ye are not straightened in him, but in your own bowels. He is able to bring sinners to Jesus; he is able to make you willing in the day of his power.

Are you willing this morning? Has he gone so far as to make you desire his name; to make you wish for Jesus? Then, O sinner! Whilst he draws you, say, “Draw me, I am wretched without thee.” Follow him, follow him; and, while he leads, tread you in his footsteps, and rejoice that he has begun a good work in you, for there is an evidence that he will continue it even unto the end. And, O desponding one! Put thy trust in the power of the Spirit. Rest on the blood of Jesus, and thy soul is safe, not only now, but throughout eternity. God bless you, my hearers. Amen.

LAW AND GRACE

SERMON NO. 37

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 26, 1855,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." — Romans 5:20.

There is no point upon which men make greater mistakes than upon the relation which exists between the law and the gospel. Some men put the law instead of the gospel: others put the gospel instead of the law; some modify the law and the gospel, and preach neither law nor gospel: and others entirely abrogate the law, by bringing in the gospel. Many there are who think that the law is the gospel, and who teach that men by good works of benevolence, honesty, righteousness, and sobriety, may be saved. Such men do err. On the other hand, many teach that the gospel is a law; that it has certain commands in it, by obedience to which, men are meritoriously saved; such men err from the truth, and understand it not. A certain class maintain that the law and the gospel are mixed, and that partly by observance of the law, and partly by God's grace, men are saved. These men understand not the truth, and are false teachers. This morning I shall attempt — God helping me to show you what is the design of the law, and then what is the end of the gospel. The coming of the law is explained in regard to its objects: "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound." Then comes the mission of the gospel: "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

I shall consider this text in two senses this morning. First, as it respects the world at large and the entrance of the law into it; and then afterwards, as respecting the heart of the convinced sinner, and the entrance of the law into the conscience.

I. First, we shall speak of the text as CONCERNING THE WORLD.

The object of God in sending the law into the world was “that the offence might abound.” But then comes the gospel, for “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” First, then, in reference to the entire world, God sent the law into the world “that the offence might abound.” There was sin in the world long before God sent the law. God gave his law that the offence might seem to be an offence; ay, and that the offence might abound exceedingly more than it could have done without its coming. There was sin long before Sinai smoked; long ere the mountain trembled beneath the weight of Deity, and the dread trumpet sounded exceeding loud and long, there had been transgression. And where that law has never been heard, in heathen countries where that word has never gone forth, yet there is sin, — because, though men cannot sin against the law which they have never seen, yet they can all rebel against the light of nature, against the dictates of conscience, and against that traditional remembrance of right and wrong, which has followed mankind from the place where God created them. All men, in every land, have consciences, and therefore all men can sin. The ignorant Hottentot, who has never heard anything of a God, has just so much of the light of nature, that in the things that are outwardly good or bad he will discern the difference; and though he foolishly bows down to stocks and stones, he has a judgment which, if he used it, would teach him better. If he chose to use his talents, he might know there is a God; for the Apostle, when speaking of men who have only the light of nature, plainly declares that “the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.” Romans 1:20. Without a divine revelation men can sin, and sin exceedingly — conscience, nature, tradition, and reason, being each of them, sufficient to condemn them for their violated commandments. The law makes no one a sinner; all men are such in Adam, and were so practically before its introduction. It entered that “the offence might abound.” Now this seems a very terrible thought at first sight, and many ministers would have shirked this text altogether. But when I find a verse I do not understand, I usually think it is a text I should study; and I try to seek it out before my heavenly Father, and then when he has opened it to my soul, I reckon it my duty to communicate it to you, with the holy aid of the Spirit. “The law entered that the offence might abound.” I will attempt to show you how the law makes offenses “abound.”

1. First of all, the law tells us that many things are sins which we should never have thought to be so if it had not been for the additional light. Even with the light of nature, and the light of conscience, and the light of tradition, there are some things we should never have believed to be sins had we not been taught so by the law. Now, what man by light of conscience, would keep holy the Sabbath-day — suppose he never read the Bible, and never heard of it? If he lived in a South Sea island he might know there was a God, but not by any possibility could he find out that the seventh part of his time should be set apart to that God. We find that there are certain festivals and feasts among heathens, and that they set apart days in honor of their fancied gods; but I should like to know where they could discover that there was a certain seventh day to be set apart to God, to spend the time in his house of prayer. How could they, unless indeed, tradition may have handed down the fact of the original consecration of that day by the creating Jehovah. I cannot conceive it possible that either conscience or reason could have taught them such a command as this: Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor they daughter, thy manservant, nor they maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. Moreover, if in the term “law” we comprehend the ceremonial ritual, we can plainly see that many things, in appearance quite indifferent, were by it constituted sins. The eating of animals that do not chew the cud and divide the hoof, the wearing of linsey-woolsey, the sitting on a bed polluted by a leper — with a thousand other things, all seem to have no sin in them, but the law made them into sins, and so made the offence to abound.

2. It is a fact which you can verify by looking at the working of your own mind, that law has a tendency to make men rebel. Human nature rises against restraint. I had not known lust except the law had said, “Thou shalt not covet.” The depravity of man is excited to rebellion by the promulgation of laws. So evil are we, that we conceive at once the desire to commit an act, simply because it is forbidden. Children, we all know, as a rule, will always desire what they may not have, and if forbidden to touch anything, will either do so when an opportunity serves, or will long to be able to do so. The same tendency any student of human nature can discern

in man-kind at large. Is then the law chargeable with my sin? God forbid. “But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For sin taking occasion by the commandment deceived me, and by it slew me.” Romans 7:7,8,11. The law is holy, and just, and good, it is not faulty, but sin uses it as an occasion of offence, and rebels when it ought to obey. Augustine placed the truth in a clear light when he wrote — ”The law is not in fault, but our evil and wicked nature; even as a heap of lime is still and quiet until water be poured thereon, but then it begins to smoke and burn, not from the fault of the water, but from the nature and kind of the lime which will not endure it.” Thus, you see, this is a second sense in which the entrance of the law causes the offence to abound.

3. Yet again, the law increases the sinfulness of sin, by removing all excuse of ignorance. Until men know the law, their crimes have at least a palliation of partial ignorance, but when the code of rules is spread before them, their offenses become greater, since they are committed against light and knowledge. He who sins against conscience shall be condemned; of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy who despises the voice of Jehovah, defies his sacred sovereignty, and willfully tramples on his commands. The more light the greater guilt — the law affords that light, and so causes us to become double offenders. Oh, ye nations of the earth who have heard the law of Jehovah, your sin is increased, and your offence abounds.

Methinks I hear some say, “How unwise it must have been that a law should come to make these things abound!” Does it not, at first sight, seem very harsh that the great author of the world should give us a law which will not justify, but indirectly cause our condemnation to be greater? Does it not seem to be a thing which a gracious God would not reveal, but would have withheld? But, know ye, “that the foolishness of God is wiser than men;” and understand ye that there is a gracious purpose even here. Natural men dream that by a strict performance of duty they shall obtain favor, but God saith thus: “I will show them their folly by proclaiming a law so high that they will despair of attaining unto it. They think that works will be sufficient to save them. They think falsely, and they will be ruined by their mistake. I will send them a law so terrible in its censures, so unflinching it its demands, that they cannot possibly obey it, and they

will be driven even to desperation, and come and accept my mercy through Jesus Christ. They cannot be saved by the law — not by the law of nature. As it is, they have sinned against it. But yet, I know, they have foolishly hoped to keep my law, and think by works of the law they may be justified; whereas I have said, 'By the works of the law no flesh living can be justified;' therefore I will write a law — it shall be a black and heavy one — a burden which they cannot carry; and then they will turn away and say, 'I will not attempt to perform it; I will ask my Savior to bear it for me.'" Imagine a case — Some young men are about to go to sea, where I foresee they will meet with a storm. Suppose you put me in a position where I may cause a tempest before the other shall arise. Well, by the time the natural storm comes on, those young men will be a long way out at sea, and they will be wrecked and ruined before they can put back and be safe. But what do I? Why, when they are just at the mouth of the river, I send a storm, putting them in the greatest danger, and precipitating them ashore, so that they are saved. Thus did God. He sends a law which shows them the roughness of the journey. The tempest of law compels them to put back to the harbour of free grace, and saves them from a most terrible destruction, which would otherwise overwhelm them. The law never came to save men. It never was its intention at all. It came on purpose to make the evidence complete that salvation by works is impossible, and thus to drive the elect of God to rely wholly on the finished salvation of the gospel. Now, just to illustrate my meaning, let me describe it by one more figure. You all remember those high mountains called the Alps. Well, it would be a great mercy if those Alps were a little higher. It would have been, at all events, for Napoleon's soldiers when he led his large army over, and caused thousands to perish in crossing. Now, if it could have been possible to pile another Alps on their summit, and make them higher than the Himalaya, would not the increased difficulty have deterred him from his enterprise, and so have adverted the destruction of thousands? Napoleon demanded, "Is it possible?" "Barely possible," was the reply. "Avancez," cried Buonaparte; and the host were soon toiling up the mountain side. Now, by the light of nature, it does seem possible for us to go over this mountain of works, but all men would have perished in the attempt, the path even of this lower hill being too narrow for mortal footsteps. God, therefore, puts another law, like a mountain, on the top; and now the sinner says, "I cannot climb over that. It is a task

beyond Herculean might. I see before me a narrow pass, called the pass of Jesus Christ's mercy — the pass of the cross — methinks I will wend my way thither." But if it had not been that the mountain was too high for him, he would have gone climbing up, and climbing up, until he sank into some chasm, or was lost under some mighty avalanche, or in some other way perished eternally. But the law comes that the whole world might see the impossibility of being saved by works.

Let us turn to the more pleasing part of the subject — the superabundance of grace. Having bewailed the devastations and injurious deeds of sin, it delights our hearts to be assured that "grace did much more abound."

1. Grace excels sin in the numbers it brings beneath its sway. It is my firm belief that the number of the saved will be far greater than the damned. It is written that in all things Jesus shall have pre-eminence; and why is this to be left out? Can we think that Satan will have more followers than Jesus? Oh, no; for while it is written that the redeemed are a number that no man can number; it is not recorded that the lost are beyond numeration. True, we know that the visible elect are ever a remnant but then there are others to be added. Think for a moment of the army of infant souls who are now in heaven. These all fell in Adam, but being all elect, were all redeemed and regenerated, and were privileged to fly from the mother's breasts to glory. Happy lot, which we who are spared might well envy. Nor let it be forgotten that the multitudes of converts in the millennial age will very much turn the scale. For then the world will be exceedingly populous, and a thousand years of a reign of grace might easily suffice to overcome the majority accumulated by sin during six thousand years of its tyranny. In that peaceful period, when all shall know him, from the least even unto the greatest, the sons of God shall fly as doves to their windows, and the Redeemer's family shall be exceedingly multiplied.

What though those who have been deluded by superstition, and destroyed by lust, must be counted by thousands — grace has still the pre-eminence. Saul has slain his thousands, but David his ten-thousands. We admit that the number of the damned will be immense, but we do think that the two states of infancy and millennial glory will furnish so great a reserve of saints that Christ shall win the day. The procession of the lost may be long; there must be thousands, and thousands, and thousands, of those

who have perished, but the greater procession of the King of kings shall be composed of larger hosts than even these. “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” The trophies of free grace will be far more than the trophies of sin.

Yet again. Grace doth “much more abound,” — because a time shall come when the world shall be all full of grace; whereas there has never been a period in this world’s history when it was wholly given to sin. When Adam and Eve rebelled against God, there was still a display of grace in the world; for in the garden at the close of the day, God said, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shalt bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel;” and since that first transgression, there has never been a moment when grace has entirely lost its footing in the earth. God has always had his servants on earth; at times they have been hidden by fifties in the caves, but they have never been utterly cut off. Grace might be low; the stream might be very shallow, but it has never been wholly dry. There has always been a salt of grace in the world to counteract the power of sin. The clouds have never been so universal as to hide the day. But the time is fast approaching when grace shall extend all over our poor world and be universal. According to the Bible testimony, we look for the great day when the dark cloud which has swathed this world in darkness shall be removed, and it shall shine once more like all its sister planets. It hath been for many a long year clouded and veiled by sin and corruption; but the last fire shall consume its rags and sackcloth. After that fire, the world in righteousness shall shine. The huge molten mass now slumbering in the bowels of our common mother shall furnish the means of purity. Palaces, and crowns, and peoples, and empires, are all to be melted down; and after like a plague-house, the present creation has been burned up entirely, God will breathe upon the heated mass, and it will cool down again. He will smile on it as he did when he first created it, and the rivers will run down the new-made hills, the oceans will float in new-made channels; and the world will be again the abode of the righteous for ever and for ever. This fallen world will be restored to its orbit; that gem which was lost from the scepter of God shall be set again, yea, he shall wear it as a signet about his arm. Christ died for the world; and what he died for, he will have. He died for the whole world, and the whole world he will have, when he has purified it and cleansed it

and fitted it for himself. “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound;” for grace shall be universal, whereas sin never was.

One thought more. Hath the world lost its possessions by sin? It has gained far more by grace. True, we have been expelled a garden of delights, where peace, love, and happiness found a glorious habitation. True, Eden is not ours, with its luscious fruits, its blissful bowers, and its rivers flowing o’er sands of gold, but we have through Jesus a fairer habitation. He hath made us sit together in heavenly places — the plains of heaven exceed the fields of paradise in the ever-new delights which they afford, while the tree of life, and the river from the throne render the inhabitants of the celestial regions more than emparadised. Did we lose natural life and subject ourselves to painful death by sin? Has not grace revealed an immortality for the sake of which we are too glad to die? Life lost in Adam is more restored in Christ. We admit that our original robes were rent in sunder by Adam, but Jesus has clothed us with a divine righteousness, far exceeding in value even the spotless robes of created innocence. We mourn our low and miserable condition, through sin, but we will rejoice at the thought, that we are now more secure than before we fell, and are brought into closer alliance with Jesus than our standing could have procured us. O Jesus! thou hast won us an inheritance more wide than our sin has ever lavished. Thy grace has overtopped our sins. “Grace doth much more abound.”

II. Now we come to the second part of the subject, and that is THE ENTRANCE OF THE LAW INTO THE HEART.

We have to deal carefully when we come to deal with internal things; it is not easy to talk about this little thing, the heart. When we begin to meddle with the law of their soul, many become indignant, but we do not fear their wrath. We are going to attack the hidden man this morning. The law entered their hearts that sin might abound, “but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”

1. The law causes the offence to abound by discovering sin to the soul. When once God the Holy Ghost applies the law to the conscience, secret sins are dragged to light, little sins are magnified to their true size, and things apparently harmless become exceedingly sinful. Before that dread searcher of the hearts and trier of the reins makes his entrance into the

soul, it appears righteous, just, lovely, and holy; but when he reveals the hidden evils, the scene is changed. Offenses which were once styled peccadilloes, trifles, freaks of youth, follies, indulgences, little slip, &c., then appear in their true colour, as breaches of the law of God, deserving condign punishment.

John Bunyan shall explain my meaning by an extract from his famous allegory: “Then the Interpreter took Christian by the hand and led him into a very large parlour that was full of dust, because never swept; in which after he had reviewed it a little while, the Interpreter called for a man to sweep. Now, when he began to sweep, the dust became so abundantly to fly about, that Christian had almost therewith been choked. Then said Interpreter to a damsel that stood by, ‘Bring hither water, and sprinkle the room’; the which when she had done, it was swept and cleansed with pleasure. Then said Christian, ‘What means this?’ The Interpreter answered, ‘This parlour is the heart of a man that was never sanctified by the sweet grace of the gospel. The dust is his original sin and inward corruptions that have defiled the whole man. He that began to sweep, at first, is the law; but she that brought the water and did sprinkle it, is the gospel. Now, whereas thou sawest that as soon as the first began to sweep, the dust did so fly about, that the room could not by him be cleansed, but that thou wast almost choked therewith; this is to show thee, that the law, instead of cleansing the heart (by its working) from sin, doth revive, Romans 7:9, put strength into, 1 Corinthians 15:56, and increase it in the soul, Romans 5:20, even as it doth discover and forbid it, for that doth not give power to subdue. Again, as thou sawest the damsel sprinkle the room with water, upon which it was cleansed with pleasure; this is to show thee, that when the gospel comes in the sweet and precious influences thereof to the heart, then, I say, even as thou sawest the damsel lay the dust by sprinkling the floor with water, so is sin vanquished and subdued, and the soul made clean, through the faith of it, and consequently fit for the King of glory to inhabit.’“

The heart is like a dark cellar, full of lizards, cockroaches, beetles, and all kinds of reptiles and insects, which in the dark we see not, but the law takes down the shutters and lets in the light, and so we see the evil. Thus sin becoming apparent by the law, it is written the law makes the offence to abound.

2. Once again. The law, when it comes into the heart, shows us how very black we are. Some of us know that we are sinners. It is very easy to say it. The word “sinner” hath only two syllables in it, and many there be who frequently have it on their lips, but who do not understand it. They see their sin, but it does not appear exceedingly sinful till the law comes. We think there is something sinful in it; but when the law comes, we detect its abomination. Has God’s holy light ever shone into your souls? Have you had the fountains of your great depravity and evil broken up, and been wakened up sufficiently to say, “O God! I have sinned?” Now, if you have your hearts broken up by the law, you will find the heart is more deceitful than the devil. I can say this of myself, I am very much afraid of mine, it is so bad. The Bible says, “The heart is deceitful above all things.” The devil is one of the things; therefore, it is worse than the devil — ”and desperately wicked.” How many do we find who are saying, “Well, I trust I have a very good heart at the bottom. There may be a little amiss at the top, but I am very good-hearted at bottom.” If you saw some fruit on the top of a basket that was not quite good, would you buy the basket because they told you, “Ay, but they are good at the bottom?” “No, no,” you would say, “they are sure to be best at the top, and if they are bad there, they are sure to be rotten below.” There are many people who live queer lives, and some friends say, “He is good-hearted at bottom; he would get drunk sometimes, but he is very good-hearted at the bottom.” Ah! never believe it. Men are seldom estimated better than they seem to be. If the outside of the cup or platter is clean, the inside may be dirty, but if the outside is impure, you may always be sure the inside is no better. Most of us put our goods in the window — keep all our good things in the front, and bad things behind. Let you and I, instead of making excuses about ourselves, about the badness of our hearts, if the law has entered into your soul, bow down and say, “O the sin — O the uncleanness — the blackness — the awful nature of our crimes!” “The law entered that the offence may abound.”

3. The law reveals the exceeding abundance of sin, by discovering to us the depravity of our nature. We are all prepared to charge the serpent with our guilt, or to insinuate that we go astray, from the force of ill example — but the Holy Spirit dissipates these dreams by bringing the law into the heart. Then the fountains of the great deep are broken up, the chambers of the

imagery are opened, the innate evil of the very essence of fallen man is discovered.

The law cuts into the core of the evil, it reveals the seat of the malady, and informs us that the leprosy lies deep within. Oh! how the man abhors himself when he sees all his rivers of water turned into blood, and loathsomeness creeping over all his being. He learns that sin is no flesh wound, but a stab in the heart; he discovers that the poison has impregnated his veins, lies in his very marrow, and hath its fountain in his inmost heart. Now he loathes himself, and would fain be healed. Actual sin seems not half so terrible as in-bred sin, and at the thought of what he is, he turns pale, and gives up salvation by works as an impossibility.

4. Having thus removed the mask and shown the desperate case of the sinner, the relentless law causes the offence to abound yet more by bringing home the sentence of condemnation. It mounts the judgment seat, puts on the black cap, and pronounces the sentence of death. With a harsh unpitying voice it solemnly thunders forth the words, “Condemned already.” It bids the soul prepare its defence, knowing well that all apology has been taken away by its former work of conviction. The sinner is therefore speechless, and the law, with frowning looks, lifts up the veil of hell, and gives the man a glimpse of torment. The soul feels that the sentence is just, that the punishment is not too severe, and that mercy it has no right to expect; it stands quivering, trembling, fainting, and intoxicated with dismay, until it falls prostrate in utter despair. The sinner puts the rope around his own neck, arrays himself in the attire of the condemned, and throws himself at the foot of the King’s throne, with but one thought, “I am vile”; and with one prayer, “God be merciful to me a sinner.”

5. Nor does the law cease its operations even here, for it renders the offence yet more apparent by discovering the powerlessness occasioned by sin. It not only condemns but it actually kills. He who once thought that he could repent and believe at pleasure, finds in himself no power to do either the one or the other.

When Moses smites the sinner he bruises and mangles him with the first blow, but at a second or a third, he falls down as one dead. I myself have been in such a condition that if heaven could have been purchased by a

single prayer I should have been damned, for I could no more pray than I could fly. Moreover, when we are in the grave which the law has digged for us, we feel as if we did not feel, and we grieve because we cannot grieve. The dread mountain lies upon us which renders it impossible to stir hand or foot, and when we would cry for help our voice refuses to obey us. In vain the minister cries, "Repent," Our hard heart will not melt; in vain he exhorts us to believe; that faith of which he speaks seems to be as much beyond our capacity as the creation of the universe. Ruin is now become ruin indeed. The thundering sentence is in our ears, "CONDEMNED ALREADY," another cry follows it, "DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS," and a third, more awful and terrible, mingles its horrible warning, "The wrath to come — the wrath to come." In the opinion of the sinner he is now cast out as a corrupt carcass, he expects each moment to be tormented by the worm that never dies and to lift up his eyes in hell. Now is mercy's moment, and we turn the subject from condemning law to abounding grace.

Listen, O heavy laden, condemned sinner, while in my Master's name, I publish superabounding grace. Grace excels sin in its measure and efficacy. Though your sins are many, mercy hath many pardons. Though they excel the stars, the sands, the drops of dew in their number, one act of remission can cancel all. Your iniquity, though a mountain, shall be cast into the midst of the sea. Your blackness shall be washed out by the cleansing flood of your Redeemer's gore. Mark! I said YOUR sins, and I meant to say so, for if you are now a law-condemned sinner, I know you to be a vessel of mercy by that very sign. Oh, hellish sinners, abandoned profligates, off-casts of society, outcasts from the company of sinners themselves, if ye acknowledge your iniquity, here is mercy, broad, ample, free, immense, INFINITE. Remember this O sinner, —

"If all the sins that men have done,
In will, in word, in thoughts, in deed,
Since words were made, or time began,
Were laid on one poor sinner's head.
The stream of Jesus' precious blood
Applied, removes the dreadful load."

Yet again, grace excelleth sin in another thing. Sin shows us its parent, and tells us our heart is the father of it, but grace surpasseth sin there, and

shows the Author of grace — the King of kings. The law traces sin up to our heart; grace traces its own origin to God, and

"In his sacred breast I see
Eternal thoughts of love to me."

O Christian, what a blessed thing grace is, for its source is in the everlasting mountains. Sinner, if you are the vilest in the world, if God forgives you this morning, you will be able to trace your pedigree to him, for you will become one of the sons of God, and have him always for your Father. Methinks I see you a wretched criminal at the bar, and I hear mercy cry, "Discharge him!" He is pallid, halt, sick, maimed — heal him. He is of a vile race — lo, I will adopt him into my family. Sinner! God taketh thee for his son. What, though thou art poor, God says, "I will take thee to be mine for ever. Thou shalt be my heir. There is thy fair brother. In ties of blood he is one with thee — Jesus is thy actual brother!" Yet how came this change? Oh! is not that an act of mercy? "Grace did much more abound."

"Grace hath put me in the number
Of the Savior's family."

Grace outdoes sin, for it lifts us higher than the place from which we fell.

And again, "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound"; because the sentence of the law may be reversed, but that of grace never can. I stand here and feel condemned, yet, perhaps, I have a hope that I may be acquitted. There is a dying hope of acquittal still left. But when we are justified, there is no fear of condemnation. I cannot be condemned if I am once justified; fully absolved I am by grace. I defy Satan to lay hands on me, if I am a justified man. The state of justification is an unvariable one, and is indissolubly united to glory. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature,

shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Oh! poor condemned sinner, doth not this charm thee, and make thee in love with free grace? And all this is YOURS. Your crimes, if once blotted out, shall never be laid to your charge again. The justification of the gospel is no Arminian sham, which may be reversed if you should in future turn aside. No; the debt once paid, cannot be demanded twice — the punishment, once endured, cannot again be inflicted. Saved, saved, saved, entirely saved by divine grace, you may walk without fear the wide world over.

And yet, once more. Just as sin makes us sick, and grievous, and sad, so does grace make us far more joyful and free. Sin causeth one to go about with an aching heart, till he seems as if the world would swallow him, and mountains hang above ready to drop upon him. This is the effect of the law. The law makes us sad; the law makes us miserable. But, poor sinner, grace removeth the evil effects of sin upon your spirit, if thou dost believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, thou shalt go out of this place with a sparkling eye and a light heart. Ah! well do I remember the morning when I stepped into a little place of worship, as miserable almost as hell could make me — being ruined and lost. I had often been at chapels where they spoke of the law, but I heard not the gospel. I sat down the pew a chained and imprisoned sinner; the Word of God came, and I went out free. Though I went in miserable as hell, I went out elated and joyful. I sat there black; I went away whiter than driven snow. God had said, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be whiter than snow." Why not this be thy lot, my brother, if thou feelest thyself a sinner now? It is all he asks of thee, to feel thy need of him, this thou hast, and now the blood of Jesus lies before thee. "The law has entered that sin might abound." Thou are forgiven, only believe it; elect, only believe it; 'tis the truth that thou are saved.

And now, lastly, poor sinner, has sin made thee unfit for heaven? Grace shall render thee a fit companion for seraphs and the just made perfect. Thou who art to-day lost and destroyed by sin, shalt one day find thyself with a crown upon thy head, and a golden harp in thine hand, exalted to the throne of the Most High. Think, O drunkard, if thou repentest, there is a crown laid up for thee in heaven. Ye guiltiest, most lost and depraved, are ye condemned in your conscience by the law? Then I invite you, in my Master's name, to accept pardon through his blood. He suffered in your

stead, he has atoned for your guilt and you are acquitted. Thou art an object of his eternal affection, the law is but a schoolmaster, to bring thee to Christ. Cast thyself on him. Fall into the arms of saving grace. No works are required, no fitness, no righteousness, no doings. Ye are complete in him who said, “It is finished.”

“Ye debtors whom he gives to know
That you ten thousand talents owe,
When humble at his feet you fall,
Your gracious God forgives them all.
“Slaves, that have borne the heavy chain
Of sin, and hell’s tyrannic reign,
To liberty assert your claim,
And urge the great Redeemer’s name.
“The rich inheritance of heaven,
Your joy, your boast, is freely giv’n;
Fair Salem your arrival waits,
With golden streets, and pearly gates.
“Her blest inhabitants no more
Bondage and poverty implore!
No debt, but love immensely great;
Their joy still rises with the debt.”

ELECTION

SERMON NO. 41

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, SEPTEMBER 2, 1855,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." — 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14.

F there were no other text in the sacred Word except this one, I think we should all be bound to receive and acknowledge the truthfulness of the great and glorious doctrine of God's ancient choice of his family. But there seems to be an inveterate prejudice in the human mind against this doctrine; and although most other doctrines will be received by professing Christians, some with caution, others with pleasure, yet this one seems to be most frequently disregarded and discarded. In many of our pulpits it would be reckoned a high sin and treason to preach a sermon upon election, because they could not make it what they call a "practical" discourse. I believe they have erred from the truth therein. Whatever God has revealed, he has revealed for a purpose. There is nothing in Scripture which may not, under the influence of God's Spirit, be turned into a practical discourse: for "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable" for some purpose of spiritual usefulness. It is true, it may not be turned into a free-will discourse — that we know right well — but it can be turned into a practical free-grace discourse: and free-grace practice is the best practice, when the true doctrines of God's immutable love are brought to bear upon the hearts of saints and sinners. Now, I trust this morning some of you who are startled at the very sound of this word, will say, "I will give it a fair hearing; I will lay aside my prejudices; I will just hear what this man has to say." Do not shut your ears and say at once, "It is high doctrine." Who has authorized you to call it high or low? Why

should you oppose yourself to God's doctrine? Remember what became of the children who found fault with God's prophet, and exclaimed, "Go up, thou bald-head; go up, thou bald-head." Say nothing against God's doctrines, lest haply some evil beast should come out of the forest and devour you also. There are other woes beside the open judgment of heaven — take heed that these fall not on your head. Lay aside your prejudices: listen calmly, listen dispassionately: hear what Scripture says; and when you receive the truth, if God should be pleased to reveal and manifest it to your souls, do not be ashamed to confess it. To confess you were wrong yesterday, is only to acknowledge that you are a little wiser to-day; and instead of being a reflection on yourself, it is an honor to your judgment, and shows that you are improving in the knowledge of the truth. Do not be ashamed to learn, and to cast aside your old doctrines and views, but to take up that which you may more plainly see to be in the Word of God. But if you do not see it to be here in the Bible, whatever I may say, or whatever authorities I may plead, I beseech you, as you love your souls, reject it; and if from this pulpit you ever hear things contrary to this Sacred Word, remember that the Bible must be the first, and God's minister must lie underneath it. We must not stand on the Bible to preach, but we must preach with the Bible above our heads. After all we have preached, we are well aware that the mountain of truth is higher than our eyes can discern; clouds and darkness are round about its summit, and we cannot discern its topmost pinnacle; yet we will try to preach it as well as we can. But since we are mortal, and liable to err, exercise your judgment; "Try the spirits whether they are of God"; and if on mature reflection on your bended knees, you are led to disregard election — a thing which I consider to be utterly impossible — then forsake it; do not hear it preached, but believe and confess whatever you see to be God's Word. I can say no more than that by way of exordium.

Now, first, I shall speak a little concerning the truthfulness of this doctrine: "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation." Secondly, I shall try to prove that this election is absolute: "He hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation," not for sanctification, but "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Thirdly, this election is eternal, because the text says, "God hath from the beginning chosen you." Fourthly, it is personal: "He hath chosen you." Then we will look at the

effects of the doctrine — see what it does; and lastly, as God may enable us, we will try and look at its tendencies, and see whether it is indeed a terrible and licentious doctrine. We will take the flower, and like true bees, see whether there be any honey whatever in it; whether any good can come of it, or whether it is an unmixed, undiluted evil.

I. First, I must try and prove that the doctrine is TRUE. And let me begin with an argumentum ad hominem; I will speak to you according to your different positions and stations. There are some of you who belong to the Church of England, and I am happy to see so many of you here. Though now and then I certainly say some very hard things about Church and State, yet I love the old Church, for she has in her communion many godly ministers and eminent saints. Now, I know you are great believers in what the Articles declare to be sound doctrine. I will give you a specimen of what they utter concerning election, so that if you believe them, you cannot avoid receiving election. I will read a portion of the 17th Article upon Predestination and Election: —

> "Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hast continually decreed by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honor. Wherefore they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God be called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season: they through grace obey the calling: they be justified freely: they be made sons of God by adoption: they be made like the image of his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity."

Now, I think any churchman, if he be a sincere and honest believer in Mother Church, must be a thorough believer in election. True, if he turns to certain other portions of the Prayer Book, he will find things contrary to the doctrines of free-grace, and altogether apart from scriptural teaching; but if he looks at the Articles, he must see that God hath chosen his people unto eternal life. I am not so desperately enamoured, however, of that book as you may be; and I have only used this Article to show you

that if you belong to the Establishment of England you should at least offer no objection to this doctrine of predestination.

Another human authority whereby I would confirm the doctrine of election, is, the old Waldensian creed. If you read the creed of the old Waldenses, emanating from them in the midst of the burning heat of persecution, you will see that these renowned professors and confessors of the Christian faith did most firmly receive and embrace this doctrine, as being a portion of the truth of God. I have copied from an old book one of the Articles of their faith: —

> "That God saves from corruption and damnation those whom he has chosen from the foundations of the world, not for any disposition, faith, or holiness that he foresaw in them, but of his mere mercy in Christ Jesus his Son, passing by all the rest according to the irreprehensible reason of his own free-will and justice."

It is no novelty, then, that I am preaching; no new doctrine. I love to proclaim these strong old doctrines, which are called by nickname Calvinism, but which are surely and verily the revealed truth of God as it is in Christ Jesus. By this truth I make a pilgrimage into the past, and as I go, I see father after father, confessor after confessor, martyr after martyr, standing up to shake hands with me. Were I a Pelagian, or a believer in the doctrine of free-will, I should have to walk for centuries all alone. Here and there a heretic of no very honorable character might rise up and call me brother. But taking these things to be the standard of my faith, I see the land of the ancients peopled with my brethren — I behold multitudes who confess the same as I do, and acknowledge that this is the religion of God's own church.

I also give you an extract from the old Baptist Confession. We are Baptists in this congregation — the greater part of us at any rate — and we like to see what our own forefathers wrote. Some two hundred years ago the Baptists assembled together, and published their articles of faith, to put an end to certain reports against their orthodoxy which had gone forth to the world. I turn to this old book — which I have just published [The Baptist Confession of Faith (1689)] — and I find the following as the

3rd Article: “By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated, or foreordained to eternal life through Jesus Christ to the praise of his glorious grace; others being left to act in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of his glorious justice. These angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished. Those of mankind that are predestinated to life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory out of his mere free grace and love, without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving him thereunto.”

As for these human authorities, I care not one rush for all three of them. I care not what they say, pro or con, as to this doctrine. I have only used them as a kind of confirmation to your faith, to show you that whilst I may be railed upon as a heretic and as a hyper-Calvinist, after all I am backed up by antiquity. All the past stands by me. I do not care for the present. Give me the past and I will hope for the future. Let the present rise up in my teeth, I will not care. What though a host of the churches of London may have forsaken the great cardinal doctrines of God, it matters not. If a handful of us stand alone in an unflinching maintenance of the sovereignty of our God, if we are beset by enemies, ay, and even by our own brethren, who ought to be our friends and helpers, it matters not, if we can but count upon the past; the noble army of martyrs, the glorious host of confessors, are our friends; the witnesses of truth stand by us. With these for us, we will not say that we stand alone, but we may exclaim, “Lo, God hath reserved unto himself seven thousand that have not bowed the knee unto Baal.” But the best of all is, God is with us.

The great truth is always the Bible, and the Bible alone. My hearers, you do not believe in any other book than the Bible, do you? If I could prove this from all the books in Christendom; if I could fetch back the Alexandrian library, and prove it thence, you would not believe it any more; but you surely will believe what is in God’s Word.

I have selected a few texts to read to you. I love to give you a whole volley of texts when I am afraid you will distrust a truth, so that you may be too

astonished to doubt, if you do not in reality believe. Just let me run through a catalogue of passages where the people of God are called elect. Of course if the people are called elect, there must be election. If Jesus Christ and his apostles were accustomed to style believers by the title of elect, we must certainly believe that they were so, otherwise the term does not mean anything. Jesus Christ says,

> "Except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days." "False Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect." "Then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven" (Mark 13:20,22,27).

> "Shall not God avenge his own elect, who cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?" (Luke 18:7).

Together with many other passages which might be selected, wherein either the word "elect," or "chosen," or "foreordained," or "appointed" is mentioned; or the phrase "my sheep" or some similar designation, showing that Christ's people are distinguished from the rest of mankind.

But you have concordances, and I will not trouble you with texts. Throughout the epistles, the saints are constantly called "the elect." In the Colossians we find Paul saying, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies." When he writes to Titus, he calls himself, "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect." Peter says, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." Then if you turn to John, you will find he is very fond of the word. He says, "The elder to the elect lady"; and he speaks of our "elect sister." And we know where it is written, "The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you." They were not ashamed of the word in those days; they were not afraid to talk about it. Now-a-days the word has been dressed up with diversities of meaning, and persons have mutilated and marred the doctrine, so that they have made it a very doctrine of devils, I do confess; and many who call themselves believers, have gone to rank Antinomianism. But notwithstanding this, why should I be ashamed of it, if men do wrest it? We love God's truth on

the rack, as well as when it is walking upright. If there were a martyr whom we loved before he came on the rack, we should love him more still when he was stretched there. When God's truth is stretched on the rack, we do not call it falsehood. We love not to see it racked, but we love it even when racked, because we can discern what its proper proportions ought to have been if it had not been racked and tortured by the cruelty and inventions of men. If you will read many of the epistles of the ancient fathers, you will find them always writing to the people of God as the "elect." Indeed the common conversational term used among many of the churches by the primitive Christians to one another was that of the "elect." They would often use the term to one another, showing that it was generally believed that all God's people were manifestly "elect."

But now for the verses that will positively prove the doctrine. Open your Bibles and turn to John 15:16, and there you will see that Jesus Christ has chosen his people, for he says, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." Then in the 19th verse, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Then in the 17th chapter and the 8th and 9th verses, "For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." Turn to Acts 13:48: "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." They may try to split that passage into hairs if they like; but it says, "ordained to eternal life" in the original as plainly as it possibly can; and we do not care about all the different commentaries thereupon. You scarcely need to be reminded of Romans 8, because I trust you are all well acquainted with that chapter and understand it by this time. In the 29th and following verses, it says, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he

also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" It would also be unnecessary to repeat the whole of the 9th chapter of Romans. As long as that remains in the Bible, no man shall be able to prove Arminianism; so long as that is written there, not the most violent contortions of the passage will ever be able to exterminate the doctrine of election from the Scriptures. Let us read such verses as these —

> "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger."

Then read the 22nd verse,

> "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory."

Then go on to Romans 11:7 —

> "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded."

In the 5th verse of the same chapter, we read —

> "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace."

You, no doubt, all recollect the passage in 1 Corinthians 1:26-29:

> "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and

> things which are not, to bring to nought things which are: that no flesh should glory in his presence."

Again, remember the passage in 1 Thessalonians 5:9 —

> "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ."

And then you have my text, which methinks would be quite enough. But, if you need any more, you can find them at your leisure, if we have not quite removed your suspicions as to the doctrine not being true.

Methinks, my friends, that this overwhelming mass of Scripture testimony must stagger those who dare to laugh at this doctrine. What shall we say of those who have so often despised it, and denied its divinity; who have railed at its justice, and dared to defy God and call him an Almighty tyrant, when they have heard of his having elected so many to eternal life? Canst thou, O rejector! cast it out of the Bible? Canst thou take the penknife of Jehudi and cut it out of the Word of God? Wouldst thou be like the woman at the feet of Solomon, and have the child rent in halves, that thou mightest have thy half? Is it not here in Scripture? And is it not thy duty to bow before it, and meekly acknowledge what thou understandest not — to receive it as the truth even though thou couldst not understand its meaning? I will not attempt to prove the justice of God in having thus elected some and left others. It is not for me to vindicate my Master. He will speak for himself, and he does so: — "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?" Who is he that shall say unto his father, "What hast thou begotten?" or unto his mother, "What hast thou brought forth?" "I am the Lord — I form the light and create darkness I, the Lord, do all these things." Who art thou that repliest against God? Tremble and kiss his rod; bow down and submit to his scepter; impugn not his justice, and arraign not his acts before thy bar, O man!

But there are some who say, "It is hard for God to choose some and leave others." Now, I will ask you one question. Is there any of you here this morning who wishes to be holy, who wishes to be regenerate, to leave off

sin and walk in holiness? “Yes, there is,” says some one, “I do.” Then God has elected you. But another says, “No; I don’t want to be holy; I don’t want to give up my lusts and my vices.” Why should you grumble, then, that God has not elected you to it? For if you were elected you would not like it, according to your own confession. If God this morning had chosen you to holiness, you say you would not care for it. Do you not acknowledge that you prefer drunkenness to sobriety, dishonesty to honesty? You love this world’s pleasures better than religion; then why should you grumble that God has not chosen you to religion? If you love religion, he has chosen you to it. If you desire it, he has chosen you to it. If you do not, what right have you to say that God ought to have given you what you do not wish for? Supposing I had in my hand something which you do not value, and I said I shall give it to such-and-such a person, you would have no right to grumble that I did not give to you. You could not be so foolish as to grumble that the other has got what you do not care about. According to your own confession, many of you do not want religion, do not want a new heart and a right spirit, do not want the forgiveness of sins, do not want sanctification; you do not want to be elected to these things: then why should you grumble? You count these things but as husks, and why should you complain of God who has given them to those whom he has chosen? If you believe them to be good and desire them, they are there for thee. God gives liberally to all those who desire; and first of all, he makes them desire, otherwise they never would. If you love these things, he has elected you to them, and you may have them; but if you do not, who are you that you should find fault with God, when it is your own desperate will that keeps you from loving these things — your own simple self that makes you hate them? Suppose a man in the street should say, “What a shame it is I cannot have a seat in the chapel to hear what this man has to say.” And suppose he says, “I hate the preacher; I can’t bear his doctrine; but still it’s a shame I have not a seat.” Would you expect a man to say so? No: you would at once say, “That man does not care for it. Why should he trouble himself about other people having what they value and he despises?” You do not like holiness, you do not like righteousness; if God has elected me to these things, has he hurt you by it? “Ah! but,” say some, “I thought it meant that God elected some to heaven and some to hell.” That is a very different matter from the gospel doctrine. He has elected men to holiness and to righteousness and through that to heaven.

You must not say that he has elected them simply to heaven, and others only to hell. He has elected you to holiness, if you love holiness. If any of you love to be saved by Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ elected you to be saved. If any of you desire to have salvation, you are elected to have it, if you desire it sincerely and earnestly. But, if you don't desire it, why on earth should you be so preposterously foolish as to grumble because God gives that which you do not like to other people?

II. Thus I have tried to say something with regard to the truth of the doctrine of election. And now, briefly, let me say that election is ABSOLUTE: that is, it does not depend upon what we are. The text says, "God hath from the beginning chosen us unto salvation"; but our opponents say that God chooses people because they are good, that he chooses them on account of sundry works which they have done. Now, we ask in reply to this, what works are those on account of which God elects his people? Are they what we commonly call "works of law," — works of obedience which the creature can render? If so, we reply to you — If men cannot be justified by the works of the law, it seems to us pretty clear that they cannot be elected by the works of the law: if they cannot be justified by their good deeds, they cannot be saved by them. Then the decree of election could not have been formed upon good works. "But," say others, "God elected them on the foresight of their faith." Now, God gives faith, therefore he could not have elected them on account of faith, which he foresaw. There shall be twenty beggars in the street, and I determine to give one of them a shilling; but will any one say that I determined to give that one a shilling, that I elected him to have the shilling, because I foresaw that he would have it? That would be talking nonsense. In like manner to say that God elected men because he foresaw they would have faith, which is salvation in the germ, would be too absurd for us to listen to for a moment. Faith is the gift of God. Every virtue comes from him. Therefore it cannot have caused him to elect men, because it is his gift. Election, we are sure, is absolute, and altogether apart from the virtues which the saints have afterwards. What though a saint should be as holy and devout as Paul; what though he should be as bold as Peter, or as loving as John, yet he would claim nothing from his Maker. I never knew a saint yet of any denomination, who thought that God saved him because he foresaw that he would have these virtues and merits. Now, my brethren,

the best jewels that the saint ever wears, if they be jewels of his own fashioning, are not of the first water. There is something of earth mixed with them. The highest grace we ever possess has something of earthliness about it. We feel this when we are most refined, when we are most sanctified, and our language must always be —

"I the chief of sinners am;
Jesus died for me."

Our only hope, our only plea, still hangs on grace as exhibited in the person of Jesus Christ. And I am sure we must utterly reject and disregard all thought that our graces, which are gifts of our Lord, which are his right-hand planting, could have ever caused his love. And we ever must sing —

"What was there in us that could merit esteem
Or give the Creator delight?
'Twas even so Father we ever must sing,
Because it seemed good in thy sight."

"He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy": he saves because he will save. And if you ask me why he saves me, I can only say, because he would do it. Was there anything in me that should recommend me to God? No; I lay aside everything, I had nothing to recommend me. When God saved me I was the most abject, lost, and ruined of the race. I lay before him as an infant in my blood. Verily, I had no power to help myself. O how wretched did I feel and know myself to be! If you had something to recommend you to God, I never had. I will be content to be saved by grace, unalloyed, pure grace. I can boast of no merits. If you can do so, I cannot. I must sing —

"Free grace alone from the first to the last,
Hath won my affection and held my soul fast."

III. Then, thirdly, this election is ETERNAL. "God hath from the beginning chosen you unto eternal life." Can any man tell me when the beginning was? Years ago we thought the beginning of this world was when Adam came upon it; but we have discovered that thousands of years before that God was preparing chaotic matter to make it a fit abode for man, putting races of creatures upon it, who might die and leave behind the marks of his handiwork and marvellous skill, before he tried his hand on man. But that was not the beginning, for revelation points us to a period

long ere this world was fashioned, to the days when the morning stars were begotten; when, like drops of dew, from the fingers of the morning, stars and constellations fell trickling from the hand of God; when, by his own lips, he launched forth ponderous orbs; when with his own hand he sent comets, like thunderbolts, wandering through the sky, to find one day their proper sphere. We go back to years gone by, when worlds were made and systems fashioned, but we have not even approached the beginning yet. Until we go to the time when all the universe slept in the mind of God as yet unborn, until we enter the eternity where God the Creator lived alone, everything sleeping within him, all creation resting in his mighty gigantic thought, we have not guessed the beginning. We may go back, back, back, ages upon ages. We may go back, if we might use such strange words, whole eternities, and yet never arrive at the beginning. Our wing might be tired, our imagination would die away; could it outstrip the lightnings flashing in majesty, power, and rapidity, it would soon weary itself ere it could get to the beginning. But God from the beginning chose his people; when the unnavigated ether was yet unfanned by the wing of a single angel, when space was shoreless, or else unborn when universal silence reigned, and not a voice or whisper shocked the solemnity of silence; when there was no being and no motion, no time, and nought but God himself, alone in his eternity; when without the song of an angel, without the attendance of even the cherubim, long ere the living creatures were born, or the wheels of the chariot of Jehovah were fashioned, even then, "in the beginning was the Word," and in the beginning God's people were one with the Word, and "in the beginning he chose them into eternal life." Our election then is eternal. I will not stop to prove it, I only just run over these thoughts for the benefit of young beginners, that they may understand what we mean by eternal, absolute election.

IV. And, next, the election is PERSONAL. Here again, our opponents have tried to overthrow election by telling us that it is an election of nations, and not of people. But here the Apostle says, "God hath from the beginning chosen you." It is the most miserable shift on earth to make out that God hath not chosen persons but nations, because the very same objection that lies against the choice of persons, lies against the choice of a nation. If it were not just to choose a person, it would be far more unjust to choose a nation, since nations are but the union of multitudes of

persons, and to choose a nation seems to be a more gigantic crime — if election be a crime — than to choose one person. Surely to choose ten thousand would be reckoned to be worse than choosing one; to distinguish a whole nation from the rest of mankind, does seem to be a greater extravaganza in the acts of divine sovereignty than the election of one poor mortal and leaving out another. But what are nations but men? What are whole peoples but combinations of different units? A nation is made up of that individual, and that, and that. And if you tell me that God chose the Jews, I say then, he chose that Jew, and that Jew, and that Jew. And if you say he chooses Britain, then I say he chooses that British man, and that British man, and that British man. So that is the same thing after all. Election then is personal: it must be so. Every one who reads this text, and others like it, will see that Scripture continually speaks of God's people one by one and speaks of them as having been the special subjects of election.

"Sons we are through God's election,
Who in Jesus Christ believe;
By eternal destination
Sovereign grace we here receive."
We know it is personal election.

V. The other thought is — for my time flies too swiftly to enable me to dwell at length upon these points — that election produces GOOD RESULTS. "He hath from the beginning chosen you unto sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth." How many men mistake the doctrine of election altogether! and how my soul burns and boils at the recollection of the terrible evils that have accrued from the spoiling and the wresting of that glorious portion of God's glorious truth! How many are there who have said to themselves, "I am elect," and have sat down in sloth, and worse than that! They have said, "I am the elect of God," and with both hands they have done wickedness. They have swiftly run to every unclean thing, because they have said, "I am the chosen child of God, irrespective of my works, therefore I may live as I list, and do what I like." Oh, beloved! let me solemnly warn every one of you not to carry the truth too far; or, rather not to turn the truth into error, for we cannot carry it too far. We may overstep the truth; we can make that which was meant to be sweet for our comfort, a terrible mixture for our destruction. I tell you there have been thousands of men who have been ruined by

misunderstanding election; who have said, “God has elected me to heaven, and to eternal life”; but they have forgotten that it is written, God has elected them “through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.” This is God’s election — election to sanctification and to faith. God chooses his people to be holy, and to be believers. How many of you here then are believers? How many of my congregation can put their hands upon their hearts and say, “I trust in God that I am sanctified”? Is there one of you who says, “I am elect”? — I remind that you swore last week. One of you says, “I trust I am elect” — but I jog your memory about some vicious act that you committed during the last six days. Another of you says, “I am elect” — but I would look you in the face and say, “Elect! thou art a most cursed hypocrite! and that is all thou art.” Others would say, “I am elect” — but I would remind them that they neglect the mercy-seat and do not pray. Oh, beloved! never think you are elect unless you are holy. You may come to Christ as a sinner, but you may not come to Christ as an elect person until you can see your holiness. Do not misconstrue what I say — do not say “I am elect,” and yet think you can be living in sin. That is impossible. The elect of God are holy. They are not pure, they are not perfect, they are not spotless; but, taking their life as a whole, they are holy persons. They are marked, and distinct from others: and no man has a right to conclude himself elect except in his holiness. He may be elect, and yet lying in darkness, but he has no right to believe it; no one can see it, there is no evidence of it. The man may live one day, but he is dead at present. If you are walking in the fear of God, trying to please him, and to obey his commandments, doubt not that your name has been written in the Lamb’s book of life from before the foundation of the world.

And, lest this should be too high for you, note the other mark of election, which is faith, “belief of the truth.” Whoever believes God’s truth, and believes on Jesus Christ, is elect. I frequently meet with poor souls, who are fretting and worrying themselves about this thought — “How, if I should not be elect!” “Oh, sir,” they say, “I know I put my trust in Jesus; I know I believe in his name and trust in his blood; but how if I should not be elect?” Poor dear creature! you do not know much about the gospel, or you would never talk so, for he that believes is elect. Those who are elect, are elect unto sanctification and unto faith; and if you have faith you are one of God’s elect; you may know it and ought to know it, for it is an

absolute certainty. If you, as a sinner, look to Jesus Christ this morning, and say —

"Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling,"

you are elect. I am not afraid of election frightening poor saints or sinners. There are many divines who tell the enquirer "election has nothing to do with you." That is very bad, because the poor soul is not to be silenced like that. If you could silence him so, it might be well, but he will think of it, he can't help it. Say to him then, if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ you are elect. If you will cast yourself on Jesus, you are elect. I tell you — the chief of sinners — this morning, I tell you in his name, if you will come to God without any works of your own, cast yourself on the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ; if you will come now and trust in him, you are elect — you were loved of God from before the foundation of the world, for you could not do that unless God had given you the power, and had chosen you to do it. Now you are safe and secure if you do but come and cast yourself on Jesus Christ, and wish to be saved and to be loved by him. But think not that any man will be saved without faith and without holiness. Do not conceive, my hearers, that some decree, passed in the dark ages of eternity, will save your souls, unless you believe in Christ. Do not sit down and fancy that you are to be saved without faith and holiness. That is a most abominable and accursed heresy, and has ruined thousands. Lay not election as a pillow for you to sleep on, or you may be ruined. God forbid that I should be sewing pillows under armholes that you may rest comfortably in your sins. Sinner! there is nothing in the Bible to palliate your sins. But if thou art condemned O man! if thou art lost O woman! thou wilt not find in this Bible one drop to cool thy tongue, or one doctrine to palliate thy guilt; your damnation will be entirely your own fault, and your sin will richly merit it, because ye believe not ye are condemned. "Ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep." "Ye wilt not come to me that ye might have life." Do not fancy that election excuses sin — do not dream of it — do not rock yourself in sweet complacency in the thought of your irresponsibility. You are responsible. We must give you both things. We must have divine sovereignty, and we must have man's responsibility. We must have election, but we must ply your hearts, we must send God's truth at you; we must speak to you, and remind you of

this, that while it is written, “In me is thy help”; yet it is also written, “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself.”

VI. Now, lastly, what are the true and legitimate tendencies of right conceptions concerning the doctrine of election. First, I will tell you what the doctrine of election will make saints do under the blessing of God; and, secondly what it will do for sinners if God blesses it to them.

First, I think election, to a saint, is one of the most stripping doctrines in all the world — to take away all trust in the flesh, or all reliance upon anything except Jesus Christ. How often do we wrap ourselves up in our own righteousness, and array ourselves with the false pearls and gems of our own works and doings. We begin to say “Now I shall be saved, because I have this and that evidence.” Instead of that, it is naked faith that saves; that faith and that alone unites to the Lamb, irrespective of works, although it is productive of them. How often do we lean on some work, other than that of our own Beloved, and trust in some might, other than that which comes from on high. Now if we would have this might taken from us, we must consider election. Pause my soul, and consider this. God loved thee before thou hadst a being. He loved thee when thou wast dead in trespasses and sins, and sent his Son to die for thee. He purchased thee with his precious blood ere thou couldst lisp his name. Canst thou then be proud?

I know nothing, nothing again, that is more humbling for us than this doctrine of election. I have sometimes fallen prostrate before it, when endeavoring to understand it. I have stretched my wings, and, eagle-like, I have soared towards the sun. Steady has been my eye, and true my wing, for a season; but, when I came near it, and the one thought possessed me, — “God hath from the beginning chosen you unto salvation,” I was lost in its lustre, I was staggered with the mighty thought; and from the dizzy elevation down came my soul, prostrate and broken, saying, “Lord, I am nothing, I am less than nothing. Why me? Why me?”

Friends, if you want to be humbled, study election, for it will make you humble under the influence of God’s Spirit. He who is proud of his election is not elect; and he who is humbled under a sense of it may believe that he is. He has every reason to believe that he is, for it is one of the

most blessed effects of election that it helps us to humble ourselves before God.

Once again. Election in the Christian should make him very fearless and very bold. No man will be so bold as he who believes that he is elect of God. What cares he for man if he is chosen of his Maker? What will he care for the pitiful chirpings of some tiny sparrows when he knoweth that he is an eagle of a royal race? Will he care when the beggar pointeth at him, when the blood royal of heaven runs in his veins? Will he fear if all the world stand against him? If earth be all in arms abroad, he dwells in perfect peace, for he is in the secret place of the tabernacle of the Most High, in the great pavillion of the Almighty. "I am God's," says he, "I am distinct from other men. They are of an inferior race. Am not I noble? Am not I one of the aristocrats of heaven? Is not my name written in God's book?" Does he care for the world? Nay: like the lion that careth not for the barking of the dog, he smileth at all his enemies; and when they come too near him, he moveth himself and dasheth them to pieces. What careth he for them? He walks about them like a colossus; while little men walk under him and understand him not. His brow is made of iron, his heart is of flint — what doth he care for man? Nay; if one universal hiss came up from the wide world, he would smile at it, for he would say, —

"He that hath made his refuge God,
Shall find a most secure abode."

"I am one of his elect. I am chosen of God and precious; and though the world cast me out, I fear not." Ah! ye time-serving professors, some of you can bend like the willows. There are few oaken-Christians now-a-days, that can stand the storm; and I will tell you the reason. It is because you do not believe yourselves to be elect. The man who knows he is elect will be too proud to sin; he will not humble himself to commit the acts of common people. The believer in this truth will say, "I compromise my principles? I change my doctrines? I lay aside my views? I hide what I believe to be true? No! since I know I am one of God's elect, in the very teeth of all men I shall speak God's truth, whatever man may say." Nothing makes a man so truly bold as to feel that he is God's elect. He shall not quiver, he shall not shake, who knows that God has chosen him.

Moreover, election will make us holy. Nothing under the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit can make a Christian more holy than the thought that he is chosen. “Shall I sin,” he says, “after God hath chosen me? Shall I transgress after such love? Shall I go astray after so much lovingkindness and tender mercy? Nay, my God; since thou hast chosen me, I will love thee; I will live to thee —

‘Since thou, the everlasting God,
My Father art become;’

I will give myself to thee to be thine for ever, by election and by redemption, casting myself on thee, and solemnly consecrating myself to thy service.”

And now, lastly, to the ungodly. What says election to you? First, ye ungodly ones, I will excuse you for a moment. There are many of you who do not like election, and I cannot blame you for it, for I have heard those preach election, who have sat down, and said, “I have not one word to say to the sinner.” Now, I say you ought to dislike such preaching as that, and I do not blame you for it. But, I say, take courage, take hope, O thou sinner, that there is election. So far from dispiriting and discouraging thee, it is a very hopeful and joyous thing that there is an election. What if I told thee perhaps none can be saved, none are ordained to eternal life; wouldst thou not tremble and fold thy hands in hopelessness, and say, “Then how can I be saved, since none are elect?” But, I say, there is a multitude elect, beyond all counting — a host that no mortal can number. Therefore, take heart, thou poor sinner! Cast away thy despondency — mayest thou not be elect as well as any other? for there is a host innumerable chosen. There is joy and comfort for thee! Then, not only take heart, but go and try the Master. Remember, if you were not elect, you would lose nothing by it. What did the four Syrians say? “Let us fall unto the host of the Syrians, for if we stay here we must die, and if we go to them we can but die.” O sinner! come to the throne of electing mercy, Thou mayest die where thou art. Go to God; and, even supposing he should spurn thee, suppose his uplifted hand should drive thee away — a thing impossible — yet thou wilt not lose anything; thou wilt not be more damned for that. Besides, supposing thou be damned, thou wouldst have the satisfaction at least of being able to lift up thine eyes in hell and say, “God, I asked mercy of thee and thou wouldst not grant it; I sought it, but thou didst refuse it.” That

thou never shalt say, O sinner! If thou goest to him, and askest him, thou shalt receive; for he ne'er has spurned one yet! Is not that hope for you? What though there is an allotted number, yet it is true that all who seek belong to that number. Go thou and seek; and if thou shouldst be the first one to go to hell, tell the devils that thou didst perish thus — tell the demons that thou art a castaway, after having come as a guilty sinner to Jesus. I tell thee it would disgrace the Eternal — with reverence to his name — and he would not allow such a thing. He is jealous of his honor, and he could not allow a sinner to say that.

But ah, poor soul! not only think thus, that thou canst not lose anything by coming; there is yet one more thought — dost thou love the thought of election this morning? Art thou willing to admit its justice? Dost thou say, "I feel that I am lost; I deserve it; and that if my brother is saved I cannot murmur. If God destroy me, I deserve it, but if he saves the person sitting beside me, he has a right to do what he will with his own, and I have lost nothing by it." Can you say that honestly from your heart? If so, then the doctrine of election has had its right effect on your spirit, and you are not far from the kingdom of heaven. You are brought where you ought to be, where the Spirit wants you to be; and being so this morning, depart in peace; God has forgiven your sins. You would not feel that if you were not pardoned; you would not feel that if the Spirit of God were not working in you. Rejoice, then, in this. Let your hope rest on the cross of Christ. Think not on election but on Christ Jesus. Rest on Jesus — Jesus first, midst, and without end.

FREE WILL — A SLAVE

SERMON NO. 52

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 2, 1855,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." — John 5:40.

This is one of the great guns of the Arminians, mounted upon the top of their walls, and often discharged with terrible noise against the poor Christians called Calvinists. I intend to spike the gun this morning, or, rather, to turn it on the enemy, for it was never theirs; it was never cast at their foundry at all, but was intended to teach the very opposite doctrine to that which they assert. Usually, when the text is taken, the divisions are: First, that man has a will. Secondly, that he is entirely free. Thirdly, that men must make themselves willing to come to Christ, otherwise they will not be saved. Now, we shall have no such divisions; but we will endeavor to take a more calm look at the text; and not, because there happen to be the words "will," or "will not" in it, run away with the conclusion that it teaches the doctrine of free-will. It has already been proved beyond all controversy that free-will is nonsense. Freedom cannot belong to will any more than ponderability can belong to electricity. They are altogether different things. Free agency we may believe in, but free-will is simply ridiculous. The will is well known by all to be directed by the understanding, to be moved by motives, to be guided by other parts of the soul, and to be a secondary thing. Philosophy and religion both discard at once the very thought of free-will; and I will go as far as Martin Luther, in that strong assertion of his, where he says, "If any man doth ascribe aught of salvation, even the very least, to the free-will of man, he knoweth nothing of grace, and he hath not learnt Jesus Christ aright." It may seem a harsh sentiment; but he who in his soul believes that man does of his own free-will turn to God, cannot have been taught of God, for that is one of the first principles taught us when God begins with us, that we have

neither will nor power, but that he gives both; that he is "Alpha and Omega" in the salvation of men.

Our four points, this morning, shall be: First — that every man is dead, because it says: "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." Secondly — that there is life in Jesus Christ: "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." Thirdly — that there is life in Christ Jesus for every one that comes for it: "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life;" implying that all who go will have life. And fourthly — the gist of the text lies here, that no man by nature ever will come to Christ, for the text says, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." So far from asserting that men of their own wills ever do such a thing, it boldly and flatly denies it, and says, "Ye WILL NOT come to me, that ye might have life." Why, beloved, I am almost ready to exclaim, Have all free-willers no knowledge that they dare to run in the teeth of inspiration? Have all those that deny the doctrine of grace no sense? Have they so departed from God that they wrest this to prove free-will; whereas the text says, "YE WILL NOT come to me that ye might have life."

I. First, then, our text implies THAT MEN BY NATURE ARE DEAD.

No being needs to go after life if he has life in himself. The text speaks very strongly when it says, "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." Though it saith it not in words, yet it doth in effect affirm that men need a life more than they have themselves. My hearers, we are all dead unless we have been begotten unto a lively hope. First, we are all of us, by nature, legally dead — "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt die the death," said God to Adam; and though Adam did not die in that moment naturally, he died legally; that is to say death was recorded against him. As soon as, at the Old Bailey, the judge puts on the black cap and pronounces the sentence, the man is reckoned to be dead at law. Though perhaps a month may intervene before he is brought on the scaffold to endure the sentence of the law, yet the law looks upon him as a dead man. It is impossible for him to transact anything. He cannot inherit, he cannot bequeath; he is nothing — he is a dead man. The country considers him not as being alive in it at all. There is an election — he is not asked for his vote because he is considered as dead. He is shut up in his condemned cell, and he is dead. Ah! and ye ungodly sinners who have never had life in Christ,

ye are alive this morning, by reprieve, but do ye know that ye are legally dead; that God considers you as such, that in the day when your father Adam touched the fruit, and when you yourselves did sin, God, the Eternal Judge, put on the black cap and condemned you? You talk mightily of your own standing, and goodness, and morality — where is it? Scripture saith, ye are "condemned already." Ye are not to wait to be condemned at the judgment-day — that will be the execution of the sentence — ye are "condemned already." In the moment ye sinned; your names were all written in the black book of justice; every one was then sentenced by God to death, unless he found a substitute, in the person of Christ, for his sins. What would you think if you were to go into the Old Bailey, and see the condemned culprit sitting in his cell, laughing and merry? You would say, "The man is a fool, for he is condemned, and is to be executed; yet how merry he is." Ah! and how foolish is the worldly man, who, while sentence is recorded against him, lives in merriment and mirth! Do you think the sentence of God is of no effect? Thinkest thou that thy sin which is written with an iron pen on the rocks for ever hath no horrors in it? God hath said thou art condemned already. If thou wouldst but feel this, it would mingle bitters in thy sweet cups of joy; thy dances would be stopped, thy laughter quenched in sighing, if thou wouldst recollect that thou art condemned already. We ought all to weep, if we lay this to our souls: that by nature we have no life in God's sight; we are actually, positively condemned; death is recorded against us, and we are considered in ourselves now, in God's sight, as much dead as if we were actually cast into hell; we are condemned here by sin, we do not yet suffer the penalty of it, but it is written against us, and we are legally dead, nor can we find life unless we find legal life in the person of Christ, of which more by-and-by.

But, besides being legally dead, we are also spiritually dead. For not only did the sentence pass in the book, but it passed in the heart; it entered the conscience; it operated on the soul, on the judgment, on the imagination, and on everything. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," was not only fulfilled by the sentence recorded, but by something which took place in Adam. Just as, in a certain moment, when this body shall die, the blood stops, the pulse ceases, the breath no longer comes from the lungs, so in the day that Adam did eat that fruit his soul died; his

imagination lost its mighty power to climb into celestial things and see heaven, his will lost its power always to choose that which is good, his judgment lost all ability to judge between right and wrong decidedly and infallibly, though something was retained in conscience; his memory became tainted, liable to hold evil things, and let righteous things glide away; every power of him ceased as to its moral vitality. Goodness was the vitality of his powers — that departed. Virtue, holiness, integrity, these were the life of man; but when these departed man became dead. And now, every man, so far as spiritual things are concerned, is "dead in trespasses and sins" spiritually. Nor is the soul less dead in a carnal man, than the body is when committed to the grave; it is actually and positively dead — not by a metaphor, for Paul speaketh not in metaphor, when he affirms, "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." But my hearers, again, I would I could preach to your hearts concerning this subject. It was bad enough when I described death as having been recorded; but now I speak of it as having actually taken place in your hearts. Ye are not what ye once were; ye are not what ye were in Adam, not what ye were created. Man was made pure and holy. Ye are not the perfect creatures of which some boast; ye are altogether fallen, ye have gone out of the way, ye have become corrupt and filthy. Oh! listen not to the siren song of those who tell you of your moral dignity, and your mighty elevation in matters of salvation. Ye are not perfect; that great word, "ruin," is written on your heart; and death is stamped upon your spirit. Do not conceive, O moral man, that thou wilt be able to stand before God in thy morality, for thou art nothing but a carcass embalmed in legality, a corpse arrayed in some fine robes, but still corrupt in God's sight. And think not, O thou possessor of natural religion! that thou mayest by thine own might and power make thyself acceptable to God. Why, man! thou art dead! and thou mayest array the dead as gloriously as thou pleasest, but still it would be a solemn mockery. There lieth queen Cleopatra — put the crown upon her head, deck her in royal robes, let her sit in state; but what a cold chill runs through you when you pass by her. She is fair now, even in her death — but how horrible it is to stand by the side even of a dead queen, celebrated for her majestic beauty! So you may be glorious in your beauty, fair, and amiable, and lovely; you put the crown of honesty upon your head, and wear about you all the garments of uprightness, but unless God has quickened thee, O man! unless the Spirit

has had dealings with thy soul, thou art in God's sight as obnoxious as the chilly corpse is to thyself. Thou wouldst not choose to live with a corpse sitting at thy table; nor doth God love that thou shouldst be in his sight. He is angry with thee every day, for thou art in sin — thou art in death. Oh! believe this; take it to thy soul; appropriate it, for it is most true that thou art dead, spiritually as well as legally.

The third kind of death is the consummation of the other two. It is eternal death. It is the execution of the legal sentence; it is the consummation of the spiritual death. Eternal death is the death of the soul; it takes place after the body has been laid in the grave, after the soul has departed from it. If legal death be terrible, it is because of its consequences; and if spiritual death be dreadful, it is because of that which shall succeed it. The two deaths of which we have spoken are the roots, and that death which is to come is the flower thereof. Oh! had I words that I might this morning attempt to depict to you what eternal death is. The soul has come before its Maker; the book has been opened; the sentence has been uttered; "Depart ye cursed" has shaken the universe, and made the very spheres dim with the frown of the Creator; the soul has departed to the depths where it is to dwell with others in eternal death. Oh! how horrible is its position now. Its bed is a bed of flame; the sights it sees are murdering ones that affright its spirit;. the sounds it hears are shrieks, and wails, and moans, and groans; all that its body knows is the infliction of miserable pain! It has the possession of unutterable woe, of unmitigated misery. The soul looks up. Hope is extinct — it is gone. It looks downward in dread and fear; remorse hath possessed its soul. It looks on the right hand — and the adamantine walls of fate keep it within its limits of torture. It looks on the left — and there the rampart of blazing fire forbids the scaling ladder of e'en a dreamy speculation of escape. It looks within and seeks for consolation there, but a gnawing worm hath entered into the soul. It looks about it — it has no friends to aid, no comforters, but tormentors in abundance. It knoweth nought of hope of deliverance; it hath heard the everlasting key of destiny turning in its awful wards, and it hath seen God take that key and hurl it down into the depth of eternity never to be found again. It hopeth not; it knoweth no escape; it guesseth not of deliverance; it pants for death, but death is too much its foe to be there; it longs that non-existence would swallow it up, but this eternal death is worse than

annihilation. It pants for extermination as the laborer for his Sabbath; it longs that it might be swallowed up in nothingness just as would the galley slave long for freedom, but it cometh not — it is eternally dead. When eternity shall have rolled round multitudes of its everlasting cycles it shall still be dead. Forever knoweth no end; eternity cannot be spelled except in eternity. Still the soul seeth written o'er its head, "Thou art damned forever." It heareth howlings that are to be perpetual; it seeth flames which are unquenchable; it knoweth pains that are unmitigated; it hears a sentence that rolls not like the thunder of earth which soon is hushed — but onward, onward, onward, shaking the echoes of eternity — making thousands of years shake again with the horrid thunder of its dreadful sound — "Depart! depart! depart! ye cursed!" This is the eternal death.

II. Secondly, IN CHRIST JESUS THERE IS LIFE,

for he says: "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." There is no life in God the Father for a sinner; there is no life in God the Spirit for a sinner apart from Jesus. The life of a sinner is in Christ. If you take the Father apart from the Son, though he loves his elect, and decrees that they shall live, yet life is only in his Son. If you take God the Spirit apart from Jesus Christ, though it is the Spirit that gives us spiritual life, yet it is life in Christ, life in the Son. We dare not, and cannot apply in the first place, either to God the Father, or to God the Holy Ghost for spiritual life. The first thing we are led to do when God brings us out of Egypt is to eat the Passover — the very first thing. The first means whereby we get life is by feeding upon the flesh and blood of the Son of God; living in him, trusting on him, believing in his grace and power. Our second thought was — there is life in Christ. We will show you there are three kinds of life in Christ, as there are three kinds of death.

First there is legal life in Christ. Just as every man by nature considered in Adam had a sentence of condemnation passed on him in the moment of Adam's sin, and more especially in the moment of his own first transgression, so I, if I be a believer, and you, if you trust in Christ, have had a legal sentence of acquittal passed on us through what Jesus Christ has done. O condemned sinner! Thou mayest be sitting this morning condemned like the prisoner in Newgate; but ere this day has passed away thou mayest be as clear from guilt as the angels above. There is such a

thing as legal life in Christ, and, blessed be God! some of us enjoy it. We know our sins are pardoned because Christ suffered punishment for them; we know that we never can be punished ourselves, for Christ suffered in our stead. The Passover is slain for us; the lintel and door-post have been sprinkled, and the destroying angel can never touch us. For us there is no hell, although it blaze with terrible flame. Let Tophet be prepared of old, let its pile be wood and much smoke, we never can come there — Christ died for us, in our stead. What if there be racks of horrid torture? What if there be a sentence producing most horrible reverberations of thundering sounds? Yet neither rack, nor dungeon, nor thunder, are for us! In Christ Jesus we are now delivered. "There is therefore NOW no condemnation unto us who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

Sinner! Art thou legally condemned this morning? Dost thou feel that? Then, let me tell thee that faith in Christ will give thee a knowledge of thy legal acquittal. Beloved, it is no fancy that we are condemned for our sins, it is a reality. So, it is no fancy we are acquitted, it is a reality. A man about to be hanged, if he received a full pardon would feel it a great reality. He would say, "I have a full pardon; I cannot be touched now." That is just how I feel.

"Now freed from sin I walk at large,
The Savior's blood's my full discharge,
At his dear feet content I lay,
A sinner saved, and homage pay."

Brethren, we have gained legal life in Christ, and such legal life that we cannot lose it. The sentence has gone against us once — now it has gone out for us. It is written, "THERE IS NOW NO CONDEMNATION," and that now will do as well for me in fifty years as it does now. Whatever time we live it will still be written, "There is therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

Then, secondly, there is spiritual life in Christ Jesus. As the man is spiritually dead, God has spiritual life for him, for there is not a need which is not supplied by Jesus, there is not an emptiness in the heart which Christ cannot fill; there is not a desolation which he cannot people, there is not a desert which he cannot make to blossom as the rose. O ye dead sinners! spiritually dead, there is life in Christ Jesus, for we have seen

— yes! these eyes have seen — the dead live again; we have known the man whose soul was utterly corrupt, by the power of God seek after righteousness; we have known the man whose views were carnal, whose lusts were mighty, whose passions were strong, suddenly, by irresistible might from heaven, consecrate himself to Christ, and become a child of Jesus. We know that there is life in Christ Jesus, of a spiritual order; yea, more, we ourselves, in our own persons, have felt that there is spiritual life. Well can we remember when we sat in the house of prayer, as dead as the very seat on which we sat. We had listened for a long, long while to the sound of the gospel, but no effect followed, when suddenly, as if our ears had been opened by the fingers of some mighty angel, a sound entered into our heart. We thought we heard Jesus saying, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." An irresistible hand put itself on our heart and crushed a prayer out of it. We never had a prayer before like that. We cried, "O God! have mercy upon me a sinner." Some of us for months felt a hand pressing us as if we had been grasped in a vice, and our souls bled drops of anguish. That misery was a sign of coming life. Persons when they are being drowned do not feel the pain so much as while they are being restored. Oh! we recollect those pains, those groans, that living strife that our soul had when it came to Christ. Ah! we can recollect the giving of our spiritual life as easily as could a man his restoration from the grave. We can suppose Lazarus to have remembered his resurrection, though not all the circumstances of it. So we, although we have forgotten a great deal, do recollect our giving ourselves to Christ. We can say to every sinner, however dead, there is life in Christ Jesus, though you may be rotten and corrupt in your grave. He who hath raised Lazarus hath raised us; and he can say, even to you, "Lazarus! come forth."

In the third place, there is eternal life in Christ Jesus. And, oh! if eternal death be terrible, eternal life is blessed; for he has said, "Where I am there shall my people be." "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given unto me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish." Now, any Arminian that would preach from that text must buy a pair of India rubber lips, for I am sure he would need to stretch his mouth amazingly; he would never be able to speak the whole truth without winding about in a most mysterious manner. Eternal life — not a life which they are to lose, but

eternal life. If I lost life in Adam I gained it in Christ; if I lost myself for ever I find myself for ever in Jesus Christ. Eternal life! Oh blessed thought! Our eyes will sparkle with joy and our souls bum with ecstasy in the thought that we have eternal life. Be quenched ye stars! let God put his finger on you — but my soul will live in bliss and joy. Put out thine eye O sun! — but mine eye shall "see the king in his beauty" when thine eye shall no more make the green earth laugh. And moon, be thou turned into blood! — but my blood shall ne'er be turned to nothingness; this spirit shall exist when thou hast ceased to be. And thou great world! thou mayest all subside, just as a moment's foam subsides upon the wave that bears it — but I have eternal life. O time! thou mayest see giant mountains dead and hidden in their graves; thou mayest see the stars like figs too ripe, falling from the tree, but thou shalt never, never see my spirit dead.

III. This brings us to the third point: that ETERNAL LIFE IS GIVEN TO ALL WHO COME FOR IT.

There never was a man who came to Christ for eternal life, for legal life, for spiritual life, who had not already received it, in some sense, and it was manifested to him that he had received it soon after he came. Let us take one or two texts — "He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto him." Every man who comes to Christ will find that Christ is able to save him — not able to save him a little, to deliver him from a little sin, to keep him from a little trial, to carry him a little way and then drop him — but able to save him to the uttermost extent of his sin, unto the uttermost length of his trials, the uttermost depths of his sorrows, unto the uttermost duration of his existence. Christ says to every one who comes to him, "Come, poor sinner, thou needst not ask whether I have power to save. I will not ask thee how far thou hast gone into sin; I am able to save thee to the uttermost." And there is no one on earth can go beyond God's "uttermost."

Now another text: "Him that cometh to me, [mark the promises are nearly always to the coming ones] I will in no wise cast out." Every man that comes shall find the door of Christ's house opened — and the door of his heart too. Every man that comes — I say it in the broadest sense — shall find that Christ has mercy for him. The greatest absurdity in the world is to want to have a wider gospel than that recorded in Scripture. I preach

that every man who believes shall be saved — that every man who comes shall find mercy. People ask me, “But suppose a man should come who was not chosen, would he be saved?” You go and suppose nonsense and I am not going to give you an answer. If a man is not chosen he will never come. When he does come it is a sure proof that he was chosen. Says one, “Suppose any one should go to Christ who had not been called of the Spirit.” Stop, my brother, that is a supposition thou hast no right to make, for such a thing cannot happen; you only say it to entangle me, and you will not do that just yet. I say every man who comes to Christ shall be saved. I can say that as a Calvinist, or as a hyper-Calvinist, as plainly as you can say it. I have no narrower gospel than you have; only my gospel is on a solid foundation, whereas yours is built upon nothing but sand and rottenness. “Every man that cometh shall be saved, for no man cometh to me except the Father draw him.” “But,” says one, “suppose all the world should come, would Christ receive them?” Certainly, if all came; but then they won’t come. I tell you all that come — aye, if they were as bad as devils, Christ would receive them; if they had all sin and filthiness running into their hearts as into a common sewer for the whole world, Christ would receive them. Another says, “I want to know about the rest of the people. May I go out and tell them — Jesus Christ died for every one of you? May I say — there is righteousness for everyone of you, there is life for every one of you?” No; you may not. You may say — there is life for every man that comes. But if you say there is life for one of those that do not believe, you utter a dangerous lie. If you tell them Jesus Christ was punished for their sins, and yet they will be lost, you tell a wilful falsehood. To think that God could punish Christ and then punish them — I wonder at your daring to have the impudence to say so! A good man was once preaching that there were harps and crowns in heaven for all his congregation; and then he wound up in a most solemn manner: “My dear friends, there are many for whom these things are prepared who will not get there.” In fact, he made such a pitiful tale, as indeed he might do; but I tell you who he ought to have wept for — he ought to have wept for the angels of heaven and all the saints, because that would spoil heaven thoroughly. You know when you meet at Christmas, if you have lost your brother David and his seat is empty, you say: “Well, we always enjoyed Christmas, but there is a drawback to it now — poor David is dead and buried!” Think of the angels saying: “Ah! this is a beautiful heaven, but we

don't like to see all those crowns up there with cobwebs on; we cannot endure that uninhabited street: we cannot behold yon empty thrones." And then, poor souls, they might begin talking to one another, and say, "we are none of us safe here for the promise was — "I give unto my sheep eternal life," and there is a lot of them in hell that God gave eternal life to; there is a number that Christ shed his blood for burning in the pit, and if they may be sent there, so may we. If we cannot trust one promise we cannot another." So heaven would lose its foundation, and fall. Away with your nonsensical gospel! God gives us a safe and solid one, built on covenant doings and covenant relationship, on eternal purposes and sure fulfillments.

IV. This brings us to the fourth point, THAT BY NATURE NO MAN WILL COME TO CHRIST,

for the text says, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." I assert on Scripture authority from my text, that ye will not come unto Christ, that ye might have life. I tell you, I might preach to you for ever, I might borrow the eloquence of Demosthenes or of Cicero, but ye will not come unto Christ. I might beg of you on my knees, with tears in my eyes, and show you the horrors of hell and the joys of heaven, the sufficiency of Christ, and your own lost condition, but you would none of you come unto Christ of yourselves unless the Spirit that rested on Christ should draw you. It is true of all men in their natural condition that they will not come unto Christ. But, methinks I hear another of these babblers asking a question: "But could they not come if they liked?" My friend, I will reply to thee another time. That is not the question this morning. I am talking about whether they will, not whether they can. You will notice whenever you talk about free-will, the poor Arminian, in two seconds begins to talk about power, and he mixes up two subjects that should be kept apart. We will not take two subjects at once; we decline fighting two at the same time, if you please. Another day we will preach from this text — "No man can come except the Father draw him." But it is only the will we are talking of now; and it is certain that men will not come unto Christ, that they might have life. We might prove this from many texts of Scripture, but we will take one parable. You remember the parable where a certain king had a feast for his son, and bade a great number to come; the oxen and fatlings were killed, and he sent his messengers bidding many to the

supper. Did they go to the feast? Ah, no; but they all, with one accord, began to make excuse. One said he had married a wife, and therefore he could not come, whereas he might have brought her with him. Another had bought a yoke of oxen, and went to prove them; but the feast was in the night-time, and he could not prove his oxen in the dark. Another had bought a piece of land, and wanted to see it; but I should not think he went to see it with a lantern. So they all made excuses and would not come. Well the king was determined to have the feast; so he said, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and" invite them — stop! not invite — "compel them to come in;" for even the ragged fellows in the hedges would never have come unless they were compelled. Take another parable: — A certain man had a vineyard; at the appointed season he sent one of his servants for his rent. What did they do to him? They beat that servant. He sent another; and they stoned him. He sent another and they killed him. And, at last, he said, "I will send them my son, they will reverence him." But what did they do? They said, "This is the heir, let us kill him, and cast him out of the vineyard." So they did. It is the same with all men by nature. The Son of God came, yet men rejected him. "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." It would take too much time to mention any more Scripture proofs. We will, however, refer to the great doctrine of the fall. Any one who believes that man's will is entirely free, and that he can be saved by it, does not believe the fall. As I sometimes tell you, few preachers of religion do believe thoroughly the doctrine of the fall, or else they think that when Adam fell down he broke his little finger, and did not break his neck and ruin his race. Why, beloved, the fall broke man up entirely. It did not leave one power unimpaired; they were all shattered, and debased, and tarnished; like some mighty temple, the pillars might be there, the shaft, and the column, and the pilaster might be there; but they were all broken, though some of them retain their form and position. The conscience of man sometimes retains much of its tenderness — still it has fallen. The will, too, is not exempt. What though it is "the Lord Mayor of Mansoul," as Bunyan calls it? — the Lord Mayor goes wrong. The Lord Will-be-will was continually doing wrong. Your fallen nature was put out of order; your will, amongst other things, has clean gone astray from God. But I tell you what will be the best proof of that; it is the great fact that you never did meet a Christian in your life who ever said he came to Christ without Christ coming to him. You have heard a great many Arminian

sermons, I dare say; but you never heard an Arminian prayer — for the saints in prayer appear as one in word, and deed and mind. An Arminian on his knees would pray desperately like a Calvinist. He cannot pray about free-will: there is no room for it. Fancy him praying, "Lord, I thank thee I am not like those poor presumptuous Calvinists. Lord, I was born with a glorious free-will; I was born with power by which I can turn to thee of myself; I have improved my grace. If everybody had done the same with their grace that I have, they might all have been saved. Lord, I know thou dost not make us willing if we are not willing ourselves. Thou givest grace to everybody; some do not improve it, but I do. There are many that will go to hell as much bought with the blood of Christ as I was; they had as much of the Holy Ghost given to them; they had as good a chance, and were as much blessed as I am. It was not thy grace that made us to differ; I know it did a great deal, still I turned the point; I made use of what was given me, and others did not — that is the difference between me and them." That is a prayer for the devil, for nobody else would offer such a prayer as that. Ah! when they are preaching and talking very slowly, there may be wrong doctrine; but when they come to pray, the true thing slips out; they cannot help it. If a man talks very slowly, he may speak in a fine manner; but when he comes to talk fast, the old brogue of his country, where he was born, slips out. I ask you again, did you ever meet a Christian man who said, "I came to Christ without the power of the Spirit?" If you ever did meet such a man, you need have no hesitation in saying, "My dear sir, I quite believe it — and I believe you went away again without the power of the Spirit, and that you know nothing about the matter, and are in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity." Do I hear one Christian man saying, "I sought Jesus before he sought me; I went to the Spirit, and the Spirit did not come to me"? No, beloved; we are obliged, each one of us, to put our hands to our hearts and say —

"Grace taught my soul to pray,
And made my eyes to o'erflow;
'Twas grace that kept me to this day,
And will not let me go."

Is there one here — a solitary one — man or woman, young or old, who can say, "I sought God before he sought me?" No; even you who are a little Arminian, will sing —

"O yes! I do love Jesus —
Because he first loved me."

Then, one more question. Do we not find, even after we have come to Christ, our soul is not free, but is kept by Christ? Do we not find times, even now, when to will is not present with us? There is a law in our members, warring against the law of our minds. Now, if those who are spiritually alive feel that their will is contrary to God, what shall we say of the man who is "dead in trespasses and sins"? It would be a marvelous absurdity to put the two on a level; and it would be still more absurd to put the dead before the living. No; the text is true, experience has branded it into our hearts. "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

Now, we must tell you the reasons why men will not come unto Christ. The first is, because no man by nature thinks he wants Christ. By nature man conceives that he does not need Christ; he thinks that he has a robe of righteousness of his own, that he is well-dressed, that he is not naked, that he needs not Christ's blood to wash him, that he is not black or crimson, and needs no grace to purify him. No man knows his need until God shows it to him; and until the Holy Spirit reveals the necessity of pardon, no man will seek pardon. I may preach Christ for ever, but unless you feel you want Christ you will never come to him. A doctor may have a good shop, but nobody will buy his medicines until he feels he wants them.

The next reason is, because men do not like Christ's way of saving them. One says, "I do not like it because he makes me holy; I cannot drink or swear if he saved me." Another says, "It requires me to be so precise and puritanical, and I like a little more license." Another does not like it because it is so humbling; he does not like it because the "gate of heaven" is not quite high enough for his head, and he does not like stooping. That is the chief reason ye will not come to Christ, because ye cannot get to him with your heads straight up in the air; for Christ makes you stoop when you come. Another does not like it to be grace from first to last. "Oh!" he says, "If I might have a little honor." But when he hears it is all Christ or no Christ, a whole Christ or no Christ, he says, "I shall not come," and turns on his heel and goes away. Ah! proud sinners, ye will not come unto Christ. Ah! ignorant sinners, ye will not come unto Christ, because ye know nothing of him. And that is the third reason.

Men do not know his worth, for if they did they would come unto him. Why did not sailors go to America before Columbus went? Because they did not believe there was an America. Columbus had faith, therefore he went. He who hath faith in Christ goes to him. But you don't know Jesus; many of you never saw his beauteous face; you never saw how applicable his blood is to a sinner, how great is his atonement; and how all-sufficient are his merits. Therefore, "ye will not come to him."

And oh! my hearers, my last thought is a solemn one. I have preached that ye will not come. But some will say, "it is their sin that they do not come." IT IS SO. You will not come, but then your will is a sinful will. Some think that we "sew pillows to all armholes" when we preach this doctrine, but we don't. We do not set this down as being part of man's original nature, but as belonging to his fallen nature. It is sin that has brought you into this condition that you will not come. If you had not fallen, you would come to Christ the moment he was preached to you; but you do not come because of your sinfulness and crime. People excuse themselves because they have bad hearts. That is the most flimsy excuse in the world. Do not robbery and thieving come from a bad heart? Suppose a thief should say to a judge, "I could not help it, I had a bad heart." What would the judge say? "You rascal! why, if your heart is bad, I'll make the sentence heavier, for you are a villain indeed. Your excuse is nothing." The Almighty shall "laugh at them, and shall have them in derision." We do not preach this doctrine to excuse you, but to humble you. The possession of a bad nature is my fault as well as my terrible calamity. It is a sin that will always be charged on men; when they will not come unto Christ it is sin that keeps them away. He who does not preach that, I fear is not faithful to God and his conscience. Go home, then, with this thought; "I am by nature so perverse that I will not come unto Christ, and that wicked perversity of my nature is my sin. I deserve to be sent to hell for it." And if the thought does not humble you, the Spirit using it, no other can. This morning I have not preached human nature up, but I have preached it down. God humble us all. Amen.

CHRIST OUR PASSOVER

A SERMON NO. 54

DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, DECEMBER 2, 1855,

NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." — 1 Corinthians 5:7.

The more you read the Bible, and the more you meditate upon it, the more you will be astonished with it. He who is but a casual reader of the Bible, does not know the height, the depth, the length and breadth of the mighty meanings contained in its pages. There are certain times when I discover a new vein of thought, and I put my hand to my head and say in astonishment, "Oh, it is wonderful I never saw this before in the Scriptures." You will find the Scriptures enlarge as you enter them; the more you study them the less you will appear to know of them, for they widen out as we approach them. Especially will you find this the case with the typical parts of God's Word. Most of the historical books were intended to be types either of dispensations, or experiences, or offices of Jesus Christ. Study the Bible with this as a key, and you will not blame Herbert when he calls it "not only the book of God, but the God of books." One of the most interesting points of the Scriptures is their constant tendency to display Christ; and perhaps one of the most beautiful figures under which Jesus Christ is ever exhibited in sacred writ, is the Passover Paschal Lamb. It is Christ of whom we are about to speak to-night.

Israel was in Egypt, in extreme bondage; the severity of their slavery had continually increased till it was so oppressive that their incessant groans went up to heaven. God who avenges his own elect, though they cry day and night unto him, at last, determined that he would direct a fearful blow against Egypt's king and Egypt's nation, and deliver his own people. We can picture the anxieties and the anticipations of Israel, but we can scarcely sympathize with them, unless we as Christians have had the same

deliverance from spiritual Egypt. Let us, brethren, go back to the day in our experience, when we abode in the land of Egypt, working in the brick-kilns of sin, toiling to make ourselves better, and finding it to be of no avail; let us recall that memorable night, the beginning of months, the commencement of a new life in our spirit, and the beginning of an altogether new era in our soul. The Word of God struck the blow at our sin; he gave us Jesus Christ our sacrifice; and in that night we went out of Egypt. Though we have passed through the wilderness since then, and have fought the Amalekites, have trodden on the fiery serpent, have been scorched by the heat and frozen by the snows, yet we have never since that time gone back to Egypt; although our hearts may sometimes have desired the leeks, the onions, and the flesh-pots of Egypt, yet we have never been brought into slavery since then. Come, let us keep the Passover this night, and think of the night when the Lord delivered us out of Egypt. Let us behold our Savior Jesus as the Paschal Lamb on which we feed; yea, let us not only look at him as such, but let us sit down to-night at his table, let us eat of his flesh and drink of his blood; for his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. In holy solemnity let our hearts approach that ancient supper; let us go back to Egypt's darkness, and by holy contemplation behold, instead of the destroying angel, the angel of the covenant, at the head of the feast, — "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world."

I shall not have time to-night to enter into the whole history and mystery of the Passover; you will not understand me to be to- night preaching concerning the whole of it; but a few prominent points therein as a part of them. It would require a dozen sermons to do so; in fact a book as large as Caryl upon Job — if we could find a divine equally prolix and equally sensible. But we shall first of all look at the Lord Jesus Christ, and show how he corresponds with the Paschal Lamb, and endeavor to bring you to the two points — of having his blood sprinkled on you, and having fed on him.

I. First, then, JESUS CHRIST IS TYPIFIED HERE UNDER THE PASCHAL LAMB; and should there be one of the seed of Abraham here who has never seen Christ to be the Messiah, I beg his special attention to that which I am to advance, when I speak of the Lord Jesus as none other than the Lamb of

God slain for the deliverance of his chosen people. Follow me with your Bibles, and open first at the 12th chapter of Exodus.

We commence, first of all, with the victim — the lamb. How fine a picture of Christ. No other creature could so well have typified him who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Being also the emblem of sacrifice, it most sweetly pourtrayed our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Search natural history through, and though you will find other emblems which set forth different characteristics of his nature, and admirably display him to our souls, yet there is none which seems so appropriate to the person of our beloved Lord as that of the Lamb. A child would at once perceive the likeness between a lamb and Jesus Christ, so gentle and innocent, so mild and harmless, neither hurting others, nor seeming to have the power to resent an injury. “A humble man before his foes, a weary man and full of woes.” What tortures the sheepish race have received from us! how are they, though innocent, continually slaughtered for our food! Their skin is dragged from their backs, their wool is shorn to give us a garment. And so the Lord Jesus Christ, our glorious Master, doth give us his garments that we may be clothed with them; he is rent in sunder for us; his very blood is poured out for our sins; harmless and holy, a glorious sacrifice for the sins of all his children. Thus the Paschal Lamb might well convey to the pious Hebrew the person of a suffering, silent, patient, harmless Messiah.

Look further down. It was a lamb without blemish. A blemished lamb, if it had the smallest speck of disease, the least wound, would not have been allowed for a Passover. The priest would not have suffered it to be slaughtered, nor would God have accepted the sacrifice at his hands. It must be a lamb without blemish. And was not Jesus Christ even such from his birth? Unblemished, born of the pure virgin Mary, begotten of the Holy Ghost, without a taint of sin; his soul was pure, and spotless as the driven snow, white, clear, perfect; and his life was the same. In him was no sin. He took our infirmities and bore our sorrows on the cross. He was in all points tempted as we are, but there was that sweet exception, “yet without sin.” A lamb without blemish. Ye who have known the Lord, who have tasted of his grace, who have held fellowship with him, doth not your heart acknowledge that he is a lamb without blemish? Can ye find any fault with your Savior? Have you aught to lay to his charge? Hath his

truthfulness departed? Have his words been broken? Have his promises failed? Has he forgotten his engagements? And, in any respect, can you find in him any blemish? Ah, no! he is the unblemished lamb, the pure, the spotless, the immaculate, “the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world;” and in him there is no sin.

Go on further down the chapter. “Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year.” I need not stop to consider the reason why the male was chosen; we only note that it was to be a male of the first year. Then it was in its prime then its strength was unexhausted, then its power was just ripened into maturity and perfection, God would not have an untimely fruit. God would not have that offered which had not come to maturity. And so our Lord Jesus Christ had just come to the ripeness of manhood when he was offered. At 34 years of age was he sacrificed for our sins; he was then hale and strong, although his body may have been emaciated by suffering, and his face more marred than that of any other man, yet was he then in the perfection of manhood. Methinks I see him then. His goodly beard flowing down upon his breast; I see him with his eyes full of genius, his form erect, his mien majestic, his energy entire, his whole frame in full development, — a real man, a magnificent man — fairer than the sons of men; a Lamb not only without blemish, but with all his powers fully brought out. Such was Jesus Christ — a Lamb of the first year — not a boy, not a lad, not a young man, but a full man, that he might give his soul unto us. He did not give himself to die for us when he was a youth, for he would not then have given all he was to be; he did not give himself to die for us when he was in old age, for then would he have given himself when he was in decay; but just in his maturity, in his very prime, then Jesus Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. And, moreover, at the time of his death, Christ was full of life, for we are informed by one of the evangelists that “he cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghost.” This is a sign that Jesus did not die through weakness, nor through decay of nature. His soul was strong within him; he was still the Lamb of the first year. Still was he mighty; he could, if he pleased, even on the cross, have unlocked his hands from their iron bolts; and descending from the tree of infamy, have driven his astonished foes before him, like deer scattered by a lion, yet did he meekly yield obedience unto death. My soul; canst thou not see thy Jesus here, the unblemished Lamb of the first year, strong and

mighty? And, O my heart! does not the though rise up — if Jesus consecrated himself to thee when he was thus in all his strength and vigor, should not I in youth dedicate myself to him? And if I am in manhood, how am I doubly bound to give my strength to him? And if I am in old age, still should I seek while the little remains, to consecrate that little to him. If he gave his all to me, which was much, should I not give my little all to him? Should I not feel bound to consecrate myself entirely to his service, to lay body, soul, and spirit, time, talents, all upon his altar. And though I am not an unblemished lamb, yet I am happy that as the leavened cake was accepted with the sacrifice, though never burned with it — I, though a leavened cake, may be offered on the altar with my Lord and Savior, the Lord's burnt offering, and so, though impure, and full of leaven, I may be accepted in the beloved, an offering of a sweet savor, acceptable unto the Lord my God. Here is Jesus, beloved, a Lamb without blemish, a Lamb of the first year!

The subject now expands and the interest deepens. Let me have your very serious consideration to the next point, which has much gratified me in its discovery and which will instruct you in the relation. In the 6th verse of the 12th chapter of Exodus we are told that this lamb which should be offered at the Passover was to be selected four days before its sacrifice, and to be kept apart. — "In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: and if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb." The 6th verse says, "And ye shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month." For four days this lamb, chosen to be offered, was taken away from the rest of the flock and kept alone by itself, for two reasons: partly that by its constant bleatings they might be put in remembrance of the solemn feast which was to be celebrated; and moreover, that during the four days they might be quite assured that it had no blemish, for during that time it was subject to constant inspection, in order that they might be certain that it had no hurt or injury that would render it unacceptable to the Lord. And now, brethren, a remarkable fact flashes before you — just as this lamb was separated four days, the ancient allegories used to say that Christ was separated four years. Four years after he left his father's

house he went into the wilderness, and was tempted of the devil. Four years after his baptism he was sacrificed for us. But there is another, better than that: — About four days before his crucifixion, Jesus Christ rode in triumph through the streets of Jerusalem. He was thus openly set apart as being distinct from mankind. He, on the ass, rode up to the temple, that all might see him to be Judah's Lamb, chosen of God, and ordained from the foundation of the world. And what is more remarkable still, during those four days, you will see, if you turn to the Evangelists, at your leisure, that as much is recorded of what he did and said as through all the other part of his life. During those four days, he upbraided the fig tree, and straightway it withered; it was then that he drove the buyers and sellers from the temple; it was then that he rebuked the priests and elders, by telling them the similitude of the two sons, one of whom said he would go, and did not, and the other who said he would not go, and went; it was then that he narrated the parable of the husbandsmen, who slew those who were sent to them; afterwards he gave the parable of the marriage of the king's son. Then comes his parable concerning the man who went unto the feast, not having on a wedding garment; and then also, the parable concerning the ten virgins, five of whom were very wise, and five of whom were foolish; then comes the chapter of very striking denunciations against the Pharisees: — "Woe unto you O ye blind Pharisees! cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter;" and then also comes that long chapter of prophecy concerning what should happen at the siege of Jerusalem, and an account of the dissolution of the world: "Learn a parable of the fig-tree: when his branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh.: But I will not trouble you by telling you here that at the same time he gave them that splendid description of the day of judgment, when the sheep shall be divided from the goats. In fact, the most splendid utterances of Jesus were recorded as having taken place within these four days. Just as the lamb separated from its fellows, did bleat more than ever during the four days, so did Jesus during those four days speak more; and if you want to find a choice saying of Jesus, turn to the account of the last four days' ministry to find it. There you will find that chapter, "Let not your hearts be troubled;" there also, his great prayer, "Father, I will;" and so on. The greatest things he did, he did in the last four days when he was set apart.

And there is one more thing to which I beg your particular attention, and that is, that during those four days I told you that the lamb was subject to the closest scrutiny, so, also, during those four days, it is singular to relate, that Jesus Christ was examined by all classes of persons. It was during those four days that the lawyer asked him which was the greatest commandment? and he said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy might; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” It was then that the Herodians came and questioned him about the tribute money; it was then that the Pharisees tempted him; it was then, also, the Sadducees tried him upon the subject of the resurrection. He was tried by all classes and grades — Herodians, Pharisees, Sadducees, lawyers, and the common people. It was during these four days that he was examined: but how did he come forth? An immaculate Lamb! The officers said, “never man spake like this man.” His foes found none who could even bear false witness against him, such as agreed together; and Pilate declared, “I find no fault in him.” He would not have been fit for the Paschal Lamb had a single blemish have been discovered, but “I find no fault in him,” was the utterance of the great chief magistrate, who thereby declared that the Lamb might be eaten at God’s Passover, the symbol and the means of the deliverance of God’s people. O beloved! you have only to study the Scriptures to find out wondrous things in them; you have only to search deeply, and you stand amazed at their richness. You will find God’s Word to be a very precious word; the more you live by it and study it, the more will it be endeared to your minds.

But the next thing we must mark is the place where this lamb was to be killed, which peculiarly sets forth that it must be Jesus Christ. The first Passover was held in Egypt, the second Passover was held in the wilderness; but we do not read that there were more than these two Passovers celebrated until the Israelites came to Canaan. And then, if you turn to a passage in Deuteronomy, the 16th chapter, you will find that God no longer allowed them to slay the Lamb in their own houses but appointed a place for its celebration. In the wilderness, they brought their offerings to the tabernacle where the lamb was slaughtered; but at its first appointment in Egypt, of course they had no special place to which they took the lamb to be sacrificed. Afterwards, we read in the 16th of

Deuteronomy, and the 5th verse, “Thou mayest not sacrifice the Passover within any of thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee; but at the place which the Lord thy God shall chose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the Passover at even at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt.” It was in Jerusalem that men ought to worship, for salvation was of the Jews; there was God’s palace, there his altar smoked, and there only might the Paschal Lamb be killed. So was our blessed Lord led to Jerusalem. The infuriated throng dragged him along the city. In Jerusalem our Lamb was sacrificed for us; it was at the precise spot where God had ordained that it should be. Oh! if that mob who gathered round him at Nazareth had been able to push him headlong down the hill, then Christ could not have died at Jerusalem; but as he said, “a prophet cannot perish out of Jerusalem,” so was it true that the King of all prophets could not do otherwise, — the prophecies concerning him would not have been fulfilled. “Thou shalt kill the lamb in the place the Lord thy God shall appoint.” He was sacrificed in the very place. Thus, again you have an incidental proof that Jesus Christ was the Paschal Lamb for his people.

The next point is the manner of his death. I think the manner in which the lamb was to be offered so peculiarly sets forth the crucifixion of Christ, that no other kind of death could by any means have answered all the particulars set down here. First, the lamb was to be slaughtered, and its blood caught in a basin. Usually blood was caught in a golden basin. Then, as soon as it was taken, the priest standing by the altar on which the fat was burning, threw the blood on the fire or cast it at the foot of the altar. You may guess what a scene it was. Ten thousand lambs sacrificed, and the blood poured out in a purple river. Next, the lamb was to be roasted; but it was not to have a bone of its body broken. Now I do say, there is nothing but crucifixion which can answer all these three things. Crucifixion has in it the shedding of blood — the hands and feet were pierced. It has in it the idea of roasting, for roasting signifies a long torment, and as the lamb was for a long time before the fire, so Christ, in crucifixion, was for a long time exposed to a broiling sun, and all the other pains which crucifixion engenders. Moreover not a bone was broken; which could not have been the case with any other punishment. Suppose it had been possible to put Christ to death in any other way. Sometimes the Romans put criminals to

death by decapitation; but by a such death the next is broken. Many martyrs were put to death by having a sword pierced through them; but, while that would have been a bloody death, and not a bone broken necessarily, the torment would not have been long enough to have been pictured by the roasting. So that, take whatever punishment you will — take hanging, which sometimes the Romans practiced in the form of strangling, that mode of punishment does not involve shedding of blood, and consequently the requirements would not have been answered. And I do think, any intelligent Jew, reading through this account of the Passover, and then looking at the crucifixion, must be struck by the fact that the penalty and death of the cross by which Christ suffered, must have taken in all these three things. There was blood-shedding; the long continued suffering — the roasting of torture; and then added to that, singularly enough, by God's providence not a bone was broken, but the body was taken down from the cross intact. Some may say that burning might have answered the matter; but there would not have been a shedding of blood in that case, and the bones would have been virtually broken in the fire. Besides the body would not have been preserved entire. Crucifixion was the only death which could answer all of these three requirements. And my faith receives great strength from the fact, that I see my Savior not only as a fulfillment of the type, but the only one. My heart rejoices to look on him whom I have pierced, and see his blood, as the lamb's blood, sprinkled on my lintel and my door-post, and see his bones unbroken, and to believe that not a bone of his spiritual body shall be broken hereafter; and rejoice, also, to see him roasted in the fire, because thereby I see that he satisfied God for that roasting which I ought to have suffered in the torment of hell for ever and ever.

Christian! I would that I had words to depict in better language; but, as it is, I give thee the undigested thoughts, which thou mayest take home and live upon during the week; for thou wilt find this Paschal Lamb to be an hourly feast, as well as supper, and thou mayest feed upon it continually, till thou comest to the mount of God, where thou shalt see him as he is, and worship him in the Lamb in the midst thereof.

II. How We Derive Benefit From The Blood Of Christ. Christ our Passover is slain for us. The Jew could not say that; he could say, a lamb, but "the Lamb," even "Christ our Passover," was not yet become a victim.

And here are some of my hearers within these walls to-night who cannot say “Christ our Passover is slain for us.” But glory be to God! some of us can. There are not a few here who have laid their hands upon the glorious Scapegoat; and now they can put their hands upon the Lamb also, and they can say, “Yes; it is true, he is not only slain, but Christ our Passover is slain for us.” We derive benefit from the death of Christ in two modes: first, by having his blood sprinkled on us for our redemption; secondly, by our eating his flesh for food, regeneration and sanctification. The first aspect in which a sinner views Jesus is that of a lamb slain, whose blood is sprinkled on the door-post and on the lintel. Note the fact, that the blood was never sprinkled on the threshold. It was sprinkled on the lintel, the top of the door, on the side-post, but never on the threshold, for woe unto him who trampleth under foot the blood of the Son of God! Even the priest of Dagon trod not on the threshold of his god, much less will the Christian trample under foot the blood of the Paschal Lamb. But his blood must be on our right hand to be our constant guard, and on our left to be our continual support. We want to have Jesus Christ sprinkled on us. As I told you before, it is not alone the blood of Christ poured out on Calvary that saves a sinner; it is the blood of Christ sprinkled on the heart. Let us turn to the land of Zoan. Do you not think you behold the scene to-night!It is evening. The Egyptians are going homeward — little thinking of what is coming. But just as soon as the sun is set, a lamb is brought into every house. The Egyptian strangers passing by, say, “These Hebrews are about to keep a feast to night,” and they retire to their houses utterly careless about it. The father of the Hebrew house takes his lamb, and examining it once more with anxious curiosity, looks it over from head to foot, to see if it has a blemish. He findeth none. “My son,” he says to one of them, “bring hither the bason.” It is held. He stabs the lamb, and the blood flows into the bason. Do you not think you see the sire, as he commands his matronly wife to roast the lamb before the fire! “Take heed,” he says, “that not a bone be broken.” Do you see her intense anxiety, as she puts it down to roast, lest a bone should be broken? Now, says the father, “bring a bunch of hyssop.” A child brings it. The father dips it into the blood. “Come here, my children, wife and all, and see what I am about to do.” He takes the hyssop in his hands, dips it in the blood, and sprinkles it across the lintel and the door-post. His children say, “What mean you by this ordinance?” He answers, “This night the Lord

God will pass through to smite the Egyptians, and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come into your houses to smite you." The thing is done; the lamb is cooked; the guests are set down to it; the father of the family has supplicated a blessing; they are sitting down to feast upon it. And mark how the old man carefully divides joint from joint, lest a bone should be broken; and he is particular that the smallest child of the family should have some of it to eat, for so the Lord hath commanded. Do you not think you see him as he tells them "it is a solemn night — make haste — in another hour we shall all go out of Egypt." He looks at his hands, they are rough with labor, and clapping them, he cries, "I am not to be a slave any longer." His eldest son, perhaps, has been smarting under the lash, and he says, "Son, you have had the task-master's lash upon you this afternoon; but it is the last time you shall feel it." He looks at them all, with tears in his eyes — "This is the night the Lord God will deliver you." Do you see them with their hats on their heads, with their loins girt, and their staves in their hands? It is the dead of the night. Suddenly they hear a shriek! The father says, "Keep within doors, my children; you will know what it is in a moment." Now another shriek — another — shriek — shriek succeeds shriek: they hear perpetual wailing and lamentation. "Remain within," says he, "the angel of death is flying abroad." A solemn silence is in the room, and they can almost hear the wings of the angel flap in the air as he passes their blood-marked door. "Be calm," says the sire, "that blood will save you." The shrieking increases. "Eat quickly, my children," he says again, and in a moment the Egyptians coming, say, "Get thee hence! Get thee hence! We are not for the jewels that you have borrowed. You have brought death into our houses." "Oh!" says a mother, "Go! for God's sake! go. My eldest son lies dead!" "Go!" says a father, "Go! and peace go with you. It were an ill day when your people came into Egypt, and our king began to slay your first-born, for God is punishing us for our cruelty." Ah! see them leaving the land; the shrieks are still heard; the people are busy about their dead. As they go out, a son of Pharoah is taken away unembalmed, to be buried in one of the pyramids. Presently they see one of their task-master's sons taken away. A happy night for them — when they escape! And do you see, my hearers, a glorious parallel? They had to sprinkle the blood, and also to eat the lamb. Ah! my soul, hast thou e'er had the blood sprinkled

on thee? Canst thou say that Jesus Christ is thine? It is not enough to say "he loved the world, and gave his Son," you must say, "He loved me,, and gave himself for me." There is another hour coming, dear friends, when we shall all stand before God's bar; and then God will say, "Angel of death, thou once didst smite Egypt's first born; thou knowest thy prey. Unsheath thy sword." I behold the great gathering, you and I are standing amongst them. It is a solemn moment. All men stand in suspense. There is neither hum nor murmur. The very stars cease to shine lest the light should disturb the air by its motion. All is still. God says, "Has thou sealed those that are mine?" "I have," says Gabriel; "they are sealed by blood every one of them." Then saith he next, "Sweep with thy sword of slaughter! Sweep the Earth! and send the unclothed, the unpurchased, the unwashed ones to the pit." Oh! how shall we feel beloved, when for a moment we see that angel flap his wings? He is just about to fly, "But," will the doubt cross our minds "perhaps he will come to me?" Oh! no; we shall stand and look the angel full in his face.

"Bold shall I stand in that great day!
For who aught to my charge shall lay?
While through thy blood absolved I am
From sin's tremendous curse and shame."

If we have the blood on us, we shall see the angel coming, we shall smile at him; we shall dare to come even to God's face and say, "Great God! I'm clean! Through Jesus' blood, I'm clean!" But if, my hearer, thine unwashen spirit shall stand unshriven before its maker, if thy guilty soul shall appear with all its black spots upon it, unsprinkled with the purple tide, how wilt thou speak when thou seest flash from the scabbard the angel's sword swift for death, and winged for destruction, and when it shall cleave thee asunder? Methinks I see thee standing now. The angel is sweeping away a thousand there. There is one of thy pot companions. There one with whom thou didst dance and swear. There another, who after attending the same chapel like thee, was a despiser of religion. Now death comes nearer to thee. Just as when the reaper sweeps the field and the next ear trembles because its turn shall come next, I see a brother and a sister swept into the pit. Have I no blood upon me? Then, O rocks! it were kind of you to hide me. Ye have no benevolence in your arms. Mountains! let me find in your caverns some little shelter. But it is all in vain, for vengeance shall cleave the mountains and split the rocks open to find me out. Have I no blood?

Have I no hope? Ah! no! he smites me. Eternal damnation is my horrible portion. The depth of the darkness of Egypt for thee, and the horrible torments of the pit from which none can escape! Ah! my dear hearers, could I preach as I could wish, could I speak to you without my lips and with my heart, then would I bid you seek that sprinkled blood, and urge you by the love of your own soul, by everything that is sacred and eternal, to labor to get this blood of Jesus sprinkled on your souls. It is the blood sprinkled that saves a sinner.

But when the Christian gets the blood sprinkled, that is not all he wants. He wants something to feed upon. And, O sweet thought! Jesus Christ is not only a Savior for sinners, but he is food for them after they are saved. The Paschal Lamb by faith we eat. We live on it. You may tell, my hearers, whether you have the blood sprinkled on the door by this: do you eat the Lamb? Suppose for a moment that one of the old Jews had said in his heart, “I do not see the use of this feasting. It is quite right to sprinkle the blood on the lintel or else the door will not be known; but what good is all this inside? We will have the lamb prepared, and we will not break his bones; but we will not eat of it.” And suppose he went and stored the lamb away. What would have been the consequence? Why, the angel of death would have smitten him as well as the rest, even if the blood had been upon him. And if, moreover, that old Jew had said, “there, we will have a little piece of it; but we will have something else to eat, we will have some unleavened bread; we will not turn the leaven out of our houses, but we will have some leavened bread.” If they had not consumed the lamb, but had reserved some of it, then the sword of the angel would have found the heart out as well as that of any other man. Oh! dear hearer, you may think you have the blood sprinkled, you may think you are just; but if you do not live on Christ as well as by Christ, you will never be saved by the Paschal Lamb. “Ah!” say some, “we know nothing of this.” Of course you don’t. When Jesus Christ said, “except ye eat my flesh, and drink my blood, ye have no life in you,” there were some that said, “This is a hard saying, who can heart it?” and many from that time went back — and walked no more with him. They could not understand him; but, Christian, dost thou not understand it? Is not Jesus Christ thy daily food? And even with the bitter herbs, is he not sweet food? Some of you, my friends, who are true Christians, live too much on your changing frames and feelings, on

your experiences and evidences. Now, that is all wrong. That is just as if a worshipper had gone to the tabernacle and began eating one of the coats that were worn by the priest. When a man lives on Christ's righteousness, it is the same as eating Christ's dress. When a man lives on his frames and feelings, that is as much as if the child of God should live on some tokens that he received in the sanctuary that never were meant for food, but only to comfort him a little. What the Christian lives on is not Christ's righteousness, but Christ; he does not live on Christ's pardon, but on Christ; and on Christ he lives daily, on nearness to Christ. Oh! I do love Christ- preaching. It is not the doctrine of justification that does my heart good, it is Christ, the justifier; it is not pardon that so much makes the Christian's heart rejoice, it is Christ the pardoner; it is not election that I love half so much as my being chosen in Christ ere worlds began; ay! it is not final perseverance that I love so much as the thought that in Christ my life is hid, and that since he gives unto his sheep eternal life, they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of his hand. Take care, Christian, to eat the Paschal Lamb and nothing else. I tell thee man, if thou eatest that alone, it will be like bread to thee — thy soul's best food. If thou livest on aught else but the Savior, thou art like one who seeks to live on some weed that grows in the desert, instead of eating the manna that comes down from heaven. Jesus is the manna. In Jesus as well as by Jesus we live. Now, dear friends, in coming to this table, we will keep the Paschal Supper. Once more, by faith, we will eat the Lamb, by holy trust we will come to a crucified Savior, and feed on his blood, and righteousness, and atonement.

And now, in concluding, let me ask you, are you hoping to be saved my friends? One says, "Well, I don't hardly know; I hope to saved, but I do not know how." Do you know, you imagine I tell you a fiction, when I tell you that people are hoping to be saved by works, but it is not so, it is a reality. In travelling through the country I meet with all sorts of characters, but most frequently with self-righteous persons. How often do I meet with a man who thinks himself quite godly because he attends the church once on a Sunday, and who thinks himself quite righteous because he belongs to the Establishment; as a churchman said to me the other day, "I am a rigid churchman." "I am glad of that," I said to him, "because then you are a Calvinist, if you hold the 'Articles.'" He replied "I don't know

about the ‘Articles,’ I go more by the ‘Rubric.’“ And so I thought he was more of a formalist than a Christian. There are many persons like that in the world. Another says, “I believe I shall be saved. I don’t owe anybody anything; I have never been a bankrupt; I pay everybody twenty shillings in the pound; I never get drunk; and if I wrong anybody at any time, I try to make up for it by giving a pound a year to such-and-such a society; I am as religious as most people; and I believe I shall be saved.” That will not do. It is as if some old Jew had said, “We don’t want the blood on the lintel, we have got a mahogany lintel; we don’t want the blood on the door-post, we have a mahogany door-post.” Ah! whatever it was, the angel would have smitten it if it had not had the blood upon it. You may be as righteous as you like: if you have not the blood sprinkled, all the goodness of your door-posts and lintels will be of no avail whatever. “Yes,” says another, “I am not trusting exactly there. I believe it is my duty to be as good as I can; but then I think Jesus Christ’s mercy will make up the rest. I try to be as righteous as circumstances allow; and I believe that whatever deficiencies there may be, Christ will make them up.” That is as if a Jew had said, “Child, bring me the blood,” and then, when that was brought, he had said, “bring me a ewer of water;” and then he had taken it and mixed it together, and sprinkled the door-post with it. Why, the angel would have smitten him as well as anyone else, for it is blood, blood, blood, blood! that saves. It is not blood mixed with the water of our poor works; it is blood, blood, blood, blood! and nothing else. And the only way of salvation is by blood. For, without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. have precious blood sprinkled upon you, my hearers; trust in precious blood; let your hope be in a salvation sealed with an atonement of precious blood, and you are saved. But having no blood, or having blood mixed with anything else, thou art damned as thou art alive — for the angel shall slay thee, however good and righteous thou mayest be. Go home, then, and think of this: “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.”

THE EXODUS

SERMON NO. 55

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 9, 1855,

AT NEW PARK STREET PULPIT CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt." — Exodus 12:41.

It is our firm conviction and increasing belief, that the historical books of Scripture were intended to teach us by types and figures spiritual things. We believe that every portion of Scripture history is not only a faithful transcript of what did actually happen, but also a shadow of what happens spiritually in the dealings of God with his people, or in the dispensations of his grace towards the world at large. We do not look upon the historical books of Scripture as being mere rolls of history, such as profane authors might have written, but we regard them as being most true and infallible records of the past, and also most bright and glorious foreshadowings of the future, or else most wondrous metaphors and marvellous illustrations of things which are verily received among us, and most truly felt in the Christian heart. We may be wrong — we believe we are not; at any rate, the very error has given us instruction, and our mistake has afforded us comfort. We look upon the book of Exodus as being a book of types of the deliverances which God will give to his elect people: not only as a history of what he has done, in bringing them out of Egypt by smiting the first-born, leading them through the Red Sea, and guiding them through the wilderness, but also as a picture of his faithful dealings with all his people, whom by the blood of Christ he separates from the Egyptians, and by his strong and mighty hand takes out of the house of their bondage and out of the land of their slavery. Last Sabbath evening we had the type of the Passover — the Paschal Lamb; and we showed you then, how the sprinkled blood, and the eaten lamb, were types of the blood applied for

our justification, and of the flesh received by inward communion with Jesus, the soul living and feeding upon him. We now take the Exodus, or the going of the children of Israel out of Egypt, as being a type and picture of the going out of all the vessels of mercy from the house of their bondage, and the deliverance of all the lawful captives from the chains of their cruel taskmasters, by sovereign and omnipotent grace, through the Passover of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The land of Egypt is a picture of the house of bondage into which all God's covenant people will, sooner or later, be brought on account of their sin. All those whom God means to give an inheritance in Canaan, he will first take down into Egypt. Even Jesus Christ himself went into Egypt before he appeared publicly as a teacher before the world, that in his instance, as well as in that of every Christian, the prophecy might be fulfilled — "Out of Egypt have I called my Son." Every one who enjoys the liberty wherewith Christ doth make us free, must first feel the galling bondage of sin. Our wrists must be made to smart by the fetters of our iniquity, and our backs must be made to bleed by the lash of the law — the taskmaster which drives us to Jesus Christ. There is no true liberty which is not preceded by true bondage; there is no true deliverance from sin, unless we have first of all groaned and cried unto God, as did the people of Israel when in bondage in Egypt. We must all serve in the brick-kiln; we must all be wearied with toiling among the pots; or otherwise we could never realize that glorious verse — "Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold." We must have bondage before liberty; before resurrection there must come death; before life there must come corruption; before we are brought out of the horrible pit and the miry clay we must be made to exclaim, "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing;" and ere, like Jonah, we can be fetched out of the whale's belly, and delivered from our sin, we must have been taken down to the bottoms of the mountains, with the weeds wrapped about our heads, shuddering under a deep sense of our own nothingness and fearing that the earth with her bars was about us for ever. Taking this as key, you will see that the deliverance out of Egypt is a beautiful picture of the deliverance of all God's people from the bondage of the law and the slavery of their sins.

I. First, consider. When the children of Israel went out of Egypt it THE MODE OF THEIR GOING OUT is a remarkable thing that they were forced out by the Egyptians. Those Egyptians who had enriched themselves with their slavery, said, "Get ye hence, for we be all dead men;" they begged and entreated them to go; yea, they hurried them forth, gave them jewels that they might depart, and made them quit the land. And it is a striking thing, that the very sins which oppress the child of God in Egypt, are the very things that drive him to Jesus. Our sins makes slaves of us while we are in Egypt, and when God the Holy Spirit stirs them up against us, how do they beat us with cruel lashes, till our soul is worn with extreme bondage; but those very sins, by God's grace, are made the means of driving us to the Savior. The dove fleeth not to its cote unless the eagle doth pursue it; so sins like eagles pursue the timid soul, making it fly into the clefts of the Rock Christ Jesus to hide itself. Once, beloved, our sins kept us from Christ; but now every sin drives us to him for pardon. I had not known Christ if I had not known sin; I had not known a deliverer, if I had not smarted under the Egyptians. The Holy Spirit drives us to Christ, just as the Egyptians drove the people out of Egypt.

Again: the children of Israel went out of Egypt covered with jewels and arrayed in their best garments. The Jews have ever on their feast days been desirous of wearing jewels and all kinds of goodly apparel; and when they were too poor to possess them, they would borrow jewels for the purpose. So it was at this remarkable Passover. They had been so oppressed that they had kept no festival for many a year; but now they all arrayed themselves in their best garments, and at the command of God did borrow of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment; "and the things as they required: and they spoiled the Egyptians." Let none say that this was robbery. It would have been, had it not been commanded of God; but as a king can set aside his own laws, so God is above his laws, and whatsoever he orders is right. Abraham would have been guilty of murder in taking up his knife to slay his son, had not God commanded him to do so; but the fact of God having commanded the action, made it justifiable and right. But, moreover, the word "borrowed" here is by the best translators said to mean nothing more than that the children of Israel asked them for their jewels, and had no intention whatever of returning them, and entered into no agreement to do so; and it

was most just, that they should do this, because they had toiled for the Egyptians for years, without having had any remuneration. Sometimes necessity has no law: how much more shall that God who is above all necessities be the master of his own laws? The great Potentate, the only wise God, the King of kings, hath a right to make what laws he pleases; and let not vain man dare to question his Maker, when his Maker gives him a command. But the fact is very significant. The children of Israel did not go out of Egypt poorly clad; they went out with their best clothing on, and moreover, they had borrowed jewels of gold, and jewels of silver, and raiment; and they went gladly out of the land. Ah! beloved, that is just how a child of God comes out of Egypt. He does not come out of his bondage with his old garments of self-righteousness on: oh! no; as long as he wears those he will always keep in Egypt; but he marches out with the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ upon him, and adorned with the goodly graces of the Holy Spirit. Oh! beloved, if you could see a child of Israel coming out of the bondage of sin, you would say, "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness?" Is this the poor slave that was making bricks without straw? Is this the wretch who had nothing but rags and tatters on him? Is this the poor creature whose whole person was soiled with the mud of Egypt's river, and who labored in Goshen's land without a wage or pay? Yes, it is he; and now he is arrayed like a king, and apparelled as a prince. Lo, each of these men of labor cometh like a bridegroom decked for his wedding, and their wives seem like royal brides clad in their bridal robes. Every child of God, when he comes out of Egypt, is arrayed in goodly apparel.

"Strangely, my soul, art thou arrayed,
By the great sacred Three;
In sweetest harmony of praise.
Let all thy powers agree."

Note, moreover, that these people obtained their jewels from the Egyptians. God's people never lose anything by going to the house of bondage. They win their choicest jewels from the Egyptians. "Strangely true it is, sins do me good," said an old writer once, "because they drive me to the Savior; and so I get good by them." Ask the humble Christian where he got his humility, and ten to one he will say that he got it in the furnace of deep sorrow on account of sin. See another who is tender in conscience: where did he get that jewel from? It cam from Egypt, I'll be bound. We get

more by being in bondage, under conviction of sin, that we often do by liberty. That bondage state, under which thou art now laboring, thou poor way-worn child of sorrow, shall be good for thee; for when thou comest out of Egypt thou wilt steal jewels from the Egyptians; thou wilt have won pearls from thy very convictions. “Oh!” say some, “I have been for months and years toiling under a sense of sin, and cannot get deliverance.” Well, I hope you will get it soon; but if you do not, you will have gained all the more jewels by stopping there, and when you come out, you will very likely make the best of Christians. What more noble preacher to sinners than John Bunyan? And who suffered more than he did? For years he was doubting and hesitating, sometimes thinking that Christ would save him, at other times thinking that he was never one of the elect, and continually bemoaning himself; but he got jewels while he was in bondage that he would never have obtained anywhere else. Who could have made a large collection of jewels like Pilgrim’s Progress, if he had not lived in Egypt? It was because he tarried so long in Egypt that he gathered so many jewels. And oh! beloved, let us be content to stop a little while in distress; for the jewels that we shall win there will adorn us all our lives long, and we shall one night come out of Egypt, not with weeping, but with songs and crowns of rejoicing. We shall have “the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness;” the sackcloth shall be removed from our loins, and the ashes from our head, and we shall march forth decked with jewels, glittering with gold and silver.

But there is one more thought concerning the way of their coming out; and that is, they came out in haste. I think a child of God, whenever he has the opportunity of coming out of bondage, will quickly avail himself of it. When a man comes to me, and says, “I am under deep conviction of sin,” and so on, and seems to be very well content, talking about to-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow, and saying, “I can repent when I please, and I can believe when I please,” and always procrastinating! — Ah! I think to myself, that is not the Lord’s deliverance, for when his people go forth out of Egypt, they are always in a hurry to get out. I never met with a poor sinner under a sense of sin, who was not in haste to get his burden off his back. No man has a broken heart, unless he wants to have it bound up directly. “To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart,” says the Holy Ghost; he never say to-morrow; to-day is his continual cry, and

every true-born Israelite will pant to get out of Egypt, whenever he has the opportunity. He will not stop to knead his dough, and make his bread to carry with him; but he will carry the unleavened bread on his shoulders, he will be in such a hurry to get away. He who hateth the noisomeness of the dungeon, longeth to hear the wards of the lock creak, that he may find liberty; he who hath been long in the pit hasteth to escape; he who hath suffered the task-master's whip fleeth like a dove unto his window, that he may find peace and deliverance in Christ Jesus.

II. But having noticed three points of similarity in the emigration of the Israelites and the deliverance of God's people, we would lead your attention, secondly, to a remark concerning THE MAGNITUDE OF THIS DELIVERANCE. Did it never strike you what a wonderful exodus of the people of Israel this was? Do you know how many people went out? According to the very lowest calculations, there must have been two millions and a half, all assembled together in one place, and all coming out of the country at one time. And then, besides these, there went out with them an exceeding great company — a mixed multitude. The number must have been so large that it is impossible to imagine it. Suppose the people of London should all go out at once to march through a wilderness; it would be a marvellous thing in history, such as we can hardly conceive of; but here were, to say the least, two millions of people, all at one time coming out from the midst of Egypt, and going forth from the country. "They journeyed," it is said, "from Rameses to Succoth." Rameses was where they were employed in building a city for the king. They stayed in Succoth, or booths. Because such an immense multitude could not find houses, they therefore made booths; and hence the children of Israel ever afterwards kept "the feast of tabernacles," to commemorate their building of the booths at Succoth, when they first of all came out of Egypt. What a mind Moses must have had, to direct so great an army; or rather what a spirit must that have been that rested on him, so that he could lead them all to one place, and then guide them all through the wilderness; if you bear in mind this mighty number, you will be astonished to think what a quantity of manna it must have required to feed them, and what a stream of water that must have been which followed them! Talk of the armies of Xerxes, or the host of the Persians; speak of the mighty armies that kings and potentates have assembled! Here was an army that outvied them all. But

oh! beloved, how much grandeur is there in the thought of the multitudes Christ redeems with his blood. Christ did not die to save a few; “he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be abundantly satisfied.” “By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.” “A multitude which no man can number” shall stand before the throne of God and of the Lamb. Oh! wondrous the stars of heaven, nor the dust of the earth, nor the sand of the sea; but let us remember that God hath promised to Abraham — “As the sand upon the sea shore, even so shall thy seed be.” “Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel?” They lick up the earth like water, and the land is utterly devoured before them. Oh! mighty God! how great is that deliverance which bringeth out a host of thine elect, more countless than the stars and as innumerable as the sands upon a thousand shores! all hail to thy power that doeth all this!

You will have another idea of the greatness of this work, when you think of the different stations which the children of Israel must have occupied. I suppose they were not all equally destitute; they were not all toiling in the same brick-kilns, but some of them would be in one place, some in another — some working in the king’s court, some for the meaner Egyptians — dispersed every where; but whatever they might be, they all came from hence. If Pharoah had slaves in his halls, they marched out the self-same day from his golden-gated palace, at Memphis or at Thebes. They all came forth that same day from their different situations, and guided by God they all came to one spot, where they built their booths, and called it Succoth. As when the autumn doth decline, and the winter approacheth, we have seen the chattering swallows gather upon the house-top, prepared for distant flights beyond the purple sea, where they might find another summer in another land, so did these Israelites from all their countries thus assemble, and stand together, about to take their flight across a trackless wilderness to that land of which God had told them saying, “Behold, I will bring you into a land that floweth with milk and honey.” Oh! great and glorious works of God! “great are thy works, O Lord, and marvellous are thy doings; and that my soul knoweth right well.”

I would have you, beloved, particularly remember one thing; and that is, that great as this emigration was, and enormous as were the multitudes that quitted Egypt, it was only one Passover that set them all free. They did not want two celebrations of the supper; they did not need two angels to

fly through Egypt; it was not necessary to have two deliverances: but all in one night, all by the Paschal Lamb, all by the Passover supper, they were saved. Look at yonder host above! See ye the blood-washed throng of souls, chosen of God and precious? Can you tell their number? Can you count the small dust of the beatified ones before the throne? Ah! no; but here is a thought for you. They did not want two Christs to save them; they did not require two Holy Spirits to deliver them; nor did it need two sacrifices to bring them there.

"Ask them whence their victory came,
They with united breath
Ascribe their victory to the Lamb,
Their triumph in his death."

On agonizing sacrifice, one death on Calvary, one bloody sweat on Gethsemane, one shriek of "It is finished." consummated all the work of redemption. Oh! the precious blood of Christ! I love it when I think it saves one sinner; but oh! to think of the multitude of sinners that it saves! Beloved, we do not think enough of our Lord Jesus Christ; we have not half such an estimation of his precious person as we ought to have. We do not value his blood at the right price. Why, poor sinner, thou art saying this morning, "This blood cannot save me." What! not save thee, when it is engaged to save thousands upon thousands, and myriads of myriads? Shall the shepherd who gathereth the whole flock together, and leadeth them unto the pastures lose a single lamb? Thou sayest, perhaps, "I am so little." For that very reason then, thou dost not want so much of his power to take care of thee. "But," says one, "I am so great a sinner." Ay, then, so much the better, for he "came to save sinners, of whom I am chief," said Paul; and he came to save thee. Ah! do not fear, ye sons of God; he who brought the Israelites all out in one night can bring you all out, though you are in the veriest bondage. Perhaps there is one of you who not only has to make bricks without straw, but has to make twice as many bricks as any one else, you think, and your taskmaster has a whip which goes right round you, and cuts the flesh off you every time; you have worse bondage than any one, your slavery is more intense, your oven hotter, your pots harder to make. Very well, I am glad of it: how sweet liberty will be to thee! and I will tell you, you shall not be left in Egypt; for if you were, what would old Pharaoh say? "He said he would bring them all out, but he has not; there is one left;" and he would parade that poor Israelite through

the streets, he would take him through Memphis and Thebes, and say, "There is one that God would not deliver; there is one I had so tight in my grasp that he could not get him out!" Ah! master devil! you shall not say that of one of the Lord's people; they shall all be there, the great and the small; this unworthy hand shall take the hand of the blessed St. Paul; they shall all be in heaven, shall all be redeemed, shall all be saved; but al, mark you, through one sacrifice, one covenant, one blood, one Passover.

III. This bring us to speak more fully of THE COMPLETENESS OF THEIR DELIVERANCE. Our text says, — "It came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt." Our dear Arminian friends think that some of the Lord's people will not come out of Egypt, but will be lost at last. Ah! well, as good Hart says —

"If one poor saint may fall away,
If follows so may all;"

and none of us are safe and secure. Therefore, we do not give way to that. But all the hosts came out of Egypt, every one of them; not a soul was left behind. There is a poor man that was lame. Ah! you see him throw away his crutches. There is a poor woman sick; ay, but she suddenly rises from her bed. There is another palsied, who can by no means lift himself up, but his frame in a moment becomes firm, "for there was not one feeble person in all their tribes." — Psalm 105:37. There is a poor little babe who knows nothing about it; but still it leaves Egypt, carried by its mother. The old greyheaded sire tottered not on his staff. Though eighty years of age, yet he was a son of Israel, and out he came. There was a youth who had just begun to have his shoulders galled; but though he was young the time was come for him, and out he came. They all came out, every one of them; there was not one left behind. I do not suppose they had any hospitals there; but if they had, I am sure they did not leave any of them in the hospital, but all were healed in an instant. There was one Israelite who had rebelled against the government of Moses, and said, "Who made you a judge and a divider over us?" But they did not leave him behind; even he came out. All of them came out; nor do we find that there was some poor shrivelled creature whose arms and legs were almost useless, and who was half an idiot, whose brain was nearly gone, left behind. So beloved, if you are "the meanest lamb in Jesus' fold," you are "one in Jesus now;" though

you have very little learning, and very little common sense, you will come out of Egypt. If the Lord has put you there in bondage, and you have been made to groan there, he will make you sing by-and-by, when you are redeemed from it. There is no fear of your being left behind; for if you were, Pharoah would say, "He delivered the strong ones, but he was not able to fetch out the weak;" and then there would be laughter in hell against the might and omnipotence of God. They all came out.

But not only so; they all had their cattle with them. As Moses said, "Not a hoof shall be left behind." They were to have all their goods, as well as their persons. What does this teach us? Why, not only that all God's people shall be saved, but that all God's people ever had shall be restored. All that Jacob ever took down to Egypt shall be brought out again. Have I lost a perfect righteousness in Adam? I shall have a perfect righteousness in Christ. Have I lost happiness on earth in Adam? God will give me much happiness here below in Christ. Have I lost heaven in Adam? I shall have heaven in Christ; for Christ came not only to seek and to save the people that were lost, but that which was lost; that is, all the inheritance, as well as the people; all their property. Not the sheep merely, but the good pasture that the sheep had lost: not only the prodigal son, but all the prodigal son's estates. Everything was brought out of Egypt; not even Joseph's bones were left behind. The Egyptians could not say that they had a scrap of the Israelites' property — not even one of their kneading troughs, or one of their old garments. And when Christ shall have conquered all things to himself, the Christian shall not have lost one atom by the toils of Egypt, but shall be able to say, "O death where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" O hell, where is thy triumph? Thou has not a flag nor a pennon to show of thy victory; there is not a casque or a helmet left upon the battle-field; there is not a single trophy which thou mayest raise up in hell in scorn of Christ. He hath not only delivered his people, but they have gone out with flying colors, taking their shields with them. Stand and admire and love the Lord, who thus delivers all his people.

IV. This brings us to notice, in the fourth place, THE TIME WHEN THE ISRAELITES CAME OUT OF EGYPT. "It came to pass at the end of four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt." God had promised to Abraham that his people should be in bondage four hundred and thirty

years, and they were not in bondage one day more. As soon as God's bond became due, though it had been drawn four hundred and thirty years before, he paid the bill; he required no more time to do it in, but he did it at once. Christopher Ness says, they had to tarry for the fulfillment of the promise till the night came; for though he fulfilled it the selfsame day, he made them stay to the end of it, to prove their faith. He was wrong there, because scripture days begin at night. "The evening and the morning were the second day." So that God did not make them wait, but paid them at once. As soon as the day came, beginning with our night, as the Jewish day does now, and the scriptural day always did — as soon as the clock struck — God paid his bond. We have heard of some landlords who come for their rent at twelve o-clock precisely. Well, we admire a man's honesty if he pays him exactly at that minute; but God is never behind hand in fulfilling his promises, not by the ticking of a clock. Though his promise seem to tarry, wait for it; you may be mistaken as to the date; if he has promised anything on a certain day, he will not keep you waiting till the morrow. The selfsame day that the Lord had promised, the Israelites came out. And so all the Lord's people shall come out of bondage at the predestined moment: and they cannot possibly come out of bondage before the appointed time. O thou poor distressed heir of heaven, groaning under sin, and seeking rest, but finding none, believe that it is the Lord's will that thou shouldst be a little longer where there is a smoking furnace. Wait a little he is doing thee good. Like Jesus of old, he is speaking hardly to thee, to try thy faith; he is telling thee now that thou art a dog, because he wants to hear thee say, "Truth, Lord, but the dogs eat of the crumbs." He would not keep thee waiting, if thine eagerness did not thereby get fresh vigor; he would not keep thee crying, if he did not mean to make it a sign of better grace to you for the future. Therefore wait; for you shall come out of Egypt, and have a joyous rescue in that day when they shall come with singing unto Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads.

But now, beloved, we must finish up in a very solemn manner, by reminding you of the companions that came out of Egypt with the children of Israel. When the children of Israel came out of Egypt, there were certain persons in Egypt, dissatisfied with the king — very likely culprits, condemned persons, debtors, bankrupts, and such like persons, who were

tired of their country, and who, as is wittily said of those who are transported, “left their country for their country’s good.” But though these people went with the children of Israel, mark you, they were not of them. They escaped, but the door was not opened to let them out; it was only opened to let out the children of Israel. It is said that the mixed multitude fell a lusting; it was the mixed multitude that taught them to worship the golden calf; it was the mixed multitude that always led them astray. And that mixed multitude have their representatives now. There are many men that came out of the land of Egypt who never were Israelites; and there are many that join with us in church fellowship, and eat that spiritual bread, and drink of that spiritual rock that followed them; and yet with many of them God is not well-pleased, just as there were many of old with whom he was not well-pleased, and who were overthrown in the wilderness. “Ah!” says one, “but I thought if they had been in Egypt, certainly if they came out they must have been Christians; for you have used the metaphors.” Ay, yes, but mark how these people were in Egypt. This mixed multitude was never in bondage in Egypt. It was Israel that had to feel the task-master’s whip, and to make the bricks without straw. But these fellows had nothing to do. They were Egyptians themselves — true-born Egyptians — “heirs of sin and children of wrath;” they never had any real bondage, and therefore they could not rejoice as the true Israelite did, when they were set free from the yoke of Pharaoh. These people are represented amongst us by certain persons, who will tell us, “Ah! I know I have been a sinner.” That is as much as to say you have been an Egyptian, and that is all: “but I cannot say, I have felt my sin, and utterly abhored it and wept over it.” They come and say, “I am a sinner,” hear something about Jesus Christ, catch at it with a fancied faith — not with the faith that unites with the Lamb and brings us true salvation, but with a notional, pretended faith, and they get deliverance; and some of these people are marvellously happy; they do not have doubts and fears; they are at ease, like Moab; they have not been emptied from vessel to vessel. They can tell us about Egypt, of course; they know as much about it as the child of God. If the child of God describes the brick-kiln, and how they made bricks without straw, he has seen it, though he has not felt it; and he can talk about it, perhaps better than the poor Israelite; for the poor Israelite has sometimes been smitten on the mouth, it may be, so that he stammers, and cannot speak so well as the other, who never had a blow. He knows all

about the bondage; perhaps he has invented some of it, in order to try the poor Israelite; and he can describe very accurately the going out of Egypt and the journey through the wilderness. But here is the difference, mark you, between the Israelites and the Egyptians. The Egyptians did not sprinkle the blood on the door-posts; and we do not read of the mixed multitude eating the paschal lamb, for it is written, “No stranger shall eat thereof.” Some persons are continually saying, “I believe I am going to heaven;” but they have never sprinkled the blood, never eaten the paschal Lamb, never had fellowship with Christ, and never had vital union with him.

O ye members of Christian churches! there are many of you who have a feigned experience and a feigned religion. How many there are of you who have the externals merely of godliness! ye are white-washed sepulchers, outwardly fair and beautiful, like the garnished gardens of a cemetery; but inwardly ye are full of dead men’s bones and rottenness! Be persuaded, I beseech you, to get no deliverance any way except by the blood of the Lamb, and by really feasting on Christ. Many a man gets a deliverance by stifling his conscience. “Ah!” says one of these mixed multitude, “here am I in the prison; and this is the night when the children of Israel go out of Egypt; Oh! if I might go out!” What does he do? Why, the keeper is frightened; he has lost his eldest son, and the prisoner says, “Let me out!” and he bribes the keeper to let him go. And there is many a man that get out of Egypt by bribing his conscience. “There, master conscience,” he says, “I will never get drunk any more; I will always go to church; there is my shop, that is always open on Sunday — I will put two shutters up, and that is almost as good as closing it entirely; and I will not do the business myself — I will get a servant to do it for me.” And out he comes! But he had better remain in Egypt than get out like that. There are some again that get out by main force; the keeper falls down dead, and so they get out of prison. There are men who not only bribe, but kill their conscience; they go so far that their conscience is almost dead, and when he is in a fit one day they rush forth, and escape; and so they have “peace, peace, where there is no peace.” They wrap themselves up in the folds of their own delusions, and invent for themselves refuges of lies, where they do place their trust. O ye mixed multitude! ye are the ruin of the churches; ye set us a lusting; the pure Israelite’s blood is tainted by union with you;

you sit as God's people sit, and yet you are not his people; you hear as God's people hear, and yet you are "in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity." You take the sacrament as sweetly as others, while you are eating and drinking damnation to yourself; you come to the church-meeting, and you sit in the private assembly of the saints; but even when you are there, you are nothing but a wolf in sheep's clothing, entering the flock when you ought not to be there.

My dear hearers, do try yourselves, to see whether you are real Israelites. Oh! could Christ say to you, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile." Have you the blood on your door-post? Have you eaten of Jesus? Do you live on him? Do you have fellowship with him? Has God the Holy Ghost brought you out of Egypt? or have you come out yourself? Have you found refuge in his dear cross and wounded side? If you have, rejoice, for Pharaoh himself cannot bring you back again; but if you have not, I pray my Master to dash your peace into atoms, fair and lovely as it may be; I beseech him to send the winds of conviction and the floods of his wrath, that your house may fall now, rather than it should stand to your death, and then, in the last solemn hour, the edifice of your own hands should totter. Mixed multitude! hear ye this! ye assembled gatherings of professors! "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your-own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" But if he be not in you, then are ye reprobates still, whom God abhorreth. The Lord bring all his people out of Egypt, and deliver all his children from the house of bondage.

HEAVEN

SERMON 56

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 16, 1855,

AT THE NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." — 1 Corinthians 2:9, 10.

How very frequently verses of Scripture are misquoted! Instead of turning to the Bible, to see how it is written, and saying, "How readest thou?" we quote from one another; and thus a passage of Scripture is handed down misquoted, by a king of tradition, from father to son, and passes as current among a great number of Christian persons. How very frequently at our prayer meetings do we hear our brethren describing heaven as a place of which we cannot conceive! They say, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him;" and there they stop, not seeing that the very marrow of the whole passage lies in this — "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." So that the joys of heaven (if this passage alludes to heaven, which, I take it, is not quite so clear as some would suppose), are, after all, not things of which we cannot conceive; for "God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit."

I have hinted that this passage is most commonly applied to heaven, and I shall myself also so apply it in some measure, this morning. But any one who reads the connection will discover that the apostle is not talking about heaven at all. He is only speaking of this — that the wisdom of this world is not able to discover the things of God — that the merely carnal mind is not able to know the deep spiritual things of our most holy religion. He says, "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none

of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." And then he goes on lower down to say, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." I take it, that this text is a great general fact, capable of specific application to certain cases; and that the great fact is this — that the things of God cannot be perceived by eye, and ear, and heart, but must be revealed by the Spirit of God; as they are unto all true believers. We shall take that thought, and endeavor to expand it this morning, explaining it concerning heaven, as well as regards other heavenly matters.

Every prophet who has stood upon the borders of a new dispensation might have uttered these words with peculiar force. He might have said, as he looked forward to the future, God having touched his eye with the anointing eye-salve of the Holy Spirit, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." We will divide the economy of free grace into different dispensations. We commence with the patriarchal. A patriarch, who like Abraham was gifted with foresight, might have looked forward to the Levitical dispensation, glorious with its tabernacle, its Shekinah, its gorgeous veil, its blazing altars; he might have caught a glimpse of Solomon's magnificent temple, and even by anticipation heard the sacred song ascending from the assembled thousands of Jerusalem; he might have seen king Solomon upon his throne, surrounded with all his riches, and the people resting in peace and tranquillity in the promised land; and he might have turned to his brethren who lived in the patriarchal age, and said, "'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him' in the next dispensation. Ye know not how clearly God will reveal himself in the Paschal Lamb — how sweetly the people will be led, and fed, and guided, and directed all the way through the wilderness — what a sweet and fair country it is that they shall inhabit; Eye hath not seen the brooks that gush

with milk, nor the rivers that run with honey; ear hath not heard the melodious voices of the daughters of Shiloh, nor have entered into the heart of man the joys of the men of Zion, ‘but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.’“

And so, moreover, at the close of the Levitical dispensation, the prophets might have thus foretold the coming glories. Old Isaiah, standing in the midst of the temple, beholding its sacrifices, and the dim smoke that went up from them, when his eyes were opened by the Spirit of God, said — “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for him that love him.” He saw by faith Christ crucified upon the cross; he beheld him weltering in his own blood in Gethsemane’s garden; he saw the disciples going out of Jerusalem, to preach everywhere the Word of God; he marked the progress of Messiah’s kingdom, and he looked down to these latter days, when every man under his own vine and fig tree doth worship God, none daring to make him afraid; and he could well have cheered the captives in Babylon in words like these, — “Now ye sit down and weep, and ye will not sing in a strange land the songs of Zion; but lift up your heads, for your salvation draweth nigh. Your eye hath not seen, nor your ear heard, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but he hath revealed them unto me by his Spirit.” And now, beloved, we stand on the borders of a new era. The mediatorial dispensation is almost finished. In a few more years, if prophecy be not thoroughly misinterpreted, we shall enter upon another condition. This poor earth of ours, which has been swathed in darkness, shall put on her garments of light. She hath toiled a long while in travail and sorrow. Soon shall her groanings end. Her surface, which has been stained with blood, is soon to be purified by love, and a religion of peace is to be established. The hour is coming, when storms shall be hushed, when tempests shall be unknown, when whirlwind and hurricane shall stay their mighty force, and when “the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.” But you ask me what sort of kingdom that is to be, and whether I can show you any likeness thereof. I answer, no; “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him,’ in the next, the millenial dispensation; “But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.” Sometimes, when we climb upwards, there are moments

of contemplation when we can understand that verse, “From whence we look for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be revealed from heaven,” and can anticipate that thrice blessed hour, when the King of kings shall put on his head the crown of the universe, when he shall gather up sheaves of scepters, and put them beneath his arm — when he shall take the crowns from the heads of all monarchs, and welding them into one, shall put them on his own head, admist the shouts of ten thousand times ten thousand who shall chaunt his high praises. But it is little enough that we can guess of its wonders.

But persons are curious to know what kind of dispensation the Millennial one is to be. Will the temple, they ask, be erected in Jerusalem? Will the Jews be positively restored to their own land? Will the different nations all speak one language? Will they all resort to one temple? and ten thousand other questions. Beloved, we cannot answer you. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” We do not profess to understand the minutiae of these things. It is enough for us to believe that a latter-day glory is approaching. Our eyes glisten with joy, in the full belief that it is coming; and our hearts swell big at the thought that our Master is to reign over the wide, wide world, and to win it for himself. But if you begin questioning us, we tell you that we cannot explain it. Just as under the legal dispensation there were types and shadows, but the mass of the people never saw Christ in them, so there are a great many different things in this dispensation which are types of the next, which will never be explained till we have more wisdom, more light, and more instruction. Just as the enlightened Jew partially foresaw what the Gospel was to be by the law, so may we guess the Millennium by the present, but we have not light enough: there are few who are taught enough in the deep things of God to explain them fully. Therefore we still say of the mass of mankind — “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man, things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit,” in some measure, and he will do so more and more, by-and-bye.

And this brings us to make the application of the subject to heaven itself. You see, while it does not expressly mean heaven here, you may very easily bring it to bear upon it; for concerning heaven, unto which believers

are all fast going, we may say “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.”

Now, beloved, I am about to talk of heaven for this reason: you know, I never preach any funeral sermons for anybody, and never intend. I have passed by many persons who have died in our church, without having made any parade of funeral sermons; but, nevertheless, three or four of our friends having departed recently, I think I may speak a little to you about heaven, in order to cheer you, and God may thus bless their departure. It is to be no funeral sermon, however — no eulogium on the dead, and no oration pronounced over the departed. Frequent funeral sermons I utterly abhor, and I believe they are not under God’s sanction and approval. Of the dead we should say nothing but that which is good: and in the pulpit we should say very little of that, except, perhaps, in the case of some very eminent saint; and then we should say very little of the man; but let the “honor be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever,”

Heaven — then, what is it? First, what is it not? It is not a heaven of the SENSES — “Eye hath not seen it.” What glorious things the eye hath seen! Have we not seen the gaudy pageantry of pomp crowding the gay streets. We have seen the procession of kings and princes; our eyes have been feasted with the display of glittering uniforms, of lavished gold and jewels, of chariots and of horses; and we have perhaps thought that the procession of the saints of God may be dimly shadowed forth thereby. But, oh it was but the thought of our poor infant mind, and far enough from the great reality. We may hear of the magnificence of the old Persian princes, of palaces covered with gold and silver, and floors inlaid with jewels; but we cannot thence gather a thought of heaven, for “eye hath not seen” it. We have thought, however, when we have come to the works of God, and our eye hath rested on them: surely we can get some glimpse of what heaven is here. By night we have turned our eye up to the blue azure, and we have seen the stars — those golden-fleeced sheep of God, feeding on the blue meadow of the sky, and we have said, “See! those are the nails in the floor of heaven up yonder;” and if this earth has such a glorious covering, what must that of the kingdom of heaven be? And when our eye has wandered from star to star, we have thought, “Now I can tell what heaven is by the

beauty of its floor." But it is all a mistake. All that we can see can never help us to understand heaven. At another time we have seen some glorious landscape; we have seen the white river winding among the verdant fields like a stream silver, covered on either side with emerald; we have seen the mountain towering to the sky, the mist rising on it, or the golden sunrise covering all the east with glory; or we have seen the west, again, reddened with the light of the sun as it departed; and we have said, "Surely, these grandeurs must be something like heaven; we have clapped our hands, and exclaimed —

"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,
Stand dressed in living green."

We have imagined that there really were fields in heaven, and that things of earth were patterns of things in heaven. It was all a mistake: — "Eye hath not seen" it.

Equally does our text assert that "the ear hath not heard" it. Oh! have we not on the Sabbath day sometimes heard the sweet voice of the messenger of God, when he has by the Spirit spoken to our souls! We knew something of heaven then, we thought. At other times we have been entranced with the voice of the preacher, and with the remarkable sayings which he has uttered; we have been charmed by his eloquence; some of us have known what it is to sit and weep and smile alternately, under the power of some mighty man who played with us as skilfully as David could have played on his harp; and we have said, "How sweet to hear those sounds! how glorious his eloquence! how wonderful his power of oratory! Now I think I know something of what heaven is, for my mind is so carried away, my passions are so excited, my imagination is so elevated, all the powers of my mind are stirred upon so that I can think of nothing but of what the preacher is speaking about!" But the ear is not the medium by which you can guess anything of heaven. The "ear hath not heard" it. At other times perhaps you have heard sweet music; and hath not music poured from the lungs of man — that noblest instrument in the world — or from some manufacture of harmony, and we have thought, "Oh! how glorious this is!" and fancied, "This is what John meant in the Revelation — 'I heard a voice like many waters, and like exceeding great thunders, and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps;' and this must be

something like heaven, something like the hallelujahs of the glorified." But ah! beloved, we made a mistake. "Ear hath not heard" it.

Here has been the very ground of that error into which many persons have fallen concerning heaven. They have said that they would like to go to heaven. What for? For this reason: they looked upon it as a place where they should be free from bodily pain. They should not have the head-ache or the tooth-ache there, nor any of those diseases which flesh is heir to, and whenever God laid his hand upon them they began to wish themselves in heaven, because they regarded it as a heaven of the senses — a heaven which the eye hath seen or the ear heard. A great mistake; for although we shall have a body free from pain, yet it is not a heaven where our senses shall indulge themselves. The laborer will have it, that heaven is a place,

Where on a green and flowery mount
His weary soul shall sit.

Another will have it that heaven is a place where he shall eat to the full, and his body shall be satisfied. We may use these as figures; but we are so degenerate that we are apt to build a fine Mahometan heaven, and to think, there shall we have all the delights of the flesh; there shall we drink from bowls of nectared wine; there shall we lavishly indulge ourselves, and our body shall enjoy every delight of which it is capable. What a mistake for us to conceive such a thing! Heaven is not a place for the delight of mere sense; we shall be raised not a sensual body, but a spiritual body. We can get no conceptions of heaven through the senses; they must always come through the Spirit. That is our first thought. It is not a heaven to be grasped by the senses.

But, secondly, it is not a heaven of the IMAGINATION. Poets let their imaginations fly with loosened wings, when they commence speaking of heaven. And how glorious are their descriptions of it! When we have read them, we say, "And is that heaven? I wish I was there." And we think we have some idea of heaven by reading books of poetry. Perhaps the preacher weaves the filigree work of fancy, and builds up in a moment by his words charming palaces, the tops of which are covered with gold, and the walls are ivory. He pictures to you lights brighter than the sun; a place where spirits flap their bright wings, where comets flash through the sky. He tells you of fields where you may feed on ambrosia, where no henbane

groweth, but where sweet flowers cover the meads. And then you think you have some idea of heaven: and you sit down and say, “It is sweet to hear that man speak; he carried me so away; he made me think I was there; he gave me such conceptions as I never head before; he worked on my imagination.” And do you know, there is not a greater power than imagination. I would not give a farthing for a man who has not imagination; he is of no use, if he wishes to move the multitude. If you were to take away my imagination I must die. It’s a little heaven below, to imagine sweet things. But never think that imagination can picture heaven. When it is most sublime when it is freest from the dust of earth, when it is carried up by he greatest knowledge, and kept steady by the most extreme caution, imagination cannot picture heaven. “It hath not entered the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” Imagination is good, but not to picture to us heaven. Your imaginary heaven you will find by-and-by to be all a mistake; though you may have piled up fine castles, you will find them to be castles in the air, and they will vanish like thin clouds before the gale. For imagination cannot make a heaven. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered the heart of man to conceive” it.

Our next point is, that it is not a heaven of the INTELLECT. Men who take to themselves the title of intelligent, and who very humbly and modestly call themselves philosophers, generally describe heaven as a place where we shall know all things; and their grandest idea of heaven is, that they shall discover all secrets there. There the rock which would not tell its origin shall bubble forth its history; there the star which would not tell its date, and could not be made to whisper of its inhabitants, shall at once unravel all its secrets; there the animal, the fashion of which could scarcely be guessed at, so long had it been buried amongst other fossils in the earth, shall start up again, and it shall be seen of what form and shape it really was: — there the rocky secrets of this our earth that they never could discover will be opened to them; and they conceive that they shall travel from one star to another star, from planet to planet, and fill their enobled intellect, as they now delight to call it, with all kinds of human knowledge. They reckon that heaven will be to understand the works of the Creator: and concerning such men as Bacon and other great philosophers, of whose piety we generally have very little evidence, we read at the end of their

biographies — “He has now departed, that noble spirit which taught us such glorious things here, to sip at the fountain of knowledge, and have all his mistakes rectified, and his doubts cleared up.” But we do not believe anything of the kind. Intellect! thou knowest it now! “It hath not entered into the heart of man.” It is high; what canst thou know? It is deep; what canst thou understand? It is only the Spirit that can give you a guess of heaven.

Now we come to the point — “He hath revealed it unto us by his Spirit.” I think this means, that it was revealed unto the apostles by the Spirit, so that they wrote something of it in the Holy Word; but as you all believe that, we will only hint at it, and pass on. We think also that it refers to every believer, and that every believer does have glimpses of heaven below, and that God does reveal heaven to him, even whilst on earth, so that he understands what heaven is, in some measure. I love to talk of the Spirit’s influence on man. I am a firm believer in the doctrine of impulse, in the doctrine of influence, in the doctrine of direction, in the doctrine of instruction by the Holy Spirit; and I believe him to be an interpreter, one of a thousand, who reveals unto man his own sinfulness, and afterwards teaches him his righteousness in Christ Jesus. I know there are some who abuse that doctrine, and ascribe every text that comes into their heart as given by the Spirit. We have heard of a man who, passing by his neighbour’s wood, and having none in his own house, fancied he should like to take some. The text crossed his mind — “In all these things Job sinned not.” He said, “There is an influence from the Spirit; I must take that man’s wood.” Presently, however, conscience whispered, “Thou shalt not steal;” and he remembered then that no text could have been put into his heart by the Spirit, if it excused sin or led him into it. However we do not discard the doctrine of impulse, because some people make a mistake; and we shall have a little of it this morning — a little of the teaching of God’s gracious Spirit, whereby he reveals unto us what heaven is.

First of all, we think a Christian gets a gaze of what heaven is, when in the midst of trials and troubles he is able to cast all his care upon the Lord, because he careth for him. When waves of distress, and billows of affliction pass over the Christian, there are times when his faith is so strong that he lies down and sleeps, though the hurricane is thundering in his ears, and though billows are rocking him like a child in its cradle, though

the earth is removed, and the mountains are carried into the midst of the sea, he says, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” Famine and desolation come; but he says, “Though the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall there be fruit on the vine, though the labor of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no increase, yet will I trust in the Lord, and stay myself on the God of Jacob.” Affliction smites him to the ground; he looks up, and says, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.” The blows that are given to him are like the lashing of a whip upon the water, covered up immediately, and he seems to feel nothing. It is not stoicism; it is the peculiar sleep of the beloved. “So he giveth his beloved sleep.” Persecution surrounds him; but he is unmoved. Heaven is something like that — a place of holy calm and trust —

“That holy calm, that sweet repose,
Which none but he who feels it knows.
This heavenly calm within the breast
Is the dear pledge of glorious rest,
Which for the church of God remains,
The end of cares, the end of pains.”

But there is another season in which the Christian has heaven revealed to him; and that is, the season of quiet contemplation. There are precious hours, blessed be God, when we forget the world — times and seasons when we get quite away from it, when our weary spirit wings its way far, far, from scenes of toil and strife. There are precious moments when the angel of contemplation gives us a vision. He comes and puts his finger on the lip of the noisy world; he bids the wheels that are continually rattling in our ears be still; and we sit down, and there is a solemn silence of the mind. We find our heaven and our God; we engage ourselves in contemplating the glories of Jesus, or mounting upwards towards the bliss of heaven — in going backward to the great secrets of electing love, in considering the immutability of the blessed covenant, in thinking of what wind which “bloweth where it listeth,” in remembering our own participation of that life which cometh from God, in thinking of our blood-bought union with the Lamb, of the consummation of our marriage with him in realms of light and bliss, or any such kindred topics. Then it is that we know a little about heaven. Have ye never found, O ye sons and daughters of gaiety, a holy calm come over you at times, in reading the thoughts of your fellowmen? But oh! how blessed to come and read the

thoughts of God, and work, and weave them out in contemplation. Then we have a web of contemplation that we wrap around us like an enchanted garment, and we open our eyes and see heaven. Christian! when you are enabled by the Spirit to hold a season of sweet contemplation, then you can say — "But he hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit;" for the joys of heaven are akin to the joys of contemplation, and the joys of a holy calm in God. But there are times with me — I dare say there may be with some of you — when we do something more than contemplate — when we arise by meditation above thought itself, and when our soul, after having touched the Pisgah of contemplation by the way, flies positively into the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. There are seasons when the Spirit not only stands and flaps his wings o'er the gulf, but positively crosses the Jordan and dwells with Christ, holds fellowship with angels, and talks with spirits — gets up there with Jesus, clasps him in his arms, and cries, "My beloved is mine, and I am his; I will hold him, and will not let him go." I know what it is at times to lay my beating head on the bosom of Christ with something more than faith — actually and positively to get hold of him; not only to take him by faith, but actually and positively to feed on him; to feel a vital union with him, to grasp his arm, and feel his very pulse beating. You say. "Tell it not to unbelievers; they will laugh!" Laugh ye may; but when we are there we care not for your laughter, if ye should laugh as loud as devils; for one moment's fellowship with Jesus would recompense us for it all. Picture not fairy lands; this is heaven, this is bliss. "He hath revealed it unto us by his Spirit."

And let not the Christian, who says he has very little of this enjoyment be discouraged. Do not think you cannot have heaven revealed to you by the Spirit; I tell you, you can, if you are one of the Lord's people. And let me tell some of you, that one of the places where you may most of all expect to see heaven is at the Lord's table. There are some of you, my dearly beloved, who absent yourselves from the supper of the Lord on earth; let me tell you in God's name, that you are not only sinning against God, but robbing yourselves of a most inestimable privilege. If there is one season in which the soul gets into closer communion with Christ than another, it is at the Lord's table. How often have we sang there,

"Can I Gethesemane forget?
Or there thy conflicts see,
Thine agony and bloody sweat,
And not remember thee?
Remember thee and all thy pains,
And all thy love to me, —
Yes, while a pulse, or breath remains,
I will remember thee."

And then you see what an easy transition it is to heaven: —

"And when these failing lips grow dumb,
And thought and memory flee;
When thou shalt in thy kingdom come,
Jesus, remember me."

O my erring brethren, ye who live on, unbaptized, and who receive not this sacred supper, I tell you not that they will save you — most assuredly they will not, and if you are not saved before you receive them they will be an injury to you; — but if you are the Lord's people, why need you stay away? I tell you, the Lord's table is so high a place that you can see heaven from it very often. You get so near the cross there, you breathe so near the cross, that your sight becomes clearer, and the air brighter, and you see more of heaven there than anywhere else. Christian, do not neglect the supper of thy Lord; for it thou dost, he will hide heaven from thee, in a measure.

Again, how sweetly do we realize heaven, when we assemble in our meetings for prayer. I do not know how my brethren feel at prayer meetings; but they are so much akin to what heaven is, as a place of devotion, that I really think we get more ideas of heaven by the Spirit there, than in hearing a sermon preached, because the sermon necessarily appeals somewhat to the intellect and the imagination. But if we enter into the vitality of prayer at our prayer meetings, then it is the Spirit that reveals heaven to us. I remember two texts that I preached from lately at our Monday evening meeting, which were very sweet to some of our souls. "Abide with us, for the day is far spent," and another, "By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him and found him." Then indeed we held some foretaste of heaven. Master Thomas would not believe that his Lord was risen. Why? Because he was not at the last prayer-meeting; for we are told that Thomas was not there. And those who are often away from devotional meetings are very apt to have

doubting frames; they do not get sights of heaven, for they get their eye-sight spoiled by stopping away.

Another time when we get sights of heaven is in extraordinary closet seasons. Ordinary closet prayer will only make ordinary Christians of us. It is in extraordinary seasons, when we are led by God to devote, say an hour, to earnest prayer — when we feel an impulse, we scarce know why, to cut off a portion of our time during the day to go alone. Then, beloved, we kneel down, and begin to pray in earnest. It may be that we are attacked by the devil; for when the enemy knows we are going to have a great blessing, he always makes a great noise to drive us away; but if we keep at it, we shall soon get into a quiet frame of mind, and hear him roaring at a distance. Presently you get hold of the angel, and say, "Lord, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." He asks your name. You begin to tell him what you name was:

"Once a sinner, near despair,
Sought thy mercy-seat by prayer;
Mercy heard and set him free;
Lord, that mercy came to me."

You say, "What is thy name, Lord?" He will not tell you. You hold him fast still; at last he deigns to bless you. That is certainly some foretaste of heaven, when you feel alone with Jesus. Let no man know your prayers; they are between God and yourselves; but if you want to know much of heaven, spend some extra time in prayer; for God then reveals it to us by his Spirit.

"Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish." You have been saying in your hearts, "The prophet is a fool, and this spiritual man is mad." Go away and say these things; but be it known unto you, that what ye style madness is to us wisdom and what ye count folly "is the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom." And if there is a poor penitent here this morning, saying, "Ah! sir, I get visions enough of hell, but I do not get visions of heaven;" poor penitent sinner, thou canst not have any visions of heaven, unless thou lookest through the hands of Christ. The only glass through which a poor sinner can see bliss is that formed by the holes in Jesus' hands. Dost thou not know, that all grace and mercy was put into the hand of Christ, and that it never could have run out to thee unless his hand had been bored through in crucifixion. He cannot hold it

from thee, for it will run through; and he cannot hold it in his heart, for he has got a rent in it made by the spear. Go and confess your sin to him, and he will wash you, and make you whiter than snow. If you feel you cannot repent, go to him and tell him so, for he is exalted to give repentance, as well as remission of sins. Oh! that the spirit of God might give you true repentance and true faith; and then saint and sinner shall meet together, and both shall not only know what “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard;” but

“Then shall we see, and hear, and know
All we desired or wished below,
And every power find sweet employ
In that eternal world of joy.”

Till that time we can only have these things revealed to us by the Spirit; and we will seek more of that, each day we live.

THE INCARNATION AND BIRTH OF CHRIST

SERMON NO. 57

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 23RD, 1855,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."
— Micah 5:2.

HIS is the season of the year when, whether we wish it or not, we are compelled to think of the birth of Christ. I hold it to be one of the greatest absurdities under heaven to think that there is any religion in keeping Christmas-day. There are no probabilities whatever that our Savior Jesus Christ was born on that day, and the observance of it is purely of Popish origin; doubtless those who are Catholics have a right to hallow it, but I do not see how consistent Protestants can account it in the least sacred. However, I wish there were ten or a dozen Christmas-days in the year; for there is work enough in the world, and a little more rest would not hurt laboring people. Christmas-day is really a boon to us; particularly as it enables us to assemble round the family hearth and meet our friends once more. Still, although we do not fall exactly in the track of other people, I see no harm in thinking of the incarnation and birth of the Lord Jesus. We do not wish to be classed with those

"Who with more care keep holiday
The wrong, than others the right way."

The old Puritans made a parade of work on Christmas-day, just to show that they protested against the observance of it. But we believe they entered that protest so completely, that we are willing, as their

descendants, to take the good accidentally conferred by the day, and leave its superstitions to the superstitious.

To proceed at once to what we have to say to you: we notice, first, who it was that sent Christ forth. God the Father here speaks, and says, "Out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be the ruler in Israel." Secondly, where did he come to at the time of his incarnation? Thirdly, what did he come for? "To be ruler in Israel." Fourthly, had he ever come before? Yes, he had. "Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

I. First, then, WHO SENT JESUS CHRIST? The answer is returned to us by the words of the text. "Out of thee" saith Jehovah, speaking by the mouth of Micah, I out of thee shall he come forth unto me." It is a sweet thought that Jesus Christ, did not come forth without his Father's permission, authority, consent, and assistance. He was sent of the Father, that he might be the Savior of men. We are, alas! too apt to forget, that while there are distinctions as to the persons in the Trinity, there are no distinctions of honor; and we do very frequently ascribe the honor of our salvation, or at least the depths of its mercy and the extremity of its benevolence, more to Jesus Christ than we do to the Father. This is a very great mistake. What if Jesus came? Did not his Father send him? If he was made a child did not the Holy Ghost beget him? If he spake wondrously, did not his Father pour grace into his lips, that he might be an able minister of the new covenant? If his Father did forsake him when he drank the bitter cup of gall, did he not love him still? and did he not, by-and by, after three days, raise him from the dead, and at last receive him up on high, leading captivity captive? Ah! beloved, he who knoweth the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost as he should know them, never setteth one before another; he is not more thankful to one than the other; he sees them at Bethlehem, at Gethsemane, and on Calvary, all equally engaged in the work of salvation. "He shall come forth unto me." O Christian, hast thou put thy confidence in the man Christ Jesus? Hast thou placed thy reliance solely on him? And art thou united with him? Then believe that thou art united unto the God of heaven; since to the man Christ Jesus thou art brother and holdest closest fellowship, thou art linked thereby with God the Eternal, and "the Ancient of days" is thy Father and thy friend. "He shall come forth unto me". Did you never see the depth of love there was in the heart of Jehovah, when God the Father equipped his Son for the

great enterprise of mercy? There had been a sad day in Heaven once before, when Satan fell, and dragged with him a third of the stars of heaven, and when the Son of God launching from his great right hand the Omnipotent thunders, dashed the rebellious crew to the pit of perdition; but if we could conceive a grief in heaven, that must have been a sadder day, when the Son of the Most High left his Father's bosom, where he had lain from before all worlds "Go," saith the Father, "and thy Father's blessing on thy head!" Then comes the unrobing. How do angels crowd around to see the Son of God take off his robes He laid aside his crown; he said, "My father, I am Lord over all, blessed for ever, but I will lay my crown aside, and be as mortal men are." He strips himself of his bright vest of glory; "Father," he says, "I will wear a robe of clay, just such a men wear." Then he takes off all those jewels wherewith he was glorified; he lays aside his starry mantles and robes of light, to dress himself in the simple garments of the peasant of Galilee. What a solemn disrobing that must have been! And next, can you picture the dismissal! The angels attend the Savior through the streets, until they approach the doors: when an angel cries, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors, and let the king of glory through!" Oh! methinks the angels must have wept when they lost the company of Jesus — when the Sun of Heaven bereaved them of all its light. But they went after him. They descended with him; and when his spirit entered into flesh and he became a babe, he was attended by that mighty host of angels, who after they had been with him to Bethlehem's manger, and seen him safely, laid on his mother's breast, in their journey upwards appeared to the shepherds and told them that he was born king of the Jews. The Father sent him! Contemplate that subject. Let your soul get hold of it, and in every period of his life think that he suffered what the Father willed; that every step of his life was marked with the approval of the great I AM. Let every thought that you have of Jesus be also connected with the eternal, ever-blessed God; for "he," saith Jehovah, "shall come forth unto me." Who sent him, then? The answer is, his Father.

II. Now, secondly, WHERE DID HE COME TO? A word or two concerning Bethlehem. It seemed meet and right that our Savior should be born in Bethlehem and that because of Bethlehem's history, Bethlehem's name, and Bethlehem's position — little in Judah.

1. First, it seemed necessary that Christ should be born in Bethlehem, because of Bethlehem's history. Dear to every Israelite was the little village of Bethlehem. Jerusalem might outshine it in splendor; for there stood the temple, the glory of the whole earth, and "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth was Mount Zion;" yet around Bethlehem there clustered a number of incidents which always made it a pleasant resting-place to every Jewish mind; and even the Christian cannot help loving Bethlehem. The first mention, I think, that we have of Bethlehem is a sorrowful one. There Rachel died. If you turn to the 35th of Genesis you will find it said in the 16th verse — "And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath; and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labor. And it came to pass, when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also. And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Ben-oni: but his father called him Benjamin. And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave, that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day." A singular incident this — almost prophetic. Might not Mary have called her own son Jesus, her Ben-oni; for he was to be the child of Sorrow? Simeon said to her — "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." But while she might have called him Ben-oni, what did God his Father call him? Benjamin, the son of my right hand. Ben-oni was he as a man; Benjamin as to his Godhead. This little incident seems to be almost a prophecy that Ben-oni — Benjamin, the Lord Jesus, should be born in Bethlehem. But another woman makes this place celebrated. That woman's name was Naomi. There lived at Bethlehem in after days, when, perhaps, the stone that Jacob's fondness had raised had been covered with moss and its inscription obliterated, another woman named Naomi. She too was a daughter of joy, and yet a daughter of bitterness. Naomi was a woman whom the Lord had loved and blessed, but she had to go to a strange land; and she said, "Call me not Naomi (pleasant) but let my name be called Mara (bitter) for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me." Yet was she not alone amid all her losses, for there cleaved unto her Ruth the Moabitess, whose Gentile blood should unite with the pure untainted stream of the Jew, and should thus bring forth the Lord our Savior, the great king both of Jews and Gentiles. That very beautiful book of Ruth had all its scenery laid in

Bethlehem. It was at Bethlehem that Ruth went forth to glean in the fields of Boaz; it was there that Boaz looked upon her, and she bowed herself before her lord; it was there her marriage was celebrated; and in the streets of Bethlehem did Boaz and Ruth receive a blessing which made them fruitful so that Boaz became the father of Obed, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David. That last fact gilds Bethlehem with glory — the fact that David was born there — the mighty hero who smote the Philistine giant, who led the discontented of his land away from the tyranny of their monarch, and who afterwards, by a full consent of a willing people, was crowned king of Israel and Judah. Bethlehem was a royal city, because the kings were there brought forth. Little as Bethlehem was, it was much to be esteemed; because it was like certain principalities which we have in Europe, which are celebrated for nothing but for bringing forth the consorts of the royal families of England. It was right, then, from history, that Bethlehem should be the birth-place of Christ.

2. But again: there is something in the name of the place. “Bethlehem Ephratah.” The word Bethlehem has a double meaning. It signifies “the house of bread,” and “the house of war.” Ought not Jesus Christ to be born in “the house of bread?” He is the Bread of his people, on which they feed. As our fathers ate manna in the wilderness, so do we live on Jesus here below. Famished by the world, we cannot feed on its shadows. Its husks may gratify the swinish taste of worldlings, for they are swine; but we need something more substantial, and in that blest bread of heaven, made of the bruised body of our Lord Jesus, and baked in the furnace of his agonies, we find a blessed food. No food like Jesus to the desponding soul or to the strongest saint. The very meanest of the family of God goes to Bethlehem for his bread; and the strongest man, who eats strong meat, goes to Bethlehem for it. House of Bread! whence could come our nourishment but from thee? We have tried Sinai, but on her rugged steeps there grow no fruits, and her thorny heights yield no corn whereon we may feed. We have repaired even to Tabor itself, where Christ was transfigured, and yet there we have not been able to eat his flesh and drink his blood. But Bethlehem, thou house of bread, rightly wast thou called; for there the bread of life was first handed down for man to eat. And it is also called “the house of war;” because Christ is to a man “the house of bread,” or else “the house of war.” While he is food to the righteous he causeth war

to the wicked, according to his own word — “Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth; I am not come to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.” Sinner! if thou dost not know Bethlehem as “the house of bread,” it shall be to thee a “house of war.” If from the lips of Jesus thou dost never drink sweet honey — if thou art not like the bee, which sippeth sweet luscious liquor from the Rose of Sharon, then out of the selfsame mouth there shall go forth against thee a two-edged sword; and that mouth from which the righteous draw their bread, shall be to thee the mouth of destruction and the cause of thine ill. Jesus of Bethlehem, house of bread and house of war, we trust we know thee as our bread. Oh! that some who are now at war with thee might hear in their hearts, as well as in their ears the song —

“Peace on earth, and mercy mild.
God and sinners reconciled.”

And now for that word Ephratah That was the old name of the place which the Jews retained and loved. The meaning of it is, “fruitfulness,” or “abundance.” Ah! well was Jesus born in the house of fruitfulness; for whence cometh my fruitfulness and any fruitfulness, my brother, but from Bethlehem? Our poor barren hearts ne’er produced one fruit, or flower, till they were watered with the Savior blood. It is his incarnation which fattens the soil of our hearts. There had been pricking thorns on all the ground, and mortal poisons, before be came; but our fruitfulness comes from him. “I am like a green fir-tree; from thee is my fruit found.” “All my springs are in thee.” If we be like trees planted by the rivers of water, bringing forth our fruit in our season, it is not because we were naturally fruitful, but because of the rivers of water by which we were planted. It is Jesus that makes us fruitful. “If a man abide in me,” he says, “and my words abide him, he shall bring forth much fruit.” Glorious Bethlehem Ephratah! Rightly named! Fruitful house of bread — the house of abundant provision for the people of God!

3. We notice, next, the position of Bethlehem. It is said to be “little among the thousands of Judah.” Why is this? Because Jesus Christ always goes among little ones. He was born in the little one “among the thousands of Judah.” No Bashan’s high hill, not on Hebron’s royal mount, not in

Jerusalem's palaces. but the humble, yet illustrious, village of Bethlehem. There is a passage in Zechariah which teaches us a lesson: — lt is said that the man on the red horse stood among the myrtle-trees. Now the myrtle-trees grow at the bottom of the hill; and the man on the red horse always rides there. He does not ride on the mountain-top; he rides among the humble in heart. "With this man will I dwell, saith the Lord, with him who is of a humble and contrite spirit, and who trembleth at my word." There are some little ones here this morning — "little among the thousands of Judah." No one ever heard your name, did they? If you were buried, and had your name on your tombstone, it would never be noticed. Those who pass by would say, "it is nothing to me: I never knew him." You do not know much of yourself, or think much of yourself; you can scarcely read, perhaps. Or if you have some talent and ability, you are despised amongst men; or, if you are not despised by them, you despise yourself. You are one of the little ones. Well, Christ is always born in Bethlehem among the little ones. Big hearts never get Christ inside of them; Christ lieth not in great hearts, but in little ones. Mighty and proud spirits never have Jesus Christ, for he cometh in at low doors, but he will not come in at high ones. He who hath a broken heart, and a low spirit, shall have the Savior, but none else. He healeth not the prince and the king, but "the broken in heart, and he bindeth up their wounds." Sweet thought! He is the Christ of the little ones. "Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel."

We cannot pass away from this without another thought here, which is, how wonderfully mysterious was that providence which brought Jesus Christ's mother to Bethlehem at the very time when she was to be delivered! His parents were residing at Nazareth; and what should they want to travel at that time for? Naturally, they would have remained at home; it was not at all likely that his mother would have taken journey to Bethlehem while in so peculiar a condition; but Caesar Augustus issues a decree that they are to be taxed. Very well, then, let them be taxed at Nazareth. No; it pleases him that they should all go to their city. But why should Caesar Augustus think of it just at that particular time? Simply because, while man deviseth his way, the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord. Why, what a thousand chances, as the world has it, met together to

bring about this event! First of all, Caesar quarrels with Herod; one of the Herods was deposed; Caesar says, “I shall tax Judea, and make it a province, instead of having it for a separate kingdom. Well, it must be done. But when is it to be done? This taxing, it is said, was first commenced when Cyreneus was governor. But why is the census to be taken at that particular period — suppose, December? Why not have had it last October and why could not the people be taxed where they were living? Was not their money just as good there as anywhere else? It was Caesar’s whim; but it was God’s decree. Oh! we love the sublime doctrine of eternal absolute predestination. Some have doubted its being consistent with the free agency of man. We know well it is so, and we never saw any difficulty in the subject; we believe metaphysicians have made difficulties; we see none ourselves. It is for us to believe, that man does as he pleases, yet notwithstanding he always does as God decrees. If Judas betrays Christ, “thereunto he was appointed;” and if Pharaoh hardens his heart, yet, “for this purpose have I raised thee up, for to show forth my power in thee.” Man doth as he wills; but God maketh him do as he willeth, too. Nay, not only is the will of man under the absolute predestination of Jehovah; but all things, great or little, are of him. Well hath the good poet said, “Doubtless the sailing of a cloud hath Providence to its pilot; doubtless the root of an oak is gnarled for a special purpose, God compasseth all things, mantling the globe like air.” There is nothing great or little, that is not from him. The summer dust moves in its orbit, guided by the same hand which rolls the stars along; the dewdrops have their father, and trickle on the rose leaf as God bids them; yea, the sear leaves of the forest, when hurled along by the tempest, have their allotted position where they shall fall, nor can they go beyond it. In the great, and in the little, there is God — God in everything, working all things according to the counsel of his own will; and though man seeks to go against his Maker, yet he cannot. God hath bounded the sea with a barrier of sand; and if the sea mount up wave after wave, yet it shall not exceed its allotted channel. Everything is of God; and unto him. who guideth the stars and wingeth sparrows, who ruleth planets and yet moveth atoms, who speaks thunders and yet whispers zephyrs, unto him be glory; for there is God in everything,

III. This brings us to the third point: WHAT DID JESUS COME FOR? He came to be "ruler in Israel." A very singular thing is this, that Jesus Christ was said to have been "born the king of the Jews." Very few have ever been "born king." Men are born princes, but they are seldom born kings. I do not think you can find an instance in history where any infant was born king. He was the prince of Wales, perhaps, and he had to wait a number of years, till his father died, and then they manufactured him into a king, by putting a crown on his head; and a sacred chrism, and other silly things; but he was not born a king. I remember no one who was born a king except Jesus; and there is emphatic meaning in that verse that we sing

"Born thy people to deliver;
Born a child, and yet a king."

The moment that he came on earth he was a king. He did not wait till his majority that he might take his empire; but as soon as his eye greeted the sunshine he was a king; from the moment that his little hands grasped anything, they grasped a scepter, as soon as his pulse beat, and his blood began to flow, his heart beat royally, and his pulse beat an imperial measure, and his blood flowed in a kingly current. He was born a king. He came "to be ruler in Israel. "Ah!" says one, "then he came in vain, for little did he exercise his rule; 'he came unto his own, and his own received him not;' he came to Israel and he was not their ruler, but he was 'despised and rejected of men,' cast off by them all, and forsaken by Israel, unto whom he came." Ay, but "they are not all Israel who are of Israel," neither because they are the seed of Abraham shall they all be called. Ah, no! He is not ruler of Israel after the flesh, but he is the ruler of Israel after the spirit. Many such have obeyed him. Did not the apostles bow before him, and own him as their king? And now, doth not Israel salute him as their ruler? Do not all the seed of Abraham after the spirit, even all the faithful, for he is "the father of the faithful," acknowledge that unto Christ belong the shields of the mighty, for he is the king of the whole earth? Doth he not rule over Israel? Ay, verily he doth; and those who are not ruled over by Christ are not of Israel. He came to be a ruler over Israel. My brother, hast thou submitted to the sway of Jesus? Is he ruler in thine heart, or is he not? We may know Israel by this: Christ is come into their hearts, to be ruler over them. "Oh!" saith one, "I do as I please, I was never in bondage to any man." Ah! then thou hatest the rule of Christ. "Oh!" says another,

"I submit myself to my minister, to my clergyman, or to my priest, and I think that what he tells me is enough, for he is my ruler." Dost thou? Ah! poor slave, thou knowest not thy dignity; for nobody is thy lawful ruler but the Lord Jesus Christ. "Ay," says another, "I have professed his religion, and I am his follower." But doth he rule in thine heart? Doth he command thy will? Doth he guide thy judgment? Dost thou ever seek counsel at his hand in thy difficulties? Art thou desirous to honor him, and to put crowns upon his heart? Is he thy ruler? If so, then thou art one of Israel; for it is written, "He shall come to be ruler in Israel." Blessed Lord Jesus! thou art ruler in thy people's hearts, and thou ever shalt be; we want no other ruler save thyself, and we will submit to none other. We are free, because we are the servants of Christ; we are at liberty, because he is our ruler, and we know no bondage and no slavery, because Jesus Christ alone is monarch of our hearts. He came "to be ruler in Israel;" and mark you, that mission of his is not quite fulfilled yet, and shall not be till the latter-day glories. In a little while you shall see Christ come again, to be ruler over his people Israel, and ruler over them not only as spiritual Israel, but even as natural Israel, for the Jews shall be restored to their land, and the tribes of Jacob shall yet sing in the halls of their temple; unto God there shall yet again be offered Hebrew songs of praise, and the heart of the unbelieving Jew shall be melted at the feet of the true Messias. In a short time, he who at his birth was hailed king of the Jews by Easterns, and at his death was written king of the Jews by a Western, shall be called king of the Jews everywhere — yes, king of the Jews and Gentiles also — in that universal monarchy whose dominion shall be co-extensive with the habitable globe, and whose duration shall be coeval with time itself. He came to be a ruler in Israel, and a ruler most decidedly he shall be, when he shall reign among his people with his ancients gloriously.

IV. And now, the last thing is, DID JESUS CHRIST EVER COME BEFORE? We answer, yes: for our text says, "Whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting."

First, Christ has had his goings forth in his Godhead. "From everlasting." He has not been a secret and a silent person up to this moment. That new-born child there has worked wonders long ere now; that infant slumbering in its mother's arms is the infant of to-day, but it is the ancient of eternity; that child who is there hath not made its appearance on the stage of this

world; his name is not yet written in the calendar of the circumcised; but still though you wist it not, "his goings forth have been of old, from everlasting."

1. Of old he went forth as our covenant head in election, "according as he hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world."

Christ be my first elect, he said,
Then chose our souls in Christ our Head."

2. He had goings forth for his people, as their representative before the throne, even before they were begotten in the world. It was from everlasting that his mighty fingers grasped the pen, the stylus of ages, and wrote his own name, the name of the eternal Son of God; it was from everlasting that he signed the compact with his Father, that he would pay blood for blood, wound for wound, suffering for suffering, agony for agony, and death for death, in the behalf of his people; it was from everlasting that he gave himself up, without a murmuring word, that from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot he might sweat blood, that he might be spit upon, pierced, mocked, rent asunder, suffer the pain of death, and the agonies of the cross. His goings forth as our Surety were from everlasting. Pause, my soul, and wonder! Thou hadst goings forth in the person of Jesus from everlasting. Not only when thou wast born into the world did Christ love thee, but his delights were with the sons of men before there were any sons of men. Often did he think of them; from everlasting to everlasting he had set his affection upon them. What! believer, has he been so long about thy salvation, and will he not accomplish it? Has he from everlasting been going forth to save me, and will he lose me now? What! has he had me in his hand, as his precious jewel, and will he now let me slip between his precious fingers? Did he choose me before the mountains were brought forth, or the channels of the deep scooped out, and will he lose me now? Impossible!

"My name from the palms of his hands
Eternity cannot erase;
Impress'd on his heart it remains,
In marks of indelible grace."

I am sure he would not love me so long, and then leave off loving me. If he intended to be tired of me, he would have been tired of me long before

now. If he had not loved me with a love as deep as hell and as unutterable as the grave, it he had not given his whole heart to me, I am sure he would have turned from me long ago. He knew what I would be, and he has had long time enough to consider of it; but I am his choice, and there is an end of it; and unworthy as I am, it is not mine to grumble, if he is but contented with me. But he is contented with me — he must be contented with me — for he has known me long enough to know my faults. He knew me before I knew myself; yea, he knew me before I was myself. Long before my members were fashioned they were written in his book, "when as yet there were none of them," his eyes of affection were set on them. He knew how badly I would act towards him, and yet he has continued to love me;

"His love in times past forbids me to think.
He'll leave me at last in trouble to sink."

No; since "his goings forth were of old from everlasting," they will be "to everlasting."

Secondly, we believe that Christ has come forth of old, even to men, so that men have beheld him. I will not stop to tell you that it was Jesus who walked in the garden of Eden in the cool of the (lay, for his delights were with the sons of men; nor will I detain you by pointing out all the various ways in which Christ came forth to his people in the form of the angel of the covenant, the Paschal Lamb, the and ten thousand types with which the sacred history is so replete; but I will rather point you to four occasions when Jesus Christ our Lord has appeared on earth as a man, before his great incarnation for our salvation. And, first, I beg to refer you to the 18th chapter of Genesis, where Jesus Christ appeared to Abraham, of whom we read, "The Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; and he lift up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him; and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground. "But whom did he bow to? He said "My Lord,"only to one of them. There was one man between the other two, the most conspicuous for his glory, for he was the God-man Christ; the other two were created angels, who for a time had assumed the appearance of men. But this was the man Christ Jesus. "And he said, My Lord, if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: Let a little water, I

pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree." You will notice that this majestic man, this glorious person, stayed behind to talk with Abraham. In the 22nd verse it is said, — And the men turned their faces from thence and went towards Sodom;" that is, two of them, as you will see in the next chapter — "but Abraham stood yet before the Lord." You will notice that this man, the Lord, held sweet fellowship with Abraham, and allowed Abraham to plead for the city he was about to destroy. He was in the positive form of man; so that when he walked the streets of Judea it was not the first time that he was a man; lie was so before, in "the plain of Mamre, in the heat of the day." There is another instance-his appearing to Jacob, which you have recorded in the 32nd chapter of Genesis and the 24th verse. All his family were gone,

> "And Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And be said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God."

This was a man, and yet God. "For as a prince bast thou power with God and with men, and bast prevailed." And Jacob knew that this man was God, for he says in the 30th verse: ,for I have seen God face to face. and my life is preserved." Another instance you will find in the book of Joshua When Joshua had crossed the narrow stream of Jordan, and had entered the promised land, and was about to drive out the Canaanites, lo! this mighty man-God appeared to Joshua. In the 5th chapter, at the 13th verse, we read- And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went unto him, and (like a brave warrior, as he was,) said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come." And Joshua saw at once that there was divinity in him; for Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said to him, "What saith my lord unto his servant?" Now, if this had been a created angel lie would have

reproved Joshua, and said, “I am one of your fellow servants.” But no; “the captain of the Lord’s host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.” Another remarkable instance is that recorded in the third chapter of the book of Daniel, where we read the account of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego being cast into the fiery furnace, which was so fierce that it destroyed the men who threw them in. Suddenly the king said to his counsellors- Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.” How should Nebuchadnezzar know that? Only that there was something so noble and majestic in the way in which that wondrous Man bore himself, and some awful influence about him, who so marvellously broke the consuming teeth of that biting an I devouring flame, so that it could not so much as singe the children of God. Nebuchadnezzar recognized his humanity. He did not say,”I see three men and an angel,” but he said, “I see four positive men, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.’ You see, then, what is meant by his goings forth being I from everlasting:’

Observe for a moment here, that each of these four great occurrences happened to the saints when they were engaged in very eminent duty, or when they were about to be engaged in it. Jesus Christ does not appear to his saints every day. He did not come to see Jacob till he was in affliction; he did not visit Joshua before he was about to be engaged in a righteous war. It is only in extraordinary seasons that Christ thus manifests himself to his people. When Abraham interceded for Sodom, Jesus was with him, for one of the highest and noblest employments of a Christian is that of intercession, and it is when he is so engaged that he will be likely to obtain a sight of Christ. Jacob was engaged in wrestling, and that is a part of a Christian’s duty to which some of you never did attain; consequently, you do not have many visits from Jesus. It was when Joshua was exercising bravery that the Lord met him. So with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: they were in the high places of persecution, on account of their adherence to duty, when he came to them, and said, “I will be with you, passing through the fire.” There are certain peculiar places we must enter, to meet with the Lord. We must be in great trouble, like Jacob; we must be

in great labor, like Joshua; we must have great intercessory faith, like Abraham; we must be firm in the performance of duty, like Shadrach Meshach, and Abednego; or else we shall not know him ,whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting;" or, if we know him, we shall not be able to "comprehend with all the saints what is the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,"

Sweet Lord Jesus! thou whose goings forth were of old, even from everlasting, thou hast not left thy goings forth yet. Oh! that thou wouldst go forth this day, to cheer the faint, to help the weary, to bind up our wounds, to comfort our distresses! Go forth, we beseech thee, to conquer sinners, to subdue hard hearts-to break the iron gates of sinners' lusts, and cut the iron bars of their sirs in pieces! O Jesus! go forth; and when thou goest forth, come thou to me! Am I a hardened sinner? Come thou to me; I want thee:

"Oh! let thy grace my heart subdue;
I would be led in triumph too;
A willing captive to my Lord,
To sing the honors of thy word."

Poor sinner! Christ has not left going forth yet. And when he goes forth, recollect, he goes to Bethlehem. Have you a Bethlehem in your heart? Are you little? will go forth to you yet. Go home and seek him by earnest prayer. If you have been made to weep on account of sin, and think yourself too little to be noticed, go home, little one! Jesus comes to little ones; his goings forth were of old, and he is going forth now. He will come to your poor old house; he will come to your poor wretched heart; he will come, though you are in poverty, and clothed in rags, though you are destitute, tormented, and afflicted; he will come, for his goings forth have been of old from everlasting. Trust him, trust him, trust him; and he will go forth to abide in your heart for ever.

CANAAN ON EARTH

SERMON NO. 58

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 30, 1855,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"For the land whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs; but the land whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven; a land which the Lord thy God careth for; the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year, even unto the end of the year." — Deuteronomy 11:10, 11, 12.

It has generally been considered, that the passage of the Jordan by the Israelites is typical of death, and that Canaan is a fitting representation of heaven. We believe that in some sense it is true, and we do fondly cherish the household words of those hymns which describe our passing through Jordan's billows, and landing safe on Canaan's side; but we do think that the allegory does not hold, and that Jordan is not a fair exhibition of death, nor the land of Canaan a fair picture of the sweet land beyond the swelling flood which the Christian gains after death. For mark you, after the children of Israel had entered into Canaan, they had to fight with their enemies. It was a land filled with foes. Every city they entered they had to take by storm, unless a miracle dismantled it. They were warriors, even in the land of Canaan, fighting for their own inheritance; and though each tribe had its lot marked out, yet they had to conquer the giant Anakim, and encounter terrible hosts of Canaanites. But when we cross the river of death we shall have no foes to fight, no enemies to encounter. Heaven is a place already prepared for us; out of it the evil ones have long ago been driven; there brethren shall await us with pleasing faces, kind hands shall clasp ours, and loving words shall alone be heard. The shout of war shall ne'er be raised by us in heaven; we shall throw our swords away, and the scabbards with them. No battles with warriors there, no plains besoaked

with blood, no hills where robbers dwell, no inhabitants with chariots of iron. It is “a land flowing with milk and honey;” and it dreams not of the foeman of Canaan of old. We think the church has lost the beauty of Scripture, in taking Jordan to mean death, and that a far fuller meaning is the true allegory to be connected with it. Egypt, as we have lately observed to you, was typical of the condition of the children of God while they are in bondage to the law of sin. There they are made to work unceasingly, without wages or profit, but continually subject to pains. We said, again, that the coming up out of Egypt was the type of the deliverance which every one of God’s people enjoys, when by faith he strikes the blood of Jesus on his lintel and his doorpost, and spiritually eats the paschal lamb; and we can also tell you now, that the passage through the wilderness is typical of that state of hoping, and fearing, and doubting, and wavering, and inconstancy, and distrust, which we usually experience between the period when we come out of Egypt, and attain unto the full assurance of faith.

Many of you, my dear hearers, are really come out of Egypt; but you are still wandering about in the wilderness. “We that have believed do enter into rest;” but you, though you have eaten of Jesus, have not so believed on him as to have entered into the Canaan of rest. You are the Lord’s people, but you have not come into the Canaan of assured faith, confidence, and hope, where we wrestle no longer with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus — when it is no longer a matter of doubt with us whether we shall be saved, but we feel that we are saved. I have known believers who have existed for years almost without a doubt as to their acceptance. They have enjoyed a sweet and blessed reliance on Christ; they have come into Canaan; they have fed on the good old corn of the land; they now “lie passive in his hand, and know no will but his.” They have such a sweet oneness with their blessed Lord Jesus, that they lay their head on his breast all day long, and they have scarcely any nights; they almost always live in days; for though they have not attained unto his perfect image, they feel themselves so manifestly in union with himself that they cannot and dare not doubt. They have entered into rest; they are come into Canaan. Such is the condition of the child of God, when he has come to an advanced stage in his experience, when God has so given him grace upon

grace that he can say, “Yes though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”

We will read this passage again; and bear in mind what I understand it to mean. It sets before the Christian’s state, after he has attained to this faith and confidence in God; when he is no longer careful about the things of this life, when he does not water the ground with his foot, but has come to a land that drinketh in the rain of heaven. “The land whither thou goest in to possess it,” — the land of high and holy Christian privilege — “is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs; but the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven; a land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.” We shall have this morning to note, first of all, the difference between the Christian’s temporal condition and that of the Egyptian worldling; and secondly, the special privilege vouchsafed to those who have entered into Canaan — that the eyes of the Lord their God are always upon their land, “from the beginning of the year, even unto the end of the year.”

I. True religion makes a difference not only in a man, but in a man’s condition; it affects not only his heart, but his state — not only his nature, but his very standing in society. The Lord thy God cares not only for Israel, but for Canaan, where Israel dwells. God has not only a regard to the elect, but to their habitation, and not only so, but to all their affairs and circumstances. The moment I become a child of God, not only is my heart changed and my nature renewed, but my very position becomes different; the very beasts of the field are in league with me, and the stones thereof are at peace. My habitation is now guarded by Jehovah; my position in this world is no longer that of a needy mendicant — I have become a gentleman-pensioner on the providence of God; my position, which was that of a bondslave in Egypt, is not become that of an inheritor in Canaan. In this difference of the condition of the Christian and the worldling, we shall mark three things.

First, the Christian's temporal condition is different to that of the worldling; for the worldling looks to secondary causes, the Christian looks to heaven; he gets his mercies thence. Read the text, "The land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs." The land of Egypt has never had any rain from heaven; it has been always watered from earthly sources. At a certain season the river Nile overflowed its banks, and covered the land; a stock of water was then accumulated in artificial reservoirs, and afterwards let out in canals, and allowed to run in little trenches through the fields. They had to water it as a garden of herbs. All their dependence was on the nether springs; they looked to the river Nile as the source of all their plenty, and even worshipped it. But the land to which you are coming is not watered from a river; "it drinketh water of the rain of heaven." Your fertility shall not come from such artificial sources as canals and trenches; you shall be fed from the water that descends from heaven! You see how beautifully this pictures a worldling and a Christian. Look at the worldling; what is his dependence? It is all upon the water below; he looks only to the water that flows from the river of this world. "Who will show us any good?" Some rely upon what they call chance — (a river the source of which, like the source of the Nile, is never known;) and though continually disappointed, they still persevere in trusting to this unknown stream. Others, who are more sensible, trust to their hard work and honesty; they look to the source of that river, and they trace it to a fountain of human erection graced by a statue of labor. Ah! that river may yet fail you; it may not overflow its banks, and you may be starved. But, O Christian, what doest thou rely upon? Thy land "drinketh water of the rain of heaven;" thy mercies come not from the hand of chance; thy daily bread cometh not so much from thy industry as from thy heavenly Father's care; thou seest stamped upon every mercy heaven's own inscription, and every blessing comes down to thee perfumed with the ointment and spikenard, and the myrrh of the ivory palaces, whence God dispenses his bounties. Here is the difference between the assured Christian and the mere worldling: the one trusts to natural causes — the other "looks through nature up to nature's God." and seeth his mercies as coming down fresh from heaven.

Beloved, let us improve this thought, by showing you the great value of it. Do you know a man who sees his mercies coming from heaven, and not from earth? How much sweeter all his mercies are! There is nothing in the world that tastes as sweet to the school-boy as that which comes from home. Those who live at the school may make him ever such good things, but he cares nothing for anything like that which comes from home. So will the Christian. All his mercies are sweeter because they are home-mercies. I love God's favors on earth; for everything I eat and drink tastes of home. And oh! how sweet to think, "That bread, my Father's hand moulded; that water, my Father droppeth out from his hand in the gentle rain." I can see everything coming from his hand. The land in which I live is not like the land of Egypt, fed by a river; but it "drinketh water of the rain of heaven." All my mercies come from above. Don't you like, beloved, to see the print of your Father's fingers on every mercy? You have heard of the haddock having the mark of the thumb of Peter on it! It is a fiction, of course; but I am sure all the fish that we get out of the sea of providence are marked by Jesus' fingers. Happy the lot of that man who receives everything as coming from God, and thanks his Father for it all! It makes anything sweet, when he knows it comes from heaven.

This thought, again, has a great tendency to keep us from an overweening love of the world. If we think that all our mercies come from heaven, we shall not be so likely to love the world, as we shall be if we think that they are the natural products of the soil. The spies went to Eschol, and fetched thence an immense cluster of the grapes which grew there; but you do not find that the people said, "These are fine fruits, therefore we will stay here." No: they saw that the grapes came from Canaan, and thereupon they said, "Let us go on, and possess them." And so, when we get rich mercies, if we think they come from the natural soil of this earth, we feel,

"Here I will for ever stay."

But if we know that they come from a foreign clime, we are anxious to go

"Where our dear Lord his vineyard keeps,
And all the clusters grow."

Christian, then, rejoice, rejoice! Thy mercies come from heaven; however small they be, still they are thy Father's gift; not one comes to thee without his knowledge, and his permission. Bless the Lord, therefore, that

thou art come to Canaan; where thy “land drinketh water of the rain of heaven!”

My dearly beloved, just stop here, and console yourselves, if you are in trouble. “Oh!” says one, “I know not what I shall do: where to turn myself I cannot tell.” You are not like your brother, who is sitting near you; he has a competency; he has a river of Egypt to depend on; you have not any; nevertheless, there is the sky still. If you were to tell a farmer, “You have no rivers to water your lands.” “Well,” he would say, “I don’t want them either; for I have clouds up there, and the clouds are enough.” So, Christian, if thou hast nothing to depend on down below, turn thine eyes up there, and say, “The land, whither I go in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence I came out, where I sowed my seed, and watered it with my foot, as a garden of herbs; but the land, whither I go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven.”

2. But now comes the second distinction, and that is, a difference in the toilsomeness of their lives. The worldly man, just like the Israelites in Egypt, has to water his land with his foot. Read the passage: — “For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot as a garden of herbs.” This alludes, possibly to the practice, amongst all eastern nations where the land is irrigated, of letting out a certain quantity of water into a trench, and then having small gutters dug in the gardens, to compel the water to run along different parts of the ground. Sometimes one of these gutters might be broken; and then the gardener would press the mould against it with his foot, to keep the water in its proper channel. But I have inclined to think that the passage alludes to the method which those eastern countries have of pumping up the water by a tread-wheel, and so watering the land with their foot. However that may be, it means that the land of Egypt was watered with extraordinary labor, in order to preserve it from sterility. “But,” says Moses, “the land, to which ye are going, is not a land which you will have to water with your foot. The water will come spontaneously; the land will be watered by the rain of heaven. You can sit in your own houses, or under your own vine, or under your own fig tree, and God himself shall be your irrigator. You shall sit still, and ‘in quietness shall ye possess your souls.’“ Now, here is a

difference between the godly and ungodly: — the ungodly man toils. Suppose his object is ambition; he will labor and labor, and labor, and spend his very life, until he obtains the desire pinnacle. Suppose it is wealth; how will he emaciate his frame, rob his body of its needed sleep, and take away the nourishment his frame requires, in order that he may accumulate riches! And if it is learning, how will he burn his eyes out with the flame of his hot desire, that he may understand all knowledge; how will he allow his frame to become weak, and weary, and wan, by midnight watchings, till the oil wherewith he lighteth himself by night comes from his own flesh, and the marrow of his bones furnisheth the light for his spirit! Men will in this way labor, and toil, and strive. But now so the Christian. No: God "giveth his beloved sleep." His "strength is to sit still." He knows what it is to fulfill the command of Paul: — "I would have you without carefulness." We can take things as God gives them, without all this toil and labor. I have often admired the advice of old Cineas to Pyrrhus. Old story saith, that when Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, was making preparation for his intended expedition into Italy, Cineas, the philosopher, took a favorable opportunity of addressing him thus: "The Romans, sir, are reported to be a warlike and victorious people; but if God permit us to overcome them, what use shall we make of the victory?" "Thou askest," said Pyrrhus, "a thing that is self-evident. The Romans once conquered, no city will resist us; we shall then be masters of all Italy."

Cineas added — "And having subdued Italy, what shall we do next?" Pyrrhus not yet aware of his intentions, replied, "Sicily next stretches out her arms to receive us." "That is very probable," said Cineas, "but will the possession of Sicily put an end to the war?" "God grant us success in that," answered Pyrrhus, "and we shall make these only the forerunners of greater things, for then Libra and Carthage will soon be ours: and these things being completed, none of our enemies can offer any further resistance." "Very true," added Cineas, "for then we may easily regain Macedon, and make absolute conquest of Greece; and when all these are in our possession, what shall we do then?" Pyrrhus, smiling, answered, "Why then, my dear friend, we will live at our ease, take pleasure all day, and amuse ourselves with cheerful conversation." "Well sir," said Cineas, "and why may we not do this now, and without the labor and hazard of an enterprise so laborious and uncertain?" So, beloved, says the Christian.

The worldly mans says, “Let me go and do this; let me go and do that; let me accumulate so many thousand pounds; let me get so rich; then I will enjoy myself and take my ease.” “Nay,” says the Christian, “I see no reason for doing it; why should I not make God my refuge now? Why should I not enjoy comfort and peace, and make myself happy now?” He does not want to water his land with his feet; but he sits down quietly, and his land “drinketh in water of the rain of heaven.” Do not say I am preaching laziness. No such thing: I am only saying it is vain for you to rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness, for, “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.” But, if “he giveth his beloved sleep,” they rest in him; they know not these toils; that is, if they have attained to full assurance, and crossed into the Canaan of full confidence in God. They do not care to go ranging the world to find their happiness; but they say, “God is my ever present help; in him my soul is satisfied.” They rest content in him. Their land is watered with the rain of heaven.

I remember a story of a young man who was a lawyer. In order to attain fame in his position he was extremely anxious to understand all the mysteries and tortuous windings of the law, and to acquire some power of oratory, that he might be able to deliver himself eloquently before the bench. For ten years did he live apart from other people, lest domestic habits should wean him from his studies; he wrapped himself every night in a blanket, and took one of his own volumes, and put it under his head; he denied himself food, eating only so many morsels a day, lest indigestion should impair his powers. Although he was an infidel, he believed in God; and he bowed his head so many times a day, and prayed that he might lose anything rather than his intellectual powers. “Make a giant of me!” — that was his expression. And although his poor mother begged him to make himself more comfortable, he would not, but persisted in his course of abstemiousness and self-denial. One day, in reading one of his books, he saw this passage: “When all is gained, how little then is won! And yet to gain that little, how much is lost!” He stamped his foot, and raved like a maniac at the thought, that he had spent all these ten years, toiling and wearying himself for nothing; he saw the vanity of his course; he was driven to desperation, seized his axe, cut down the sign-board of his profession, and said, “Here ends this business.” Turning to the same book,

he found that it recommended Christianity as the rest of the weary soul; he found it in Christ, and attained to such an understanding of Christ, that he became a preacher of the gospel, and might well have preached on this text — “The land whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs; but the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh the water of heaven: a land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.”

3. This brings us to the third and last difference that we will note this morning; and that is, that the unbeliever, he who has not crossed the Jordan and come to full confidence, does not understand the universality of God’s providence, while the assured Christian does. You will see that in my text in a minute. In Egypt the ground is almost entirely flat; and where it is not flat, it is impossible, of course, to grow anything, unless the ground is watered at considerable difficulty by some method of artificial irrigation, which shall force the water on to the high places. “But,” says Moses, “the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys.” The Egyptians could not et the water up on the hills, but you can; for the mountains drink in the rain, as well as the valleys. Now look at a worldling. Give him comforts, give him prosperity: oh! he can be so happy. Give him everything just as he likes it; make his course all a plain, all a dead valley and a flat; he can fertilize that, and water it; but let him have a mountainous trouble, let him lose a friend, or let his property be taken from him — put a hill in his way, and he cannot water that, with all the pumping of his feet, and all the force he strives to use. But the Christian lives in “a land of hills and valleys;” a land of sorrow as well as joys; but the hills drink the water, as well as the valleys. We need not climb the mountains to water their heads, for our God is as high as the hills. High as our troubles, and mountainous as are our difficulties sometimes, we need not climb up with weary foot to make them fertile, for they are all made to work together for our good. Go, Egyptian; live thou in thy flat country, and enjoy its luxuries; thou hast thy papyrus, and thou writest mercies upon it, but it shall be the food of worms; we have no lotus, but we have a flower that blooms in paradise; and we write our

mercies on rocks, and not on rushes. Oh! sweet Canaan, heavenly land, where I dwell, and where you dwell, my brother Christians — a land which "drinketh water of the rain of heaven!"

II. We must consider a little time, THE SPECIAL MERCY. "The eyes of the Lord are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." WE must now turn away altogether from the allegoric, and come to this special mercy, which is the lot only of God's people.

"The eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year:" that is, upon the lot of all Christians individually. We have come now, beloved, to the end of another year — to the threshold of another period of time, and have marched another year's journey through the wilderness. Come, now! In reading this verse over, can you say Amen to it? "The eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon you, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." Some of you say, "I have had deep troubles this year." "I have lost a friend," says one. "Ah!" says another, "I have been impoverished this year." "I have been slandered," cries another. "I have been exceedingly vexed and grieved," says another. "I have been persecuted," says another. Well, but, beloved, take the year altogether — the blacks and the whites, the troubles and the joys, the hills and the valleys altogether, and what have you to say about it? You may say, "Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Do not pick out one day in the year, and say it was a bad day, but take all the year round, let it revolve in all its grandeur; let all the signs of the Zodiac come before you. Do not say, "I have been in Cancer so long a time," but run through them all, and then get into Libra, and judge between things that differ; and then what will you say? "Ah! bless the Lord! he hath done all things well; my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!" And you know why all things have been well. It is because the eyes of the Lord have been upon you all the year. Oh! if those awful eyes had been shut for a single moment, by night or day, where should we have been? Why, we had not been at al, but swept away, like airy dreams, into nihility. God watches over every one of his people, just as if there were only that one in the world; and he has been watching over you, so that when a trouble came, God said, "Trouble, avaunt!" "There shall no temptation happen to you but such as is common to man." And

when your joys would have cloyed upon you, and around you, God has said, “Stand back, joy! I will not have you fondle him too much; he will be deceived by thee.” “The eyes of the Lord” have been upon you continually, “from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.” “Well,” says one, “I cannot say so much of my year.” Then I cannot say so much of you. I was speaking to the Christian; and if you cannot say of your year, “surely goodness and mercy have followed it all,” I am afraid you are not a child of God, for methinks a child of God will say, when he reviews it all, “not one good thing hath failed of all the Lord God hath promised, but all hath come to pass.”

Then, my brethren, might I not say a word to you concerning the eyes of the Lord having been upon us as a church? Ought we to let this year pass without rehearsing the works of the Lord? Hath he not been with us exceeding abundantly, and prospered us? It is during this year that we met together in the great assembly — during this year that these eyes have seen the mighty gatherings of men who listened to our words on the Sabbath-day. We shall not soon forget our sojourn in Exeter Hall--shall we? During those months the Lord brought in many of his own elect, and multitudes who were unsaved up to that time were called by divine mercy, and brought into the fold. How God protected us there! What peace and prosperity hath he given to us! How hath he enlarged our borders, and multiplied our numbers, so that we are not few, and increased us, so that we are not weak! I do think we were not thankful enough for the goodness of the Lord which carried us there, and gave us so many who have now become useful to use in our church! Remember in how many places ye have worshipped God this year. This place has been enlarged, so that more can be held within its walls; now we can receive more to listen to the voice of the Gospel than we could before; and God seems to say, “Go, forward, go forward still.” The goodness of the Lord has increased as we have gone along. I have often feared, lest the people should desert the house, and that when we made it larger we should not have enough to fill it: but the Lord still sends an overwhelming congregation, and still gives us grace to preach his gospel. How thankful should we be! Surely, “the eyes of the Lord” have been upon this church, “from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.” We have had peace: not a rotten peace, I trust, but the peace of God. Nothing has arisen that should disturb our equanimity. The

church has been kept by the grace of God faithful to the doctrines of grace. Ah! what a blessing it is, that our members have been kept from falling into sin! What a glorious thing that we are carried through another year safely! Some old writer has said, “Every hour that a Christian remains a Christian is an hour of miracle.” It is true; and every year that the church is kept an entire church is a year of miracle.

It is a year of miracles. Tell it to the wide, wide world; tell it everywhere. “The eye of the Lord” hath been upon us, “from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.” Two hundred and ten persons have this year united with us in church fellowship; about enough to have formed a church. One half the churches in London cannot number so many in their entire body; and yet the Lord has brought so many into our midst. And still they come; still they come. Whenever I have an opportunity of seeing those who are converted to God, they come in such numbers that many have to be sent away. Still they come, still they come; and well I am assured, that I have as many still in this congregation, who will during the present year come forward to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. How often has the sacred pool of baptism been opened this year! How sweetly have we assembled round the Lord’s table! What precious moments we have had at the Monday evening prayer meetings! And how glorious it has been when we have recognized brother after brother, sister after sister publicly, by giving them the right hand of fellowship! In all our ways we hope we have acknowledged him, and he has directed our paths. Sing unto the Lord, for he hath done wonders; bless his name, for he has worked miracles; praise his grace, for he hath highly exalted his people; for he has worked miracles; praise his grace, for he hath highly exalted his people; unto him be honor, for ever and ever. And mark you, brethren, this church has known what it is to come out of Egypt. We have not toiled with our feet here. I hope there has been no desire to draw unfit persons into the church, I have had no toiling with my feet, I am sure, in preaching the gospel — no legal preaching — none of your exciting preaching — none of all that toiling with your feet; but we have had nothing but the rain from heaven. We have not labored to excite carnal passions, nor to preach sermons with a view of driving you into religious fevers. Sturdy old Calvinism will not let us do that. We cannot preach such sermons as Arminians can. The land has been watered by the rain of heaven. We have not had any of those fatal

pestilential mists that sometimes gather round the church. It is proverbial, that wherever the revivalists go, they always carry desolation; before them is an Eden; behind them is a desert; wherever they go they scorch the land like firebrands; though hundreds seem to be converted to God, they are converted to ten times blacker sins than before, and the last end of them is worse than the first.* We want not the getting up of a little feverish passion by appealing to the natural man; it is the drinking water of the rain of heaven that does the good. I trust it has been so here, and that "the eyes of the Lord" have been upon you "from the beginning of the ear even to the end of the year."

So, beloved, I can say that, as a minister, the eyes of the Lord have been upon me this year. It has been my privilege, many times this year to preach his word. I think, more than four hundred times have I stood in the pulpit to testify his truth, and the eyes of the Lord have been upon me. Blessed be his name! whether it has been in the north, in the south, in the east, or in the west, I have never lacked a congregation; nor have I ever gone again to any of the places I have preached at, without hearing of souls converted. I cannot remember a single village, or town, that I have visited a second time without meeting with some who blessed God that they heard the word of truth there. When I went to Bradford last time, I stated in the pulpit that I had never heard of a soul being converted through my preaching there; and the good pew-opener came to Brother Dowson, and said, "Why didn't you tell Mr. Spurgeon that such-a-one joined the church through hearing him?" and instantly that dear man of God told me the cheering news. We have met with much opposition this year. Thanks to our brethren in the ministry, we have not had very much assistance from them. We have been enabled to say to them all, "I will not take from you, from a thread to a shoe-latchet, lest ye should say, I have made him rich." But how much of that bigotry which formerly existed has subsided! How much of that sneer, which was at one time so common, has now gone away! I am now, rather more afraid of their smiles than their frowns — though I do not think I feel much of either. Cedo nulli, was my motto at the beginning, and I take it once more. I yield to none; but by the grace of God I preach his truth, and still, if he help me, will I hold on my way. And to the Three-one God, be eternal honor. Amen.

*The revivalists since this period have been usually true preachers of the gospel with whom we have the fullest sympathy. Our remarks were intended for certain American Arminian ravers who had done much mischief.

WATCH-NIGHT SERVICE

SERMONS NO. 59

ON TUESDAY NIGHT, DECEMBER 31, 1855,

HELD AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

If it be enquired why I held a Watch-night, let the answer be — because I hoped that the Lord would own the service, and thus souls might be saved. I have preached at all hours the gospel of Jesus, and I see no reason why I may not preach at midnight, if I can obtain hearers. I have not done it from imitation, but for the best of reasons — the hope of doing good, and the wish to be the means of gathering in the outcasts of Israel. God is my witness, I would preach every hour of the day, if body and mind were equal to the task. When I consider how souls are being damned and how few there are who mourn and cry over them, I am constrained to cry with Paul, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." Oh, that the new year may be far better than the last.

I am almost sorry to see this service in print, and fear it will rob many of their week's food from the regular sermon; but as it is done, I pray the Lord to own it for Jesus' sake. — C.H.S.

The chapel being densely crowded in every part, the preacher entered the pulpit, and after prayer, solemnly read the verse — which the congregation then sang —

"Ye virgin souls, arise!
With all the dead awake;
Unto salvation wise;
Oil in your vessels take:
Upstarting at the MIDNIGHT CRY,
Behold Your heavenly bridegroom nigh."

Two brethren then offered prayer for the Church and the World, that the new year might be clothed with glory by the spread of the knowledge of Jesus. — Then followed the

EXPOSITION

On Tuesday Night, December 31, 1855, — Psalm 90:1-22

Yea Jehovah, WE, they children, can say that thou hast been our home, our safe dwelling-place. And oh, what joy, what peace have we found in his sacred bosom. No home like the breast of the Lord, to which, in all generations, true believers fly. Let me ask the unbelievers where their joy is. Where has your habitation been, ye sons of sin and daughters of folly?

> "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."

And the same God too, loving His people, passing by their sins and remembering not their iniquities. Oh, beloved, let this thought cheer you, he was, he is, he will be God. Here change cannot climb, here mutation must not approach. For ever and ever he is God.

> "Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men."

How many this year have departed. Oh, where had we been had this been our case? Many of us can say, we should have been in bliss, and we should have returned unto God, but alas, many here would have entered the fires of hell and commenced their never-ending torture.

> "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night."

> "Thou carriest them away as with a flood."

Who are they who are carried away as with a flood? Yourselves, my hearers, and myself. Though we know it not, we are always in motion. The impetuous torrent of time is carrying us along like a mighty rolling river. We cannot stand against the force which drives us onwards. As powerless

as the straw we are; we can by no means resist it. Whither are we going? Where is the river carrying us to? We cannot stem its torrens; we cannot escape its floods. Oh! where, oh! where, are we going!

"Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up.

"In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.

"For we are consumed by thine anger,
and by thy wrath are we troubled."

No man better understands this than the convinced sinner, when smarting under the rod of God. Truly our strength is then utterly consumed, and the troubles of our heart are enlarged.

"Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance."

Hear that! "our secret sins." Some of you bear hell's mark on your forehead. Some of you, like Cain, have the mark of justice on your very brow. Your sins are beforehand with you in judgment. Ah! they are there to-night, blabbing out the tale of your sad, sad history. But there are persons here who have "secret sins." Ye have not been found out yet. The night was too dark for human eye to se you; the deed was to secret for mortal to behold; but it is set somewhere. Just as we set a stone in a golden ring, so has God set your "secret sins in the light of his countenance." Your sins are this night before the eyes of the infinite Jehovah.

"For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told."

The Vulgate translation has: "Our years pass away like those of a spider." It implies that our life is as frail as the thread of a spider's web. Constituted most curiously the spider's web is; but what more fragile? In what is there more wisdom than in the complicated frame of a human body; and what more easily destroyed? Glass is granite compared with flesh; and vapours are rocks compared with life.

"The days of our years are threescore years and ten;"

Mark, the Psalmist says, “the days of our years.” How seldom we think of that! Our years we think of, but not “the days of our years.”

> “And if [it is a great “if” indeed, for how many die before they attain to it!] by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.”

Where do we fly to? Is it upwards that we wing our way, on more than eagles’ wings, to realms of joy unknown? Or is it downward that we sink with all our sins round our necks like millstones? Oh! shall we go down, down, till in hell we lift up our eyes, being in torments?

> “Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.
>
> “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”

Here is heavenly arithmetic; an application of numeration seldom thought of even by the wise. May we, during the next year, so measure out our time, that we may apply our hearts to Jesus, who is the true wisdom.

Amen! Lord, may that be granted!
Now we will sing a verse of that solemn hymn —

> “When thou my righteous judge shall come,”

and then the Pastor will make an evening’s prayer for you before he comes to speak with your souls on God’s behalf.

HYMN

“Let me among thy saints be found
Whene’er the archangel’s trump shall sound,
To see thy smiling face:
Then loudest of the crowd I’ll sing,
While heav’n’s resounding mansions ring
With shouts of sovereign grace.”

PRAYER

O God, save my people! Save my people! A solemn charge hast thou given to thy servant. Ah! Lord, it is all too solemn for such a child. Help him; help him by thine own grace, to discharge it as he ought. O Lord, let thy servant confess that he feels that his prayers are not as earnest as they should be for his people's souls; that he does not preach so frequently as he ought, with that fire, that energy, that true love to men's souls. But O Lord, damn not the hearers for the preacher's sin. Oh, destroy not the flock for the shepherd's iniquity. Have mercy on them, good Lord, have mercy on them, O Lord, have mercy on them! There are some, Father, that will not have mercy on themselves. How have we preached to them, and labored for them! O God thou knowest that I lie not. How have I striven for them, that they might be saved! But the heart is too hard for man to melt, and the soul made of iron too hard for flesh and blood to render soft. O God, the God of Israel, thou canst save. There is the pastor's hope; there is the minister's trust. He cannot but thou canst, Lord; they will not come, but thou canst make them willing in the day of thy power. They will not come unto thee that they may have life; but thou canst draw them, and then they shall run after thee. They cannot come; but thou canst give them power; for though no man cometh except the Father draw him, yet if he draw him then he can come, O Lord, for another year has thy servant preached — thou knowest how. It is not for him to plead his cause with thee — that is in another's hands, and has been there, thank God, years ago. But now, O Lord, we beseech thee, bless our people. Let this our church, thy church, be still knit together in unity; and this night may they commence a fresh era of prayer. They are a praying people, blessed by thy name, and they pray for their minister with all their hearts. O Lord, help them to pray more earnestly. May we wrestle in prayer more than ever, and besiege thy throne until thou makest Jerusalem a praise not only here, but everywhere. But, Father, it is not the church we weep for; it is not the church we groan for; it is the world. O Faithful Promisor, hast thou not promised to thy Son that he should not die in vain? Give him souls we beseech thee, that he may be abundantly satisfied. Hast thou not promised thy church that she shall be increased? Oh, increase her, increase her. And hast thou not promised that thy ministers shall not labor in vain? For thou hast said that "as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and

returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, even so shall thy word be: it shall not return unto thee void." Let not the word return void tonight; but now may thy servant in the most earnest manner, with the most fervent heart, burning with love to his Savior, and with love to souls, preach once more the glorious gospel of the blessed God. Come, Holy Spirit! We can do nothing without thee. We solemnly invoke thee, great Spirit of God! thou who didst rest on Abraham, on Isaac, and on Jacob; thou, who in the night visions speaketh unto men. Spirit of the Prophets, Spirit of the Apostles, Spirit of the Church, be thou our Spirit this night, that the earth may tremble, that souls may be made to hear thy Word, and that all flesh may rejoice together to praise thy name. Unto Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the dread Supreme, be everlasting praise. Amen.

SERMON

"Arise, cry out in the night; in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord" — Lamentations 2:19.

This was originally spoken to Zion, when in her sad and desolate condition, Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, had wept his eyes dry for the slain of the daughter of his people; and when he had done all he could himself to pour out tears for poor Jerusalem, he then begged Jerusalem to weep for herself. Methinks I might become a Jeremy to-night, and weep as he, for surely the church at large is in almost as evil a condition. O Zion, how hast thou been veiled in a cloud, and how is thy honor trodden in the dust! Arise, ye sons of Zion, and weep for your mother, yea weep bitterly, for she hath given herself to other lovers, and forsaken the Lord that bought her. I bear witness this night, in the midst of this solemn assembly, that the church at large is wickedly departing from the living God; she is leaving the truth which was once her glory, and she is mixing herself among the nations. Ah! beloved, it were well if Zion now could sometimes weep; it were well if there were more who would lay to heart the wound of the daughter of his people. How hath the city become a harlot! how hath the much fine gold become dim! and how hath the glory departed! Zion is under a cloud. Her ministers preach not with the energy and fire that anciently dwelt in the lips of God's servants, neither is pure and undefiled doctrine proclaimed in her streets. Where are her evangelists who with earnest hearts traversed the land with the gospel on their lips.

Where are her apostolic preachers who everywhere declared the good tidings of salvation. Alas for the idle shepherds! Alas for the slumbering ministers! Weep sore, O Zion! weep thee sore, until another reformation comes to sweep thy floor. Weep thee, Zion: weep until he shall come whose fan is in his hand, who shall thoroughly purge his floor; for the time is coming when judgment must begin at the house of God. Oh, that now the princes of Israel had wisdom, that they might seek the Lord; but alas, our leaders have given themselves to false doctrine; neither do they love the thing which is right. Therefore I charge thee, "Arise," O Zion, "cry out in the night, in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord."

We leave Zion, however, to speak to those who need exhortation more than Zion does; to speak to those who are Zion's enemies, or followers of Zion, and yet not belonging to her ranks. To them we shall have a word or two to say to-night.

1. First, from our text we gather — that it is never too soon to pray. "Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord." You are lying on your bed; the gracious Spirit whispers — "Arise, and pray to God." Well, there is no reason why you should delay till the morning light; "in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord." We are told there that it is never too soon to pray. How many young persons imagine that religion is a thing for age, or at least for maturity; but they conceive that whilst they are in the bloom of their youth, they need not attend to its admonitions. How many have we found who count religion to be a crutch for old age, who reckon it an ornament to their grey hairs, forgetting that to the young man religion is like a chain of gold around his neck, and like an ornament set with precious jewels, that shall array him with honor. How many there be who think it is yet too soon for them to bear for a single moment the cross of Jesus. They do not want to have their young shoulders galled with an early burden; they do not think it is true that "it is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth;" and they forget that that "yoke is easy," and that "burden is light." Therefore, hour after hour, and day after day, the malicious fiend whispers in their ear — "It is too soon, it is too soon! postpone, postpone, postpone! procrastinate!" Need we tell you once more that oft-repeated axiom,

"Procrastination is the thief of time?" Need we remind you that "delays are dangerous?" Need we tell you that those are the workings of Satan? For the Holy Ghost, when he strives with man, says, "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." It is never beloved, too soon to pray. Art thou a child to-night? Thy God heareth children. He called Samuel when he was but a child. "Samuel, Samuel;" and he said, "Here am I." We have had our Josiahs; we have heard of our Timothys; we have seen those in early youth who have been brought to the Savior. Oh! remember it is not too soon to seek the Savior, ere you arrive at manhood. If God in his mercy calls you to him, I beseech you think not for a moment that he will not hear you. I trust I know his name; yea, more than that, I know I "do. I know whom I have believed." But he did not call me too early. Though but a child, I descended into the pool of baptism, there to be buried with my Savior. Oh! I wish I could say that all those fourteen or fifteen years of my life had not been thrown away. Blessed be his name, he never calls us too soon. If he rises early in the morning, and sends some into his vineyard to labor, he does not send them before they should go — before there is work for them to do. Young man, it is not too soon. "Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord."

2. Again; it is not too late to cry to the Lord; for if the sun be set, and the watches of the night have commenced their round, the mercy seat is open. No shop is open so late as the House of Mercy. The devil has two tricks with men. Sometimes he puts their clock a little backward, and he says, "Stop, there is time enough yet;" and when that does not answer, he turns the hands on, and he cries out, "Too late! too late!" Old man, has the devil said "It is too late?" Convinced sinner, has Satan said "It is too late?" Troubled, distressed one, has the thought risen in thy soul — a bitter and a dark one — "It is too late?" It is not. Within another fifteen minutes another year shall have come; but if the Spirit of God calls you this year, he will not call you too late in the year.If to the last second you should live, if God the Holy Ghost calls you then, he will not have called you too late. Ah! ye desponding ones, who think it is all too late — it is not.

While the lamp holds out to burn,
The vilest sinner that returns

shall find mercy and peace. There have been some older than you can be; some as sinful and vile, and heinously wicked, who have provoked God as much, who have sinned against him as frequently, and yet they have found pardon. If he call thee, sinner, if he call thee to-night, 12 o'clock is not too late, as 1 o'clock is not too early. If he call thee, whether it be at midnight, or cock-crowing, or noon-day, we would say to thee, as they did to the blind man, "Arise; he calleth thee." And as sure as ever he calls you, he will not send you away without a blessing. It is not too late to call on God. The darkness of night is gathering; it is coming on, and you are near to death. Arise, sleeper, arise! thou who art now taking the last nap of death. "Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord."

3. Next: we cannot pray too vehemently, for the text says, "Arise, cry out in the night." God loves earnest prayers. He loves impetuous prayers — vehement prayers. Let a man preach if he dare coldly and slowly, but never let him pray so. God loveth crying-out prayers. There is a poor fellow who says — "I don't know how to pray." "Why, sir," He says, "I could not put six or seven words together in English grammar." Tush upon English grammar! God does not care for that, so long as you pour out your heart. That is enough. Cry out before him. "Ah!" says one, "I have been supplicating to God. I think I have asked for mercy." But perhaps you have not cried out. Cry out before God. I have often heard men say they have prayed and have not been heard. But I have known the reason. They have asked amiss if they have asked; and those who cry with weak voices, who do not cry aloud, must not expect to get a blessing. When you go to mercy's gate, let me give you a little advice. Do not go and give a gentle tap, like a lady; do not give a single knock, like a beggar; but take the knocker and wrap hard, till the very door seems to shake. Rap with all your might! and recollect that God loveth those who knock hard at mercy's gate. "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." I picture the scene at midnight, which our Savior mentioned in the parable, and it will suit the present occasion. A certain man wanted some bread; a friend of his on a journey had come to his house and was very faint, and needed bread to eat. So off he went to his next door neighbor and rapped at his door, but no one came. He stood beneath the window and called out his friend's name. His friend answered from the top of the house, where he had been

lying asleep, “My wife and children are with me in bed, and I cannot rise and give thee.” But the man did not care about that. His poor friend wanted bread; so he called out aloud — “It is bread I want, and bread I must have!” I fancy I see the man lying and sleeping there. He says, “I shan’t get up; it is very cold to-night. How can you expect me to rise and go down stairs to get bread for you? I won’t; I can’t;’ I shan’t.” So he wraps himself very comfortably again and lays down to sleep once more. What does the man down below do? Oh! I hear him still. “Awake, sir! I must have it! I will have it! my friend is starving.” “Go home, you fellow! Don’t disturb me this time of night.” “I must have bread! why don’t you come and let me have it!” says the other; but the friend vexed and angry lies down again on his bed. Still at the door there comes a heavier and a heavier rap, and the man still shouts — “Bread, sir, bread! you will not sleep all night till you come down and give it me!” And verily I say unto you, though he will not rise and give it to him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as much as he needeth. “Arise, cry out in the night,” and God will hear you, if you cry out with all your souls, and pour out your hearts before him.

4. And now our last remark is — we cannot pray too simply. Just hear how the Psalmist has it: “pour out your hearts before him.” Not “pour out your fine words,” not “pour out your beautiful periods,” but “pour out your hearts.” “I dare not,” says one, “there is black stuff in my heart.” Out with it them: it is better out than in. “I cannot,” says another, “it would not run freely.” Pour it out sir; pour it all out — like water! Do you not notice something in this? Some men say — “I cannot pray as I could wish; my crying out is a feeble one.” Well, when you pour out water it does not make much noise. So you can pour out your heart prayer uttered in a garret that nobody has heard — but stop! Gabriel heard it; God himself heard it. There is many a cry down in a cellar, or up in a garret, or some lonely place where the cobbler sits mending his shoes beneath a window, which the world does not hear, but the Lord hears it. Pour out your heart like water. How does water run out? The quickest way it can; that’s all. It never stops much about how it runs. That is the way the Lord loves to have it. Some of your gentry offer prayers which are poured out drop after drop, and must be brought to a grand, ecclesiastical, prayer-book shape. Now, take your heart and pour it out like water. “What!” says one, “with

all the oaths in it?" Yes. "With all my old sins in it?" Yes. Pour out your heart like water; pour it out by confessing all your sins; pour it out by begging the Lord to have mercy upon you for Christ's sake; pour it out like water. And when it is all poured out, he will come and fill it again with "wines on the lees, well refined." "Arise, cry out in the night; in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord."

Thus do I speak to all who will acknowledge themselves to be sinners in the sight of God, but even these must have the assistance of the Holy Spirit to enable them to cry out, O my Lord, grant it.

And now, dear friends, may grace be given unto you, that ye may be able to pour out your hearts this night! Remember, my hearers, it may seem a light thing for us to assemble to-night at such an hour, but listen for one moment to the ticking of that clock! [Here the preacher paused, and amid solemn silence every one heard the clock with its tick, tick, tick.] It is the beating of the pulse of eternity. You hear the ticking of that clock! — it is the footstep of death pursuing you. Each time the clock ticks, death's footsteps are falling on the ground close behind you. You will soon enter another year. This year will have gone in a few seconds. 1855 is almost gone; where will the next year be spent, my friends? One has been spent on earth; where will you spend the next? "In heaven!" says one, "I trust." Another murmurs, "Perhaps I shall spend mine in hell!" Ah! solemn is the thought, but before that clock strikes 12, some here may be in hell; and blessed be the name of God! some of us may be in heaven! But O, do you know how to estimate your time, my hearers? do you know how to measure your days? Oh! I have not words to speak to-night. Do you know that every hour you are nearing the tomb? that every hour you are nearing judgment? that the archangel is flapping his wings every second of your life, and, trumpet at his mouth, is approaching you? that you do not live stationary lives, but always going on, on, on, towards the grave? Do you know where the stream of life is hastening some of you? To the rapids — to the rapids of woe and destruction! What shall the end of those be who obey not the gospel of God? Ye will not have so many years to live as ye had last year! See the man who has but a few shillings in his pocket, how he takes them out and spends them one by one! Now he has but a few coppers, and there is so much for that tiny candle, so much for that piece

of bread. He counts the articles out one by one; and so the money goes! You think there is no bottom to your pockets; you think you have a boundless store of time — but you have not! As the Lord liveth, there is a young man here that has not more than one year to live; and yet he is spending all that he is worth of time, in sin, in folly, and vice. Some of you have not that to live; and yet how are you spending your time! O take care! take care! time is precious! and whenever we have little of it, it is more precious; yea, it is most precious. May God help you to escape from hell and fly to heaven! I feel like the angel, to-night, who put his hand upon Lot, and cried — "Escape! look not behind thee! stay not in all the plain; flee to the mountain, lest thou be consumed!"

And now, I appreciate the power of silence. You will please to observe strict and solemn silence until the striking of that clock; and let each one spend the time as he pleases. [It was now two minutes to twelve, and profound silence reigned, save where sobs and groans could be distinctly heard from penitent lips seeking the Savior. The clock having struck, Mr Spurgeon continued:] You are now where you never were before; and you never will be again where you have been to-night.

Now we have had a solemn meeting, and let us have a cheerful ending of it. As we go away let us sing a sweet hymn to encourage our hearts.

[A hymn was then sung]

Now may the Lord bless you, and lift up the light of his countenance upon you, and give you peace! May you, during this year of grace; receive much grace; and may you proceed onwards towards heaven! And may we as a church, as members of churches, as ministers, as deacons, mutually strive together for the faith of Jesus, and be edified therein! And may the Lord save the ungodly! If the last year is clean gone and they are not yet pardoned and forgiven, let not another year roll away without their finding mercy!

The Lord dismiss you all with his sweet blessing, for his blessed Son's sake, Amen. And may the love of Jesus Christ, the grace of his Father, and the fellowship of his blessed Spirit be yours, my beloved, if ye know Christ, world without end. Amen.

Now, my friends, in the highest and best sense, I wish you all a happy new year.

SOVEREIGNTY AND SALVATION

SERMON NO. 60

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JANUARY 6, 1856,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."--Isaiah 45:22.

Six years ago to-day, as near as possible at this very hour of the day, I was "in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity," but had yet, by divine grace, been led to feel the bitterness of that bondage, and to cry out by reason of the soreness of its slavery. Seeking rest, and finding none, I stepped within the house of God, and sat there, afraid to look upward, lest I should be utterly cut off, and lest his fierce wrath should consume me. The minister rose in his pulpit, and, as I have done this morning, read this text, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." I looked that moment; the grace of faith was vouchsafed to me in the self-same instant; and now I think I can say with truth,

"Ere since by faith I saw the stream
His flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die."

I shall never forget that day, while memory holds its place; nor can I help repeating this text whenever I remember that hour when first I knew the Lord. How strangely gracious! How wonderfully and marvelously kind, that he who heard these words so little time ago for his own soul's profit, should now address you this morning as his hearers from the same text, in the full and confident hope that some poor sinner within these walls may hear the glad tidings of salvation for himself also, and may to-day, on this 6th of January, be "turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God!"

If it were within the range of human capacity to conceive a time when God dwelt alone, without his creatures, we should then have one of the grandest and most stupendous ideas of God. There was a season when as yet the sun had never run his race, nor commenced flinging his golden rays across space, to gladden the earth. There was an era when no stars sparkled in the firmament. for there was no sea of azure in which they might float. There was a time when all that we now behold of God's great universe was yet unborn, slumbering within the mind of God, as yet uncreate and no-existent; yet there was God, and he was "over all blessed for ever;" though no seraphs hymned his praises, though no strong-winged cherubs flashed like lightning to do his high behests, though he was without a retinue, yet he sat as a king on his throne, the mighty God, for ever to be worshipped — the Dread Supreme, in solemn silence dwelling by himself in vast immensity, making the placid clouds his canopy, and the light from his own countenance forming the brightness of his glory. God was, and God is. From the beginning God was God; ere worlds had beginning, he was "from everlasting to everlasting." Now, when it pleased him to create his creatures, does it not strike you how infinitely those creatures must have been below himself? If you are potters, and you fashion upon the wheel a vessel, shall that piece of clay arrogate to itself equality with you? Nay, at what a distance will it be from you, because you have been in part its creator. So where the Almighty formed his creatures, was it not consummate impudence, that they should venture for a moment to compare themselves with him? Yet that arch traitor, that leader of rebels, Satan, sought to climb to the high throne of God, soon to find his aim too high, and hell itself not low enough wherein to escape divine vengeance. He knows that God is "God alone." Since the world was created, man has imitated Satan; the creature of a day, the ephemera of an hour, has sought to match itself with the Eternal. Hence it has even been one of the objects of the great Jehovah, to teach mankind that he is God, and beside him there is none else. This is the lesson he has been teaching the world since it went astray from him. He has been busying himself in breaking down the high places, in exalting the valleys, in casting down imaginations and lofty looks, that all the world might

"Know that he Lord is God alone,
He can create, and he destroy."

This morning we shall attempt to show you, in the first place, how God has been teaching this great lesson to the world — that he is God, and beside him there is none else; and then, secondly, the special way in which he designs to teach it in the matter of salvation — "Look unto me, and be ye saved: for I am God, and there is none else."

I. First, then, HOW HAS GOD BEEN TEACHING THIS LESSON TO MANKIND?

We reply, he has taught it, first of all, to false gods, and to the idolaters who have bowed before them. Man, in his wickedness and sin, has set up a block of wood and stone to be his maker, and has bowed before it. He hath fashioned for himself out of a goodly tree an image made unto the likeness of mortal man, or of the fishes of the sea, or of creeping things of the earth, and he has prostrated his body, and his soul too, before that creature of his own hands, calling it a god, while it had neither eyes to see, nor hands to handle, nor ears to hear. But how hath God poured contempt on the ancient gods of the heathen? Where are they now? Are they so much as known? Where are those false deities before whom the multitudes of Ninevah prostrated themselves? Ask the moles and the bats, whose companions they are; or ask the mounds beneath which they are buried; or go where the idle gazer walketh through the museum — see them there as curiosities, and smile to think that men should ever bow before such gods as these. and where are the gods of Persia? Where are they? The fires are quenched, and the fire-worshipper hath almost ceased out of the earth. Where are the gods of Greece — those gods adorned with poetry, and hymned in the most sublime odes? Where are they? They are gone. Who talks of them now, but as things that were of yore? Jupiter — doth any one bow before him? And who is he that adores Saturn? They are passed away, and they are forgotten. And where are the gods of Rome? Doth Janus now command the temple? or do the vestal virgins now feed their perpetual fires? Are there any now that bow before these gods? No, they have lost their thrones. And where are the gods of the South Sea Islands — those bloody demons before whom wretched creatures prostrated their bodies? They have well-nigh become extinct. Ask the inhabitants of China and Polynesia where are the gods before which they bowed? Ask, and echo says ask, and ask again. They are cast down from their thrones; they are hurled from their pedestals; their chariots are broken, their scepters are

burnt in the fire, their glories are departed; God hath gotten unto himself the victory over false gods, and taught their worshippers that he is God, and that beside him there is none else. Are their gods still worshipped, or idols before which the nations bow themselves? Wait but a little while, and ye shall see them fall. Cruel Juggernaut, whose car still crushes in its motion the foolish ones who throw themselves before it shall yet be the object of derision; and the most noted idols, such as Buddha, and Brahma, and Vishnu, shall yet stoop themselves to the earth, and men shall tread them down as mire in the streets; for God will teach all men that he is God, and that there is none else.

Mark ye, yet again, how God has taught this truth to empires. Empires have risen up, and have been gods of the era; their kings and princes have taken to themselves high titles, and have been worshipped by the multitude. But ask the empires whether there is any beside God? Do you not think you hear the boasting soliloquy of Babylon — "I sit as a queen, and am no widow; I shall see no sorrow; I am god, and there is none beside me?" And think ye not now, if ye walk over ruined Babylon, that ye will meet aught save the solemn spirit of the Bible, standing like a prophet gray with age, and telling you that there is one God, and that beside him there is none else? Go ye to Babylon, covered with its sand, the sand of its own ruins; stand ye on the mounds of Nineveh, and let the voice come up — "There is one God, and empires sink before him; there is only one Potentate, and the princes and kings of the earth, with their dynasties and thrones, are shaken by the trampling of his foot." Go, seat yourselves in the temples of Greece; mark ye there what proud words Alexander once did speak; but now, where is he, and where his empire too? Sit on the ruined arches of the bridge of Carthage, or walk ye through the desolated theatres of Rome, and ye will hear a voice in the wild wind amid those ruins — "I am God, and there is none else." "O city, though didst call thyself eternal; I have made thee melt away like dew. Though saidst 'I sit on seven hills, and I shall last forever; ' I have made thee crumble, and thou art now a miserable and contemptible place, compared with what thou wast. Thou wast once stone, thou madest thyself; I have made thee stone again, and brought thee low." O! how has God taught monarchies and empires that have set themselves up like new kingdoms of heaven. that he is God, and that there is none else!

Again: how has he taught his great truth to monarchs! There are some who have been most proud that have had to learn it in a way more hard than others. Take, for instance, Nebuchadnezzar. His crown is on his head, his purple robe is over his shoulders; he walks through proud Babylon, and says, “Is not this great Babylon which I have builded?” Do you see that creature in the field there? It is a man. “A man?” say you; its hair has grown like eagles’ feathers, and its nails like birds’ claws; it walketh on all-fours, and eateth grass, like an ox; it is driven out from men. That is the monarch who said — ”Is not this great Babylon that I have builded?” And he is now restored to Babylon’s palace, that he may “bless the Most High who is able to abase those that walk in pride.” Remember another monarch. Look at Herod. He sits in the midst of his people, and he speaks. Hear ye the impious shout? “It is the voice of God,” they cry, “and not the voice of man.” The proud monarch gives not God the glory; he affects the God, and seems to shake the spheres, imagining himself divine. There is a worm that creepeth into his body, and yet another, and another; and ere that sun has set, he is eaten up of worms. Ah! monarch! though thoughtest of being a god, and worms have eaten thee! thou hast thought of being more than man; and what art thou? Less than man, for worms consume thee, and thou art the prey of corruption. Thus God humbleth the proud; thus he abaseth the mighty. We might give you instances from modern history; but the death of a king is all-sufficient to teach this one lesson, if men would but learn it. When kings die, and in funeral pomp are carried to the grave, we are taught the lesson — ”I am God, and beside me there is none else.” When we hear of revolutions, and the shaking of empires — when we see old dynasties tremble, and gray-haired monarchs driven from their thrones, then it is that Jehovah seems to put his foot upon land and sea, and with his hand uplifted cries — ”Hear! ye inhabitants of the earth! Ye are but as grasshoppers; ‘I am God, and beside me there is none else.’“

Again: our God has had much to do to teach this lesson to the wise men of this world; for as rank, pomp, and power, have set themselves up in the place of God, so has wisdom; and one of the greatest enemies of Deity has always been the wisdom of man. The wisdom of man will not see God. Professing themselves to be wise, wise men have become fools. But have ye not noticed, in reading history, how God has abased the pride of

wisdom? In ages long gone by, he sent mighty minds into the world, who devised systems of philosophy. “These systems,” they said, “will last forever.” There pupils thought them infallible, and therefore wrote their sayings on enduring parchment, saying, “This book will last forever; succeeding generations of men will read it, and to the last man that book shall be handed down, as the epitome of wisdom.” “Ah! but,” said God, “that book of yours shall be seen to be folly, ere another hundred years have rolled away.” And so the mighty thoughts of Socrates, and the wisdom of Solon, are utterly forgotten now; and could we hear them speak, the veriest child in our schools would laugh to think that he understandeth more of philosophy than they. But when man has found the vanity of one system, his eyes have sparkled at another; if Aristotle will not suffice, here is Bacon; now I shall know everything; and he sets to work and says that this new philosophy is to last forever. He lays his stones with fair colors, and he thinks that every truth he piles up is a precious imperishable truth. But, alas! another century comes, and it is found to be “wood, hay, and stubble.” A new sect of philosophers rise up, who refute their predecessors. So too, we have wise men in this day — wise secularists, and so on, who fancy they have obtained the truth; but within another fifty years — and mark that word — this hair shall not be silvered over with gray, until the last of that race shall have perished, and that man shall be thought a fool that was ever connected with such a race. Systems of infidelity pass away like a dew-drop before the sun, for God says, “I am God, and beside me there is none else.” This Bible is the stone that shall break in powder philosophy; this is the mighty battering ram that shall dash all systems of philosophy in pieces; this is the stone that a woman may yet hurl upon the head of every Abimelech, and he shall be utterly destroyed. O church of God! fear not; thou shalt do wonders; wise men shall be confounded, and thou shalt know, and they too, that he is God, and that beside him there is none else.

“Surely,” says one, “the Church of God does not need to be taught this.” Yes, we answer, she does; for of all beings, those whom God has made the objects of his grace are perhaps the most apt to forget this cardinal truth, that he is God, and that beside him there is none else. How did the church in Canaan forget it, when they bowed before other gods, and therefore he brought against them mighty kings and princes, and afflicted them sore.

How did Israel forget it; and he carried them away captive into Babylon. And what Israel did, in Canaan and in Babylon, that we do now. We too, too often, forget that he is God, and beside him there is none else. Doth not the Christian know what I mean, when I tell him this great fact? For hath he not done it himself? In certain times prosperity has come upon him; soft gales have blown his bark along, just where his wild will wished to steer; and he has said within himself: "Now I have peace, now I have happiness, now the object I wished for is within my grasp, now I will say, 'Sit down, my soul, and take thy rest; eat, drink, and be merry; these things will well content me; make thou these thy god, be thou blessed and happy.'" But have we not seen our God dash the goblet to the earth, spill the sweet wine, and instead thereof fill it with gall? and as he has given it to us, he has said — "Drink it, drink it: ye have thought to find a god on earth, but drain the cup and know its bitterness." When we have drunk it, nauseous the draft was, and we have cried, "Ah! God, I will drink no more of these things; thou art God, and beside thee there is none else." And ah! how often, too, have we devised schemes for the future, without asking God's permission! Men have said, like those foolish ones James mentioned, "We will do such-and-such things on the morrow; we will buy and sell and get gain." whereas they knew not what was to be on the morrow,, for long ere the morrow came they were unable to buy and sell; death had claimed them, and a small span of earth held all their frame. God teaches his people every day, by sickness, by affliction, by depression of spirits, by the forsakings of God, by the loss of the Spirit for a season, by the lackings of the joys of his countenance, that he is God, and that beside him there is none else. And we must not forget that there are some special servants of God raised up to do good works, who in a peculiar manner have to learn this lesson. Let a man, for instance, be called to the great work of preaching the gospel. He is successful; God helped him; thousands wait at his feet, and multitudes hang upon his lips; as truly as that man is a man, he will have a tendency to be exalted above measure, and too much will he begin to look to himself, and too little to his God. Let men speak who know, and what they know let them speak; and they will say, "It is true, it is most true." If God gives us a special mission, we generally begin to take some honor and glory to ourselves. But in review of the eminent saints of God, have you never observed how God has made them feel that he was God, and beside him there was none else? Poor Paul might have

thought himself a god, and been puffed up above measure, by reason of the greatness of his revelation, had not there been a thorn in the flesh. But Paul could feel that he was not a god, for he had a thorn in the flesh, and gods could not have thorns in the flesh. Sometimes God teaches the minister, by denying him help on special occasions. We come up into our pulpits and say, "oh! I wish I could have a good day to-day!" We begin to labor; we have been just as earnest in prayer, and just as indefatigable; but it is like a blind horse turning round a mill, or like Samson with Delilah: we shake our vain limbs with vast surprise, "make feeble fight," and win no victories. We are made to see that the Lord is God, and that beside him there is none else. Very frequently God teaches this to the minister, leading him to see his own sinful nature. He will have such an insight into his own wicked and abominable heart, that he will feel as he comes up the pulpit stairs that he does not deserve so much as to sit in his pew, much less to preach to his fellows. Although we feel always joy in the declaration of God's Word, yet we have known what it is to totter on the pulpit steps, under a sense that the chief of sinners should scarcely be allowed to preach to others. Ah! beloved, I do not think he will be very successful as a minister who is not taken into the depths and blackness of his own soul, and made to exclaim, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." There is another antidote which God applies in the case of ministers. If he does not deal with them personally, he raises up a host of enemies, that it may be seen that he is God, and God alone. An esteemed friend sent me, yesterday, a valuable old Ms. of one of George Whitefield's hymns which was sung on Kennington Common. It is a splendid hymn, thoroughly Whitefieldian all through. It showed that his reliance was wholly on the Lord, and that God was within him. What! will a man subject himself to the calumnies of the multitude, will he toil and work day after day unnecessarily, will he stand up Sabbath after Sabbath and preach the gospel and have his name maligned and slandered, if he has not the grace of God in him? For myself, I can say, that were it not that the love of Christ constrained me, this hour might be the last that I should preach, so far as the ease of the thing is concerned. "Necessity is laid upon us; yea, woe is unto us if we preach not the gospel." But that opposition through which God carries his servants, leads them to see at once that he is God, and that there is none else. If every one applauded, if all were

gratified, we should think ourselves God; but, when they hiss and hoot, we turn to our God, and cry,

"If on my face, for thy dear name,
Shame and reproach should be,
I'll hail reproach and welcome shame,
If thou'lt remember me."

II. This brings us to the second portion of our discourse. Salvation is God's greatest work; and, therefore, in his greatest work, he specially teaches us this lesson, That he is God, and that beside him there is none else. Our text tells us how he teaches it. He says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." He shows us that he is God, and that beside him there is none else, in three ways. First, by the person to whom he directs us: "look unto me, and be ye saved." Secondly, by the means he tells us to use to obtain mercy: "Look," simply, "Look." And thirdly, by the persons whom he calls to "look:" "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."

1. First, to whom does God tell us to look for salvation? O, does it not lower the pride of man, when we hear the Lord say, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth?" It is not. "Look to your priest, and be ye saved:" if you did, there would be another god, and beside him there would be some one else. It is not "Look to yourself;" if so, then there would be a being who might arrogate some of the praise of salvation. But it is "Look unto me." How frequently you who are coming to Christ look to yourselves. "O!" you say, "I do not repent enough." That is looking to yourself. "I do not believe enough." That is looking to yourself. "I am too unworthy." That is looking to yourself. "I cannot discover," says another, "that I have any righteousness." It is quite right to say that you have not any righteousness; but it is quite wrong to look for any. It is, "Look unto me." God will have you turn your eye off yourself and look unto him. The hardest thing in the world is to turn a man's eye off himself; as long as he lives, he always has a predilection to turn his eyes inside, and look at himself; whereas God says, "Look unto me." From the cross of Calvary, where the bleeding hands of Jesus drop mercy; from the Garden of Gethsemane, where the bleeding pores of the Savior sweat pardons, the cry comes, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." From Calvary's summit, where Jesus cries, "It is finished," I hear a shout,

"Look, and be saved." But there comes a vile cry from our soul, "Nay, look to yourself! look to yourself!" Ah, my hearer, look to yourself, and you will be damned. That certainly will come of it. As long as you look to yourself there is no hope for you. It is not a consideration of what you are, but a consideration of what God is, and what Christ is, that can save you. It is looking from yourself to Jesus. P! there be men that quite misunderstand the gospel; they think that righteousness qualifies them to come to Christ; whereas sin is the only qualification for a man to come to Jesus. Good old Crisp says, "Righteousness keeps me from Christ: the whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. Sin makes me come to Jesus, when sin is felt; and, in coming to Christ, the more sin I have the more cause I have to hope for mercy." David said, and it was a strange thing, too, "Have mercy upon me, for mine iniquity is great." But, David, why did not you say that it was little? Because, David knew that the bigger his sins were, the better reason for asking mercy. The more vile a man is, the more eagerly I invite him to believe in Jesus. A sense of sin is all we have to look for as ministers. We preach to sinners; and let us know that a man will take the title of sinner to himself, and we then say to him, "Look unto Christ, and ye shall be saved." "Look," this is all he demands of thee, and even this he gives thee. If thou lookest to thyself thou art damned; thou art a vile miscreant, filled with loathsomeness, corrupt and corrupting others. But look thou here — seest thou that man hanging on the cross? Dost thou behold his agonized head dropping meekly down upon his breast? Dost thou see that thorny crown, causing drops of blood to trickle down his cheeks? Dost thou see his hands pierced and rent, and his blest feet, supporting the weight of his own frame, rent well-nigh in twain with the cruel nails? Sinner! dost thou hear him shriek, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabbacthani?" Dost thou hear him cry, "It is finished?" Dost thou mark his head hang down in death? Seest thou that side pierced with the spear, and the body taken from the cross? O, come thou hither! Those hands were nailed for thee; those feet gushed gore for thee; that side was opened wide for thee; and if thou wantest to know how thou canst find mercy, there it is. "Look!" "Look unto me!" Look no longer to Moses. Look no longer to Sinai. Come thou here and look to Calvary, to Calvary's victim, and to Joseph's grave. And look thou yonder, to the man who near the throne sites with his Father, crowned with light and immortality. "Look, sinner," he says, this morning, to you, "Look unto me, and be ye

saved." It is in this way God teaches that there is none beside him; because he makes us look entirely to him, and utterly away from ourselves.

2. But the second thought is, the means of salvation. It is, "Look unto me, and be ye saved." You have often observed, I am sure, that many people are fond of an intricate worship, and involved religion, one they can hardly understand. They cannot endure worship so simple as ours. Then they must have a man dressed in white, and a man dressed in black; then they must have what they call an altar and a chancel. After a little while that will not suffice, and they must have flower-pots and candles. The clergyman then becomes a priest, and he must have a variegated dress, with a cross on it. So it goes on; what is simply a plate becomes a paten, and what was once a cup becomes a chalice; and the more complicated the ceremonies are, the better they like them. They like their minister to stand like a superior being. The world likes a religion they cannot comprehend. But have you never noticed how gloriously simple the Bible is? It will not have any of your nonsense; it speaks plain, and nothing but plain things. "Look!" There is not an unconverted man who likes this, "Look unto Christ, and be ye saved." No, he comes to Christ like Naaman to Elijah; and , when it is said, "Go, wash in Jordan," he replies, "I verily thought he would come and put his hand on the place, and call on the name of his God. But the idea of telling me to wash in Jordan, what a ridiculous thing! Anybody could do that!" If the prophet had bidden him to do some great thing, would he not have done it? Ah! certainly he would. And if, this morning, I could preach that any one who walked from here to Bath without his shoes and stockings, or did some impossible thing, should be saved, you would start off tomorrow morning before breakfast. If it would take me seven years to describe the way of salvation, I am sure you would all long to hear it. If only one learned doctor could tell the way to heaven, how would he be run after! And if it were in hard words, with a few scraps of Latin and Greek, it would be all the better. But it is a simple gospel that we have to preach. It is only "Look!" "Ah!" you say, "Is that the gospel? I shall not pay any attention to that." But why has God ordered you to do such a simple thing? Just to take down your pride, and to show you that he is God, and that beside him there is none else. O, mark how simple the way of salvation is. It is "Look! look! look!" Four letters, and two of them alike! "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." Some

divines want a week to tell what you are to do to be saved; but God the Holy Ghost only wants four letters to do it. “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.” How simple is that way of salvation! and O, how instantaneous! It takes us some time to move our hand, buy a look does not require a moment. So a sinner believes in a moment; and the moment that sinner believes and trusts in his crucified God for pardon, at once he receives salvation in full through his blood. There may be one that came in here this morning unjustified in his conscience, that will go out justified rather than others. There may be some here, filthy sinners one moment, pardoned the next. It is done in an instant. “Look! look! look!” And how universal it is! Because, wherever I am, however far off, it just says, “Look!” It does not say I am to see; it only says, “Look!” If we look on a thing in the dark, we cannot see it; but we have done what we were told. So, if a sinner only looks to Jesus he will save him; for Jesus in the dark is as good as Jesus in the light; and Jesus, when you cannot see him, is as good as Jesus when you can. It is only, “Look!” “Ah! says one, “I have been trying to see Jesus this year, but I have not seen him.” It does not say, see him, but “Look unto him.” And it says that they who looked were enlightened. If there is an obstacle before you, and you only look in the right direction, it is sufficient. “Look unto me.” It is not seeing Christ so much as looking after him. The will after Christ, the wish after Christ, the desire after Christ, the trusting in Christ, the hanging on Christ, that is what is wanted. “Look! look! look!” Ah! if the man bitten by the serpent had turned his sightless eyeballs towards the brazen serpent, though he had not seen it, he would still have had his life restored. It is looking, not seeing, that saves the sinner.

We say again, how this humbles a man! There is a gentleman who says, “Well, if it had been a thousand pounds that would have saved me, I would have thought nothing of it.” But gold and silver is cankered; it is good for nothing. “Then, am I to be saved just the same as my servant Betty?” Yes, just the same; there is no other way of salvation for you. That is to show man that Jehovah is God, and that beside him there is none else. The wise man says, “If it had been to work the most wonderful problem, or to solve the greatest mystery, I would have done it. May I not have some mysterious gospel? May I not believe in some mysterious religion?” No; it is “Look!” “What! am I to be saved just like that Ragged School Boy, who

can't read his letters?" Yes, you must, or you will not be saved at all. Another says, "I have been very moral and upright; I have observed all the laws of the land; and, if there is anything else to do, I will do it. I will eat only fish on Fridays, and keep all the fasts of the church, if that will save me." No, sir, that will not save you; your good works are good for nothing. "What! must I be saved in the same way as a harlot or a drunkard?" Yes, sir; there is only one way of salvation for all. "He hath concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." He hath passed a sentence of condemnation on all, that the free grace of God might come upon many to salvation. "Look! look! look!" This is the simple method of salvation. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."

But, lastly, mark how God has cut down the pride of man, and has exalted himself by the persons whom he has called to look. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." When the Jew heard Isaiah say that, "Ah!" he exclaimed, "you ought to have said, 'Look unto me, O Jerusalem, and be saved.' That would have been right. But those Gentile dogs, are they to look and be saved?" "Yes," says God; "I will show you Jews, that, though I have given you many privileges, I will exalt others above you; I can do as I will with my own."

Now, who are the ends of the earth? Why, there are poor heathen nations now that are very few degrees removed from brutes, uncivilized and untaught; but if I might go and tread the desert, and find the Bushman in his kraal, or go to the South Seas and find a cannibal, I would say to the cannibal or the Bushman, "Look unto Jesus, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." They are some of "the ends of the earth," and the gospel is sent to as much to them as to the polite Grecians, the refined Romans, or the educated Britons. But I think "the ends of the earth" imply those who have gone the farthest away from Christ. I say, drunkard, that means you. You have been staggering back. till you have got right to the ends of the earth; you have almost had delirium tremens; you cannot be much worse. There is not a man breathing worse than you. Is there? Ah! but God, in order to humble your pride, says to you, "Look unto me, and be ye saved." There is another who has lived a life of infamy and sin, until she has ruined herself, and even Satan seems to sweep her out at the back door; but God says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." Methinks I see one trembling here, and saying, "Ah, I have not been one of

these, sir, but I have been something worse; for I have attended the house of God, and I have stifled convictions, and put off all thoughts of Jesus, and now I think he will never have mercy on me." You are one of them. "Ends of the earth!" So long as I find any who feel like that, I can tell them that they are "the ends of the earth." "But," says another, "I am so peculiar; if I did not feel as I do, it would be all very well; but I feel that my case is a peculiar one." That is all right; they are a peculiar people. You will do. But another one says, "There is nobody in the world like me; I do not think you will find a being under the sun that has had so many calls, and put them all away, and so many sins on his head. Besides, I have guilt that I should not like to confess to any living creature." One of "the ends of the earth" again; therefore, all I have to do is to cry out, in the Master's name, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." But thou sayest, sin will not let thee look. I tell thee, sin will be removed the moment thou dost look. "But I dare not; he will condemn me; I fear to look." He will condemn thee more if thou dost not look. Fear, then, and look; but do not let thy fearing keep thee from looking. "But he will cast me out." Try him. "But I cannot see him." I tell you, it is not seeing, but looking. "But my eyes are so fixed on the earth, so earthly, so worldly." Ah! but, poor soul, he giveth power to look and live. He saith, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."

Take this, dear friends, for a new year's text, both ye who love the Lord, and ye who are only looking for the first time. Christian! in all thy troubles through this year, look unto God and be saved. In all thy trials and afflictions, look unto Christ, and find deliverance. In all thine agony, poor soul, in all thy repentance for thy guilt, look unto Christ, and find pardon. This year, remember to put thine eyes heavenward, and thine heart heavenward, too. Remember, this day, that thou bind round thyself a golden chain, and put one link of it in the staple of heaven. Look unto Christ; fear not. There is no stumbling when a man walks with his eyes up to Jesus. He that looked at the stars fell into the ditch; but he that looks at Christ walks safely. Keep your eyes up all the year long. "Look unto him, and be ye saved;" and remember that "he is God, and beside him there is none else." And thou, poor trembler, what sayest thou? Wilt thou begin the year by looking unto him? You know how sinful you are this morning;

you know how filthy you are; and yet it is possible that, before you open your pew door, and get into the aisle, you will be as justified as the apostles before the throne of God. It is possible that, ere you foot treads the threshold of your door, you will have lost the burden that has been on your back, and you will go on your way, singing, “I am forgiven, I am forgiven; I am a miracle of grace; this day is my spiritual birthday.” O, that it might be such to many of you, that at last I might say, “Here am I, and the children thou hast given me.” Hear this, convinced sinner! “This poor man cried, and the Lord delivered him out of his distresses.” O, taste and see that the Lord is good! Now believe on him; now cast thy guilty soul upon his righteousness; now plunge thy black soul into the bath of his blood; now put thy naked soul at the door of the wardrobe of his righteousness; now seat thy famished soul at the feast of plenty. Now, “Look!” How simple does it seem! And yet it is the hardest thing in the world to bring men to. They never will do it, till constraining grace makes them. Yet there it is, “Look!” Go thou away with that thought. “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.”

THE BEATIFIC VISION

SERMON NO. 61-62

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JANUARY 20, 1856,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"We shall see him as he is." — 1 John 3:2.

It is one of the most natural desires in all the world, that when we hear of a great and a good man, we should wish to see his person. When we read the works of any eminent author, we are accustomed to turn to the frontispiece to look for his portrait. When we hear of any wondrous deed of daring, we will crowd our windows to see the warrior ride through the streets. When we know of any man who is holy, and who is eminently devoted to his work, we will not mind tarrying anywhere, if we may but have a glimpse of him whom God has so highly blessed. This feeling becomes doubly powerful when we have any connection with the man; when we feel, not only that he is good to us; not only that he is benevolent, but that he has been a benefactor to us as individuals. Then the wish to see him rises to a craving desire, and the desire is insatiable until it can satisfy itself in seeing that unknown, and hitherto unseen donor, who has done such wondrously good deeds for us. I am sure, my brethren, you will all confess that this strong desire has arisen in your minds concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. We owe to none so much; we talk of none so much, we hope, and we think of none so much: at any rate, no one so constantly thinks of us. We have I believe, all of us who love his name, a most insatiable wish to behold his person. The thing for which I would pray above all others, would be for ever to behold his face, for ever to lay my head upon his breast, for ever to know that I am his, for ever to dwell with him. Ay, one short glimpse, one transitory vision of his glory, one brief glance at his marred, but now exalted and beaming countenance, would repay almost a world of trouble. We have a strong desire to see him. Nor do I think that that desire is wrong. Moses himself asked that he might see

God. Had it been a wrong wish arising out of vain curiosity, it would not have been granted, but God granted Moses his desire: he put him in the cleft of the rock, shaded him with his hands, bade him look at the skirts of his garments, because his face could not be seen. Yea, more; the earnest desire of the very best of men has been in the same direction. Job said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and though worms devour this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:" that was his desire. The holy Psalmist said, "I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness;" "I shall behold thy face in righteousness." And most saints on their death-beds have expressed their fondest, dearest, and most blessed wish for heaven, in the expression of longing "to be with Christ, which is far better." And not ill did our sweet singer of Israel put the words together, when he humbly said, and sweetly too: —

"Millions of years my wondering eyes
Shall o'er thy beauties rove;
And endless ages I'll adore
The glories of thy love."

We are rejoiced to find such a verse as this, for it tells us that our curiosity shall be satisfied, our desire consummated, our bliss perfected. "WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS." Heaven shall be ours, and all we ever dreamed of him shall be more than in our possession.

By the help of God's mighty Spirit, who alone can put words in our mouths, let us speak first of all concerning the glorious position — "AS HE IS;" secondly, his personal identity — "we shall see HIM as he is;" thirdly, the positive vision — "WE SHALL SEE him as he is;" and fourthly, the actual persons — "WE shall see him as he is."

I. First then, THE GLORIOUS POSITION. Our minds often revert to Christ as he was, and as such we have desired to see him. Ah! how often have we wished to see the babe that slept in Bethlehem! How earnestly have we desired to see the man who talked with the woman at the well! How frequently have we wished that we might see the blessed Physician walking amongst the sick and dying, giving life with his touch, and healing with his breath! How frequently too have our thoughts retired to Gethsemane, and we have wished our eyes were strong enough to pierce through eighteen hundred and fifty years which part us from that

wondrous spectacle, that we might see him as he was! We shall never see him thus; Bethlehem's glories are gone for ever; Calvary's glooms are swept away; Gethsemane's scene is dissolved; and even Tabor's splendours are quenched in the past. They are as things that were; sponge, the nails — these are not. The manger and the rocky tomb are gone. The places are there, unsanctified by Christian feet, unblessed, unhallowed by the presence of their Lord. We shall never see him as he was. In vain our fancy tries to paint it, or our imagination to fashion it. We cannot, must not, see him as he was; nor do we wish, for we have a larger promise, "We shall see him as he is." Come, just look at that a few moments by way of contrast, and then I am sure you will prefer to see Christ as he is, rather than behold him as he was.

Consider, first of all, that we shall not see him abased in his incarnation, but exalted in his glory. We are not to see the infant of a span long; we are not to admire the youthful boy; we are not to address the incipient man; we are not to pity the man wiping the hot sweat from his burning brow; we are not to behold him shivering in the midnight air; we are not to behold him subject to pains, and weaknesses, and sorrows, and infirmities like ours. We are not to see the eye wearied by sleep; we are not to behold hands tired in labor; we are not to behold feet bleeding with arduous journeys, too long for their strength. We are not to see him with his soul distressed; we are not to behold him abased and sorrowful. Oh! the sight is better still. We are to see him exalted. We shall see the head, but not with its thorny crown.

"The head that once was crowned with thorns,
Is crown'd with glory now."

We shall see the hand, and the nail-prints too, but not the nail; it has been once drawn out, and for ever. We shall see his side, and its pierced wound too, but the blood shall not issue from it. We shall see him not with a peasant's garb around him, but with the empire of the universe upon his shoulders. We shall see him, not with a reed in his hand, but grasping a golden scepter. We shall see him, not as mocked and spit upon and insulted, not bone of our bone, in all our agonies, afflictions, and distresses; but we shall see him exalted; no longer Christ the man of sorrows, the acquaintance of grief, but Christ the Man-God, radiant with splendor, effulgent with light, clothed with rainbows, girded with clouds, wrapped in

lightnings, crowned with stars, the sun beneath his feet. Oh! glorious vision! How can we guess what he is? What words can tell us? or how can we speak thereof? Yet whate'er he is, with all his splendor unveiled, all his glories unclouded, and himself unclothed — we shall see him as he is.

Remember again: we are not to see Christ as he was, the despised, the tempted one. We shall never see Christ sitting in the wilderness, while the arch-traitor says to him, "If thou be the Son of God command that these stones be made bread." We shall not see him standing firmly on the temple's pinnacle, bidding defiance to the evil one who bids him cast himself down from his towering height. We shall not see him erect on the mountain of temptation, with the earth offered to him if he will but crouch at the feet of the demon. Nay; nor shall we see him mocked by Pharisees, tempted by Sadducees, laughed at by Herodians. We shall not behold him with the finger of scorn pointed at him. We shall never see him called a "drunken man, and a wine-bibber." We shall never see the calumniated, the insulted, the molested, the despised Jesus. He will not be seen as one from whom we shall hide our faces, who "was despised, and we esteemed him not." Never shall these eyes see those blessed cheeks dripping with the spittle; never shall these hands touch that blessed hand of his while stained with infamy. We shall not see him despised of men and oppressed; but "we shall see him as he is."

"No more the bloody spear,
The cross and nails no more;
For hell itself shakes at his name,
And all the heavens adore."

No tempting devil near him; for the dragon is beneath his feet. No insulting men; for lo! the redeemed cast their crowns before his feet. no molesting demons; for angels sound his lofty praise through every golden street; princes bow before him; the kings of the isles bring tribute; all nations pay him homage, while the great God of heaven and earth shining on him, gives him mighty honor. We shall see him, beloved, not abhorred, not despised and rejected, but worshipped, honored, crowned, exalted, served by flaming spirits, and worshipped by cherubim and seraphim. "We shall see him as he is."

Mark again. We shall not see the Christ wrestling with pain, but Christ as a conqueror. We shall never see him tread the winepress alone, but we shall

see him when we shall cry, “Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?” We shall never see him as when he stood foot to foot with his enemy: but we shall see him when his enemy is beneath his feet. We shall never see him as the bloody sweat streams from his whole body; but we shall see him as he hath put all things under him, and hath conquered hell itself. We shall never see him as the wrestler; but we shall see him grasp the prize. We shall never see him sealing the rampart; but we shall see him wave the sword of victory on the top thereof. We shall not see him fight; but we shall see him return from the fight victorious, and shall cry, “Crown him! Crown him! Crowns become the victor’s brow.” “We shall see him as he is.”

Yet again. We shall never see our Savior under his Father’s displeasure; but we shall see him honored by his Father’s smile. The darkest hour of Christ’s life was when his Father forsook him — that gloomy hour when his Father’s remorseless hand held the cup to his Son’s own lips, and bitter though it was said to him, “Drink my Son — ay, drink;” and when the quivering Savior, for a moment, having man within him — strong in its agonies for the moment, said, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” Oh! it was a dark moment when the Father’s ears were deaf to his Son’s petitions, when the Father’s eyes were closed upon his Son’s agonies. “My Father,” said the Son, “Canst thou not remove the cup? Is there no way else for thy severe justice? Is there no other medium for man’s salvation?” There is none! Ah! it was a terrible moment when he tasted the wormwood and the gall; and surely darker still was that sad mid-day-midnight, when the sun hid his face in darkness while Jesus cried “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Believer, thou wilt never see that sick face; thou wilt never see those tearful eyes; thou wilt never see that pale emaciated body; thou wilt never see that weary, weary heart! thou wilt never see that exceedingly sorrowful spirit; for the Father never turns his face away now. But what wilt thou see? Thou wilt see thy Lord lit up with his Father’s light as well as with his own; thou wilt see him caressed by his beloved Parent; thou wilt see him sitting at his Father’s right hand, glorified and exalted for ever. “We shall see him as he is.”

Perhaps I have not shown clearly enough the difference between the two visions — the sight of what he was and what he is. Allow me then, a

moment more, and I will try and make it clearer still. When we see Christ as he was how astonished we are! One of the first feelings we should have, if we could have gone to the Mount of Olives and seen our Savior sweating there, would have been, astonishment. When we were told that it was the Son of God in agonies, we should have lifted up our hands, and there would have been no speech in us at the thought. But then, beloved, here is the difference. The believer will be as much astonished when he sees Jesus' glories as he sits on his throne, as he would have been to have seen him in his earthly sufferings. The one would have been astonishment, and horror would have succeeded it; but when we see Jesus as he is, it will be astonishment without horror. We shall not for one moment feel terrified at the sight, but rather

"Our joys shall run eternal rounds,
Beyond the limits of the skies.
And earth's remotest bounds."

If we could see Jesus as he was, we should see him with great awe. If we had seen him walking on the water, what awe should we have felt! If we had seen him raising the dead, we should have thought him a most majestic Being. So we shall feel awe when we see Christ on his throne; but the first kind of awe is awe compounded with fear, for when they saw Jesus walking on the water they cried out and were afraid; but when we shall see Christ as he is, we shall say,

"Majestic sweetness sits enthroned
Upon his awful brow."

There will be no fear with the awe — but it will be awe without fear. We shall not bow before him with trembling, but it will be with joy; we shall not shake at his presence, but rejoice with joy unspeakable.

Furthermore, if we had seen Christ as he was, we should have had great love for him; but that love would have been compounded with pity. We should stand over him, and say,

"Alas! and did my Savior bleed,
And did my Sovereign die?
Would he devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?"

We shall love him quite as much when we see him in heaven, and more too, but it will be love without pity; we shall not say "Alas!" but we shall shout —

"All-hail, the power of Jesu's name;
Let angels prostrate fall:
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown him Lord of all."

Once again. If we had seen Jesus Christ as he was here below, there would have been joy to think that he came to save us; but we should have had sorrow mingled with it to think that we needed saving>/I>. Our sins would make us grieve that he should die; and "alas!" would burst from us even with a song of joy. But when we see him, there it will be joy without sorrow; sin and sorrow itself will have gone; ours will be a pure, unmingled, unadulterated joy.

Yet more. If we had seen our Savior as he was, it would have been a triumph to see how he conquered, but still there would have been suspense about it. We should have feared lest he might not overcome. But when we see him up there it will be triumph without suspense. Sheathe the sword; the battle's won. 'Tis over now. " "Tis finished," has been said. The grave has been past; the gates have been opened; and now, henceforth, and for ever, he sitteth down at his Father's right hand, from whence also he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

Here, then, is the difference. "We shall see him as he is." We shall feel astonishment without horror, awe without fear, love without pity, joy without sorrow, triumph without suspense. That is the glorious position. Poor words, why fail ye? Poor lips, why speak ye not much better? If ye could, ye would; for these are glorious things ye speak of. "WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS."

II. Now secondly, we have PERSONAL IDENTITY. Perhaps while I have been speaking, some have said, "Ah! but I want to see the Savior, the Savior of Calvary, the Savior of Judea, the very one that died for me. I do not so much pant to see the glorious Savior you have spoken of; I want to see that very Savior who did the works of love, the suffering Savior; for him I love." Beloved, you shall see him. It is the same one. There is personal identity. "We shall see him." "Our eyes shall see him and not

another." "We shall see HIM as he is." It is a charming thought that we shall see the very, very Christ; and the poet sung well, who said —

"Oh! how the thought that I shall know
The man that suffered here below,
To manifest his favor,
For me, and those whom most I love,
Or here, or with himself above,
Does my delighted passion move,
At that sweet word "for ever."
For ever to behold him shine,
For evermore to call him mine,
And see him still before me.
For ever on his face to gaze,
And meet his full assembled rays,
While all the Father he displays,
To all the saints for ever."

That is what we want — to see the same Savior. Ay, it will be the same Lord we shall see in heaven. Our eyes shall see him and not another. We shall be sure it is he; for when we enter heaven we shall know him by his manhood and Godhead. We shall find him a man, even as much as he was on earth. We shall find him man and God too, and we shall be quite sure there never was another Man-God; we never read or dreamed of another. Don't suppose that when you get to heaven you will have to ask "Where is the man Christ Jesus?" You will see him straight before you on his throne, a man like yourselves.

"Bright like a man the Savior sits;
The God, how bright he shines."

But then you will know Christ by his wounds. Have you never heard of mothers having recognized their children years after they were lost by the marks and wounds upon their bodies? Ah! beloved, if we ever see our Savior we shall know him by his wounds. "But," you say, "They are all gone." Oh no; for he

"Looks like a Lamb that once was slain,
And wears his priesthood still."

The hands are still pierced, though the nails are not there; the feet have still the openings through them; and the side is still gaping wide; and we shall know him by his wounds. We have heard of some who on the battle-field

have been seeking for the dead; they have turned their faces up and looked at them, but knew them not. But the tender wife as come, and there was some deep wound, some sabre cut that her husband had received upon his breast, and she said "It is he; I know him by that wound." So in heaven we shall in a moment detect our Savior by his wounds, and shall say "it is he; it is he — he who once said, 'They have pierced my hands and my feet.' "

But then, beloved, Christ and we are not strangers; for we have often seen him in this glass of the Word. When by the Holy Spirit our poor eyes have been anointed with eye-salve, we have sometimes caught a sufficient glimpse of Christ to know him by it. We have never seen him except reflectedly. When we have looked on the Bible, he has been above us and looked down upon it; and we have looked there as into a looking glass, and have seen him "as in a glass darkly." But we have seen enough of him to know him. And oh, methinks when I see him, I shall say, "That is the bridegroom I read of in Solomon's Song; I am sure it is the same Lord that David used to sing of. I know that is Jesus, for he looks even now like that Jesus who said to the poor woman, 'Neither do I condemn thee,' — like that blessed Jesus who said "Talitha Cumi,' — 'Maid, I say unto thee, arise.' " We shall know him, because he will be so much like the Bible Jesus, that we shall recognize him at once.

Yet more, we have known him better than by Scripture sometimes — by close and intimate fellowship with him. Why, we meet Jesus in the dark sometimes; but we have sweet conversation with him, and he puts his lips against our ear, and our lip goes so close to his ear, when we hold converse with him. Oh! we shall know him well enough when we see him. You may trust the believer for knowing his Master when he finds him. We shall not need to have Jesus Christ introduced to us when we go to heaven; for if he were off his throne and sitting down with all the rest of the blessed spirits, we should go up to him directly, and say — "Jesus, I know thee." The devil knew him, for he said, "Jesus I know;" and I am sure God's people ought to know him. "Jesus, I know thee," we shall say at once, as we go up to him. "How dost thou know me?" saith Jesus. "Why sweet Jesus, we are no stranger, thou hast manifested thyself to me as thou dost not unto the world; thou hast given me sometimes such tokens of thy gracious affection; dost thou think I have forgotten thee? Why, I have seen thy hands and thy feet sometimes by faith, and I have put my hand into thy

side, like Thomas, of old; and thinkest thou that I am a stranger to thee? No, blessed Jesus; if thou wert to put thine hand before thine eyes, and hide thy countenance I should know thee then. Wert thou blindfolded once more, mine eyes would tell thee, for I have known thee too long to doubt thy personality." Believer, take this thought with thee: "we shall see him," despite all the changes in his position. It will be the same person. We shall see the same hands that were pierced, the same feet that were weary, the same lips that preached, the same eyes that wept, the same heart that heaved with agony; positively the same, except as to his condition. "We shall see him." Write the word HIM as large as you like. "We shall see him as he is."

III. This brings us to the third point — THE POSITIVE NATURE OF THE VISION "We shall see him as he is." This is not the land of sight; it is too dark a country to see him, and our eyes are not good enough. We walk here by faith, and not by sight. It is pleasant to believe his grace, but we had rather see it. Well, "We shall see him." But perhaps you think, when it says, "We shall see him," that it means, we shall know more about him; we shall think more of him; we shall get better views of him by faith. Oh, no, it does not at all. It means what it says — positive sight. Just as plainly as I can see my brother there, just as plainly as I can see any one of you, shall I see Christ — with these very eyes too. With these very eyes that look on you shall I look on the Savior. It is not a fancy that we shall see him. Do not begin cutting these words to pieces. Do you see that gas lamp? You will see the Savior in the same fashion — naturally, positively, really, actually? You will not see him dreamily, you will not see him in the poetical sense of the word — see, you will not see him in the metaphorical meaning of the word; but positively, you shall "see him as he is." "See him:" mark that. Not think about him, and dream about him; but we shall positively "see him as he is." How different that sight of him will be from that which we have here. For here we see him by reflection. Now, I have told you before, we see Christ "through a glass darkly:" and he says that means, "Here we look through a telescope, and we see Christ only darkly through it." But the good man had forgotten that telescopes were not invented till hundreds of years after Paul wrote; so that Paul could not have intended telescopes. Others have tried to give other meanings to the word. The fact is, glass was never used to see through at that time. They

used glass to see by, but not to see through. The only glass they had for seeing was a glass mirror. They had some glass which was no brighter than our black common bottle-glass. “Here we see through a glass darkly.” That means, by means of a mirror. As I have told you, Jesus is represented in the Bible; there is his portrait; we look on the Bible, and we see it. We see him “through a glass darkly.” Just as sometimes, when you are looking in your looking glass, you see somebody going along in the street. You do not see the person; you only see him reflected. Now, we see Christ reflected; but then we shall not see him in the looking-glass; we shall positively see his person. Not the reflected Christ, not Christ in the sanctuary, not the mere Christ shining out of the Bible, not Christ reflected from the sacred pulpit; but “we shall see him as he is.”

Again: how partially we see Christ here. The best believer only gets half a glimpse of Christ. While here one Christian sees Christ’s glorious head, and he delights much in the hope of his coming; another beholds his wounds, and he always preaches the atonement: another looks into his heart, and he glories most in immutability and the doctrine of election; another only looks at Christ’s manhood, and he speaks much concerning the sympathy of Christ with believers; another thinks more of his Godhead, and you will always hear him asserting the divinity of Christ. I do not think there is a believer who has seen the whole of Christ. No. We preach as much as we can do of the Master; but we cannot paint him wholly. Some of the best paintings, you know, only just give the head and shoulders; they do not give the full-length portrait. There is no believer, there is no choice divine, that could paint a full-length portrait of Christ. There are some of you who could not paint much more than his little finger; and mark, if we can paint the little finger of Jesus well, it will be worth a life-time to be able to do that. Those who paint best cannot paint even his face fully. Ah! he is so glorious and wondrous, that we cannot fully portray him. We have not seen him more than partially. Come, beloved; how much dost thou know of Christ? Thou wilt say, “Ah! I know some little of him; I could join with the spouse, when she declares that he is altogether lovely; but I have not surveyed him from head to foot, and on his wondrous glories I cannot fully dwell.” Here we see Christ partially; there we shall see Christ entirely, when “we shall see him as he is.”

Here, too, how dimly we see Christ! It is through many shadows that we now behold our Master. Dim enough is the vision here; but there "we shall see him as he is." Have you never stood upon the hill-tops, when the mist has played on the valley? You have looked down to see the city and the streamlet below; you could just ken yonder steeple, and mark that pinnacle; you could see that dome in the distance; but they were all so swathed in the mist that you could scarcely discern them. Suddenly the wind has blown away from the mist from under you, and you have seen the fair, fair valley. Ah! it is so when the believer enters heaven. Here he stands and looks upon Christ veiled in a mist — upon a Jesus who is shrouded; but when he gets up there, on Pisgah's brow, higher still, with his Jesus, then he shall not see him dimly, but he shall see him brightly. We shall see Jesus then "without a veil between" — not dimly, but face to face.

Here, too, how distantly we see Christ! Almost as far off as the farthest star! We see him, but not nigh; we behold him, but not near to us; we catch some glimpse of him; but oh! what lengths and distances lie between! What hills of guilt — a heavy load! But then we shall see him closely; we shall see him face to face; as a man talketh with his friend, even so shall we then talk with Jesus. Now we are distant from him; then we shall be near to him. Away in the highlands, where Jesus dwells, there shall our hearts be too, when heart and body shall be "present with the Lord."

And oh! how transitory is our view of Jesus! It is only a little while we get a glimpse of Christ, and then he seems to depart from us. Our chariots have sometimes been like Amminadib's; but in a little while the wheels are all gone, and we have lost the blessed Lord. Have you not some hours in your life felt so to be in the presence of Christ, that you scarcely knew where you were? Talk of Elijah's chariots and horses of fire; you were on fire yourself; you could have made yourself into a horse and chariot of fire, and gone to heaven easily enough. But then, all of a sudden, did you never feel as if a lump of ice had fallen on your heart, and put the fire out, and you have cried, "Where is my beloved gone! Why hath he hidden his face? Oh! how dark how dim!" But, Christians, there will be no hidings of faces in heaven! Blessed Lord Jesus! there will be no coverings of thine eyes in glory; Is not thine heart a sea of love, where all my passions roll? And there is no ebb-tide of thy sea, sweet Jesus, there. Art thou not

everything? There will be no losing thee there — no putting thy hand before thine eyes up there; but without a single alteration, without change or diminution, our unwearied, unclouded eyes, shall throughout eternity perpetually behold thee. “We shall see him as he is!” Blest sight! Oh! that it were come!

Then do you know, there will be another difference. When “we shall see him as he is;” how much better that sight will be than what we have here! When we see Christ here, we see him to our profit; when we see him there, we shall see him to our perfection. I bear my Master witness, I never saw him yet, without being profited by him. There are many men in this world whom we see very often, and get very little good by, and the less we see of them the better; but of our Jesus we can say, we never come near him without receiving good by him. I never touched his garments yet, without feeling that my fingers did smell myrrh, and aloes, and cassia out of the ivory palaces. I never did come near his lips, but what his very breath shed perfume on me. I was never near my Master yet, but what he slew some sin for me. I never have approached him, but his blessed eyes burned a lust out of my heart for me. I have never come near to hear him speak, but I felt I was melting when the Beloved spoke; being conformed into his image. But, then beloved, it will not be to improve us, it will be to perfect us, when we see him there. “We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” Oh! that first sweet look on Christ, when we shall have left the body! I am clothed in rags: he looks upon me, and I am clothed in robes of light. I am black; he looks upon me, and I forget the tents of Kedar, and become white as the curtains of Solomon. I am defiled; sin has looked upon me, and there is filth upon my garments: lo, I am whiter than the driven snow, for he hath looked upon me. I have evil wishes and evil thoughts, but they have fled like the demon before his face, when he said, “Get thee hence, Satan; I command thee to come out of the man.” “We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” I know, beloved, the Savior seems to you like a great ship, and I like some small boat, trying to pull the ship out of the harbour. It is how I feel myself. I have the oars, I am trying to pull; but it is such a glorious big ship, that I cannot pull it out. There are some subjects the rudder of which I can take hold of and guide anywhere; they will come out of any harbour, let the passage be ever so narrow; but this is a noble ship — so big that we can hardly get it out to sea. It needs the

Holy Ghost to blow the sails for you, and your whole souls to dwell upon it, and desire to think of this wondrous sight; and then I hope you will go away dissatisfied with the preacher, because you will feel that the subject had altogether mastered him and you also.

IV. Lastly, here are THE ACTUAL PERSONS: "We shall see him as he is." Come, now, beloved! I do not like diving you; it seems hard work that you and I should be split asunder, when I am sure we love each other with all our hearts. Ten thousand deeds of kindness received from you, ten thousand acts of heart-felt love and sympathy, knit my heart to my people. But oh! beloved, is it not obvious, that when we say, "we shall see him," the word "we" does not signify all of us — does not include everybody here! "We shall see him as he is!" Come, let us divide that "we" into "I's." How many "I's" are there here, that will "see him as he is?"

Brother, with snow upon thy head, wilt thou "see him as he is?" Thou hast had many years of fighting and trying, and trouble: if thou ever dost "see him as he is," that will pay for all. "Yes," sayest thou, "I know in whom I have believed." Well, brother, thine old dim eyes will need no spectacles soon. To "see him as he is," will give thee back thy youth's bright beaming eye, with all its lustre and its fire. But are thy grey hairs full of sin? and doth lust tarry in thy old cold blood? Ah! thou shalt see him, but not nigh; thou shalt be driven from his presence. Would God this arm were strong enough to drag thee to a Savior; but it is not. I leave thee in his hands. God save thee!

And thou, dear brother, and thou, dear sister, who hast come to middle age, struggling with the toils of life, mixed up with all its battles, enduring its ills, thou art asking, it may be, shalt thou see him! The text says, "We shall;" and can you and I put our hands on our hearts and know our union with Jesus? If so, "We shall see him as he is." Brother! fight on! Up at the devil! Strike hard at him! Fear not! that sight of Christ will pay thee. Soldier of the cross, whet thy sword again, and let it cut deep. Labourer! toil again; delve deeper; life the axe higher, with a brawnier and stouter arm; for the sight of thy Master at last will please thee well. Up, warrior! Up the rampart, for victory sits smiling on the top, and thou shalt meet thy Captain there! When thy sword is reeking with the blood of thy sins, it

will be a glory indeed to meet thy master, when thou art clothed with triumph, and then to “see him as he is.”

Young man, my brother in age, the text says, “We shall see him as he is.” Does “we” mean that young man there in the aisle? Does it mean you, my brother, up there? Shall we “see him as he is?” We are not ashamed to call each other brethren in this house of prayer. Young man, you have got a mother and her soul doats upon you. Could your mother come to you this morning, she might take hold of your arm, and say to you, “John, we shall ‘see him as he is;’ it is not I, John, that shall see him for myself alone, but you and I shall see him together, ‘we shall see him as he is.’ “ Oh! bitter, bitter thought that just now crossed my soul! O heavens! if we ever should be sundered from those we love so dearly when the last day of account shall come! Oh! if we should not see him as he is! Methinks to a son’s soul there can be nought more harrowing than the thought, that it possibly may happen that some of his mother’s children shall see God, and he shall not! I had a letter just now from a person who thanks God that he read the Sermon, “Many shall come from the east and from the west;” and he hopes it has brought him to God. He says, ‘I am one out of a large family, and all of them love God except myself; I don’t know that I should have thought of it, but I took up this sermon of yours, and it has brought me to a Savior.” Oh! beloved, think of bringing the last out of nine to a Savior! Have not I made a mother’s heart leap for joy? But oh! if that young man had been lost out of the nine, and had seen his eight brothers and sisters in heaven, while he himself was cast out, methinks he would have had nine hells — he would be nine times more miserable in hell, as he saw each of them, and his mother and his father, too, accepted, and himself cast out. It would not have been “we” there with the whole family.

What a pleasant thought it is, that we can assemble to-day, some of us, and can put our hands round those we love, and stand, an unbroken family — father, mother, sister, brother, and all else who are dear, and can say by humble faith, “We shall see him as he is” — all of us, not one left out! Oh! my friends, we feel like a family at Park Street. I do feel myself, when I am away from you, that there is nothing like this place, that there is nothing on earth which can recompense the pain of absence from this hallowed spot. Somehow or other, we feel knit together by such ties of love! Last Sabbath I went into a place where the minister gave us the vilest stuff that

ever was brewed. I am sure I wished I was back here, that I might preach a little godliness, or else hear it. Poor Wesleyan thing! He preached works from beginning to end, from that very beautiful text — "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy!" telling us that whatever we sowed, that we should reap, without ever mentioning salvation for sinners, and pardon required even by saints. It was something like this: "Be good men and women, and you shall have heaven for it. Whatsoever you sow you are sure to reap; and if you are very good people, and do the best you can, you will all go to heaven, but if you are very bad and wicked then you will have to go to hell; I am sorry to tell you so, but whatever you sow that shall you reap." Not a morsel about Jesus Christ, from beginning to end; not a scrap. "Well," I thought, "they say I'm rather hard upon these Arminian fellows; but if I do not drive my old sword into them worse than ever, now I have heard them myself again, then I am not a living man!" I thought they might have altered a little, and not preach works so much; but I am sure there never was a sermon more full of salvation by works preached by the Pope himself, than that was. They do believe in salvation by works, whatever they may say, and however they may deny it when you come to close quarters with them; for they are so everlastingly telling you to be good, and upright, and godly, and never directing you first to look to the bleeding wounds of a dying Savior; never telling you about God's free grace, which has brought you out of enormous sins; but always talking about that goodness, goodness, goodness, which never will be found in the creature.

Well, beloved, somehow or other, wherever we go, we seem that we must come back here.

"Here our best friends our kindred dwell;
Here God our Savior reigns."

And the thought of losing one of you grieves me almost as much as the thought of losing any of my relatives. How often have we looked at one another with pleasure! How often have we met together, to sing the same old song to the same old tunes! How often have we prayed together! And how dearly we all of us love the sound of the word "Grace, grace, grace!" And yet there are some of you that I know in my heart, and you know yourselves, will not see him, unless you have a change — unless you have a new heart and a right spirit. Well, would you like to meet your pastor at the day of judgment, and feel that you must be parted from him because

his warnings were unheeded and his invitation cast to the wind. Thinkest thou, young man, that thou wouldst like to meet me at the day judgment, there to remember what thou hast heard, and what thou hast disregarded? And thinkest thou, that thou wouldst like to stand before thy God, and to remember how the way of salvation was preached to thee — "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be baptized, and thou shalt be saved," — and that thou didst disregard the message? That were sad indeed. But we leave the thought with you, and lest you should think that if you are not worthy you will not see him — if you are not good you will not see him — if you do not do such-and-such good things you will not see him — let me just tell you, whosoever, though he be the greatest sinner under heaven — whosoever, though his life be the most filthy and the most corrupt — whosoever believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ shall have everlasting life; for God will blot out his sins, will give him righteousness through Jesus, accept him in the beloved, save him by his mercy, keep him by his grace, and at last present him spotless and faultless before his presence with exceeding great joy.

My dear friends, it is a sweet thought to close with now; that with a very large part of you I can say, "We shall see him as he is." For you know when we sit down at the Lord's table, we occupy the whole ground floor of this chapel, and I believe that half of us are people of God here, for I know that many members cannot get to the Lord's table in the evening. Brethren, we have one heart, one soul — "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." We may be sundered here below a little while; some may die before us, as our dear brother Mitchell has died; some may cross the stream before the time comes for us; but we shall meet again on the other side of the river. "We shall see him as he is."

EXPOSITION

NO. 62E

1 JOHN 3:1-10

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

As dear Dr. Hawker said concerning this, there is a chapter in every word and a sermon in every letter. How it opens with a "Behold!" because it is such a striking portion of sacred Scripture, that the Holy Ghost would have us pay particular attention to it. "Behold!" says he, "read other Scriptures if you like, with a glance, but stop here. I have put up a way-mark to tell you there is something eminently worthy of attention buried beneath these words." "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us." Consider who we were, and who we are now; ay, and what we feel ourselves to be even when divine grace is powerful in us. And yet, beloved, we are called "the sons of God." It is said that when one of the learned heathens was translating this, he stopped and said, "No; it cannot be; let it be written 'Subjects,' not 'Sons,' for it is impossible we should be called 'the sons of God.'" What a high relationship is that of a son to his father! What privileges a son has from his father! What liberties a son may take with his father! and oh! what obedience the son owes to his father, and what love the father feels towards the son! But all that, and more than that, we now have through Christ. "Behold!" ye angels! stop, ye seraphs! here is a thing more wonderful than heaven with its walls of jasper. Behold, universe! open thine eyes, O world.

> "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not."

Well, we are content to go with him in his humiliation, for we are to be exalted with him. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God.” That is easy to read; but it is not so easy to feel. “Now are we the sons of God.” How is it with your heart this morning? Are you in the lowest depths of sorrow and suffering? “Now are you a son of God.” Does corruption rise within your spirit, and grace seem like a poor spark trampled under foot? “Beloved, now are you a son of God.” Does your faith almost fail you? and are your graces like a candle well nigh blown out by the wind! Fear not, beloved; it is not your graces, it is not your frames, it is not your feelings, on which you are to live: you must live simply by naked faith on Christ. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God.” With all these things against us, with the foot of the devil on our neck, and the sword in his hand ready to slay us — beloved now in the very depths of our sorrow, wherever we may be — now, as much in the valley as on the mountain, as much in the dungeon as in the palace, as much when broken on the wheel of suffering as when exalted on the wings of triumph — “beloved, now are we the sons of God.” “Ah!” but you say, “see how I am arrayed! my graces are not bright; my righteousness does not shine with apparent glory.” But read the next: “It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him.” We are not so much like him now, but we have some more refining process to undergo, and death itself, that best of all friends, is yet to wash us clean. “We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” “And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure. “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law for sin is the transgression of the law. “And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.” Believer, read these words in two senses. He was manifested to take away thy sins that thou hast committed; and that he accomplished, when “the just for the unjust,” he sustained the penalties of them. And he was manifested to take away the power of thy sins; that is to say, to conquer thy reigning lusts, to take away thine evil imaginations, to purify thee, and make thee like himself. Well, beloved, what a mercy it is that some one was manifested to take away our sins from us! for some of us have been striving a long, long while, to conquer our sins, and we cannot do it. We thought we had driven them out, but they had “chariots of iron,” and we could not overcome them; they lived “in the hill country,” and we could not get near them. As

often as we worsted them in one battle, they came upon us thick and strong, like an army of locusts; when heaps and heaps had been destroyed they seemed as thick as ever. Ah! but there is a thought — they shall all be taken away. “Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins;” and so he will. The time will come when you and I shall stand without spot or blemish before the throne of God: for they are “without fault before the throne of God” at this moment, and so shall we be ere long. “Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.” This plain, simple verse, has been twisted by some who believe in the doctrine of perfection, and they have made it declare that it is possible for some to abide in Christ, and therefore not to sin. But you will remark that it does not say, that some that abide in Christ do not sin; but it says that none who abide in Christ sin. “Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not.” Therefore this passage is not to be applied to a few who attain to what is called by our Arminian friends the fourth degree — perfection; but it appertains to all believers; and of every soul in Christ it may be said, that he sinneth not. In reading the Bible, we read it simply as we would read another book. We ought not to read it as a preacher his text, with the intention of making something out of every word; but we should read it as we find it written: “Whosoever abideth in Christ sinneth not.” Now we are sure that cannot mean that he does not sin at all, but it means that sins not habitually, he sins not designedly, he sins not finally, so as to perish. The Bible often calls a man righteous; but that does not mean that he is perfectly righteous. It calls a man a sinner, but it does not imply that he may not have done some good deeds in his life; it means that that is the man’s general character. So with the man who abides in Christ: his general character is not that he is a sinner, but that he is a saint — he sinneth not openly wilfully before men. In his own heart, he has much to confess, but his life before his fellow creatures is such a one that it can be said of him: “Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not; but whosoever sinneth [the sins of this world. in which the multitude indulge] hath not seen him, neither known him.” “Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.” That is the sign of it. Works are the fruits of grace. “He is righteous,” — not in himself; for mark how graces come in here — “He is righteous, even as HE is righteous.” It will not allow our righteousness to be our own, but it brings us to Christ again. “He that doeth righteousness is righteous,” not according to his own

works, but “even as HE is righteous.” Good works prove that I have perfect righteousness in Christ; they do not help the righteousness of Christ, nor yet in any way make me righteous. Good works are of no use whatever in the matter of justification: they only use they are, is, that they are for our comfort, for the benefit of others, and for the glory of God.

> “He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil.” “He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.”

It were well if we always remembered that practical godliness is the soul of godliness; that it is not talking religion, but walking religion which proves a man to be sincere; it is not having a religious tongue, but a religious heart; it is not a religious mouth, but a religious foot. The best evidence is the salvation of the soul. Avaunt! talkative; go thy way, thou mere professing formalist! Your ways lead down to hell, and your end shall be destruction; for “He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he mighty destroy the works of the devil.”

MARVELLOUS INCREASE OF THE CHURCH

SERMON NO. 63

DELIVERED ON THE SABBATH MORNING, JANUARY 27, 1856,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?" — Isaiah 60:8.

The ancient church, in the foresight of her mighty increase in these latter days lifts up her hands in astonishment, and having been so used to see the Lord's grace confined to a small nation, she exclaims in amazement, "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?" We, beloved, are in a somewhat similar position. It has pleased our Father to add to our numbers so greatly beyond all precedent in modern times, that I doubt not that many of our aged members, who remember days of yore, when God was pleased to bless them very greatly, and then think of days of sadness and weariness, when they were diminished and brought low, are this morning lifting up their hands, and saying, as they think of the present prosperity of our church, "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?" I am sure whenever I appoint an evening for seeing the converts I am amazed; I can only stand up afterwards, clap my hands, and go home and weep for very joy, to think that the word of our God is so running and multiplying and abundantly increasing; and as post after post I receive letters from different parts of this country, from one person here, and another there, not in England only, but in Scotland, and even across the sea — in Ireland, and you know, in the Crimea also — I have been overwhelmed with amazement, and have been obliged to cry out, "Who hath begotten me these?" "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?"

The church, when she uttered these words, appears to have been the subject of three kinds of feeling. First, wonder: secondly, pleasure: thirdly, anxiety. These three feelings you have felt; you are not strangers to them; and you will understand, while I speak to you as the children of God, how it is that we can feel at the same time, wonder, pleasure, and yet anxiety.

I. First, the church of old, and our church now, appears to have been the subject of WONDER when she saw so many come to know the Lord. "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?" Take the first sentence of the text first: "Who are these that fly as a cloud?"

The church wondered, first of all, at the number of her converts. They did "fly as a cloud." Not here and there a convert — not now and then one — not converts like solitary bitterns of the desert; but they "did fly as a cloud." Not a convert now and then, like a meteor, a thing we see but seldom, which flashes across the sky, rejoices the darkness, and then is gone; not now and then a convert, as a rara avis, — a spiritual prodigy. "But who are these?" saith she, "who fly as a cloud?" She wonders at their number. But, my brethren, why should we be astonished? Did not the apostle Peter become the instrument of converting three thousand under one sermon? And have we not heard of Whitfield, that while ten thousand listened to him, it has been known that two thousand at a time have felt the power of God manifested in their hearts? And why should we wonder if hundreds were brought to God now? "Is his arm shortened, that he cannot save? Is his ear heavy, that he cannot hear?" Have we not cried unto the God of Jacob; and is anything impossible to him? Remember how he "cut Rahab and wounded the dragon." Think of his prodigies by the Red Sea, and the miracles he worked in the field of Zoan. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Oh! thou distrustful church, dost thou marvel because thy Lord giveth thee many children? Is it not written — "More are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife," saith the Lord. I tell thee, the Lord will show thee greater things than these. The increase we have had shall yet be exceeded, if God wills it. Nothing is impossible with him. He who converts one, could as easily convert a hundred; and he who redeems a hundred, could save a thousand by the self-same power. Is not the blood of Jesus sufficient? Is not the Holy Ghost powerful enough? and is not the mighty Three-one God "able to do for us exceeding abundantly above what we can ask or think?" Yet, so it is;

so little are our expectations, and so unprepared are we for God's mercies, that when he pours out a blessing upon us, so that we have not room enough to receive it, we begin shutting up the windows altogether, and think, "Surely it cannot come from God, because there is so much of it." Why, that is the very reason why we should believe it to be. If there were few conversions, then we might tremble, and fear lest they might be man's; but when there are so many none but a God can accomplish it. When one or two are brought to join a church, we may shake for fear and examine them with caution; but when they fly like a cloud, we can only say, "Great art thou, O God, marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well." Doubtless, brethren, until larger views of God's power and increased faith shall diminish the wonder, we shall always stand in amazement, and say, "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?"

But, secondly, the Chaldee has the idea in it, not of numbers, but of swiftness. "Who are these that fly as a cloud," for swiftness? Ye have seen clouds dashing along, like chariots drawn by mighty horses, or flying like a fugitive army, when the swift winds have pursued them, and ye have said, "See how swiftly the clouds career along the sky;" and it is notable, that in great revivals of religion, persons are generally more swift in their religious growth and experience than they are in dull and degenerate times. "Why," says one, "how soon persons join the church here! how very soon they attain to assurance of faith! how very speedily they come to understand gospel doctrines. It was not so in my days; for I know I was months and months, and tried a long while, before I dared think of obeying my Master — before I could say, 'I know whom I have believed.'" Just so; but these are brighter days than your days, and you are wondering now because the converts fly so swiftly. But that is just the idea of the text: "Who are these that fly as swiftly as a cloud?" I know, brethren, it used to be the custom with our churches, when a convert came to keep him a summer and a winter — to summer him and to winter him. Now, that is very prudent and very wise; but it is not at all scriptural: there is nothing in the word of God to support it. The example of Jesus and his apostles is altogether against it; and I take it that scripture is to go before prudence, and that his example is always to be above man's wisdom. Why should the people of God tarry in these days? Let them haste, and delay not to keep his

commandments; and what if young people do grow in grace faster now than they did in your time? Perhaps God has now poured out a larger measure of his Spirit. He has placed us in brighter days; and plants in the warm sunshine must expect to grow faster than those that dwell in the frost. We know that in the short summers of Sweden, a harvest will ripen in two or three months, or less than that. Why should we complain of the corn of Sweden, because it ripens so swiftly, when it is just as good as ours that takes several months to ripen? The Lord does as he wills and as he pleases; and if some fly swiftly, whilst others travel slowly, let those who go slowly bless God that they go at all, but let them not murmur that others go a little faster. Nevertheless, it will always be to God's church a source of wonder: "Who are these that fly so swiftly like a cloud?"

The Targum has another idea, that of publicity. "Who are these that fly as a cloud?" The cloud, you know, flies so that everybody can see it. So do these converts fly openly before the world. It is a matter of admiration with this church and with God's church whenever it is increased, that the converts become so bold and fly so publicly. In the first days of the church, Nicodemus, the ruler of the Jews, came to Jesus by night; he was somewhat ashamed, lest he should be put out of the synagogue. Joseph of Arimathea, the rich man, was afraid to profess his Lord, and therefore loved Jesus "secretly, for fear of the Jews." But you do not read that any of them were afraid, when God poured out the Holy Ghost on the day that Peter preached; but "they broke their bread from house to house, and did eat it in singleness of heart, praising God." They went up to the beautiful gate of the temple, and in the very teeth of all the people, Peter and John healed the lame man. They worked their miracles openly before all men. They were not ashamed. So, when there is a glorious ingathering of souls, you will always notice how bold the people become. Why, there never were such a brazen-faced set of people as those who assemble here. They are not ashamed of their religion. Why, I have seen persons come to the pool of baptism, fearing, shaking, and trembling: but I have not found it so with the majority of those who have been baptized in this place. They seem proud to own their Master. They can sing, —

"Ashamed of Jesus? Sooner far
Let evening blush to own a star!
Ashamed of Jesus? Just as soon
Let midnight be ashamed of noon!"

You “are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ,” for it has been here the power of God unto salvation to many who have believed. I have rejoiced to see the boldness of the young converts; I have heard of them fighting with the antagonists of the truth. I have seen them boldly standing up for their Master, in the face of scorns and jeers, and slanders; and the church says, with regard to them, “Who are these that fly publicly as a cloud?”

But methinks there is another idea here, which Dr. Gill gives us in his very valuable commentary. “Who are these that fly as a cloud,” for unanimity? You will mark, not as clouds, but “as a cloud;” not as two or three bodies, but as one united and compact mass! Here is the secret of strength. Split us into fractions, and we are conquered; unite us into a steady phalanx, and we become invincible; knit us together as one man, and Satan himself can never rend us asunder. Divide us into threads, let our warp and woof be disunited, and we become like rotten tow, that burneth before a single spark of the fire of the enemy. But, thanks be to God, we are “as the heart of one man.” I could not but wonder at our Church Meeting on Wednesday, how all seemed to fly as a cloud. No sooner was a thing proposed, than the whole church seemed without a dissentient opinion to be carried along irresistibly by one thought that possessed its bosom. It is very seldom you see a church really united; but God has united us; we have “one Lord, one faith, one baptism.” But yet the church wonders at it; she can scarcely understand it. “Who are these,” she says, “who fly as one compact and solid cloud?” God grant that we may always continue so! Whatever is said of one of us, let it be said of all of us. Do not let us be stragglers. Those who fall into the rear of an army are always in danger; and those who hang about its flanks are equally subject to insult and injury. Let us march breast to breast, shoulder to shoulder, each of us drawing the sword at one word; every one doing as the captain tells us; and as surely as truth prevaileth, unity shall conquer, and our king shall honor us and bless us still, treading our foes beneath our feet, and making us more than conquerors through him that hath loved us.

Again: there is the idea of power. Who is he that shall bridle a cloud, or stop it in its march? What man is he who by a word can stay the careering clouds, and make them still? Who is he that can bid them, when they are driving northward, turn their course to the south? Who is he that can rein the coursers of the wind, and forbid them to drag the chariots of darkness

along to the west? The clouds yield to none; no majesty can control them; they laugh to scorn the scepter of the prince, and they move on, despite the rattling of the sabres of armies. None can stop the clouds; they are invincible, uncontrollable; and in their majesty they move themselves right royally, like the kings of heaven. And who is he that can stop the converts of Zion? Who is he that can keep back the children of Jerusalem; when the Lord shall "bring again the captivity of his people," who is he that shall stop them? When his people of old were in Babylon, could "the two-leaved gates" bar them in? Could Cyrus, with all his armies, have kept them prisoners? Nay, the two-leaved gates open, the bars of brass give way; and Cyrus himself sends them back to their country, with gold and silver to build their temple. And when in latter days the Jews shall return to their own land again, to worship God, who shall stop them? Shall the might of Russia? Shall the power of Egypt? Shall the tyranny of Turkey? Shall aught keep them back? No; the city shall be builded again upon her own heap, and the tribes of the Lord shall yet go up again, to worship God where their forefathers bowed before them. O, people of God! it is so with you. "Who are these that fly as a cloud!" Try, try, O enemy, to stop one of the Lord's doves, when he is coming to the windows! You cannot do it. Did not the devil try to stop you, O brother, when you were coming to God? Ah! he did; but it was all in vain. And when you went to join the church, how many difficulties there were in the way! But when you are called to God you will not be afraid, you will fly like a cloud. Ah! the world says we shall stop by-and-by; that all our success is as nothing; that it will soon die away; that it is a mere excitement, and will soon end. Ah! let them talk so, if they please. We are flying like a cloud. We have God within us; we have good within us; we have the might of the Deity within our church; and who is he that shall stop us? We bid the mighty men of this earth come; we bid carnal reason array itself against us; we bid the wisdom of the critic try to stop us. But they cannot do it. The weakness of God is mightier than man; and he who took us from the sheep-folds to lead his people Israel will not desert his David; he who has put us before his people will not cast us away, nor will he leave his church, nor forsake his chosen ones. "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?"

Thus have I tried to picture to you the amazement of Christ's Church. "Who are these that fly as a cloud?" And, now, Church of God, one word with thee, ere I leave thee. Your success is amazing one way; but it is not amazing if you look at it in another direction. It is amazing that any man should be saved, if you look at man; it is not amazing if you consider God. It is amazing that the wilderness should blossom as the rose, if you look at the wilderness; but it is not amazing, if you consider Jehovah. It is wonderful that a desert should have the excellency of Carmel and Sharon: but, wonder all dies away, when you recollect that God who doeth as he wills in the armies of heaven doeth as he pleases in this lower world. O, Church of God! give the honor and the glory to thy God, and to thy God only. Write his name upon thy banners; let thy sacrifice smoke before him, and before the shields of the mighty. "I am, and there is none else besides me." Bow before him; lest, if you give praise to the creature, and if you think we have done anything, and say, "Behold this great Babylon that I have builded," God would say, "Because thou hast exalted thyself like the cedars of Lebanon, therefore will I bring thee down to the earth, and thy glory shall be taken from thee." May the Lord in his mercy keep us from pride, and also keep us living on him, believing in his might, and trusting in his power!

II. This brings us to the second portion of our discourse, which is the PLEASURE OF THE CHURCH. "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?"

First, the church is exceedingly pleased at the character of those who come to her, "doves." We should always thank God, when those who join the church are of the right sort; for alas! there is such a thing as having a large addition to the church of men that are of no use whatever. Many an army has swelled its ranks with recruits, who have in no way whatever contributed to its might; and it has been known in many great revivals, that large hosts have been gathered in, who have forsaken the truth in six months. I know a church which excommunicated eighty members in twelve months, for disorderly conduct and forsaking the truth; and they had taken on a hundred or so the year before, from some great spasm, which had been occasioned by one of those spurious revivalists, who came about making a great noise, and doing no good whatever, but scorching and burning up the ground, where other men might have sown the good seed of

the kingdom. I wonder that any man should be so self-conceited as to call himself a revivalist, or profess to be a revival-maker: let this be known, as my opinion, he is a nuisance and nothing better. But where a church is cautious, where the minister exercises scrutiny, and all possible means are taken to see into character, it gives us great pleasure that they are of the right sort. Ah! beloved, you should be at our church meetings sometimes, and hear the sweet words of experience which are uttered there. I am sure you would say, that they, "fly as the doves to their windows." Now and then there comes before me an old croaking raven, that wants to come in; but we are soon able to tell the raven from the dove. It may be, that now and then a raven gets into our church; but I do hope that the majority are doves. We have seen them so humble, so meek, trusting alone in Jesus, like timid doves, half afraid to speak and tell you, and yet so loving, that they seemed as if they had sat on the finger of Jesus, and picked their food from between his lips; we have marked their conduct afterwards, and seen it to be holy and consistent. We will glory before the world, that notwithstanding the numbers that have been added to us, we have had to cut off as few as any church in the world — but one in a year, out of our vast body! and that one was received from another church, and therefore had never been examined thoroughly. O my brethren, always try to give the church pleasure by your dove-like conversation. "Be wise as serpents, but harmless as doves." Such was your Master's teaching. Let your character be —

"Humble, teachable, and mild,
Changed into a little child;
Pleased with all the Lord provides,
Weaned from all the world besides."

"Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth." Be not like the unclean bird, that will devour all kinds of filth; but be like the dove, that liveth on the "good corn of the kingdom." And be ye sure that you are like them, loving and kind one to another; and, like them, always mourn when you lose your mate; weep when your Jesus is gone from you, and you lose his delightful presence. Be ye like the dove in all these things.

Again: the church feels pleasure, not only in their character, but in their condition. Like doves "that fly." Lowth translates this portion of the verse "like doves on the wing." The church feels pleasure in thinking that her

converts are “like doves on the wing.” Do you never, beloved, get into such a condition, that you are not like a dove on the wing, but like a dove in a secret place, in the cleft of the rock, hiding yourself in darkness, because you are afraid to be seen? For my own part, I am often not like a dove on the wing, but like a dove hiding its head under its wing, afraid to fly. But “he reneweth our strength like the eagle’s.” There is a moulting time for the Lord’s doves; but their feathers grow again, and then they have the wings of the dove, covered with silver, and their feathers with yellow gold; and they can fly upwards towards Jesus. And will not our church rejoice, when her converts appear to be all on the wing, not doubting, fearful converts, not converts that stand timidly, afraid to come; but converts on the wing, flying upwards towards Jesus, prayerful, laborious, active; not sitting still, doing nothing, but laboring and flying upwards towards Jesus. These are the converts we want. And the church is pleased when she can say, “Who are these that are like doves on the wing?”

Furthermore; the translation of the Septuagint gives us another idea. “Who are these that fly like doves with their young?” The church rejoices at the company that the converts bring with them. How charming is the sight when a father unites himself with the people of God, and then his children after him! We had an instance a little while ago here, of two sons followed by their mother, and we have had many instances of a mother following her daughters, and of daughters following their mothers, and sons following their fathers. Oh! how blessed it is, to see the doves come with their young! If there is anything more beautiful than a dove, it is the little dove that flieth by its side. Beloved, do you not rejoice, some of you, that you have your children in the church? that you can run your eye along the pew, where your offspring are sitting with you, and can say, “Ah! glory be to God, it is not only I that have received his mercy, but here are my sons, too; and there sits my daughter drinking from the same well as I draw from; living on the same spiritual manna, looking to the same cross for salvation, and hoping for the same heaven! But I notice some families here — I could point them out if I would: I notice them with sadness; where there is a father and a mother, both of them heirs of heaven, but of whose sons we have no evidence and no hope that they are the children of God. And there are some of you, my friends, whose young ones have come

before you. We have daughters here that have prayerless mothers; we have sons that have ungodly fathers. Oh! does it not seem hard that the children should be in the kingdom before the parents? For if it be hard that a parent should see his children perishing, surely there is tenfold horror in the thought of children saved, and parents going to hell; your offspring entering into the joy of their Lord, and ye yourselves cast "into outer darkness, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth." Daughter of Zion! plead for your children. Men of Jerusalem! plead for your children.

The church, again, feels pleasure at the direction in which these doves move. "Who are these that fly as the doves to their windows?" Where should the dove fly to else but to its dovecot? The word means the dovecot, where the doves live, the little pigeon holes, into which the doves enter and dwell. The joy of the church is, that the poor sinner does not fly to man, nor to the law, but flies to Christ, the dovecot! I can recollect when, like a poor dove, sent out by Noah from his hand, I flew over the wide expanse of waters, and hoped to find some place where I might rest my wearied wing. Up towards the north I flew; and my eye looked keenly through the mist and darkness, if perhaps it might find some floating substance, on which my soul might rest its foot, but it found nothing. Again it turned its wing, and flapped it, but not so rapidly as before, across that deep water that knew no shore; but still there was no rest. The raven had found his resting-place upon a floating body, and was feeding itself upon the carrion of some drowned man's carcass; but my poor soul found none. I went on: thought I saw a ship floating out at sea; it was the ship of the law; and I thought I would put my feet on its canvass, or rest myself on its cordage for a time, and find some refuge. But ah! it was an airy phantom, on which I could not rest; for my foot had no right to rest on the law, I had not kept it, and the soul that keepeth it not must die. At last I saw the barque Christ Jesus — that happy ark; and I thought I would fly thither; but my poor wing was weary, and I could fly no further, and down I sank into the water, but as providence would have it, when my wings were flagging, and I dropped into the stream to be drowned, just below me was the roof of the ark, and I saw a hand put out from it, that took me, and said, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore I have not delivered the soul of my turtle dove into the company of the

wicked; come in, come in!" and then I found I had an olive branch in my mouth of peace with God and peace with man, plucked off with Jesus' power. Poor soul! hast thou found a resting-place in the ark? hast thou fled to thy window? or art thou, O Ephraim, like the silly dove that hath no heart, that goeth down to Egypt, and resteth itself in Assyria? Oh, say thou, why is it that thou are looking for rest, where none can be found? There be many that say, "Who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me!" That is the dove's resting-place; that is his house. Have you found your home in Christ? If you have not, when the storm comes, O dove, with ruffled plumage thou shalt be driven before the swift tempest; thou shalt be blown along like a small feather before the stream, onward, onward, through the dark unknown until thou findest thyself with burned and singed wings, falling into flames that have no bottom. The Lord give you deliverance, and help you to fly to Jesus.

III. Now we come to our third point — the CHURCH'S ANXIETY. "Ah!" says the church, "it is all very well their flying like a cloud; it is all right their going as doves to their windows; but who are they?" The church is anxious, and she anxiously desires to be sure that it is all gold that is put into her treasury; for she suspects that some of those lumps of bullion cannot be gold. She thinks, "surely that is not all genuine metal, or there would not be so much of it;" and she says, "Who are they?" That is the question! Now I address myself to an anxious church to answer it.

First, they are those that fly. Our text says, "Who are these that fly?" They are those who fly because they cannot stop where they were, and they are flying somewhere else for refuge. We trust that those who have joined our church are those who are persuaded that the land wherein they dwelt is to be consumed with fire, who feel a necessity to come out of the place where they once lived, and have a strong desire to seek "a city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." We hope, beloved, that those who have joined with us here are those who are escaping from hell and flying to heaven; such as once had no sins that they cared for, but now come out because they needs must come, for their house has got too hot for them, and they cannot abide any longer in their sins. Here we have the idea of conviction. They are those that fly. They are not content now to make their nest of their own good works, with here and there a little bit of down picked off Morality-common, and here apiece of yarn that they have

picked up in Legality palace, and here a piece of good work that they have found in the barn-yard of Ceremonialism. No; they are poor souls that have no rest anywhere, but a re flying, and flying with rapid wing, until they can get to their windows. Are you such, my beloved, that have joined the church? or are you not? If you are not, you have deceived me, and you have deceived the church, for we thought you were; we want to have none united with us but those who are flying to us. We want no self-righteous ones; no self-sufficient ones, no good moral people; we want those who feel that they are ragged sinners, clothed by Jesus; poor dead sinners, made alive by Jesus. I ask God, when I ask him to give me any, to give me those who are flying with haste for a Savior; and if any of you that have come to us making a profession of flying are not such, I beseech you by everything that is solemn, by that hell of hypocrites, which is the hell of hells, and by the heaven you would lose, to bethink yourselves how sinfully you are acting, in continuing members of a Christian church when you are hypocrites and have never fled.

But again: they are those who fly not on the ground, but like a cloud, up high. We know many a church, to which the people come, because there is so much charity connected with it. I know some country churches in the Establishment which are attended by some people, because there are regularly given away so many sixpences after the service. That is flying like a will-o'-the-wisp, dancing about in dark marshy places. If I could buy all London for my congregation by the turn of a threepenny piece, I would not give it. If people do not come from some better motives, we do not wish to have any. But we have none of that sort, we trust. They fly higher than these groundlings. Zion rejoiced that they did not fly on the ground, but flew like a cloud. They were persons that did not care about the world, but wanted heaven.

They were souls filled with rain, like the clouds; or if they were not big and black with rain, as the clouds sometimes are when they are about to burst, yet they had a little grace in them, a little moisture, a little dew.

And they were persons driven by the wind, just as the clouds are — who do not move of themselves, but go because they must go — who have no power of themselves to move, but have something driving them behind. Brethren, we hope that the converts of this church have been driven to us

by the power of the Holy Ghost, and could not help coming, and they have been men filled with rain, which they will drop out upon us in copious showers, if God pleases. They have been like the clouds, which tarry not for man, neither wait for the sons of men. They are come with us now: and we hope to see the clouds go up higher and higher, into the air, until those clouds shall one by one, be swallowed up in Jesus, shall be lost in the one assembly of the First-born Church of the Holy Ghost. These are the persons who “fly as a cloud.”

We give thee yet another answer, O thou timid church. Those who come to join themselves with thee are persons who have been regenerated; for they are doves. They were not doves by nature; they were ravens; but they are doves now. They are changed from ravens into doves, from lions into lambs. Beloved, it is very easy for you to pretend to be the children of God; but it is not easy for you to be so. The old fable of the jackdaw dressed up in peacock’s feathers often takes place now. Many a time have we seen coming to our church, a fine strutting fellow, with long feathers of prayer behind him. He could pray gloriously; and he has come strutting in, with all his majesty and pride, and said, “Surely I must come; I have everything about me; am I not rich and polite? have I not learning and talent?” In a very little while we have found him to be nothing but an old prattling jackdaw, having none of the true feathers belonging to him; by some accident one of his borrowed feathers have dropped out, and we have found him to be a hypocrite. I beseech you, do not be hypocrites. The glory of the gospel is not that it paints ravens white, and whitewashes blackbirds, but that it turns them into doves. it is the glory of our religion not that it makes a man seem what he is not, but that it makes him something else. It takes the raven and turns him into a dove; his ravenish heart becomes a dove’s heart. It is not the feathers that are changed, but the man himself. Glorious Gospel, which takes a lion, and doth not cut the lion’s mane off, and then cover him with a sheep’s skin, but makes him into a lamb! O church of God! these that have come like doves to their windows are trophies of regenerating grace, which has transformed them, and made them as new creatures in Christ Jesus.

The last answer I shall give respecting those who have come to join themselves with us is, that they are those, we hope, who have fled to their windows, and found a refuge in Christ my Lord. There is nothing we want

to know of a person coming before the church, except this. Dost thou believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? Hast thou had pardon from his hands? Hast thou had union with his person? Dost thou hold communion with him day by day? Is he thy hope, thy stay, thy refuge, thy trust? If so, then thou mayest come in. If thou art one living in the dovecot we will not drive thee away; if thou hast fled like a dove to thy window, we are glad to have thee. But there is the anxious question — Have you fled to Christ? Beloved, there are some who think they have fled to Christ that have not; and there are some who think they have not fled to Christ that have. There are some of you who think yourselves safe for heaven, that are nothing but whitewashed sepulchers, like the Pharisees of old. It is a horrible thought, that there are some, we fear, who lay their head upon their death pillow, as they think, in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection, but will in hell lift up their eyes, being in torment. A dove, you know, can find good shelter for itself in other places beside a dovecot; there may be some little hole in the barn, and in there the dove gets and builds its nest, and is very happy and comfortable. Ah! dove, but there is no place that will protect you that is not a dovecot; and there is only one dovecot. You have built a nice snug nest perhaps in some of your trees; you are building your hope in some one of your merits; you are putting your trust in some of your own works. It is all in vain. There is only one dovecot. “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ and him crucified.” There is only one hope for a poor sinner from the justice of Jehovah; and that is in the “Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,” who “gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair.” Do you know how that dovecot was made for you? Do you know how it is lined for you, and how large the door is? It was made by Jesus, the carpenter’s son; it is lined with the blood of his own heart; and the door is so wide that the biggest sinner can get in, but he who has any righteousness will find that the door is not large enough to let him carry his righteousness with him. Poor soul! hast thou a dovecot? and art thou living in it? If so, we rejoice with thee, and glad enough should we be to have thee united with our church; for we love all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, lest thou shouldst not understand our holy religion, one moment shall suffice, and thou shalt go. Dost thou not know that the law which God made on Sinai has been broken by us all, and that God, the “jealous God,” will “by no means spare the guilty?” And dost thou not

know, O sinner, that thou must offer something to God, to make up a recompense for what thou hast done? Dost thou not know, that God is so angry with the man who sins, that he will damn that man, unless there is some one who will be damned for him, and suffer the punishment in his stead? And dost thou not know, that our religion is a religion of substitution — that Jesus Christ the Son of God became man; that he might take the punishment we ought to have had; that he bore the wrath we ought to have borne; that he took the guilt we committed, just as the scape-goat of old did, and carried it right away into the wilderness of forgetfulness; so that now a sinner who is putting his trust in that substitution can escape punishment. God's justice cannot demand payment twice —

"First at my bleeding Surety's hands,
And then again at mine."

Precious Jesus! what a substitute thou wast for guilt? Sweet Lord Jesus! I kiss thy wounds this day; thou Man! thou God! thou who didst wrestle with Jacob! thou who didst walk with Abraham, the man of God, of Mamre! thou who stoodst in the fiery furnace with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! Thou Son of God, thou Son of Man, who didst appear to Joshua with thy sword drawn! I worship thee, my substitute, my hope! Oh! that others might do so too, and that the whole of this vast multitude might, with one heart, accept him as their Savior!

THE ENCHANTED GROUND

SERMON NO. 64

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 3, 1856,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"Therefore let us not sleep, as do others: but let us watch and be sober." — 1 Thessalonians 5:6

As the spiritual guide of the flock of God along the intricate mazes of experience, it is the duty of the gospel minister to point out every turning of the road to heaven, to speak concerning its dangers or its privileges, and to warn any whom he may suspect to be in a position peculiarly perilous. Now, there is a portion of the road which leadeth from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City, which has in it, perhaps, more dangers than any other portion of the way. It doth not abound with lions; there are no dragons in it; it hath no dark woods, and no deep pitfalls; yet more seeming pilgrims have been destroyed in that portion of the road than anywhere else, and not even Doubting Castle, with all its host of bones, can show so many who have been slain there. It is the part of the road called the Enchanted Ground. The great geographer, John Bunyan, well pictured it when he said:

"I then saw in my dream that they went on till they came into a certain country, whose air naturally tended to make one drowsy, if he came a stranger into it. And here Hopeful began to be very dull, and heavy of sleep; wherefore he said unto Christian, I do now begin to grow so drowsy that I can scarcely hold up mine eyes; let us lie down here, and take one nap.

Christian: "By no means, said the other, lest sleeping we never awake more."

Hopeful: "Why, my brother? Sleep is sweet to the laboring man; we may be refreshed if we take a nap."

Christian: “Do you not remember that one of the shepherds bid us beware of the Enchanted Ground? He meant by that, that we should beware of sleeping; wherefore, ‘let us not sleep as others do, but let us watch and be sober.’“

There are no doubt, many of us, beloved, who are passing over this plain; and I fear that this is the condition of the majority of churches in the present day. They are lying down on the settles of Lukewarmness, in the Arbors of the Enchanted Ground. There is not that activity and zeal we could wish to see among them; they are not, perhaps, notably heterodox; they may not be invaded by the lion of persecution, but they are somewhat worse than that, — they are lying down to slumber, like Heedless and Too-Bold in the Arbor of Sloth. May God grant that his servants may be the means of arousing the church from its lethargy, and stirring it up from its slumbers, lest haply professors should sleep the sleep of death.

This morning I intend to show you what is meant by the state of sleep into which Christians sometimes fall; secondly, I shall use some considerations, if possible, to wake up such as are slumbering; thirdly, I shall mark sundry times when the Christian is most liable to fall asleep; and shall conclude by giving you some advice as to the mode in which you should conduct yourselves when you are passing over the Enchanted Ground, and feel drowsiness weighing down your eyelids.

I. First, what is that state of sleep into which the Christian man may fall? It is not death. He was dead once, but he is now alive in Christ Jesus; and therefore shall never die; but though a living man shall never die, being quickened by an immortal life, yet that living man may sleep; and that sleep is so nearly akin to death that I have known slumbering Christians mistaken for dead, carnal sinners. Come, beloved, let me picture to you the state of the Christian while he is in a condition of sleep.

First, sleep is a state of insensibility; and such is that state which too often falls upon even the best children of God. When a man is asleep he is insensible. The world goes on, and he knows naught about it. The watchman calls beneath his window, and he sleeps on still. A fire is in a neighboring street, his neighbor’s house is burned to ashes, but he is asleep, and knows it not. Persons are sick in the house, but he is not

awakened; they may die, and he weeps not for them. A revolution may be raging in the streets of his city; a king may be losing his crown; but he that is asleep shares not in the turmoil of politics. A volcano may burst somewhere near him, and he may be in imminent peril; but he escapeth not; he is sound asleep, he is insensible. The winds are howling, the thunders are rolling across the sky, and the lightnings flash at his window; but he that can sleep on careth not for these, and is insensible to them all. The sweetest music is passing through the street; but he sleeps, and only in dreams doth he hear the sweetness. The most terrific wailings may assail his ears; but sleep has sealed them with the wax of slumber, and he hears not. Let the world break in sunder, and the elements go to ruin, keep him asleep, and he will not perceive it. Christian, behold your condition. Have you not sometimes been brought into a condition of insensibility? You wished you could feel; but all you felt was pain because you could not feel. You wished you could pray. It was not that you felt prayerless, but it was because you did not feel at all. You sighed once; you would give a world if you could sigh now. You used to groan once; a groan now would be worth a golden star if you could buy it. As for songs, you can sing them, but then your heart does not go with them. You go to the house of God; but when "the multitude that keep holy day" in the full tide of song send their music up to heaven, you hear it, but your heart does not leap at the sound. Prayer goeth solemnly like the evening sacrifice up to God's throne; once you could pray, too; but now, while your body is in the house of God, your heart is not there. You feel you have brought the chrysalis of your being; but the fly is gone away from it; it is a dead, lifeless case. You have become like a formalist; you feel that there is not savor, that unction, in the preaching that there used to be. There is no difference in your minister, you know; the change is in yourself. The hymns and the prayers are just the same, but you have fallen into a state of slumber. Once, if you thought of a man's being damned, you would weep your very soul out in tears; but now you could sit at the very brink of hell, and hear its wailings unmoved. Once the thought of restoring a sinner from the error of his ways would have made you start from your bed at midnight, and you would have rushed through the cold air to help rescue a sinner from his sins. Now, talk to you about perishing multitudes, and you hear it as an old, old tale. Tell you of thousands swept by the mighty flood of sin onwards to the precipice of destruction, you express

your regret, you give your contribution, but your heart goeth not with it. You must confess that you are insensible. — not entirely, but too much so. You want to be awake: but you groan because you feel yourselves to be in this state of slumber.

Then, again, he that sleepeth is subject to divers illusions. When we sleep, judgment goeth from us, and fancy holdeth carnival within our brain. When we sleep, dreams arise and fashion in our head strange things. Sometimes we are tossed on the stormy deep, and anon we revel in king's palaces. We gather up gold and silver as if they were but the pebbles of the sea; and anon we are poor and naked, shivering in the blast. What illusions deceive us! The beggar in his dream becomes richer than Plautus, and the rich man as poor as Lazarus: the sick man is well, the healthy man hath lost his limbs, or is dead. Yea, dreams do make us descend to hell, or even carry us to heaven. Christian, if thou art one of the sleepy brotherhood, thou art subject to divers illusions. Strange thoughts come to thee which thou never hadst before. Sometimes thou doubtest if there be a God, or if thou dost exist thyself. Thou tremblest lest the gospel should not be true, and the old doctrine which once thou didst hold with a stern hand, thou art almost inclined to let go. Vile heresies assail thee. Thou thinkest that the Lord that bought thee was not the Son of God. The devil tells thee that thou art none of the Lord's, and thou dreamest that thou art cast away from the love of the covenant. Thou criest

"I would, but cannot sing;
I would, but cannot pray;"

and thou feelest as if it were all in question whether thou art one of the Lord's or no. Or perhaps thy dreams are brighter, and thou dreamest that thou art somebody, great and mighty, a special favorite of Heaven; pride puffs thee up; thou dreamest that thou art rich, and hast need of nothing, whilst thou art naked, poor, and miserable. Is this thy state, O Christian? If so, may God wake thee up from it!

Again, sleep is a state of inaction. No daily bread is earned by him that sleepeth. The man who is stretched upon his couch neither writeth books, nor tilleth the ground, nor plougheth the sea, nor doth aught else. His hands hang down, his pulse beateth, and life there is, but he is positively dead as to activity. O beloved, here is the state of many of you. How

many Christians are inactive! Once it was their delight to instruct the young in the Sabbath- school, but that is now given up. Once they attended the early prayer-meeting, but not now. Once they would be hewers of wood and drawers of water, but alas! they are asleep now. Am I talking of what may happen! Is it not too true almost universally? Are not the churches asleep? Where are the ministers that preach? We have men that read the manuscripts, and talk essays: but is that preaching? We have men that can amuse an audience for twenty minutes. Is that preaching? Where are the men that preach their hearts out, and say their soul in every sentence? Where are the men that make it, not a profession, but a vocation, the breath of their bodies, the marrow of their bones, the delight of their spirits? Where are the Whitefields and Wesleys now? Are they not gone, gone, gone? Where are the Rowland Hills now, who preached every day, and three times a day, and were not afraid of preaching everywhere the unsearchable riches of Christ? Brethren, the Church slumbers. It is not merely that the pulpit is a sentry-box with the sentinel fast asleep; but the pews are affected. How are the prayer-meetings almost universally neglected! Our own church stands out like an almost solitary green islet in the midst of a dark, dark, sea; one bright pearl in the depths of an ocean of discord and confusion. Look at neighboring churches. Step into the vestry, and see a smaller band of people than you would like to think of, assembled round the pastor, whose heart is dull and heavy. Hear one brother after another pour out the dull monotonous prayer that he has said by heart these fifty years; and then go away and say: “Where is the spirit of prayer, where the life of devotion?” Is it not almost extinct? Are not our churches “fallen, fallen, fallen from their high estate?” God wake them up, and send them more earnest and praying men!

Once more. The man who is asleep is in a state of insecurity. The murderer smiteth him that sleeps: the midnight robber plundereth his house that resteth listlessly on his pillow. Jael smiteth a sleeping Sisera. Abner taketh away the spear from the bolster of a slumbering Saul A sleeping Eutychus falleth from the third loft, and is taken up dead. A sleeping Samson is shorn of his locks, and the Philistines are upon him. Sleeping men are ever in danger; they cannot ward off the blow of the enemy, or strike another. Christian, if thou art sleeping, thou art in danger. Thy life, I know, can never be taken from thee; that is hid with Christ in God. But O! thou

mayest lose thy spear from thy bolster; thou mayest lose much of thy faith; and thy cruse of water, wherewith thou dost moisten thy lips, may be stolen by the prowling thief. O! thou little knowest thy danger. Even now the black-winged angel takes his spear, and standing at thy head, he says to Jesus (to David), "Shall I smite him? I will smite him but once." (David says) Our Jesus whispers, "Thou shalt not smite him. Take his spear and his cruse, but thou shalt not kill him." But O! awake, thou slumber! Start up from the place where thou now liest in thy insecurity! This is not the sleep of Jacob, in which ladders unite heaven and earth, and angels tread their ascending rounds; but this is the sleep where ladders are raised from hell, and devils climb upward from the pit to molest thy spirit.

II. This brings me to the second point, Some considerations to wake up sleepy Christians. I remember, once in my life, having a sleepy congregation. They had been eating too much dinner, and they came to the chapel in the afternoon very sleepy, so I tried an old expedient to rouse them. I shouted with all my might, "Fire! fire! fire!" when, starting from their seats, some of the congregation asked where it was; and I told them it was in hell, for such sleepy sinners as they were. So, beloved, I might cry "Fire! fire!" this morning, to waken sleepy Christians; but that would be a false cry, because the fire of hell was never made for Christians at all, and they need never tremble at it. The honor of God is engaged to save the meanest sheep; and whether that sheep is asleep or awake, it is perfectly safe, so far as final salvation is concerned. There are better reasons why I should stir up a Christian, and I shall use a very few of them.

And first, O Christian! awake from thy slumber, because thy Lord is coming. That is the grand reason used in the text. The apostle says, "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day." "Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." "Ye brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." O Christians! do you know that your Lord is coming? In such an hour as ye think not, the man who once hung quivering on Calvary will descend in glory; "The head that once was crowned with thorns" will soon be crowned with a diadem of brilliant jewels. He will come in the clouds of heaven to his church. Would you wish to be sleeping when your Lord comes? Do you want to be like the foolish virgins, or like the wise ones, either, who, while the bridegroom tarried, slumbered and slept? If our

Master were to appear this morning, are there not half of us in such a state that we should be afraid to see him? Why, you know, when a friend comes to your house, if he is some great man, what brushing and dusting there is. Every corner of the room has its cobwebs removed; every carpet is turned up; and you make every effort to have the house clean for his coming. What! and will you have your house dusty, and the spiders of neglect building the cobwebs of indolence in the corners of your house, when your Lord may arrive tomorrow? And if we are to have an audience with the Queen, what dressing there is! How careful will men be that everything should be put on aright, that they should appear properly in court dress! Do you not know, servant of the Lord, that you are to appear before the king in his beauty, and to see him soon on earth? What! will ye be asleep when he comes? When he knocks at the door, shall he have for an answer, "The good man is asleep; he did not expect you"? Oh, no; be ye like men who watch for their Lord, that at his coming he may find you ready. Ah! ye carnal professors, who attend plays and balls, would you like Christ to come and find you in the middle of your dance? would you like him to look you in the face in the opera? Ah! ye carnal tradesmen, ye can cheat, and then pray after it. Would you like Christ to find you cheating? Ye devour widows' houses, and for a show make long prayers. You would not mind him coming in the middle of your long prayer; but he will come just at that poor widow's house is sticking in your throat, just as you are swallowing the lands of the poor oppressed on, and putting in your pocket the wages of which you have defrauded the laborer. Then he will come; and how terrible will he be to such as you! We have heard of the sailor, who, when his ship was sinking, rushed to the cabin to steal a bag of gold, and though warned that he could no swim with it, tied it about his loins, leaped into the sea with it, and sank to rise no more. And I am afraid there be some rich men who know not how to use their money, who will sink to hell, strangled by their gold, hanging like millstones round their necks. O Christian, it shall not b so with you; but wake from thy slumbers, for thy Lord cometh.

But again, Christian, thou art benevolent; thou lovest men's souls, and I will speak to thee of that which will touch thy heart. Wilt thou sleep while souls are being lost? A brother here, some time ago, rushed into a house which was burning, and he saved a person from it; he then returned to his

wife, and what did she say to him? “Go back again, my husband, and see if you cannot save another. We will not rest till all are delivered.” Methinks that this is what the Christian man would say: “If I have been the means of saving one soul, I will not rest until I have saved another.” Oh, hast thou ever thought how many souls sink into hell every hour? Did the dreary thought that the death-knell of a soul is tolled by every tick of yonder clock, ever strike thee? Hast thou never thought that myriads of thy fellow creatures are in hell now, and that myriads more are hastening thither? and yet dost thou sleep? What! physician, wilt thou sleep while men are dying? Sailor, wilt thou sleep when the wreck is out at sea, and the life-boat is waiting for hands to man it! Christian, wilt thou tarry while souls are being lost? I do not say that thou canst save them — God alone can do that — but thou mayest be the instrument; and wouldst thou lose the opportunity of winning another jewel for thy crown in heaven? wouldst thou sleep while work is being done? Well, said the British king, at the battle of Agincourt, “Come on, and conquer.”

And gentlemen in England — now a-bed,
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here:
And hold their manhood cheap, when any speaks
That fought with us upon this glorious day.”

So methinks, when souls are being saved, Christians in bed may think themselves accursed they are not here. Sleep Christian, let me shout in thine ears — thou art sleeping while souls are being lost — sleeping while men are being damned — sleeping while hell is being peopled — sleeping while Christ is being dishonored — sleeping while the devil is grinning at thy sleepy face — sleeping while demons are dancing around thy slumbering carcase, and telling it in hell that a Christian is asleep. You will never catch the devil asleep; let not the devil catch you asleep. Watch, and be sober, that ye may be always up to do your duty.

I have no time to use other considerations, though the subject is large enough, and I should have no difficulty in finding sticks enough to beat a sleeping dog with. “Let us not sleep as do others.”

III. Now it may be asked, When is the Christian most liable to sleep?

First, I answer, he is most liable to sleep when his temporal circumstances are all right. When your nest is well feathered you are then most likely to

sleep; there is little danger of your sleeping when there is a bramble-bush in the bed. When all is downy, then the most likely thing will be that thou wilt say, “Soul, soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thy rest, eat, drink, and be merry.” Let me ask some of you, when you were more straightened in circumstances, when you had to rely upon providence each hour and had troubles to take to the throne of grace, were you not more wakeful than you are now? The miller who hath his wheel turned by a constant stream goes too sleep; but he that attendeth on the wind, which sometimes bloweth hard and sometimes gently, sleeps not, lest haply the full gust might rend the sails or there should not be enough to make them go round. Those who live by the day often sleep not by day, but they sleep in the night, — the sleep of the beloved. Easy roads tend to make us slumber. Few sleep in a storm; many sleep on a calm night. He is a brave boy, indeed, who can have his eyes sealed when “upon the high and giddy mast, in bosom of the rude imperious surge;” but he is no wonder who sleepeth when there is no danger. Why is the church asleep now? She would not sleep if Smithfield were filled with stakes, if Bartholomew’s tocsin were ringing in her ears; she would not sleep if Sicilian Vespers might be sung tomorrow’s eve; she would not sleep if massacres were common now. But what is her condition? Every man sitting under his own vine and his own fig tree, none daring to make him afraid. Tread softly! she is fast asleep. Wake up, church! or else we will cut down the fig tree about thine ears. Start up! for the figs are ripe, they hang into thy sleepy mouth, and thou art too lazy to bite them off.

Now another dangerous time is when all goes well in spiritual matters. You never read that Christian went to sleep when lions were in the way; he never slept when he was going through the river Death, or when he was in Giant Despair’s castle, or when he was fighting with Apollyon. Poor creature! he almost wished he could sleep then. But when he got halfway up the Hill Difficulty, and came to a pretty little arbor, in he went, and sat down and began to read his roll. O, how he rested himself! How he unstraped his sandals and rubbed his weary feet! Very soon his mouth was open, his arms hung down, and he was fast asleep. Again, the enchanted ground was a very easy, smooth place, and liable to send the pilgrim to sleep. You remember Bunyan’s description of some of the arbors: “Then they came to an arbor, warm, and promising much refreshing to the weary

pilgrims; for it was finely wrought above head, beautified with greens, and furnished with benches and settles. It had also in it a soft couch, where the weary might lean." "The arbor was called the Slothful's Friend, and was made on purpose to allure, if it might be, some of the pilgrims to take up their rest there when weary." Depend upon it, it is in easy places that men shut their eyes and wander into the dreamy land of forgetfulness. Old Erskine said a good thing when he remarked, "I like a roaring devil better than a sleeping devil." There is no temptation half so bad as not being tempted. The distressed soul does not sleep; it is after we get into confidence and full assurance that we are in danger of slumbering. Take care, thou who art full of gladness. There is no season in which we are so likely to fall asleep as that of high enjoyment. The disciples went to sleep after they had seen Christ transfigured on the mountain-top. Take heed, joyous Christian, good frames are very dangerous; they often lull you into a sound sleep.

Yet there is one more thing; and, if I ever were afraid of anything, I should fear to speck before my grave and reverend fathers in the faith the fact that one of the most likely places for us to sleep in is when we get near our journey's end. It is ill for a child to say that, and I will therefore back it up by the words of that great pilot John Bunyan: "For this enchanted ground is one of the last refuges that the enemy to pilgrims has; wherefore it is, as you see, placed almost at the end of the way, and so it standeth against us with the more advantage. For when, thinks the enemy, will these fools be so desirous to sit down as when they are weary? and when so like to be weary as when almost at their journey's end? Therefore it is, I say, that the enchanted ground is placed so nigh to the land Beulah, and so near the end of their race. Wherefore let pilgrims look to themselves, lest it happen to them as it has done to these that, as you see, are fallen asleep, and none can awake them." May a child speck to those who are far before him in years and experience? But I am not a child when I preach. In the pulpit we stand as ambassadors of God, and God knoweth nothing of childhood or age; he teacheth whom he willeth, and speaketh as he pleases. It is true, my brethren, that those who have been years in grace are most in danger of slumbering. Somehow we get into the routine of the thing; it is usual for us to go to the house of God; it is usual for us to belong to the church, and that of itself tends to make people sleepy. Go into some of your churches

in London, and you will hear a most delicious sermon preached to a people all sound asleep. The reason is that the service is all alike; they know when they have got to the third “Our Father which art in heaven.” when they have passed the confession general, and when they have got to the sermon, — which is the time to sleep for twenty minutes. If the minister should smite his fist ecclesiastic upon the Bible, or enliven his faculties with a pinch of snuff, or even use his pocket handkerchief, the people would wake up, because it would be something out of the usual course. Or if he uttered an odd sentiment, they might be aroused, and would probably think that he had broken the 59th commandment, in making some of the congregation smile. But he never violates decorum; he stands, the very mirror of modesty and the picture of everything that is orderly. I have digressed, but you will see what I mean. If we are always going on the same road we are liable to sleep. If Moab gets at ease, and is not emptied from vessel to vessel, he sleeps on, for he knows no change, and when years have worn our road with a rut of godliness, we are apt to throw the reins on our horse’s neck and sleep soundly.

IV. Now, lastly let me give a little good advice to the sleeping Christian. But, Christian, if thou art asleep, thou wilt not hear me. I will speck gently, then, and let thee sleep on. No, I will not, I will shout in thine ears, “Awake, thou that sleepest! Arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise. Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem. Put on thy glorious array, thou church of the living God.”

But now what is the best plan to keep awake when you are going across the enchanted ground? This book tells us that one of the best plans is to keep Christian company, and talk about the ways of the Lord. Christian and Hopeful said to themselves, “Let us talk together, and then we shall not sleep.” Christian said, “Brother, where shall we begin?” And Hopeful said, “We will begin where God began with us.” There is no subject so likely to keep a man awake as talking of the place where God began with him. When Christian men talk together they won’t sleep together. Hold Christian company, and you will not be so likely to slumber. Christians who isolate themselves and stand alone are very liable to lie down and sleep on the settle or the soft couch, and go to sleep; but, if you talk much together, as they did in old time, you will find it extremely beneficial. Two

Christians talking together of the ways of the Lord will go much faster to heaven than one; and when a whole church unite in specking of the Lord's loving kindness, verily, beloved, there is no way like that of keeping themselves awake.

Then let me remind you that if you will look at interesting things you will not sleep; and how can you be kept awake in the enchanted ground better than by holding up your Savior before your eyes? There are some things, it is said, which will not let men shut their eyes if they are held before them. Jesus Christ crucified on Calvary is one of them. I never knew a Christian go to sleep at the foot of the cross; but he always said —

"Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,
Which before the cross I spend."
And he said, too —
"Here I'd sit, for ever viewing
Mercies' streams in streams of blood."

But he never said, "Here I would lay down and sleep;" for he could not sleep with that shriek, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani," in his ears. He could not sleep with "It is finished!" going into his very soul. Keep thou near to the cross, Christian, and thou wilt not sleep.

Then I would advise thee to let the wind blow on thee; let the breath of the Holy Spirit continually fan thy temples, and thou wilt not sleep. Seek to live daily under the influence of the Holy Ghost; derive all thy strength from him, and thou wilt not slumber.

Lastly, labor to impress thyself with a deep sense of the value of the place to which thou art going. If thou rememberest that thou art going to heaven, thou wilt not sleep on the road. If thou thinkest that hell is behind thee, and the devil pursuing thee, I am sure thou wilt not be inclined to sleep. Would the man-slayer sleep if the avenger of blood were behind him, and the city of refuge before him? Christian, wilt thou sleep whilst the pearly gates are open; the songs of angels waiting for thee to join them; a crown decorated with delight to be worn upon thy brow? Ah, no!

"Forget the steps already trod,
And onward urge thy way."
"Weak as thou art, thou shalt not faint,
Or, fainting, shalt not die;
He feeds the strength of every saint,
He'll help thee from on high."

Dearly beloved, I have finished my sermon. There are some of you that I must dismiss, because I find nothing in the text for you. It is said, "Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober." There are some here who do not sleep at all, because they are positively dead; and, if it takes a stronger voice than mine to wake the sleeper, how much more mighty must be that voice which wakes the dead. Yet even to the dead I speck; for God can wake them, though I cannot. O, dead man! dost thou not know that thy body and thy soul are worthless carrion? that whilst thou art dead thou liest abhorred of God, abhorred of man? that soon the vultures of remorse will come and devour thy lifeless soul; and, though thou hast lived in this world these seventy years (perhaps) without God and without Christ, in thy last hour the vulture of remorse shall come and tear thy spirit; and, though thou laughest now at the wild bird that circles in the sky, he will descend upon thee soon, and thy death will be a bed of shrieks, howlings, and wailings, and lamentations and yells! Dost thou know more still, that afterwards that dead soul will be cast into Tophet; and, as in the East they burn the bodies, so thy body and thy soul together shall be burned in hell? Go not away and dream that this is a metaphor. It is truth. Say not it is a fiction; laugh not at it as a mere picture. Hell is a positive flame; it is a fire that burns the body, albeit that it burns the soul, too. There is physical fire for the body, and there is spiritual fire for the soul. Go thy way, O man; such shall be thy fate. E'en now thy funeral pile is building, thy years of sin have laid huge trees across each other; and see, the angel is flying down from heaven with a brand already lit; thou art lying dead upon the pile; he puts the brand to the base thereof; thy disease proves that the lower parts are kindling with the flame; those pains of thine are the crackling of the fire. It shall reach thee soon, thou poor diseased one; thou art near death, and when it reaches thee thou shalt know the meaning of the fire that is unquenchable, and the worm that dieth not. Yet while there is hope I will tell thee the gospel. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be," must be "damned." He that believeth on the Lord Jesus, that is, with a simple,

naked faith, comes and puts his trust in him, shall be saved, without anything else; but he that believeth not shall inevitably — hear it, men, and tremble — he that believeth not shall assuredly be damned.

P.S. — It is frequently objected that the preacher is censorious: he is not desirous of defending himself from the charge. He is confident that many are conscious that his charges are true, and if true, Christian love requires us to warn those who err; nor will candid men condemn the minister who is bold enough to point out the faults of the church and the age, even when all classes are moved to anger by his faithful rebukes, and pour on his head the full vials of their wrath. IF THIS BE VILE, WE PURPOSE TO BE VILER STILL. — C.H.S.

LIONS LACKING BUT THE CHILDREN SATISFIED

SERMON NO. 65

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 10, 1856,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

On behalf of the Baptist Fund for the Relief of Poor Ministers.

"The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." — Psalm 34:10.

Right truly did Paul say, "Whereby he hath given unto us exceeding great and precious promises;" for surely this promise is exceeding great indeed. In the entire compass of God's holy word, there is not to be found a precious declaration which can excel this in sweetness; for how could God promise to use more than all things? how could even his infinite benevolence stretch the line of his grace farther than it hath gone in this verse of the psalm? — "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." There is here no reserve; nothing is kept back; there is no solitary word of exception. There is no codicil in this will striking off the smallest portion of the estate; there is no caveat put in to warn us that there are domains upon which we must not intrude; a large field is laid before the children of God; a wide door is open, and no man can shut it. "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."

Now, we shall notice, first of all, the Christian character beautifully delineated. "They that seek the Lord;' secondly, we shall notice a promise set in a glorious light by a contrast, "they shall not want any good thing," although the young lions do lack and suffer hunger;" and thirdly, we shall consider whether we cannot bring some evidence to prove the fulfillment of the promise.

I. First, we have here a very short, but very beautiful DESCRIPTION OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN: he is said to "seek the Lord." "They that seek the Lord (Or Jehovah, as the original has it) shall not want any good thing." Ah! beloved, if some of us had the drawing up of this description we should have made it too narrow. Possibly some of you might have said, "They that seek the Lord in the established church, within the pale of the state religion, shall not lack any good thing;" others might have said, "They that seek the Lord in the orthodox Calvinistic manner shall not lack any good thing;" and others might have said, "They that seek the Lord in the Baptist fashion, or the Methodist fashion, or some other, shall not lack any good thing." But it is not written so. It is written, "They that seek the Lord," in order that it may take in the Lord's people of all classes and denominations, and all shades of character. It is a description very brief, yet full and comprehensive, including Christians in all stages and positions. Now let me show you that the Christian, in whatever portion of his spiritual history he may be, is one that seeks the Lord.

We commence with conviction of sin. That is where God begins with us, and no man is a Christian unless the Holy Spirit has revealed to him in his own entire helplessness, his want of merit, and absence of power ever to accumulate merit in the sight of God. Well, then, the man who is under a conviction of sin, and feels his need of a Savior — what is he doing? What is his occupation, now that he is hungering and thirsting after righteousness? Why, he is seeking the Lord. Ask him what is his one want, and he will say, 'Christ is all my desire: I rise early in the morning, and the first thought I have is, 'O that I knew where I might find him?' I am in my business, and my ejaculatory prayers go up to heaven like hands searching for Jesus; and when I lie down again upon my bed, my heart says, 'I seek him whom my soul loveth: I seek him, but I find him not.'" Such a man will offer prayer. Why? Not because there is any merit in it, not because he will be praised for it, but to seek the Lord. He turns the pages of Scripture, not as he would a book of philosophy, from curiosity, or for mere instruction, but to seek the Lord. He has one passion, one desire — to seek the Lord. For that he would barter his life, and be content to have his name cancelled from the register of men below, if he might but find the Lord Jesus, desiring above everything to have his name recorded in some humble place in the Lamb's book of life. Are you thus in the dim morn of

spiritual life seeking the Lord? Is he your one object of pursuit? Rejoice then, and tremble not, for the promise is to you in this earlier stage of your calling, when you are only just struggling into being, “They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”

But let us go a stage further on, when the Christian has found the Savior, and is justified, when he can say, in those sweet words I so often repeat,

“Now, freed from sin I walk at large,
My Jesu’s blood’s my full discharge.”

You will find that he has not left off seeking the Lord. No; he seeks now to know more of him; he seeks to understand more of the heights and depths, and lengths, and breadths of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. I ask any one here who has an assurance that he is a pardoned man, thoroughly justified and complete in Christ — are you not seeking the Lord? “Oh yes,” you say, “I thirst, I long to know more of him; I feel that all I have ever known of him is like the whispering of the sea in the shell, while the awful roar of the sea itself has not yet reached mine ears. I have heard the whisperings of Christ in some little mercy, and I have heard his bounties sing of bottomless, eternal, unchangeable love; but oh! I long to plunge into the sea itself, to bathe myself in the broad ocean of his infinite generosity and love to me.” No Christian ever fancies that he knows enough of his Master; there is no Christian who has found the Lord who does not desire to be better acquainted with him. “Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest,” is the cry of the man who has had his sins forgiven. He sitteth down at the feet of Jesus, and looketh up to him, and saith, “Master, teach me more; I am a little child; thou art a great instructor; oh! I long to love and learn more of thee.” He is ever seeking the Lord; and, in this more advanced stage, the promise to him is, “They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”

But go a little further on, when the Christian has scarcely ever a shadow of a doubt of his acceptance; he has progressed so far in spiritual life that he has attained to the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus; his faith has become so confident, that

“His steady soul doth fear no more
Than solid rocks when billows roar.”

He can read his “title clear to mansions in the skies;” he has climbed the Delectable Mountain; his feet are standing fast upon a rock, and his goings are established; but even then he is seeking the Lord. In the highest flights of his assurance, on the topmost pinnacle of his faith, there is something yet beyond. When he had sailed farthest into the sea of Acceptance, there are Fortunate Isles that he hath not reached; there is an ultima thule, a distant land, that he hath not yet seen. He is still seeking the Lord; he feels that he has “not yet attained;” he is still “pressing forward to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” But then he seeks the Lord in a different fashion; he seeks him that he may put a crown on his head; he is not seeking him for mercy, but to give him praise. Oh, that my heart could find thee! that all its strings might sing sweet music to thee. Oh that my mouth could find thine ear, and that I might bid it open and listen to the whisper of my song. Oh that I knew where thou didst dwell, that I might sing hard by the eaves of thy habitation, and that thou mightest hear me ever — that I might perpetually send the songs of my gratitude up to thy sacred courts? I seek thee that I may break the alabaster box of praise on thy dear sacred head. I seek thee that I may put my soul upon the altar, and sacrifice my living self to thee. I seek thee, that I may go where cherubim are singing, whom I envy, because they

“All night long unwearied sing
High praises to the Eternal King.”

I will seek thee in business, that there I may adorn the doctrine of God my Savior in all things. I will seek thee in my songs that I may hymn thy praise. I will seek thee in my musings, that I may magnify the Lord in my thoughts. I will seek thee in my words, that my conversation may show forth thy praise. I will seek thee in my gifts of benevolence, that I may be like my Savior. I will seek thee ever, for enough I have attained to know that I am thine and thou art mine, though I have nought else to ask of thee, seeing thou hast given me thyself; though thou art

“Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh,
My kinsman near allied by blood,”
though now my soul stands perfect in thee, and
“Not a shadow of a spot
Can on my soul be found,”

yet still I will seek thee-seek to honor thee-seek to kiss those blessed feet that bled for me — seek to worship that dear "man who once on Calvary died," and put crowns of eternal unfading honor upon his blessed, thorn-crowned, but now exalted brow.

Then bring the Christian to the last period of life, to the brink of death. Set him on those hoary rocks that skirt the edge of Jordan; let him sit there, looking down at the dark stream rolling rapidly below, not afraid to wade it, but rather wishing to die that he may be with Jesus. Ask the old man what he is doing, and he will answer, "Seeking the Lord." But I thought thou hadst found him many a year, old man? "So I have, but when I found him I sought him more; and I am seeking him now — seeking him that I may be complete in him, at his appearing; that I may be like him when I shall see him as he is. I have sought to understand more of his love to me, and now I do not know it all. I know as much as mortal can know; I am living in the land of Beulah. See this bunch of spices; angel hands have brought it to me, a present from my King; here are tokens of his love, his mercy, and his grace. And dost not see yonder the golden light of the celestial city? and didst not hear just now the sweet singing of the angels?" "Nay, nay," saith the young man, "I hear them not." "But," the old man replies, "I am on the edge of Jordan, and my ears are open, whereas thine are dull, still I am doing what I have done all my life-long — seeking the Lord, and till this pulse shall cease its perpetual beating, I will still seek him, that dying, I may clasp him in my arms, the antidote of death."

You will readily confess that this description of a Christian is invariably correct. You may take the youngest child of God — yon little boy ten years old, who has just been baptized, and received into the church. Ask what he is doing? "Seeking the Lord." Follow him till he becomes a middle-aged man with all the cares of life about him. Ask what he is doing then? Still he answers, "Seeking the Lord." Put a few grey hairs upon his head, and let him know that half a century has gone. Again, ask what he is doing? "Seeking the Lord." Then make his head all frosty with the winters of old age, and ask him the same question; and he will still reply, "Seeking the Lord." Take away those hairs until the head is entirely bald, and the man is trembling on the grave; what is he doing then? "Seeking the Lord." Ay, as long as we are in this body, whatever our position, or condition, this will ever apply to us: "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."

But let us not leave this one point without asking you one solemn question. Will you answer it? I beseech you to answer it to yourselves. Are ye seeking the Lord? Nay; some of you there, if you only can have your bottle of wine and your fowl, that will satisfy you better than seeking the Lord. There is another — give you health and strength and let you enjoy the pleasures of this world, and that will be better to you than seeking the Lord. There is another flying in the face of the Almighty, cursing and swearing — you are not seeking the Lord. Another is here this morning who once thought that he did seek the Lord, but he has left off doing it now; he went away from us because he was not of us, for, "if he had been of us, he doubtless would have continued with us." There is a young woman who thought she sought the Lord once, but she has gone astray, she has backslidden, proving that after all that it was mere excitement. Would God I could include you all in this promise this morning; but can I, dare I, must I? No, I must not. As the Lord liveth, if you are not seeking the Lord, the devil is seeking you; if you are not seeking the Lord, judgment is at your heels. Even now, the swift-winged angel of justice is holding the torch before the fierce messenger of vengeance who, with his naked dagger, is about to execute the wrath of God upon your spirit. Ah! take no lease of your lives; fancy not that you are to live for ever. If you have not sought the Lord, as Jonathan Edwards said, "thou standest over the mouth of hell upon a single plank, and that plank is rotten." You are hanging over hell by a single rope, and all the strands of the rope are creaking, snapping, breaking. Remember after death, judgment; and after judgment, woe; and after woe, nought; for woe, woe, woe, must be for ever. "The wrath to come! The wrath to come! The wrath to come!" It needs a damned spirit to start from the grave to preach to you, and let you know something of it; but though one should rise from the grave with all the scars of all his torments upon him, with his hair all crisp by the hot fire of vengeance, his body scorched in the flames which no abatement know, though he should tell you with a tear at every word and a groan as a stop at every sentence, and a deep sigh on every syllable, how horribly he feels, how damnably he is tormented, still ye would not repent. Therefore we will say little of it. May God the Holy Ghost seek you, and then you will seek him, and you shall be turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God.

II. Now we come to THE PROMISE SET FORTH BY WAY OF CONTRAST. "they shall not want any good thing:" that is the jewel. "The young lions do lack and suffer hunger;" that is the foil to set off the jewel and make it shine more brightly. "They shall not want any good thing." I can hardly speak of that, for there is too much to say. Did you never see a horse let into a wide field where the grass grew so thickly, that he scarcely knew where to begin to eat? If not, you have seen children taken into the field where wild flowers grow; it is so full of them in their liveries of white and yellow that the children know not where to pluck first, they have so wide a choice. That is how I feel when I have such a text as this: "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." We have heard of the celebrated cheque for a million pounds which has been preserved; here is one for millions of millions. Here is a promise wide as our wants, large as our necessities, deep as our distresses. There are some persons whose ambitious desires are very much like the Slough of Despond, which, though the king's laborers cast in thousands of tons of good material, never could be filled up. But the Lord can fill them. However bottomless our desires, however deep our wishes, however high our aspirations, all things meet in this promise, "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."

We take it concerning things spiritual. Are we wanting a sense of pardon? We shall not want it long. Are we desiring stronger faith? We shall not want it long. Do you wish to have more love to your Savior, to understand more concerning inward communion with Jesus? You shall have it. "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." Do you desire to renounce your sins, to be able to overcome this corruption or that? to attain this virtue, or that excellency? "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." Is it adoption, justification, sanctification, that thou wantest? "Thou shalt not lack any good thing."

But are thy wants temporal? Dost thou want bread and water? No, I know thou dost not, for it is said, "Bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure." Or, if thou dost want it somewhat, it shall come before long; it shall not be to starvation. David said, "I have been young and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." Do you want clothes? You shall have them. "He that clothes the lilies of the valley, will he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" Do you

need temporary supplies. You, shall receive them, for “your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.” Whatever your desire, there is the promise, only go and plead it at the throne, and God will fulfill it. We have no right to look for the fulfillment of the promises unless we put the Promiser in mind of them, although truly, at times, he exceeds our desires or wishes. He gives us these promises as his notes of hand, his bills of exchange, and if we do not take our notes to get them cashed at the throne it is our fault, for the promise is just as good: “they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”

But here is a contrast, and we will proceed to that at once. “The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.” The old Psalter has it: “The rich had need, and they hungered; but seekers of the Lord shall not be lessed of all good.” It appears that there is only the difference of a very little mark in the Hebrew between the words “mighty men” and “young lions.” But it is of very little consequence for, doubtless “the young lions” are put by way of figure to denominate certain characters of men who do “lack and suffer hunger.”

There are certain men in the world who, like the lions, are kings over others. The lion is lord of the forest, and at his roar others tremble; so are there men who walk about among us — noblemen, respectable, great, honorable — persons who are had in reverence and esteem; and they suppose, sometimes, because they are lions they are sure never to have any spiritual hunger. They are great and mighty men; they have no need of a Savior. Are they not the elders of the city? are they not mighty men of valor? are they not noble and great! They are, moreover, so excellent in their own esteem that their proper language seems to be when they come before their Maker’s bar: “Lord, I had not a very bad nature, and wherein it was a little bad, I made the best of it! and wherein I did not do quite as well as I ought, Jesus Christ will make it up.” Talk to these men about being depraved! “Rubbish!” they say; they know better; their heart is pure enough. They have no need of the Holy Spirit; they are young lions; you small mice may want it, but not they indeed! They have no need of another’s righteousness to cover them; their old shaggy mane is glory enough to them. But do you know these young lions “lack and suffer hunger;” ay, even when we do not know anything about it? They can play bombast before men, but they “lack and suffer hunger” when they are

alone. A suspicion often crosses their minds that their righteousness is not good for much; they know very well that while they can make a long prayer the poor widow's house sticks in their throat; that while they boast of their good works they are no better than they should be. You may think, perhaps, like David, that "they are not plagued like other men." But you don't know that. They are very often plagued when they do not tell you. When they roar so loudly their mane scarcely covers their bare ribs. "The young lions do lack and suffer hunger;" but, blessed be God, "they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." Poor and helpless though they are, having no works of righteousness of their own, confessing their sin and depravity, they shall want no good thing. Is it not amazing? There is a poor sinner who has sinned against God and in every way dishonored his name; yet he cannot lack any good thing.

"Poor, helpless worms in Christ possess
Grace, wisdom, peace, and righteousness."

Again, by young lions we may understand men of cunning and men of wisdom. The lion goeth out at night, and prowleth silently through the jungle. It hath a keen scent, and knoweth where to find its prey. It scenteth the fountain, and knoweth that the antelope will go there to drink. When he comes, the lion croucheth down, with wild eyes looks upon him, and in a moment, ere the antelope is aware, he is in the fangs of the lion. Men of cunning and wisdom — have you not seen such? Have you not heard their boastful exclamation, "Submit myself to a dogmatical preacher! No, sir, I will not. Believe in the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures! I cannot believe in any such absurdity. Sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of him in the Scriptures! No, sir, I cannot. I like something to discuss; I like an intellectual religion; I cannot believe everything simply because God says it. I want to be allowed to judge for myself. Am I not wise learned?" And when he sees us in distress, sometimes he says, "Nonsense! you have no brains! you, poor Calvinists must be bereft of your senses." And yet we can show as many men of sense as they can, and we are not afraid of them, however much they glory in their wisdom. But sometimes the poor Christian is frightened by them; he cannot answer their sophisms; he does not see his way through their labyrinths, and cannot escape from their nets. Well, don't try to escape from them. Let them talk on; the best answer is often silence. But do you know that these young lions so

gloriously self-sufficient when in argument with you, in secrecy often "lack and suffer hunger?" There was never an infidel in the world that did not suffer spiritual hunger, though he might not confess it. His creed did not satisfy him; there was a hollow place, an aching void somewhere, which the world could never fill. But "they that seek the Lord," who take the Scriptures for their guide, who bow implicity to the words of Jehovah, "do not lack any good thing." They feel no hollow unoccupied; Christ has filled their hearts, and they are satisfied with his presence and his love. "The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."

Again, the young lions denote those who are very strong, so that they hope to save themselves, and very swift in their course of profession. Some are very fierce in the matter of religion, very anxious to obtain salvation; and they are very strong, so that they think it scorn to borrow strength of another. Like the Jews, they follow after righteousness, but they do not attain it because they seek it by the works of the law. Have you never seen what they will do? There is a goodly chapel they have built; they are engaged at six o'clock in the morning at prayers, and repeat so many Ave Marias and Pater-nosters; then comes the daily service, the mass, and all that rubbish — the messe, as they call it in France, and verily a mess it is; then they whip themselves, fetch blood from their bodies, and perform all kinds of penances. Even among Protestants, meritmongery is not quite gone by; for there be many who are full of holy works, in which they are thursting for salvation. The poor Christian says, "I cannot perform all these works; I wish it were in my power to serve the Lord more devoutly." But dost thou not know that these "young lions do lack, and suffer hunger?" The formalist is never satisfied with all his forms; the hypocrite is never contented; there is always something he misses that makes his heart ache.

Then we may take it in a temporal sense. Young lions may mean deep cunning schemers. Have you never seen men with their thousand schemes and plans to make themselves rich, men who can overreach others, who are so subtle that you cannot see through them? Their instinct seems to be cunning. They are always lying in wait to take advantage of others; they prowl the world around, to seize on the helpless widow and the defenceless orphan. Or, perhaps, they may be following more legitimate

schemes yet, such as are full of speculation and will involve the exercise of all their wits. Surely such can live if others stand. But no, they are just the men who “lack and suffer hunger;” their schemes all prove futile; the arrow which they shoot returneth on their own head and woundeth them. But they who lie gently down in passive faith, singing

“Father, I wait thy daily will;
Thou shalt divide my portion still,
Give me on earth what seems thee best,
‘Till death and heaven reveal the rest,”
do not lack any good thing.

Again, by “young lions,” we may understand “rich men” — men who have abundance. We have known persons who have ridden in fine carriages and dwelt in noble mansions, brought to the depths of poverty. Every now and then we hear of men, almost millionares, who are turned out into the very streets. Kings have walked our soil without their crowns, and nobles even now are living on our charity. Daughters of men in high positions have to work as menials, and long sometimes to be allowed to do that. The rich sometimes “lack, and suffer hunger;” but they that wait on the Lord,” poor as they may be, “do not lack any good thing.”

Again, this may apply to you who earn your living by bodily labor. Perhaps you are a weak and sickly man; you are not one of the “young lions,” like your neighbor, a strong big fellow, who can earn his day’s wages without the least difficulty. He says to you, perhaps, “I shouldn’t like to be such a poor lean thing as you are. If you should be ill, what would become of you? You trust in Providence, but I trust in my big arms. The best providence is to take care of yourself — to go and eat a good dinner, and keep yourself in trim.” Nay, nay; have you not seen those young lions, “lack and suffer hunger?” Our missionary can tell of strong men whom he visits, who cannot find employment, but are brought almost to starvation; while he does not find that they that wait on the Lord lack any good thing. Don’t be afraid because you have a sick and weakly frame; labor as hard as you can, and be sure, that if you wait on the Lord you will not lack any good thing.

Once more, the lion is a creature that overcomes and devours all others. We have some such in our society; you find them everywhere. They put their hand upon you, and you feel you are in a vice. They understand law better

than you do: and woe be to you if you make a mistake! won't they take advantage of you? So in business they can always over-reach you; like sharks, if they do not devour you altogether, they leave you minus a leg or an arm. Yes, but you have seen these men, too, "lack and suffer hunger." And amongst all the miserable miscreants that walk the earth, there is none so destitute as the young lion that lacks, and suffers hunger. He puts his money into a bag full of holes; and methinks hell laughs at the covetous man, at him who grasps his neighbour's wealth. "Ha! ha!" says the devil, "damn thy soul to win — nothing! send thy soul to hell to win — a dream! A thing which thou hadst, but is gone; thou didst grasp it — it was a shadow! Sold thine immortal spirit to win a bubble which burst in thy grasp." Christian, do not be concerned about temporal things; trust in God; for while "young lions do lack, and suffer hunger, they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.

III. And now, I come to the third part, which is THE FULFILMENT OF THE PROMISE. Time fails me, and I shall not try to prove to you that God can in the ordinary course of his providence make a distinction between the righteous and the wicked; that would be an easy task. While God has the hearts of all men under his control, he can make the rich give where he pleases; and he can influence the church, and those that love the Lord, always to take care of the Lord's poor. But I am going to state one or two facts by way of stimulating you to assist me in the noble enterprise of endeavoring to support the poor disabled ministers of the everlasting gospel. Amongst the particular Baptists we have a fund called the Baptists Fund. It was instituted in 1717, in order to afford assistance to ministers in England and Wales, who were in poverty and distress, in consequence of the inability of their churches and congregations to furnish them with a competent maintenance for themselves and their families. During nearly a century and a half, it has carried out, so far as its funds were sufficient, the benevolent purposes for which it was established. It publishes its accounts yearly; and from the last printed statement for 1854-5, it appears that in that year, one hundred and sixty-five cases were relieved in England, and sixty-five in the Principality, by grants in money to the amount of *L*1,560, no one receiving a larger sum than *L*10, and no grant being in any case made where the minister's income from every source exceed *L*80. In addition to the money grants, books also of the value together of

*L*155 have been presented to thirty-five poor ministers unable to purchase them. Towards raising the necessary funds to meet these cases, collections are annually made in this and in number, character, and circumstances of the objects to be relieved, and the purpose for which the relief is afforded are considered, it will be well understood that this is no ordinary collection. We have the right of four votes, one for the pastor and three messengers sent by us, owing to our fathers having in olden times deposited *L*150 by way of starting the fund, the interest of which sum, and of that given by other churches, is spent every year. Different legacies having been left by other persons, a considerable sum has accumulated, and I believe the yearly income is somewhere about *L*2,000 at the present time. We need, however, much more. I am not going to detain you long by telling you about the fund, but I will read you one or two letters from the recipients. The first is from an old minister aged eighty.

[It is thought best not to print these, lest the worthy men who wrote them should feel aggrieved.]

I think I need add nothing more to move you. There are many poor ministers now, who, when they go up the pulpit stairs, are obliged to hold their arms pretty close to their bodies lest they should rend their coats to pieces; and I have seen them with such coats on, as you would not like to put on if you were going into the meanest chapel in London. I have myself found livery for some of these holy men year by year, but one person cannot supply the necessities of all. I know the case of a preacher who walked to a chapel, within ten miles of this spot, and preached in the morning, and walked back again; he also preaching in the evening, and had to walk back to his house; and what do you think the deacons gave him? The poor man had nothing else to live upon, and he was nearly eighty years of age. When he had finish (oh! don't hear it, ye angels! pray shut up your ears) they gave him — a shilling! That was for his day's work. Another brother told me some time ago that he preached three sermons, walking eight miles and back again and going dinnerless all the while; and the deacons gave him the munificent sum of — half-a-crown! Oh! if you knew all the circumstances connected with the fund, you would not long restrain your benevolence. The funds are mostly given to those who preach the gospel — gospel ministers of the best sort, men who preach what we consider to be gospel — Calvinistic sentiments. And the funds

must always be given in that way, for so the deed directs it. I bless God for this society, and I ask you, under God, to take care of it, that while "the young lions do lack, and suffer hunger," the ministers of the Lord shall "not want any good thing."

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

SERMON NO. 66-7

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 17, 1856,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both the of the just and unjust." — Acts 24:15.

Reflecting the other day upon the sad state of the churches at the present moment, I was led to look back to apostolic times, and to consider wherein the preaching of the present day differed from the preaching of the apostles. I remarked the vast difference in their style from the set and formal oratory of the present age. I remarked that the apostles did not take a text when they preached, nor did they confine themselves to one subject, much less to any place of worship, but I find that they stood up in any place and declared from the fullness of their heart what they knew of Jesus Christ. But the main difference I observed was in the subject of their preaching. Surprised I was when I discovered that the very staple of the preaching of the apostles was the resurrection of the dead. I found myself to have been preaching the doctrine of the grace of God, to have been upholding free election, to have been leading the people of God as well as I was enabled into the deep things of his word; but I was surprised to find that I had not been copying the apostolic fashion half as nearly as I might have done. The apostles when they preached always testified concerning the resurrection of Jesus, and the consequent resurrection of the dead. It appears that the Alpha and the Omega of their gospel was the testimony that Jesus Christ died and rose again from the dead according to the Scriptures. When they chose another apostle in the room of Judas, who had become apostate, Acts 1:22, they said, "One must be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection;" so that the very office of an apostle

was to be a witness of the resurrection. And well did they fulfill their office. When Peter stood up before the multitude, he declared unto them that "David spoke of the resurrection of Christ." When Peter and John were taken before the council, the great cause of their arrest was that the rulers were grieved :because they taught the people and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead." Acts 4:2. When they were set free, after having been examined, it is said, "With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all." Acts 4:33. It was this which stirred the curiosity of the Athenians when Paul preached among them, "They said, he seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods, because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection of the dead." And this moved the laughter of the Areopagites, for when he spoke of the resurrection of the dead, "Some mocked, and others said, we will hear thee again of this matter." Truly did Paul say, when he stood before the council of the Pharisees and Sadducees, "Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am called in question." And equally truly did he constantly assert, "IF Christ be not risen from the dead, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is vain, and ye are yet in your sins." The resurrection of Jesus and the resurrection of the righteous is a doctrine which we believe, but which we too seldom preach or care to read about. Though I have inquired of several booksellers for a book specially upon the subject of the resurrection, I have not yet been able to purchase one of any sort whatever; and when I turned to Dr. Owen's works, which are a most invaluable storehouse of divine knowledge, containing much that is valuable on almost every subject; I could find, even there, scarcely more than the slightest mention of the resurrection. It has been set down as a well known truth, and therefore has never been discussed. Heresies have not risen up respecting it; it would almost have been a mercy if there had been, for whenever a truth is contested by heretics, the orthodox fight strongly for it, and the pulpit resounds with it every day. I am persuaded, however, that there is much power in this doctrine; and if I preach it this morning you will see that God will own the apostolic preaching, and there will be conversions. I intend putting it to the test now, to see whether there be not something which we cannot perceive at present in the resurrection of the dead, which is capable of moving the hearts of men and bringing them into subjection to the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

There are very few Christians who believe the resurrection of the dead. You may be surprised to hear that, but I should not wonder if I discovered that you yourself have doubts on the subject. By the resurrection of the dead is meant something very different from the immortality of the soul: that, every Christian believes, and therein is only on a level with the heathen, who believes it too. The light of nature is sufficient to tell us that the soul is immortal, so that the infidel who doubts it is a worse fool even than a heathen, for he, before Revelation was given, had discovered it — there are some faint glimmerings in men of reason which teach that the soul is something so wonderful that it must endure forever. But the resurrection of the dead is quite another doctrine, dealing not with the soul, but with the body. The doctrine is that this actual body in which I now exist is to live with my soul; that not only is the "vital spark of heavenly flame" to burn in heaven, but the very censer in which the incense of my life doth smoke is holy unto the Lord, and is to be preserved for ever. The spirit, every one confesses, is eternal; but how many there are who deny that the bodies of men will actually start up from their graves at the great day? Many of you believe you will have a body in heaven, but you think it will be an airy fantastic body, instead of believing that it will be a body like to this — flesh and blood (although not the same kind of flesh, for all flesh is not the same flesh), a solid, substantial body, even such as we have here. And there are yet fewer of you who believe that the wicked will have bodies in hell; for it is gaining ground everywhere that there are to be no positive torments for the damned in hell to affect their bodies, but that it is to be metaphorical fire, metaphorical brimstone, metaphorical chains, metaphorical torture. But if ye were Christians as ye profess to be, ye would believe that every mortal man who ever existed shall not only live by the immortality of his soul, but his body shall live again, that the very flesh in which he now walks the earth is as eternal as the soul, and shall exist for ever. That is the peculiar doctrine of Christianity. The heathens never guessed or imagined such a thing; and consequently when Paul spoke of the resurrection of the dead, "Some mocked," which proves that they understood him to speak of the resurrection of the body, for they would not have mocked had he only spoken of the immortality of the soul, that having been already proclaimed by Plato and Socrates, and received with reverence.

We are now about to preach that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. We shall consider first the resurrection of the just; and secondly, the resurrection of the unjust.

I. There shall be A RESURRECTION OF THE JUST.

The first proof I will offer of this, is, that it has been the constant and unvarying faith of the saints from the earliest periods of time. Abraham believed the resurrection of the dead, for it is said in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 11. verse 19, that he "accounted that God was able to raise up Isaac even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." I have no doubt that Joseph believed in the resurrection, for he gave commandment concerning his bones; and surely he would not have been so careful of his body if he had not believed that it should be raised from the dead. The Patriarch Job was a firm believer in it, for he said in that oft repeated text, Job. 19:25, 26

> "For I know that my Redeemer liveth; and that he shall stand at the latter-day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."

David believed it beyond the shadow of a doubt, for he sang of Christ, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption." Daniel believed it, for he said, that "Many who sleep in the dust shall rise, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting contempt." Souls do not sleep in the dust; bodies do. It will do you good to turn to one or two passages and see what these holy men thought. For instance, in Isaiah, ch. 26:19, you read:

> "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."

We will offer no explanation. The text is positive and sure. Let another prophet speak — Hosea, ch. 6. verses 1 and 2:

> "Come and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight."

Although this does not declare the resurrection, yet it uses it as a figure which it would not do were it not regarded as a settled truth. It is declared by Paul, also, in Hebrews 11:35, that such was the constant faith of the martyrs; for he says, “Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.” All those holy men and women, who, during the time of the Maccabees, stood fast by their faith, and endured the fire and sword, and tortures unutterable, believed in the resurrection, and that resurrection stimulated them to give their bodies to the flames, not caring even for death, but believing that thereby they should attain to a blessed resurrection. But our Savior brought the resurrection to light in the most excellent manner, for he explicitly and frequently declared it. “Marvel not,” said he, “at what I have said unto you. Behold the hour cometh when they that are in their graves shall hear the voice of God.” “The hour is coming when he will call the dead to judgment, and they shall stand before his throne.” Indeed, throughout his preaching, there was one continued flow of firm belief, and a public and positive declaration of the resurrection of the dead. I will not trouble you with any passages from the writings of the Apostles; they abound therewith. In fact, Holy Scripture is so full of this doctrine that I marvel, brethren, that we should so soon have departed from the stedfastness of our faith, and that it should be believed in many churches that the actual bodies of the saints will not live again, and especially that the bodies of the wicked will not have a future existence. We maintain as our text doth, that “there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.”

A second proof, we think, we find in the translation of Enoch and Elijah to heaven. We read of two men who went to heaven in their bodies. Enoch “was not; for God took him;” and Elijah was carried to heaven in a chariot of fire. Neither of these men left his ashes in the grave: neither left his body to be consumed by the worm, but both of them in their mortal frames (changed and glorified doubtless) ascended up on high. Now, those two were the pledge to us that all of us shall rise in the same manner. Would it be likely that two bright spirits would sit in heaven clothed in flesh, while the rest of us were unclothed? Would it be at all reasonable that Enoch and Elijah should be the only saints who should have their bodies in heaven, and that we should be there only in our souls — poor souls! longing to have our bodies again. No; our faith tells us that these

two men having safely gone to heaven, as John Bunyan hath it, by a bridge that no one else trod, by which they were not under the necessity to wade the river, we shall also rise from the flood, and our flesh shall not for ever dwell with corruption.

There is a remarkable passage in Jude, where it speaks of Michael the Archangel contending with the devil about the body of Moses, and using no “railing accusation.” Now, this refers to the great doctrine of angels watching over the bones of the saints. Certainly, it tells us that the body of Moses was watched over by a great archangel; the devil thought to disturb that body, but Michael contended with him about it. Now would there be a contention about that body if it had been of no value? Would Michael contend for that which was only to be the food of worms? Would he wrestle with the enemy for that which was to be scattered to the four winds of heaven, never to be united again into a new and goodlier fabric? No; assuredly not. From this we learn that an angel watches over every tomb. It is no fiction, when on the marble we carve the cherubs with their wings. There are cherubs with outstretched wings over the head of the grave-stones of all the righteous; ay, and where “the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep,” in some nook o’ergrown by nettles, there an angel standeth night and day to watch each bone and guard each atom, that at the resurrection those bodies, with more glory than they had on earth, may start up to dwell for ever with the Lord. The guardianship of the bodies of the saints by angels proves that they shall rise again from the dead.

Yet, further, the resurrections that have already taken place give us hope and confidence that there shall be a resurrection of all saints. Do you not remember that it is written, when Jesus rose from the dead many of the saints that were in their graves arose, and came into the city, and appeared unto many? Have ye not heard that Lazarus, though he had been dead three days, came from the grave at the word of Jesus? Have you never read how the daughter of Jarius awoke from the sleep of death when he said, “Talitha cumi?” Have you never seen him at the gates of Nain, bidding that widow’s son rise from the bier? Have you forgotten that Dorcas who made garments for the poor, sat up and saw Peter after she had been dead? And do you not remember Eutychus who fell from the third loft and was taken up dead, but who, at the prayer of Paul, was raised again? Or, does not your memory roll back to the time when hoary Elijah stretched himself

upon the dead child, and the child breathed, and sneezed seven times, and his soul came to him? Or have you not read that when they buried a man, as soon as he touched the prophet's bones he rose again to life? These are pledges of the resurrection; a few specimens, a few chance gems flung into the world to tell us how full God's hand is of resurrection jewels. He hath given us proof that he is able to raise the dead by the resurrection of a few, who afterwards were seen on earth by infallible witnesses.

We must now, however, leave these things, and refer you once more to the Holy Spirit by way of confirming the doctrine that the saints' bodies shall rise again. The chapter in which you will find one great proof is in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, 6:13:

> "Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord;
> and the Lord for the body."

The body, then, is the Lord's. Christ died not only to save my soul, but to save my body. It is said he "came to seek and to save that which was lost." When Adam sinned he lost his body, and he lost his soul too; he was a lost man, lost altogether. And when Christ came to save his people, he came to save their bodies and their souls. "Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord." Is this body for the Lord, and shall death devour it? Is this body for the Lord, and shall winds scatter its particles far away where they never shall discover their fellows? No! the body is for the Lord, and the Lord shall have it. "And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise us by his own power." Now look at the next verse: "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ." Not merely is the soul a part of Christ — united to Christ, but the body is also. These hands, these feet, these eyes, are members of Christ, if I be a child of God. I am one with him, not merely as to my mind, but one with him as to this outward frame. The very body is taken into union. The golden chain which binds Christ to his people goes round the body and soul too. Did not the apostle say "they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church?" — Ephesians 5:31, 32. "They are one flesh;" and Christ's people are not only one with him in spirit, but they are "one flesh" too. The flesh of man is united with the flesh of the God-man; and our bodies are members of Jesus Christ.

Well, while the head lives the body cannot die; and while Jesus lives the members cannot perish. Further the Apostle says, in the 19th verse,

> "Know yet not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price."

This body he says, is the temple of the Holy Ghost; and where the Holy Ghost dwells in a body, he not only sanctifies it, but renders it eternal. The temple of the Holy Ghost is as eternal as the Holy Ghost. You may demolish other temples and their gods too, but the Holy Ghost cannot die, nor "can his temple perish." Shall this body which has once had the Holy Ghost in it be always food for worms? Shall it never be seen more, but be like the dry bones of the valley? No; the dry bones shall live, and the temple of the Holy Ghost shall be built up again. Though the legs, the pillars, of that temple fall — though the eyes, the windows of it be darkened, and those that look out of them see no more, yet God shall re-build this fabric, re-light the eyes, and restore its pillars and regild it with beauty, yea, "this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible put on incorruption.

But the master argument with which we close our proof is that Christ rose from the dead, and verily his people shall. The chapter which we read at the commencement of the service is proof to a demonstration that if Christ rose from the dead all his people must; that if there be no resurrection, then is Christ not risen. But I will not long dwell on this proof, because I know you all feel its power, and there is no need for me to bring it out clearly. As Christ actually rose from the dead — flesh and blood, so shall we. Christ was not a spirit when he rose from the dead; his body could be touched. Did not Thomas put his hand into his side? and did not Christ say, "Handle me, and see. A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." And if we are to rise as Christ did — and we are taught so — then we shall rise in our bodies — not spirits, not fine aerial things, made of I know not what — some very refined and elastic substance; but "as the Lord our Savior rose, so all his followers must." We shall rise in our flesh, "though all flesh is not the same flesh;" we shall rise in our bodies, though all bodies are not the same bodies; and we shall rise in glory, though all glories are not the same glories. "There is one flesh of man and another of

beasts;" and there is one flesh of this body, and another flesh of the heavenly body. There is one body for the soul here, and another body for the spirit up there; and yet it shall be the same body that will rise again from the grave — the same I say in identity, though not in glory or in adaptation.

I come now to some practical thoughts from this doctrine before I go to the other.

My brethren, what thoughts of comfort there are in this doctrine, that the dead shall rise again. Some of us have this week been standing by the grave; and one of our brethren, who long served his Master in our midst, was placed in the tomb. He was a man valiant for truth, indefatigable in labor, self-denying in duty, and always prepared to follow his Lord (Mr. Turner, of Lamb and Flag School), and to the utmost of his ability, serviceable to the church. Now, there were tears shed there: do you know what they were about? There was not a solitary tear shed about his soul. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul was not required to give us comfort, for we knew it well, we were perfectly assured that he had ascended to heaven. The burial service used in the Church of England most wisely offers us no comfort concerning the soul of the departed believer, since that is in bliss, but it cheers us by reminding us of the promised resurrection for the body; and when I speak concerning the dead, it is not to give comfort as to the soul, but as to the body. And this doctrine of the resurrection has comfort for the mourners in regard to the buried mortality. You do not weep because your father, brother, wife, husband, has ascended to heaven — you would be cruel to weep about that. None of you weep because your dear mother is before the throne; but you weep because her body is in the grave, because those eyes can no more smile on you, because those hands cannot caress you, because those sweet lips cannot speak melodious notes of affection. You weep because the body is cold, and dead, and clay-like; for the soul you do not weep. But I have comfort for you. That very body will rise again; that eye will flash with genius again; that hand will be held out in affection once more. Believe me, I am speaking no fiction. That very hand, that positive hand, those cold, clay-like arms that hung down by the side and fell when you uplifted them, shall hold a harp one day; and those poor fingers, now icy and hard,

shall be swept along the living strings of golden harps in heaven. Yea, you shall see that body once more.

"Their inbred sins require
Their flesh to see the dust,
But as the Lord their Savior rose,
So all his followers must."

Will not that remove your tears. "He is not dead, but sleepeth." He is not lost, he is "seed sown against harvest time to ripen." His body is resting a little while, bathing itself in spices, that it may be fit for the embraces of its Lord.

And here is comfort for you too, you poor sufferers, who suffer in your bodies. Some of you are almost martyrs with aches of one kind and another — lumbagoes, gouts, rheumatisms, and all sorts of sad afflictions that flesh is heir to. Scarcely a day passes but you are tormented with some suffering or other; and if you were silly enough to be always doctoring yourselves, you might always be having the doctor in your home. Here is comfort for you. That poor old rickety body of yours will live again without its pains, without its agonies; that poor shaky frame will be repaid all it has suffered. Ah! poor negro slave, every scar upon your back shall have a stripe of honor in heaven. Ah! poor martyr, the crackling of thy bones in the fire shall earn thee sonnets in glory; all thy sufferings shall be well repaid by the happiness thou shalt experience there. Don't fear to suffer in your frame, because your frame will one day share in your delights. Every nerve will thrill with delight, every muscle move with bliss; your eyes will flash with the fire of eternity; your heart will beat and pulsate with immortal blessedness; your frame shall be the channel of beatitude; the body which is now often a cup of wormwood will be a vessel of honey; this body which is often a comb out of which gall distilleth, shall be a honeycomb of blessedness to you. Comfort yourselves then, ye sufferers, weary languishers upon the bed: fear not, your bodies shall live.

But I want to draw a word of instruction from the text, concerning the doctrine of recognition. Many have puzzled themselves a to whether they will know their friends in heaven. Well now, if the bodies are to rise from the dead, I see no reason why we should not know them. I think I should know some of my brethren, even by their spirits, for I know their

character so well, having talked with them of the things of Jesus, and being well acquainted with the most prominent parts of their character. But I shall see their bodies too. I always thought that a quietus to the question, which the wife of old John Ryland asked. "Do you think," she said, "you will know me in heaven?" "Why," said he, "I know you here; and do you think I shall be a bigger fool in heaven than I am on earth?" The question is beyond dispute. We shall live in heaven with bodies, and that decides the matter. We shall know each other in heaven; you may take that as a positive fact, and not mere fancy.

But now a word of warning, and then I have done with this part of the subject. If your bodies are to dwell in heaven, I beseech you take care of them. I do not mean, take care of what you eat and rink, and wherewithal you shall be clothed; but I mean, take care that you do not let your bodies be polluted by sin. If this throat is to warble for ever with songs of glory, let not words of lust defile it. If these eyes are to see the king in his beauty, even let this be your prayer, "Turn off my eyes from beholding vanities." If these hands are to hold a palm branch, oh, let them never take a bribe, let them never seek after evil. If these feet are to walk the golden streets, let them not be swift after mischief. If this tongue is for ever to talk of all he said and did, ah! let it not utter light and frothy things. And if this heart is to pulsate for ever with bliss, I beseech you give it not unto strangers; neither let it wander after evil. If this body is to live for ever, what care we ought to take of it; for our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost, and they are members of the Lord Jesus.

Now, will you believe this doctrine or not? If you will not, you are excommunicate from the faith. This is the faith of the Gospel; and if you do not believe it you have not yet received the Gospel. "For if the dead rise not, then your faith is vain, and ye are yet in your sins." The dead in Christ shall rise, and they shall rise first.

II. But now we come to the RESURRECTION OF THE WICKED. Will the wicked rise too? Here is a point of controversy. I shall have some hard things to say now: I may detain you long, but I beg you, nevertheless, hearken to me. Yea, the wicked shall rise.

The first proof is given in the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians, ch. 5:10.

> "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

Now, since we are all to appear, the wicked must appear, and they will receive the deeds done in the body. Since the body sins, it is only natural that the body should be punished. It would be unjust to punish the soul and not the body, for the body has had as much to do with sin as ever the soul has had. But wherever I go now, I hear it said, "The ministers in old times were wont to say there was fire in hell for our bodies, but it is not so; it is metaphorical fire, fancied fire." Ah! it is not so. Ye shall receive the things done in your body. Though your souls shall be punished, your bodies will be punished as well. Ye who are sensual and devilish, do not care about your souls being punished, because you never think about your souls; but if I tell you of bodily punishment you will think of it far more. Christ may have said that the soul should be punished; but he far more frequently described the body in misery in order to impress his hearers, for he knew that they were sensual and devilish, and that nothing that did not affect the body would touch them in the least. "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, to receive the things done in the body according to what we have done, whether it be good or evil."

But this is not the only text to prove the doctrine, I will give you a better one — Matthew 5:29.

> "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."

— not "thy whole soul," but "thy whole body." Man, this does not say that thy soul shall be in hell — that is affirmed many times — but it positively declares that thy body shall. That same body which is now standing in the aisle, or sitting in the pew, if thou diest without Christ, shall burn for ever in the flames of hell. It is not a fancy of man, but a truth that thy actual flesh and blood, and those very bones shall suffer: "thy whole body shall be cast into hell."

But lest that one proof should not suffice thee, hear another out of the same gospel — chapter 10:28.

> "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

Hell will be the place for bodies as well as for souls. As I have remarked, wherever Christ speaks of hell and of the lost state of the wicked, he always speaks of their bodies; you scarcely find him saying anything about their souls. He says, "Where their worm dieth not," which is a figure of physical suffering — the worm torturing for ever the inmost heart, like a cancer within the very soul. He speaks of the "fire that never shall be quenched." Now, do not begin telling me that this is metaphorical fire: who cares for that? If a man were to threaten to give me a metaphorical blow on the head, I should care very little about it; he would be welcome to give me as many as he pleased. And what say the wicked? "We do not care about metaphorical fires." But they are real, sir — yes, as real as yourself. There is a real fire in hell, as truly as you have now a real body — a fire exactly like that which we have on earth in everything except this — that it will not consume, though it will torture you. You have seen the asbestos lying in the fire red hot, but when you take it out it is unconsumed. So your body will be prepared by God in such a way that it will burn for ever without being consumed; it will lie, not as you consider, in a metaphorical fire, but in actual flame. Did our Savior mean fictions when he said he would cast body and soul into hell? What should there be a pit for if there were no bodies? Why fire, why chains, if there were to be no bodies? Can fire touch the soul? Can pits shut in spirits? Can chains fetter souls? No; pits and fire and chains are for bodies, and bodies shall be there. Thou wilt sleep in the dust a little while. When thou diest thy soul will be tormented alone — that will be a hell for it — but at the day of judgment thy body will join thy soul, and then thou wilt have twin hells, body and soul shall be together, each brimfull of pain, thy soul sweating in its inmost pore drops of blood, and thy body from head to foot suffused with agony; conscience, judgment, memory, all tortured, but more — thy head tormented with racking pains, thine eyes starting from their sockets with sights of blood and woe; thine ears tormented with

"Sulten moans and hollow groans.
And shrieks of tortured ghosts.

Thine heart beating high with fever; thy pulse rattling at an enormous rate in agony; thy limbs crackling like the martyrs in the fire, and yet unburnt; thyself, put in a vessel of hot oil, pained, yet coming out undestroyed; all thy veins becoming a road for the hot feet of pain to travel on; every nerve a string on which the devil shall ever play his diabolical tune of Hell's Unutterable Lament; thy soul for ever and ever aching, and thy body palpitating in unison with thy soul. Fictions, sir! Again, I say, they are no fictions, and as God liveth, but solid, stern truth. If God be true, and this Bible be true, what I have said is the truth, and you will find it one day to be so.

But now I must have a little reasoning with the ungodly on one or two points. First, I will reason with such of you as are very proud of your comely bodies, and array yourselves in goodly ornaments, and make yourselves glorious in your apparel. There are some of you who have no time for prayer, but you have time enough for your toilet; you have no time for the prayer-meeting, but you have time enough to be brushing your hair to all eternity; you have no time to bend your knee, but plenty of time to make yourselves look smart and grand. Ah! fine lady, thou who takest care of thy goodly fashioned face, remember what was said by one of old when he held up the skull:

"Tell her, though she paint herself an inch thick,
To this complexion she must come at last."

And something more than that: that fair face shall be scarred with the claws of fiends, and that fine body shall be only the medium for torment. Ah! dress thyself proud gentleman for the worm; anoint thyself for the crawling creatures of the grave; and worse, come thou to hell with powdered hair — a gentleman in hell; come thou down to the pit in goodly apparel; my lord, come there, to find yourself no higher than others, except it be higher in torture, and plunged deeper in flames. Ay, it ill becomes us to waste so much time upon the trifling things here, when there is so much to be done, and so little time for doing it, in the saving of men's souls. O God, our God, deliver men from feasting and pampering their bodies when they are only fattening them for the slaughter, and feeding them to be devoured in the flame.

Again, hear me when I say to you who are gratifying your lusts-do you know that those bodies, the lusts of which you gratify here, will be in hell, and that you will have the same lusts in hell that you have here? The debauchee hastes to indulge his body in what he desires — can he do that in hell? Can he find a place there where he shall gratify his lust and find indulgence for his foul desire? The drunkard here can pour down his throat the intoxicating and deadly draught; but where will he find the liquor to drink in hell, when his drunkenness will be as hot upon him as it is here! Ay, where will he find so much as a drop of water to cool his parched tongue? The man who loves gluttony here will be a glutton there; but where will be the food to satisfy him, when he may hold his finger up and see the loaves go away from him, and the fruits refuse his grasp. Oh! to have your passions and yet not to satisfy them! To shut a drunkard up in his cell, and give him nothing to drink! He would dash himself against the wall to get the liquor, but there is none for him. What wilt thou do in hell, O drunkard, with that thirst in thy throat, and having nought but flames to swallow, which increase thy woe? And what wilt thou do, O rake, when still thou wouldst be seducing others, but there are none with whom thou canst sin? Do I speak plainly? Did not Christ do so? If men will sin, they shall find men who are not ashamed to reprove them. Ah! to have a body in hell, with all its lusts, but not the power to satisfy them! How horrible that hell will be!

But hear me yet again. Oh! poor sinner, if I saw thee going into the inquisitor's den to be tormented, would I not beg of thee to stop ere thou shouldst put thy foot upon the threshold? And now I am talking to you of things that are real. If I were standing on a stage this morning, and were acting these things as fancies, I would make you weep: I would make the godly weep to think that so many should be damned, and I would make the ungodly weep to think that they should be damned. But when I speak of realities, they do not move you half as much as fictions would, and ye sit just as ye did ere the service had commenced. But hear me while I again affirm God's truth. I tell thee sinner, that those eyes that now look on lust shall look on miseries that shall vex and torment thee. Those ears which now thou lendest to hear the song of blasphemy, shall hear moans, and groans, and horrid sounds, such as only the damned know. That very throat down which thou pourest drink shall be filled with fire. Those very

lips and arms of thine will be tortured all at once. Why, if thou hast a headache thou wilt run to thy physician; but what wilt thou do when thy head, and heart, and hands, and feet ache all at once? If thou hast but a pain in thy reins, thou wilt search out medicines to heal thee; but what wilt thou do when gout, and rheum, and vertigo, and all else that is vile attack thy body at once? How wilt thou bear thyself when thou shalt be loathsome with every kind of disease, leprous, palsied, black, rotten, thy bones aching, thy marrow quivering, every limb thou hast filled with pain; thy body a temple of demons, and a channel of miseries. And will ye march blindly on? As the ox goeth to the slaughter, and the sheep licketh the butcher's knife, so is it with many of you. Sirs, you are living without Christ, many of you; you are self-righteous and ungodly. One of you is going out this afternoon to take his day's pleasure; another is a fornicator in secret; another can cheat his neighbor; another can now and then curse God; another comes to this chapel, but in secret he is a drunkard; another prates about godliness, and God wots he is a wretched hypocrite. What will ye do in that day when ye stand before your Maker? It is a little thing to have your minister upbraid you know; it is a small thing to be judged of man's judgment; what will ye do when God shall thunder out not your accusation, but your condemnation, "Depart ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?" Ah! sensual ones, I knew I should never move you will I spoke about torments for your souls. Do I move you now? Ah no! Many of you will go away and laugh, and call me, as I remember once being called before, "a hell-fire parson." Well, go; but you will see the hell-fire preacher one day in heaven, perhaps, and you yourselves will be cast out; and looking down thence with reproving glance, it may be, I shall remind you that you heard the word, and listened not to it. Ah! men, it is a light thing to hear it; it will be hard enough to bear it. You listen to me now unmoved; it will be harder work when death gets hold of you and you lie roasting in the fire. Now you despise Christ; you will not despise him them. Now ye can waste your Sabbaths; then ye would give a thousand worlds for a Sabbath if ye could but have it in hell. Now ye can scoff and jeer; there will be no scoffing or jeering then: you will be shrieking, howling, wailing for mercy; but —

“There are no acts of pardon passed
In the cold grave to which we haste;
But darkness, death, and long despair,
Reign in eternal silence there.”

O my hearers! the wrath to come! the wrath to come! the wrath to come. Who among you can dwell with devouring fire? Who among you can dwell with everlasting burnings? Can you, sir? can you? Can you abide the flame for ever? “Oh, no,” sayest thou, “what can I do to be saved?” Hear thou what Christ hath to say, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” “He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.” “Come, now let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

SERMON NO. 66

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 17, 1856,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both the of the just and unjust." — Acts 24:15.

Reflecting the other day upon the sad state of the churches at the present moment, I was led to look back to apostolic times, and to consider wherein the preaching of the present day differed from the preaching of the apostles. I remarked the vast difference in their style from the set and formal oratory of the present age. I remarked that the apostles did not take a text when they preached, nor did they confine themselves to one subject, much less to any place of worship, but I find that they stood up in any place and declared from the fullness of their heart what they knew of Jesus Christ. But the main difference I observed was in the subjects of their preaching. Surprised I was when I discovered that the very staple of the preaching of the apostles was the resurrection of the dead. I found myself to have been preaching the doctrine of the grace of God, to have been upholding free election, to have been leading the people of God as well as I was enabled into the deep things of his word; but I was surprised to find that I had not been copying the apostolic fashion half as nearly as I might have done. The apostles when they preached always testified concerning the resurrection of Jesus, and the consequent resurrection of the dead. It appears that the Alpha and the Omega of their gospel was the testimony that Jesus Christ died and rose again from the dead according to the Scriptures. When they chose another apostle in the room of Judas, who had become apostate, Acts 1:22, they said, "One must be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection;" so that the very office of an apostle

was to be a witness of the resurrection. And well did they fulfill their office. When Peter stood up before the multitude, he declared unto them that "David spoke of the resurrection of Christ." When Peter and John were taken before the council, the great cause of their arrest was that the rulers were grieved :because they taught the people and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead." Acts 4:2. When they were set free, after having been examined, it is said,

> "With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all." Acts 4:33.

It was this which stirred the curiosity of the Athenians when Paul preached among them, "They said, he seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods, because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection of the dead." And this moved the laughter of the Areopagites, for when he spoke of the resurrection of the dead, "Some mocked, and others said, we will hear thee again of this matter." Truly did Paul say, when he stood before the council of the Pharisees and Sadducees, "Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am called in question." And equally truly did he constantly assert, "IF Christ be not risen from the dead, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is vain, and ye are yet in your sins." The resurrection of Jesus and the resurrection of the righteous is a doctrine which we believe, but which we too seldom preach or care to read about. Though I have inquired of several booksellers for a book specially upon the subject of the resurrection, I have not yet been able to purchase one of any sort whatever; and when I turned to Dr. Owen's works, which are a most invaluable storehouse of divine knowledge, containing much that is valuable on almost every subject; I could find, even there, scarcely more than the slightest mention of the resurrection. It has been set down as a well known truth, and therefore has never been discussed. Heresies have not risen up respecting it; it would almost have been a mercy if there had been, for whenever a truth is contested by heretics, the orthodox fight strongly for it, and the pulpit resounds with it every day. I am persuaded, however, that there is much power in this doctrine; and if I preach it this morning you will see that God will own the apostolic preaching, and there will be conversions. I intend putting it to the test now, to see whether there be not something which we cannot perceive at present in the resurrection of the dead, which is capable of moving the hearts of men and

bringing them into subjection to the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

There are very few Christians who believe the resurrection of the dead. You may be surprised to hear that, but I should not wonder if I discovered that you yourself have doubts on the subject. By the resurrection of the dead is meant something very different from the immortality of the soul: that, every Christian believes, and therein is only on a level with the heathen, who believes it too. The light of nature is sufficient to tell us that the soul is immortal, so that the infidel who doubts it is a worse fool even than a heathen, for he, before Revelation was given, had discovered it — there are some faint glimmerings in men of reason which teach that the soul is something so wonderful that it must endure forever. But the resurrection of the dead is quite another doctrine, dealing not with the soul, but with the body. The doctrine is that this actual body in which I now exist is to live with my soul; that not only is the "vital spark of heavenly flame" to burn in heaven, but the very censer in which the incense of my life doth smoke is holy unto the Lord, and is to be preserved for ever. The spirit, every one confesses, is eternal; but how many there are who deny that the bodies of men will actually start up from their graves at the great day? Many of you believe you will have a body in heaven, but you think it will be an airy fantastic body, instead of believing that it will be a body like to this — flesh and blood (although not the same kind of flesh, for all flesh is not the same flesh), a solid, substantial body, even such as we have here. And there are yet fewer of you who believe that the wicked will have bodies in hell; for it is gaining ground everywhere that there are to be no positive torments for the damned in hell to affect their bodies, but that it is to be metaphorical fire, metaphorical brimstone, metaphorical chains, metaphorical torture. But if ye were Christians as ye profess to be, ye would believe that every mortal man who ever existed shall not only live by the immortality of his soul, but his body shall live again, that the very flesh in which he now walks the earth is as eternal as the soul, and shall exist for ever. That is the peculiar doctrine of Christianity. The heathens never guessed or imagined such a thing; and consequently when Paul spoke of the resurrection of the dead, "Some mocked," which proves that they understood him to speak of the resurrection of the body, for they would not have mocked had he only spoken of the immortality of the soul, that

having been already proclaimed by Plato and Socrates, and received with reverence.

We are now about to preach that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. We shall consider first the resurrection of the just; and secondly, the resurrection of the unjust.

I. There shall be A RESURRECTION OF THE JUST.

The first proof I will offer of this, is, that it has been the constant and unvarying faith of the saints from the earliest periods of time. Abraham believed the resurrection of the dead, for it is said in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 11 verse 19, that he

> "accounted that God was able to raise up Isaac even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."

I have no doubt that Joseph believed in the resurrection, for he gave commandment concerning his bones; and surely he would not have been so careful of his body if he had not believed that it should be raised from the dead. The Patriarch Job was a firm believer in it, for he said in that oft repeated text, Job. 19:25, 26:

> "For I know that my Redeemer liveth; and that he shall stand at the latter-day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."

David believed it beyond the shadow of a doubt, for he sang of Christ, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption." Daniel believed it, for he said, that "Many who sleep in the dust shall rise, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting contempt." Souls do not sleep in the dust; bodies do. It will do you good to turn to one or two passages and see what these holy men thought. For instance, in Isaiah, ch. 26:19, you read:

> "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."

We will offer no explanation. The text is positive and sure. Let another prophet speak — Hosea, ch. 6. verses 1 and 2:

> "Come and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight."

Although this does not declare the resurrection, yet it uses it as a figure which it would not do were it not regarded as a settled truth. It is declared by Paul, also, in Hebrews 11:35, that such was the constant faith of the martyrs; for he says, "Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection." All those holy men and women, who, during the time of the Maccabees, stood fast by their faith, and endured the fire and sword, and tortures unutterable, believed in the resurrection, and that resurrection stimulated them to give their bodies to the flames, not caring even for death, but believing that thereby they should attain to a blessed resurrection. But our Savior brought the resurrection to light in the most excellent manner, for he explicitly and frequently declared it. "Marvel not," said he, "at what I have said unto you. Behold the hour cometh when they that are in their graves shall hear the voice of God." "The hour is coming when he will call the dead to judgment, and they shall stand before his throne." Indeed, throughout his preaching, there was one continued flow of firm belief, and a public and positive declaration of the resurrection of the dead. I will not trouble you with any passages from the writings of the Apostles; they abound therewith. In fact, Holy Scripture is so full of this doctrine that I marvel, brethren, that we should so soon have departed from the stedfastness of our faith, and that it should be believed in many churches that the actual bodies of the saints will not live again, and especially that the bodies of the wicked will not have a future existence. We maintain as our text doth, that "there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."

A second proof, we think, we find in the translation of Enoch and Elijah to heaven. We read of two men who went to heaven in their bodies. Enoch "was not; for God took him;" and Elijah was carried to heaven in a chariot of fire. Neither of these men left his ashes in the grave: neither left his body to be consumed by the worm, but both of them in their mortal frames (changed and glorified doubtless) ascended up on high. Now, those two were the pledge to us that all of us shall rise in the same manner. Would it be likely that two bright spirits would sit in heaven clothed in

flesh, while the rest of us were unclothed? Would it be at all reasonable that Enoch and Elijah should be the only saints who should have their bodies in heaven, and that we should be there only in our souls — poor souls! longing to have our bodies again. No; our faith tells us that these two men having safely gone to heaven, as John Bunyan hath it, by a bridge that no one else trod, by which they were not under the necessity to wade the river, we shall also rise from the flood, and our flesh shall not for ever dwell with corruption.

There is a remarkable passage in Jude, where it speaks of Michael the Archangel contending with the devil about the body of Moses, and using no "railing accusation." Now, this refers to the great doctrine of angels watching over the bones of the saints. Certainly, it tells us that the body of Moses was watched over by a great archangel; the devil thought to disturb that body, but Michael contended with him about it. Now would there be a contention about that body if it had been of no value? Would Michael contend for that which was only to be the food of worms? Would he wrestle with the enemy for that which was to be scattered to the four winds of heaven, never to be united again into a new and goodlier fabric? No; assuredly not. From this we learn that an angel watches over every tomb. It is no fiction, when on the marble we carve the cherubs with their wings. There are cherubs with outstretched wings over the head of the grave-stones of all the righteous; ay, and where "the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep," in some nook o'ergrown by nettles, there an angel standeth night and day to watch each bone and guard each atom, that at the resurrection those bodies, with more glory than they had on earth, may start up to dwell for ever with the Lord. The guardianship of the bodies of the saints by angels proves that they shall rise again from the dead.

Yet, further, the resurrections that have already taken place give us hope and confidence that there shall be a resurrection of all saints. Do you not remember that it is written, when Jesus rose from the dead many of the saints that were in their graves arose, and came into the city, and appeared unto many? Have ye not heard that Lazarus, though he had been dead three days, came from the grave at the word of Jesus? Have you never read how the daughter of Jarius awoke from the sleep of death when he said, "Talitha cumi?" Have you never seen him at the gates of Nain, bidding that widow's son rise from the bier? Have you forgotten that Dorcas who made

garments for the poor, sat up and saw Peter after she had been dead? And do you not remember Eutychus who fell from the third loft and was taken up dead, but who, at the prayer of Paul, was raised again? Or, does not your memory roll back to the time when hoary Elijah stretched himself upon the dead child, and the child breathed, and sneezed seven times, and his soul came to him? Or have you not read that when they buried a man, as soon as he touched the prophet's bones he rose again to life? These are pledges of the resurrection; a few specimens, a few chance gems flung into the world to tell us how full God's hand is of resurrection jewels. He hath given us proof that he is able to raise the dead by the resurrection of a few, who afterwards were seen on earth by infallible witnesses.

We must now, however, leave these things, and refer you once more to the Holy Spirit by way of confirming the doctrine that the saints' bodies shall rise again. The chapter in which you will find one great proof is in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, 6:13: "Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body." The body, then, is the Lord's. Christ died not only to save my soul, but to save my body. It is said he "came to seek and to save that which was lost." When Adam sinned he lost his body, and he lost his soul too; he was a lost man, lost altogether. And when Christ came to save his people, he came to save their bodies and their souls. "Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord." Is this body for the Lord, and shall death devour it? Is this body for the Lord, and shall winds scatter its particles far away where they never shall discover their fellows? No! the body is for the Lord, and the Lord shall have it. "And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise us by his own power." Now look at the next verse: "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ." Not merely is the soul a part of Christ — united to Christ, but the body is also. These hands, these feet, these eyes, are members of Christ, if I be a child of God. I am one with him, not merely as to my mind, but one with him as to this outward frame. The very body is taken into union. The golden chain which binds Christ to his people goes round the body and soul too. Did not the apostle say "they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church?" — Ephesians 5:31, 32. "They are one flesh;" and Christ's people are not only one with him in spirit, but they are "one flesh" too. The flesh of man is united with the flesh of the God-man; and our bodies

are members of Jesus Christ. Well, while the head lives the body cannot die; and while Jesus lives the members cannot perish. Further the Apostle says, in the 19th verse, “Know yet not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price.” This body he says, is the temple of the Holy Ghost; and where the Holy Ghost dwells in a body, he not only sanctifies it, but renders it eternal. The temple of the Holy Ghost is as eternal as the Holy Ghost. You may demolish other temples and their gods too, but the Holy Ghost cannot die, nor “can his temple perish.” Shall this body which has once had the Holy Ghost in it be always food for worms? Shall it never be seen more, but be like the dry bones of the valley? No; the dry bones shall live, and the temple of the Holy Ghost shall be built up again. Though the legs, the pillars, of that temple fall — though the eyes, the windows of it be darkened, and those that look out of them see no more, yet God shall re-build this fabric, re-light the eyes, and restore its pillars and regild it with beauty, yea, “this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible put on incorruption.

But the master argument with which we close our proof is that Christ rose from the dead, and verily his people shall. The chapter which we read at the commencement of the service is proof to a demonstration that if Christ rose from the dead all his people must; that if there be no resurrection, then is Christ not risen. But I will not long dwell on this proof, because I know you all feel its power, and there is no need for me to bring it out clearly. As Christ actually rose from the dead — flesh and blood, so shall we. Christ was not a spirit when he rose from the dead; his body could be touched. Did not Thomas put his hand into his side? and did not Christ say, “Handle me, and see. A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have.” And if we are to rise as Christ did — and we are taught so — then we shall rise in our bodies — not spirits, not fine aerial things, made of I know not what — some very refined and elastic substance; but “as the Lord our Savior rose, so all his followers must.” We shall rise in our flesh, “though all flesh is not the same flesh;” we shall rise in our bodies, though all bodies are not the same bodies; and we shall rise in glory, though all glories are not the same glories. “There is one flesh of man and another of beasts;” and there is one flesh of this body, and another flesh of the heavenly body. There is one body for the soul here, and another body for

the spirit up there; and yet it shall be the same body that will rise again from the grave — the same I say in identity, though not in glory or in adaptation.

I come now to some practical thoughts from this doctrine before I go to the other. My brethren, what thoughts of comfort there are in this doctrine, that the dead shall rise again. Some of us have this week been standing by the grave; and one of our brethren, who long served his Master in our midst, was placed in the tomb. He was a man valiant for truth, indefatigable in labor, self-denying in duty, and always prepared to follow his Lord (Mr. Turner, of Lamb and Flag School), and to the utmost of his ability, serviceable to the church. Now, there were tears shed there: do you know what they were about? There was not a solitary tear shed about his soul. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul was not required to give us comfort, for we knew it well, we were perfectly assured that he had ascended to heaven. The burial service used in the Church of England most wisely offers us no comfort concerning the soul of the departed believer, since that is in bliss, but it cheers us by reminding us of the promised resurrection for the body; and when I speak concerning the dead, it is not to give comfort as to the soul, but as to the body. And this doctrine of the resurrection has comfort for the mourners in regard to the buried mortality. You do not weep because your father, brother, wife, husband, has ascended to heaven — you would be cruel to weep about that. None of you weep because your dear mother is before the throne; but you weep because her body is in the grave, because those eyes can no more smile on you, because those hands cannot caress you, because those sweet lips cannot speak melodious notes of affection. You weep because the body is cold, and dead, and clay-like; for the soul you do not weep. But I have comfort for you. That very body will rise again; that eye will flash with genius again; that hand will be held out in affection once more. Believe me, I am speaking no fiction. That very hand, that positive hand, those cold, clay-like arms that hung down by the side and fell when you uplifted them, shall hold a harp one day; and those poor fingers, now icy and hard, shall be swept along the living strings of golden harps in heaven. Yea, you shall see that body once more.

"Their inbred sins require
Their flesh to see the dust,
But as the Lord their Savior rose,
So all his followers must."

Will not that remove your tears. "He is not dead, but sleepeth." He is not lost, he is "seed sown against harvest time to ripen." His body is resting a little while, bathing itself in spices, that it may be fit for the embraces of its Lord.

And here is comfort for you too, you poor sufferers, who suffer in your bodies. Some of you are almost martyrs with aches of one kind and another — lumbagoes, gouts, rheumatisms, and all sorts of sad afflictions that flesh is heir to. Scarcely a day passes but you are tormented with some suffering or other; and if you were silly enough to be always doctoring yourselves, you might always be having the doctor in your home. Here is comfort for you. That poor old rickety body of yours will live again without its pains, without its agonies; that poor shaky frame will be repaid all it has suffered. Ah! poor negro slave, every scar upon your back shall have a stripe of honor in heaven. Ah! poor martyr, the crackling of thy bones in the fire shall earn thee sonnets in glory; all thy sufferings shall be well repaid by the happiness thou shalt experience there. Don't fear to suffer in your frame, because your frame will one day share in your delights. Every nerve will thrill with delight, every muscle move with bliss; your eyes will flash with the fire of eternity; your heart will beat and pulsate with immortal blessedness; your frame shall be the channel of beatitude; the body which is now often a cup of wormwood will be a vessel of honey; this body which is often a comb out of which gall distilleth, shall be a honeycomb of blessedness to you. Comfort yourselves then, ye sufferers, weary languishers upon the bed: fear not, your bodies shall live.

But I want to draw a word of instruction from the text, concerning the doctrine of recognition. Many have puzzled themselves a to whether they will know their friends in heaven. Well now, if the bodies are to rise from the dead, I see no reason why we should not know them. I think I should know some of my brethren, even by their spirits, for I know their character so well, having talked with them of the things of Jesus, and being well acquainted with the most prominent parts of their character. But I

shall see their bodies too. I always thought that a quietus to the question, which the wife of old John Ryland asked. “Do you think,” she said, “you will know me in heaven?” “Why,” said he, “I know you here; and do you think I shall be a bigger fool in heaven than I am on earth?” The question is beyond dispute. We shall live in heaven with bodies, and that decides the matter. We shall know each other in heaven; you may take that as a positive fact, and not mere fancy.

But now a word of warning, and then I have done with this part of the subject. If your bodies are to dwell in heaven, I beseech you take care of them. I do not mean, take care of what you eat and rink, and wherewithal you shall be clothed; but I mean, take care that you do not let your bodies be polluted by sin. If this throat is to warble for ever with songs of glory, let not words of lust defile it. If these eyes are to see the king in his beauty, even let this be your prayer, “Turn off my eyes from beholding vanities.” If these hands are to hold a palm branch, oh, let them never take a bribe, let them never seek after evil. If these feet are to walk the golden streets, let them not be swift after mischief. If this tongue is for ever to talk of all he said and did, ah! let it not utter light and frothy things. And if this heart is to pulsate for ever with bliss, I beseech you give it not unto strangers; neither let it wander after evil. If this body is to live for ever, what care we ought to take of it; for our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost, and they are members of the Lord Jesus.

Now, will you believe this doctrine or not? If you will not, you are excommunicate from the faith. This is the faith of the Gospel; and if you do not believe it you have not yet received the Gospel. “For if the dead rise not, then your faith is vain, and ye are yet in your sins.” The dead in Christ shall rise, and they shall rise first.

II. But now we come to the RESURRECTION OF THE WICKED. Will the wicked rise too? Here is a point of controversy. I shall have some hard things to say now: I may detain you long, but I beg you, nevertheless, hearken to me. Yea, the wicked shall rise.

The first proof is given in the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians, ch. 5:10. “We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” Now, since we are all to appear, the wicked

must appear, and they will receive the deeds done in the body. Since the body sins, it is only natural that the body should be punished. It would be unjust to punish the soul and not the body, for the body has had as much to do with sin as ever the soul has had. But wherever I go now, I hear it said, "The ministers in old times were wont to say there was fire in hell for our bodies, but it is not so; it is metaphorical fire, fancied fire." Ah! it is not so. Ye shall receive the things done in your body. Though your souls shall be punished, your bodies will be punished as well. Ye who are sensual and devilish, do not care about your souls being punished, because you never think about your souls; but if I tell you of bodily punishment you will think of it far more. Christ may have said that the soul should be punished; but he far more frequently described the body in misery in order to impress his hearers, for he knew that they were sensual and devilish, and that nothing that did not affect the body would touch them in the least. "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, to receive the things done in the body according to what we have done, whether it be good or evil."

But this is not the only text to prove the doctrine, I will give you a better one — Matthew 5:29.

> "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."

— not "thy whole soul," but "thy whole body." Man, this does not say that thy soul shall be in hell — that is affirmed many times — but it positively declares that thy body shall. That same body which is now standing in the aisle, or sitting in the pew, if thou diest without Christ, shall burn for ever in the flames of hell. It is not a fancy of man, but a truth that thy actual flesh and blood, and those very bones shall suffer: "thy whole body shall be cast into hell."

But lest that one proof should not suffice thee, hear another out of the same gospel — chapter 10:28.

> "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

Hell will be the place for bodies as well as for souls. As I have remarked, wherever Christ speaks of hell and of the lost state of the wicked, he always speaks of their bodies; you scarcely find him saying anything about their souls. He says, “Where their worm dieth not,” which is a figure of physical suffering — the worm torturing for ever the inmost heart, like a cancer within the very soul. He speaks of the “fire that never shall be quenched.” Now, do not begin telling me that this is metaphorical fire: who cares for that? If a man were to threaten to give me a metaphorical blow on the head, I should care very little about it; he would be welcome to give me as many as he pleased. And what say the wicked? “We do not care about metaphorical fires.” But they are real, sir — yes, as real as yourself. There is a real fire in hell, as truly as you have now a real body — a fire exactly like that which we have on earth in everything except this — that it will not consume, though it will torture you. You have seen the asbestos lying in the fire red hot, but when you take it out it is unconsumed. So your body will be prepared by God in such a way that it will burn for ever without being consumed; it will lie, not as you consider, in a metaphorical fire, but in actual flame. Did our Savior mean fictions when he said he would cast body and soul into hell? What should there be a pit for if there were no bodies? Why fire, why chains, if there were to be no bodies? Can fire touch the soul? Can pits shut in spirits? Can chains fetter souls? No; pits and fire and chains are for bodies, and bodies shall be there. Thou wilt sleep in the dust a little while. When thou diest thy soul will be tormented alone — that will be a hell for it — but at the day of judgment thy body will join thy soul, and then thou wilt have twin hells, body and soul shall be together, each brimfull of pain, thy soul sweating in its inmost pore drops of blood, and thy body from head to foot suffused with agony; conscience, judgment, memory, all tortured, but more — thy head tormented with racking pains, thine eyes starting from their sockets with sights of blood and woe; thine ears tormented with

“Sullen moans and hollow groans.
And shrieks of tortured ghosts.”

Thine heart beating high with fever; thy pulse rattling at an enormous rate in agony; thy limbs crackling like the martyrs in the fire, and yet unburnt; thyself, put in a vessel of hot oil, pained, yet coming out undestroyed; all thy veins becoming a road for the hot feet of pain to travel on; every nerve

a string on which the devil shall ever play his diabolical tune of Hell's Unutterable Lament; thy soul for ever and ever aching, and thy body palpitating in unison with thy soul. Fictions, sir! Again, I say, they are no fictions, and as God liveth, but solid, stern truth. If God be true, and this Bible be true, what I have said is the truth, and you will find it one day to be so.

But now I must have a little reasoning with the ungodly on one or two points. First, I will reason with such of you as are very proud of your comely bodies, and array yourselves in goodly ornaments, and make yourselves glorious in your apparel. There are some of you who have no time for prayer, but you have time enough for your toilet; you have no time for the prayer-meeting, but you have time enough to be brushing your hair to all eternity; you have no time to bend your knee, but plenty of time to make yourselves look smart and grand. Ah! fine lady, thou who takest care of thy goodly fashioned face, remember what was said by one of old when he held up the skull:

"Tell her, though she paint herself an inch thick,
To this complexion she must come at last."

And something more than that: that fair face shall be scarred with the claws of fiends, and that fine body shall be only the medium for torment. Ah! dress thyself proud gentleman for the worm; anoint thyself for the crawling creatures of the grave; and worse, come thou to hell with powdered hair — a gentleman in hell; come thou down to the pit in goodly apparel; my lord, come there, to find yourself no higher than others, except it be higher in torture, and plunged deeper in flames. Ay, it ill becomes us to waste so much time upon the trifling things here, when there is so much to be done, and so little time for doing it, in the saving of men's souls. O God, our God, deliver men from feasting and pampering their bodies when they are only fattening them for the slaughter, and feeding them to be devoured in the flame.

Again, hear me when I say to you who are gratifying your lusts-do you know that those bodies, the lusts of which you gratify here, will be in hell, and that you will have the same lusts in hell that you have here? The debauchee hastes to indulge his body in what he desires — can he do that in hell? Can he find a place there where he shall gratify his lust and find

indulgence for his foul desire? The drunkard here can pour down his throat the intoxicating and deadly draught; but where will he find the liquor to drink in hell, when his drunkenness will be as hot upon him as it is here! Ay, where will he find so much as a drop of water to cool his parched tongue? The man who loves gluttony here will be a glutton there; but where will be the food to satisfy him, when he may hold his finger up and see the loaves go away from him, and the fruits refuse his grasp. Oh! to have your passions and yet not to satisfy them! To shut a drunkard up in his cell, and give him nothing to drink! He would dash himself against the wall to get the liquor, but there is none for him. What wilt thou do in hell, O drunkard, with that thirst in thy throat, and having nought but flames to swallow, which increase thy woe? And what wilt thou do, O rake, when still thou wouldst be seducing others, but there are none with whom thou canst sin? Do I speak plainly? Did not Christ do so? If men will sin, they shall find men who are not ashamed to reprove them. Ah! to have a body in hell, with all its lusts, but not the power to satisfy them! How horrible that hell will be!

But hear me yet again. Oh! poor sinner, if I saw thee going into the inquisitor's den to be tormented, would I not beg of thee to stop ere thou shouldst put thy foot upon the threshold? And now I am talking to you of things that are real. If I were standing on a stage this morning, and were acting these things as fancies, I would make you weep: I would make the godly weep to think that so many should be damned, and I would make the ungodly weep to think that they should be damned. But when I speak of realities, they do not move you half as much as fictions would, and ye sit just as ye did ere the service had commenced. But hear me while I again affirm God's truth. I tell thee sinner, that those eyes that now look on lust shall look on miseries that shall vex and torment thee. Those ears which now thou lendest to hear the song of blasphemy, shall hear moans, and groans, and horrid sounds, such as only the damned know. That very throat down which thou pourest drink shall be filled with fire. Those very lips and arms of thine will be tortured all at once. Why, if thou hast a headache thou wilt run to thy physician; but what wilt thou do when thy head, and heart, and hands, and feet ache all at once? If thou hast but a pain in thy reins, thou wilt search out medicines to heal thee; but what wilt thou do when gout, and rheum, and vertigo, and all else that is vile attack

thy body at once? How wilt thou bear thyself when thou shalt be loathsome with every kind of disease, leprous, palsied, black, rotten, thy bones aching, thy marrow quivering, every limb thou hast filled with pain; thy body a temple of demons, and a channel of miseries. And will ye march blindly on? As the ox goeth to the slaughter, and the sheep licketh the butcher's knife, so is it with many of you. Sirs, you are living without Christ, many of you; you are self-righteous and ungodly. One of you is going out this afternoon to take his day's pleasure; another is a fornicator in secret; another can cheat his neighbor; another can now and then curse God; another comes to this chapel, but in secret he is a drunkard; another prates about godliness, and God wots he is a wretched hypocrite. What will ye do in that day when ye stand before your Maker? It is a little thing to have your minister upbraid you know; it is a small thing to be judged of man's judgment; what will ye do when God shall thunder out not your accusation, but your condemnation, "Depart ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?" Ah! sensual ones, I knew I should never move you will I spoke about torments for your souls. Do I move you now? Ah no! Many of you will go away and laugh, and call me, as I remember once being called before, "a hell-fire parson." Well, go; but you will see the hell-fire preacher one day in heaven, perhaps, and you yourselves will be cast out; and looking down thence with reproving glance, it may be, I shall remind you that you heard the word, and listened not to it. Ah! men, it is a light thing to hear it; it will be hard enough to bear it. You listen to me now unmoved; it will be harder work when death gets hold of you and you lie roasting in the fire. Now you despise Christ; you will not despise him them. Now ye can waste your Sabbaths; then ye would give a thousand worlds for a Sabbath if ye could but have it in hell. Now ye can scoff and jeer; there will be no scoffing or jeering then: you will be shrieking, howling, wailing for mercy; but —

"There are no acts of pardon passed
In the cold grave to which we haste;
But darkness, death, and long despair,
Reign in eternal silence there."

O my hearers! the wrath to come! the wrath to come! the wrath to come. Who among you can dwell with devouring fire? Who among you can dwell with everlasting burnings? Can you, sir? can you? Can you abide the flame for ever? "Oh, no," sayest thou, "what can I do to be saved?" Hear thou

what Christ hath to say, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” “He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.” “Come, now let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

EXPOSITION

1 CORINTHIANS 15

There were people in the Apostles' days who had an idea that there was no resurrection. Paul endeavors torefute the idea, and teaches the Corinthians that there was a resurrection from the dead. From the 1st to the 11th verse he proves the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and upon that grounds the doctrine of the resurrection of the just.

> "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, and wherein ye stand:
>
> "By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain."

Now, we expect to hear a whole list of doctrines when the apostle says "I declare unto you the gospel;" but instead of that, he simply tells us of the resurrection of Jesus, for that is the very marrow of the gospel, the foundation of it — that Jesus Christ died and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.

> "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures."
>
> "And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

That is the whole of the gospel. He who perfectly understands that, understands the first principles; he has commenced aright. This is the starting point if we wish to learn the truth, "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."

> "And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve.
>
> After that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen

asleep.

After that he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

And last of all he was seen of me also,
as of one born out of due time."

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is one of the best attested facts on record. There were so many witnesses to behold it, that if we do in the least degree receive the credibility of men's testimonies, we cannot and we dare not doubt that Jesus rose from the dead. It is all very easy for infidels to say that these persons were deceived, but it is equally foolish, for these persons could not every one of them have been so positively deceived as to say that they had seen this man, whom they knew to have been dead, afterwards alive; they could not all, surely, have agreed together to help on this imposture: if they did, it is the most marvellous thing we have on record, that not one of them ever broke faith with the others, but that the whole mass of them remained firm. We believe it to be quite impossible that so many rogues should have agreed for ever. They were men who had nothing to gain by it; they subjected themselves to persecution by affirming the very fact; they were ready to die for it, and did die for it. Five hundred or a thousand persons who had seen him at different times, declared that they did see him, and that he rose from the dead; the fact of his death having been attested beforehand. How, then, dare any man say that the Christian religion is not true, when we know for a certainty that Christ died and rose again from the dead? And knowing that, who shall deny the divinity of the Savior? Who shall say that he is not mighty to save? Our faith hath a solid basis, for it hath all these witnesses on which to rest, and the more sure witness of the Holy Spirit witnessing in our hearts. "And last of all," says the apostle, "he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time: for I am the least of the apostles." We should not have thought Paul proud if he had said, "I am the greatest of the apostles," for he occupies the largest portion of the sacred Scriptures with his writings; and he preached more abundantly than they all. There was not one who could exceed Paul, or even come near him in his arduous labors; yet he says,

"For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God."

When he looked upon the mercies that God gave to him he always recollected how little he deserved; and when he found himself preaching, oh! with what pathos did he preach to the ungodly, for he could always close up: — "But I obtained mercy, that in me first Christ might show forth all long-suffering as a pattern to them that believe." Have I a persecutor here? Let him know that his sin is a most damnable sin that will sink him lower into hell than any other; but even for him there is mercy, and abundant pardon; for Paul says he obtained mercy even though he persecuted the church of God.

> "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

> "Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed."

"But by the grace of God I am what I am." That is about as far as most of us can get; we shall never get any further. "By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all." Then he stops himself: "Yet, not I, but the grace of God which was with me." We should always take care that we do not take any of our good works to ourselves: they are the effects of grace within us. If we once get putting the crown on our own heads we shall soon have heavy heads for our trouble; but if we put them all on the head of Jesus, he will honor us if we honor him.

Having thus proved the resurrection of Christ, he goes on:

> "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?
>
> "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen!
>
> "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.
>
> "Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

"For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

"And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain;
ye are yet in your sins:",

Perhaps it does not strike you at first sight that there is an indissoluble connection between the resurrection of Christ and that of all his people; perhaps you do not see the marrow of the argument. The apostle says, "If the dead do not rise, then Christ did not rise; and if Christ did rise, then all the dead will rise." Do you see how it is? Why, because Christ and human nature are now so linked together that what Christ did, he did as the representative of all his people. When Adam sinned, the world sinned, and the world died. "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." Christ could not rise except as the representative of his people; and "if Christ rose," says Paul, "then his people will rise; and if he did not rise then we shall not rise, because we are one with him; and if we do not rise Christ did not rise, because we are one with him." See here a connection which cannot be broken, — that if Christ rose, then must the dead rise also. This brings another argument

"Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished."

How do you like that thought?

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ,
we are of all men most miserable."

For they were then persecuted, cast to the wild beasts, shut up in prison; and if this life were all, what would be the value of the Christian religion? If would only make men miserable.

"But now is Christ risen from the dead,
and become the first-fruits of them that slept.

"For since by man came death,
by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

It is no use for the Arminian to strain this, and say that it proves that every one receives grace through Christ. It says no such thing; it simply says, "die" and "live." Everybody shall live at the resurrection.

> “But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits: afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.
>
> “Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.
>
> “For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.
>
> “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”

Here the great proof flashes out — if death is to be destroyed, then there must be a resurrection, for death cannot be destroyed until the very bones of the saints are delivered from the strongholds of the enemy.

> “For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.
>
> “And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.”

We are not to suppose, when we read that Jesus Christ will deliver up his kingdom to God, even to his Father, that he will therefore cease to be God or cease to be a King. Understand this; God the Father gave to the Son a Mediatorial Kingdom as Man-God; but the Father was just as much God when he had given him that kingdom; it was his own special kingdom which he, as the Man-God Mediator was to take, and God the Father lost no glory by giving it to him. When Christ shall have worked out all his Mediatorial purposes, when he shall have finished the salvation of all his elect, he will lay the crown of his Mediatorial Kingdom at the feet of God, and, as the Man-Mediator, he too will be subject unto the great Jehovah, the Three-one; then there will be no Mediator any longer, since there will be no necessity for any mediation, but we shall all be gathered in one, even the things that are on earth and the things that are in heaven — one in Christ Jesus. Then Christ will have his kingdom as God, but as Mediator he will have no kingdom. It is a destruction of office, not of person, nor yet of honor; it is a laying aside of his official capacity, not in any degree a diminution of his glory and honor.

"Else what shall they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?"

This text has had thirty or forty explanations. Doddridge and a great many more think it refers to the practice, when a martyr died, for another person to come forward and fill the offices which he held, and so to be "baptized for the dead;" but the meaning I like best is: What shall they do who are baptized with the certainty that they are not baptized to live a long while, but that immediately after baptism they will be dragged away to die — baptized in the very teeth of death? For as soon as any one was baptised, the Romans would be looking after him, to drag him away to death. Thus they were many of them baptised as if they were being washed for their burial, and dedicating themselves to the grave. They came forward and said, "O Lord, I give myself unto thy service — not to serve thee here below, for that the enemy will not let me do, but since I must die, I will be baptized and brave it all; I will be baptized even for death itself." Well, what shall these do who are baptized in the certain prospect of death if the dead rise not? "Why are they then baptized for the dead?"

"And why stand in jeopardy every hour?

"I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

"If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die."

It does not say that Paul did fight with beasts at Ephesus; but a great many others did. It was a common practice to put Christians to the lions, giving them a short sword, and bidding them fight for their lives; and sometimes, strengthened by God, they fought manfully, and come off alive. But "if," says Paul, "I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not?" I might as well give up my religion; then I could lie down and be at peace. "Let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die." Oh! wicked Paul! to quote from a heathen poet! How disgraceful. If I were to repeat a verse, and it looked as if Shakespere or any profane author ever wrote such a thing, how criminal! say you. But I like good things wherever I find them. I have often quoted from the devil, and I dare

say I shall often quote from his people. Paul quoted this from Meander, and another heathen poet, who wrote far worse things than have been written by modern poets, and if any of us who may have stored our minds with the contents of books we wish we had never read, and if there be some choice gems in them which may be used for the service of God, by his help we will so use them.

> "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.
>
> "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

Christ is coming, and he will find some alive on the earth, and those who are alive will not die. Paul was so full of the Second Coming, that he says: "We shall not all sleep." He did not know but what Christ might come while he was writing the letter. And we are so earnestly looking for Christ, that we too are constrained to say, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

> "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.
>
> "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?
>
> "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.
>
> "But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

What a shame it is, when we sometimes attend a funeral and hear that magnificent portion of Scripture read over by a chaplain without heart, or soul, or life — the quicker he can get through the service the better. Oh that such noble words should be so awfully spoiled by men who know nothing about them!

> "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know

that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

Just Published, Price Twopence, “Come, ye Children,” a Sermon addressed to Sunday School Teachers, by the Rev. C. H. SPURGEON, preached on behalf of the Western Kent Sunday School Union, at the “Temple,” Saint Mary Cray, Kent, on Wednesday Afternoon, February 20th, 1856.

A SOLEMN WARNING FOR ALL CHURCHES

SERMON NO. 68

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 24, 1856,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy." — Revelation 3:4.

My learned and eminently pious predecessor, Dr. Gill, is of opinion that the different churches spoken of in the Book of Revelation are types of different states through which the church of God shall pass until it comes into the Philadelphia state, the state of love, in which Jesus Christ shall reign in its midst, and afterwards, as he thinks, shall pass into the state of Laodicea, in which condition it shall be when suddenly the Son of Man shall come to judge the world in righteousness and the people in equity. I do not go with him in all his suppositions with regard to these seven churches as following each other in seven periods of time; but I do think he was correct when he declared that the church in Sardis was a most fitting emblem of the church in his days, as also in these. The good old doctor says, "When we shall find any period in which the church was more like the state of Sardis as described here, than it is now?" And he points out the different particulars in which the church of his day (and I am sure it is yet more true of the church at the present day) was exactly like the church in Sardis. I shall use the church in Sardis as a figure of what I conceive to be the sad condition of Christendom at the present moment. My first point will be general defilement — there were but "a few names" in Sardis who had not "defiled their garments;" secondly, special preservation — there were a few who had not defiled their garments; and thirdly, a peculiar reward — "And they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy."

I. GENERAL DEFILEMENT. The holy apostle, John, said of the church in Sardis,

> "These things saith he that hath the Seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou has a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou has received and heard, and hold fast and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments."

The first charge of general defilement he brings against the church in Sardis was that they had a vast deal of open profession, and but little of sincere religion. "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." That is the crying sin of the present age. I am not inclined to be morbid in my temperament, or to take a melancholy view of the church of God. I would wish at all times to exhibit a liberality of spirit, and to speak as well as I can of the church at large; but God forbid that any minister should shrink from declaring what he believes to be the truth. In going up and down this land, I am obliged to come to this conclusion, that throughout the churches there are multitudes who have "a name to live, and are dead." Religion has become fashionable. The shopkeeper could scarcely succeed in a respectable business if he were not united with a church. It is reckoned to be reputable and honorable to attend a place of worship; and hence men are made religious in shoals. And especially now that parliament itself doth in some measure sanction religion, we may expect that hypocrisy will abound yet more and more, and formality everywhere take the place of true religion. You can scarcely meet with a man who does not call himself a Christian, and yet it is equally hard to meet with one who is in the very marrow of his bones thoroughly sanctified to the good work of the kingdom of heaven. We meet with professors by hundreds; but me must expect still to meet with possessors by units. The whole nation appears to have been Christianized in an hour. But is this real? Is this sincere? Ah! we fear not. How is it that professors can live like other men? How is it that there is so little distinction between the church and the world? Or, that if there is any difference, you are

frequently safer in dealing with an ungodly man than with one who is professedly righteous? How is it that men who make high professions can live in worldly conformity, indulge in the same pleasures, live in the same style, act from the same motives, deal in the same manner as other do? Are not these days when the sons of God have made affinity with the sons of men? And may be not fear that something terrible may yet occur unless God shall send a voice, which shall say, “Come out of them, my people, lest ye be partakers of their plagues?” Take our churches at large — there is no lack of names, but there is a lack of life. Else, how is it that our prayer-meetings are so badly attended? Where is the zeal or the energy shown by the apostles? Where is the Spirit of the living God? Is he not departed? Might not “Ichabod” be written on the walls of many a sanctuary? They have a name to live, , but are dead. They have their piety? Where is sincere religion? Where is practical godliness? Where is firm, decisive, puritanical piety? Thank God, there are a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; but charity itself will not allow us to say that the church generally possesses the Spirit of God.

Then the next charge was, that there was a want of zeal throughout the church of Sardis. He says, “Be watchful.” He looked on the church and saw the bishops slumbering, the elders slumbering, and the people slumbering; they were not, as once they were, watchful for the faith, striving together and earnestly contending for it, not wrestling against the enemy of souls, laboring to spread their Master’s kingdom, but the apostle saw sleepiness, coldness, lethargy; therefore he said, “Be watchful.” Oh! John, if from thy grave thou couldst start up, and see the church as thou didst at Sardis, having thine eyes anointed by the Spirit, thou wouldst say it is even so now. Ah! we have abundance of cold, calculating Christians, multitudes of professors; but where are the zealous ones? where are the leaders of the children of God? where are your heroes who stand in the day of battle? where are your men who “count not their lives dear unto them,” that they might win Christ, and be found in him? where are those who have an impassioned love for souls? How many of our pulpits are filled by earnest, enthusiastic preachers? Alas! look, at the church. She has builded herself fine palaces, imitating popery; she hath girded herself with vestments; she has gone astray from her simplicity; but she has lost the fire and the life which she once had. We go into our chapels now, and we

see everything in good taste: we hear the organ play; the psalmody is in keeping with the most correct ear; the gown and the noble vestments are there, and everything is grand and goodly, and we think that God is honored. Oh for the days when Whitfields would preach on tubs once more, when their pulpits should be on Kennington Common, and their roofs the ceiling of God's sky. Oh for the time when we might preach in barns again, or in catacombs either, if we might but have the life of God that once they had in such places. What is the use of garnishing the shell when you have lost the kernel. Go and whitewash, for the life is gone. Garnish the outside of your cups and platters; but ye have lost the pure word of God. Ye have it not for a piece of bread; they flinch to speak the whole truth, or if they seem to speak it, it is with cold, meaningless, passionless words, as if it were nothing whether souls were damned or saved, whether heaven were filled or heaven depopulated, or whether Christ should see of the travail of his would and be satisfied. Do I speak fierce things? I can say as Irving once did, I might deserve to be broken on the wheel if I did not believe what I say to be the truth; for the utterance of such things I might deserve the stake; but God is my witness, I have endeavored to judge and to speak impartially. With all that universal cant of charity now so prevalent I am at arm's length; I care not for it. Let us speak of things as we find them. WE do believe that the church has lost her zeal and her energy. But what do men say of us? "Oh! you are too excited." Good God! excited! when men are being damned; Excited! When we have the mission of heaven to preach to dying souls. EXCITED! preaching too much! when souls are lost. Why should it come to pass that one man should be perpetually laboring all the week, while others are lolling upon their couches, and preach only upon the Sabbath-day? Can I bear to see the laziness, the slothfulness, the indifference of ministers, and of churches, without speaking. No! there must be a protest entered, and we enter it now. Oh! Church of God, thou has a name to live, and art dead; thou art not watchful. Awake! awake! arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

The third charge which John brought against Sardis was that they did not "look to the things that remained and were ready to die." I take it that this may related to the poor feeble saints, the true children of God, who were sorrowing, mourning, and groaning in their midst, who were so oppressed

with sorrow on account of the state of Sardis, that they were “ready to die.” And what does the church do now? Do the shepherds go after those that are wounded and sick, and those that are weary? Do they carry the lambs in their bosom, and gently lead those that are with young? Do they see to poor distressed consciences, and speak to those who feel their deadness in trespasses and sins? Yes, but how do they speak? They tell them to do things they cannot do — to perform impossible duties — instead of “strengthening the things that remain and are ready to die” In how much contempt are the truly new-born children of God held in these times! They are called peculiar men, scouted as Antinomians, hissed at as being oddities, high doctrine men who have departed from the usual mode of pulling down God’s word to men’s fancies; they are called bigots, narrow-minded souls, and their creed is set down as dry, hard, rough, severe Calvinism. God’s gospel called hard, rough, and severe! The things for which our fathers died are not called infamous things! Mark whether, if ye stand out prominently in the truth, you will not be abhorred and scouted. If you go into a village, and hear of poor people who are said to be doing a deal of mischief, are they not the people who understand most of the gospel? Go and ask the minister who are the persons that he most dislikes? and he will say, “We have a nasty lot of Antinomians here.” What does he mean by that? Men who love the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and will have it, and are therefore called a nasty set of Antinomians. Ah! we have lost what once we had. We do not now “strengthen the things that remain and are ready to die;” they are not looked after as they ought to be, not beloved, not fostered. The salt of the earth are now the offscouring of all things; men whom God has loved, and who have attained a high standing in godliness — these are the men who will not bow the knee to Baal, and who therefore are cast into the fiery furnace of persecution and slander. O Sardis! Sardis! I see thee now. Thou hast defiled thy garments. Thank God, there are a few who have not followed the multitude to do evil, and who shall “walk in white, for they are worthy.”

Another charge which God has brought against the church is, that they were careless about the things which they heard. He says, “Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast; and repent.” If I am wrong upon other points, I am positive that the sin of this age is

impurity of doctrine, and laxity of faith. Now you know you are told every Sunday that it does not signify what you believe; that all sects and denominations will be saved; that doctrines are unimportant things; that as to the doctrines of God's grace, they are rather dangerous than otherwise, and the less you inquire about them the better; they are very good things for the priests, but you common people cannot understand them. Thus they keep back a portion of the gospel with cautious reserve; but having studied in the devil's new Jesuitical college, they understand how to call themselves particular Baptists, and then preach general doctrines, to call themselves Calvinists, and preach Arminianism, telling the people that it does not signify whether they preach damnable heresies instead of the truth of God. And what do the congregations say? "Well, he is a wise man, and ought to know." So you are going back into as bad a priestcraft as ever. Presbyter has become priest written large, and minister has become priest in many a place because persons do not search for themselves and endeavor to get hold of the truth of God. It is everywhere proclaimed that we are all right; that though one says God loved his people from before the foundation of the world, and the other that he did not; though one says that God is changeable and turns away from his people, and the other, that he will hold them fast to the end; though the one says that the blood of Christ avails for all for whom it was shed and the other, that it is inefficacious for a large number of those for whom he died; though one says that the works of the law are in some measure necessary, or at any rate that we must endeavor to improve what we have, and then we shall get more, while the other says, that "by grace we are saved through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God," yet both are right. A new age this, when falsehood and truth can kiss each other! New times these when fire and water can become friendly! Glorious times these when there is an alliance between hell and heaven, though God knows, we are of vastly different families. Ah! now, who cares for truth except a few narrow-minded bigots as they are called. Election — horrible! Predestination — awful! Final perseverance — desperate! Yet, turn to the pages of the Puritans, and you will see that these truths were preached every day. Turn to the Fathers; read Augustine, and you will see that these were the truths for which he would have bled and died. Read the Scriptures, and if every page is not full of them I have not read them aright, or any child of God either. Ay, laxity of doctrine is the great fault now; we solemnly protest

against it. You may fancy that I am raising an outcry about nothing at all. Ah! no; my anxious spirit sees the next generation — what will that be. This generation — Arminianism. What next? Pelagianism. And what next? Popery. And what next? I leave you to guess. The path of error is always downward. We have taken one step in the wrong direction; God knows where we shall stop. If there had not been sturdy men in ages gone by, the Lord would not have left to us a remnant even now; all grace must have died, and we had become like unto Gomorrah and unto Sodoma. Oh, church of the living God, awake! awake! Once more write truth upon thy banner; stamp truth upon thy sword; and for God and for his word, charge home. Ye knights of truth, and truth alone, shall sit king over the whole world!

But now I have lifted up the whip, I must have another lash. Look on any section of the church you like to mention, not excepting that to which I belong; and let me ask you whether they have not defiled their garments. Look at the church of England. Her articles are pure and right in most respects; yet see how her garments are defiled. She hath made the Queen her Head instead of God; she bows before the state, and worships the golden calf that is set up before her. Look at her abominations, her pluralities, her easy living bishops doing nothing; look at her ungodly clergymen in the country, living in sin. The churchman who does not know that his church has defiled her garments is partial to his mother, as indeed he ought to be, but he is too partial to speak the truth. But good churchmen themselves weep, because what I say is true. Then look at John Wesley's body; have not they defiled their garments? See how they have lately been contending with a despotism as accursed as any that ever brooded over the slaves in America? See how they have been rent in sunder, and how imperfect in doctrine they are too after all, professedly at least, not holding the truth of God. Look into what denomination you please, Independent, or Baptist, or any other — have they not all defiled their garments in some way or other? Look at the churches around, and see how they have defiled their garments by giving baptism to those who whom it was never intended, and degrading a holy church ordinance to become a mere sop with which they feed their babes. And see how they have taken away Christ's honor, how they have taken the bread that was meant for the children, and cast it to ungodly persons. Look at our own

denomination: see how it has deserted the leading truths of the gospel. For a proof hereof, I refer you to hundreds of our pulpits. Oh church of God! I am but a voice crying in the wilderness, but I must cry still, "How art thou fallen from heaven, thou son of the morning! how art thou fallen!" "Remember how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent." If thou dost not watch, thy Master will come upon thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know in what hour he will come unto thee.

II. But now we come to far easier work; not because we would shun what we conceive to be our duty, even at the expense of offending many now present, but because we always delight to speak well if we can. "Thou has a few names even in Sardis that have not defiled their garments." He we have SPECIAL PRESERVATION. Mark, "Thou hast a few names." Only a few; not so few as some think, but not as many as others imagine! A few compared with the mass of professors; a few compared even with the true children of God, for many of them have defiled their garments. They were but a few, and those few were even I Sardis. There is not a church on earth that is so corrupt but has "a few." You who are always fighting so much for your denomination, you think other denominations are Sardis; but there are a few even in Sardis. Even if the denomination is the worst of all Protestant sections, there are a few in Sardis; and perhaps that is as much as we can say of our denomination: so we will treat them all alike. There are a few in Sardis — mark that. Not in what you conceive to be Philadelphia, your own blessed church, but in Sardis — there are a few there. Where there is heresy and false doctrine, where there are many mistakes about rites and ceremonials, there are a few there; and even where they cringe before the state, there are a few there — ay, and a goodly few too, a few whom we love, with whom we can hold communion. This makes us severe against the whole body, but it makes us very loving towards all the dear people of God everywhere. There are a few even in Sardis. Well, when I meet a brother who lives in Sardis, I will hope he is one of the few; and when you meet such, do you say, "Ah! well, I know my brother comes out of a bad church, but there are a few in Sardis, and very likely he is one of them." That is the kind of charity God loves; not the universal charity which says Sardis is all right, but that which says, some in her are sincere. We stand this morning like old Elijah, when he stood before God and said, "I, only I, am left, and they seek my life." But

God whispers, “I have yet reserved unto myself seventy thousand that have not bowed the knee to Baal.” Take heart, Christian, there are a few in Sardis — do not forget that — who have not defiled their garments. Take heart. It is not all rotten yet; there is a soundness in the core after all; there is “a remnant according to the election of grace;” there is “salt,” and for the sake of that salt, many who have defiled their garments in a measure will be saved. They will enter into heaven even as these few will; but unto the few there will be special honor and special blessing. Take heart then; and whenever you go to your chamber and mourn over the sad condition of the church, think you hear that good old woman in her closet groaning and crying; think you hear that minister faithfully dispensing the word; think you see that valiant deacon standing up for God’s truth; think you see that young man strong in the midst of temptation; think of these few in Sardis, and they will cheer you. Do not be quite downcast. Some heroes have not turned their backs in the day of battle; some mighty men still fight for the truth. Be encouraged; there are a few in Sardis. But be careful, for perhaps you are not one of the few. Since there are but a few, there ought to be great searchings of heart. Let us look to our garments and see whether they be defiled. If they be not, we shall walk in white, for we are worthy through Jesus. Be active; be prayerful. The fewer the workmen to do the work the greater reason is there that you should be active. Be instant in season and out of season, because there are so few. Oh! if we had hundreds behind us, we might say, “Let them do the work;” but if we stand with only a few, how should each of those few rush hither and thither! A city is besieged: it is full of inhabitants; half of them are asleep; the others watch the walls, and thus they relieve each other. Another city has but a few defenders: see how that champion rushes first to that breach and routs the enemy; now he brings his might to another place; a bastion is assaulted, and he is there; now a postern is attacked — there he is with all his force behind him; he is here, he is there, he is everywhere, because he feels there is but a handful of men who can gather round him. Take courage, take heart; stir yourselves up to the sternest activity, for verily there are but a few in Sardis who have not defiled their garments. Above all, be prayerful. Put up your earnest cries to God that he would multiply the faithful, that he would increase the number of chosen ones who stand fast, that he would purify the church with fire in a furnace seven times heated, so that he might bring out her third part through the fire; cry unto God that the

day may come when the much fine gold shall be no longer dim, when the glory shall again return unto Zion. Beg of God to remove the cloud, to take away "the darkness that may be felt." Be doubly prayerful, for there are but a few in Sardis who have not defiled their garments.

III. This brings us to the third point, which is a PECULIAR REWARD. "They shall walk in white, for they are worthy." The attentive reader will observe, that in quoting the passage just now, I left out two of the sweetest words in the passage. It reads: "They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy." That is the very pith of the honor; if the rest of it be gold this is the jewel. "They shall walk with me in white." That is to say, communion with Christ on earth shall be the special reward of those who have not defiled their garments. Now, I must say a very hard thing again, but it is a true one. Go into what company you please, do you meet with many men who hold communion with Christ? Though they may be godly men, upright men, ask them if they hold communion with Christ, and will they understand you? If you give them some of those sweetly spiritual books, that those who hold fellowship love to read, they will say they are mystical, and they do not love them. Ask them whether they can spend an hour in meditation upon Christ, whether they ever rise to heaven and lay their head on the breast of the Savior, whether they ever know what it is to enter into rest and get into Canaan; whether they understand how he has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; whether they can often say,

Abundant sweetness while I sing
Thy love, my ravish'd heart o'erflows;
Secure in thee my God and King
Of glory that no period knows."

Ask them that, and they will say, "We don't comprehend you." Now, the reason of it is in the first part of my sermon — they have defiled their garments, and therefore Christ will not walk with them. He says, "Those that have not defiled their garments shall walk with me." Those who hold fast the truth, who take care to be free from the prevailing sins of the times, "These," he says, "shall walk with me; they shall be in constant fellowship with me; I will let them see that I am bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh: I will bring them into the banqueting-house; my banner over them shall be love; they shall drink wine on the lees well refined; they

shall have the secrets of the Lord revealed unto them, because they are the people who truly fear me: they shall walk with me in white." Oh, Christian! if thou wouldst have communion with Christ, the special way to win it is by not defiling thy garments, as the church has done.

But we must dwell on the rest of the passage. "They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy." A good old author says there is a reference here to that fact, that the rabbis allowed persons to walk in white who could trace their pedigree without a flew; but if they found any blot on their escutcheon, and could not trace their birth up to Abraham, they were not allowed to walk in white on certain days. Well, he says he thinks the passage means that those who have not defiled their garments will be able to prove their adoption, and will walk in white garments as being sure they are the sons of God. If we would be certain that we are the people of God, we must take care that we have no blots on our dress, for each one of those spatterings of the mire of this earth will cry out, and say "Perhaps you are not a child of God." Nothing is such a father of doubts as sin; sin is the very mother of our distress. He who is covered with sin must not expect to enjoy full assurance, but he who liveth close to his God, and keeps his garments unspotted from the world — he shall walk in white, knowing that his adoption is sure.

But chiefly we should understand this to refer to justification. "They shall walk in white;" that is, they shall enjoy a constant sense of their own justification by faith; they shall understand that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to them, that they have

A matchless robe which far exceeds
What earthly princes wear;"

that they have been washed and make whiter than snow, and purified and made more cleanly than wool.

Again, it refers to joy and gladness: for white robes were holiday dresses among the Jews. They that have not defiled their garments, shall have their faces always bright; they shall understand what Solomon meant when he said, "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart. Let thy garments be always white, for God hath accepted thy works." He who is accepted of God shall wear white garments, being received by the Father — garments of joy and gladness. Whence so many

doubts, so much distress, and misery, and mourning? It is because the church has defiled her garments; they do not here below walk in white, because they are not worthy.

And lastly, it refers to walking in white before the throne of God. Those who have not defiled their garments here, shall most certainly walk in white up yonder, where the white-robed hosts sing perpetual hallelujahs to the Most High. If thou hast not defiled thy garments, thou mayest say, "I know whom I have believed;" not for my works, not by way of merit, but as the reward of grace. If there be joys inconceivable, happiness beyond a dream, bliss which imagination knoweth not, blessedness which even the stretch of desire hath not reached, thou shalt have all these: thou shalt walk in white, since thou art worthy. Christ shall say to thee "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

But what shall be done with such persons as live in the church, but are not of it having a name to live, but are dead? What shall be done with mere professors who are not possessors? What shall become of those who are only outwardly religious but inwardly are in the gall of bitterness? We answer, as good Calvin did once: "They shall walk in black, for they are unworthy." They shall walk in black — the blackness of God's destruction. They shall walk in black — the blackness of hopeless despair. They shall walk in black — the blackness of incomparable anguish. They shall walk in black — the blackness of damnation. They shall walk in black for ever, because they were found unworthy. O professors, search yourselves. O ministers, search yourselves. O ye, who make a profession of religion now, put your hands within your hearts, and search your souls. You live in the sight of a rein-trying God. Oh! try your own reins, and search your own hearts. It is not a matter of half-importance for which I plead, but a matter of double importance. I beseech you, examine and cross-examine your own souls, and see whether ye be in the path, for it will go ill with you if ye shall find at last that ye were in the church, but not of it, that ye make a profession of religion, but it was only a cloak for your hypocrisy — if ye should have entered into his courts below, and be shut out of the courts above. Remember, the higher the pinnacle of profession the direr your fall of destruction. Beggared kings, exile princes, crownless emperors, are always subjects of pity. Professor, what wilt thou think of thyself when thy robes are taken from thee, when thy crown

of profession is taken from thy head, and thou standest the hiss of even vile men, the scoff of blasphemers, the jeer of those who, whatever they were, were not hypocrites, as thou art? They will cry to thee, “Art thou become like one of us? Thou professor, thou high-flying man, art thou become like one of us?” And ye will hide your guilty heads in the dark pit of perdition, but all in vain, for you never will be able to avoid that hiss which shall ever greet you. “What! thou!” the drunkard whom you told to drink no more will say “Art thou become like one of us?” And the harlot whom you scorned, and the young debauched man whom you warned, will stare you in the face, and say, “What! you! You who talked of religion. A pretty fellow you were! Art thou become one of us?” Oh! I think I hear them saying in hell, “Here’s a parson, come here; here’s a deacon; here’s a church member; here’s a man who has had the sacramental wine within his lips; here’s a man that has had the baptismal water on his garments.” Ah! take care. There are but a few names in Sardis who shall walk in white. Be ye of that few. May God give you grace that ye be not reprobates, but may be accepted of the Lord in that day! May he give you mercy, that when he severs the chaff from the wheat, you may abide as the good corn, and may not be swept away into unquenchable fire! The Lord in mercy bless this warning, and hear our supplication, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

THE ALLEGORIES OF SARAH AND HAGAR

SERMON NO. 69

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 2, 1856,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"These are the two covenants." — Galatians 4:24.

There cannot be a greater difference in the world between two things than there is between law and grace. And yet, strange to say, while the things are diametrically opposed and essentially different from each other, the human mind is so depraved, and the intellect, even when blessed by the Spirit, has become so turned aside from right judgment, that one of the most difficult things in the world is to discriminate properly between law and grace. He who knows the difference, and always recollects it — the essential difference between law and grace — has grasped the marrow of divinity. He is not far from understanding the gospel theme in all its ramifications, its outlets, and its branches, who can properly tell the difference between law and grace. There is always in a science some part which is very simple and easy when we have learned it, but which, in the commencement, stands like a high threshold before the porch. Now, the first difficulty in striving to learn the gospel is this. Between law and grace there is a difference plain enough to every Christian, and especially to every enlightened and instructed one; but still, when most enlightened and instructed, there is always a tendency in us to confound the two things. They are as opposite as light and darkness, and can no more agree than fire and water; yet man will be perpetually striving to make a compound of them — often ignorantly, and sometimes wilfully. They seek to blend the two, when God has positively put them asunder.

We shall attempt this morning to teach you something of the allegories of Sarah and Hagar, that you may thereby better understand the essential

difference between the covenants of law and of grace. We shall not go fully into the subject, but shall only give such illustrations of it as the text may furnish us. First, I shall want you to notice the two women, whom Paul uses as types — Hagar and Sarah; then I shall notice the two sons — Ishmael and Isaac; in the third place, I shall notice Ishmael's conduct to Isaac; and I shall conclude by noticing the the different fates of the two.

I. First, we invite you to notice THE TWO WOMEN — Hagar and Sarah. It is said that they are the types of the two covenants; and before we start we must not forget to tell you what the covenants are. The first covenant for which Hagar stands, is the covenant of works, which is this: "There is my law, O man; if thou on thy side wilt engage to keep it, I on my side will engage that thou shalt live by keeping it. If thou wilt promise to obey my commands perfectly, wholly, fully, without a single flaw, I will carry thee to heaven. But mark me, if thou violatest one command, if thou dost rebel against a single ordinance, I will destroy thee for ever." That is the Hagar covenant — the covenant propounded on Sinai, amidst tempests, fire and smoke — or rather, propounded, first of all, in the garden of Eden, where God said to Adam, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." As long as he did not eat of the tree, but remained spotless and sinless, he was most assuredly to live. That is the covenant of the law, the Hagar covenant. The Sarah covenant is the covenant of grace, not made with God and man, but made with God and Christ Jesus, which covenant is this: "Christ Jesus on his part engages to bear the penalty of all his people's sins, to die, to pay their debts, to take their iniquities upon his shoulders; and the Father promises on his part that all for whom the Son doth die shall most assuredly be saved; that seeing they have evil hearts, he will put his law in their hearts, that they shall not depart from it, and that seeing they have sins, he will pass them by and not remember them any more for ever." The covenant of works was, "Do this and live, O man!" but the covenant of grace is, "Do this, O Christ, and thou shalt live, O man!" The difference of covenants rests here. The one was made with man, the other with Christ; the one was a conditional covenant, conditional on Adam's standing, the other is a conditional covenant with Christ, but as perfectly unconditional with us. There are no conditions whatever in the covenant of grace, or if there be conditions, the covenant gives them. The covenant gives faith, gives repentance, gives good works, gives salvation,

as a purely gratuitous unconditional act; nor does our continuance in that covenant depend in the least degree on ourselves. The covenant was made by God with Christ, signed, sealed, and ratified, in all things ordered well.

Now come and look at the allegory. First, I would have you notice, that Sarah who is the type of the new covenant of grace, was the original wife of Abraham. Before he knew anything about Hagar, Sarah was his wife. The covenant of grace was the original covenant after all. There be some bad theologians who teach that God mad man upright, and made a covenant with him; that man sinned, and that as a kind of afterthought God mad a new covenant with Christ for the salvation of his people. Now, that is a complete mistake. The covenant of grace was made before the covenant of works; for Christ Jesus, before the foundation of the world, did stand as its head and representative; and we are said to be elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. We, long ere we fell, were loved of God; he did not love us out of pity to us, but he loved his people, considered purely as creatures. He loved them when they became sinners; but when he started with them he considered them as creatures. He allowed them to fall into sin, to show forth the riches of his grace, which existed before their sin. He did not love them and choose them from among the rest, after their fall, but he loved them beyond their sin, and before their sin. He made the covenant of grace before we fell by the covenant of works. If you could go back to eternity, and ask which is the oldest born, you would hear that grace was born before law — that it came into the world long before the law was promulgated. Older even than the fundamental principles which guide our morals is that great fundamental rock of grace, in covenant made of old, long ere seers preached the law, and long ere Sinai smoked. Long before Adam stood in the garden God had ordained his people to eternal life, that they might be saved through Jesus.

Notice next: though Sarah was the elder wife, yet Hagar bare the first son. So the first man Adam was the son of Hagar; though he was born perfectly pure and spotless, he was not the son of Sarah when he was in the garden. Hagar had the first son. She bore Adam, who lived for a time under the covenant of works. Adam lived in the garden on this principle. Sins of commission were to be his fall; and if he omitted to do the sin, then he was to stand for ever. Adam had it entirely in his own power whether he would

obey God or not: his salvation, then, rested simply on this basis, “If thou touchest that fruit thou diest; if thou obeyest my command, and dost not touch it, thou shalt live.” And Adam, perfect as he was, was but an Ishmael, and not an Isaac, till after his fall. Apparently, at any rate, he was a Hagarene, though secretly, in the covenant of grace, he may have been a child of promise. Blessed be God, we are not under Hagar now; we are not under the law since Adam fell. Now Sarah hath brought forth children. The new covenant is, “The mother of us all.”

But notice again, Hagar was not intended to be a wife; she never ought to have been anything but a hand-maid to Sarah. The law was never intended to save men: it was only designed to be a hand-maid to the covenant of grace. When God delivered the law on Sinai, it was apart from his ideas that any man would ever be saved by it; he never conceived that man would attain perfection thereby. But you know that the law is a wondrous handmaid to grace. Who brought us to the Savior? Was it not the law thundering in our ears? We should never have come to Christ if the law had not driven us there; we should never have known sin if the law had not revealed it. The law is Sarah’s handmaid to sweep our hearts, and make the dust fly so that we may cry for blood to be sprinkled that the dust may be laid. The law is, so to speak, Jesus Christ’s dog, to go after his sheep, and bring them to the shepherd; the law is the thunderbolt which affrighteth ungodly men, and maketh them turn from the error of their ways, and seek after God. Ah! if we know rightly how to use the law, if we understand how to put her in her proper place, and make her obedient to her mistress, then all will be well. But this Hagar will always be wishing to be mistress, as well as Sarah; and Sarah will never allow that, but will be sure to treat her harshly, and drive her out. We must do the same; and let none murmur at us, if we treat the Hagarenes harshly in these days — if we sometimes speak hard things against those who are trusting in the works of the law. We will quote Sarah as an example. She treated Hagar harshly, and so will we. We mean to make Hagar flee into the wilderness: we wish to have nothing to do with her. Yet it is very remarkable, that coarse and ill-featured as Hagar is, men have always a greater love for her than they have for Sarah; and they are prone continually to be crying, “Hagar, thou shalt be my mistress,” instead of saying, “Nay, Sarah, I will be thy son, and Hagar shall be bondmaid.” What is God’s law now? It is not above a

Christian — it is under a Christian. Some men hold God's law like a rod, in terrorem, over Christians, and say, "If you sin you will be punished with it." It is not so. The law is under a Christian; it is for him to walk on, to be his guide, his rule, his pattern. "We are not under the law, but under grace." Law is the road which guides us, not the rod which drives us, nor the spirit which actuates us. The law is good and excellent, if it keeps its place. Nobody finds fault with the handmaid, because she is not the wife; and no one shall despise Hagar because she is not Sarah. If she had but remembered her office, it had been all well, and her mistress had never driven her out. We do not wish to drive the law out of chapels, as long as it is kept in its right position; but when it is set up as mistress, away with her; we will have nought to do with legality.

Again: Hagar never was a free woman, and Sarah never was a slave. So, beloved, the covenant of works never was free, and none of her children ever were. All those who trust in works never are free, and never can be, even could they be perfect in good works. Even if they have no sin, still they are bond-slaves, for when we have done all that we ought to have done, God is not our debtor, we are debtors still to him, and still remain as bond-slaves. If I could keep all God's law, I should have no right to favor, for I should have done no more than was my duty, and be a bond-slave still. The law is the most rigorous master in the world, no wise man would love its service; for after all you have done, the law never gives you a "Thank you," for it, but says, "Go on, sir, go on.!" The poor sinner trying to be saved by law is like a blind horse going round and round a mill, and never getting a step further, but only being whipped continually; yea, the faster he goes, the more work he does, the more he is tired, so much the worse for him. The better legalist a man is, the more sure he is of being damned; the more holy a man is, if he trust to his works, the more he may rest assured of his own final rejection and eternal portion with Pharisees. Hagar was a slave; Ishmael, moral and good as he was, was nothing but a slave, and never could be more. Not all the works he ever rendered to his father could make him a free-born son. Sarah never was a slave. She might be sometimes taken prisoner by Pharoah, but she was not a slave then; her husband might sometimes deny her, but she was his wife still; she was soon owned by her husband, and Pharoah was soon obliged to send her back. So the covenant of grace might seem once in jeopardy, and the

representative of it might cry, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;” but it never was in real hazard. And sometimes the people under the covenant of grace may seem to be captives and bond-slaves; but still they are free. Oh! that we knew how to “stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.”

One thought more. Hagar was cast out, as well as her son; but Sarah never was. So the covenant of works has ceased to be a covenant. Not only have the people been cast away who trusted in it, not simply was Ishmael cast out, but Ishmael’s mother too. SO the legalist may not only know himself to be damned, but the law as a covenant has ceased to be, for mother and son are both driven out by the gospel, and those who trust in law are sent away by God. You ask to-day who is Abraham’s wife? Why Sarah; does she not sleep side by side with her husband in the Machpelah’s cave at this instant? There she lies, and if she lie there for a thousand years to come, she will still be Abraham’s wife, while Hagar never can be. Oh, how sweet to think, that the covenant made of old was in all things ordered well, and never, never shall be removed. “Although my house be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.” Ah! ye legalists, I do not wonder that ye teach the doctrine of falling away, because that is consistent with your theology. Of course, Hagar has to be driven out, and Ishmael too. But we who preach the covenant of free and full salvation know, that Isaac never shall be driven out, and that Sarah never shall cease to be the friend and wife of Abraham. Ye Hagarenes! ye ceremonialists! ye hypocrites! ye formalists! of what avail will it be, when at last ye shall say, “Where is my mother? Where is my mother, the law?” Oh! she is driven out, and thou mayest go with her into eternal oblivion. But where is my mother? the Christian can say at last; and it will be said, “There is the mother of the faithful, Jerusalem above, the mother of us all; and we shall enter in, and dwell with our Father and our God.”

II. Now we are going to review the TWO SONS. While the two women were types of the two covenants, the two sons were types of those who live under each covenant. Isaac is a type of the man who walks by faith, and not by sight, and who hopes to be saved by grace; Ishmael of the man who lives by works, and hopes to be saved by his own good deeds. Let us look at these two.

First, Ishmael is the elder. So, beloved, the legalist is a great deal older than the Christian. If I were a legalist to-day, I should be some fifteen or sixteen years older than I am as a Christian, for we are all born legalists. Speaking of Arminians, Whitfield said, “We are all born Arminians.” It is grace that turns us into Calvinists, grace that makes Christians of us, grace that makes us free, and makes us know our standing in Christ Jesus. The legalist must be expected, then, to have more might of argument than Isaac; and when the two boys are wrestling, of course Isaac generally gets a fall, for Ishmael is the biggest fellow. And you must expect to hear Ishmael making the most noise, for he is to be a wild man, his hand against every man, and every man’s hand against him; whereas Isaac is a peaceful lad. He always stands up for his mother, and when he is mocked, he can go and tell his mother that Ishmael mocked him, but that is all that he can do; he has not much strength. So you notice now-a-days. The Ishmaelites are generally the strongest, and they can give us desperate falls when we get into argument with them. In fact, it is their boast and glory that the Isaacs have not much power of reasoning — not much logic. No, Isaac does not want it, for he is an heir according to promise, and promise and logic do not much consist together. His logic is his faith; his rhetoric is his earnestness. Never expect the gospel to be victorious when you are disputing after the manner of men; more usually look to be beaten. If you are discoursing with a legalist, and he conquers you, say, “Ah! I expected that; it shows I am an Isaac, for Ishmael will be sure to give Isaac a thrashing, and I am not at all sorry for it. Your father and mother were in the prime of life, and were strong; and it was natural that you should overcome me, for my father and mother were quite old people.

But where was the difference between the two lads in their outward appearance? There was no difference between them as to ordinances, for both of them were circumcised. There was no distinction with regard to outward and visible signs. So, my dearly beloved, there is often no difference between Ishmael and Isaac, between the legalist and the Christian, in matters of outward ceremonies. The legalist takes the sacrament and is baptized; he would be afraid to die if he did not. And I do not believe there was much difference as to character. Ishmael was nearly as good and honorable a man as Isaac; there is nothing said against him in Scripture; indeed, I am led to believe that he was an especially good lad,

from the fact that when God gave a blessing, he said, “With Isaac shall the blessing be.” Abraham, said, “O that Ishmael might live before thee.” He cried to God for Ishmael, because he loved the lad, doubtless, for his disposition. God said, yes, I will give Ishmael such-and-such a blessing; he shall be the father of princes, he shall have temporal blessings; but God would not turn aside, even for Abraham’s prayer. And when Sarah was rather fierce, as she must have been that day when she turned Hagar out of the house, it is said, “It grieved Abraham because of his son;” and I do not suspect that Abraham’s attachment was a foolish one. There is one trait in Ishmael’s character that you love very much. When Abraham died, he did not leave Ishmael a single stick or stone, for he had previously given him his portion and sent him away; yet he came to his father’s funeral, for it is said that his sons Ishmael and Isaac buried him in Machpelah. There seems then to have been but little difference in the characters of the two. So, dearly beloved, there is little difference between the legalist and the Christian as to the outward walk. They are both the visible sons of Abraham. It is not a distinction of life; for God allowed Ishmael to be as good as Isaac, in order to show that it was not the goodness of man that made any distinction, but that he “will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will be hardeneth.”

Then, what was the distinction? Paul has told us that the first was born after the flesh, and the second after the Spirit. The first was a natural son, the other a spiritual one. Ask the legalist, “You do good works; you have repented, you say: you are keeping the law, and you have no need to repent. Now, where did you get your strength from?” Perhaps he says, “Grace;” but if you ask him what he means, he says that he used it; he had grace, but he used it. Then the difference is, you used your grace, and others did not. Yes. Well, then, it is your own doing. You may call it grace, or you may call it mustard; it was no grace after all, for it was your using, you say, that made the difference. But ask poor Isaac how he has kept the law, and what does he say? Very badly, indeed. Are you a sinner, Isaac? “Oh! yes, an exceedingly great one; I have rebelled against my father times without number; I have often gone astray from him.” Then you do not think yourself quite as good as Ishmael, do you? “No.” But yet there is a difference between you and him after all. What has made the difference? “Why, grace has made me to differ.” Why is not Ishmael an Isaac? Could

Ishmael have been an Isaac? "No," says Isaac, "it was God who made me to differ, from the first to the last; he made me a child of promise before I was born, and he must keep me so."

"Grace all the work shall crown
Through everlasting days;
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise."

Isaac has more really good works; he does not stand second to Ishmael. When he is converted, he labors, if it be possible, to serve his father far more than the legalist does his master; but still doubtless, if you were to hear both their tales, you would hear Isaac say that he was a poor miserable sinner, while Ishmael would make himself out a very honorable Pharisaic gentleman. The difference is not in works, however, but in motives; not in the life, but in the means of sustaining life — not in what they do, so much as in how they do it. Here, then, is the difference between some of you. Not that you legalists are worse than Christians; you may be often better in your lives, and yet you may be lost. Do you complain of that as unjust? Not in the least. God says men must be saved by faith, and if you say, "No, I will be saved by works," you may try it, but you will be lost for ever. It is as if you had a servant, and you should say, "John, go and do such-and-such a thing in the stable;" but he goes away and does the reverse, and then says, "Sir, I have done it very nicely." "Yes," you say, "but that is not what I told you to do." So God has not told you to work out your salvation by good works; but he has said, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure." So that when you come before God with your good works he will say, "I never told you to do that. I said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptized, and thou shalt be saved." "Ah!" you say, "I though the other was a great deal better way." Sir, you will be lost for your thoughts. "Why is it that the Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness, have attained unto righteousness," when Israel, who followed after righteousness, hath not attained it? It is this: "Because they sought it not by faith, but by the works of the law."

III. Now I will briefly say a word or two concerning ISHMAEL'S CONDUCT TO ISAAC. It says that Ishmael mocked Isaac. Have not some of you, dear sons of Hagar, felt exceedingly irritated when you heard this

doctrine? You have said, “It is dreadful, it is horrible, it is quite unjust, that I may be as good as I like, but if I am not a son of the promise, I cannot be saved; it is really awful, it is an immoral doctrine; it does a deal of damage, and ought to be stopped.” Of course! That shows that you are an Ishmael. Of course Ishmael will mock at Isaac; and we need no further explanation. Where the pure sovereignty of God is preached, where it is held that the child of the promise, and not the child of the flesh, is the heir, the child of the flesh always makes a hubbub about it. What said Ishmael to Isaac? “What business have you here? Am I not my father’s eldest son? I should have had all the property, if it had not been for you. Are you above me?” That is how the legalist talks. “Is not God the father of everybody? Are we not all his children? He ought not to make any difference.” Said Ishmael: “Am not I as good as you? Do I not serve my father as well? As for you, you know you are your mother’s favorite, but my mother is as good as yours.” And so he teased and mocked at Isaac. That is just how you Arminians do with free salvation. The legalist says, “I don’t see it, I cannot have it, and I won’t; if we are both equal in character, it cannot be fair that one should be lost, and the other saved.” And thus he mocks at free grace. You may get on very easily, if you do not preach free grace too fully, but if you dare to speak such things, though they are obnoxious to the crowd, what will people say? They call them “baits for popularity.” (See the so-called FREEMAN Newspaper.) Few fishes, however, bite at those baits. Most men say, “I hate him, I cannot bear him; he is so uncharitable.” You say we preach this to gain popularity! Why, it is, upon the surface of it, a bare-faced lie; for the doctrine of God’s sovereignty will always be unpopular; men will always hate it, and grind their teeth, just as they did when Jesus taught it. Many widows he said, were in Israel, but to none of them was the prophet sent, save unto a widow of Sarepta. And many lepers were in Israel, but none of them were healed, except one who came far away from Syria. A fine popularity our Savior got from that sermon. The people ground their teeth at him; and all the popularity he had, would have been to be pushed down the hill, from which, it is said, they would have cast him headlong, but he made his way out of them and escaped. What! popular to humble a man’s pride, to abolish man’s standing, and make him cringe before God as a poor sinner? No; it will never be popular till men be born angels, and all men love the Lord, and that will not be just yet, I ween.

IV. But we have to enquire WHAT BECAME OF THE TWO SONS.

First, Isaac had all the inheritance, and Ishmael none. Not that Ishmael came off poorly, for he had many presents, and became very rich and great in this world; but he had no spiritual inheritance. So the legalist will get many blessings, as a reward for his legality; he will be respected and honored. "Verily," said Christ, "the Pharisees have their reward." God does not rob any man of his reward. Whatever a man angles for, he catches. God pays men all he owes, and a great deal over; and those who keep his law, even in this world, will receive great favors. By obeying God's command they will not injure their bodies as much as the vicious, and they will preserve their reputation better-obedience does good in this way. But then Ishmael had none of the inheritance. So, thou poor legalist, if thou art depending on thy works, or on anything, except the free sovereign grace of God, for thy deliverance from death, thou wilt not have so much as a foot of the inheritance of Canaan, but in that great day when God shall allot the portions of all the sons of Jacob, there will be not a scrap for thee. But if thou art a poor Isaac, a poor guilty trembling sinner — and if thou sayest, "Ishmael has his hands full,

But nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to the cross I cling."
If thou art saying this morning —
I am nothing at all,
But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

If thou renouncest all the works of the flesh, and dost confess, "I the chief of sinners am, but I am the child of the promise; and Jesus died for me," thou shalt have an inheritance, and thou shalt not be robbed of it by all the mocking Ishmaels in the world; nor shall it be diminished by the sons of Hagar. Thou mayest sometimes be sold, and carried down to Egypt, but God will bring his Josephs and his Isaacs back again, and thou shalt yet be exalted to glory, and sit on Christ's right hand. Ah! I have often thought what consternation there will be in hell when outwardly good men go there. "Lord," saith one as he goes in, "am I to go into that loathsome dungeon? Did not I keep the Sabbath? Was not I a strict Sabbatarian? I never cursed or swore in all my life. Am I to go there? I paid tithes of all that I possessed, and am I to be locked up there? I was baptized; I took the Lord's supper; I was everything that ever a man could be, that was

good. It is true, I did not believe in Christ; but I did not think I needed Christ, for I thought I was too good and too honorable; and am I to be locked up there?" Yes, sir! and amongst the damned thou shalt have this pre-eminence, that thou didst scorn Christ most of all. They never set up an anti-Christ. They followed sin, and so didst thou in thy measure, but thou didst add to thy sin this most damnable of sins: that thou didst set up thyself as an anti-Christ, and bowed down and worshipped thine own fancied goodness. Then God will proceed to tell the legalist, "On such a day I heard thee rail at my sovereignty; I heard thee say it was unfair of me to save my people, and distribute my favors after the counsel of my own will; thou didst impugn thy Creator's justice, and justice thou shalt have in all its power." The man had thought he had a great balance on his side, but he finds it is only some little grain of duty; but then God holds up the immense roll of his sins, with this at the bottom: "Without God, without hope, a stranger from the common wealth of Israel!" The poor man then sees that his little treasure is not half a mite, while God's great bill is ten thousand million talents; and so with an awful howl, and a desperate shriek, he runs away with all his little notes of merit that he had hoped would have saved him; crying, "I am lost! I am lost with all my good works! I find my good works were sands, but my sins were mountains; and because I had not faith, all my righteousness was but white-washed hypocrisy."

Now, once more, Ishmael was sent away, and Isaac was kept in the house. So there you are some of you, when the searching day shall come to try God's church, though you have been living in the church as well as others, though you have got the mask of profession on you, you will find that it will not avail. You have been like the elder son; whenever a poor prodigal has come into the church, you have said, "As soon as thy son is come which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf." Ah! envious legalist, thou wilt be banished at last from the house. I tell you legalist, and formalist, that you have no more to do with Christ than the heathens have, and thou you have been baptized with Christian baptism, though you sit at a Christian table, though you hear a Christian sermon, you have neither part nor lot in the matter, any more than a Catholic or a Mahomedan, unless you are trusting simply in the grace of God, and are an heir according to the promise. Whosoever doth

trust to his works, though it be ever so little, will find that that little trust will ruin his soul. All that nature spins must be unravelled. That ship which works have builded must have her keel cut in halves. A soul must trust simply and wholly to the covenant of God, or else that soul is lost. Legalist, thou hopest to be saved by works. Come, now, I will treat thee respectfully. I will not charge thee with having been a drunkard, or a swearer; but I want to ask thee, Art thou aware, that in order to be saved by thy works, it is requisite that thou shouldst be entirely perfect? God demands the keeping of the whole law. If you have a vessel with the smallest crack in it, it is not a whole one. Have you never committed sin in all your life? Have you never thought an evil thought, never had an evil imagination? Come, sire, I would not suppose that you have stained those white kid gloves with anything like lust, or carnality, or that your fine mouth which uses such chaste language ever condescended to an oath, or anything like lasciviousness; I will not imagine that you have ever sung lascivious son; I will leave that out of the question — but hast thou never sinned? "Yes," sayest thou. Then, mark this: "the soul that sinneth, it shall die;" and that is all I have to say to thee. But if thou wilt deny that thou hast ever sinner, dost thou know that if in future thou commit but one sin — though thou shouldst live for seventy years a perfect life, and at the end of that seventy years thou shouldst commit one sin, all thy obedience would go for nothing; for "He that offends in one point is guilty of all." "Sir," you say, "you are going on a wrong supposition, for though I believe I ought to do some good works, I believe Jesus Christ is very merciful, and though I am not exactly perfect, I am sincere, and I think sincere obedience will be accepted instead of perfect obedience." You do, indeed! and pray what is sincere obedience? I have known a man get drunk once a week; he was very sincere, and he did not think he was doing wrong so long as he was sober on a Sunday. Many people have what they call a sincere obedience, but it is one which always leaves a little margin for iniquity. But then you say, "I do not take too much margin, it is only a little sin I allow." My dear sir, you are quite in error as to your sincere obedience, for if this be what God requires, then hundreds of the vilest characters are as sincere as you are. But I do not believe you are sincere. If you were sincere, you would obey what God says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." It strikes me thy sincere obedience is a sincere delusion, and such thou wilt find it. "Oh," sayest thou, "I

believe that after all we have done, we must go to Jesus Christ, and we must say, "Lord, there is a great deficiency here, wilt thou make it up?" I have heard of weighing witches against the parish Bible, and if they were found heavier they were declared to be innocent; but to put the witch and the Bible in the same scale is a new idea. Why, Christ will not get in the scale with such a conceited fool as thou art. You wish Christ to be a make-weight. He is much obliged to you for the compliment, but he will accept no such menial service. "Oh," sayest thou, "he shall assist me in the matter of salvation." Yes, I know that would please you; but Christ is a very different kind of Savior; he has a propensity when he does a thing to do it all. You may think it strange, but he never likes any assistance. When he made the world, he did not ask the angel Gabriel so much as to cool the molten matter with his wing, but he did it entirely himself. So it is in salvation: he says, "My glory I will not give to another." And I beg to remind thee, as thou professest to go to Christ, and yet to have a little share in the business thyself, that there is a passage in the Scriptures which is apropos to thee, and which thou mayest masticate at thy leisure, "And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." For if you mix the two together, you spoil them both. Go home, sir, and make yourself a stirabout with fire and water, endeavor to keep in your house a lion and a lamb, and when you have succeeded in doing these, tell me that you have made works and grace agree, and I will tell you, you have told me a lie even then, for the two things are so essentially opposite, that it cannot be done. Whosoever amongst you will cast all his good works away, and will come to Jesus, with this "Nothing, nothing, NOTHING,

'Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to the cross I cling,

Christ will give you good works enough, his Spirit will work in you to will and to do of his good pleasure, and will make you holy and perfect; but if you have endeavored to get holiness before Christ, you have begun at the wrong end, you have sought the flower before you have the root, and are foolish for your pains. Ishmaels, tremble before him now! If others of you be Isaacs, may you ever remember that you are children of the promise.

Stand fast. Be not entangled by the yoke of bondage, for you are not under the law, but under grace.

GOOD WORKS

SERMON NO. 70

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 16, 1856,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"Zealous of good works." — Titus 2:14.

We shall not be afraid of leading any of you into a legal spirit this morning through what we shall say, for after our frequent exhortations to avoid anything like trusting in your works, attended as they have been, we trust, by the Holy Spirit, we are not afraid that you will so misunderstand us, as to suppose that when we speak of good works, to-day, we shall in any way whatsoever wish you to imagine that they can promote your eternal salvation. We labored when here the Sabbath morning before last, to let you know the difference between the two covenants, the covenant of grace and the covenant of works; we shall beg you to remember what we then said, and if by any slips of the tongue we should say anything that should look like legality, we beg you will put the two together, and wherein we shall err from the great truth of justification by faith, to reject our testimony.

"Zealous of good works." There are some who hear us preach high doctrine, and constantly declare that we are saved by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, who, therefore, suppose that we cannot preach good works, and that we could not preach a good sermon of exhortation to Christians, to live in holiness. Well, we will not say that we can preach a good sermon, but we will say that we will try and preach one as to that matter that shall be as good as theirs, and as much lead the children of God to live in holiness as any of their exhortations can do, grounded as they are on trusting in the flesh, and based as they are on threatenings, regulations and promises, which they hope will induce God's children, but which are well enough for slaves, though of little avail in operating on the true-born believer. The children of God are a holy people;

— for this very purpose were they born and brought into the world, that they should be holy; for this they were redeemed with blood and made a peculiar people. God's end in election, the end of all his purposes, is not answered until they become a people "zealous of good works."

Now, this morning, we shall first of all tell you the nature of good works, for there are many things called good works that are not so at all; secondly, we shall trace good works to their origin — find where good works come from; thirdly, we shall attempt to show you the use of good works; and we shall close up by endeavoring to prove that our doctrines, those of free, distinguishing, discriminating grace, have a tendency to make us who believe them "zealous of good works."

1. First, then, we are about to answer the question, WHAT ARE GOOD WORKS? Now, I dare say we shall offend many here when we tell them what good works are; for in our opinion good works are the rarest things in the world, and we believe we might walk for many a mile before we should see a good work at all. We use the word good now in its proper sense. There are many works which are good enough between man and man, but we shall use the word good in a higher sense to-day as regards God. We think we shall be able to show you that there are very few good works anywhere, and that there are none out of the pale of Christ's church. We think, if we read Scripture rightly, that no work can be good unless it is commanded of God. How this cuts off a large portion of what men will do in order to win salvation! The Pharisee said he tithed mint, anise, and cummin; could he prove that God commanded him to tithe his mint, his anise, and his cummin? Perhaps not. He said he fasted so many times a week; could he prove that God told him to fast? If not, his fasting was no obedience. If I do a thing that I am not commanded to do, I do not obey in doing it. Vain, then, are all the pretences of men, that by mortifying their bodies, by denying their flesh, by doing this, that, or the other, they shall therefore win the favor of God. No work is good unless God has commanded it. A man may build a long row of almshouses, but if he build without reference to the commandment, he has performed no good work.

Again: nothing is a good work unless it is done with a good motive; and there is no motive which can be said to be good but the glory of God. He who performs good works with a view to save himself, does not do them

from a good motive, because his motive is selfish. He who does them also to gain the esteem of his fellows and for the good of society, has a laudable motive, so far as man is concerned; but it is, after all, an inferior motive. — What end had we in view? If for the benefit of our fellow-creatures, then let our fellow-creatures pay us; but that has nought to do with God. Work is not good, unless a man does it with a view to God's glory, and he has been brought into subjection to God's divine will, so that in everything he has an eye to the Most High, and works in order to promote his glory and honor in the world. And even, beloved, when our works are done from the best motives, nothing is a good work unless it is done with faith; for "without faith it is impossible to please God." Like Cain, we may build the altar, and lay the first fruits of the salt of faith, there it will lie — it will not be accepted by God, for without faith it is impossible to please him. Bring me a man who all his life long has been spending his health and strength for his fellow-creatures; fetch me some public officer, who has fully discharged his trust, who has labored night and day, even to the wearing down of his constitution, because he believed that England expected every man to do his duty, and he wished to do it; bring me that man; let me see all his charitable works; let me witness the most lavish benevolence, the most profuse bounty; tell me that he has always, with a consistent motive, labored for his country; and then, if he cannot answer this question. "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" I shall be bound in all honesty to tell him that he has not done a solitary good work in all his life, so far as God is concerned.

Furthermore, when we have faith in God, and perform all our works with the best of motives, even then we have not so much as a solitary good work, until the blood of Christ is sprinkled thereon. Looking on all that we have ever done in our lives, can we find a solitary thing which we dare call good until Christ's blood is put upon it? Grant there is something good about it, for the Spirit wrought it in our souls; there is much also that is evil about it, for even our best exercises are so terribly spoiled, marred, and ruined by the sins and imperfections that are in them, that we dare not call them good, until Jesus Christ hath sprinkled them with his blood, and taken the stain away. Oh how often have I thought to myself, "Now, I have labored to preach God's word; I have not spared, at all times, before friends or foes, and I hope I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel

of God!" And yet, beloved, how many of those sermons have not been good works at all, because I had not an eye to my Master's honor at the time, or because there was not faith mixed with them but I preached in a desponding, low, miserable frame; or, perhaps, I had some natural aim, even in the winning of souls; for I have often feared, even when we rejoice to see souls converted, that we may have some evil motive, such as honoring ourselves, that the world may say, "See how many souls are brought to God by him!" And even when the church associates in doing holy works, have you not noticed that something selfish creeps in — a wish to exalt our own church, to glorify our own people, and to make ourselves mighty. I am sure, beloved, if you sit down and pull your good works to pieces, you will find so many bad stitches in them that they need to be all unstitched and done over again. There are so many spots and blurs about them, that you need to have them washed in the blood of Christ to make them good for anything.

And now, beloved, do you think you have any good works? "Oh!" you say "I am afraid I have not many myself-nay, I know I have not; but thanks be unto his love, he who accepted my person in Christ, accepts my works through Christ; and he who blessed me in him, that I should be a chosen vessel, has been pleased to accept that which he himself poured into the vessel, 'to the praise of the glory of his grace, where he hath made me accepted in the beloved.'"

And now, ye moralists, ye who have trusted in yourselves that ye are righteous, if what I have said be true, what has become of all your holiness? You are saying "I am a charitable man." Grant that you are! I tell you to go and appeal to your fellow-creatures, and let them pay you for your charity. You say, "Ay, but I am a consistent and moral man. I am a great credit to the country; if all men would act as I do, what a good thing for this world and generation!" Of course you have served your generation. Then send in your bill, and let your generation pay you. I tell you, you have toiled for nought; you have only sown the wind, and likely enough you will reap the whirlwind. God owes you nothing; you have not lived to his honor; you must honestly confess that you have not performed a single action with a desire to please him; you have labored to please yourself — that has been the highest motive you have had; you felt that if you were good you would go to heaven, and that if you were evil you would be sure

to go to hell. You have been thoroughly selfish, from first to last. Reckon up your accounts and settle with yourself. God owes you nothing; you have done nothing for him; and if you have, then consider within yourself, you have so much violated God's commands, and so frequently done all you could to injure your Maker, if it were possible, that all your accounts are easily struck off. And as for your good works, where are they? Where are they? Ah! it is a figment and a fiction, a laugh and a dream. Good works in sinners? There are no such things. Augustine well said, "Good works, as they are called, in sinners, are nothing but splendid sins." This is true of the best works of the best man, who is out of Christ, they are nothing but splendid sins — vanished sins. God forgive you, dear friends, for your good works! You have as great need to be forgiven for your good works as you have for your bad ones, if you are out of Christ; for I reckon they are both alike, bad, if they come to be sifted.

II. And now, secondly, WHERE DO GOOD WORKS COME FROM?

It is an old maxim, that nature can never rise above itself. Water, coming from the top of a hill, will rise as high as its source; but unless there is some extraordinary pressure put upon it, it will never rise higher. So of human nature, Scripture says it is exceedingly vile; we cannot expect good works out of an evil nature. Can a bitter well send forth sweet water? As poison groweth not on healthful trees, with healthful fruit, so cannot healthy fruit grow on poisonous trees. We must not look for good works in an evil nature any more than we should look for the grapes of Sorek on the vines of Gomorrah. We cannot expect to find good works coming from nature; truly it is vain and idle to think that good works can arise from the natural man. "Where, then," you ask, "do they come from?" We answer, good works come from a real conversion, brought about by the Spirit of God. Until our conversion, there is not the shadow of goodness about us. In the eye of the world we may be reputable and respectable, but in the eye of God we are nothing of the sort. Could we look into our hearts, as we sometimes look into other people's faces, we should see very much there which would drive out of our souls the very imagination of good works before our heart is changed. How many things there are in the world, which we have upon our tables and which we even eat, that if we were to put beneath our microscope we should be afraid to touch, for we should see all kinds of loathsome creatures creeping and crawling about in

them — such things as we never conceived! and so it is with human nature. When once the human heart is put under the microscope of Scripture, and we see it with a spiritual eye, we see it to be so vile and filthy, that we are quite sure that until we have a new heart and a right spirit, it would be just as impossible to expect to find good works in an unrighteous, unconverted man, as to hope to see fire burning in the midst of the ocean. The two things would be incongruous. Our good works, if we have any, spring from a real conversion; yet more, they spring also from a constant spiritual influence exercised upon us, from the time of conversion even until the hour of death. Ah! Christian, thou wouldst have no good works if thou hadst no fresh influence day by day. Thou wouldst not find the grace given thee at the first hour sufficient to produce fruit to-day. It is not like the planting of a tree in our hearts, which naturally of itself bringeth forth fruit; but the sap cometh up from the root of Jesus Christ. We are not trees by ourselves, but we are branches fixed on the living vine. Good works, I know whence you come! Ye come floating down on the stream of grace, and if I did not have that stream of grace always flowing, I should never find good works coming from me. Good works from the creature? Impossible! Good works are the gifts of God, his choice pearls, which he sendeth down with his grace.

And again: we think that good works spring from union with Christ. We believe that the more a man knows and feels himself to be one with Jesus, the more holy will he be. The very fact that Christ and the Christian become one, makes the Christian Christ-like. Why is a Christian's character like Christ's character? Only for this reason, that is joined and united to the Lord Jesus Christ. Why doth that branch bring forth grapes? Simply because it has been engrafted into the vine, and therefore it partakes of the nature of the stem. So, Christian, the only way whereby thou canst bring forth fruit to God is by being grafted into Christ and united with him. You Christians who think you can walk in holiness without keeping up perpetual fellowship with Christ have made a great mistake. If you would be holy, you must live close to Jesus. Good works spring only thence. Hence we draw the most powerful reasons against anything like trusting in works; for as works are only the gift of God, how utterly impossible does it become for an unrighteous, unconverted,

ungodly man, to produce any such good works in himself. And if they are God's gifts, how little merit can there be in them.

III. We have thus tried to trace good works to their origin and foundation. And now we come to the third point, which is, WHAT IS THE USE OF GOOD WORKS?

I am rather fond of being called an Antinomian, for this reason, that the term generally applied to those who hold truth very firmly and will not let it go. But I should not be fond of being an Antinomian. We are not against the law of God. We believe it is no longer binding on us as the covenant of salvation; but we have nothing to say against the law of God. "The law is holy; we are carnal, sold under sin." None shall charge us truthfully with being Antinomians. We do quarrel with Antinomians; but as for some poor souls, who are so inconsistent as to say the law is not binding, and yet try to keep it with all their might, we do not quarrel with them! they will never do much mischief; but we think they might learn to distinguish between the law as a covenant of life and a direction after we have obtained life.

Well, we do love good works. Do you ask, of what use are they? I reply, first: Good works are useful as evidences of grace. The Antinomian says, — But I do not require evidences; I can live without them. This is unreasonable. Do you see yonder clock? That is the evidence of the time of day. The hour would be precisely the same if we had not that evidence. Still, we find the clock of great use. So we say, good works are the best evidence of spiritual life in the soul. Is it not written, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren?" Loving the brethren is a good work. Again, "If any man abide in me, he shall bring forth fruit." Fruits of righteousness are good works, and they are evidence that we abide in Christ. If I am living in sin day by day, what right have I to conclude I am a child of God? A man comes to this chapel, and while he hears the gospel, he exclaims, "What delicious truth! what heavenly doctrine!" Yet when he leaves the place, you may see him enter one public-house for another, and get intoxicated. Has this man any right to think himself an heir of heaven? The man who comes to God's house, and drinks "wine on the lees, well refined," and then goes away and drinks the cup and enjoys the company of the ungodly, gives no evidence that he is a

partaker of divine grace. He says, “I do not like good works.” Of course he does not. “I know I shall not be saved by good works.” Of this we are certain, for he has none to be saved by. Many are ready enough to say,

“Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to the cross I cling;”

who believe they are children of God, because, though they have no good works as evidence, they think they have faith. Ah, sir! you have faith, and there is another gentleman quite as respectable as you are, who has faith; I shall not tell you his name this morning, but he is better than you are, for it is said, “He believes and trembles,” while you sit unmoved by the most powerful appeals. Yes you who think you are children of God while you live in sin, you are in the most dreadful error. There is no delusion, if you except the delusion of the Pharisee, which is more dreadful than the delusion of a man, who thinks that sin and grace can reign together. The Christian has sins of heart, over which he groans and laments, but as regards his outward life, he is kept, so that the evil one touches him not; the Lord keeps him under the shadow of his wing; he doth not, except in some falls, allow him to turn out of the way. Works are the evidence of our faith; by faith our souls are justified before God; by works our faith is justified before ourselves and fellow-men.

Secondly, we think good works are the witnesses or testimony to other people of the truth of what we believe. Every Christian was sent into the world to be a preacher; and just like every other creature that God has made, he will always be preaching about his Lord. Doth not the whole world preach God? Do not the stars, while they shine, look down from heaven and say there is a God? Do not the winds chaunt God’s name in their mighty howling? Do not the waves murmur it upon the shore, or thunder it in the storms? Do not the floods and the fields, the skies and the plains, the mountains and the valleys, the streamlets and the rivers, all speak for God? Assuredly they do; and a new-born creature — the man created in Christ — must preach Jesus Christ wherever he goes. This is the use of good works. He will preach, not with his mouth always, but with his life. The use of good works is, that they are a Christian’s sermon. A sermon is not what a man says, but what he does. You who practice are preaching; it is not preaching and practising, but practising is preaching. The sermon that is preached by the mouth is soon forgotten, but what we

preach by our lives is never forgotten. There is nothing like faithful practice and holy living, if we would preach to the world. The reason why Christianity does not advance with a mightier stride, is simply this: — that professors are in a large measure a disgrace to religion, and many of those who are joined to the church have no more godliness than those who are out of it. If I preached such a contradictory sermon on a Sunday as some of you have preached the most part of your lives, you would go out and say, “We will not go again till he can be a little more consistent with himself.” There is a difference in the very tone of the voice of some people when they are in the chapel engaged in prayer, and when they are in the workshop; you would hardly think them the same persons. Out upon your inconsistency! Professors, take heed lest your inconsistencies should blot your evidence, and some of you should be found manifesting, not inconsistency, but a most fearful consistency, because living in sin and iniquity, and therefore being consistent with yourselves in hypocrisy.

In the third place, good works are of us to a Christian as an adornment. You will all remember that passage in the Scriptures, which tells us how a woman should adorn herself. “Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.” The adornment of good works, the adornment in which we hope to enter heaven, is the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ; but the adornment of a Christian here below, is his holiness, his piety, his consistency. If some people had a little more piety, they would not require such a showy dress; if they had a little more godliness, to set them off, they would have no need whatever to be always decorating themselves. The best ear-rings that a woman can wear, are the ear-rings of hearing the Word with attention. The very best ring that we can have upon our finger is the ring which the father puts upon the finger of the prodigal son, when he is brought back; and the very best dress we can ever wear, is a garment wrought by the Holy Spirit, the garment of a consistent conduct. But it is marvellous, while many are taking all the trouble they can to array this poor body, they have very few ornaments for their soul; they forgot to dress the soul. Oh! no; they are too late at chapel, all because of that other pin, which they might have left out. They come here just when the service is beginning, because, forsooth,

they have so much to put on, they could not be expected to be here in time. And there are Christian men and Christian women, who forget what God has written in his word, which is as true now as ever it was, that Christian women should array themselves with modesty. It would be a good thing, perhaps, if we went back to Wesley's rule, to come out from the world in our apparel, and to dress as plainly and neatly as the Quakers, though alas! they have sadly gone from their primitive simplicity. I am obliged to depart a little sometimes, from what we call the high things of the gospel; for really the children of God cannot now be told by outward appearance from the children of the devil, and they really ought to be; there should be some distinction between the one and the other; and although religion allows distinction of rank and dress, yet everything in the Bible cries out against our arraying ourselves, and making ourselves proud, by reason of the goodliness of our apparel. Some will say, "I wish you would leave that alone!" Of course you do, because it applies to yourself. But we let nothing alone which we believe to be in the Scriptures; and while I would not spare any man's soul, honesty to every man's conscience and honesty to myself demands, that I should always speak of that which I see to be an evil breaking out in the Church. We should always take care that in everything we keep as near as possible to the written Word. If you want ornaments here they are. Here are jewels, rings, dresses, and all kinds of ornament; men and women, ye may dress yourselves up till ye shine like angels. How can you do it? By dressing yourselves out in benevolence, in love to the saints, in honesty and integrity, in uprightness, in godliness, in brotherly-kindness, in charity. These are the ornaments which angels themselves admire, and which even the word will admire; for men must give admiration to the man or the woman who is arrayed in the jewels of a holy life and godly conversation. I beseech you, brethren, "adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things."

IV. Thus have I told you the use of good works. Now just a moment or two to tell you that the religion which we profess in this place, and which we preach, is CALCULATED TO PRODUCE GOOD WORKS IN THE CHILD OF GOD.

Some say that what is called Calvinism, which is an alias for the true gospel, is calculated to lead men into sin. Now, we will refute that, just by reminding them, that the holiest people in the world have been those who

professed the doctrine which we hold. If you ask who in the dark ages were the great moral lights of the world, the answer will be, such as Athanasius, Ambrose, Chrysostom; and then coming lower still, such men as Wickliffe, Jerome of Prague, and Calvin; and every one of these held the doctrines which we love to proclaim. And just let me remind you, there never were better men in the world than the Puritans, and every one of them held fast the truth we love. I happened to find in a book the other day a statement which pleased me so much, that I thought I would read it to you. The writer says, "The Puritans were the most resolved Protestants in the nation; zealous Calvinists; warm and affectionate preachers. They were the most pious and devout people in the land; men of prayer in secret and in public, as well as in their families. Their manner of devotion was fervent and solemn, depending on the assistance of the Divine Spirit. They had a profound reverence for the holy name of God, and were great enemies not only to profane swearing, but to foolish talking and jesting. They were strict observers of the Lord's day, spending the whole of it in public and private devotion and charity. It was the distinguishing mark of a Puritan, in these times, to see him going to church twice a day, with his Bible under his arm; and while others were at plays and interludes, at revels, or walking in the fields, or at the diversions of bowling, fencing, etc., on the eve of the Sabbath, these with their families were employed in reading the Scriptures, singing psalms, repeating sermons, catechising their children, and prayer. Nor was this the work only of the Lord's day, but they had their hours of family devotion in the week days; they were circumspect, as to all excess in eating and drinking, apparel, and lawful diversions; being frugal, industrious, exact in their dealings, and solicitous to give every one his own." That is a noble testimony to puritanic truth and the power of the gospel. But I have one, which I think will please you, in another part of the book. A learned Infidel says of the modern Calvinists and Jansenists, that "When compared with their antagonists, they have excelled, in no small degree, in the most rigid and respectable virtues; that they have been an honor to their own age, and the best model for imitation to every age succeeding." Only think of an infidel speaking like that. I think it was an infidel that said, "Go the Arminians to hear about good works; but go to the Calvinists to see them exhibited." And even Dr. Priestly, who was a Unitarian, admits that, "They who hold the doctrines of grace, have less apparent conformity to the world, and more

of a principle of real religion, than his own followers: and that they who, from a principle of religion, ascribe more to God and less to man than others, have the greatest elevation of piety."

And just now, as the Unitarians are bringing up all their great men — so great that we never heard their names to this day — and endeavoring to do all they can in London, to bring people to Unitarianism, we would just tell them this fact. Dr. Priestly ascribes the coolness of Unitarianism to their becoming more indifferent to religious doctrine — and accounts for the fact of their chapels not being well attended, by saying that Unitarians have a very slight attachment to their religious doctrines. What a mercy! for if they continued to hold them, they would inevitably be lost. A man who denies the divinity of Christ is sure to be lost. It is idle for them to talk of their being Christians; they might as well talk of being holy angels. The best proof I can give you of the holy tendency of our doctrines is this great fact, viz.: — That in every age those who have held the doctrines of grace have exhibited in their lives a holy walk and conversation.

But once more: in just hastily running over the doctrines, we ask, what could more tend to make men holy, than the truths we preach? Do we not teach you, that God has chosen to himself a people who must be holy? Is that an unholy doctrine? Do we not tell you that God has chosen to himself a people who in this world shall show forth his praise, by holy living? Is that an unholy doctrine? And we have told you that the Holy Ghost gives a new heart, and a right spirit, and that there is something more required than you can do yourselves; that you are unable to perform such good things as God expects from you, therefore God the Spirit must renovate you. Do you call that an unholy doctrine? Is the doctrine, that men by nature are vile and need renewing grace, unholy? And the doctrine that the true saints will certainly hold on to the end: is that unholy? Methinks the contrary to these doctrines are the most unholy in the world. Is the doctrine that only those who believe have an interest in the blood of Christ an unholy thing? Is the doctrine that I preach, that Christ has redeemed only such as live in holiness, having been brought thereto by the Holy Ghost, an unholy thing? Methinks not. We challenge all those who love to speak against our doctrines to prove that there is a single one of them which has an unholy tendency. Charge us with not holding good works? Come and try to get into our church, and you will soon have a

proof that you are wrong. Why, we would not have you, sir, if you would give us a thousand pounds, unless we considered you were a holy man. If you have not good works, it will be a long time before we will receive you; and if you were to steal into our church, you would be turned out in a week, if you lived in sin and unrighteousness; for it would soon be reported to the pastor and deacons, and you would see whether we did not hold the necessity of good works. If you did not exhibit them every day we would cast you out from amongst us, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Our church order is the best refutation of the calumny.

What more can we say, then? We hope we have proved our points to all honest and consistent men. We only send you away, ye hypocrites, with this ringing in your ears, “Except ye have the spirit of Christ, ye are none of his.” Except ye live like Christ, ye shall not be with Christ at last; if your spirit be not sanctified in this world, you will not find that God will sanctify you when you come before his throne. But you, poor sinners, who have no holiness of your own, and no good works at all; I know you have not any, because you are not a child of God. Do you feel that you have not? Come then, and Christ will give you some: he will give you himself. If you believe on the Lord Jesus, he will wash you from all your sins, give you a new heart, and henceforth your life shall be holy, your conduct shall be consistent, he shall keep you to the end, and you shall most assuredly be saved. God bless this testimony to any such as are living in sin, that they may be reclaimed from it; for Christ’s sake! Amen.

A BOTTLE IN THE SMOKE

SERMON NO. 71

DELIVERED ON THE SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 23, 1856

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet do I not forget they statutes." — Psalm 119: 83.

The figure of "a bottle in the smoke" is essentially oriental; we must therefore go to the East for its explanation. This we will supply to our hearers and readers in the words of the Author of the Pictorial Bible: "This doubtless refers to a leathern bottle, of kid or goat-skin. The peasantry of Asia keep many articles, both dry and liquid, in such bottles, which, for security, are suspended from the roof, or hung against the walls of their humble dwellings. Here they soon become quite black with smoke; for as, in the dwellings of the peasantry, there are seldom any chimneys, and the smoke can only escape through an aperture in the roof, or by the door, the apartment is full of dense smoke whenever a fire is kindled in it. And in those nights and days, when the smokiness of the hovels in which we daily rested during a winter's journey in Persia, Armenia, and Turkey, seemed to make the cold and weariness of actual travel a relief, we had ample occasion to observe the peculiar blackness of such skin vessels, arising from the manner in which substances offering a surface of this sort, receive the full influence of the smoke, and detain the minute particles of soot which rest upon them. When such vessels do not contain liquids, and are not quite filled by the solids which they hold, they contract a shrunk and shrivelled appearance, to which the Psalmist may also possibly allude as well as to the blackness. But we presume that the leading idea refers to the latter circumstance, as in the East blackness has an opposite signification to the felicitous meaning of whiteness. David had doubtless seen bottles of this description hanging up in his tent when a wanderer; and though he might have had but few in his palace, yet in the cottages of his own poor

people he had, no doubt, witnessed them. Hence he says of himself, 'I am become,' by trouble and affliction, by trial and persecution, 'like a bottle in the smoke; yet do I not forget thy statutes.'"

First, God's people have their trials — they get put in the smoke; secondly, God's people feel their trials — they "become like a bottle in the smoke;" thirdly, God's people do not forget God's statutes in their trials — "I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet do I not forget thy statutes."

I. GOD'S PEOPLE HAVE THEIR TRIALS. This is an old truth, as old as the everlasting hills, because trials were in the covenant, and certainly the covenant is as old as the eternal mountains. It was never designed by God when he chose his people, that they should be an untried people; that they should be chosen to peace and safety, to perpetual happiness here below, and freedom from sickness and the pains of mortality. But rather, on the other hand, when he made the covenant, he made the rod of the covenant too; when he drew up the charter of privileges, he also drew up the charter of chastisements; when he gave us the roll of heirship, he put down the rods amongst the things to which we should inevitably be heirs. Trials are a part of our lot; they were predestinated for us in God's solemn decrees; and so surely as the stars are fashioned by his hands, he has fixed their orbits, so surely are our trials weighed in scales; he has predestinated their season and their place, their intensity and the effect they shall have upon us. Good men must never expect to escape troubles; if they do, they shall be disappointed; some of their predecessors have escaped them.

"The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown."

Mark Job, of whose patience ye have heard; read ye well of Abraham, for he had his trials, and by his faith under them, when he offered up Isaac, he became "the father of the faithful." Note ye well the biographies of all the patriarchs, of all the prophets, of all the apostles and martyrs, and you shall discover none of those, whom God made vessels of mercy, who were not hung up like bottles in the smoke. It is ordained of old, that the cross of trouble, even as the sparks fly upwards; and when born again, it does seem as if we had a birth to double trouble; and double toil and trouble come to the man who hath double grace and double mercy bestowed upon

him. Good men must have their trials; they must expect to be like bottles in the smoke.

Sometimes these trials arise from the poverty of their condition. It is the bottle in the cottage which gets into the smoke, not the bottle in the palace. The Queen's plate knows nothing of smoke; we have seen at Windsor how carefully it is preserved; it knoweth nothing of trial, no hands are allowed to touch that, so as to injure it, although even it may be stolen by accident when the guards are not careful over it. Still, it was not intended to be subject to smoke. So with God's poor people; they must expect to have smoke in their dwellings. We should suppose that smoke does not enter into the house of the rich, although even then our supposition would be false; but certainly we must suppose there is more smoke where the chimney is ill built, and the home is altogether of bad construction. It is the poverty of the Arab that puts his bottle in the smoke; so the poverty of Christians exposes them to much trouble, and inasmuch as God's people are for the most part poor, for that reason must they always be for the most part in affliction. We shall not find many of God's people in the higher ranks; not many of them shall ever be illustrious in this world. Until happier times come, when kings shall be their nursing fathers, and queens their nursing mothers, it must still be true that "God hath chosen the poor in this world, rich in faith, that they should be heirs of the kingdom." Poverty hath its privileges, for Christ hath lived in it; but it hath its ills, it hath its smoke, it hath it trials. Ye know not sometimes how ye shall be provided for; ye are often pinched for food and raiment, ye are vexed with anxious cares, ye wonder whence tomorrow's food shall come, and where ye shall obtain your daily supplies. It is because of your poverty that ye are hung up like a bottle in the smoke.

Many of God's people, however, are not poor; and even if they are, poverty does not occasion so much trouble to them as some suppose; for God, in the midst of poverty, makes his children very glad, and so cheers their hearts in the cottage that they scarce know whether it e a palace or a hovel; yea, he doth send such sweet music across the waters of their woe, that they know not whether they be on dry land or not.

But there are other trials: and this brings us to remark, that our trials frequently result from our comforts. What makes the smoke? Why, it is

the fire, by which the Arab warms his hands, that smokes his bottle, and smokes him too. So, beloved, our comforts usually furnish us with troubles. It is the law of nature, that there should never be a good, without having an ill connected with it. What if the stream fertilize the land? It can sometimes drown the inhabitants. What if the fire cheer us? doth it not frequently consume our dwellings? What if the sun enlighten us? does he not sometimes scorch and smite us with his heat? What if the rain bring forth our food, and cause the flowers to blossom on the face of the earth? does it not also break the young blossom from the trees, and cause many diseases? There is nothing good without its ill, there is no fire without its smoke. The fire of our comfort will always have the smoke of trial with it. You will find it so, if you instance the comforts you have in your own family. You have relations; mark you, every relationship engenders its trial, and every fresh relationship upon which you enter opens to you, at one time certainly, a new source of joys, but infallibly also a new source of sorrows. Are you parents? your children are your joy; but those children cause you some smoke, because you fear, lest they should not be brought up in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" and it may be, when they come to riper years, that they will grieve your spirits, — God grant they may not break your hearts by their sins! You have wealth. Well, that has its joys with it; but still, hath it not its trials and its troubles? Hath not the rich man more to care for than the poor? He who hath nothing sleepeth soundly, for the thief will not molest him; but he who hath abundance often trembles lest the rough wind should blown down that which he hath builded — lest the rude storm should wreck that argosy laden with his gold — lest an overwhelming and sudden turn in the tide of commerce should sweep away his speculations and destroy his hopes. Just as the birds that visit us fly away from us, so do our joys bring sorrow with them. In fact, joy and sorrow are twins; the blood which runs in the veins of sorrow, runs in the veins of joy too. For what is the blood of sorrow, is it not the tear? and what is the blood of joy? When we are full of joy do we not weep? Ah! that we do. The same drop which expresses joy is sorrow's own emblem; we weep for joy, and we weep for sorrow. Our fires gives smoke, to tell us that our comforts have their trials with them. Christian men! you have extraordinary fires, which others have never kindled; expect then to have extraordinary smoke. You have the presence of Christ; but then you will have the smoke of fear, lest you should lose it. You have the

promise of God's Word — there is the fire of it: but you have the smoke sometimes, when you read it without the illumination of God's Spirit. You have the joy of assurance; but you have also the smoke of doubt, which blows into your eyes, and well nigh blinds you. You have your trials, and your trials arise from your comforts. The more comfort you have, the more fire you have, the more sorrows shall you have, and the more smoke.

Again, the ministry is the great fire by which Christian men warm their hands: but the ministry hath much smoke with it. How often have you come to this house of God and had your spirits lifted up! But perhaps as often ye have come here to be cast down. Your harp strings at times have been all loose; you could not play a tune of joy upon them, you have come here, and Christ tuned your harp, so that it could awake "like David's harp of solemn sound." But at other times you have come here, and had all the rejoicings removed from you, by some solemn searching sermon. Last Sabbath day, how many of you there were like bottles in the smoke! This pulpit, which is intended at times to give you fire, is also intended to have smoke with it. It would not be God's pulpit if no smoke issued from it. When God made Sinai his pulpit, Sinai was altogether on a smoke. You have often been like bottles in the smoke, — the smoke caused by the fire of God's own kindling, the fire of the gospel ministry.

I think, however, that David had one more thought. The poor bottle in the smoke keeps there for a long time, till it gets black; it is not just one puff of smoke that comes upon it; the smoke is always going up, always girding the poor bottle; it lives in an atmosphere of smoke. So, beloved, some of us hang up like bottles in the smoke, for months, or for a whole year. No sooner do you get out of one trouble, than you tumble into another; no sooner do you get up one hill, than you have to mount another; it seems to be all up hill to heaven with you. You feel that John Bunyan is right in his ditty — "A Christian man is seldom long at ease; when one trouble's gone, another doth him seize." You are always in the smoke. You are linked perhaps with an ungodly partner; or perhaps you are of a singular temperament, and your temperament naturally puts clouds and darkness round about you, so that you are always in the smoke. Well, beloved, that was the condition of David; he was not just sometimes in trial, but it seemed as if trials came to him every day. Each day had its cares; each hour carried on its wings some fresh tribulation; while, instead of bringing

joy, each moment did but toll the knell of happiness, and bring another grief. Well, if this is your case, fear not, you are not alone in your trials; but you see the truth of what is uttered here: you are become like bottles in the smoke.

II. This brings us to the second point: CHRISTIAN MEN FEEL THEIR TROUBLES. They are in the smoke; and they are like bottles in the smoke. There are some things that you might hang up in the smoke for many a day, and they would never be much changed, because they are so black now, that they could never be made any blacker, and so shrivelled now, that they never could become any worse. But the poor skin bottle shrivels up in the heat, gets blacker, and shows at once the effect of the smoke; it is not an unfeeling thing, like a stone, but it is at once affected. Now, some men think, that grace makes a man unable to feel suffering; I have heard people insinuate that the martyrs did not endure much pain when they were being burned to death; but this is a mistake, Christian men are not like stones; they are like bottles in the smoke. In fact, if there be an difference, a Christian man feels his trials more than another, because he traces them to God, and that makes them more acute, as coming from the God whom he loves. But at the same time, I grant you, it makes them more easy to bear, because he believes they will work the comfortable fruits of righteousness. A dog will bite the stone that is thrown at it, but a man would resent the injury on the man that threw the stone. Stupid, foolish, carnal unbelief quarrels with the trial; but faith goes into the Court of King's Bench at once, and asks its God "wherefore dost thou content with me." But even faith itself does not avert the pain of chastisement, it enables us to endure, but does not remove the trial. The Christian is not wrong in giving way to his feelings; did not his Master shed tears when Lazarus was dead? and did he not, when on the cross, utter the exceeding bitter cry, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Our Heavenly Father never intended to take away our griefs when under trial; he does not put us beyond the reach of the flood, but builds us an ark, in which we float, until the water be ultimately assuaged, and we rest on the Ararat of heaven for ever, God takes not his people to an Elysium where they become impervious to painful feelings: but he gives us grace to endure our trials, and to sing his praises while we suffer. "I am become like a bottle in the smoke:" I feel what God lays upon me.

The trial that we do not feel is no trial at all. I remember a remarkable case of assault and battery that was tried sometime ago. I knew a friend who happened to be in court. It was a most singular affair; for when the prosecutor was requested to state in what the assault consisted; he said, in curious English, “Ah! sir, he struck me a most tremendous blow.” “Well, but where did he strike you?” “Well, sir, he did not hit me; it only just grazed me.” Of course the judge said there was no assault and battery, because there was no real blow struck. So we sometimes meet with persons, who say, “I could bear that trial if it did not touch my feelings.” Of course you could, for then it would be no trial at all. Suppose a man were to see his house and property burned, would you call it a trial, if he could do as Sheridan did, when his theater was burned? He went to a house opposite, and sat down drinking, and jokingly said, “Surely, every man has a right to sit and warm his hands by his own fireside.” It is feeling that makes it a trial; the essence of the trial lies in my feeling it. And God intended his trials to be felt. His rods are not made of wheat straw, they are made of true birch; and his blows fall just where we feel them. He does not strike us on the iron plates of our armor; but he smites us where we are sure to be affected.

And yet more: trials which are not felt are unprofitable trials. If there be no blueness in the wound, then the soul is not made better; if there be no crying out, then there will be no emptying out of our depravity. It is just so much as we feel, that we are profited; but a trial unfelt must be a trial unsanctified, a trial under which we do not feel at all, cannot be a blessing to us, because we are only blessed by feeling it, under the agency of God’s Holy Spirit. Christian man! do not blush, because you are like a bottle in the smoke: because you are sensitive under affliction, for so you ought to be. Do not let others say, you ought not feel it so much, because your husband is dead, or your child is dead, or you have lost your property. Just tell them that you ought; for God sent the trouble, that you might feel it (not excessively, and murmur against God,) but that you might feel the rod, and then kiss it. That is patience: not when we do not feel, but when we feel it, and say, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.” “I am like a bottle in the smoke.”

Now, a bottle, when it is in the smoke, gets very black: so does the Christian, when he is in the smoke of trial, or in the smoke of the gospel

ministry, or the smoke of persecution, get very black to his own esteem. It is marvellous how bright we are when everything goes right with us; but it is equally marvellous how black we get when a little tribulation comes upon us. We think very well of ourselves while there is no smoke; but let the smoke come, and it just reveals the blackness of our hearts. Trials teach us what we are; they dig up the soil, and let us see what we are made of; they just turn up some of the ill weeds on the surface; they are good, for this reason, they make us know our blackness.

A bottle, too, that hangs up in the smoke, will become very useless. So do we, often, when we are under a trying ministry, or a trying providence, feel that we are so very useless, good for nothing, like a bottle that has been hung up in the smoke, that nobody will ever drink out of any more, because it will smoke everything that is put in it, we feel that we are no use to anybody — that we are poor unprofitable creatures. In our joys we are honorable creatures; we scarcely think the Creator could do without us; but when we are in trouble, we feel, "I am a worm, and no man" — good for nothing; let me die; I have become useless, as well as black, "like a bottle in the smoke."

And then a bottle in the smoke is an empty bottle. It would not have been hung up in the smoke unless it had been empty. And very often under trials how empty we become; we are full enough in our joys; but the smoke and heat soon dry every atom of moisture out of us; all our hope is gone, all our strength is departed, we then feel that we are empty sinners, and want a full Christ to save us. We are like bottles in the smoke.

Have I described any of your characters? I dare say some of you are like bottles in the smoke. You do feel your trials; you have a soft, tender heart, and the arrows of the Almighty sink fast in it. You are like a piece of sea-weed, affected by every change of the weather; not like a piece of rock, that might be hung up and would never change, but you are capable of being affected, and it is quite right you should be: you are "become like a bottle in the smoke."

III. And now, beloved, the third and blessed thought is, that CHRISTIANS, THOUGH THEY HAVE TROUBLES, AND FEEL THEIR TROUBLES, DO NOT IN THEIR TROUBLES FORGET GOD'S STATUTES.

What are God's statutes? God has two kinds of statutes, both of them engraved in eternal brass. The first are the statutes of his commands; and of these he has said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of the law shall fail till all be fulfilled." These statutes are like the statutes of the Medes and Persians; they are binding upon all his people. His precepts are a light and easy yoke; but they are one which no man must cast from his shoulders; all must carry the commands of Christ, and all who hope to be saved by him must take up his cross daily and follow him. Well, the Psalmist said, "In the midst of my trials I have not swerved from thy statutes; I have not attempted to violate thy commands; I have not in any way moved from the strict path of integrity; and in the midst of all my persecutions, I have gone straight on, never once forgetting God's statutes or commands." And then again: there are statutes of promise, which are equally firm, each of them as immortal as God who uttered them. David did not forget these; for he said of them, "Thy statutes have been my song, in the house of my pilgrimage;" and he could not have sung about them if he had forgotten them.

Why was it David still held fast by God's statutes? First of all, David was not a bottle in the fire, or else he would have forgotten them. Our trials are smoke, but not fire; they are very uncomfortable, but they do not consume us. In other parts of Scripture, the figure of fire may be applied to our trials, but here it would not be appropriate, because the bottle would be burned up directly, if it were in the fire. But the Christian may say, "True, it is all smoke round about me, but there is nothing which tends to burn up my piety; smoke may dim my evidence, but it cannot burn it; it may, and certainly will, be obnoxious to my eyes and nose, and all my senses, but it cannot burn my limbs; it may stop my breath, and prevent my drinking in the pure air of heaven, but it cannot consume my lungs and burn the vital parts of my body. Ah! it is well for thee, O Christian, that there is more smoke than fire in thy trials. And there is no cause why you should forget your God in your troubles; they may have a tendency to drive you from him, but like great waves, they often wash the drift wood of the poor lost barks upon the beach of God's love; and the mast, that might have floated out to sea, and been carried no one knows where, if often stranded on the shore, and there once more is made to do fresh service. So art thou,

Christian, washed on shore by the waves of thy trouble, and never art thou washed away by them. “I have not forgotten thy statutes.”

Another reason why, when David was in the smoke, he did not forget God’s statutes was this, that Jesus Christ was in the smoke with him, and the statutes were in the smoke with him too. God’s statutes have been in the fire, as well as God’s people. Both the promise and the precept are in the furnace; and if I hang up in the smoke, like a bottle, I see hanging up by my side, God’s commands, covered with soot, and smoke, subject to the same perils. Suppose I am persecuted: It is a comfort to know that men do not persecute me, but my Master’s truth. It is a singular thing, with regard to all the envenomed shafts that have been hurled at me, that they have generally fallen on that part of my frame which is most invulnerable, because they have generally fallen on something I have quoted from somebody else, or proved from Scripture. They may go on; it is sweet to think that Jesus Christ is in the smoke as well as we are; and the more flame there is, the better we shall be able to see our Master in the smoke with us.

By God’s command where’er I stray,
Sorrow attends me all the way,
A never failing friend;
And, if my sufferings may augment
Thy praise, behold me well content —
Let sorrow still attend!
It costs me no regret, that she
Who follow’d Christ should follow me;
And though where’er she goes,
Thorns spring spontaneous at her feet,
I love her and extract a sweet
From all my bitter woes.”

Another reason why David did not forget the statutes was, they were in the soul, where the smoke does not enter. Smoke does not enter the interior of the bottle; it only affects the exterior. So it is with God’s children: the smoke does not enter into their hearts; Christ is there, and grace is there, and Christ and grace are both unaffected by the smoke. Come up, clouds of smoke! curl upward, till ye envelop me! Still will I hang on the Nail, Christ Jesus — the sure Nail, which never can be moved from its place — and I will feel, that “while the outward man decayeth, the inward man is renewed day by day;” and the statutes being there, I do not

forget them. “For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet I do not forget thy statutes.”

To such of you as can join with David, let me give a word of consolation. If you have been persecuted, and still hold fast by God’s word — if ye have been afflicted, and still persevere in the knowledge of our Lord and Master, you have every reason to believe yourself a Christian. If under your trials and troubles you remain just what you were when at ease, you may then hope, and not only so, but steadfastly believe and be assured that you are a child of God. Some of you, however, are very much like Christians, when you hear sermons full of promises; when I preach to you about bruised reeds, or address you with the invitation, “Come unto me, all ye that labor;” but when I give you a smoky sermon — one which you cannot endure — if you then can say, guilty, weak, and helpless I may be, but still I fall into his arms; sinful I know I am, and I have grace cause for doubt, but still

“There, there, unshaken will I rest,
Till this vile body dies;”

I know, poor, weak, and helpless though I am, that I have a rich Almighty Friend; if you can stand a little smoke, then you may believe yourself to be a child of God. But there are some fantastic people we know of, who are shocked with a very puff of smoke, they cannot endure it, they go out at once, just like rats out of the hold of a ship when they begin to smoke it; but if you can live in the smoke and say, “I feel it, and still can endure it,” — if you can stand a smoky sermon, and endure a smoky trial, and hold fast to God under a smoky persecution, then you have reason to believe, that you are certainly a child of God. Fair-weather birds! you are good for nothing; it is the stormy petrels that are God’s favorites. He loves the birds that can swim in the tempest; he loves those who can move in the storm, and like the eagle, companion of the lightening flash, can make the wind their chariot, and ride upon forked flames of fire. If in the heat of battle, when your helmet is bruised by some powerful enemy, you can still hold up your head, and say, “I know whom I have believed,” and do not swerve from your post, then you are verily a child of heaven; for constancy, endurance, and perseverance, are the true marks of a hero of the cross, and of the invincible warriors of the Lord. Those are no invincible ships that flee away before a storm; he is no brave warrior who hears

reports from others that a fort is impregnable, and dares not attack it; but he is brave, who dashes his ship beneath the guns, or runs her well nigh aground, and gives broadside after broadside with a desperate valor against his foe; he who in the smoke and the tempest, in the clamor and roar of the battle, can yet cooly give his commands, and knowing that every man is expected to do his duty, can fight valiantly, he is a brave commander, he is a true soldier, he shall receive from his master a crown of glory. O Christian! cleave to thy Master in the smoke, hold on to thy Lord in the trials, and thou shalt be refined by thine afflictions; yea, thou shalt exceedingly increase, and be profited beyond measure.

However, I have some here who can consume their own smoke. There are some of my congregation who, when they have any trials, can manage to get over them very well themselves. They say, "Well, I don't care, you seem to be a sad set of simpletons, you feel everything; but as for me, it all rolls off, and I don't care for anything." NO, I dare say you don't but the time will come when you will find the truth of that little story you used to read when you were children, that don't care came to a very bad end. These persons are not like bottles in the smoke, but like pieces of wood hanging over it; but they will find there is something more than smoke by-and-bye; they will come to a place, where there is not only smoke, but fire; and though they can endure the smoke of this world's troubles, they will find it not so easy as they imagine to endure the unutterable burnings and the everlasting flames of that pit whose fire knows no extinction, and whose worm shall know no death. Oh! hardened sinner, thou hast sorrows now, which are like the skirmishers before an army, a few light-armed troops to lead the way for the whole hosts of God's avengers, who shall trample thee beneath their feet. One or two drops of woe have fallen on the pavement of thy life; thou laughest at them; ah! but they are the heralds of a shower of fire and brimstone, which God shall rain out of heaven upon thy soul throughout eternity. And yet you may be pitying us poor Christians, because of our troubles and sufferings. Pity us, do you? Ah! but our light afflictions is but for a moment, and it worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Take your pity back, and reserve it for yourselves; for your light joy, which is but for a moment, worketh out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of torment, and your little bliss will be the mother of an everlasting, unutterable

torture, which we shall happily escape. Your sun will soon set, and at its setting your night shall come; and when your night cometh, it will be night for ever, without hope of light again. Ere thy sun setteth, my hearer, may God give thee grace. Dost thou inquire what thou shouldst do to be saved? Again comes the old answer: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptized, and thou shalt be saved.” If thou art no sinner, I have no salvation for thee; if thou art a Pharisee, and knowest not thy sins, I have no Christ to preach to thee; I have no heaven to offer to thee, as some have; but if thou art a sinner, a bona-fide sinner, if thou art a real sinner, not a sham one, I have this to tell thee: “Jesus Christ came to save sinners, even the chief;” and if thou wilt believe on him, thou shalt go out of this house of prayer, shriven, absolved, without a sin; forgiven, pardoned, washed, without a stain, accepted in the Beloved. As long as thou livest, that pardon shall avail thee; and when thou diest, thou wilt have nought to do, but to show it at the gates of paradise, to gain admittance. And then, in a nobler and sweeter song, that pardon shall form the basis of thy praise, while heaven’s choirs shall sing, or while the praise of the Eternal shall be the chaunt of the universe. God bless thee! Amen.

ISRAEL AT THE RED SEA

SERMON NO. 72

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 30, 1856,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness." — Psalm 106:9.

Several Sabbaths ago we preached upon the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt, by the blood of the passover: and we told you then, that we believed that event to be typical of the coming forth of God's people from that spiritual house of bondage, that furnace of mental suffering whence they are delivered by the omnipotent grace of God, at the time of their conversion. This morning we pursue the narrative. No doubt the children of Israel supposed that now all was over; the Egyptians has sent them away, entreating them to depart, and loading them with riches. Terror had smitten the heart of Egypt, for from the king on the throne to the prisoner in the dungeon, all was dismay and fear on account of Israel. Egypt was glad for them when they departed. Therefore the children of Israel said within themselves, "We shall now march to Canaan at once; there will be no more dangers, no more troubles, no more trials; the Egyptians themselves have sent us away, and they are too much afraid of us ever to molest us again. Now shall be tread the desert through with hasty footstep; and when a few more days have passed, we shall enter into the land of our possession — the land that floweth with milk and honey." "Not quite so speedily," says God; "the time is not arrived yet for you to rest. It is true I have delivered you from Egypt; but there is much you have to learn before you will be prepared to dwell in Canaan. Therefore I shall lead you about, and instruct you, and teach you." And it came to pass that the Lord led the children of Israel about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea, till they arrived over against Baalzephon, where on either side the craggy mountains shut them in. Pharoah hears of it; he comes

upon them, to overcome them; and they stand in terrible fright and jeopardy of them, to overcome them; and they stand in terrible fright and jeopardy of their lives. Now, beloved, it is usually so with the believer: he marches out of Egypt spiritually at the time of his conversion, and he says within himself, "Now I shall always be happy." He has a bright eye, and a light heart, for his fetters have been dashed to the ground, and he feels no longer the lash of conscience upon his shoulder. "Now," says he, "I may have a short life, but it will be a happy one."

"'A few more rolling years at most,
Will land me on fair Canaan's coast.'

And then I shall have no more warfare, no more fighting, no more disturbance; but I shall be at peace." "Not quite as thou desirest," says God. "Oh! thou little one; I have more to teach thee ere thou art prepared for my palace." Then he commences to lead us about, and bring us into straits and perils. The sins which we thought had utterly left us are hunting us behind, while impassible floods block up the way. Even trembling Israel halting by the Red Sea is but a faint emblem of that terrible position into which the child of God usually falls, within a few weeks or months after he has come out of the land of Egypt.

I shall preach this morning a sermon, which I hope will be useful to such of you as have lately come to know the Lord. You were expecting to build tabernacles, in which to dwell on the summit of the mountains of joy for ever; but you find, on the contrary, that you have very great troubles and conflicts; and perhaps now you have a more terrible trial than you ever experienced in all your life before. I will endeavor to show you, that this is just what you might have expected; that there will be a Red Sea very soon after you come out of your house of bondage. Others of you, my dear friends, have passed through all these things many years ago. You can say, —

"Many days have passed since then,
Many changes I have seen,
Yet have been upheld till now;
Who could hold me up but thou?"

But I am sure you will be glad to re-visit the spot, where God delivered you from your distresses. We find it very pleasant to look upon the place

where we were taught in our school-boy days, or to visit the haunts of our childhood. So you who are grey-headed in the cause of your Master, will not find it very tedious work to go back a little way, and look to that Red Sea which God rebuked and dried up, that you might be led through it even as through the wilderness.

Coming, then, to the subject; the children of Israel had their difficulties, and so generally the child of God has his very soon after he comes out of Egypt. But then they had their refuges; and moreover, God had a great and grand design to answer in all the troubles into which they were brought.

I. Taking the first point, the children of Israel just now had THREE DIFFICULTIES — three exceeding great dangers. And so I believe that every heir of heaven, within a very short period after the time of his deliverance, will meet with the same.

The first they had was a great trial sent by God himself. There was the Red Sea in the front of them. Now, it was not an enemy that put the sea there; it was God himself. We may therefore think, that the Red Sea represents some great and trying providence, which the Lord will be sure to place in the path of every new-born child; in order to try his faith, and to test the sincerity of his trust in God. I do not know, beloved, whether your experience will back up mine: but I can say this, that the worst difficulty I ever met with, or I think I can ever meet with, happened a little time after my conversion to God. And you must generally expect, very soon after you have been brought to know and love him, that you will have some great, broad, deep Red Sea straight before your path, which you will scarcely know how to pass. Sometimes it will occur in the family. The husband says, for instance — if he is an ungodly man — "You shall not attend such-and-such a place of worship; I positively forbid you to be baptized, or to join that church;" there is a Red Sea before you. You had done nothing wrong; it is God himself who places that Red Sea before your path. Or perhaps before that time, you were carrying on a business which now you cannot conscientiously continue; and there is a Red Sea which you have to cross in renouncing your means of livelihood. You don't see how it is to be done; how you are to maintain yourself, and to provide things honest in the sight of all men. Or perhaps your employment calls you amongst men with whom you lived before on amicable terms, and now

on a sudden, they say, “Come! won’t you do as you used to do?” There, again, is a Red Sea before you. It is a hard struggle; you do not like to come out and say, “I cannot, I shall not, for I am a Christian.” You stand still, half afraid to go forward. Or perhaps it is something proceeding more immediately from God. You find that just when he plants a vine in your heart, he blasts all the vines in your vineyard; and when he plants you in his own garden, then it is that he uproots all your comforts and your joys. Just when the Sun of Righteousness is rising upon you, your own little candle is blown out; just when you seem to need it most, your gourd is withered, your prosperity departs, and your flood becomes an ebb. I say again, it may not be so with all of you, but I think that most of God’s people have not long escaped the bondage of Egypt, before they find some terrible, rolling sea, lashed perhaps by tempestuous winds directly in their path; they stand aghast, and say, “O God, how can I bear this? I thought I could give up all for thee; but now I feel as if I could do nothing! I thought I should be in heaven, and all would be easy; but here is a sea I cannot ford — there is no squadron of ships to carry me across: it is not bridged even by thy mercy; I must swim it, or else I fear I must perish.”

Then the children of Israel had a second difficulty. They would not have cared about the Red Sea a single atom, if they had not been terrified by the Egyptians who were behind them. These Egyptians, I think may be interpreted this morning, by way of parable, as the representatives of those sins of ours, which we thought were clean dead and gone. For a little while after conversion sin does not trouble a Christian; he is very happy and cheerful, in a sense of pardon; but before many days are past, he will understand what Paul said, “I find another law in my members, so that when I would do good, evil is present with me.” The first moment when he wins his liberty he laughs and leaps in an ecstacy of joy. He thinks, “Oh! I shall soon be in heaven; as for sin, I can trample that beneath my feet!” But mark you, scarce has another Sabbath gladdened his spirit, ere he finds that sin is too much for him; the old corruptions which he fancied were laid in their graves get a resurrection and start up afresh, and he begins to cry, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” He sees all his old sins galloping behind him: like Pharoah and his host pursuing him to the borders of the Red Sea. There is a great trial before him. Oh! he thinks he could bear that; he thinks he could walk

through the Red Sea; oh! those Egyptian — they are behind him! He thought he should never have seen them any more for ever; they were the plague and torment of his life when they made him work in the brick-kiln. He sees his old master, the very man who was wont to lay the lash on his shoulders, riding post haste after him; and there are the eyes of that black Pharoah, flashing like fire in the distance; he sees the horrid scowling face of the tyrant, and how he trembles! Satan is after him, and all the legions of hell seem to be let loose, if possible, utterly to destroy his soul. At such a time, moreover, our sins are more formidable to us than they were before they were forgiven; because, when we were in Egypt, we never saw the Egyptians mounted on horses, or in chariots; they only appeared as our task-masters, with their whips; but now these people see the Egyptians on horseback, clad in armor; they behold all the mighty men of valor come out with their warlike instruments to slay them. So did I find, speaking for myself, that when I first knew the weight of sin, it was as a burden, as a labor, as a trouble; but when the second time

"I asked the Lord that I might grow,
In faith, and love, and every grace;
Might more of his salvation know,
And seek more earnestly his face;"

and when he answered me by letting all my sins loose upon me they appeared more frightful than before. I thought the Egyptians in Egypt were not half so bad as the Egyptians out of Egypt; I thought the sins I knew before, though they were cruel task-masters, were not half so much to be dreaded as those soldier-sins, armed with spears and axes, with chariots of iron with scythes upon their axles, hastening to assault me. It is true they did not come so near to me as heretofore; nevertheless they occasioned more fright than when I was their slave. It may be, poor child of God, thou art astonished and amazed to find, that thy sins are more black now than they were when thou wast under conviction; that thou hast less hope than thou hadst even then; and that thy condition is possibly far worse than when the law was beating thee from head to foot, and rubbing brine into the wounds of thy conscience. Thou mayest be saying, "Ah! well, I never thought of this; if I be a child of God, if I were really pardoned and forgiven, how could it be that I should be so vexed and tormented with a sense of my guilt? And if all my transgressions have been cast into the depths of the sea, how is it that I hear the armies of my sins,

rattling their horse-hoofs and chariot-wheels behind me?" I tell thee, beloved, in the name of the Lord, that is just what you ought to have expected. The pangs after we come out of Egypt are at times even more painful than those we feel in the house of bondage; and there is usually a time of trial a little while after the new birth, which is even more terrible and awful than the previous agony of the soul, though not usually so protracted. This was the second difficulty.

But there was a third difficulty, which perhaps wrought them more misery than either of the other two: these poor children of Israel had such faint hearts. They no sooner saw the Egyptians than they began to cry out; and when they beheld the Red Sea before them, they murmured against their deliverer. A faint heart is the worst foe a Christian can have; whilst he keeps his faith firm, whilst the anchor is fixed deep in the rock, he never need fear the storm; but when the hand of faith is palsied, or the eye of faith is dim, it will go hard with us. As for the Egyptian, he may throw his spear; while we can catch it on the shield of faith, we are not terrified by the weapon, but if we lose our faith, the spear becomes a deadly dart. While we have faith, the Red Sea may flow before us, as deep and dark as it pleases: for like Leviathan, we trust we can snuff up Jordan at a draught. But if we have no faith, then at the most insignificant streamlet, which Faith could take up in her hands in a single moment, and drink like Gideon's men, poor Unbelief stands quivering and crying, "Ah! I shall be drowned in the floods, or I shall be slain by the foe; there is no hope for me; I am driven to despair. It would have been better for me that I had died in Egypt, than that I should come hither to be slain by the hand of the enemy." The child of God, when he is first born, has but very little faith, because he has had but little experience; he has not tried the promise, and therefore he does not know its faithfulness. He has not used the arm of his faith, and therefore the sinews of it have not become strong. Let him live a little longer, and become confirmed in the faith, and he will not care for Red Seas, nor yet for the Egyptians; but just then his little heart beats against the walls of his body, and he laments, "Ah, me! ah, me! O wretched man that I am! How shall I ever find deliverance?" This description of spiritual geography may be uninteresting to some, because they may not have traveled through this part of the wilderness, but others will view it with attention. Who cared about maps of the Crimea till there was war there?

But as soon as our soldiers were engaged in that particular spot, every man bought a map of the Crimea and studied the boundaries of Russia. So if you have been in these straits, you will be very glad of my map this morning, that you may see the way in which God leads his family. These are the three dangers — a great trial, sins pursuing us behind, and an exceedingly faint heart.

II. But, thanks be to God! the children of Israel had THREE HELPS.

Oh! child of God? dost thou discern this mystery? Whenever thou hast three trials, thou wilt always have three promises; and if thou hadst forty afflictions, thou wouldst have forty measures of grace. Yes, and if thou hadst a million troubles, thou wouldst have a million measures of mercy. The Israelites had three difficulties, and they had three helps; and as the difficulty was put in the way by providence, so providence did also furnish a relief.

The first help they had was Providence. Providence put the Red Sea there, and piled the rocks on either hand, while providence represented by the fiery cloudy pillar, had led them to its shore, and conducted them into the defile, and now the same pillar of providence came to their assistance. They had not come thither undirected, and therefore they should not be left unprotected, for the same cloudy pillar which led them there, came behind them to protect them.

Cheer up, then, heir of grace! What is thy trial? Has providence brought it upon thee? If so, unerring wisdom will deliver thee from it. What is it thou art now exercised upon? As truly as thou art alive, God will remove it. Dost thou think God’s cloudy pillar would ever lead thee to a place where God’s right arm would fail thee? Dost thou imagine that he would ever guide thee into such a defile that he could not conduct thee out again? The providence which apparently misleads, will in verity befriend thee. That which leads thee into difficulties guards thee against thy foes; it casts darkness on thy sins, whilst it giveth light to thee. How sweet is providence to a child of God, when he can reflect upon it! He can look out into this world, and say, “However great my troubles, they are not so great as my Father’s power; however difficult may be my circumstances, yet all things around me are working together for good. He who holds up yon unpillared arch of the starry heavens can also support my soul

without a single apparent prop; he who guides the stars in the well-ordered courses, even when they seem to move in hazy dances, surely he can overrule my trials in such a way that out of confusion he will bring order; and from seeming evil produce lasting good. He who bridles the storm, and puts the bit in the mouth of the tempest, surely he can restrain my trial, and keep my sorrows in subjection. I need not fear while the lightnings are in his hands and the thunders sleep within his lips; while the oceans gurgle from his fist, and the clouds are in the hollow of his hands; while the rivers are turned by his foot, and while he diggeth the channels of the sea. Surely he whose might wings an angel, can furnish a worm with strength; he who guides a cherub will not be overcome by the trials of an emmet like myself. He who makes the most ponderous orb roll in dignity, and keeps its predestined orbit, can make a little atom like myself move in my proper course, and conduct me as he pleaseth. Christian! there is no sweeter pillow than providence; and when providence seemeth adverse, believe it still, lay it under thy head, for depend upon it there is comfort in its bosom. There is hope for thee thou child of God! The great trouble which is to come in thy way in the early part of thy pilgrimage, is planned by love, the same love which shall interpose as thy protector.

Again: the children of Israel had another refuge, in the fact, that they knew that they were the covenant people of God, and that, though they were in difficulties, God had brought them there, and therefore God, (with reverence let me say it,) was bound in honor to bring them out of that trouble into which he had brought them. “Well,” says the child of God, “I know I am in a strait, but this one thing I also know, that I did not come out of Egypt by myself — I know that he brought me out; I know that I did not escape by my own power, or slay my first-born sins myself — I know that he did it; and though I fled from the tyrant — I know that he made my feet mighty for travel, for there was not one feeble in all our tribes; I know that though I am at the Red sea, I did not run there uncalled, but he bade me go there, and therefore I give to the winds my fears; for it he hath led me here into this difficulty, he will lead me out, and lead me through.

But the point to which I want to direct your attention most of all is this. The third refuge which the children of Israel had, was in a man; and neither of the two others, without that, would have been of any avail. It was the

man Moses. He did everything for them. Thy greatest refuge, O child of God! in all thy trials, is in a man: not in Moses, but in Jesus; not in the servant, but in the master. he is interceding for thee, unseen and unheard by thee, even as Moses did for the children of Israel. If thou couldst but, in the dim distance, catch the sweet syllables of his voice as they distil from his lips, and see his heart as it speaks for thee, thou wouldst take comfort; for God hears that man when he pleads. He can overcome every difficulty. He has not a rod, but a cross, which can divide the Red sea; he has not only a cloudy pillar of forgiving grace, which can dim the eyes of your foes and keep them at a distance; but he has a cross, which can open the Red sea and drown thy sins in the very midst. He will not leave thee. Look! on yonder rock of heaven he stands, cross in hand, even as Moses with his rod. Cry to him, for with that uplifted cross he will cleave a path for thee, and guide thee through the sea; he will make those hoary floods, which had been friends for ever, and stand asunder like foes. Call to him, and he will make thee a way in the midst of the ocean, and a path through the pathless sea. Cry to him, and there shall not a sin of thine be left alive; he will sweep them all away; and the king of sin, the devil, he too shall be overwhelmed beneath the Savior's blood, whilst thou shalt sing —

"Hell and my sins obstruct my path,
But hell and sin are conquer'd foes;
My Jesus nailed them to his cross,
And sang the triumph as he rose."
Still look thou to that man who once on Calvary died!

III. GOD HAD A DESIGN IN IT. And here, also, we wish you to regard with attention what God's design is, in leading the Christian into exceeding great trials in the early part of his life. This is explained to us by the Apostle Paul. A reference Bible is the best commentator in the world; and the most heavenly exposition is the searching out of kindred, texts, and comparing their meaning. "They were all baptized," says the Apostle, "unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea." God's design in bringing his people into trouble, and raising all their sins at their heels, is to give them a thorough baptism into his service, consecrating them for ever to himself. I mean by baptism this morning, not the rite, but what baptism represents. Baptism signifies dedication to God — initiation into God's service. It is not when we are first converted that we so fully dedicate ourselves to God, as afterwards, when some great Red sea rolls before us. I should be

delighted to see some of you get into trouble. Am I unkind to utter such a wish? Well I repeat it, I should; for I shall never get you into the church unless you do; you will never come forward and make a thorough dedication of yourselves to God, till you have had a sharp trial. Rest assured of this, that sharp trials were no slight cause of the heroic devotion of the martyrs, confessors, and missionaries, who so thoroughly consecrated themselves to their Master's service. The great purpose of all our affliction is the promotion of an entire dedication to Christ in all our hearts. It is only in the font of sorrow that we are baptized with Christ's baptism. No holy chrism hath efficacy to baptize; it is the Spirit, who alone can dedicate us in the waters of the sea of tribulation. You are brought into these straits, young believer, that you may at such a time receive the baptism for God. Do not, I beseech you, let the time pass by; for there are some who neglect it, who, afterwards, never perfectly know what it is to be "baptized unto Jesus, in the cloud and in the sea." They say, "they will wait a little while," but the consequence is, they wait a very long while. They say they will do to-morrow what they ought to do to-day. Beware how you let slip the opportunity which God presents you, that you may devote yourself publicly to him. The very first time after conversion, when we come into straits and difficulties, is intended that we should then be dedicated to Jesus, and come out openly as the children of the living God.

Now, beloved, let these thoughts rest with you. You may think them unimportant, but I am sure they are not. Believe me, you ought, indeed, to own yourselves on the Lord's side. If God be God, serve him; if Baal be God, serve him. There is nothing which I would more earnestly and ardently press upon you, than the great duty of decision for Jesus Christ. How many of you have a faint and indistinct hope, that when you die you will be Christ's people; and yet you must confess that you are not decided for Christ. You think you are his, but you often neglect duty, and frequently allow what you think a little sin to stain your conscience. You are not godly in worldly affairs. But I beseech you, put truth and righteousness into one scale, and put your own worldly gain into the other, and see which is the most important, and if you think that prudence dictates attention to this world instead of God, then remember, that is hellish prudence, and cometh of the devil, and, therefore, reject it. If ye

were Egyptians, I might tell you to serve another master; but since you are God's people, or profess to be, I charge home upon you; and I beg of you, if you make a profession, to be out-and-out with it. How we do loathe those hot and cold people, who are neither one thing nor the other! You, who hold with the hare and run with the hounds — you, who are first one thing and then another — you, who are half horse, half alligator, and neither of them — you, who are something between the two, who are neither Christians nor worldlings in your own opinions. We know which you are. I have often thought what a consistent religion the Roman Catholic would be for some of you go-between people. You are not exactly children of God; but you would not like to be called the children of the devil. Where should we put you at last? It would be a very convenient thing to have a purgatory for you, to place you somewhere between the two. But as we have no such place, we do not wish to have any such characters, and we believe there are none such; you are either servants of God, or servants of the devil. Don't stand halting between two opinions, but just say, once for all, whom you will serve. If you choose the devil, choose him, love him, serve him, and rejoice in your choice. If you choose hell, go there, rush madly there; it's a fearful dwelling place for eternity — an awful home for ever! But if you choose God, I beseech you be in downright earnest about it. The religion of the present day, what mockery it is to call it religion at all! I protest, I believe the common religion of this age will not carry half those who profess it to heaven. It is a religion which they might easily carry to heaven, for it is too light to burden them, but it is too fragile to carry them there. They have a godliness which has not eaten up their soul. I heart a minister say once to his people, that "it would be a long time before the zeal of God's house would eat them up." Take the churches all round: what a slumbering brotherhood they are! There might almost be a controversy between the prince of this world, and the prince of heaven to whom they belonged. But I beseech you, let there be a marked and decided difference between you and the world. Let your heart be steeped in godliness; let your life be saturated with religion. Take care that, "whether you eat, or drink, or whatsoever you do, you do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto God and the Father by him." So shall God see his great design subserved of making you to be baptized unto Jesus, "in the cloud and in the sea."

In concluding, there is one sad aspect of this picture, which I wish you to regard. It is this. Some of you are journeying in an unconverted state to that bourne from which there is no return. At death you will find a Red Sea in your way — the sea of death staring you in the face. When you come before it, you will find no bridge, no ships; but you must wade that sea alone. And, mark you, if you are living now in an ungodly condition, and are doing so when you die, as certainly as you are here, just when that great sea of death is rolling before you, all the Egyptian hosts of your sins will harass you in the rear. All your sins will come bellowing after you; you will have your iniquities like wild winter wolves pursuing you, athrist for blood, and swift to slay. You will hear fiends howling in your ears. And when already the raging flood of Jordan hath made your bones shake, and your marrow quiver, just then you will see the red eyes of your sins peering through the darkness of your despair, and hear the howlings of your former transgressions, as they hound you to the pit, seeking after your soul's blood. Ah, then, my hearer, thou wilt have no cloudy pillar to give thee light; thou wilt have no pillar of darkness to confound thy foes; but thou wilt have behind thee all thy sins, and before thee that black sea of death, which thou art compelled to cross. But mark thee, those sins will swim that sea with thee; they will not be like the Egyptians which were drowned; but when thou art wading through the sea, thou wilt find thy sins like hounds fixing on a stag, drinking thy heart's blood. Ay, when thou hast landed in eternity, thou wilt find there was not a single one drowned in the sea, but that they are all alive; every sin grown into a giant, every lust brandishing a thousand arms, each arm bearing a thousand horrid fingers of flame, and each finger a claw of iron, which shall tear thy soul. Oh! I warn thee against these Egyptians of thy sins, for unless the blood be sprinkled on thy door-post and on thy lintel, and unless the destroying angel smite those sins for thee, they will assuredly follow thee across the sea. Methinks I see thee there! Thou art just in the midst of the Jordan. Poor soul! the river itself is work enough for a man to wade through it; for dying is not easy labor. The waters are rushing into his lips, and gurgling in his throat, like a whirlpool. See how he shakes. White as the floods around him, he quivers, like the very waves themselves. And, ah! just when in his fell despair, he shrieks — see, the harpies feed him with black fruits of hell; and when he quivers most, see there the scalding brimstone of Almighty God rained upon his body. Just when he is shrieking in death's

torments, then is it that Satan takes the opportunity to howl in his face, and show him his glaring eyes of fire, to terrify his poor soul, worse than death itself. Sinner! when thou diest, remember that thou wilt have to die two deaths, one death which we shall see, another death which we only know of by the shrieks, and groans, and anguish, which even we may hear on this side of the grave. But what thou wilt experience in the next world, I cannot picture to thee, I cannot tell thee; those dim shapes of horror I cannot paint to thee; those fierce flames of misery I cannot now describe; that doleful miserere of desolation, and that awful lament of eternity, I cannot endure to hear; I dare not lift the veil that conceals the dread scenes, which haunt the spirits of the ungodly departed.

Well, then, what shalt thou do to escape this death? What canst thou do to be saved? Why, sinner, in the first place, of thyself thou canst do nothing at all. But, in the second place, there is one — a Man, who can do all for thee. He is the Man Christ Jesus; if thou believest on him, filthy as thou art, and wretched, and outcast, and vile, thou shalt never see the second death, but shalt have eternal life abiding in thee; and when thou diest in this world, instead of black fiends to hound thee through the river, thou wilt have sweet angels playing o'er the stream, waiting to waft thee unto glory; thou wilt feel bright spirits fanning thy hot brow with their soft wings; thou wilt hear songs, sweet as the music of paradise, and when thy troubles are the strongest, thou wilt have a peace with God "which passeth all understanding;" a "joy unspeakable and full of glory," which shall enable thee to "swallow up death in victory." "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." Poor, trembling, penitent sinner, put thine hand inside the hand of Christ; now fall on his mercy; "to-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your heart." I beseech you for Christ's sake, "be ye reconciled to God." And if ye be penitents, may God give you faith that ye may be believers! As for the rest of you, remember, ere you go, I have told you no fable, but the truth. You may go away and say, "There is no hell." Well, suppose there is none, believers will be as well off as you are. But suppose there is — and there is for a certainty — suppose yourselves in it, you cannot then suppose yourselves out of it any more. May God grant his blessing, for Jesus' sake; turning many of you to righteousness.

EFFECTUAL CALLING

SERMON NO. 73

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 30, 1856,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"When Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house." — Luke 19:5.

Notwithstanding our firm belief that you are in the main well instructed in the doctrines of the everlasting gospel, we are continually reminded in our conversation with young converts, how absolutely necessary it is to repeat our former lessons, and repeatedly assert and prove over and over again those doctrines which lie at the basis of our holy religion. Our friends, therefore, who have many years ago been taught the great doctrine of effectual calling, will believe that whilst I preach very simply this morning, the sermon is intended for those who are young in the fear of the Lord, that they may better understand this great starting point of God in the heart, the effectual calling of men by the Holy Spirit. I shall use the case of Zaccheus as a great illustration of the doctrine of effectual calling. You will remember the story. Zaccheus had a curiosity to see the wonderful man Jesus Christ, who was turning the world upside down, and causing an immense excitement in the minds of men. We sometimes find fault with curiosity, and say it is sinful to come to the house of God from that motive; I am not quite sure that we should hazard such an assertion. The motive is not sinful, though certainly it is not virtuous; yet it has often been proved that curiosity is one of the best allies of grace. Zaccheus, moved by this motive, desired to see Christ; but there were two obstacles in the way: first, there was such a crowd of people that he could not get near the Savior; and again, he was so exceedingly short in stature that there was no hope of his reaching over people's heads to catch a glimpse of him. What did he do? He did as the boys were doing — for the boys of old

times were no doubt just like the boys of the present age, and were perched up in the boughs of the tree to look at Jesus as he passed along. Elderly man though he is, Zaccheus jumps up, and there he sits among the children. The boys are too much afraid of that stern old publican, whom their fathers dreaded, to push him down or cause him any inconvenience. See him there. With what anxiety he is peeping down to see which is Christ — for the Savior had no pompous distinction; no beadle is walking before him with a silver mace; he did not hold a golden crozier in his hand: he had no pontifical dress; in fact, he was just dressed like those around him. He had a coat like that of a common peasant, made of one piece from top to bottom; and Zaccheus could scarcely distinguish him. However, before he has caught a sight of Christ, Christ has fixed his eye upon him, and standing under the tree, he looks up, and says, "Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house." Down comes Zaccheus; Christ goes to his house; Zaccheus becomes Christ's follower, and enters into the kingdom of heaven.

1. Now, first, effectual calling is a very gracious truth. You may guess this from the fact that Zaccheus was a character whom we should suppose the last to be saved. He belonged to a bad city — Jericho — a city which had been cursed, and no one would suspect that any one would come out of Jericho to be saved. It was near Jericho that the man fell among thieves; we trust Zaccheus had no hand in it; but there are some who, while they are publicans, can be thieves also. We might as well expect converts from St. Giles's, or the lowest parts of London, from the worst and vilest dens of infamy, as from Jericho in those days. Ah! my brethren, it matters not where you come from; you may come from one of the dirtiest streets, one of the worst back slums in London but if effectual grace call you, it is an effectual call, which knoweth no distinction of place. Zaccheus also was of an exceedingly bad trade, and probably cheated the people in order to enrich himself. Indeed, when Christ went into his house, there was an universal murmur that he had gone to be a guest with a man that was a sinner. But, my brethren, grace knows no distinction; it is no respector of persons, but God calleth whom he wills, and he called this worst of publicans, in the worst of cities, from the worst of trades. Besides, Zaccheus was one who was the least likely to be saved because he was rich. It is true, rich and poor are welcome; no one has the least excuse for

despair because of his condition; yet it is a fact that “not many great men,” after the flesh, “not many mighty,” are called, but “God hath chosen the poor of this world — rich in faith.” But grace knows no distinction here. The rich Zaccheus is called from the tree; down he comes, and he is saved. I have thought it one of the greatest instances of God’s condescension that he can look down on man; but I will tell you there was a greater condescension than that, when Christ looked up to see Zaccheus. For God to look down on his creatures — that is mercy; but for Christ so to humble himself that he has to look up to one of his own creatures, that becomes mercy indeed. Ah! many of you have climbed up the tree of your own good works, and perched yourselves in the branches of your holy actions, and are trusting in the free will of the poor creature, or resting in some worldly maxim; nevertheless, Christ looks up even to proud sinners, and calls them down. “Come down,” says he, “to-day I must abide in thy house.” Had Zaccheus been a humble-minded man, sitting by the wayside, or at the feet of Christ, we should then have admired Christ’s mercy; but here he is lifted up, and Christ looks up to him, and bids him come down.

2. Next it was a personal call. There were boys in the tree as well as Zaccheus but there was no mistake about the person who was called. It was, “Zaccheus, make haste and come down.” There are other calls mentioned in Scripture. It is said, especially, “Many are called, but few are chosen.” Now that is not the effectual call which is intended by the apostle, when he said, “Whom he called, them he also justified.” That is a general call which many men, yea, all men reject, unless there come after it the personal, particular call, which makes us Christians. You will bear me witness that it was a personal call that brought you to the Savior. It was some sermon which led you to feel that you were, no doubt, the person intended. The text, perhaps, was “Thou, God, seest me;” and the minister laid particular stress on the word “me,” so that you thought God’s eye was fixed upon you; and ere the sermon was concluded, you thought you saw God open the books to condemn you, and your heart whispered, “Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord.” You might have been perched in the window, or stood packed in the aisle; but you had a solemn conviction that the sermon was preached to you, and not to other people. God does not call his people in shoals, but in units. “Jesus saith unto her, Mary; and she turned and said unto him,

Rabboni, which is to say, Master." Jesus seeth Peter and John fishing by the lake, and he saith unto them, "Follow me." He seeth Matthew sitting at the table at the receipt of custom, and he saith unto him, "Arise, and follow me," and Matthew did so. When the Holy Ghost comes home to a man, God's arrow goes into his heart: it does not graze his helmet, or make some little mark upon his armor, but it penetrates between the joints of the harness, entering the marrow of the soul. Have you felt, dear friends, that personal call? Do you remember when a voice said, "Arise, he calleth thee." Can you look back to some time when you said, "My Lord, my God?" when you knew the Spirit was striving with you, and you said, Lord, I come to thee, for I know that thou callest me." I might call the whole of you throughout eternity, but if God call one, there will be more effect through his personal call of one than my general call of multitudes.

3. Thirdly, it is a hastening call. "Zaccheus, make haste." The sinner, when he is called by the ordinary ministry, replies, "To-morrow." He hears a telling sermon, and he said, "I will turn to God by-and-bye." The tears roll down his cheek, but they are wiped away. Some goodness appears, but like the cloud of the morning it is dissipated by the sun of temptation. He says, "I solemnly vow from this time to be a reformed man. After I have once more indulged in my darling sin, I will renounce my lusts, and decide for God." Ah! that is only a minister's call, and is good for nothing. Hell, they say, is paved with good intentions. These good intentions are begotten by general calls. The road to perdition is laid all over with branches of trees whereon men are sitting, for they often pull down branches from the trees but they do not come down themselves. The straw laid down before a sick man's door causes the wheels to roll more noiselessly. So there be some who strew their path with promises of repentance, and so go more easily and noiselessly down to perdition. But God's call is not a call for to-morrow. "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts: as in the provocation, when your fathers tempted me." God's grace always comes with despatch; and if thou art drawn by God, thou wilt run after God, and not be talking about delays. To-morrow — it is not written in the almanack of time. To-morrow — it is in Satan's calendar, and nowhere else. To-morrow — it is a rock whitened by the bones of mariners who have been wrecked upon it; it is the wrecker's light gleaming on the shore, luring poor ships to destruction. To-morrow — it is

the idiot's cup which he fableth to lie at the foot of the rainbow, but which none hath ever found. To-morrow — it is the floating island of Loch Lomond, which none hath ever seen. To-morrow — it is a dream. To-morrow — it is a delusion. To-morrow, ay, to-morrow you may lift up your eyes in hell, being in torments. Yonder clock saith "to-day;" everything crieth "to-day;" and the Holy Ghost is in union with these things, and saith, "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Sinners, are you inclined now to seek the Savior? are you breathing a prayer now? are you saying, "Now or never! I must be saved now?" If you are, then I hope it is an effectual call, for Christ, when he giveth an effectual call, says, "Zaccheus, make haste."

4. Next, it is a humbling call. "Zaccheus, make haste and come down." Many a time hath a minister called men to repentance with a call which has made them proud, exalted them in their own esteem, and led them to say, "I can turn to God when I like; I can do so without the influence of the Holy Ghost." They have been called to go up and not to come down. God always humbles a sinner. Can I not remember when Gold told me to come down? One of the first steps I had to take was to go right down from my good works; and oh! what a fall was that! I have pulled you down from your good works, and now I will pull you down from your self-sufficiency." Well, I had another fall, and I felt sure I had gained the bottom, but Christ said "Come down!" and he made me come down till I fell on some point at which I felt I was yet salvable. "Down, sir! come down, yet." And down I came until I had to let go every bough of the tree of my hopes in despair: and then I said, "I can do nothing; I am ruined." The waters were wrapped round my head, and I was shut out from the light of day, and thought myself a stranger from the commonwealth of Israel. "Come down lower yet, sir! thou hast too much pride to be saved. Then I was brought down to see my corruption, my wickedness, my filthiness. "Come down," says God, when he means to save. Now, proud sinners, it is of no use for you to be proud, to stick yourselves up in the trees; Christ will have you down. Oh, thou that dwellest with the eagle on the craggy rock, thou shalt come down from thy elevation; thou shalt fall by grace, or thou shalt fall with a vengeance one day. He "hath cast down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek."

5. Next, it is an affectionate call. “To-day I must abide in thy house.” You can easily conceive how the faces of the multitude change! They thought Christ to be the holiest and best of men, and were ready to make him a king. But he says, “To-day I must abide in thy house.” There was one poor Jew who had been inside Zaccheus’s house; he had “been on the carpet,” as they say in country villages when they are taken before the justice, and he recollected what sort of house it was; he remembered how he was taken in there, and his conceptions of it were something like what a fly would have of a spider’s den after he had once escaped. There was another who had been distrained of nearly all his property; and the idea he had of walking in there was like walking into the den of lions. “What!” said they, “Is this holy man going into such a den as that, where we poor wretches have been robbed and ill-treated. It was bad enough for Christ to speak to him up in the tree, but the idea of going into his house!” They all murmured at his going to be “a guest with a man who was a sinner.” Well, I know what some of his disciples thought: they thought it very imprudent; it might injure his character, and he might offend the people. They thought he might have gone to see this man night, like Nicodemus, and give him an audience when nobody saw him; but publicly to acknowledge such a man was the most imprudent act he could commit. But why did Christ do as he did? Because he would give Zaccheus an affectionate call. “I will not come and stand at thy threshold, or look in at thy window, but I will come into thine house — the same house where the cries of widows have come into thine ears, and thou hast disregarded them; I will come into thy parlour, where the weeping of the orphan have never moved thy compassion; I will come there, where thou, like a ravenous lion hast devoured thy prey; I will come there, where thou hast blackened thine house, and made it infamous; I will come into the place where cries have risen to high heaven, wrung from the lips of those whom thou hast oppressed; I will come into thy house and give thee a blessing.” Oh! what affection there was in that! Poor sinner, my Master is a very affectionate Master. He will come into your house. What kind of a house have you got? A house that you have made miserable with your drunkenness — a house that you have defiled with your impurity — a house you have defiled with your cursing and swearing — a house where you are carrying on an ill-trade that you would be glad to get rid of. Christ say, “I will come into thine house.” And I know some houses now that once were dens of sin, where Christ comes every

morning; the husband and wife who once could quarrel and fight, bend their knees together in prayer. Some of my hearers can scarce come for an hour to their meals but they must have a word of prayer and reading of the Scriptures. Christ comes to them. Where the walls were plastered up with the lascivious song and idle picture, there is a Christian almanack in one place, there is a Bible on the chest of drawers; and though it is only one room they live in, if an angel should come in, and God should say, "What hast thou seen in that house?" he would say, "I have seen good furniture, for there is a Bible there; here and there a religious book; the filthy pictures are pulled down and burned; there are no cards in the man's cupboard now; Christ has come into his house." Oh! what a blessing that we have our household God as well as the Romans! Our God is a household God. He comes to live with his people; he loves the tents of Jacob. Now, poor ragmuffin sinner, thou who livest in the filthiest den in London, if such an one be here, Jesus saith to thee, "Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for to-day I must abide in thy house."

6. Again, it was not only an affectionate call, but it was an abiding call. "To-day I must abide at thy house." A common call is like this: "To-day I shall walk in at thy house at one door, and out at the other." The common call which is given by the gospel to all men is a call which operates upon them for a time, and then it is all over; but the saving call is an abiding call. When Christ speaks, he does not say, "Make haste, Zaccheus, and come down, for I am just coming to look in;" but "I must abide in thy house; I am coming to sit down to eat and drink with thee; I am coming to have a meal with thee; to-day I must abide in thy house." "Ah!" says one, "you cannot tell how many times I have been impressed, sir, I have often had a series of solemn convictions, and I thought I really was saved, but it all died away; like a dream, when one awaketh, all hath vanished that he dreamed, so was it with me." Ah! but poor soul, do not despair. Dost thou feel the strivings of Almighty grace within thine heart bidding thee repent to-day? If thou dost, it will be an abiding call. If it is Jesus at work in thy soul, he will come and tarry in thine heart, and consecrate thee for his own for ever. He says, "I will come and dwell with thee, and that for ever. I will come and say,

Here I will make my settled rest,
No more will go and come;
No more a stranger or a guest,
But master of this home."

"Oh!" say you, "that is what I want; I wan an abiding call, something that will last; I do not want a religion that will wash out, but a fast-color religion." Well, that is the kind of call Christ gives. His ministers cannot give it; but when Christ speaks, he speaks with power, and says, "Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house."

7. There is one thing, however, I cannot forget, and that is that it was a necessary call. Just read it over again. "Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house." It was not a thing that he might do, or might not do; but it was a necessary call. The salvation of a sinner is as much a matter of necessity with God as the fulfillment of his covenant that the rain shall no more drown the world. The salvation of every blood-bought child of God is a necessary thing for three reasons; it is necessary because it is God's purpose; it is necessary because it is Christ's purchase; it is necessary because it is God's promise. It is necessary that the child of God should be saved. Some divines think it is very wrong to lay a stress on the word "must," especially in that passage where it is said "he must needs go through Samaria." "Why," they say, "he must needs go through Samaria, because there was no other way he could go, and therefore he was forced to go that way." Yes, gentlemen, we reply, no doubt; but then there might have been another way. Providence made it so that he must needs go through Samaria, and that Samaria should like in the route he had chosen. So that we have you any way. "He must needs go through Samaria." Providence directed man to build Samaria directly in the road, and grace constrained the Savior to move in that direction. It was not "Come down, Zaccheus, because I may abide at thy house," but "I must." The Savior felt a strong necessity. Just as much a necessity as there is that man should die, as stern a necessity as there is that the sun should give us light by day and the moon by night, just so much a necessity is there that every blood-bought child of God shall be saved. "To-day I must abide at thy house." And oh! when the Lord comes to this, that he must and he will, what a thing it is with the poor sinner then! At other times we ask, "Shall I let him in at all? there is a stranger at the door; he is knocking now;

he has knocked before; shall I let him in?" But this time it is, "I must abide at thy house." There was no knocking at the door, but smash went the door into atoms! and in he walked: "I must, I shall, I will; I care not for your protesting your vileness, your unbelief; I must, I will; I must abide in thy house." "Ah!" says one, "I do not believe God would ever make me to believe as you believe, or become a Christian at all." Ah! but if he shall but say, "To-day I must abide at thy house," there will be no resistance in you. There are some of you who would scorn the very idea of being a canting methodist; "What, sir! do you suppose I would ever turn one of your religious people?" No, my friend, I don't suppose it; I know it for a certainty. If God says "I must," there is no standing against it. Let him say "must," and it must be.

I will just tell you an anecdote proving this. "A father was about sending his son to college; but as he knew the influence to which he would be exposed, he was not without a deep and anxious solicitude for the spiritual and eternal welfare of his favorite child. Fearing lest the principles of Christian faith, which he had endeavored to instil into his mind, would be rudely assailed, but trusting in the efficacy of that word which is quick and powerful, he purchased, unknown to his son, an elegant copy of the Bible, and deposited it at the bottom of his trunk. The young man entered upon his college career. The restraints of a pious education were son broken off, and he proceeded from speculation to doubts, and from doubts to a denial of the reality of religion. After having become, in his own estimation, wiser than his father, he discovered one day, while rummaging his trunk, with great surprise and indignation, the sacred deposit. He took it out, and while deliberating on the manner in which he should treat it, he determined that he would use it as waste paper, on which to wipe his razor while shaving. Accordingly, every time he went to shave, he tore a leaf or two of the holy book, and thus used it til nearly half the volume was destroyed. But while he was committing this outrage upon the sacred book, a text now and then met his eye, and was carried like a barbed arrow to his heart. At length, he heard a sermon, which discovered to him his own character, and his exposure to the wrath of God, and riveted upon his mind the impression which he has received from the last torn leaf of the blessed, yet insulted volume. Had worlds been at his disposal, he would freely have given them all, could they have availed, in enabling him to undo what he had done. At

length he found forgiveness at the foot of the cross. The torn leaves of that sacred volume brought healing to his soul; for they led him to repose on the mercy of God, which is sufficient for the chief of sinners." I tell you there is not a reprobate walking the streets and defiling the air with his blasphemies, there is not a creature abandoned so as to be well-nigh as bad as Satan himself, if he is a child of life, who is not within the reach of mercy. And if God says, "To-day I must abide in thy house," he then assuredly will. Do you feel, my dear hearer, just now, something in your mind which seems to say you have held out against the gospel a long while, but to-day you can hold out no longer? Do you feel that a strong hand has god hold of you, and do you hear a voice saying, "Sinner, I must abide in thy house; you have often scorned me, you have often laughed at me, you have often spit in the face of mercy, often blasphemed me, but sinner, I must abide in thy house; you banged the door yesterday in the missionary's face, you burned the tract, you laughed at the minister, you have cursed God's house, you have violated the Sabbath; but, sinner, I must abide in thy house, and I will!" "What, Lord!" you say, "abide in my house! why it is covered all over with iniquity. Abide in my house! why there is not a chair or a table but would cry out against me. Abide in my house! why the joists and beams and flooring would all rise up and tell thee that I am not worthy to kiss the hem of thy garment. What, Lord! abide in my house!" "Yes," says he, "I must; there is a strong necessity; my powerful love constrains me, and whether thou wilt let me or no, I am determined to make thee willing, and thou shalt let me in." Does not this surprise you, that Christ not only asks you to come to him, but invites himself to your table, and what is more, when you would put him away, kindly says, "I must, I will come in." Only think of Christ going after a sinner, crying after a sinner, beginning a sinner to let him save him; and that is just what Jesus does to his chosen ones. The sinner runs away from him, but free-grace pursues him, and says, "Sinner, come to Christ;" and if our hearts be shut up, Christ puts his hand in at the door, and if we do not rise, but repulse him coldly, he says, "I must, I will come in;" he weeps over us till his tears win us; he cries after us till his cries prevail; and at last in his own well determined hour he enters into our heart, and there he dwells. "I must abide in thy house," said Jesus.

8. And now, lastly, this call was an effectual one, for we see the fruits it brought forth. Open was Zaccheus's door; spread was his table; generous was his heart; washed were his hands; unburdened was his conscience; joyful was his soul. "Here, Lord," says he, "the half of my goods I give to the poor; I dare say I have robbed them of half my property — and now I restore it." "And if I have taken anything from any one by false accusation, I will restore it to him fourfold." — away goes another portion of his property. Ah! Zaccheus, you will go to be to-night a great deal poorer than when you got up this morning — but infinitely richer, too — poor, very poor, in this world's goods, compared with what thou wert when thou first didst climb that sycamore tree; but richer-infinitely richer — in heavenly treasure. Sinner, we shall know whether God calls you by this: if he calls, it will be an effectual call — not a call which you hear and then forget but one which produces good works. If God hath called thee this morning, down will go that drunken cup, up will go thy prayers; if God hath called thee this morning, there will not be one shutter up to-day in your shop, but all, and you will have a notice stuck up, "This house is closed on the Sabbath day, and will not again on that day, be opened." To-morrow, there will be such-and-such worldly amusement, but if God hath called you, you will not go. And if you have robbed anybody (and who knows but I may have a thief here?) If God call you, there will be a restoration of what you have stolen? you will give up all that you have, so that you will follow God with all your heart. We do not believe a man to be converted unless he doth renounce the error of his ways; unless, practically, he is brought to know that Christ himself is master of his conscience, and his law is his delight. "Zaccheus, make haste and come down, I must abide at thy house." And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. "And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Now, one or two lessons. A lesson to the proud. Come down, proud hearts, come down! Mercy runneth in valleys, but it goeth not to the mountain top. Come down, come down, lofty spirit! The lofty city, he

layeth it low even to the ground, and then he buildeth it up. Again, a lesson to thee, poor despairing soul: I am glad to see thee in God's house this morning; it is a good sign. I care not what you came for. You heard there was a strange kind of man that preached here, perhaps. Never mind about that. You are all quite as strange as he is. It is necessary that there should be strange men to gather in other strange men. Now, I have a mass of people here; and if I might use a figure, I should compare you to a great heap of ashes, mingled with which are a few steel filings. Now, my sermon if it be attended with divine grace, will be a sort of magnet: it will not attract any of the ashes — they will keep just where they are — but it will draw out the steel filings. I have got a Zaccheus there; there is a Mary up there, a John down there, a Sarah, or a William, or a Thomas, there — God's chosen ones — they are steel filings in the congregation of ashes, and my gospel, the gospel of the blessed God, like a great magnet, draws them out of the heap. There they come, there they come. Why? because there was a magnetic power between the gospel and their hearts. AH! poor sinner, come to Jesus, believe his love, trust his mercy. If thou hast a desire to come, if thou art forcing thy way through the ashes to get to Christ, then it is because Christ is calling thee. Oh! all of you who know yourselves to be sinners — every man, woman, and child of you — yea, ye little children (for God has given me some of you to be my wages), do you feel yourselves sinners? then believe on Jesus and be saved. You have come here from curiosity, many of you. Oh! that you might be met with and saved. I am distressed for you lest you should sink into hell-fire. Oh! listen to Christ while he speaks to you. Christ says, "Come down," this morning. Go home and humble yourselves in the sight of God: go and confess your iniquities that you have sinned against him; go home and tell him that you are a wretch, undone without his sovereign grace; and then look to him, for rest assured he has first looked to you. You say, "Sir, oh! I am willing enough to be saved, but I am afraid he is not willing." Stay! stay! no more of that! Do you know that is part blasphemy — not quite. If you were not ignorant, I would tell you that it was part blasphemy. You cannot look to Christ before he has looked to you. If you are willing to be saved, he gave you that will. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be baptized, and thou shalt be saved. I trust the Holy Spirit is calling you. Young man up there, young man in the window, make haste! come down! Old man, sitting in these pews, come down. Merchant in yonder aisle,

make haste. Matron and youth, not knowing Christ, oh, may he look at you. Old grandmother, hear the gracious call; and thou, young lad, Christ may be looking at thee — I trust he is — and saying to thee, “Make haste, and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house.”

A WILLING PEOPLE AND AN IMMUTABLE LEADER

SERMON NO. 74

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 13, 1856,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth." — Psalm 110:3.

Never verse in the Scripture has puzzled me more than this to find out its meaning and its connection. In reading it over hastily, at first sight, it may appear very easy; but if you search into it very carefully you will find you can with difficulty string the words together, or give them any intelligible meaning. I have taken down all the commentators I have in my possession; I find they all give a meaning to the words, but not a soul of them — not even Dr. Gill — gives a connected meaning to the whole sentence. After looking at the old translations, and employing every means in my power to discover the meaning, I found myself as far off as when I began. Matthew Henry, one of the wisest commentators, certainly the best for family reading, makes the passage read as if it were like this: "Thy people shall come willingly in the day of thy power in the beauties of holiness. In the womb of the morning thou hast the dew of thy youth." That is how he explains it, though he does not say that is the proper translation. He explains the last sentence, "Thou hast the dew of thy youth," as meaning that in early life, from the womb of the morning, young people would give themselves to Jesus Christ. But it is no such thing. There is a colon at the word "morning," dividing the sentence. Besides, it does not say, the "people shall be willing; thou hast the dew of their youth," as it would read if it were as the expositors understand it; but it says to Christ, "Thou hast the dew of thy youth." It was not until we had thoroughly looked at the connection of the verse, and tried to catch the scope of the Psalm, that

we thought we had hit upon its meaning; and even now we shall leave it with your judgment to decide whether or not we have gained the mind of the Spirit, as we hope we have.

The Psalm is a kind of coronation Psalm. Christ is bidden to take his throne: "Sit thou at my right hand." The scepter is put into his hand. "The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion." And then the question is asked, "Where are his people?" For a king would be no king without subjects. The highest title of kingship is but an empty one that hath no subjects to make up its fullness. Where, then, shall Christ find that which shall be the fullness of him that filleth all in all? The great anxiety we have is not whether Christ is king or not: — we know he is; he is the Lord of creation and of providence; our anxiety is about his subjects. Ofttimes do we ask, "O Lord, where shall we find thy subjects?" When we have preached to hard hearts, and prophesied to dry bones, our unbelief at times says, "Where shall we find children for Christ? Where shall we find people who will constitute the subjects of his empire?" Our fears are all put to rest by this passage: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning;" and by the second promise, "Thou hast the dew of thy youth." These thoughts are placed here to allay the anxieties of God's believing people, and to let them see how Christ shall indeed be king, and never lack a multitude of subjects.

First, here is a promise concerning his people; and secondly, here is a promise concerning Christ himself, that he shall always be as strong, as fresh, as new, and as mighty a Christ as ever.

I. First, we shall look at THE PROMISE MADE TO CHRIST'S PEOPLE. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning." Here is a promise of time; "in the day of thy power." Here is a promise of people: "thy people." Here is a promise of disposition: "thy people shall be willing." Here is a promise of character: "thy people shall be willing in the beauties of holiness." And here is a majestic figure to show the manner in which they shall be brought forth. By a very bold metaphor, they are said to come out as mysteriously as the dew drops from the womb of the morning. We know not how, but they are produced by God. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy

power, in the beauties of holiness." In the womb of the morning they shall come.

1. First, here is a promise concerning time. Christ is not to gather in his people every day, but on one special day, the day of his power. It is not the day when man feels himself to be the most mighty, that souls are gathered; for alas! God's servants sometimes preach until their self-complacency tells them they have been exceedingly eloquent and mighty, and that, therefore, men must be saved: but there is no promise that in the day of our power we shall ever see men gathered to Christ. There are times too when the people seem to have a great power of seeking after God, and when they have the power of hearing, but there is no promise that just when an excitement reigns, and when there appears to be power in the creature, that such a day shall be the day of God's ingathering. It is "the day of thy power" — not of the minister's power, nor of the hearers'.

The day of God's power — when is it? We take it, it is the day when God pours out his own power upon the minister, so that God's children are gathered in by his preaching.

There are times, beloved, when the ordained servant of the living God will have nothing to do in preaching, but just to open his mouth and allow the words to flow. He will scarcely need stay to think, but the thoughts will be injected into his mind, and while he preaches he will feel there is a power accompanying his word. His hearers too will discern it. Some of them will feel as if they were sitting under a sledge hammer, beating on their hearts. Others will feel as if truth were stealing into their hearts and slaying all their unbelief, in such a way that they could not resist the blessed power. It will often happen that God's children will find an influence and a might irresistible going with the word. They have heard that minister before, they were delighted with him, they trusted that they had been edified on good soil, every blow hit the mark, there was no arrow shot which did not go into the center of the soul — there was not a syllable uttered which was not like the word of Jehovah himself, speaking either from Sinai, or Calvary. Have you never known such times? Have you not felt them when you have been standing or sitting in the house of God? Ah! those are times when God, by the manifestation of himself, is pleased to enlighten his children, to gather in his people, and to make poor

sinners willing. There is also a day of power in every sinner's heart; for, alas! the general day of power which occurs to our congregation omits many — many over whom we have to weep — while hundreds shed tears of penitence, other hundreds sit stolid and unmoved. While some hearts leap for very joy, others are bound in the fetters of ignorance, and are sleeping the sleep of death. While God is pouring out his Spirit till some hearts are full to the very brim, ready to burst, there are some dry, without a drop of the heavenly moisture. But the day of God's power is a day of personal power in our souls, like that day of Zaccheus when the Lord said, "Make haste, and come down." It is a day not of argument of man, but a day of omnipotent power — God working in the heart. It is not a day of intellectual enlightenment, a day of instruction merely, but a day when God shall enter into the heart, and with a mighty hand shall wrench the will and turn it as he would — shall make the judgment judge righteously, the imagination think as it ought, and shall guide the whole soul to himself. Did you never think what power that was which God exerts in every individual heart? There is no power like it. Should a man command the mighty waterfalls to congeal and stand, in heaps? If they should obey him, he would not have worked a miracle half so mighty as that which God works in the heart when he bids the floods of sin to cease flowing. Could I command Etna with its flames and smoke to cease its ebullitions, and should it at once be still, I had not worked a deed so mighty as when God speaks to a boiling spirit sending forth fire and smoke, and bids it stay. The everlasting God exhibits more power in turning a sinner from the error of his ways, than in the creation of a world or the sustentation of an universe. In the day of God's power, God's people shall be willing. Beloved, we also look for a day of power in the coming period of the reign of Jesus Christ. I take it there is a time coming when the feeblest among us shall be as David, and when David shall be as the angel of the Lord. The time is approaching when every poor ignorant minister shall preach with power, and when every child of God shall be filled with the knowledge of God. We hope for a happy day when Christ shall come and shall cause the knowledge of the Lord to be spread so rapidly that it shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea. We often cheer ourselves with this subject — well, if we do labor in vain and spend our strength for nought now, it will not be so always; the day will come when the fresh wind of the Spirit will fill the sails of the church, and she shall go swiftly along; when the feeble

hand of the minister shall be as mighty as the hand of the boldest Christian warrior who ever wielded the sword of the Spirit; when every word of Christ shall be as ointment poured forth, spreading perfume over a sinful world; when we shall never preach a sermon without effect; when, as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, it not only shall not return void, but shall water the earth, so that having already brought forth and budded, it shall bring forth fruit to the glory of God — that fruit, the destruction of idols, and the casting down of all false religions. Happy day, that day of power! Christians! why do you not pray for it? Why do ye not ask that God would give his people might, and that Christ may speedily come and find his people willing?

There is, however, another translation to these words. Calvin translates them, “at the time of the assembling of their army,” “au jour des montres” “in the day of the review.” You sometimes say, “Oh! if a great struggle were to occur, where would be found the men to fight for Christ?” We have heard timid believers say, “Oh, I am afraid if persecution should set in, we should find very few valiant for truth — few ministers would come forward boldly to uphold the gospel of Christ.” No such thing, believer! Christ’s people will be willing in the day of God’s armies. God never had a battle to fight yet when he could say, “I have no soldiers in reserve.” God never had an arduous campaign in which his armies were insufficient. Once the prophet said, Zechariah 1:18-21,

> “Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns. And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What be these? And he answered me, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. And the Lord showed me four carpenters. Then said I, What come these to do? And he spoke, saying, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it.”

God had enough men to cut off the horns, and to build his house, there were four; and he had the right sort of men ready to do his work; for “carpenters” were ready. Whenever a struggle is approaching God will find his men. Whenever a battle is to commence, God will find the men valiant

for truth. Never be afraid that God will not take care of his church. “Thy people shall be willing in the day of God’s battle.” Are you undertaking some noble enterprise? Are you saying, “Here is a grand endeavor to evangelize the world; where shall we find people? The answer is, “God’s people shall be willing in the day of his armies.” Some Sunday-school teachers are complaining, that in their church they cannot find enough to canvass the district. Why not? Because they have not enough of God’s people, for God’s people are willing in the day of his armies. We have complained that we cannot get ministers to evangelize. Why not? Because they are not thoroughly imbued with the Master’s Spirit, for his people would be willing in the day of God’s armies when they are wanted. They always have willing hearts to be ready for the battle. They do not say, “I must consult flesh and blood.” No, there is the standard; up go God’s soldiers! There is the battle; out go their swords! They are ready for the fight at once. They are always ready in the day of God’s armies. Beloved, fear no struggle; dread no enterprise; neither think that the silver and the gold will be withholden from us — “The silver and the gold are mind, and the cattle on a thousand hills.” Think not, however grand your ideas, that you shall fail therein. God’s people will come forward willingly when he requires their aid. We believe that truth firmly; but we must wait for God’s day; we must pray for God’s day; we must hope for it; we must labor for it, and when it comes, God shall find his people willing, as they ought to be.

2. Next, we have here the promise of a people, “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power” — nobody else. Here is a promise that Christ shall always have a people. In the darkest ages Christ has always had a church; and if darker times shall come, he will have his church still. Oh! Elijah, thy unbelief is foolish. Thou sayest, “I, only I, am left alone, and they seek my life.” Nay, Elijah, in those caves of the earth God has his prophets, hidden by seventies. Thou, too, poor unbelieving Christian, at times thou sayest, “I, even I, am left.” Oh! if thou hadst eyes to see, if thou couldst travel a little, thy heart would be glad to find that God does not lack a people. It cheers my heart to find that God has a family everywhere. We do not go anywhere but we find really earnest hearts — men full of prayer. I bless God that I can say, concerning the church wherever I have been, though they are not many, there are a few, who sigh

and groan over the sorrows of Israel. There are chosen bands in every church, thoroughly earnest men who are looking out for, and are ready to receive their Master, who cry to God that he would send them times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Do not be too sad; God has a people, and they are willing now; and when the day of God's power shall come, there is no fear about the people. Religion may be at a low ebb, but it never was at such a low ebb that God's ship was stranded. It may be ever so low, but the devil shall never be able to cross the river of Christ's church dry shod. He shall always find abundance of water running in the channel thereof. God grant us grace to look out for his people, believing that there are some everywhere, for the promise is, "thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."

3. We next come to disposition. God's people are a willing people. Adam Clarke says, — "This verse has been woefully perverted. It has been supposed to point out that irresistible operation of the grace of God on the souls of the elect, thereby making them willing to receive Christ as their Savior." A doctrine which he utterly discards. Well, my dear Adam Clarke, we are extremely obliged to you for your remark, but at the same time we think that the text has not been "woefully perverted." We believe that the text has been very properly used to show that God makes men willing. For if we read our Bibles rightly, we understand that men, by nature, are not willing; for there is a text you are extremely fond of which we do not think belongs to you, and which says, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." "No man can come unto me, except the Father which has sent me, draw him." If you would remember that, we think, even though the text does not teach it, you might at least have some respect for the doctrine; but it says, God's people shall be willing in the day of God's power; and if we read it as plain English people, we look from this text that there must be a work of his grace making men willing in the day of God's power. We do not know whether you think that fair logic. We think it is. We have been accused of having no logic, and we are not particularly sorry about that, for we would rather have what men call dogmatism than logic. It is Christ's to prove; it is ours to preach. We leave argument to Christ; for us, we have only to affirm what we see in God's Word. God's people are to be a willing people. We can tell who are the children by the fact that they are willing. I preach to many of you times without number. I

tell you of hell; I bid you flee from it; I tell you of Christ; I bid you look to him, but you are unwilling to do so. What do I conclude from that? Either that the day of God's power has not yet come, or that you are not God's people. When I preach with power, and the word is dispensed with unction, if I see you unmoved and unsettled, unwilling to cast yourselves on Jesus Christ, what say I? Why, I fear those are not God's people, for God's people are willing in the day of his power, willing to submit to sovereign grace, to give themselves up into the hands of the Mediator, to hang simply on his cross for salvation. I ask again what has made them willing? Must it not have been something in grace which has turned their will? If the will of man be purely free to do right or wrong, I conjure you, my friends, to answer this: if it be so, why do you not turn to God this very moment without divine assistance? It is because you are not willing, and it needed a promise that God's people should be willing in the day of his power.

I think this word applies not only to their being willing to be saved, but willing to work after they are saved. Did you ever know a minister who preached on the Sunday, but who at the prayer-meeting on the Monday night seemed as if he would much rather be at home? And if there was a lecture on Thursday, did not he, poor man, come up as if he were about to perform some enormously hard duty? What do you think of him? Why, you think he is not one of the people of God, else he would be willing. Some persons come to the house of God, but they come just as the negro would to his whipping place, they do not like it, and they are glad to get away again. But what do we say of God's people, —

"Up to her courts with joys unknown,
The sacred tribes repair."

They are a willing people. There is a collection. The Church of God requires some assistance. One man doles out as small a trifle as ever he can to keep up his respectability. You do not think he exhibits the spirit of a Christian because he is not willing; but Christ's people are willing; all that they do, they do willingly, for they are constrained by no compulsion, but by grace alone. I am sure we all can do a thing far better when we are willing than when we are forced. God loves his people's services, because they do them voluntarily. Voluntaryism is the essence of the gospel. Willing people are those whom God delights to have as his servants. He

would not have slaves to grace his throne, but free men, who, with gladness and joy, should be willing in the day of his power.

4. We shall scarcely have time for a discussion of the whole text, but we must briefly notice the character of these people as well as their dispositions. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." "They shall be willing in the beauties of holiness." This is how they shall be clothed — not merely in holiness, but in the beauties of holiness, for holiness hath its beauties, its gems, its pearls; and what are these? They shall be clothed in the beauties of holiness of imputed righteousness and of imparted grace. God's people are, in themselves a deformed people, hence their comeliness must be given them. The standard of beauty is saintship. If an angel should descend from heaven, and carry up to God the most beautiful creature he could find, he would not cull earth's roses, he would not gather her lilies, but he would take up to heaven the fair character of a child of God. Where he found a self-denying hero, where he discovered a disinterested Christian — an ardent disciple, the angel would take him up, exclaiming, "Great God, here is beauty; take it, this is thy beauty." We walk along and admire statues and such-like things, and we say, "Here is beauty," but the Christian has on him the true beauty — the beauties of holiness. Oh! ye young, ye gay, ye proud, ye ask for beauty, but do you know that all the beauties of this earth can do you no good, for you must die and wear a shroud?

"Time will rob you of your bloom,
Death will drag you to the tomb."

But if you have the beauties of holiness, they shall increase and become fairer and fairer, and amongst the fair angels, you, as fair as they, shall stand decked in your Savior's righteousness. "Thy people shall be willing" to come forward, and they shall be the right sort of people; they will be a holy people, arrayed in all "the beauties of holiness."

5. Now there is a bold metaphor here which we must explain in the last place. The text says, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power in the beauties of holiness." Now you understand that, but what do the next words mean, "From the womb of the morning?" "Why, from the earliest periods of their lives," say the commentators, "God's people shall be willing." No, it does not mean that; there is a bold and brilliant figure

here. It is asked, where are they to come from? how are God's people to be brought? what means are to be employed? how is it to be done? The simple answer is this. Did you never see the dew-drops glistening on the earth? and did you never ask, "Whence came these? how came they here so infinite in number, so lavishly scattered everywhere, so pure and brilliant." Nature whispered the answer, "They came from the womb of the morning." So God's people will come forth as noiselessly, as mysteriously, as divinely, as if they came "from the womb of the morning," like the dew drops. Philosophy has labored to discover the origin of dew, and perhaps has guessed it; but to the Eastern, one of the greatest riddles was, out of whose womb came the dew? Who is the mother of those pearly drops? Now, so will God's people come mysteriously. It will be said by the bystander, "There was nothing in that man's preaching; I thought I should hear an orator; this man has been made the means of salvation to thousands, and I thought I should hear an eloquent man, but I have heard a great many preachers far more intelligent and intellectual than he; how were these souls converted? "Why, they have come from the womb of the morning," mysteriously. Again, the dew drops — who made them? Do kings and princes rise up and hold their scepters, and bid the clouds shed tears, or affright them to weeping by the beating of the drum? Do armies march to the battle to force the sky to give up its treasure, and scatter its diamonds lavishly? No; God speaks; he whispers in the ears of nature, and it weeps for joy at the glad news that the morning is come. God does it; there is no apparent agency employed, no thunder, no lightning; God has done it. That is how God's people shall be saved; they come forth from the "womb of the morning" divinely called, divinely brought, divinely blessed, divinely numbered, divinely scattered over the entire surface of the globe, divinely refreshing to the world, they proceed from the "womb of the morning." You may have noticed in the morning what a multitude of dew drops there are, and you may have inquired, "Whence comes so great a multitude?" We answer, the womb of nature is capable of ten thousand births at once. So, "from the womb of the morning" God's children shall come. No struggle, no pang, no shriek, no agony is heard, all is secret; but they shall come fresh "from the womb of the morning." The figure is so beautiful that words cannot explain it. You have only to stand early one morning when the sun is beginning to shoot his rays of light up to the sky, and look at the fields all glistening with

dew, and say, “Whence came all these?” The answer is, they came “From the womb of the morning.” So when you find that multitudes are saved, and you see them coming so mysteriously, so gently, so divinely, and yet so numerously, you can only compare them to the dew of the morning. You say, “Whence came these?” And the answer is, they have come “from the womb of the morning.”

II. Now the second part of the text is the sweetest, and we must have a little time upon that. There was a promise made to Christ concerning his people, and that sets our fears at rest concerning the Church. Now here is ANOTHER PROMISE MADE TO CHRIST: “Thou hast the dew of thy youth.” Ah! believer, this is the great source of gospel success, that Christ has the dew of his youth. Jesus Christ, personally, has the dew of his youth. Certain leaders in their young days have led their troops to battle, and by the loudness of their voice, and the strength of their bodies, they have inspired their men with courage; but the old warrior hath his hair sown with grey; he begins to be decrepid, and no longer can lead men to battle. It is not so with Jesus Christ. He has still the dew of his youth. The same Christ who led his troops to battle in his early youth leads them now. The arm which smote the sinner with his word smites now; it is as unpalsied as it was before. The eye which looked upon his friends with gladness, and upon his foemen with a glance most stern and high — that same eye is regarding us now, undimmed, like that of Moses. He has the dew of his youth. Oh! it does delight us to think that Christ was “God over all, blessed for ever,” in his youth, filled with Almighty power, and he is just the same now. He is not an old Christ — a worn out Christ, but our leader still. He is as young as ever. The same dew, the same freshness, is about him. You hear it said of a minister, “In his younger days there was a deal of freshness about him, but he is getting old and begins to repeat himself.” It is never so with Christ; he always has the dew of his youth. He who “spake as never man spake,” once, when he shall come to speak again, will speak just as he did before. He has the dew of his youth personally.

So also doctrinally. Christ hath the dew of his youth. Usually, when a religion starts it is very rampant, but it afterwards decays. Look at the religion of Mahommed. For one hundred years or more it threatened to subvert kingdoms, and overturn the whole world, but where are the blades that flashed then? Where are now the willing hands that smote down the

foes of Mahommed? Why, his religion has become an old worn-out thing; no one cares about it; and the Turk, sitting on his divan, with his legs crossed, smoking his pipe, is the best image of the Mahommedan religion — old, infirm, effete. But the Christian religion, — ah! it is as fresh as when it started from its cradle at Jerusalem; it is as hale, and hearty, and mighty, as when Paul preached it at Athens, or Peter at Jerusalem. It is not an old religion. Not one particle of it hath waxed old, though hundreds of years have passed away. How many religions have died since Christ's began! How many have risen up, like mushrooms in a night! But is not Christ's as new as it ever was? I ask you, ye old grey heads, you have known your Master in your youth, and you thought his religion sweet and precious; do you find it useless now? Do you find now that Christ has not the dew of youth upon him? No; you can say, "Sweet Jesus, the day I first touched thine hand, the day of mine espousals, I thought thee altogether lovely; and thou art not like an earthly friend: thou hast not waxed old; thou art as young as ever. Thy brow hath no furrows on it; thine eyes are not dime. Thine hair is still black as the raven, not white with age; thou art still unmoved, unaltered, notwithstanding all the years that I have known thee. Well, beloved, do you see what encouragement this is to us in the propagation of our Master's kingdom, that we are not preaching an old thing that is out of date, but a religion which has the dew of its youth upon it. The same religion which could save three thousand at Pentecost, can save three thousand now. I preach old doctrine, but it is as new as when it first came from heaven's mint. The image and the superscription is as clear, and the metal is as bright and undimmed as ever. I have an old sword, but it is not a rusty one; though it hath hacked and cut many a Rahab, yet it has not a single mark of weakness upon itself — it is as new as when it was first forged upon the anvil of wisdom. The gospel has the same spirit attending it now, that it had when it was a young gospel. As Peter stood up to preach then so may Peters now, and God shall give them the same unction. As Paul preached then, so shall Pauls now. As Timothy upheld the Lord's word, so may Timothys now, and the same Holy Spirit shall attend it. I am afraid Christ's people do not believe this sentence — that Christ has the dew of his youth. They have a notion that the times of great revivals are gone by. And the fathers, they ask, where are they? We are apt to cry, "The horses of Israel, and the chariots thereof." No one will ever wear Elijah's mantle again; we shall

never see great and wondrous deeds again. O foolish unbelief! Christ has still the dew of his youth. He has as much of the Holy Spirit now as he had at first, for he has it without measure. And though he has dispensed it unto thousands, he will dispense it still. But the question is asked, "How is it that people in these times begin to get tired of the gospel, if it has the dew of its youth?" Why, beloved, it is because the gospel does not come to them in the form of dew at all. Do we not frequently hear a gospel all dry and marrowless, like a lot of bones out of which the marrow has been boiled? Very nice these bones are for your philosophical divines, who like to study antiquities, and discover to what unclean animal this or that bone belongs, but of no service at all to God's children, for there is no food on the bones. We want a gospel covered with unction, full of savor; and when God's people have that, they are never tired of it, they find a dew and a freshness about it which are lasting.

Now, if Christ has the dew of his youth about him, how earnestly ought those of us who are his ministers to proclaim his word. There is nothing like strong faith to make a man preach mightily. If I think I preach a tottering old gospel, I cannot proclaim it with zeal; but if I think I am preaching a strong stalwart gospel, whose frame has not been shaken, and whose might is just as great as ever, how strongly ought I to preach it? Ah! blessed be God, there are a few hearts as hot as ever, a few souls as firm in their Master's cause as ever were the hearts of the Apostles. They are yet a few good men and true, who rally round the cross. Like David's men in the cave Adullam, there are some mighties who rally round the standard. He is not left without his witnesses, he has the dew of his youth yet, and the day may come when those now hidden in darkness, shall, as dew before the sunshine, come out, glistening on every bush, adorning every tree, enlightening every village, cheering every pasture, making the little hills sing for joy. Go, Christian, and put this into the form of prayer. Pray to Christ that his people may be willing in the day of his power, and that he would always retain the dew of his youth.

"Ride forth, sweet Prince, triumphantly,
And bid the world obey."

Go on, and prove thyself to be the same as ever, the blessed God, "God over all, blessed for evermore." Up, Christian, up! fight for your young Monarch! Up with ye, warriors! Let your swords flash from their

scabbards! Fight for your King! Up! up! for the old banner is a new banner too. Christ is still fresh and still young. Let the enthusiasm of your youth gird you! Once again, start up, ye aged Christians, and let your young days come again, for if Christ has the dew of his youth about him, it behooves you to serve him with youthful vigor. Up! starting now from your sleep, give to him a new youth, and strive to be as earnest and as zealous for his cause as if it were the first day you ever knew him. Oh! may God make many sinners willing! May he bring many to his feet, for he has promised that they shall be willing in the day of his power.

FINAL PERSEVERANCE

SERMON NO. 75

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 20, 1856,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." — Hebrews 6:4-6.

There are some spots in Europe which have been the scenes of frequent warfare, as for instance, the kingdom of Belgium, which might be called the battle field of Europe. War has raged over the whole of Europe, but in some unhappy spots, battle after battle has been fought. So there is scarce a passage of Scripture which has not been disputed between the enemies of truth and the upholders of it; but this passage, with one or two others, has been the special subject of attack. This is one of the texts which have been trodden under the feet of controversy; and there are opinions upon it as adverse as the poles, some asserting that it means one thing, and some declaring that it means another. We think that some of them approach somewhat near the truth; but others of them desperately err from the mind of the Spirit. We come to this passage ourselves with the intention to read it with the simplicity of a child, and whatever we find therein to state it; and if it may not seem to agree with something we have hitherto held, we are prepared to cast away every doctrine of our own, rather than one passage of Scripture.

Looking at the scope of the whole passage, it appears to us that the Apostle wished to push the disciples on. There is a tendency in the human mind to stop short of the heavenly mark. As soon as ever we have attained to the first principles of religion, have passed through baptism, and understand the resurrection of the dead, there is a tendency in us to sit

still; to say, “I have passed from death unto life; here I may take my stand and rest;” whereas, the Christian life was intended not to be a sitting still, but a race, a perpetual motion. The Apostle, therefore endeavors to urge the disciples forward, and make them run with diligence the heavenly race, looking unto Jesus. He tells them that it is not enough to have on a certain day, passed through a glorious change — to have experienced at a certain time, a wonderful operation of the Spirit; but he teaches them it is absolutely necessary that they should have the Spirit all their lives — that they should, as long as they live, be progressing in the truth of God. In order to make them persevere, if possible, he shows them that if they do not, they must, most certainly be lost; for there is no other salvation but that which God has already bestowed on them, and if that does not keep them, carry them forward, and present them spotless before God, there cannot be any other. For it is impossible, he says, if ye be once enlightened, and then fall away, that ye should ever be renewed again unto repentance.

We shall, this morning, answer one or two questions. The first question will be, Who are the people here spoken? Are they true Christians or not? Secondly, What is meant by falling away? And thirdly, What is intended, when it is asserted, that it is impossible to renew them to repentance?

I. First, then, we answer the question, WHO ARE THE PEOPLE HERE SPOKEN OF? If you read Dr. Gill, Dr. Owen, and almost all the eminent Calvinistic writers, they all of them assert that these persons are not Christians. They say, that enough is said here to represent a man who is a Christian externally, but not enough to give the portrait of a true believer. Now, it strikes me they would not have said this if they had had some doctrine to uphold; for a child, reading this passage, would say, that the persons intended by it must be Christians. If the Holy Spirit intended to describe Christians, I do not see that he could have used more explicit terms than there are here. How can a man be said to be enlightened, and to taste of the heavenly gift, and to be made partaker of the Holy Ghost, without being a child of God? With all deference to these learned doctors, and I admire and love them all, I humbly conceive that they allowed their judgments to be a little warped when they said that; and I think I shall be able to show that none but true believers are here described.

First, they are spoken of as having been once enlightened. This refers to the enlightening influence of God's Spirit, poured into the soul at the time of conviction, when man is enlightened with regard to his spiritual state, shown how evil and bitter a thing it is to sin against God, made to feel how utterly powerless he is to rise from the grave of his corruption, and is further enlightened to see, that "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified," and to behold Christ on the cross, as the sinner's only hope. The first work of grace is to enlighten the soul. By nature we are entirely dark; the Spirit, like a lamp, sheds light into the dark heart, revealing its corruption, displaying its sad state of destitution, and, in due time, revealing also Jesus Christ, so that in his light we may see light. I cannot consider a man truly enlightened unless he is a child of God. Does not the term indicate a person taught of God? It is not the whole of Christian experience; but is it not a part?

Having enlightened us, as the text says, the next thing that God grants to us is a taste of the heavenly gift, by which we understand, the heavenly gift of salvation, including the pardon of sin, justification by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, regeneration by the Holy Ghost, and all those gifts and graces, which in the earlier dawn of spiritual life convey salvation. All true believers have tasted of the heavenly gift. It is not enough for a man to be enlightened; the light may glare upon his eyeballs, and yet he may die; he must taste, as well as see that the Lord is good. It is not enough to see that I am corrupt; I must taste that Christ is able to remove my corruption. It is not enough for me to know that he is the only Savior; I must taste of his flesh and of his blood, and have a vital union with him. We do think that when a man has been enlightened and has had an experience of grace, he is a Christian; and whatever those great divines might hold, we cannot think that the Holy Spirit would describe an unregenerate man as having been enlightened, and as having tasted of the heavenly gift. No, my brethren, if I have tasted of the heavenly gift, then that heavenly gift is mine; if I have had ever so short an experience of my Savior's love, I am one of his; if he has brought me into the green pastures, and made me taste of the still waters and the tender grass, I need not fear as to whether I am really a child of God.

Then the Apostle gives a further description, a higher state of grace: sanctification by participation of the Holy Ghost. It is a peculiar privilege

to believers, after their first tasting of the heavenly gift, to be made partakers of the Holy Ghost. He is an indwelling Spirit; he dwells in the hearts, and souls, and minds of men; he makes this mortal flesh his home; he makes our soul his palace, and there he rests; and we do assert (and we think, on the authority of Scripture), that no man can be a partaker of the Holy Ghost, and yet be unregenerate. Where the Holy Ghost dwells there must be life; and if I have participation with the Holy Ghost, and fellowship with him, then I may rest assured that my salvation has been purchased by the blood of the Savior. Thou need'st not fear, beloved; if thou has the Holy Ghost, thou hast that which ensures thy salvation; if thou, by an inward communion, canst participate in his Spirit, and if by a perpetual indwelling the Holy Ghost rests in thee, thou art not only a Christian, but thou hast arrived at some maturity in and by grace. Thou hast gone beyond mere enlightenment: thou hast passed from the bare taste — thou hast attained to a positive feast, and a partaking of the Holy Ghost.

Lest there should be any mistake, however, about the persons being children of God, the Apostle goes to a further stage of grace. They "have tasted the good word of God." Now, I will venture to say there are some good Christian people here who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have never "tasted the good word of God." I mean by that, that they are really converted, have tasted the heavenly gift, but have not grown so strong in grace as to know the sweetness, the richness, and fatness of the very word that saves them. They have been saved by the word, but they have not come yet to realize, and love, and feed upon the word as many others have. It is one thing for God to work a work of grace in the soul, it is quite another thing for God to show us that work; it is one thing for the word to work in us — it is another thing for us really and habitually to relish, and taste, and rejoice in that word. Some of my hearers are true Christians; but they have not got to that stage wherein they can love election, and suck it down as a sweet morsel, wherein they can take the great doctrines of grace, and feed upon them. But these people had. They had tasted the good word of God, as well as received the good gift: they had attained to such a state, that they had loved the word, had tasted, and feasted upon it. It was the man of their right hand; they had counted it sweeter than honey — ay,

sweeter than the droppings of the honeycomb. They had “tasted the good word of God.” I say again, if these people be not believers — who are?

And they had gone further still. They had attained the summit of piety. They had received “the powers of the world to come.” Not miraculous gifts, which are denied us in these days, but all those powers with which the Holy Ghost endows a Christian. And what are they? Why, there is the power of faith, which commands even the heavens themselves to rain, and they rain, or stops the bottles of heaven, that they rain not. There is the power of prayer, which puts a ladder between earth and heaven, and bids angels walk up and down, to convey our wants to God, and bring down blessings from above. There is the power with which God girds his servant when he speaks by inspiration, which enables him to instruct others, and lead them to Jesus; and whatever other power there may be — the power of holding communion with God, or the power of patient waiting for the Son of Man — they were possessed by these individuals. They were not simply children, but they were men; they were not merely alive, but they were endued with power; they were men, whose muscles were firmly set, whose bones were strong; they had become giants in grace, and had received not only the light, but the power also of the world to come. These, we say, whatever may be the meaning of the text, must have been, beyond a doubt, none other than true and real Christians.

II. And now we answer the second question, WHAT IS MEANT BY FALLING AWAY?

We must remind our friends, that there is a vast distinction between falling away and falling. It is nowhere said in Scripture, that if a man fall he cannot be renewed; on the contrary, “the righteous falleth seven times, but he riseth up again;” and however many times the child of God doth fall, the Lord still holdeth the righteous; yea, when our bones are broken, he bindeth up our bones again, and setteth us once more upon a rock. He saith, “Return, ye backsliding children of men; for I am married unto you;” and if the Christian do backslide ever so far, still Almighty mercy cries, “Return, return, return, and seek an injured Father’s heart.” He still calls his children back again. Falling is not falling away. Let me explain the difference; for a man who falls may behave just like a man who falls away; and yet there is a great distinction between the two. I can use no better

illustration than the distinction between fainting and dying. There lies a young creature; she can scarcely breathe; she cannot herself, lift up her hand, and if lifted up by any one else, it falls. She is cold and stiff; she is faint, but not dead. There is another one, just as cold and stiff as she is, but there is this difference — she is dead. The Christian may faint, and may fall down in a faint too, and some may pick him up, and say he is dead; but he is not. If he fall, God will lift him up again; but if he fall away, God himself cannot save him. For it is impossible, if the righteous fall away, "to renew them again unto repentance."

Moreover, to fall away is not to commit sin. under a temporary surprise and temptation. Abraham goes to Egypt; he is afraid that his wife will be taken away from him, and he says, "She is my sister." That was a sin under a temporary surprise — a sin, of which, by-and-by, he repented, and God forgave him. Now that is falling; but it is not falling away. Even Noah might commit a sin, which has degraded his memory even till now, and shall disgrace it to the latest time; but doubtless, Noah repented, and was saved by sovereign grace. Noah fell, but Noah did not fall away. A Christian may go astray once, and speedily return again; and though it is a sad, and woeful, and evil thing to be surprised into a sin, yet there is a great difference between this and the sin which would be occasioned by a total falling away from grace.

Nor can a man who commits a sin, which is not exactly a surprise, be said to fall away. I believe that some Christian men — (God forbid that we should say much of it! — let us cover the nakedness of our brother with a cloak.) but I do believe that there are some Christians who, for a period of time, have wandered into sin, and yet have not positively fallen away. There is that black case of David — a case which has puzzled thousands. Certainly for some months, David lived without making a public confession of his sin, but, doubtless, he had achings of heart, for grace had not ceased its work: there was a spark among the ashes that Nathan stirred up, which showed that David was not dead, or else the match which the prophet applied would not have caught light so readily. And so, beloved, you may have wandered into sin for a time, and gone far from God; and yet you are not the character here described, concerning whom it is said, that it is impossible you should be saved; but, wanderer though you be, you are your father's son still, and mercy cries, "Repent, repent; return

unto your first husband, for then it was better with you than it is now. Return, O wanderer, return."

Again, falling away is not even a giving up of profession. Some will say, "Now there is So-and-so; he used to make a profession of Christianity, and now he denies it, and what is worse, he dares to curse and swear, and says that he never knew Christ at all. Surely he must be fallen away." My friend, he has fallen, fallen fearfully, and fallen woefully; but I remember a case in Scripture of a man who denied his Lord and Master before his own face. You remember his name; he is an old friend of yours — our friend Simon Peter! he denied him with oaths and curses, and said, "I say unto thee that I know not the man." And yet Jesus looked on Simon. He had fallen, but he had not fallen away; for, only two or three days after that, there was Peter at the tomb of his Master, running there to meet his Lord, to be one of the first to find him risen. Beloved, you may even have denied Christ by open profession, and yet if you repent there is mercy for you. Christ has not cast you away, you shall repent yet. You have not fallen away. If you had, I might not preach to you; for it is impossible for those who have fallen away to be renewed again unto repentance.

But some one says, "What is falling away?" Well, there never has been a case of it yet, and therefore I cannot describe it from observation; but I will tell you what I suppose it is. To fall away, would be for the Holy Spirit entirely to go out of a man — for his grace entirely to cease; not to lie dormant, but to cease to be — for God, who has begun a good work, to leave off doing it entirely — to take his hand completely and entirely away, and say, "There, man! I have half saved thee; now I will damn thee." That is what falling away is. It is not to sin temporarily. A child may sin against his father, and still be alive; but falling away is like cutting the child's head off clean. Not falling merely, for then our Father could pick us up, but being dashed down a precipice, where we are lost for ever. Falling away would involved God's grace changing its living nature. God's immutability becoming variable, God's faithfulness becoming changeable, and God, himself being undeified; for all these things falling away would necessitate.

III. But if a child of God could fall away, and grace could cease in a man's heart — now comes the third question — Paul says, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR

HIM TO BE RENEWED. What did the Apostle mean? One eminent commentator says, he meant that it would be very hard. It would be very hard, indeed, for a man who fell away, to be saved. But we reply, "My dear friend, it does not say anything about its being very hard; it says it is impossible, and we say that it would be utterly impossible, if such a case as is supposed were to happen; impossible for man, and also impossible for God; for God hath purposed that he never will grant a second salvation to save those whom the first salvation hath failed to deliver. Methinks, however, I hear some one say, "It seems to me that it is possible for some such to fall away," because it says, "It is impossible, if they shall fall away, to renew them again into repentance." Well, my friend, I will grant you your theory for a moment. You are a good Christian this morning; let us apply it to yourself, and see how you will like it. You have believed in Christ, and committed your soul to God, and you think, that in some unlucky hour you may fall entirely away. Mark you, if you come to me and tell me that you have fallen away, how would you like me to say to you, "My friend, you are as much damned as the devil in hell! for it is impossible to renew you to repentance?" "Oh! no, sir," you would say, "I will repent again and join the Church." That is just the Arminian theory all over; but it is not in God's Scripture. If you once fall away, you are as damned as any man who suffereth in the gulf for ever. And yet we have heard a man talk about people being converted three, four, and five times, and regenerated over and over again. I remember a good man (I suppose he was) pointing to a man who was walking along the street, and saying, "That man has been born again three times, to my certain knowledge." I could mention the name of the individual, but I refrain from doing so. "And I believe he will fall again," said he, "he is so much addicted to drinking, that I do not believe the grace of God will do anything for him, unless he becomes a teetotaller." Now, such men cannot read the Bible; because in case their members do positively fall away, here it is stated, as a positive fact, that it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance. But I ask my Arminian friend, does he not believe that as long as there is life there is hope? "Yes," he says:

"While the lamp holds out to burn,
The vilest sinner may return."

Well, that is not very consistent, to say this in the very next breath to that with which you tell us that there are some people who fall away, and consequently fall into such a condition, that they cannot be saved. I want to know how you make these two things fit each other; I want you to make these two doctrines agree; and until some enterprising individual will bring the north pole, and set it on the top of the south, I cannot tell how you will accomplish it. The fact is you are quite right in saying, "While there is life there is hope;" but you are wrong in saying that any individual ever did fall into such a condition, that it was impossible for him to be saved.

We come now to do two things: first, to prove the doctrine, that if a Christian fall away, he cannot be saved; and, secondly, to improve the doctrine, or to show its use,

I. Then I am going to prove the doctrine, that if a Christian fall away — not fall, for you understand how I have explained that; but if a Christian cease to be a child of God, and if grace die out in his heart — he is then beyond the possibility of salvation, and it is impossible for him ever to be renewed. Let me show you why. First, it is utterly impossible, if you consider the work which has already broken down. When men have built bridges across streams, if they have been built of the strongest material and in the most excellent manner, and yet the foundation has been found so bad that none will stand, what do they say? Why, "We have already tried the best which engineering or architecture has taught us; the best has already failed; we know nothing that can exceed what has been tried; and we do therefore feel, that there remains no possibility of ever bridging that stream, or ever running a line of railroad across this bog, or this morass, for we have already tried what is acknowledged to be the best scheme." As the apostle says, "These people have been once enlightened; they have had once the influence of the Holy Spirit, revealing to them their sin: what now remains to be tried. They have been once convinced — is there anything superior to conviction?" Does the Bible promise that the poor sinner shall have anything over and above the conviction of his sin to make him sensible of it? Is there anything more powerful than the sword of the Spirit? That has not pierced the man's heart; is there anything else which will do it? Here is a man who has been under the hammer of God's law; but that has not broken his heart; can you find anything stronger? The

lamp of God's spirit has already lit up the caverns of his soul: if that be not sufficient, where will you borrow another?Ask the sun, has he a lamp more bright than the illumination of the Spirit! Ask the stars, have they a light more brilliant than the light of the Holy Ghost? Creation answers no. If that fails, then there is nothing else. These people, moreover, had tasted the heavenly gift; and though they had been pardoned and justified, yet pardon through Christ and justification were not enough (on this supposition) to save them. How else can they be saved? God has cast them away; after he has failed in saving them by these, what else can deliver them? Already they have tasted of the heavenly gift: is there a greater mercy for them? Is there a brighter dress than the robe of Christ's righteousness? Is there a more efficacious bath than that "fountain filled with blood?" No. All the earth echoes, "No." If the one has failed, what else does there remain?

These persons, too, have been partakers of the Holy Ghost; if that fail, what more can we give them? If, my hearer, the Holy Ghost dwells in your soul, and that Holy Ghost does not sanctify you and keep you to the end, what else can be tried? Ask the blasphemer whether he knows a being, or dares to suppose a being superior to the Holy Spirit! Is there a being greater than Omnipotence? Is there a might greater than that which dwells in the believer's new-born heart? And if already the Holy Spirit hath failed, O, heavens! tell us where we can fight aught that can excel his might? If that be ineffectual, what next is to be essayed? These people, too, had "tasted the good Word of Life;" they had loved the doctrines of grace; those doctrines had entered into their souls, and they had fed upon them. What new doctrines shall be preached to them? Prophet of ages! where whilt thou find another system of divinity? Who shall we have? Shall we raise up Moses from the tomb? shall we fetch up all the ancient seers, and bid them prophecy? If, then, there is only one doctrine that is true, and if these people have fallen away after receiving that, how can they be saved?

Again, these people, according to the text, have had "the powers of the world to come." They have had power to conquer sin — power in faith, power in prayer, power of communion; with what greater power shall they be endowed? This has already failed; what next can be done? O ye angels! answer, what next! What other means remain? What else can avail,

if already the great things of salvation have been defeated? What else shall now be attempted? He hath been once saved; but yet it is supposed that he is lost. How, then, can he now be saved? Is there a supplementary salvation? is there something that shall overtop Christ, and be a Christ where Jesus is defeated.

And then the apostle says, that the greatness of their sin which they would incur, if they did fall away, would put them beyond the bounds of mercy. Christ died, and by his death he made an atonement for his own murderers; he made an atonement for those sins which crucified him once; but do we read that Christ will ever die for those who crucify him twice? But the Apostle tells us that if believers do fall away, they will "crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." Where, then, would be an atonement for that? He has died for me; What! though the sins of all the world were on my shoulders, still they only crucified him once, and that one crucifixion has taken all those sins away; but if I crucified him again, where would I find pardon? Could heavens, could earth, could Christ himself, with bowels full of love, point me to another Christ, show to me a second Calvary, give me a second Gethsemane? Ah! no! the very guilt itself would put us beyond the pale of hope, if we were to fall away?

Again, beloved, think what it would necessitate to save such a man. Christ has died for him once, yet he has fallen away and is lost; the Spirit has regenerated him once, and that regenerating work has been of no use. God has given him a new heart (I am only speaking, of course, on the supposition of the Apostle), he has put his law in that heart, yet he has departed from him, contrary to the promise that he should not; he has made him "like a shining light," but he did not "shine more and more unto the perfect day," he shone only unto blackness. What next? There must be a second incarnation, a second Calvary, a second Holy Ghost, a second regeneration, a second justification, although the first was finished and complete — in fact, I know not what. It would necessitate the upsetting of the whole kingdom of nature and grace, and it would, indeed, be a world turned upside down, if after the gracious Savior failed, he were to attempt the work again.

If you read the 7th verse, you will see that the Apostle calls nature in to his assistance. He says, "The earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh

oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned." Look! there is a field; the rain comes on it, and it brings forth good fruit. Well, then, there is God's blessing on it. But there is according to your supposition, another field, on which the same rain descends, which the same dew moistens; it has been ploughed and harrowed, as well as the other, and the husbandman has exercised all his craft upon it, and yet it is not fertile. Well, if the rain of heaven did not fertilize it, what next? Already all the arts of agriculture have been tried, every implement has been worn out on its surface, and yet it has been of no avail. What next? There remains nothing but that it shall be burnt and cursed — given up like the desert of Sahara, and resigned to destruction. So, my hearer, could it be possible that grace could work in thee, and then not affect thy salvation — that the influence of Divine grace could come down, like rain from heaven, and yet return unto God void, there could not be any hope for thee, for thou wouldst be "night unto cursing," and thine end would be "to be burned."

There is one idea which has occurred to us. It has struck us as a singular thing, that our friends should hold that men can be converted, made into new creatures, then fall away and be converted again. I am an old creature by nature; God creates me into a new thing, he makes me a new creature. I cannot go back into an old creature, for I cannot be uncreated. But yet, supposing that new creatureship of mine is not good enough to carry me to heaven. What is to come after that? Must there be something above a new creature — a new creature. Really, my friends, we have got into the country of Dreamland; but we were forced to follow our opponents into that region of absurdity, for we do not know how else to deal with them.

And one thought more. There is nothing in Scripture which teaches us that there is any salvation, save the one salvation of Jesus Christ — nothing that tells us of any other power, super-excellent and surpassing the power of the Holy Spirit. These things have already been tried on the man, and yet, according to the supposition, they have failed, for he has fallen away. Now, God has never revealed a supplementary salvation for men on whom one salvation has had no effect; and until we are pointed to one scripture which declares this, we will still maintain that the doctrine of the text is this: that if grace be ineffectual, if grace does not keep a man, then there is

nothing left but that he must be damned. And what is that but to say, only going a little round about, that grace will do it? So that these words, instead of miltating against the Calvinistic doctrine of final perseverance, form one of the finest proofs of it that could be afforded.

And now, lastly, we come to improve this doctrine. If Christians can fall away, and cease to be Christians, they cannot be renewed again to repentance. "But," says one, "You say they cannot fall away." What is the use of putting this "if" in, like a bugbear to frighten children, or like a ghost that can have no existence? My learned friend, "Who art thou that repliest against God?" If God has put it in, he has put it in for wise reasons and for excellent purposes. Let me show you why. First, O Christian, it is put in to keep thee from falling away. God preserves his children from falling away; but he keeps them by the use of means; and one of these is, the terrors of the law, showing them what would happen if they were to fall away. There is a deep precipice: what is the best way to keep any one from going down there? Why, to tell him that if he did he would inevitably be dashed to pieces. In some old castle there is a deep cellar, where there is a vast amount of fixed air and gas, which would kill anybody who went down. What does the guide say? "If you go down you will never come up alive." Who thinks of going down? The very fact of the guide telling us what the consequences would be, keeps us from it. Our friend puts away from us a cup of arsenic; he does not want us to drink it, but he says, "If you drink it, it will kill you." Does he suppose for a moment that we should drink it. No; he tells us the consequences, and he is sure we will not do it. So God says, "My child, if you fall over this precipice you will be dashed to pieces." What does the child do? He says, "Father, keep me; hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." It leads the believer to greater dependence on God, to a holy fear and caution, because he knows that if he were to fall away he could not be renewed, and he stands far away from that great gulf, because he know that if he were to fall into it there would be no salvation for him. If I thought as the Arminian thinks, that I might fall away, and then return again, I should pretty often fall away, for sinful flesh and blood would think it very nice to fall away, and be a sinner, and go and see the play at the theater, or get drunk, and then come back to the Church, and be received again as a dear brother who had fallen away for a little while. No doubt the minister would say, "Our brother Charles is a

little unstable at times.” A little unstable! He does not know anything about grace; for grace engenders a holy caution, because we feel that if we were not preserved by Divine power we should perish. We tell our friend to put oil in his lamp, that it may continue to burn! Does that imply that it will be allowed to go out? No, God will give him oil to pour into the lamp continually. Like John Bunyan’s figure; there was a fire, and he saw a man pouring water upon it. “Now,” says the Preacher, “don’t you see that fire would go out, that water is calculated to put it out, and if it does, it will never be lighted again;” but God does not permit that! for there is a man behind the wall who is pouring oil on the fire; and we have cause for gratitude in the fact, that if the oil were not put in by a heavenly hand, we should inevitably be driven to destruction. Take care, then Christian, for this is a caution.

2. It is to excite our gratitude. Suppose you say to your little boy, “Don’t you know Tommy, if I were not to give you your dinner and your supper you would die? There is nobody else to give Tommy dinner and supper.” What then? The child does not think that you are not going to give him his dinner and supper; he knows you will, and he is grateful to you for them. The chemist tells us, that if there were no oxygen mixed with the air, animals would die. Do you suppose that there will be no oxygen, and therefore we shall die? No, he only teaches you the great wisdom of God, in having mixed the gases in their proper proportions. Says one of the old astronomers, “There is great wisdom in God, that he has put the sun exactly at a right distance — not so far away that we should be frozen to death, and not so near that we should be scorched.” He says, “If the sun were a million miles nearer to us we should be scorched to death.” Does the man suppose that the sun will be a million miles nearer, and, therefore, we shall be scorched to death? He says, “If the sun were a million miles farther off we should be frozen to death.” Does he mean that the sun will be a million miles farther off, and therefore we shall be frozen to death? Not at all. Yet it is quite a rational way of speaking, to show us how grateful we should be to God. So says the Apostle. Christian! if thou shouldst fall away, thou couldst never be renewed unto repentance. Thank thy Lord, then, that he keeps thee.

“See a stone that hangs in air; see a spark in ocean live;
Kept alive with death so near; I to God the glory give.”

There is a cup of sin which would damn thy soul, O Christian. Oh! what grace is that which holds thy arm, and will not let thee drink it? There thou art, at this hour, like the bird-catcher of St. Kilda, thou art being drawn to heaven by a single rope; if that hand which holds thee let thee go, if that rope which grasps thee do but break, thou art dashed on the rocks of damnation. Lift up thine heart to God, then, and bless him that his arm is not wearied, and is never shortened that it cannot save. Lord Kenmure, when he was dying, said to Rutherford. “Man! my name is written on Christ’s hand, and I see it! that is bold talk, man, but I see it!” Then, if that be the case, his hand must be severed from his body before my name can be taken from him; and if it be engraven on his heart, his heart must be rent out before they can rend my name out.

Hold on, then, and trust believer! thou hast “an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, which entereth within the veil.” The winds are bellowing, the tempests howling; should the cable slip, or thine anchor break, thou art lost. See those rocks, on which myriads are driving, and thou art wrecked there if grace leave thee; see those depths, in which the skeletons of sailors sleep, and thou art there, if that anchor fail thee. It would be impossible to moor thee again, if once that anchor broke; for other anchor there is none, other salvation there can be none, and if that one fail thee, it is impossible that thou ever shouldst be saved. Therefore thank God that thou hast an anchor that cannot fail, and then loudly sing —

“How can I sink with such a prop,
As my eternal God,
Who bears the earth’s huge pillars up?
And spreads the heavens abroad?”
How can I die, when Jesus lives,
Who rose and left the dead?
Pardon and grace my soul receives,
From my exalted head.”

GOSPEL MISSIONS

SERMON NO. 76

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 27, 1856,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

On behalf of the Baptist Missionary Society.

"And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region." — Acts 13:49.

I shall not confine myself to the text. It begin an old custom to take texts when we preach, I have taken one, but I shall address you, at large, upon a subject which I am sure will occupy your attention, and has done for many days and years past — the subject of gospel missions. We feel persuaded that all of you are of one mind in this matter, that it is the absolute duty as well as the eminent privilege of the Church to proclaim the gospel to the world. We do not conceive that God will do his own work without instruments, but that, as he has always employed means in the work of the regeneration of this world, he will still continue to do the same, and that it becomes the Church to do its utmost to spread the truth wherever it can reach the ear of man. We have not two opinions on that point. Some churches may have, but we have not. Our doctrines, although they are supposed to lead to apathy and sloth, have always proved themselves to be eminently practical; the fathers of the mission were all zealous lovers of the doctrines of the grace of God; and we believe, the great supporters of missionary enterprise, if it is to be successful, must always come from those who hold God's truth firmly and boldly, and yet have fire and zeal with it, and desire to spread it everywhere. But there is a point on which we have great division of opinion, and that is as to the reason why we have had so little success in our missionary labors. There may be some who say the success has been proportionate to the agency, and that we could not have been more successful. I am far from being of their opinion, and I do not think they themselves would express it on their knees before Almighty

God. We have not been successful to the extent we might have expected, certainly not to an apostolic extent, certainly with nothing like the success of Paul or Peter, or even of those imminent men who have preceded us in modern times, and who were able to evangelize whole countries, turning thousands to God. Now, what is the reason of this? Perhaps we may turn our eyes on high, and think we find that reason in the sovereignty of God, which hath withholden his Spirit, and hath not poured out his grace as aforetime. I shall be prepared to grant all men may say on that point, for I believe in the ordination of everything by Almighty God. I believe in a present God in our defeats as well as in our successes; a God as well in the motionless air as in the careering tempest; a God of ebbs as well as a God of floods. But still we must look at home for the cause. When Zion travails, she brings forth children; when Zion is in earnest, God is in earnest about his work; when Zion is prayerful, God blesses her. We must not, therefore, arbitrarily look for the cause of our failure in the will of God, but we must also see what is the difference between ourselves and the men of Apostolic times, and what it is that renders our success so trifling in comparison with the tremendous results of Apostolic preaching. I think I shall be able to show one or two reasons why our holy faith is not so prosperous as it was then. In the first place, we have not Apostolic men; in the second place, they do not set about their work in an Apostolic style; in the third place, we have not Apostolic churches to back them up; and in the fourth place, we have not the Apostolic influence of the Holy Ghost.

I. in the measure which they had it in ancient times.

1. First, WE HAVE FEW APOSTOLIC MEN IN THESE TIMES. I will not say we have none; here and there we may have one or two, but unhappily their names are never heard; they do not start out before the world, and are not noted as preachers of God’s truth. We had a Williams once, a true apostle, who went from island to island, not counting his life dear unto him; but Williams is called to his reward. We had a Knibb, who toiled for his Master with seraphic earnestness, and was not ashamed to call an oppressed slave his brother; but Knibb, too, has entered into his rest. We have one or two still remaining, precious and treasured names; we love them fervently, and our prayers shall ever rise to heaven on their behalf. We always say, in our prayers, “God bless such men as Moffat! God

bless those who are earnestly toiling and successfully laboring!" But cast your eyes around, and where can we find many such men? They are all good men; we find no fault with them; they are better than we; we, ourselves, shrink into nothingness compared with them; but we must still say of them that they are less than their fathers, they differ from the mighty Apostles in many respects, which we think even they would not be slow to own. I am not speaking of missionaries only, but of ministers too; for I take it we have as much to mourn over in regard to the spread of the gospel in England as in foreign lands, and much to regret the lack of men filled with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

In the first place, we have not men with Apostolic zeal. Converted in a most singular way, by a direct interposition from heaven, Paul, from that time forward became an earnest man. He had always been earnest, in his sin and in his persecutions; but after he heard that voice from heaven, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" and had received the mighty office of an apostle, and had been sent forth a chosen vessel to the Gentiles, you can scarce conceive the deep, the awful earnestness which he manifested. Whether he did eat, or drink, or whatsoever he did, he did all for the glory of his God; he never wasted an hour; he was employing his time either in ministering with his own hands unto his necessities, or else lifting those hands in the Synagogue, on Mars-hill, or anywhere where he could command the attention of the multitude. His zeal was so earnest, and so burning, that he could not (as we unfortunately do) restrain himself within a little sphere; but he preached the Word everywhere. It was not enough for him to have it handed down that he was the Apostle of Pisidia, but he must go also to Pamphylia; it was not enough that he should be the great preacher of Pamphylia and Pisidia, but he must go also to Attalia; and when he had preached throughout all Asia, he must needs take ship to Greece, and preach there also. I believe not once only did Paul hear in his dream the men of Macedonia saying, "Come over and help us," but every day and hour he heard the cry in his ears from multitudes of souls, "Paul, Paul, come over and help us." He could not restrain himself from preaching. "Woe is unto me" he said "if I preach not the gospel. God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Christ." Oh! if you could have seen Paul preach, you would not have gone away as you do from some of us, with half a conviction, that we do not mean what we say. His

eyes preached a sermon without his lips, and his lips preached it, not in a cold and frigid manner, but every word fell with an overwhelming power upon the hearts of his hearers. He preached with power, because he was in downright earnest. You had a conviction, when you saw him, that he was a man who felt he had a work to do and must do it, and could not contain himself unless he did do it. He was the kind of preacher whom you would expect to see walk down the pulpit stairs straight into his coffin, and then stand before his God, ready for his last account. Where are the men like that man? I confess I cannot claim that privilege, and I seldom hear a solitary sermon which comes up to the mark in earnest, deep, passionate longing for the souls of men.

We have no eyes now like the eyes of the Savior, which could weep over Jerusalem; we have few voices like that earnest impassioned voice which seemed perpetually to cry, “Come unto me, and I will give you rest.” “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not.” If ministers of the gospel were more hearty in their work of preaching; if, instead of giving lectures and devoting a large part of their time to literary and political pursuits, they would preach the Word of God, and preach it as if they were pleading for their own lives, ah! then, my brethren, we might expect great success; but we cannot expect it while we go about our work in a half-hearted way, and have not that zeal, that earnestness, that deep purpose which characterized those men of old.

Then, again, I take it we have not men in our days who can preach like Paul — as to their faith. What did Paul do? He went to Philippi; did he know a soul there? Not one. He had his Master’s truth, and he believed in the power of it. He was unattended and devoid of pomp, or show, or parade; he did not go to a pulpit with a soft cushion in it to address a respectable congregation, but he walked through the streets and began to preach to the people. He went to Corinth, to Athens, alone, single-handed, to tell the people the gospel of the blessed God. Why? Because he had faith in the gospel and believed it would save souls, and hurl down idols from their thrones. He had no doubt about the power of the gospel; but now-a-days, my brethren, we have not faith in the gospel we preach. How many there are who preach gospel, which they are afraid will not save souls; and, therefore, they add little bits of their own to it in order, as they

think, to win men to Christ! We have known men who believed Calvinistic doctrines, but who preached Calvinism in the morning and Arminianism in the evening, because they were afraid God's gospel would not convert sinners, so they would manufacture one of their own. I hold that a man who does not believe his gospel to be able to save men's souls, does not believe it all. If God's truth will not save men's souls, man's lies cannot; if God's truth will not turn men to repentance, I am sure there is nothing in this world that can. When we believe the gospel to be powerful, then we shall see it is powerful. If I walk into this pulpit, and say, "I know what I preach is true," the world says I am an egotist. "The young man is dogmatical." Ay, and the young man means to be; he glories in it, he keeps it to himself as one of his peculiar titles, for he does most firmly believe what he preaches. God forbid that I should ever come tottering up the pulpit stairs to teach anything I was not quite sure of, something which I hoped might save sinners, but of which I was not exactly certain. When I have faith in my doctrines, those doctrines will prevail, for confidence is the winner of the palm. He who hath courage enough to grasp the standard, and hold it up, will be sure enough to find followers. He who says, "I know," and asserts it boldly in his Master's name, without disputing, will not be long before he will find men who will listen to what he says, and who will say, "This man speaks with authority, and not as the Scribes and Pharisees." That is one reason why we do not succeed: we have not faith in the gospel. We send educated men to India in order to confound the learned Brahmins. Nonsense! Let the Brahmins say what they like, have we any business to dispute with them? "Oh, but they are so intellectual and so clever." What have we to do with that? We are not to seek to be clever in order to meet them. Leave the men of the world to combat their metaphysical errors; we have merely to say, "This is truth: he that believeth it shall be saved, and he that denieth it shall be damned." We have no right to come down from the high ground of divine authoritative testimony; and until we maintain that ground, and come out as we ought to do, girded with the belt of divinity — preaching not what may be true, but asserting that which God has most certainly revealed — we shall not see success. We want a deeper faith in our gospel; we want to be quite sure of what we preach. Brethren, I take it we have not the faith of our fathers. I feel myself a poor drivelling thing in point of faith. Why, methought sometimes I could believe anything; but now a little difficulty comes

before me, I am timid, and I fear. It is when I preach with unbelief in my heart that I preach unsuccessfully; but when I preach with faith and can say, "I know my God has said, that in the self-same hour he will give me what I shall preach, and careless of man's esteem, I preach what I believe to be true," then it is that God owns faith and crowns it with his own crown.

Again: we have not enough self-denial, and that is one reason why we do not prosper. Far be it from me to say aught against the self-denial of those worthy brethren who have left their country to cross the stormy deep and preach the Word. We hold them to be men who are to be had in honor; but still I ask, where is the self-denial of the Apostles now-a-days? I think one of the greatest disgraces that ever was cast upon the church in these days was that last mission to Ireland. Men went over to Ireland, but like men who have valour's better part, brave bold men, they came back again, which is about all we can say of the matter. Why do they not go there again? Why, they say the Irish "hooted" at them. Now, don't you think you see Paul taking a microscope out of his pocket, and looking at the little man who should say to him, "I shall not go there to preach because the Irish hooted me?" "What!" he says, "is this a preacher? — what a small edition of a minister he must be, to be sure!" "Oh! but they threw stones at us; you have no idea how badly they treated us!" Just tell that to the Apostle Paul. I am sure you would be ashamed to do so. "Oh! but in some places the police interfered, and said that we should only create a riot." What would Paul have said to that? The police interfering! I did not know that we had any right to care about governments. Our business is to preach the Word, and if we must be put in the stocks there let us lie; there would come no hurt of it at last. "Oh! but they might have killed some of us." That is just it. Where is that zeal which counted not its life dear so that it might win Christ? I believe that the killing of a few of our ministers would have prospered Christianity. However we might mourn over it, and none more than myself, I say the murder of a dozen of them would have been no greater ground for grief than the slaughter of our men by hundreds in a successful fight for hearths and homes. I would count my own blood most profitably shed in so holy a struggle. How did the gospel prosper aforetime? Were there not some who laid down their lives for it; and did not others walk to victory over their slain bodies; and must it not be so

now? If we are to start back because we are afraid of being killed, heaven knows when the gospel is to spread over the world — we do not. What have other missionaries done? Have they not braved death in its direst forms, and preached the Word amid countless dangers? My brethren, we say again, we find no fault, for we, ourselves, might err in the same manner; but we are sure we are therein not like Paul. He went to a place where they stoned him with stones, and dragged him out as dead. Did he say, "Now for the future I will not go where they will ill-treat me?" No, for he says, "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, thrice I suffered shipwreck." I am sure we have not the self-denial of the Apostles. We are mere carpet-knights and Hyde-park-warriors. When I go to my own house and think how comfortable and happy I am, I say to myself, "How little I do for my Master! I am ashamed that I cannot deny myself for his truth, and go everywhere preaching his Word." I look with pity upon people who say "Do not preach so often; you will kill yourself." O my God! what would Paul have said to such a thing as that? "Take care of your constitution; you are rash; you are enthusiastic." When I compare myself with one of those men of old, I say, "Oh that men should be found calling themselves Christians, who seek to stop our work of faith and labor of love, for the sake of a little consideration about the 'constitution,' which gets all the stronger for the preaching of God's Word."

But I hear some one whispering, "You ought to make a little allowance." My dear friend, I make all allowance. I am not finding fault with those brethren; they are a good sort of people; we are "all honorable men;" but I will only say, that in comparison with Paul, we are less than nothing, and vanity; little insignificant Lilliputian creatures, who can hardly be seen in comparison with those gigantic men of old.

Ones of my hearers may perhaps hint that this is not the sole cause, and he observes, "I think you ought to make excuse, for ministers now cannot work miracles." Well, I have considered that too, and certainly it is a drawback, but, I take it, not a very great one; for if it had been, God would not have allowed it to exist. He gave that gift to the Church in its infancy, but now it needs it no longer. We mistake in attributing too much to miracles. What was one of them? Wherever the Apostles went they could speak the language of the people. Well, in the time it would have taken

Paul to walk from here to Hindostan, we could learn Hindostani, and we can go over in a very little time by the means of travelling that are now provided: so that is no great gain there. Then, again, in order to make the gospel known amongst the people, it was necessary that miracles should be worked, so that every one might talk about it; but now there is a printing press to aid us. What I say to-day, within six months will be read across the Alleghanies; and so with other ministers, what they say and what they do can soon be printed off and distributed everywhere; so they have facilities for making themselves known which are not much behind the power of miracles. Again, we have a great advantage over the Apostles. Wherever they went they were persecuted, and sometimes put to death; but now, although occasionally we hear of the massacre of a missionary, the occurrence is rare enough. The slaughter of an Englishman anywhere would provoke a fleet of men-of-war to visit the offense with chastisement. The world respects an Englishman wherever he goes; he has the stamp of the great Caesar upon him; he is the true cosmopolite — the citizen of the world. That could not be said of the poor despised Jews. There might be some respect paid to Paul, for he was a Roman citizen, but there would be none paid to the rest. We cannot be put to death now without a noise being made. The murder of two or three ministers in Ireland would provoke a tumult through the country; the government would have to interpose, the orderly of the land would be up in arms, and then we might preach with an armed constabulary around us, and so go through the land, provoking the priests, startling antichrist, and driving superstition to its dens for ever.

II. In the second place, WE DO NOT GO ABOUT OUR WORK IN AN APOSTOLIC STYLE. How is that? Why, in the first place, there is a general complaint that there is not enough preaching by ministers and missionaries. They sit down interpreting, establishing schools, and doing this, that, and the other. We have nothing to find fault with in this; but that is not the labor to which they should devote themselves; their office is preaching, and if they preached more, they might hope for more success. The missionary Chamberlain preached once at a certain place, and years afterwards disciples were found there from that one sermon. Williams preached wherever he went, and God blessed him; Moffat preached wherever he went, and his labors were owned. Now we have our churches,

our printing-presses, about which a great deal of money is spent. This is doing good, but it is not doing the good. We are not using the means which God has ordained, and we cannot therefore expect to prosper. Some say there is too much preaching now-a-days, in England. Well, it is the tendency of the times to decry preaching, but it is “the foolishness of preaching” which is to change the world. It is not for men to say, “If you preached less, you might study more.” Study is required well enough if you have a settled church; but the Apostles needed no study, I apprehend, but they stood up and delivered out the simple cardinal truths of religion, not taking one text, but going through the whole catalogue of truth. So I think, in itinerant evangelical labors, we are not bound to dwell on one subject, for then we need to study, but we shall find it profitable to deal out the whole truth wherever we go. Thus we should always find words to hand, and truths ever ready to teach the people.

In the next place I conceive that a great mistake has been made in not affirming the divinity of our mission, and standing fast by the truth, as being a revelation not to be proved by men, but to be believed; always holding out this, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.” I am often grieved when I read of our missionaries holding disputes with the Brahmins, and it is sometimes said that the missionary has beaten the Brahmin because he kept his temper, and so the gospel had gained great honor by the dispute. I take it that the gospel was lowered by the controversy. I think the missionary should say, “I am come to tell you something which the One God of heaven and earth hath said, and I tell you before I announce it, that if you believe it you shall be saved, and if not, you shall be damned. I am come to tell you that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became flesh, to die for poor unworthy man, that through his mediation, and death, and suffering, the people of God might be delivered. Now, if you will listen to me you shall hear the word of God: if you do not, I shake the dust of my feet against you, and go somewhere else.” Look at the history of every imposture; it shows us that the claim of authority insures a degree of progress. How did Mahommed come to have so strong a religion in his time? He was all alone, and he went into the market-place and said, “I have received a revelation from heaven.” It was a lie, but he persuaded men to believe it. People looked at his face; they saw that he looked upon them earnestly as believing what he said,

and some five or six of them joined him. Did he prove what he said? Not he. “You must,” he said, “believe what I say, or there is no Paradise for you.” There is power in that kind of thing, and wherever he went his statement was believed, not on the ground of reasoning, but on his authority, which he declared to be from Allah; and in a century after he first proclaimed his imposture, a thousand sabres had flashed from a thousand sheaths, and his word had been proclaimed through Africa, Turkey, Asia, and even in Spain. The man claimed authority — he claimed divinity; therefore he had power. Take again the increase of Mormonism. What has been its strength? Simply this — the assertion of power from heaven. That claim is made, and the people believe it, and now they have missionaries in almost every country of the habitable globe, and the book of Mormon is translated into many languages. Though there never could be a delusion more transparent, or a counterfeit less skillful, and more lying upon the very surface, yet this simple pretension to power has been the means of carrying power with it. Now, my brethren, we have power; we are God’s ministers; we preach God’s truth; the great Judge of heaven and earth has told us the truth, and what have we to do to dispute with worms of the dust? Why should we tremble and fear them? Let us stand out and say, “We are the servants of the living God; we tell unto you what God has told us, and we warn you, if you reject our testimony, it shall be better for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.” If the people cast that away we have done our work. We have nothing to do with making men believe; ours is to testify of Christ everywhere, to preach and to proclaim the gospel to all men.

But there is one passage in the Bible which seems to militate against what I have said, if the common translation be true — the passage which says that Paul “disputed in the school of one Tyrannus.” But this is better rendered in English, he “dialogued in the school of one Tyrannous.” Albert Barnes says, that “disputed is not a happy translation,” for there is no such idea conveyed by the word. Jesus, when he preached, “dialogued.” When the man came and said to him, “Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” he “dialogued” with him. When another said unto him, “Speak, Lord, unto my brother, that he divide with me the inheritance,” Christ did not dispute with him, but he “dialogued.” His usual style was to address the people, and but rarely to dispute with men. We might give up

all the books that have been written in defense of Christianity if we would but preach Christ, if, instead of defending the outposts, we were to say, "God will take care of them," and were at once to make a sortie on the enemy; then by God's Holy Spirit we should carry everything before us. O, Church of God! believe thyself invincible, and thou art invincible; but stay to tremble, and fear, and thou art undone. Lift up thy head and say, "I am God's daughter; I am Christ's bride." Do not stop to prove it, but affirm it; march through the land, and kings and princes shall bow down before thee, because thou hast taken thine ancient prowess and assumed thine ancient glory.

I have one more remark to make here with regard to the style in which we go to work. I fear that we have not enough of the divine method of itinerancy. Paul was a great itinerant: he preached in one place, and there were twelve converted there; he made a church at once; he did not stop till he had five hundred; but when he had twelve, he went off to another place. A holy woman takes him in; she has a son and daughter; they are saved and baptized — there is another church. Then he goes on; wherever he goes the people believe and are baptized, wherever he meets a family who believe, he or his companion baptizes all the house, and goes about his way still forming churches and appointing elders over them. We, now-a-days, go and settle in a place, make a station of it, and work around it by little and little, and think that is the way to succeed. No, no! ravage a continent; attempt great things and great things shall be done. But they say if you just pass over a place it will be forgotten like the summer shower, which moistens all, but satisfies none. Yes, but you do not know how many of God's elect may be there; you have no business to stop in one place; go straight on; God's elect are everywhere. I protest if I could not itinerate this country of England, I could not bear to preach. If I preached here always, many of you would become gospel hardened. I love to go ranging here, there, and everywhere. My highest ambition is this, that I may be found going through the entire land, as well as holding my head quarters in one position. I do hold that itinerancy is God's great plan. There should be fixed ministers and pastors, but those who are like apostles should itinerate far more than they do.

III. But I have a third thing to say which will strike home to some of us: that is, that WE HAVE NOT APOSTOLIC CHURCHES. Oh! had you seen an

Apostolic church, what a different thing it would appear to one of our churches! as different, I had almost said, as light from darkness, as different as the shallow bed of the brook that is dried by summer is from the mighty rolling river, ever full, ever deep and clear, and ever rushing into the sea. Now, where is our prayerfulness compared with theirs? I trust that we know something of the power of prayer here, but I do not think we pray like they did. “They broke bread from house to house, and did eat their meat with singleness of heart, giving glory to God.” There was not a member of the Church, as a rule, who was half-hearted; they gave their souls wholly to God; and when Anaias and Sapphira divided the price, they were smitten with death for their sin. Oh! if we prayed as deeply and as earnestly as they did, we should have as much success. Any measure of success we may have had here has been entirely owing under God to your prayers; and wherever I have gone, I have boasted that I have a praying people. Let other ministers have as prayerful a people; let missionaries have as many prayers from the Church, and, all things being equal, God will bless them, and there will be greater prosperity than ever.

We have not the Apostolic mode of liberality. In the Apostles’ days they gave all their substance. It was not demanded of them then, and it is not now, no one thinks of asking such a thing; still we have run to the other extreme, and many give nothing at all. Men who have thousands and tens of thousands are so eternally considerate for their families, albeit they are provided for, that they give nothing more than the servant girl who sits next to them. It is a common saying, that members of Christian Churches do not give in proportion to their wealth. We give because it is genteel and respectable. A great many of us give I hope, because we love the cause of God; but many of us say, “There is a poor bricklayer, working hard all the week and only earning just enough to keep his wife and family: he will give a shilling; now, I have so many pounds a week — I am a rich man — what shall I give? why, I will give half-a-crown.” Another says, “I will give ten shillings this morning.” Now, if they measured their wealth in comparison with his, they would see that he gives all he has left above his maintenance, while they give comparatively nothing. My brethren, we are not half Christians; that is the reason why we have not half success. We are Christianised, but I question whether we are thoroughly so. The Spirit of

God hath not entered into us to give us that life, and fire, and soul, which they had in these ancient times.

IV. But lastly, as the result of the other things which have gone before, and perhaps partly as the cause of them too, WE HAVE NOT THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THAT MEASURE WHICH ATTENDED THE APOSTLES. I see no reason whatever, why, this morning, if God willed it, I should not stand up and preach a sermon which should be the means of converting every soul in the place. I see no reason why I should not, tomorrow, preach a sermon which should be the means of the salvation of all who heard it, if God the Spirit were poured out. The word is able to convert, just as extensively as God the Spirit pleases to apply it; and I can see no reason why, if converts come in by ones and twos now, there should not be a time when hundreds and thousands shall come to God. The same sermon which God blesses to ten if he pleased he could bless to a hundred. I know not but that in the latter days when Christ shall come and shall begin to take the kingdom to himself, every minister of God shall be as successful as Peter on the day of Pentecost. I am sure the Holy Spirit is able to make the word successful, and the reason why we do not prosper is that we have not the Holy Spirit attending us with might and energy as they had then. My brethren, if we had the Holy Spirit upon our ministry, it would signify very little about our talent. Men might be poor and uneducated; their words might be broken and ungrammatical; there might be no polished periods of Hall, or glorious thunders of Chalmers; but if there were the might of the Spirit attending them, the humblest evangelists would be more successful than the most pompous of divines, or the most eloquent of preachers. It is extraordinary grace, not talent, that wins the day; extraordinary spiritual power, not extraordinary mental power. Mental power may fill a chapel; but spiritual power fills the Church. Mental power may gather a congregation; spiritual power will save souls. We want spiritual power. Oh! we know some before whom we shrink into nothing as to talent, but who have no spiritual power, and when they speak they have not the Holy Spirit with them; but we know others, simple hearted worthy men who speak their country dialect, and who stand up to preach in their country place, and the Spirit of God clothes every word with power; hearts are broken, souls are saved, and sinners are born again. Spirit of the living God! we want thee. Thou art the life, the soul; thou art the source of

thy people's success; without thee they can do nothing, with thee they can do everything.

Thus I have tried to show you what I conceive to be the causes of our partial non-success. And now permit me, with all earnestness, to plead with you on behalf of Christ and Christ's Holy Gospel, that you would stir yourselves up to renewed efforts for the spread of his truth, and to more earnest prayers, that his kingdom may come, and his will be done on earth even as it is in heaven. Ah! my friends, could I show you the tens of thousands of spirits who are now walking in outer darkness; could I take you to the gloomy chamber of hell, and show you myriads upon myriads of heathen souls in utterable torture, not having heard the word, but being justly condemned for their sins; methinks you could ask yourselves, "Did I do anything to save these unhappy myriads? They have been damned, and can I say I am clear of their blood?" Oh! God of mercy, if these skirts be clear of my fellow creatures' blood, I shall have eternal reason to bless thee in heaven. Oh! Church of Christ! thou hast great reason to ask thyself whether thou art quite clean in this matter. Ye say too often, ye sons of God, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Ye are too much like Cain; ye do not ask yourselves whether God will require your fellow-creatures blood at your hands. Oh! there is a truth which says, "If the watchman warn them not, they shall perish, but their blood will he require at the watchman's hands." Ah! there ought to be more of us who are preaching to the heathen, and yet, perhaps, we are indolent and doing little or nothing. There are many of you, yea all of you, who ought to be doing far more than you are for evangelical purposes and the spread of Christ's gospel. Oh! put this question to your hearts; shall I be able to say to the damned spirit if he meets me in hell, "Sinner, I did all I could for thee?" I am afraid some will have to say, "No, I did not; it is true I might have done more; I might have labored more, even though I might have been unsuccessful, but I did not do it." AH, my dear friends, I believe there is a great reason for some of us to suspect whether we believe our religion at all. An infidel once met a Christian. "Because," said the other, "for years you have passed me on my way to my house of business. You believe, do you not, there is a hell, into which men's spirit are cast?" "Yes, I do," said the Christian. "And you believe that unless I believe in Christ I must be sent there?" "Yes." "You do not, I am sure, because if you did you must be a most inhuman wretch

to pass me, day by day, and never tell me about it or warn me of it." I do hold that there are some Christians who are verily guilty in this matter; God will forgive them, the blood of Christ can even wash that out, but they are guilty. Did you ever think of the tremendous value of a single soul. My hearers, if there were but one man in Siberia unsaved, and all the world were saved besides, if God should move our minds, it would be worth while for all the people in England to go after that one soul. Did you ever think of the value of a soul? Ah! ye have not heart the howls and yells of hell; ye have not heard the mighty songs and hosannas of the glorified; ye have no notion of what eternity is, or else ye would know the value of a soul. Ye who have been broken by conviction, humbled by the Spirit, and led to cry for mercy through the covenant Jesus; ye know something of what a soul's value is, but many of my hearers do not. Could we preach carelessly, could we pray coldly, if we knew what a precious thing it is about which we are concerned? No, surely we should be doubly in earnest that God will please to save sinners. I am sure the present state of affairs cannot go on long; we are doing next to nothing; Christianity is at a low ebb. People think it will never be much better; that it is clear impossible to do wonders in these days. Are we in a worse condition than the Roman Catholic nations were when one man, a Luther, preached? Then God can find a Luther now. We are not in a much worse state than when Whitfield began to preach, and yet God can find his Whitfields now. It is a delusion to suppose that we cannot succeed as they did. God helping us we will; God helping us by his Spirit we will see greater things than this, at any rate, we will never let God's Church rest if we do not see it prosper, but we will enter our earnest hearty protest against the coldness and lethargy of the times, and as long as this our tongue shall move in our mouth, we will protest against the laxity and false doctrine so rampant throughout the Churches, and then that happy double reformation — a reformation in doctrine and Spirit, will be brought about together. Then God knoweth but what we shall say, "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows," and ere long the shout of Christ shall be heard. He, himself, shall descend from heaven; and we shall hear it said and sung, "Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY

SERMON NO. 77

DELIVERED ON THE SABBATH MORNING, MAY 4, 1856,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? — Matthew 20:15.

The householder says, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" and even so does the God of heaven and earth ask this question of you this morning. "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" There is no attribute of God more comforting to his children than the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty. Under the most adverse circumstances, in the most severe troubles, they believe that Sovereignty hath ordained their afflictions, that Sovereignty overrules them, and that Sovereignty will sanctify them all. There is nothing for which the children of God ought more earnestly to contend than the dominion of their Master over all creation — the kingship of God over all the works of his own hands — the throne of God, and his right to sit upon that throne. On the other hand, there is no doctrine more hated by worldlings, no truth of which they have made such a foot-ball, as the great, stupendous, but yet most certain doctrine of the Sovereignty of the infinite Jehovah. Men will allow God to be everywhere except on his throne. They will allow him to be in his workshop to fashion worlds and to make stars. They will allow him to be in his almonry to dispense his alms and bestow his bounties. They will allow him to sustain the earth and bear up the pillars thereof, or light the lamps of heaven, or rule the waves of the ever-moving ocean; but when God ascends his throne, his creatures then gnash their teeth; and when we proclaim an enthroned God, and his right to do as he wills with his own, to dispose of his creatures as he thinks well, without consulting them in the matter, then it is that we are hissed and execrated, and then it is that men turn a deaf ear to us, for God on his throne is not the God they love. They love him anywhere better than they do when he sits with his scepter in his

hand and his crown upon his head. But it is God upon the throne that we love to preach. It is God upon his throne whom we trust. It is God upon his throne of whom we have been singing this morning; and it is God upon his throne of whom we shall speak in this discourse. I shall dwell only, however, upon one portion of God's Sovereignty, and that is God's Sovereignty in the distribution of his gifts. In this respect I believe he has a right to do as he wills with his own, and that he exercises that right.

We must assume, before we commence our discourse, one thing certain, namely, that all blessings are gifts and that we have no claim to them by our own merit. This I think every considerate mind will grant. And this being admitted, we shall endeavor to show that he has a right, seeing they are his own to do what he wills with them — to withhold them wholly is he pleaseth — to distribute them all if he chooseth — to give to some and not to others — to give to none or to give to all, just as seemeth good in his sight. "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?"

We shall divide God's gifts into five classes. First, we shall have gifts temporal; second, gifts saving; third gifts honorable; fourth, gifts useful; and fifth, gifts comfortable. Of all these we shall say, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?"

I. In the first place then, we notice GIFTS TEMPORAL. It is an indisputable fact that God hath not, in temporal matters, given to every man alike; that he hath not distributed to all his creatures the same amount of happiness or the same standing in creation. There is a difference. Mark what a difference there is in men personally (for we shall consider men chiefly); one is born like Saul, a head and shoulders taller than the rest — another shall live all his life a Zaccheus — a man short of stature. One has a muscular frame and a share of beauty — another is weak, and far from having anything styled, comeliness. How many do we find whose eyes have never rejoiced in the sunlight, whose ears have never listened to the charms of music, and whose lips have never been moved to sounds intelligible or harmonious. Walk through the earth and you will find men superior to yourself in vigor, health, and fashion, and others who are your inferiors in the very same respects. Some here are preferred far above their fellows in their outward appearance, and some sink low in the scale and have nothing about them that can make them glory in the flesh. Why hath

God given to one man beauty and to another none? to one all his senses, and to another but a portion? why, in some, hath he quickened the sense of apprehension, while others are obliged to bear about them a dull and stubborn body? We reply, let men say what they will, but no answer can be given except this, “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” The old Pharisees asked, “Did this man sin or his parents, that he was born blind?” We know that there was neither sin in parents nor child, that he was born blind, or that others have suffered similar distresses, but that God has done as it has pleased him in the distribution of his earthly benefits, and thus hath said to the world, “Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?”

Mark also, in the distribution of mental gifts, what a difference exists. All men are not like Socrates; there are but few Platos; we can discover but here and there a Bacon; we shall but every now and then converse with a Sir Isaac Newton. Some have stupendous intellects wherewith they can unravel secrets — fathom the depths of oceans — measure mountains — dissect the sunbeams, and weigh the stars. Other have but shallow minds. You may educate and educate, but can never make them great. You cannot improve what is not there. They have not genius, and you cannot impart it. Anybody may see that there is an inherent difference in men from their very birth. Some, with a little education do surpass those who have been elaborately trained. There are two boys, educated it may be in the same school, by the same master, and they shall apply themselves to their studies with the same diligence, but yet one shall far outstrip his fellow. Why is this? Because God hath asserted his sovereignty over the intellect as well as the body. God hath not made us all alike, but diversified his gifts. One man is as eloquent as Whitfield; another stammers if he but speaks three words of his mother tongue. What makes these various differences between man and man? We answer, we must refer it all to the Sovereignty of God, who does as he wills with his own.

Note, again, what are the differences of men’s conditions in this world. Mighty minds are from time to time discovered in men whose limbs are wearing the chains of slavery, and whose backs are laid bare to the whip — they have black skins, but are in mind vastly superior to their brutal masters. So, too, in England; we find wise men often poor, and rich men not seldom ignorant and vain. One comes into the world to be arrayed at

once in the imperial purple — another shall never wear aught but the humble garb of a peasant. One has a palace to dwell in and a bed of down for his repose, while another finds but a hard resting-place, and shall never have a more sumptuous covering than the thatch of his own cottage. If we ask the reason for this, the reply still is, “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” So, in other ways you will observe in passing through life how sovereignty displays itself. To one man God giveth a long life and uniform health, so that he scarcely knows what it is to have day’s sickness, while another totters through the world and finds a grave at almost every step, feeling a thousand deaths in fearing one. One man, even in extreme old age, like Moses, has his eye undimmed; and though his hair is grey, he stands as firmly on his feet as when a young man in his father’s house. Whence, again, we ask is the difference? And the only adequate answer is, it is the effect of Jehovah’s Sovereignty. You find, too, that some men are cut off in the prime of their life — the very midst of their days — while others live beyond their threescore years and ten. One departs before he has reached the first stage of existence, and another has his life lengthened out until it becomes quite a burden; we must, I conceive, necessarily trace the cause of all these differences in life to the fact of God’s Sovereignty. He is Rule and King, and shall he not do as he wills with his own.

We pass from this point — but before we do so we must stop to improve it just a moment. O thou who art gifted with a noble frame, a comely body, boast not thyself therein, for thy gifts come from God. O glory not, for if thou gloriest thou becomest uncomely in a moment. The flowers boast not of their beauty; be exalted ye sons of comeliness; and O ye men of might and intellect, remember, that all you have is bestowed by a Sovereign Lord; he did create; he can destroy. There are not many steps between the mightiest intellect and the helpless idiot — deep though verges on insanity. Thy brain may at any moment, be smitten, and thou be doomed henceforth to live a madman. Boast not thyself of all that thou knowest, for even the little knowledge thou hast has been given thee. Therefore, I say, exalt not thyself above measure, but use for God what God has given thee, for it is a royal gift, and thou shouldst not lay it aside. But if the Sovereign Lord has given thee one talent, and no more, lay it not up in a napkin, but use it well, and then it may be that he will give thee more. Bless God that thou

hast more than others, and thank him also that he has given thee less than others, for thou hast less to carry on thy shoulders; and the lighter thy burden the less cause wilt thou have to groan as thou travellest on towards the better land. Bless God then if thou possessest less than thy fellows, and see his goodness in withholding as well as in giving.

II. So far most men probably have gone with us; but when we come to the second point, GIFTS SAVING, there will a large number who will go from us because they cannot receive our doctrine. When we apply this truth regarding the Divine Sovereignty to man's salvation, then we find men standing up to defend their poor fellow creatures whom they conceive to be injured by God's predestination. But I never heard of men standing up for the devil; and yet I think if any of God's creature have a right to complain of his dealings it is the fallen angels. For their sin they were hurled from heaven at once, and we read not that any message of mercy was ever sent to them. Once cast out, their doom was sealed; while men were respited, redemption sent into their world, and a large number of them chosen to eternal life. Why not quarrel with Sovereignty in the one case as well as the other. We say that God has elected a people out of the human race, and his right to do this is denied. But I ask, why not equally dispute the fact that God has chosen men and not fallen angels, or his justice in such a choice. If salvation be a matter of right, surely the angels had as much claim to mercy as men. Were they not seated in more than equal dignity? Did they sin more? We think not. Adam's sin was so wilful and complete, that we cannot suppose a greater sin than that which he committed. Would not the angels who were thrust out of heaven have been of greater service to their Maker if restored, than we can ever be? Had we been the judges in this matter we might have given deliverance to angels but not to men. Admire then, Divine Sovereignty and love, that whereas the angels were broken into shivers, God hath raised an elect number of the race of men to set them among princes, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Note again, the Divine Sovereignty, in what God chose the Israelitish race and left the Gentiles for years in darkness. Why was Israel instructed and saved, while Syria was left to perish in idolatry? Was the once race purer in its origin and better in its character than the other? Did not the Israelites take unto themselves false gods a thousand times, and provoke the true

God to anger and loathing? Why then, should they be favored above their fellows? Why did the sun of heaven shine upon them while all around the nations were left in darkness, and were sinking into hell by myriads? Why? The only answer that can be given is this, that God is a Sovereign, and "will have mercy upon whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."

So, now, also, why is it that God hath sent his word to us while a multitude of people are still without his word? Why do we each come up to God's tabernacle, Sabbath after Sabbath, privileged to listen to the voice of the minister of Jesus, while other nations have not been visited thereby? Could not God have caused the light to shine in the darkness there as well as here? Could not he, if he had pleased, have sent forth messengers swift as the light to proclaim his gospel over the whole earth? He could have done it if he would. Since we know that he has not done it, we bow in meekness, confessing his right to do as he wills with his own.

But let me drive the doctrine home once more. Behold how God displays his Sovereignty in this fact, that out of the same congregation, those who hear the same minister, and listen to the same truth, the one is taken and the other left. Why is it that one of my hearers shall sit in yonder pew, and her sister by her side, and yet that the effect of the preaching shall be different upon each? They have been nursed on the same knee, rocked in the same cradle, educated under the same auspices, they hear the same minister, with the same attention — why is it that the one shall be saved and the other left? Far be it from us to weave any excuse for the man who is damned: we know of none: but also, far be it from us to take glory from God. We assert that God makes the difference — that the saved sister will not have to thank herself but her God. There shall even be two men given to drunkenness. Some word spoken shall pierce one of them through, but the other shall sit unmoved, although they shall, in all respects, be equally the same both in constitution and education. What is the reason? You will reply, perhaps, because the one accepts and the other rejects the message of the gospel. But must you not come back to the questions, who made the one accept it, and who made the other reject it? I dare you to say that the man made himself to differ. You must admit in your conscience that it is God alone to whom this power belongs. But those who dislike this doctrine are nevertheless up in arms against us; and they say, how can God

justly make such a difference between the members of his family? Suppose a father should have a certain number of children, and he should give to one all his favors, and consign the others to misery — should we not say that he was a very unkind and cruel father? I answer, yes. But the cases are not the same. You have not a father to death with, but a judge. You say all men are God's children; I demand of you to prove that. I never read it in my Bible. I dare not say, "Our father which art in heaven," till I am regenerated. I cannot rejoice in the fatherhood of God towards me till I know that I am one with him, and a joint heir with Christ. I dare not claim the fatherhood of God as an unregenerated man. It is not father and child — for the child has a claim upon its father — but it is King and subject; and not even so high a relation as that, for there is a claim between subject and King. A creature — a sinful creature, can have no claim upon God; for that would be to make salvation of works and not of grace. If men can merit salvation, then to save them is only the payment of a debt, and he gives them nothing more than he ought to give them. But we assert that grace must be distinguishing if it be grace at all. O, but some say is it not written that "He giveth to every man a measure of grace to profit withal?" If you like to repeat that wonderful quotation so often hurled at my head, you are very welcome, for it is no quotation from Scripture, unless it be an Arminian edition. The only passage at all like it refers to the spiritual gifts of the saints and the saints only. But I say, granted your supposition, that a measure of grace is given to every man to profit withal, yet he hath given to some a measure of particular grace to make that profit. For what do you mean by grace, which I put out, to profit? I can understand a man's improvement in the use of grace, but grace improved and made use of by the power of man I cannot comprehend. Grace is not a thing which I use; grace is something which uses me. But people talk of grace sometimes as if it was something they could use, and not as influence having power over them. Grace is something not which I improve, but which improves, employs me, works on me; and let people talk as they will about universal grace, it is all nonsense, there is no such thing, nor can there be. They may talk correctly of universal blessings, because we see that the natural gifts of God are scattered everywhere, more or less, and men may receive or reject them. It is not so, however, with grace. Men cannot take the grace of God and employ it in turning themselves from darkness to light. The light does not come to the darkness and say, use me; but the light comes and drives

the darkness away. Life does not come to the dead man and say, use me, and be restored to life; but it comes with a power of its own and restores to life. The spiritual influence does not come to the dry bones and say, use this power and clothe yourselves with flesh; but it comes and clothes them with flesh, and the work is done. Grace is a thing which comes and exercises an influence on us.

"The sovereign will of God alone
Creates us heirs of grace;
Born in the image of his Son,
A new-created race."

And we say to all of you who gnash your teeth at this doctrine, whether you know it or not, you have a vast deal of enmity towards God in your hearts; for until you can be brought to know this doctrine, there is something which you have not yet discovered, which makes you opposed to the idea of God absolute, God unbounded, God unfettered, God unchanging, and God having a free will, which you are so fond of proving that the creature possesses. I am persuaded that the Sovereignty of God must be held by us if we would be in a healthy state of mind. "Salvation is of the Lord alone." Then give all the glory to his holy name, to whom all glory belongs.

III. We now come, in the third place, to notice the differences which God often makes in his Church in HONORABLE GIFTS. There is a difference made between God's own children — when they are his children. Note what I mean: One hath the honorable gift of knowledge, another knows but little. I meet, every now and then, with a dear Christian brother with whom I could talk for a month, and learn something from him every day. He has had deep experience — he has seen into the deep things of God — his whole life has been a perpetual study wherever he has been. He seems to have gathered thoughts, not from books merely, but from men, from God, from his own heart. He knows all the intricacies and windings of Christian experience: he understands the heights, the depths, the lengths, and the breadths of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. He has gained a grand idea, an intimate knowledge of the system of grace, and can vindicate the dealings of the Lord with his people.

Then you must meet with another who has passed through many troubles, but he has no deep acquaintance with Christian experience. He never learned a single secret by all his troubles. He just floundered out of one trouble into another, but never stopped to pick up any of the jewels that lay in the mire — never tried to discover the precious jewels that lay in his afflictions. He knows very little more of the heights and depths of the Savior's love than when he first came into the world. You may converse with such a man as long as you like, but you will get nothing from him. If you ask why is it, I answer, there is a Sovereignty of God in giving knowledge to some and not to others. I was walking the other day with an aged Christian, who told me how he had profited by my ministry. There is nothing humbles me like that thought of yon old man deriving experience in the things of God, receiving instruction in the ways of the Lord from a mere babe in grace. But I expect that when I am an old man, if I should live to be such, that some babe in grace will instruct me. God sometimes shutteth the mouth of the old man and openeth the mouth of the child. Why should we be a teacher to hundreds who are, in some respects, far more able to teach us? The only answer we can find is in the Divine Sovereignty, and we must bow before it, for has he not a right to do as he wills with his own? Instead of being envious of those who have the gift of knowledge, we should seek to gain the same, if possible. Instead of sitting down and murmuring that we have not more knowledge, we should remember that the foot cannot say to the head, nor the head to the foot, I have no need of thee, for God hath given us talents as it hath pleased him.

Note, again, when speaking of honorable gifts. Not only knowledge, but office is an honorable gift. There is nothing more honorable to a man than the office of a deacon or a minister. We magnify our office, though we would not magnify ourselves. We hold there is nothing can dignify a man more than being appointed to an office in a Christian church. I would rather be a deacon of a church than Lord Mayor of London. To be a minister of Christ is in my estimation an infinitely higher honor than the world can bestow. My pulpit is to me more desirable than a throne, and my congregation is an empire more than large enough; an empire before which the empires of the earth dwindle into nothing in everlasting importance. Why does God give to one man a special call by the Holy Ghost, to be a minister, and pass by another? There is another man more

gifted, perhaps, but we dare not put him in a pulpit, because he has not had a special call. So with the deaconship; the man whom some would perhaps think most suitable for the office is passed by, and another chosen. There is a manifestation of God's Sovereignty in the appointment to office — in putting David on a throne, in making Moses the leader of the children of Israel through the wilderness, in choosing Daniel to stand among princes, in electing Paul to be the minister to the Gentiles, and Peter to be the Apostle of the Circumcision. And you who have not the gift of honorable office, must learn the great truth contained in the question of the Master, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?"

There is another honorable gift, the gift of utterance. Eloquence hath more power over men than all else besides. If a man would have power over the multitude, he must seek to touch their hearts, and chain their ears. There are some men who are like vessels full of knowledge to the brim, but having no means of giving it forth to the world. They are rich in all gems of learning but know not how to set them in the golden ring of eloquence. They can collect the choicest of flowers, but know not how to tie them up in a sweet garland to present them to the admirer's eye. How is this? We say again, the Sovereignty of God is here displayed in the distribution of gifts honorable. Learn here, O Christian man, if you have gifts, to cast the honor of them at the Savior's feet, and if you possess them not, learn not to murmur; remember that God is equally as kind when he keepeth back as when he distributeth his favors. If any among you be exalted, let him not be puffed up; if any be lowly, let him not be despised; for God giveth to every vessel his measure of grace. Serve him after your measure, and adore the King of Heaven who doth as he pleaseth.

IV. We notice in the fourth place, the gift of USEFULNESS. I have often done wrong in finding fault with brother ministers for not being useful, I have said you might have been as useful as I have been had you been in earnest. But surely there are others even more earnest, and more efficient: others laboring as constantly, but with far less effect. And, therefore, let me retract my accusation, and in lieu thereof assert that the gift of usefulness is the result of God's Sovereignty. It is not in man to be useful, but in God to make him useful. We may labor ourselves with all our might, but God alone can make us useful. We can put every stitch of canvass on when the wind blows, but we cannot make the wind blow.

The Sovereignty of God is seen also in the diversity of ministerial gifts. You go to one minister and are fed with plenty of good food: another has not enough to feed a mouse; he has plenty of reproof, but no food for the child of God. Another can comfort the child of God, but he cannot reprove a backslider. He has not strength of mind enough to give those earnest home strokes which are sometimes needed. And what is the reason! God's Sovereignty. One can wield the sledge hammer but could not heal a broken heart. If he were to attempt it, you would be reminded of an elephant trying to thread a needle. Such a man can reprove, but he cannot apply oil and wine to a bruised conscience. Why? Because God hath not given to him the gift. There is another one who always preaches experimental divinity; and very rarely touches upon doctrine. Another is all doctrine, and cannot preach much about Jesus Christ and him crucified. Why? God hath not given him the gift of doctrine. Another always preaches Jesus — blessed Jesus; men of the Hawker school — and many say, oh! they do not give us experience enough; they do not go into the deep experiences of the corruption which vexes the children of God. But we do not blame them for this. You will notice that out of the same man will at one time flow streams of living water, while at another time he will be as dry as possible. On one Sabbath you go away refreshed by the preaching, and the next you get no good. There is Divine Sovereignty in all this, and we must learn to recognize and admire it. I was preaching on one occasion last week to a large crowd of people, and in one part of the sermon the people were very much affected; I felt that the power of God was there; one poor creature absolutely shrieked out because of the wrath of God against sin; but at another time the same words might have been uttered and there might have been the same desire in the minister's heart, and yet no effect produced. We must trace, I say, Divine Sovereignty in all such cases. We ought to recognize God's hand in everything. But the present is the most godless generation that ever trod this earth, I verily believe. In our fathers' days there was hardly a shower but they declared that God caused it to fall; and they had prayers for rain, prayers for sunshine, and prayers for harvest; as well when a haystack was on fire, as when a famine desolated the land; our forefathers said, the Lord hath done it. But now our philosophers try to explain everything, and trace all phenomena to second causes. But brethren, let it be ours to ascribe the origin and direction of all things to the Lord, and the Lord alone.

V. Lastly, GIFTS COMFORTABLE are of God. O, what comfortable gifts do some of us enjoy in the ordinances of God's house, and in a ministry that is profitable. But how many churches have not a ministry of that kind; and why then have we? Because God hath made a difference. Some here have strong faith, and can laugh at impossibilities; we can sing a song in all ill weathers — in the tempest as well as in the calm. But there is another with little faith who is in danger of tumbling down over every straw. We trace eminent faith entirely to God. One is born with a melancholy temperament, and he sees a tempest brewing even in the calm; while another is cheerful, and sees a silver lining to every cloud, however black, and he is a happy man. But why is that? Comfortable gifts come of God. And then observe that we ourselves, differ at times. For a season we may have blessed intercourse with heaven, and be permitted to look within the veil? but anon, these delightful enjoyments are gone. But do we murmur on that account? May he not do as he will with his own? May he not take back what he has given? The comforts we possess were his before they were ours.

"And shouldst thou take them all away,
Yet would I not repine,
Before they were possessed by me
They were entirely thine."

There is no joy of the Spirit — there is no exceeding blessed hope — no strong faith — no burning desire — no close fellowship with Christ, which is not the gift of God, and which we must not trace to him. When I am in darkness and suffer disappointment, I will look up and say, he giveth songs in the night; and when I am made to rejoice, I will say, my mountain shall stand fast for ever. The Lord is a Sovereign Jehovah; and, therefore, prostrate at his feet I lie, and if I perish, I will perish there.

But let me say, brethren, that so far from this doctrine of Divine Sovereignty making you to sit down in sloth, I hope in God it will have a tendency to humble you, and so to lead you to say, "I am unworthy of the least of all thy mercies. I feel that thou hast a right to do with me as thou wilt. If thou dost crush, a helpless worm, thou wilt not be dishonored; and I have no right to ask thee to have compassion upon me, save this, that I want thy mercy. Lord, if thou wilt, thou art able to pardon, and thou never gavest grace to one that wanted it more. Because I am empty, fill me with

the bread of heaven; because I am naked, clothe me with thy robe; because I am dead, give me life." If you press that plea with all your soul and all your mind, though Jehovah is a Sovereign, he will stretch out his scepter and save, and thou shalt live to worship him in the beauty of holiness, loving and adoring his gracious Sovereignty. "He that believeth" is the declaration of Scripture "and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." He that believeth in Christ alone, and is baptized with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, shall be saved, but he who rejecteth Christ and believeth not in him, shall be damned. That is the Sovereign decree and proclamation of heaven — bow to it, acknowledge it, obey it, and God bless you.

THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST'S PEOPLE

SERMON NO. 78

DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 22, 1855,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." — John 17:16.

Christ's prayer was for a special people. He declared that he did not offer an universal intercession. "I pray for them," said he. "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine." In reading this beautiful prayer through, only one question arises to our minds; Who are the people that are described as "them," or as "they?" Who are these favored individuals, who share a Savior's prayers, are recognized by a Savior's love, have their names written on the stones of his precious breastplate, and have their characters and their circumstances mentioned by the lips of the High Priest before the throne on high? The answer to that question is supplied by the words of our text. The people for whom Christ prays are an unearthly people. They are a people somewhat, above the world, distinguished altogether from it. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

I shall treat my text, first of all, docrtrinally; secondly, experimentally; and thirdly, practically.

I. First, we shall take our text and look at it DOCTRINALLY.

The doctrine of it is, that God's people are people who are not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world. It is not so much that they are not of the world, as that they are "not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world." This is an important distinction, for there are to be found certain people who are not of the world, and yet they are not Christians. Amongst these I would mention sentimentalists — people who are always

crying and groaning in affected sentimental ways. Their spirits are so refined, their characters are so delicate, that they could not attend to ordinary business. They would think it rather degrading to their spiritual nature to attend to anything connected with the world. They live much in the air of romances and novels; love to read things that fetch tears from their eyes; they would like continually to live in a cottage near a wood, or to inhabit some quiet cave, where they could read "Zimmerman on Solitude" for ever; for they feel that they are "not of the world." The fact is, there is something too flimsy about them to stand the wear and tear of this wicked world. They are so pre-eminently good, that they cannot bear to do as we poor human creatures do. I have heard of one young lady, who thought herself so spiritually-minded that she could not work. A very wise minister said to her, "That is quite correct! you are so spiritually-minded that you cannot work; very well, you are so spiritually-minded that you shall not eat unless you do." That brought her back from her great spiritual-mindedness. There is a stupid sentimentalism that certain persons nurse themselves into. They read a parcel of books that intoxicate their brains, and then fancy that they have a lofty destiny. These people are "not of the world," truly; but the world does not want them, and the world would not miss them much, if they were clean gone for ever. There is such a thing as being "not of the world," from a high order of sentimentalism, and yet not being a Christian after all. For it is not so much being "not of the world," as being "not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world." There are others, too, like your monks, and those other made individuals of the Catholic church, who are not of the world. They are so awfully good, that they could not live with us sinful creatures at all. They must be distinguished from us altogether. They must not wear, of course, a boot that would at all approach to a worldly shoe, but they must have a sole of leather strapped on with two or three thongs, like the far-famed Father Ignatius. They could not be expected to wear worldly coats and waistcoats; but they must have peculiar garbs, cut in certain fashions, like the Passionists. They must wear particular dresses, particular garments, particular habits. And we know that some men are "not of the world," by the peculiar mouthing they give to all their words — the sort of sweet, savory, buttery flavor they give to the English language, because they think themselves so eminently sanctified that they fancy it would be wrong to indulge in anything in which ordinary mortals indulge. Such

persons are, however, reminded, that their being “not of the world,” has nothing to do with it. It is not being “not of the world,” so much as being “not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world.”

This is the distinguishing mark — being different from the world in those respects in which Christ was different. Not making ourselves singular in unimportant points, as those poor creatures do, but being different from the world in those respects in which the Son of God and the Son of man, Jesus Christ, was not of the world in nature; that he was not of the world again, in office; and above all, that he was not of the world in his character.

1. First, Christ was not of the world in nature. What was there about Christ that was worldly? In one point of view his nature was divine; and as divine, it was perfect, pure unsullied, spotless, he could not descend to things of earthliness and sin; in another sense he was human; and his human nature, which was born of the Virgin Mary, was begotten of the Holy Ghost, and therefore was so pure that in it rested nothing that was worldly. He was not like ordinary men. We are all born with worldliness in our hearts. Solomon well says, “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child.” It is not only there, but it is bound up in it; it is tied up in his heart, and is difficult to remove. And so with each of us; when we were children, earthliness and carnality were bound up in our nature. But Christ was not so. His nature was not a worldly one; it was essentially different from that of every one else, although he sat down and talked with them. Mark the difference! He stood side by side with a Pharisee; but every one could see he was not of the Pharisee’s world. He sat by a Samaritan woman, and though he conversed with her very freely, who is it that fails to see that he was not of that Samaritan woman’s world — not a sinner like her? He mingled with the Publicans, nay, he sat down at the Publican’s feast, and eat with Publicans and sinners; but you could see by the holy actions and the peculiar gestures he there carried with him, that he was not of the Publicans’ world, though he mixed with them. There was something so different in his nature, that you could not have found an individual in all the world whom could have set beside him and said, “There! he is of that man’s world,” Nay, not even John, though he leaned on his bosom and partook very much of his Lord’s spirit, was exactly of that world to which Jesus belonged; for even he once in his Boanergean spirit, said words to this effect, “Let us call down fire from heaven on the heads of those who

oppose thee," — a thing that Christ could not endure for a moment, and thereby proved that he was something even beyond John's world.

Well, beloved, in some sense, the Christian man is not of the world even in his nature. I do not mean in his corrupt and fallen nature, but in his new nature. There is something in a Christian that is utterly and entirely distinct from that of anybody else. Many persons think that the difference between a Christian and worldling consists in this: one goes to chapel twice on a Sabbath-day, another does not go but once, or perhaps not at all; one of them takes the sacrament, the other does not; one pays attention to holy things, the other pays very little attention to them. But, ah, beloved, that does not make a Christian. The distinction between a Christian and a worldling is not merely external, but internal. The difference is one of nature, and not of act.

A Christian is as essentially difference from a worldling as a dove is from a raven, or a lamb from a lion. He is not of the world even in his nature. You could not make him a worldling. You might do what you liked; you might cause him to fall into some temporary sin; but you could not make him a worldling. You might cause him to backslide; but you could not make him a sinner, as he used to be. He is not of the world by his nature. He is a twice-born man; in his veins run the blood of the royal family of the universe. He is a nobleman; he is a heaven-born child. His freedom is not merely a bought one, but he hath his liberty his new-born nature; he is essentially and entirely different from the world. There are persons in this chapel now who are more totally distinct from one another than you can even conceive. I have some here who are intelligent, and some who are ignorant; some who are rich, and some who are poor; but I do not allude to those distinctions: they all melt away into nothing in that great distinction — dead or alive, spiritual or carnal, Christian or worldling. And oh! if ye are God's people, then ye are not of the world in your nature; for ye are "not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world."

2. Again: you are not of the world in your office. Christ's office had nothing to do with worldly things. "Art thou a king them?" Yes; I am a king; but my kingdom is not of this world. "Art thou a priest?" Yes; I am a priest; but my priesthood is not the priesthood which I shall soon lay aside, or which shall be discontinued as that of others has been. "Art thou

a teacher?" Yes; but my doctrines are not the doctrines of morality, doctrines that concern earthly dealings between man and man simply; my doctrine cometh down from heaven. So Jesus Christ, we say, is "not of the world." He had no office that could be termed a worldly one, and he had no aim which was in the least worldly. He did not seek his own applause, his own fame, his own honor; his very office was not of the world. And, O believer! what is thy office? Hast thou none at all? Why, yes, man! Thou art a priest unto the Lord thy God; thy office is to offer a sacrifice of prayer and praise each day. Ask a Christian what he is. Say to him: "What is your official standing? What are you by office?" Well, if he answers you properly, he will not say, "I am a draper, or druggist," or anything of that sort. No; he will say, "I am a priest unto my God. The office unto which I am called, is to be the salt of the earth. I am a city set on a hill, a light that cannot be hid. That is my office. My office is not a worldly one." Whether yours be the office of the minister, or the deacon, or the church member, ye are not of this world is your office, even as Christ was not of the world; your occupation is not a worldly one.

3. Again, ye are not of the world in your character; for that is the chief point in which Christ was not of the world. And now, brethren, I shall have to turn somewhat from doctrine to practice before I get rightly to this part of the subject; for I must reprove many of the Lord's people, that they do not sufficiently manifest that they are not of the world in character, even as Christ was not of the world. Oh! how many of you there are, who will assemble around the table at the supper of your Lord, who do not live like your Savior. How many of you there are, who join our church and walk with us, and yet are not worthy of your high calling and profession. Mark you the churches all around, and let your eyes run with tears, when you remember that of many of their members it cannot be said, "ye are not of this world," for they are of the world. O, my hearers, I fear many of you are worldly, carnal, and covetous; and yet ye join the churches, and stand well with God's people by a hypocritical profession. O ye whitewashed sepulchers! ye would deceive even the very elect! ye make clean the outside of the cup and platter, but your inward part is very wickedness. O that a thundering voice might speak this to your ears! — "Those whom Christ loves are not of the world," but ye are of the world; therefore ye cannot be his, even though ye profess so to be; for those that

love him are not such as you. Look at Jesus character; how different from every other man's — pure, perfect, spotless, even such should be the life of the believer. I plead not for the possibility of sinless conduct in Christians, but I must hold that grace makes men to differ, and that God's people will be very different from other kinds of people. A servant of God will be a God's-man everywhere. As a chemist, he could not indulge in any tricks that such men might play with their drugs; as a grocer — if indeed it be not a phantom that such things are done — he could not mix sloe leaves with tea or red lead in the pepper; if he practiced any other kind of business, he could not for a moment condescend to the little petty shifts, called "methods of business." To him it is nothing what is called "business;" it is what is called God's law, he feels that he is not of the world, consequently, he goes against its fashions and its maxims. A singular story is told of a certain Quaker. One day he was bathing in the Thames, and a waterman called out to him, "Ha! there goes the Quaker." "How do you know I'm a Quaker?" "Because you swim against the stream; it is the way the Quakers always do." That is the way Christians always ought to do — to swim against the stream. The Lord's people should not go along with the rest in their worldliness. Their characters should be visibly different. You should be such men that your fellows can recognize you without any difficulty, and say, "Such a man is a Christian." Ah! beloved, it would puzzle the angel Gabriel himself, to tell whether some of you are Christians or not, if he were sent down to the world to pick out the righteous from the wicked. None but God could do it, for in these days of worldly religion they are so much alike. It was an ill day for the world, when the sons of God and the daughters of men were mingled together: and it is an ill day now, when Christians and worldlings are so mixed, that you cannot tell the difference between them. God save us from a day of fire that may devour us in consequence! But O beloved! the Christian will be always different from the world. This is a great doctrine, and it will be found as true in ages to come as in the centuries which are past. Looking back into history, we read this lesson: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." We see them driven to the catacombs of Rome; we see them hunted about like partridges; and wherever in history you find God's servants, you can recognize them by their distinct, unvarying character — they are not of the world, but were a people scarred and peeled; a people entirely distinct from the nations. And

if in this age, there are no different people, if there are none to be found who differ from other people, there are no Christians; for Christians will be always different from the world. They are not of the world; even as Christ is not of the world. This is the doctrine.

II. But now for treating this text EXPERIMENTALLY.

Do we, dearly beloved, feel this truth? Has it ever been laid to our souls, so that we can feel it is ours? "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Have we ever felt that we are not of the world? Perhaps there is a believer sitting in a pew to-night, who says, "Well, sire, I can't say that I feel as if I was not of the world, for I have just come from my shop, and worldliness is still hanging about me." Another says, "I have been in trouble and my mind is very much harassed — I can't feel that I am different from the world; I am afraid that I am of the world." But, beloved, we must not judge ourselves rashly, because just at this moment we discern not the spot of God's children. Let me tell you, there are always certain testing moments when you can tell of what kind of stuff a man is made. Two men are walking. Part of the way their road lies side by side. How do you tell which man is going to the right, and which to the left? Why, when they come to the turning point. Now, to-night is not a turning point, for you are sitting with worldly people here, but at other times we may distinguish.

Let me tell you one or two turning points, when every Christian will feel that he is not of the world. One is, when he gets into very deep trouble. I do believe and protest, that we never feel so unearthly as when we get plunged down into trouble. Ah! when some creature comfort hath been swept away, when some precious blessing hath withered in our sight, like the fair lily, snapped at the stalk; when some mercy has been withered, like Jonah's gourd in the night — then it is that the Christian feels, "I am not of the world." His cloak is torn from him, and the cold wind whistles almost through him; and then he says, "I am a stranger in the world, as all my fathers were. Lord, thou hast been my dwelling-place in all generations." You have had at times deep sorrows. Thank God for them! They are testing moments. When the furnace is hot, it is then that the gold is tried best. Have you felt at such a time that you were not of the world? Or, have you rather sat down, and said, "Oh! I do not deserve this

trouble?" Did you break under it? Did you bow down before it and let it crush you while you cursed your Maker? Or did your spirit, even under its load, still lift itself unto him, like a man all dislocated on the battle-field, whose limbs are cut away, but who still lifts himself up as best he can, and looks over the field to see if there be a friend approaching. Did you do so? Or did you lie down in desperation and despair? If you did that, methinks you are no Christian; but if there was a rising up, it was a testing moment, and it proved that you were "not of the world," because you could master affliction; because you could tread it under foot, and say —

"When all created streams are dry,
His goodness is the same;
With this I well am satisfied,
And glory in his name."

But another testing moment is prosperity. Oh! there have been some of God's people, who have been more tried by prosperity than by adversity. Of the two trials, the trial of adversity is less severe to the spiritual man than that of prosperity. "As the fining pot for silver, so is a man to his praise." It is a terrible thing to be prosperous. You had need to pray to God, not only to help you in your troubles, but to help you in your blessings. Mr. Whitfield once had a petition to put up for a young man who had — stop, you will think it was for a young man who had lost his father or his property. No! "The prayers of the congregation are he has need of much grace to keep him humble in the midst of riches." That is the kind of prayer that ought to be put up; for prosperity is a hard thing to bear. Now, perhaps you have become almost intoxicated with worldly delights, even as a Christian. Everything goes well with you; you have loved, and you are loved. Your affairs are prosperous; your heart rejoices, your eyes sparkle; you tread the earth with a happy soul and a joyous countenance; you are a happy man, for you have found that even in worldly things, "godliness with contentment is great gain." Did you ever feel, —

"These can never satisfy;
Give me Christ, or else I die."

Did you feel that these comforts were nothing but the leaves of the tree, and not the fruit, and that you could not live upon mere leaves? Did you feel they were after all nothing but husks? Or did you not sit down and

say, “Now, soul, take thine ease; thou hast goods laid up for many years; eat, drink, and be merry?” If you did imitate the rich fool, then you were of the world; but if your spirit went up above your prosperity so that you still lived near to God, then you proved that you were a child of God, for you were not of the world. These are testing points; both prosperity and adversity.

Again: you may test yourselves in this way in solitude and in company. In solitude you may tell whether you are not of the world. I sit me down, throw the window up, look out on the stars, and think of them as the eyes of God looking down upon me! And oh! does it not seem glorious at times to consider the heavens when we can say, “Ah! beyond those stars in my house not made with hands; those stars are mile-stones on the road to glory, and I shall soon tread the glittering way, or be carried by seraphs far beyond them, and be there!” Have you felt in solitude that you are not of the world? And so again in company. Ah! beloved, believe me, company is one of the best tests for a Christian. You are invited to an evening party. Sundry amusements are provided which are not considered exactly sinful, but which certainly cannot come under the name of pious amusements. You sit there with the rest; there is a deal of idle chat going on, you would be thought puritanical to protest against it. Have you not come away — and notwithstanding all has been very pleasant, and friends have been very agreeable — have you not been inclined to say, “Ah! that does not do for me; I would rather be in a prayer meeting; I could be with the people of God, than in fine rooms with all the dainties and delicacies that could be provided without the company of Jesus. By God’s grace I will seek to shun all these places as much as possible.” That is a good test. You will prove in this way that you are not of the world. And you may do so in great many other ways, which I have no time to mention. Have you felt this experimentally, so that you can say, “I know that I am not of the world, I feel it; I experience it.” Don’t talk of doctrine. Give me doctrine ground into experience. Doctrine is good; but experience is better. Experimental doctrine is the true doctrine which comforts and which edifies.

IV. And now, lastly we must briefly apply this in PRACTICE. “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” And, first, allow me, man or woman, to apply this to thee. Thou who art of the world, whose

maxims, whose habits, whose behavior, whose feelings, whose everything is worldly and carnal, list thee to this. Perhaps thou makest some profession of religion. Hear me, then. Thy boasting of religion is empty as a phantom, and shall pass away when the sun rises, as the ghosts sleep in their grave at the crowing of the cock. Thou hast some pleasure in that professioned religion of thine wherewith thou art arrayed, and which thou carriest about thee as a cloak, and usest as a stalking-horse to thy business, and a net to catch the honor of the world, and yet thou art worldly, like other men. Then I tell thee if there be no distinction between thyself and the worldly, the doom of the worldly shall be thy doom. If thou wert marked and watched, thy next door tradesman would act as thou dost, and thou actest as he does; there is no distinction between thee and the world. Hear me, then; it is God's solemn truth. Thou art none of his. If thou art like the rest of the world, thou art of the world. Thou art a goat, and with goats thou shalt be cursed; for the sheep can always be distinguished from the goats by their appearance. O ye worldly men of the world! ye carnal professors, ye who crowd our churches, and fill our places of worship, this is God's truth! let me say it solemnly. If I should say it as I ought, it would be weeping tears of blood. Ye are, with all your profession, "in the gall of bitterness;" with all your boastings, ye are "in bonds of iniquity;" for ye act as others and ye shall come where others come; and it shall be done with you as with more notorious heirs of hell. There is an old story which was once told of a Dissenting minister. The old custom was, that a minister might stop at an inn, and not pay anything for his bed or his board; and when he went to preach, from place to place, he was charged nothing for the conveyance in which he rode. But on one occasion, a certain minister stopped at an inn and went to bed. The landlord listened and heard no prayer; so when he came down in the morning, he presented his bill. "Oh! I am not going to pay that, for I am a minister." "Ah!" said the landlord, "you went to bed last night like a sinner, and you shall pay this morning like a sinner; I will not let you go." Now, it strikes me, that this will be the case with some of you when you come to God's bar. Though you pretended to be a Christian, you acted like a sinner, and you shall fare like a sinner too. Your actions were unrighteous; they were far from God; and you shall have a portion with those whose character was the same as yours. "Be not deceived;" it is easy to be so. "God is not

mocked," though we often are, both minister and people. "God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

And now we want to apply this to many true children of God who are here, by way of caution. I say, my brother Christian, you are not of the world. I am not going to speak hardly to you, because you are my brother, and in speaking to you I speak to myself also, for I am as guilty as thou art. Brother, have we not often been too much like the world? Do we not sometimes in our conversation, talk too much like the world? Come, let me ask myself, are there not too many idle words that I say? Ay, that there are. And do I not sometimes give occasion to the enemy to blaspheme, because I am not so different from the world as I ought to be? Come, brother; let us confess our sins together. Have we not been too worldly? Ah! we have. Oh! let this solemn thought cross our minds: suppose that after all we should not be his! for it is written, "Ye are not of the world." O God! if we are not right, make us so; where we are a little right, make us still more right; and where we are wrong, amend us! Allow me to tell a story to you; I told it when I was preaching last Tuesday morning, but it is worth telling again. There is a great evil in many of us being too light and frothy in our conversation. A very solemn thing once happened. A minister had been preaching in a country village, very earnestly and fervently. in the midst of his congregation there was a young man who was deeply impressed with a sense of sin under the sermon; he therefore sought the minister as he went out, in hopes of walking home with him. They walked till they came to a friend's house. On the road the minister had talked about anything except the subject on which he had preached, though he had preached very earnestly, and even with tears in his eyes. The young man thought within himself, "Oh! I wish I could unburden my heart and speak to him; but I cannot. He does not say anything now about what he spoke of in the pulpit." When they were at supper that evening, the conversation was very far from what it should be, and the minister indulged in all kinds of jokes and light sayings. The young man had gone into the house with eyes filled with tears, feeling like a sinner should feel; but as soon as he got outside, after the conversation, he stamped his foot, and said, "It is a lie from beginning to end. That man has preached like an angel; and now he has talked like a devil." Some years after the young man was taken ill, and sent for this same minister. The minister did not know

him. “Do you remember preaching at such-and-such a village?” asked the young man. “I do.” “your text was very deeply laid to my heart.” “Thank God for that,” said the minister. “Do not be so quick about thanking God,” said the young man. “Do you know what you talked of that evening afterwards, when I went to supper with you. Sir, I shall be damned! And I will charge you before God’s throne with being the author of my damnation. On that night I did feel my sin; but you were the means of scattering all my impressions.” That is a solemn thought, brother, and teaches us how we should curb our tongues, especially those who are so light hearted, after solemn services and earnest preachings, that we should not betray levity. Oh! let us take heed that we are not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world.

And Christian, lastly, by way of practice, let me comfort thee with this. Thou art not of the world for thy home is in heaven. Be content to be here a little, for thou art not of the world, and thou shalt go up to thine own bright inheritance by-and-bye. A man in travelling goes into an inn; it is rather uncomfortable, “Well,” says he, “I shall not have to stay here many nights; I have only to sleep here to-night, I shall be at home in the morning, so that I don’t care much about one night’s lodging being a little uncomfortable.” So, Christian, this world is never a very comfortable one; but recollect, you are not of the world. This world is like an inn; you are only lodging here a little while. Put up with a little inconvenience, because you are not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world; and by-and-bye, up yonder, you shall be gathered into your father’s house, and there you will find that there is a new heaven and a new earth provided for those who are “not of the world.”

THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS

SERMON NO. 79

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MAY 11, 1856,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." — 2 Timothy 1:13.

My incessant anxiety for you, dearly beloved in the faith of Jesus Christ, is that I may be able, in the first place, to teach you what God's truth is; and then, trusting that I have to the best of my ability taught you what I believe to be God's most holy gospel, my next anxiety is, that you should "hold fast the form of sound words;" that whatever may occur in the future, should death snatch away your pastor, or should anything occur which might put you in perilous circumstances, so that you were tempted to embrace any system of heresy, you might every one of you stand as firm and as unmoved as rocks, and as strong as mountains be, abiding in "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," whereof ye have heard, and which we have proclaimed unto you. If the gospel be worth your hearing, and if it be a true gospel, it is worth your holding, and our anxiety is, that you should be so established in the faith, that you may, "hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering, for he is faithful that has promised."

The Apostle most earnestly admonished Timothy to "hold fast the form of sound words which he had heard of him in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." I do not suppose that by this it is intended that Paul ever wrote out for Timothy a list of doctrines; or that he gave him a small abstract of divinity, to which he desired him to subscribe his name, as the articles of the church over which he was made a pastor. If so, doubtless the document would have been preserved and enrolled in the canons of Scripture as one of the writings of an inspired man. I can scarce think such a creed would have been lost, whilst other creeds have been preserved and

handed down to us. I conceive that what the Apostle meant was this: — "Timothy, when I have preached to you, you have heard certain grand outlines of truth; you have heard from me the great system of faith in Jesus Christ; in my writings and public speakings you have heard me continually insist upon a certain pattern or form of faith; now I bid you, my dearly beloved son in the gospel, "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

This morning I shall first attempt to tell you what I conceive to be a "form of sounds words," which we are to hold fast. In the second place, I shall endeavor to urge upon you the strong necessity of holding fast that form. In the third place, I shall warn you of some dangers to which you will be exposed, tempting you to give up the form of sound words. Then, in the last place I shall mention the two great holdfasts, faith and love in Christ Jesus, which are the great means of "holding fast the form of sound words."

1. What is a "FORM OF SOUND WORDS?" Ten thousand persons will quarrel upon this. One will say, "My creed is a form of sound words;" another will declare that his creed also is sound, if not infallible. We will not, therefore, enter into all the minutiae which distinguish creeds from each other, but just simply say, that no system can be a form of sound words unless it is perfectly scriptural. We receive no doctrines as the doctrines of men; whatever authority come to us which is not the authority of the Holy Spirit, and inspired by God, is no authority at all to us. We laugh to scorn all the dogmatism of men; we care for nothing they assert, however strongly they declare it, or however eloquently they plead for it; we utterly reject and discard it; we hold it a sin to "take for doctrines the commandments of men;" we give no heed to the traditions that are handed down to us. If our opponent cannot quote text or verse for anything he advances, we hold no argument with him. Scripture is the only weapon we can acknowledge.

But since it is said that texts may be found to prove almost everything, we must remark, that a form of sound words must be one that exalts God and puts down man. We dare not for a moment think that any doctrine is sound that does not put the crown upon the head of Jesus, and does not exalt the Almighty. If we see a doctrine which exalts the creature, we do

not care one fig about what arguments may be brought to support it; we know that it is a lie, unless it lays the creature in the very dust of abasement, and exalts the Creator. If it does not do this, it is nothing but a rotten doctrine of pride; it may dazzle us with the brilliant malaria rising from its marshes, but it never can shed a true and healthful light into the soul; it is a rotten doctrine, not fit to be builded on the gospel, unless it exalts Jehovah Jesus, Jehovah the Father, and Jehovah the Holy Spirit.

We think, also, that we may judge of the soundness of doctrine by its tendency. We can never think a doctrine sound, when we see plainly upon its very surface that it has a tendency to create sin in men. Unless it be a doctrine according to godliness, we cannot conceive it to be a doctrine of God. Unless the believer of it, earnestly and truthfully believing it, doth give himself to virtue — unless that doctrine has in itself a natural tendency to promote in him a love to the right — we are at first sight suspicious of it; and if we find on examination that it is a licentious doctrine — it may have all the glitter and the glare of novelty, but we cast it away as not being the doctrine of Christianity, because it does not promote holiness in the soul.

We shall, perhaps, be asked what we do regard as a form of sound words, and what those doctrines are which are scriptural, which at the same time are healthful to the spirit and exalting to God. We answer, we believe a form of sound words must embrace, first of all, the doctrine of God's being and nature, we must have the Trinity in Unity, and the Unity in Trinity. Any doctrine, which hath not the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as equal persons in one undivided essence, we cast aside as being unsound, for we are sure that such doctrines must be derogatory to God's glory; and if they be so it is enough for us. If any man despise either Father, Son, or Holy Ghost, we despise him, and despise his teachings, and cannot even say to him, "I wish you God speed."

Now, we hold, that a form of sound words must look upon man aright as well as upon God aright; it must teach that man is utterly fallen, that he is sinful, and for his sin condemned, and in himself altogether hopeless of salvation. If it exalts man by giving him a character which is not a true one, and clothing him with a spurious robe of righteousness, woven by his own fingers, we reject and discard it utterly.

And next, we think that a doctrine that is sound must have right views of salvation, as being of the Lord alone; unless we find in it everlasting, unchanging love, working out a salvation for a people "who were not a people," but were made a people by special grace; unless we find discriminating love, others may say what they will — we cannot consider such a creed to be a form of sound words, unless we discern redeeming mercy openly and boldly taught; unless we see final perseverance, and all those great and glorious truths which are the very bulwarks of our religion, others may embrace the doctrine as being a form of sound words; but we cannot, and we dare not. We love the old system of our forefathers; we love the old truths of Scripture, not because they are old, but because we cannot consider anything to be truth which doth not hold the scriptural view of salvation. Methinks Paul himself, in this very chapter, gives us a form of sound words, where he speaks of "God who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

I need not stop this morning to prove to you that which I have briefly hinted at as a form of sound words, because you believe it, and believe it firmly. I am not about to urge you to receive it, because I know you have already received it; but what I have to say is, "Hold fast," I beseech you, "the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

II. Now let me show you THE NECESSITY OF HOLDING FAST THIS FORM OF SOUND WORD, AND KEEPING IT FOR YOUR OWN SAKE, FOR THE CHURCH'S SAKE, FOR THE WORLD'S SAKE.

First, for your own sake, hold it fast, for thereby you will receive ten thousand blessings; you will receive the blessing of peace in your conscience. I protest, before God, that if at any time I ever doubt one of the great things I receive from God, instantly there comes an aching void which the world can never fill, and which I can never get filled until I receive that doctrine again, and believe it with all my heart. When at any time I am cast down and dejected, I always find comfort in reading books which are strong on the doctrines of the faith of the gospel; if I turn to some of them that treat of God's eternal love, revealed to his chosen

people in the person of Christ; and if I remember some of the exceeding great and precious promises made to the elect in their covenant head, my faith at once becomes strong, and my soul, with wings sublime, mounts upwards towards its God. You cannot tell, beloved, if you have never tasted, how sweet is the peace which the doctrines of grace will give to the soul; there is nothing like them. They are —

"A sovereign balm for every wound,
A cordial for our fears."

They are God's sweet lullaby, wherewith he singeth his children to sleep, even in storms. They are God's sheet anchors, which are cast out into the sea, to hold our little vessels fast in the midst of tempests. There is a "peace of God which passeth all understanding," which accrues to a man who is strong believer, but you know the tendency of the day is to give up old land marks and to adopt new ones, and to avow anything rather than the old-fashioned divinity. Well, my dear friends, if any of you like to try new doctrines, I warn you, that if you be the children of God you will soon be sick enough of those new-fangled notions, those newly invented doctrines, which are continually taught. You may, for the first week, be pleased enough with their novelty; you may wonder at their transcendental spirituality, or something else, which entices you on; but you will not have lived on them long, before you will say, "Alas! alas! I have taken in my hands the apples of Sodom; they were fair to look upon, but they are ashes in my mouth." If you would be peaceful, keep fast to the truth, hold fast the form of sound words: so shall "your peace be like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea."

"Hold fast the form of sound words," again, let me say, because it will tend very much to you growth. He who holds fast the truth will grow faster than he who is continually shifting from doctrine to doctrine. What a mighty number of spiritual weathercocks we have in this world now. We have men who in the morning hear a Calvinistic preacher, and say, "Oh, it is delightful;" in the evening they hear an Arminian, and they say, "Oh, it is just as good; and no doubt they are both true, though one contradicts the other!" The glorious charity of the present day is such, that it believes lies to be as good as truth; and lies and truth have met together and kissed each other; and he that telleth truth is called a bigot, and truth has ceased to be honorable in the world! Ah! beloved, we know better than to profess such

unlimited, but false charity; the truth is, we know how to “hold fast the form of sounds words,” which has been given to us, because in this way we grow. Changeable people cannot grow much. If you have a tree in your garden plant it in one place to-day, and tomorrow place it somehwere else, how much bigger will it be in six months? It will be dead very likely; or if it does not die, it will not be very much grown; it will be marvellously stunted. So it is with some of you: you plant yourselves there; then you are persuaded that you are not quite right, and you go and plant yourself somewhere else. Why, there are men who are anythingarians; who go dodging about from one denomination to another, and cannot tell what they are; our opinion is, of these people, that they believe nothing, and are good for nothing, and anybody may have them that likes; we do not consider men to be worth much, unless they have settle principles, and “hold fast the form of sound words.” You cannot grow unless you hold it fast. How should I know any more of my faith in ten years’ time, if I allowed it to take ten forms in ten years? I should be but a smatterer in each, and know nothing thoroughly of one. But he that hath one faith, and knoweth it to be the faith of God, and holdeth it fast, how strong he becomes in his faith? Each wind or tempest doth but confirm him, as the fierce winds root the oaks, and make them strong, standing firmly in their places; but if I shift and change, I am none the better, but rather the worse. For your own peace sake then, and for your growth, “hold fast the form of sound words.”

But, my beloved, I would beseech you to hold it fast for your own sakes, from a remembrance of the great evils which will follow the contrary course. If you do not “hold fast the form of sound words,” listen to me while I tell you what you will do.

In the first place, every deviation from truth is a sin. It is not simply a sin for me to do a wrong act, but it is a sin for me to believe a wrong doctrine. Lately our ministers have absolved us all from obeying God in our judgments; they have told us point blank, many of them, in their drawing-rooms, and some of them in the pulpit, that we shall never be asked in the day of judgment what we believed. We have been told that for our acts we shall be responsible, but for our faith we shall be irresponsible, or something very much like it; they have told us plainly, that the God who made us, although he has authority over our hands, our feet, our eyes and

our lips, hath but little authority over our judgments; they have told us, that if we make ever such blunders in divinity, they are no sins, so long as we can live right lives. But is that true? No; the whole man is bound to serve God; and if God gives me a judgment, I am bound to employ that judgment in his service; and if that judgment receive an untruth, it has received stolen goods, and I have sinned as much as if I put forth my hand to take my neighbour's goods. There may be degrees in the sin. If it be a sin of ignorance, it is nevertheless a sin; but it is not so heinous as a sin of negligence, which I fear it is with many. I tell you, beloved, if, for instance, baptism be not by immersion, I commit a sin every time I practice it; and if it be, my brother commits a sin who does not practice it. If Election be true, I am committing a sin if I do not believe it; and if Final Perseverance be true, I am committing a sin before Almighty God, if I do not receive it; and if it be not true, then I sin in embracing what is not scriptural. Error in doctrine is as much a sin as error in practice. In everything we are bound to serve our God with all our might, exercising those powers of judging and believing which he has given unto us; and I warn you, Christians, not to think it is a little thing to hold faith with a feeble hand: it is a sin every time you do aught which makes you waver in the faith of Jesus Christ. Remember, too, that error in doctrine is not only a sin, but a sin which has a great tendency to increase. When a man once in his life believes a wrong thing, it is marvellous how quickly he believes another wrong thing. Once open the door to a false doctrine — Satan says it is but a little one — ay, but he only puts the little one in like the small end of the wedge, and he means to drive in a larger one; and he will say it is only a little more, and a little more, and a little more. The most damnable heretics who ever perverted the faith of God erred by littles and littles; those who have gone the widest from truth have only gone so by degrees. Whence came the Church of Rome, that mass of abominations? Why, from gradual departures. It did not become abominable at first; it was not the "mother of harlots" all at once; but it first did deck itself in some ornaments, then in others, and by-and-bye it went on to commit its fornications with the kings of the earth. It fell by little and little, and in the same way it separated itself from the truth. For centuries it was a Church of Christ, and it is difficult to say, looking at history, when was the exact point in which it ceased to be numbered with Christian Churches. Take care, Christians, if you commit one error, you cannot tell how many more you will commit.

"Hold fast the form of sound words," because error in doctrine almost inevitably leads to error in practice. When a man believes wrongly, he will soon act wrongly. Faith has a great influence on our conduct. As a man's faith, so is he. If you begin to imbibe erroneous doctrines, they soon have an effect on your practice. Keep fast to the bulwarks of your fathers' faith. If you do not, the enemy will make sad havoc with you. "Hold fast the form of sound words which was delivered unto you."

2. And now, for the good of the Church itself, I want you all to "hold fast the form of sound words." Would you wish to see the Church prosperous? Would you wish to see it peaceful? Then "hold fast the form of sound words." What is the cause of divisions, schisms, quarrels, and bickerings amongst us? It is not the fault of the truth; it is the fault of the errors. There would have been peace in the Church, entire and perpetual peace, if there had been purity — entire and perpetual purity — in the Church. Going down to Sheerness on Friday, I was told by some one on board that during the late gale several of the ships there had their anchors rent up, and had gone dashing against the other ships, and had done considerable damage. Now, if their anchors had held fast and firm, no damage would have been done. Ask me the cause of the damage which has been done to our churches by the different denominations, and I tell you, it is because all their anchors did not hold fast. If they had held fast by the truth, there would have been no disputing; disputing comes from errors. If there be any ill feeling, you must not trace it to the truth — you must trace it to the error. If the Church had always kept firm to the faith, and had always been united to the great doctrines of the truth, there would have been no disputes. Keep firm to you belief, and you will prevent discord in the Church.

Keep to your faith, I say again, for the Church's sake, for so you will promote strength in the Church. I saw lying between Chatham and Sheerness a number of ships that I supposed to be old hulks; and I thought how stupid Government was to let them remain there, and not chop them up for firewood, or something else; but some one said to me, those ships can soon be fitted for service; they look old now, but they only want a little paint, and when the Admiralty requires them, they will be commissioned and made fit for use. So we have heard some people say, "There are those old doctrines — what good are they?" Wait; there is not a

doctrine in God's Bible that has not its use. Those ships that you may think are not wanted, will be useful by-and-bye. So it is with the doctrines of the Bible. Do not say, Break up those old doctrines, you can do without them." Nay, we want them, and we must have them. Some people say, "Why do you preach against Arminians? we have not much to fear from them now." But I like to practice my men against the time comes for action. We are not going to burn our ships; they will be wanted by-and-bye, and when we sail out of harbour, the men will say, "Whence came these old ships?" "Why," we will reply, "they are just the doctrines you thought good for nothing; now we bring them out, and we will make good use of them." Now-a-days we are having new and marvellous hymn-books, full of perfect nonsense; and we are having new theories, and new systems; and they say, "Why be so stringent? our Christian brethren may believe what they like on those points just now;" but as certain as there is a church in this land, they will want our old ships to fight their battles; they may do very well in times of peace, but they will not do in the time of war. They will then need our broadside to support the faith of the gospel, though now they laugh at us. For the strength of the church, my brethren, I bid you "hold fast the form of sound words."

"Well," says one, "I think we ought to hold the truth firmly; but I do not see the necessity for holding the form of it; I think we might cut and trim a little, and then our doctrines would be received better." Suppose, my friends, we should have some valuable egg, and some one should say, "Well, now, the shell is good for nothing; there will never be a bird produced by the shell certainly, why not break the shell? I should simply smile in his face and say, "My dear friend, I want the shell to take care of what is inside. I know the vital principle is the most important, but I want the shell to take care of the vital principle." You say, "Hold fast the principle, but do not be so severe about the form. You are an old Puritan, and want to be too strict in religion; let us just alter a few things, and make it a little palatable." My dear friends, do not break the shell; you are doing far more damage than you think. We willingly admit the form is but little; but when men attack the form, what is their object? They do not hate the form; they hate the substance. Keep the substance then, and keep the form too. Not only hold the same doctrines, but hold them in the same shape — just as angular, rough and rugged as they were, for if you do not, it is

difficult to change the form and yet to keep fast the substance. “Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou has heard of me, in faith and love which is in Jesus Christ.”

3. Again, I say, “hold fast the form of sound words,” for the world’s sake. Pardon me when I say that, speaking after the manner of men, I believe that the progress of the gospel has been awfully impeded by the errors of its preachers. I never wonder when I see a Jew an unbeliever in Christianity, for this reason, that the Jew very seldom sees Christianity in its beauty. For hundreds of years what has the Jew thought Christianity to be? Why, pure idolatry. He has seen the Catholic bow down to blocks of wood and stone; he has seen him prostrating himself before the Virgin Mary and all saints; and the Jew has said, “Ah! this is my watchword — hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is our Lord; I could not be a Christian, for to worship one God is the essential part of my religion.” So the heathen, I believe have seen a false system of Christianity, and they have said, “What! is that your Christianity?” and they did not receive it. But I believe that when the gospel is purged from all the rudiments of men, and all the chaff and dust have been winnowed from it, and it is presented in all its naked simplicity, it will be sure to win the day; and I say again, speaking as a man, the gospel might have made a ten thousand fold greater progress, if it had been preached in all its simplicity, instead of that diluted or rather distorted form in which it is commonly proclaimed. If ye would see sinners saved, if ye would see God’s elect gathered in, “Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”

III. And now, very briefly, in the third place, LET ME WARN YOU OF TWO DANGERS.

One is, that you will be very much tempted to give up the form of sound words that you hold, on account of the opposition you will meet with. I do not prophesy that you will have corporeal persecution, though I know there are some poor creatures here that have to endure that from ungodly husbands, and such like; but you will all of you, in some measure, if you hold the truth, meet with the persecution of the tongue. You will be laughed at: your doctrine will be held up to ridicule, exhibited in a grotesque manner; you will be caricatured in all that you believe, and you

will be sometimes tempted to say, "No I do not believe that," though all the while you do. Or if you do not positively say it, you will at times be led to turn a little, because the laughter you cannot stand, and the scoff of the worldly-wise is rather too hard for you. Oh! my beloved, let me warn you against being thus drawn aside. "Hold fast the form of sound words" in the midst of all ridicule. But the greatest obstacle you will have is a sort of slight and cunning, trying to pervert you to the belief, that your doctrine is the same with one which is just the very opposite. The enemy will try to persuade you that something he holds is quite harmless, though opposed to what you hold; and he will say, "You do not want to be broaching these things, that must bring forth controversy; there is a way of squaring your sentiments with mine." And you know we all like to be thought so liberal! The greatest pride in the world now is to be thought liberal in sentiment; and some of us would run a hundred miles, rather than be called a bigot or an Antinomian. I beseech you, be not drawn aside by those who are so ready to subvert your faith, not by openly attacking it, but by insidiously undermining every doctrine, saying, this does not signify, and that does not signify, while all the while they are trying to pull down every castle and fortress wherewith God has guarded his truth and his Church.

IV. And now, in the last place, I am to tell you of THE GREAT HOLDFASTS, WHEREBY YOU ARE TO HOLD FAST THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL.

If I might be allowed to mention one or two before coming to those in the text, I should say, in the first place, if you want to hold fast the truth, seek to get an understanding of it. A man cannot hold a thing fast, unless he has a good understanding of it. I never want you to have the faith of the collier who was asked what he believed; he said he believed what the Church believed. "Well, but what does the Church believe?" He said the Church believed what he believed, and he believed what the Church believed; and so it went all the way round. We do not want you to have that faith. It may be a very pertinacious faith, a very obstinate faith, but it is a very foolish faith. We want you to understand things, to get a true knowledge of them. The reason why men forsake truth for error is, that they have not really understood that truth; in nine cases out of ten they have not embraced it with enlightened minds. Let me exhort you, parents, as much

as lieth in you, to give your children sound instruction in the great doctrines of the gospel of Christ. I believe that what Irving once said is a great truth. He said, “In these modern times you boast and glory, and you think yourselves to be in a high and noble condition, because you have your Sabbath-schools and British-schools, and all kinds of schools for teaching youth. I tell you,” he said, “that philanthropic and great as these are, they are the ensigns of your disgrace; they show that your land is not a land where parents teach their children at home. They show you more is a want of parental instruction; and though they be blessed things, these Sabbath-schools, they are indications of something wrong, for it we all taught our children there would be no need of strangers to say to our children ‘Know the Lord.’“

I trust you will never give up that excellent puritanical habit of catechising your children at home. Any father or mother who entirely gives up a child to the teaching of another has made a mistake. There is no teacher who wishes to absolve a parent from what he ought to do himself. He is an assistant, but he was never intended to be a substitute. Teach your children; bring up your old catechisms again, for they are after all blessed means of instruction, and the next generation shall outstrip those that have gone before it; for the reason why many of you are weak in the faith is this, you did not receive instruction in your youth in the great things of the gospel of Christ. If you had, you would have been so grounded, and settled, and firm in the faith, that nothing could by any means have moved you. I beseech you, then, understand truth, and then you will be more likely to hold fast by it.

But, then, Christian men, above all things, if you would hold fast the truth, pray yourselves right into it. The way to get a doctrine is to pray till you get it. An old divine says, “I have lost many things I learned in the house of God, but I never lost anything I ever learned in the closet.” That which a man learns on his knees, with his Bible open, he will never forget. Well, have you ever bowed your knees, and said, “Open thou mind eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law?” If you have seen that wondrous thing you will never forget it. He that prays himself into a truth, will never be got out of it by the very devil himself, though he were to put on the garb of an angel of light. Pray yourselves into the truth.

But the two great holdfasts are here given — faith and love. If ye would hold the truth fast, put your faith in Jesus Christ, and have an ardent love towards him.

Believe the truth. Do not pretend to believe it, but believe it thoroughly. And he who does believe it, and fixes his faith first in Christ, and then in all Christ says, will not be likely to let it go. Why, we do not believe religion, most of us. We pretend to believe it, but we do not believe it with all our heart and all our soul, with all our might and all our strength — not with that "faith which is in Christ Jesus;" for if we did, come storms, come trials, like Luther of old, we should not flinch because of persecution, but stand fast in the evil day, having our faith fixed upon a rock.

And then the second holdfast is love. Love Christ and love Christ's truth because it is Christ's truth, for Christ's sake, and if you love the truth you will not let it go. It is very hard to turn a man away from the truth he loves. "Oh!" says one, "I cannot argue with you about it, but I cannot give it up: I love it, and cannot live without it; it is a part of myself, woven into my very nature; and though my opponent says that bread is not bread, and I cannot prove that it is, yet I know I go and eat it; it is wonderfully like it to me, and it takes away my hunger. He says that stream is not a pure stream; I cannot prove that it is, but I go and drink of it, and find it the river of the water of life to my soul." And he tells me that my gospel is not a true one: well, it comforts me, it sustains me in my trials, it helps me to conquer sin and to keep down my evil passions, and brings me near to God, and if my gospel be not a true one, I wonder what sort of thing a true one is: mine is wonderfully like it, and I cannot suppose that a true gospel would produce better effects. That is the best thing to do, to believe the Word, to have so full a belief in it, that the enemy cannot pull you away. He may try to do it, but you will say, —

"Amidst temptations sharp and long,
My soul to the same refuge flies;
Faith is my anchor, firm and strong
When tempests blow or billows rise."

Hold on then, Christian, to "faith and love which are by Christ Jesus" — two blessed holdfasts, wherewith we grasp the truth.

And now, brethren and sisters. I pray that my Master will enable you to see the importance of what I have uttered. Perhaps you may not think it so important now, especially those of you who are young; but there are some here, the fathers of this church, who will tell you that the older they grow and the longer they live, the more they find truth to be valuable. They may perhaps in their youth have had a little radicalism in them with regard to truth, but they are conservative in their regard to the truth, we began to be conservative as soon as we believed it, and held it fast and never let it go. I think the chief fault of the present day is, that in seeking to be liberal we do not hold the truth firmly enough. I met some time ago with the case of an eminent minister in the gospel, a brother whom I respect and esteem, who preached a sermon from the text, "Prove all things." A young man was there who was professedly a believer in Christianity; but such was the style in which the subject was handled, that after hearing that sermon he went home and bought some infidel works, and the consequence is, that he has become entirely apostate even from virtue itself, and has forsaken everything that he once held to be true. I say, send your anchor right down, young Christian, and let whatever may come against you, hold on still by that truth; and you may yet even then "prove all things." But while you are doing it, remember to "hold fast that which is good." Do not "prove all things" by giving up that which is good to do it.

Now such of you as know not the Lord, if you ever are saved, let me tell you that the most likely place for you to meet with salvation is under a pure gospel ministry. Therefore there is a lesson for you. Attend where the gospel is preached.

Again: the most likely way for you ever to receive God's grace is to believe God's truths. Never kick against God's doctrines, but receive them. And I have one thing to say to thee this morning, if in thy heart, poor sinner, thou canst say, "I believe God's gospel to be a glorious gospel," thou art not far from something else. If thou canst say, "I submit to all its demands, I believe God just if he destroys me, and if he saves me, it will be of his sovereign mercy only," then, sinner, there are good hopes of thee; thou hast proceeded some way on the road to heaven. If thou canst but do one thing more, and say, "Though he slay me yet I trust in him," and if thou canst come to the cross of Christ, and say, "Jesus, I love thy gospel

and I love thy truth; if I perish, I will perish believing all thy truth, I will perish clasping thy cross; if I die, I will die owning that thou art a just and gracious God, and still in my poor way, holding fast the form of sound words," I tell thee, poor soul, God will never damn thee. If thou dost believe in Jesus Christ, and holdest fast his words, he will look upon thee in love, he will say, "Poor soul! though he does not know that these truths are his, yet he thinks them precious; though he dares not hope that they belong to him, yet he will fight for them; though he does not know that he is really a soldier of the cross, chosen of me ere time began, yet see how valiantly he strives for me;" and the Lord will say, "Poor soul, thou lovest the things that thou thinkest are not thine own — I will make thee rejoice in them as thine own, by my grace; thou lovest election, though thou thinkest thou art not elect — that is an evidence that thou art mine." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be baptized, and thou shalt be saved."

And now, my brethren, stand fast, I beseech you. If my tears, if my bended knees, if my cries, yea, if my blood could prevail with you to lay to heart what I have said this morning, here should be tears, and cries, and blood too — if I could but make you all hold fast in these evil, perilous times. Hold fast, ah! with the tenacity of the dying hand of the sinking mariner — "Hold fast," I beseech you, "the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

GOD ALONE
THE SALVATION OF HIS PEOPLE

SERMON NO. 80

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MAY 18, 1856,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"He only is my rock and my salvation." — Psalm 62:2.

How noble a title. So sublime, suggestive, and overpowering. "MY ROCK." It is a figure so divine, that to God alone shall it ever be applied.

Look on yon rocks and wonder at their antiquity, for from their summits a thousand ages look down upon us. When this gigantic city was as yet unfounded they were grey with age; when our humanity had not yet breathed the air, 'tis said that these were ancient things; they are the children of departed ages. With awe we look upon these aged rocks, for they are among nature's first-born. You discover, embedded in their bowels, the remnants of unknown worlds, of which, the wise may guess, but which, nevertheless, they must fail to know, unless God himself should teach them what hath been before them. You regard the rock with reverence, for you remember what stories it might tell, if it had a voice; of how through igneous and aqueous agency, it has been tortured into the shape it now assumes. Even so is our God pre-eminently ancient. His head and his hair are white like wool, as white as snow, for he is "the ancient of days," and we are always taught in Scripture to remember, that he is "without beginning of years." Long ere creation was begotten, "from everlasting to everlasting," he was God.

"My rock!" What a history the rock might give you of the storms to which it has been exposed; of the tempests which have raged in the ocean at its base, and of the thunders which have disturbed the skies above its head; while it, itself, has stood unscathed by tempests, and unmoved by

the buffettings of storms. So with our God. How firm hath he stood — how steadfast hath he been — though the nations have reviled him, and "the kings of the earth have taken counsel together!" By merely standing still he hath broken the ranks of the enemy, without even stretching forth his hand! With motionless grandeur like a rock he hath broken the waves, and scattered the armies of his enemies, driving them back in confusion. Look at the rock again: see how firm and unmoved it stands! It doth not stray from place to place, but it abideth fast for evermore. Other things have changed, islands have been drowned beneath the sea, and continents have been shaken; but see, the rock stands as steadfast as if it were the very foundation of the whole world, and could not move till the wreck of creation, or the loosening of the bands of nature. So with God: how faithful he is in his promises! how unalterable in his decrees! how unswerving! how unchanging!

The rock is immutable, nought hath been worn from it. Yon old granite peak hath gleamed in the sun, or worn the white veil of winter snow — it hath sometimes worshipped God with bare uncovered head, and at other times the clouds furnished it with veiling wings, that like a cherub, it might adore its Maker, but yet itself hath stood unchanged. The frosts of winter have not destroyed it, nor have the heats of summer melted it. It is the same with God. Lo, he is my rock; he is the same, and his kingdom shall have no end. Unchangeable he is in his being, firm in his own sufficiency; he keeps himself immutably the same; and "therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." The ten thousand uses of the rock, moreover, are full of ideas as to what God is. You see the fortress standing on a high rock, up which the clouds themselves can scarcely climb, and up whose precipices the assault cannot be carried, and the armed cannot travel, for the besieged laugh at them from their eminence. So is our God a sure defense; and we shall not be moved if he hath "set our feet upon a rock, and established our goings." Many a giant rock is a source of admiration from its elevation; for on the summit we can see the world outspread below, like some small map; we mark the river or broadly spreading stream, as if it were a vein of silver inlaid in emerald. We discover the nations beneath our feet, "like drops in a bucket," and the islands are "very little things" in the distance, while the sea itself seems but a basin of water, held in the hand of a mighty giant. The mighty God is such a rock; we stand on him, and look down on

the world, counting it to be a mean thing. We have climbed to Pisgah's top, from the summit of which we can see across this world of storms and troubles to the bright land of spirits — that world unknown to ear or eye, but which God hath revealed to us by the Holy Ghost. This mighty rock is our refuge, and it is our high observatory, from which we see the unseen, and have the evidence of things which as yet, we have not enjoyed. I need not, however, stop to tell you all about a rock, we might preach for a week upon it; but we give you that for your meditation during the week. "He is my rock." How glorious a thought! How safe am I, and how secure: and how may I rejoice in the fact, that when I wade through Jordan's stream he will be my rock! I shall not walk upon a slippery foundation, but I shall tread on him who cannot betray my feet; and I may sing, when I am dying, "He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him."

We now leave the thought of the rock, and proceed to the subject of our discourse, which is this: that God alone is the salvation of his people.

"He ONLY is my rock and my salvation."

We shall notice, first, the great doctrine, that God only is our salvation; secondly, the great experience, to know and to learn that "he only is my rock and my salvation"; and, thirdly, the great duty, which you may guess at, which is, to give all the glory and all the honor, and place all our faith on him who "only is our rock and our salvation."

I. The first thing is, THE GREAT DOCTRINE — that God "only is our rock and our salvation." If any one should ask us what we would choose for our motto, as preachers of the gospel, we think we should reply, "God only is our salvation." The late lamented Mr. Denham has put at the foot of his portrait, a most admirable text, "Salvation is of the Lord." Now, that is just an epitome of Calvinism; it is the sum and the substance of it. If any one should ask you what you mean by a Calvinist, you may reply, "He is one who says, salvation is of the Lord." I cannot find in Scripture any other doctrine than this. It is the essence of the Bible. "He only is my rock and my salvation." Tell me anything that departs from this and it will be a heresy; tell me a heresy, and I shall find its essence here, that it has departed from this great, this fundamental, this rocky truth, "God is my rock and my salvation." What is the heresy of Rome, but the addition of something to the perfect merits of Jesus Christ — the bringing in of the

works of the flesh, to assist in our justification? and what is that heresy of Arminianism but the secret addition of something to the complete work of the Redeemer? You will find that every heresy, if rough to the touchstone, will discover itself here, it departs from this, “He only is my rock and my salvation.”

Let us now explain this doctrine fully. By the term “salvation” here, I understand not simply regeneration and conversion, but something more. I do not reckon that to be salvation which regenerates me, and then puts me in such a position that I may fall out of the covenant and be lost; I cannot call that a bridge which only goes half-way over the stream; I cannot call that salvation, which does not carry me all the way to heaven, wash me perfectly clean, and put me among the glorified who sing constant hosannahs around the throne. By salvation, then if I may divide it into parts, I understand deliverance, preservation continually through life, sustentation, and the gathering up of the whole in the perfecting of the saints in the person of Jesus Christ at last.

1. By salvation, I understand deliverance from the house of bondage, wherein by nature I am born, and being brought out into the liberty wherewith Christ makes us free, together with a putting “on a rock, and establishing my goings.” This I understand to be wholly of God. And I think I am right in that conclusion, because I find in Scripture that man is dead; and how can a dead man assist in his own resurrection? I find that man is utterly depraved, and hates the divine change. How can a man, then, work that change which he himself hates? I find man to be ignorant of what it is to be born again, and like Nicodemus, asking the foolish question, “How can a man enter again into his mother’s womb, and be born?” I cannot conceive that a man can do that which he does not understand: and if he does not know what it is to be born again, he cannot make himself to be born again. No. I believe man to be utterly powerless in the first work of his salvation. He cannot break his chains, for they be not chains of iron, but chains of his own flesh and blood; he must first break his own heart before he can break the fetters that bind him. And how should man break his own heart? What hammer is that which I can use upon my own soul to break it, or what fire can I kindle which can dissolve it? Nay, deliverance is of God alone. The doctrine is affirmed continually to Scripture; and he who doth not believe it doth not receive affirmed continually in Scripture;

and he who doth not believe it doth not receive God's truth. Deliverance is of God alone; "Salvation is of the Lord."

2. And if we are delivered and made alive in Christ, still preservation is of the Lord alone. If I am prayerful, God makes me prayerful: if I have graces, God gives me graces; if I have fruits, God gives me fruits; if I hold on in a consistent life, God holds me on in a consistent life. I do nothing whatever towards my own preservation, except what God himself first does in me. Whatever I have, all my goodness is of the Lord alone. Wherein I sin, that is my own; but wherein I act rightly, that is of God, wholly and completely. If I have repulsed an enemy, his strength nerved my arm. Did I strike a foeman to the ground? His strength sharpened my sword and gave me courage to strike the blow. Do I preach his word? It is not I, but grace that is in me? Do I live to God a holy life? It is not I, but Christ that liveth in me? Am I sanctified? I did not sanctify myself; God's Holy Spirit sanctifies me. Am I weaned from the world? I am weaned by God's chastisements. Do I grow in knowledge? The great Instructor teaches me. I find in God all I want; but I find in myself nothing. "He only is my rock and my salvation."

3. And again: sustentation also is absolutely requisite. We need sustentation in providence for our bodies, and sustentation in grace for our souls. Providential mercies are wholly from the Lord. It is true that rain falls from heaven, and waters the earth, and "maketh it bring forth and bud, that there may be seed, for the sower, and bread for the eater;" but out of whose hand cometh the rain, and from whose fingers do the dew drops distil? It is true, the sun shines, and makes the plants grow, and bud, and bring forth the blossom, and his heat ripens the fruit upon the tree; but who gives the sun his light, and who scatters the genial heat from him? It is true, I work and toil; this brow sweats; these hands are weary; I cast myself upon my bed, and there I rest, but I do not "sacrifice to mine own drag," nor do I ascribe my preservation to my own might. Who makes these sinews strong? who makes these lungs like iron, and who makes these nerves of steel? "God only is the rock of my salvation." He only is the salvation of my body and the salvation of my soul. Do I feed on the word? That word would be no food for me unless the Lord made it food for my soul, and helped me to feed upon it. Do I live on the manna which comes down from heaven? What is that manna, but Jesus Christ himself

incarnate, whose body and whose blood I eat and drink. Am I continually receiving fresh increase of might? Where do I gather my might? My salvation is of him: without him I can do nothing. As a branch cannot bring forth fruit except it abide in the vine, no more can I except I abide in him.

4. Then if we gather the three thoughts in one. The perfection we shall soon have, when we shall stand yonder, near God's throne, will be wholly of the Lord. That bright crown which shall sparkle on our brow, like a constellation of brilliant stars, shall have been fashioned only by our God. I go to a land, but it is a land which the plough of earth hath never upturned, though it be greener than earth's best pastures, and though it be richer than all her harvests ever saw. I go to a building of more gorgeous architecture than man hath builded; it is not of mortal architecture; it is "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens". All I shall know in heaven, will be given by the Lord; and I shall say, when at last I appear before him, —

"Grace all the work shall crown
Through everlasting days;
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise."

II. And now, beloved, we come to THE GREAT EXPERIENCE. The greatest of all experience, I take it, is to know that "he only is our rock and our salvation." We have been insisting upon a doctrine; but doctrine is nothing unless proved in our experience. Most of God's doctrines are only to be learned by practice — by taking them out into the world, and letting them bear the wear and tear of life. If I ask any Christian in this place whether this doctrine is true, if he has had any deep experience, he will reply, "True! ay, that it is; not one word in God's Bible is more true than that, for indeed salvation is of God alone." "He only is my rock and my salvation." But, beloved, it is very hard to have such an experimental knowledge of the doctrine that we never depart from it. It is very hard to believe that "salvation is of the Lord." There are times when we put our confidence in something else but God, and sin by linking hand-in-hand with God — something besides him. Let me now dwell a little upon the experience which will bring us to know that salvation is of God alone.

The true Christian will confess that salvation is of God alone effectively; that is, that "he works in him to will and to do of his own pleasure." Looking back on my past life, I can see that the dawning of it all was of God; of God effectively. I took no torch with which to light the sun; but the sun did light me. I did not commence my spiritual life — no, I rather kicked and struggled against the things of the Spirit: when he drew me, for a time, I did not run after him: there was a natural hatred in my soul of everything holy and good. Wooings were lost upon me — warnings were cast to the wind — thunders were despised; and as for the whispers of his love, they were rejected as being less than nothing and vanity. But, sure I am, I can say now, speaking on behalf of myself, and of all who know the Lord, "He only is my salvation, and your salvation too." It was he who turned your heart, and brought you down on your knees. You can say in very deed, then —

"Grace taught my soul to pray,
Grace made my eyes o'erflow."
And coming to this moment, you can say, —
"'Tis grace has kept me to this day,
And will not let me go."

I remember, when I was coming to the Lord, I thought I was doing it all myself, and though I sought the Lord earnestly, I had no idea the Lord was seeking me. I do not think the young convert is at first aware of him. One day when I was sitting in the house of God, I was not thinking much about the man's sermon, for I did not believe it. The thought struck me, "How did you come to be a Christian?" I sought the Lord. "But how did you come to seek the Lord?" The thought flashed across my mind in a moment — I should not have sought him unless there had been some previous influence in my mind to make me seek him. I am sure you will not be many weeks a Christian, certainly not many months, before you will say, "I ascribe my change wholly to God." I desire to make this my constant confession. I know there are some who preach one gospel in the morning, and another at night — who preach a good sound gospel in the morning, because they are preaching to saints, but preach falsehood in the evening, because they are preaching to sinners. But there is no necessity to preach truth at one time and falsehood at another. "The word of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." There no need to put anything else in it, in order to bring sinners to the Savior. But, my brothers, you must confess

that “Salvation is of the Lord.” When you turn back to the past, you must say, “My Lord, whatever I have, thou gavest it me. Have I the wings of faith? I was a wingless creature once. Have I the eyes of faith? I was a blind creature once; I was dead, till thou madest me alive; blind, till thou openedst my eyes; my heart was a loathsome dunghill, but thou puttest pearls there, if pearls there be, for pearls are not the produce of dunghills; thou hast given me all I have;” And so, if you look at the present, if you experience be that of a child of God, you will trace all to him; not only all you have had in the past, but all you have now. Here you are, sitting in your pew this morning; now, I just want you to review where you stand. Beloved, do you think you would be where you are now if it were not for divine grace? Only think what a strong temptation you had yesterday, they did “consult to cast you down from your excellency;” perhaps you were served like I am sometimes. The devil sometimes seems to drag me right to the edge of a precipice of sin by a kind of enchantment, making me forget the danger by the sweetness which surrounds it; and just when he would push me down, I see the yawning gulph beneath me, and some strong hang put out, and I hear a voice saying, “I will preserve him from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom.” Do you not feel, that ere this sun goes down you will be damned, if grace does not keep you? Have you anything good in your heart that grace did not give you? If I thought I had a grace that did not come from God, I would trample it beneath my feet, as not being a godly virtue; I would guess it to be but a counterfeit, for it could not be right if it did not come from the mint of glory. It may look ever so much like the right thing: but it is certainly bad unless it came from God. Christian! canst thou say, of all things past and present, “He only is my rock and my salvation?”

And now look forward to the future. Man! think how many enemies thou hast; how many rivers thou hast to cross, how many mountains to climb, how many dragons to fight, how many lions’ teeth to escape, how many fires to pass through, how many floods to wade. What thinkest thou, man? Can thy salvation be of anything except of God! Oh! if I had not that everlasting arm to lean upon, I would cry, “Death! hurl me anywhere; anywhere out of the world.” If I had not that one hope, that one trust, bury me ten thousand fathoms deep beneath creation, where my being might be forgotten! Oh! put me far away, for I am miserable if I have not

God to help me all my journey through. Are you strong enough to fight with one of your enemies without your God? I trow not. A little silly maid may cast a Peter down, and cast you down too, if God do not keep you. I beseech you, remember this; I hope you know it by experience in the past; but try to remember it in the future, wherever you go, "Salvation is of the Lord." Do not get looking at your heart, do not get examining to see whether you have anything to recommend you, but remember, "Salvation is of the Lord." "He only is my rock and my salvation."

Effectively, it all comes of God; and I am sure we must add, meritoriously. We have experienced that salvation is wholly of him. What merits have I? If I were to scrape together all I ever had, and then come to you and beg all you have got, I should not collect the value of a farthing among you all. We have heard of some Catholic, who said that there was a balance struck in his favor between his good works and his bad ones, and therefore he went to heaven. But there is nothing of the sort here; I have seen many people, many kinds of Christians, and many odd Christians, but I never yet met with one who said he had any merits of his own when he came to close quarters. We have heard of perfect men, and we have heard of men perfectly foolish, and we have thought the characters perfectly alike. Have we any merits of our own? I am sure we have not, if we have been taught of God. Once we thought we had; but there came a man called Conviction into our house one night, and took away our gloryings. Ah! we are vile still. I don't know whether Cowper said quite right, when he said, —

"Since the dear hour that brought me to thy foot,
And cut up all my follies by the root,
I never trusted in an arm but thine —
Nor hoped but in thy righteousness divine!"

I think he made a mistake, for most Christians get trusting in self at times, but we are forced to own that "salvation is of the Lord," if we consider it meritoriously.

My dear friends, have you experienced this in your own hearts? Can you say "amen" to that, as it goes round? Can you say, "I know that God is my helper?" I dare say you can, most of you; but you will not say it so well as you will by-and-bye, if God teach you. We believe it, when we commence the Christian life; we know it afterwards; and the longer we live, the more we find it to be the truth — "Cursed is he that trusteth in man

and maketh flesh his arm, but blessed is he who trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is." In fact, the crown of Christian experience is to be delivered from all trust in self or man, and to be brought to rely wholly and simply on Jesus Christ. I say, Christian, thy highest and noblest experience is not to be groaning about thy corruption, is not to be crying about thy wanderings, but is to say —

"With all my sin, and care, and woe,
His Spirit will not let me go."

"Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief." I like what Luther says: "I would run into Christ's arms if he had a drawn sword in his hands." Trust is called venturesome believing; but as an old divine says, there is no such thing as venturesome believing; we cannot venture on Christ; it is no venture at all; there is no hap-hazard in the least degree. It is a holy and heavenly experience, when we can go to Christ, amid the storm, and say, "Oh! Jesus, I believe I am covered by thy blood;" when we can feel ourselves to be all over rages, and yet can say, "Lord, I believe that through Christ Jesus, ragged though I am, I am fully absolved." A saint's faith is little faith when he believes as a saint; but a sinner's faith is true faith when he believes as a sinner. The faith, not of a sinless being, but the faith of a sinful creature — that is the faith which delights God. Go, then, Christian: ask that this may be thy experience, to learn each day, "He only is my rock and my salvation."

III. And now, in the third place, we speak of THE GREAT DUTY. We have had the great experience; now we must have the great duty.

The great duty is — if God only be our rock, and we know it, are we not bound to put all our trust in God, to give all our love to God? If God be all I have, sure, all I have shall be God's. If God alone is my hope, sure, I will put all my hope upon God; if the love of God is alone that which saves, sure, he shall have my love alone. Come, let me talk to thee, Christian, for a little while, I want to warn thee not to have two Gods, two Christs, two friends, two husbands, two great Fathers; not to have two fountains, two rivers, two suns, or two heavens, but to have only one. I want to bid thee now, as God hath put all salvation in himself, to bring all thyself unto God. Come, let me talk to thee!

In the first place, Christian, never join anything with Christ. Wouldest thou stitch thy old rags into the new garment he giveth? Wouldest thou put new wine into old bottles? Wouldst thou put Christ and self together? Thou mightest as well yoke an elephant and an emmet; they could never plough together. What! wouldst thou put an archangel in the same harness with a worm, and hope that they would drag thee through the sky! How inconsistent! how foolish! What! thyself and Christ? Sure, Christ would smile; nay, Christ would weep, to think of such a thing! Christ and man together? CHRIST AND CO? No, it never shall be; he will have nothing of the sort; he must be all. Note how inconsistent it would be to put anything else with him; and note, again, how wrong it would be. Christ will never bear to have anything else places with him. He calls them adulterers and fornicators that love anything else but him; he will have thy whole heart to trust in him, thy whole soul to love him, and thy whole life to honor him. He will not come into thy house, till thou puttest all the keys at his girdle; he will not allow thee to give him all the keys but one; he will not come till thou givest him garret, parlour, drawing-room, and cellar too. He will make thee sing —

"Yet if I might make some reserve,
And duty did not call,
I love my God with zeal so great,
That I should give him all."

Mark thee, Christian; it is a sin to keep anything from God.

Again, Christ is very grieved if you do it. Assuredly you do not desire to grieve him who shed his blood for you. Surely there is not one child of God here who would like to vex his blessed elder Brother. There cannot be one soul redeemed by blood who would like to see those sweet blessed eyes of our best beloved bedewed with tears. I know ye will not grieve your Lord; will ye? But I tell you ye will vex his noble spirit if ye love aught but him; for he is so fond of you, that he is jealous of your love. It is said, concerning his Father, that he is "a jealous God," and he is a jealous Christ you have to deal with; therefore, put not your trust in chariots, stay not yourselves in horses, but say, "He only is my rock and my salvation."

I beg thee, mark also, one reason why thou shouldest not look at anything else; and that is, if thou lookest at anything else thou canst not see Christ so well. "Oh!" thou sayest, "I can see Christ in his mercies;" but thou

canst not see him so well there, as if you viewed his person. No man can look at two objects at the same time, and see both distinctly. You may afford a wink for the world, and a wink for Christ; but you cannot give Christ a whole look and a whole eye, and the world half an eye too. I beseech thee, Christian, do not try it. If thou lookest on the world, it will be a speck in thine eye; if thou trustest in anything but him, betwixt two stools thou wilt come to the ground, and a fearful fall wilt thou have. Therefore, Christian, look thou only on him. “He only is my rock and my salvation.”

Mark thee, again, Christian, I would bid thee never put anything else with Christ; for as sure as ever thou dost, thou wilt have the whip for it. There never was a child of God who harboured one of the Lord’s traitors in his heart, but he always had a charge laid against him. God has sent out a search warrant against all of us; and do you know what he has told his officers to search for? He has told them to search for all our lovers, all our treasures, and all our helpers. God cares less about our sins as sins, than he does about our sins, or even our virtues, as usurpers of his throne. I tell thee, there is nothing in the world thou settest thy heart upon that shall not be hung upon a gallows higher than Haman’s. If thou lovest anything but Christ, he will make it to do penance; if thou lovest thy house better than Christ, he will make it a prison to thee; if thou lovest thy child better than Christ, he will make it an adder in thy breast to sting thee; if thou lovest thy daily provisions better than Christ, he will make thy drink bitter and thy food like gravel stones in thy mouth, till thou comest to live wholly on him. There is nothing which thou hast, which he cannot turn into a rod, if thou lovest it better than him; and rest assured he will do so, if thou makest it anything to rob thy Christ.

And, mark thee, once again, if thou lookest at anything save God, thou wilt soon go into sin. If the mariner will steer by the pole-star he shall go to the north; but if he steers sometimes by the pole-star and sometimes by another constellation, he knoweth not where he shall go. If thou dost not keep thine eye wholly on Christ, thou wilt soon be wrong. If thou ever dost give up the secret of thy strength, namely, thy trust I Christ; if thou ever dalliest with the Delilah of the world, and lovest thyself more than Christ, the Philistines will be upon thee, and shear thy locks, and take thee out to grind at the mill, till thy God give thee deliverance by means of thy

hair growing once more, and bringing thee to trust wholly in the Savior. Keep thine eye, then, fixed on Jesus; for if thou dost turn away from him, how ill wilt thou fare! I bid thee, Christian, beware of thy graces; beware of thy virtues; beware of thy experience; beware of thy prayers; beware of thy hope; beware of thy humility. There is not one of thy graces which may not damn thee, if they are left alone to themselves. Old Brooks saith, when a woman hath a husband, and that husband giveth unto her some choice rings, she putteth them on her fingers; and if she should be so foolish as to love the rings better than her husband; if she should care only for the jewels, and forget him who gave them; how angry would the husband be, and how foolish she would be herself! Christian! I warn thee, beware of thy graces; for they may prove more dangerous to thee than thy sins. I warn thee of everything in this world; for everything has this tendency, especially a high estate. If we have a comfortable maintenance, we are most likely not to look so much to God. Ah! Christian, with an independent fortune, take care of thy money; beware of thy gold and silver; it will curse thee if it comes between thee and thy God. Always keep thine eye to the cloud, and not to the rain, — to the river, and not to the ship that floateth on its bosom. Look thee not to the sunbeam, but to the sun; trace thy mercies to God, and say perpetually, “He only is my rock and my salvation.”

Lastly, I bid thee once more to keep thine eye wholly on God, and on nothing in thyself, because what art thou now, and what wast thou ever, but a poor damned sinner if thou wert out of Christ! I had been preaching the other day all the former part of the sermon, as a minister; presently I thought I was a poor sinner, and then, how differently I began to speak! The best sermons I ever preach are those I preach, not in my ministerial capacity, but as a poor sinner preaching to sinners. I find there is nothing like a minister recollecting that he is nothing but a poor sinner, after all. It is said of the peacock, that, although he has fine feathers, he is ashamed of his black feet: I am sure that we ought to be ashamed of ours. However gay our feathers may appear at times, we ought to think of what we should be if grace did not help us. Oh! Christian, keep thine eye on Christ, for out of him thou art no better than the damned in hell; there is not a demon in the pit but might put thee to the blush, if thou art out of Christ. Oh that thou wouldest be humble! Recollect what an evil heart thou hast within thee,

even when grace is there. Thou hast grace — God loves thee; but recollect, thou hast a foul cancer in thy heart still. God has removed much of thy sin, but still the corruption remains. We feel that though the old man is somewhat choked, and the fire somewhat damped by the sweet waters of the Holy Spirit's influence, yet it would blaze up worse than before, if God did not keep it under. Let us not glory in ourselves, then. The slave need not be proud of his descent: he has the brand-mark upon his hand. Out upon pride! Away with it! Let us rest wholly and solely upon Jesus Christ.

Now, just one word to the ungodly — you who do not know Christ. You have heard what I have told you, that salvation is of Christ alone. Is not that a good doctrine for you? For you have not got anything, have you? You are a poor, lost, ruined sinner. Hear this, then, sinner: thou hast nothing, and thou dost not want anything, for Christ has all. "Oh!" sayest thou, "I am a bond slave." Ah! but he has got the redemption. "Nay," sayest thou, "I am a black sinner." Yes, but he has got the bath that can wash thee white. Sayest thou, "I am leprous?" Yes, but the good Physician can take thy leprosy away. Sayest thou, "I am condemned?" Ay, but he has got the acquittal warrant signed and sealed, if thou dost believe in him. Sayest thou, "But I am dead?" Ay, but Christ has life, and he can give thee life. Thou wantest nothing of thine own — nothing to rely on but Christ; and if there be a man, woman or child here, who is prepared to say solemnly after me, with his or her heart, "I take Christ to be my Savior, with no powers and no merits of my own to trust in; I see my sins, but I see that Christ is higher than my sins; I see my guilt, but I believe that Christ is mightier than my guilt;" — I say, if any one of you can say that, you may go away and rejoice, for you are heirs of the kingdom of heaven.

I must tell you a singular story, which was related at our church meeting, because there may be some very poor people here who may understand the way of salvation by it. One of the friends had been to see a person who was about to join the church; and he said to him, "Can you tell me what you would say to a poor sinner who came to ask you the way of salvation?" "well," said he, "I do not know — I think I can hardly tell you; but it so happened that a case of this sort did occur yesterday. A poor woman came into my shop, and I told her the way; but it was in such a homely manner that I don't like to tell you." "Oh, yes, tell me; I should

like to hear it," Well, she is a poor woman, who is always pawning her things, and by-and-bye she redeems them again. I did not know how to tell her better than this. I said to her: — 'Look here; your soul is in pawn to the devil; Christ has paid the redemption money; you take faith for your ticket, and so you will get your soul out of pawn.'" Now, that was the most simple, but the most excellent way of imparting a knowledge of salvation to this woman. It is true our souls were pawned to Almighty vengeance; we were poor, and could not pay the redemption money; but Christ came and paid it all, and faith is the ticket which we use to get our souls out of pawn. We need not take a single penny with us; we have only to say, "Here, Lord, I believe in Jesus Christ. I have brought no money to pay for my soul, for there is the ticket; the money has been paid long ago. This is written in thy word: 'The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin.'" If thou takest that ticket, thou wilt get thy soul out of pawn; and thou wilt say, "I'm forgiven, I'm forgiven, I'm a miracle of grace." May God bless you, my friends, for Christ's sake.

THE GOD OF THE AGED

SERMON NO. 81-82

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MAY 25, 1856,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

The substance of which was also delivered at Stambourne, Essex, on the commemoration of the Jubilee of his Grandfather, the REV. JAMES SPURGEON, Tuesday 27th May. 1856

"Even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you. I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you. — Isaiah 46:4.

Those will be peculiar circumstances under which I shall stand up to address the people next Tuesday; circumstances which perhaps seldom occur, — possibly may never have occurred before. It might have been more in order that the aged minister should himself address the people; but nevertheless, as it is his own choice, so it must be; and I shall draw my consolation from the third verse, where it is declared, that though God be the God of the close of our life, yet he is also the God of its beginning. He carries us from the very womb; therefore the child may trust in God, as well as the grey head; and he who giveth special blessings to the hoary hairs does also crown the head of the young with his perpetual favor, if they be his children.

"Even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you."

Will you allow me to expound the doctrine of this text, and then to show you how it is carried out, especially in the time of old age?

I. THE DOCTRINE OF THE TEXT I hold to be, the constancy of God's love, its perpetuity, and its unchangeable nature. God declares that he is not simply the God of the young saint; that he is not simply the God of the middle-aged saint: but that he is the God of the saints in all their ages from

the cradle to the tomb. “Even to old age I am he;” or, as Lowth beautifully and more properly translates it: “Even to old age I am the same, and even to hoary hairs will I carry you.”

The doctrine, then is twofold: that God himself is the same, whatever may be our age; and that God’s dealings towards us, both in providence and in grace, his carryings and his deliverings, are alike unchanged.

As to the first part of the doctrine, that God himself is unchanged when we come to old age, surely I have no need to prove that. Abundant testimonies of Scripture declare God to be an immutable being, upon whose brow there is no furrow of old age, and whose strength is not enfeebled by the lapse of ages; but if we need proofs, we might look even abroad on nature, and we should from nature guess that God would not change during the short period of our mortal life. Seemeth it unto me a hard thing, that God should be the same for seventy years, when I find things in nature that have retained the same impress and image for many more years? Behold the sun! The sun that led our fathers to their daily labor, lighteth us still; and the moon by night is unchanged, — the self-same satellite, glittering with the light of her master, the sun. Are not the rocks the same? And are there not many ancient trees, which remain well night the same for multitudes of years, and outlive centuries? Is not the earth, for the most part, the same? Have the stars lost their light? Do not the clouds still pour their rain upon the earth? Does not the ocean still beat with its one great pulse of ebb and flow? Do not the winds still howl, or breathe in gentle gales upon the earth? Doth not the sun still shine? Do not plants grow as heretofore? Hath the harvest changed? Hath God forgotten his covenant of day and night? Hath he yet brought another flood upon the earth? Doth it not still stand in the water and out of the water? Surely, then, if changing nature, made to pass away in a few more years, and to be “dissolved with fervent heat,” remains the same through the cycles of seventy years, may we not believe that God, who is greater than nature, the creator of all worlds, would still remain the same God, through so brief a period? Does not that suffice? Then, we have another proof. Had we a new God, we should not have the Scriptures: had God changed, then we should need a new Bible. But the Bible which the infant readeth is the Bible of the grey head; the Bible which I carried with me to my Sunday School, I shall sit in my bed to read, when, hoary-headed, all strength shall

fail save that which is divine. The promise which cheered me in the young morning of life, when first I consecrated myself to God, shall cheer me when my eyes are dim with age, and when the sunlight of heaven lights them up, and I see bright visions of far-off worlds, where I hope to dwell for ever. The word of God is still the same; there is not one promise removed. The doctrines are the same; the truths are the same; all God's declarations remain unchanged for ever; and I argue, from the very fact that his years do not change him. Look at our worship — is not that the same? Oh! hoary heads! well can ye remember how ye were carried to God's house in your childhood; and ye heard the self-same hymns that now ye hear. Have they lost their savor? Have they lost their music? At times, when prayer is offered, ye remember that your ancient pastor prayed the same petition fifty years ago; but the petition is as good as ever. It is still unchanged; it is the same praise, the same prayer, the same expounding, the same preaching. All our worship is the same. And with many it is the same house of God, where first they were dedicated to God in baptism. Surely, my brethren, if God had changed, we should have been obliged to make a new form of worship; if God had not been immutable, we should have needed to have sacrificed our sacred service to some new method; but since we find ourselves bowing like our fathers, with the same prayers, and canting the same psalms, we rightly believe that God himself must be immutable.

But we have better proofs than this that God is still unchanged. We learn this from the sweet experience of all the saints. They testify that the God of their youth is the God of their later years. They own that Christ "hath the dew of his youth." When they saw him first, as the bright and glorious Immanuel, they thought him "altogether lovely;" and when they see him now, they see not one beauty faded, and not one glory departed: he is the self-same Jesus. When they first rested themselves on him, they thought his shoulders strong enough to carry them; and they find those shoulders still as mighty as ever. They thought at first his bowels did melt with love, and that his heart was beating high with mercy; and they find it is still the same. God is unchanged; and therefore they "are not consumed." They put their trust in him, because they have not yet marked a single alteration in him. His character, his essence, his being, and his deeds are all the same; and, moreover, to crown all, we cannot suppose a God, if we cannot

suppose a God immutable. A God who changed would be no God. We could not grasp the idea of Deity if we once allowed our minds to take in the thought of mutability. From all these things, then, we conclude that "even from old age he is the same, and that even to hoary hairs he will carry us."

2. The other side of the doctrine is this, not only that God is the same in his nature, but that he is the same in his dealings; that he will carry us the same, that he will deliver us the same, that he will bear us the same as he used to do. And here, also, we need scarcely to prove to you that God's dealings towards his children are the same, especially when I remind you that God's promises are made not to age, but to people, to persons, and to men. It has been recently declared by some ministers, that certain ages are more likely to be converted than other ages. We have heard persons state, that should a man outlive thirty years of life, if he has heard the Gospel, he is not at all likely to be saved; but we believe a more palpable, bare-faced lie was never uttered in the pulpit, for we have, ourselves, known multitudes who have been saved at forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, and even bordering on the grave at eighty. We find some promises in the Bible made to some particular conditions; but the main, the great, the grand promises, are made to sinners as sinners; they are made to the elect, to the chosen ones, irrespective of their age or condition. We hold, that the man who is old, can be justified in the same way as the way who is young; that the robe of Christ is broad enough to cover the strong full-grown man as well as the little child. We believe the blood of Christ avails to wash out seventy years, as well as seventy days of sin; that "with God there is no respect of persons," that all ages are alike to him, and that "whosoever cometh unto Christ, he will in no wise case out," and sure we are, that all the good things of the Bible are as good at one time as at another. The perfect robe of righteousness that I wear, will that change by years? The sanctification of the Spirit, will that be destroyed by years? The promises, will they shake? The covenant, will that be dissolved? I can suppose that the everlasting hills shall melt; I can dream that the eternal mountains shall be dissolved, like the snow upon their peaks; I can conceive that the ocean may be licked up with tongues of forked flame; I can suppose the sun stopped in his career; I can imagine the moon turned into blood; I can conceive the stars falling from the vault of night; I can imagine "the wreck

of nature and the crash of worlds;" but I cannot conceive the change of a single mercy, a single covenant blessing, a single promise, or a single grace, which God bestows upon his people, for I find every one of them in itself stamped with immutability, and I have no reason to put this merely upon guess-work. I find, when I turn over the whole Bible that the experience of the saints, one thousand, two thousand, three thousand years ago, was just the same as the experience of the saints now; and if I find God's mercy is unchanged from David's time till mine, can I conceive that God, who lasts the same for thousands, would change during the brief period of seventy? Nay, still we hold that he will carry us, and he will bear us in old age as well as in our youth. But, besides that, we have living witnesses, living testimonies. I could fetch up from the ground floor of this place, and from the galleries, not one or two, but twenty, yea a hundred living witnesses, who, rising up, would tell you that God doth carry them now, as he did of old, and that he still doth bear them. I need not appeal to my friends, or they would stand up in their pews, and with tears trickling down their cheeks, they would say, "Young men, young women, trust your God! he hath not forsaken me!" I find that —

"Even down to old age, all his people do prove,
His sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love;
And when hoary hairs do their temples adorn,
Like lambs they now still in his bosom are borne."

Ask you aged friend, ask any aged Christian, whether he finds God has, in the least forsaken him, and you will see him shake his head, and hear him say, "O young man, if I had another seventy years to live, I would trust him still, for I have not found him fail all the way that the Lord God hath led me. Not one promise hath failed, but all hath come to pass;" and I think I see him lifting up his hand in the midst of the assembly, and saying, "I have nothing to regret but my sin. If I had to live over again, I should only want to put myself into the hands of the same Providence, to be led and directed by the self-same grace." Beloved, we need not prove to you farther, for living witnesses do testify, that God carries out his promise, "I have made and will bear; even I will carry and deliver you."

II. But now we come to our real subject, which is, to consider THE TIME OF OLD AGE AS A SPECIAL PERIOD, and to mark, therefore, the constancy of divine love — that God bears and succors his servants in their later

years. I cannot imagine or dream that I need offer any apology for preaching to aged people. If I were in sundry stupid circles where people call themselves ladies and gentlemen, and always want to conceal their ages, I might have some hesitation; but I have nothing to do with that here. I call an old man, an old man, and an old woman, an old woman; whether they think themselves old or not is nothing to me. I guess they are, if they are getting anyway past sixty, on to seventy or eighty. Old age is a time of peculiar memories, of peculiar hopes, of peculiar solicitudes, of peculiar blessedness, and of peculiar duties; yet in all this, God is the same, although man be peculiar.

(1.) First, old age is a time of peculiar memory; in fact, it is the age of memory. We young men talk of remembering such-and-such things a certain time ago; but what is our memory, compared to our father's? Our father looks back on three or four times the length of time over which we cast our eyes. What a peculiar memory the old man has! How many joys he can remember! How many times has his heart beat high with rapture and blessedness! How many times has his house been gladdened with plenty! How many harvest homes has he seen! How many treadings of the vintage! How many times has he heard the laugh run round the ingle fire! How many times have his children shouted in his ear, and rejoiced around him! How many times have his own eyes sparkled with delight! How many hill Mizars has he seen! How many times has he had sweet banquetting with the Lord! How many periods of communion with Jesus! How many hallowed services hath he attended! How many songs of Zion hath he sung! How many answered prayers have gladdened his spirit! How many happy deliverances have made him laugh for joy! When he looks back, he can string his mercies together by the thousand! and looking upon them all, he can say, though he will think of many troubles that he has had to pass through, "Surely, goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life." God hath been with him to hoary hairs, and even to old age he hath carried him. His joys he looks back upon as proof of God's constancy.

And how many griefs hath he had! How many times hath that old man been to the chamber of sickness! How many times hath that aged sister been stretched on the bed of affliction! How many diseases can he or she look back upon! How many hours of bitter travail and pain! How many

seasons of trouble, infirmity, and approachings to the grave? How many times hath the old man tottered very near that bourne from which no traveler can return? How many times hath he had the Father's rod upon his shoulders? And yet, looking back upon all, he can say, "Even to old age he is the same; and even to hoary hairs he hath carried me." How frequently, took, hath that old man gone to the grave where he hath buried many he has loved? There, perhaps, he has laid a beloved wife, and he goes to weep there; or, the husband sleeps, while the wife is yet alive. Sons and daughters, too, that old man can remember — snatched away to heaven almost as soon as they were born; or, perhaps, permitted to live until their prime, and then cut down just in their youthful glory. How many of the old friends he hath welcomed to his fireside hath he buried? How frequently has he been forced to exclaim, "Though friends have departed, yet 'there is a Friend who sticketh closer than a brother,' on him I still trust, and to him I still commit my soul."

And mark, moreover, how many times temptation hath shattered that venerable saint! how many conflicts hath he had with doubts and fears! how many wrestlings with the enemy! how often he hath been tempted to forsake his faith! how frequently he hath had to stand in the thickest part of the battle; but yet he has been preserved by mercy, and not quite cut down. He has been enabled to persevere in the heavenly road. How travel-sore are his feet! how blistered by the roughness of the way, but he can tell you, that notwithstanding all these things, Christ hath "kept him till this day, and will not let him go;" and his conclusion is, "even to old age God hath been the same, and even to hoary hairs he hath carried him."

There is one said reflection which we are obliged to mention when we look upon the bald head of the aged saint, and that is, how many sins he hath committed! Ah! my beloved, however pure may have been your lives, you will be obliged to say, "Oh! how have I sinned, in youth, in middle age, and even when infirmities have gathered around me! Would to God I had been holy! How often have I forsaken God! how frequently have I wandered from him! alas! how often have I provoked him! How frequently have I doubted his promises, when I had no cause whatever to distrust him! how frequently has my tongue sinned against my heart! how constantly have I violated all I knew to be good and excellent! I am forced to say now, in my grey old age, —

"Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling."
I am still —
"A monument of grace,
A sinner saved by blood"

I have no hope now, save in the blood of Christ, and can only wonder how it is that Christ could have preserved me so long. Truly, I can say, "Even to old age he is the same, and even to hoary hairs he hath carried me."

(2.) The aged man, too, hath peculiar hopes. He hath no such hopes as I or my young friends here. He hath few hopes of the future in this world; they are gathered up into a small space, and he can tell you, in a few words, what constitutes all his expectation and desire. But he has one hope, and that is the very same which he had when he first trusted in Christ; it is a hope "undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them that are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." Let me talk a little of that hope, and you will see from it that the Christian is the same as ever he was; and even down to hoary hairs God deals the same with him. My venerable brother, what is the ground of thy hope? Is it not the same as that which animated thee when thou wast first united with the Christian Church? Thou saidst then, "My hope is in the blood of Jesus Christ." I ask thee, brother, what is thy hope now, and I am sure thou wilt answer, "I do not hope to be saved because of my long service, nor because of my devotedness to God's cause."

"All my hope on Christ is staid,
All my help from him I bring:
He covers my defenceless head
With the shadow of his wing."

And, my brother, what is the reason of thy hope? If thou art asked what reason thou hast to believe thou art a Christian, thou wilt say, "The self-same reason I gave at the Church-meeting." When I came before it, I said, then "I believe myself to be a child of God, because I feel myself to be a sinner, and God has given me grace to put my trust in Jesus." I think that is all the reason you have to believe yourself a child of God now. At times you have some evidence, as you call it; but there are hours when your graces and virtues are obscured, and you cannot see them, for gloomy doubts prevail, and you will confess, I am sure, that the only way to get rid of your doubts will be, to come and say, again —

"A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On Christ's kind arms I fall;
He's still my strength and righteousness,
My Savior and my all."

And the object or end of hope, is not that the same? What was your hope when you first went to the wicket gate? Why, your hope was that you might arrive at the land of the blessed. And is it not the same now? Is your hope of heaven changed? Do you wish for anything else, or for anything better? "No," you will say, "I thought when I started I should one day be with Jesus; that is what I expect now. I feel that my hope is precisely the same. I want to be with Jesus, to be like him, and to see him as he is." And is not the joy of that hope just the same? How glad you used to be when your minister preached about heaven, and told you of its pearly gates and streets of shining gold! and has it lost any of its beauty in your eyes now? Do you not remember, that in your father's house, at family prayer, one night, they sang, —

"Jerusalem, my happy home,
Name, ever dear to me!
When shall my labors have an end.
In joy, and peace, and thee"?

Cannot you sing that now? Do you want any other city besides Jerusalem? Do you remember how they used to rise up sometimes in the house of God, when you were children, and sing, —

"On Jordan's stormy banks I stand,
And cast a wishful eye!"

Will not that hymn do for you now even better than it did for you then? You can now sing it, as your old father used to sing it, with a firm heart, and yet with a quivering lip. The hope that ravished you then ravishes you now. You start at the same watchword. Heaven is your home still.

"There your best friends, your kindred dwell,
There, God your Savior reigns."

Does not all this prove, again, that though our hopes are somewhat more contracted than they were, yet "God is still the same, and even to hoary hairs he will carry us."

(3.) Again, old age is a time of peculiar solicitude. An old man is not anxious about self. He hath not the cares of starting in business, as he once had. He hath no children to launch out in business. He hat not to cast his anxious eyes on his little family. But his solicitude hath somewhat increased in another direction. He hath more solicitude about his bodily frame than he once had. He cannot now run as he used to do; but he must walk with more sober gait. He fears every now and then that the pitcher will be "broken at the cistern;" for "the noise of the grinders is low." He hath no longer that strength of desire he once possessed; his body begins to totter, to shake, and to quiver. The old tenement has stood these fifty years; and who expects a house to last for ever? A bit of mortar has gone off from one place, and a lath out of another; and when a little wind comes to shake it about, he is ready to cry out, "The earthly house of my tabernacle is about to be dissolved." But I told you before, this peculiar solicitude is but another proof of divine faithfulness; for now that you have little pleasure in the flesh, do you not find that God is just the same? and that, though the days are come when you can say, "I have no pleasure in them," yet the days are not come when you can say, "I have no pleasure in him;" but, on the contrary,

"Though all created streams are dry,
His goodness is the same:
With this you still are satisfied,
And glory in his name."

If he had only been your God when you were a strong young man, you might have thought that he loved you for what you could do for him; but, now you have become a poor worn-out pensioner, have you any better proof that he is an unchanging God, because he loves you when you can do so little for him? I tell you, even your bodily pains are but proofs of his love; for he is taking down your old tenement stick by stick, and is building it up again in brighter worlds, never to be taken down any more.

And remember, too, there is another solicitude — a failure of mind, as well as of body. There are many remarkable instances of old men, who have been as gifted in their old age as in their youth; but with the majority the mind becomes somewhat impaired, especially the memory. They cannot remember what was done yesterday, although it is a singular fact that they can remember what was done fifty, sixty, or seventy years ago. They

forget much which they would wish to remember; but still they find that their God is just the same; they find that his goodness does not depend on their memory; that the sweetness of his grace does not depend upon their palate. When they can remember but little of the sermon, they still feel that it leaves as good an impression on their heart as when they were strong in their memories; and thus they have another proof that God, even when their mind faileth a little, carries them down to their hoar hairs, their old age, and that to them he is ever the same.

But the chief solicitude of old age is death. Young men may die soon. Old men must die. Young men, if they sleep, sleep in a siege; old men, if they sleep, sleep in an attack, when the enemy has already made a breach, and is storming the castle. A greyheaded old sinner is a greyheaded old fool; but an aged Christian is an aged wise man. But even the Christian hath peculiar solicitudes about death. He knows he cannot be a long way from his end. He feels that, even in the course of nature, apart from what is called accidental death, there is no doubt but in a few more years he must stand before his God. He thinks he may be in heaven in ten or twenty years; but how short do those ten or twenty years appear! He does not act like a man who thinks a coach is a long way off, and he may take his time; but he is like one who is about to go a journey, and hears the post-horn blowing down the street, and is getting ready. His one solicitude now is, to examine himself whether he is in the faith. He fears that if he is wrong now, it will be terrible to have spent all his life dabbling in profession, and to find at last that he hath got nothing for his pains, except a mere empty name, which must be swept away by death. He feels now how solemn a thing the Gospel is; he feels the world to be as nothing; he feels that he is near the bar of doom. But still, beloved, mark, God's faithfulness is the same; for if he be nearer death, he has the sweet satisfaction that he is nearer heaven; and if he has more need to examine himself than ever, he has also more evidence whereby to examine himself, for he can say, "Well, I know that on such-and-such an occasion the Lord heard my prayer; at such-and-such a time he manifested himself to me, as he did not unto the world," and, though examination presses more upon the old, still they have greater materials for it. And here, again, is another proof of this grand truth. "Even unto old age I am the same," says God; "and even to hoar hairs will I carry you."

(4.) And now, once more, old age hath its peculiar blessedness. Some time ago I stepped up to an old man whom I saw when preaching at an anniversary, and I said to him, “Brother, do you know there is no man in the whole chapel I envy so much as you!” “Envy me,” he said — “why, I am eighty-seven.” I said, “I do, indeed; because you are so near your home, and because I believe that in old age there is a peculiar joy, which we young people do not taste at present. You have got to the bottom of the cup, and it is not with God’s wine as it is with man’s. Man’s wine becomes dregs at the last, but God’s wine is sweeter the deeper you drink of it.” He said, “That’s very true, young man,” and shook me by the hand. I believe there is a blessedness about old age that we young men know nothing of. I will tell you how that is. In the first place, the old man has a good experience to talk about. The young men are only just trying some of the promises; but the old man can turn them over one by one, and say, “There, I have tried that, and that, and that.” We read them over and say, “I hope they are true;” but the old man says, “I know they are true.” And then he begins to tell you why. He has got a history for everyone, like a soldier for his medals; and he takes them out, and says, “I will tell you when the Lord revealed that to me; just when I lost my wife: just when I buried my son; just when I was turned out of my cottage, and did not get work for six weeks; or, at another time, when I broke my leg.” He begins telling you the history of the promises, and says, “There, now. I know they are all true.” What blessed thing, to look upon them as paid notes; to bring out the old cheques that have been cashed and say, “I know they are genuine, or else they would not have been paid.” Old people have not the doubts young people have about the doctrine. Young people are apt to doubt; but when they get old, they begin to get solid and firm in the faith. I love to get some of my old brethren, to talk with me concerning the good things of the kingdom. They do not hold the truth with their two fingers, as some of the young men do; but they get right hold of it, and nobody can take it from their grasp. Rowland Hill once somewhat lost his way in a sermon, and he turned to this text — “Oh, Lord, my heart is fixed.” “Young men,” he said, “there is nothing like having your hearts fixed. I have been all these years seeking the Lord; now my heart is fixed. I never have any doubts now about election, or any other doctrine. If man brings me a new theory, I say, ‘Away with it!’ I stand hard and fast by the truth alone.” An old gentleman wrote me a little time ago, and said I was a little

too high. He said he believed the same doctrine as I do, but he did not think so when he was as old as I am. I told him it was just as well to begin right as to end right, and it was better to be right at the beginning than to have to rub off so many errors afterwards. An old countryman once came to me, and said, “Ah! young man, you have had too deep a text; you handled it well enough, but it is an old man’s text, and I felt afraid to hear you announce it.” I said, “Is God’s truth dependant on age? If the thing is true, it is just as well to hear it from me as from any one else; and if you can hear it better anywhere else, you have got the opportunity.” Still, he did not think that God’s precious truths were suitable to young people; but I hold they are suitable to all God’s children; therefore I love to preach them. But how blessed it is to come to a position in life where you have good anchorage for your faith, — where you can say,

“Should all the forms that hell devise,
Assail my faith with treacherous art.”
I shall not be very polite to them —
“I’ll call them vanity of lies,
And bind the Gospel to my heart.”

And I think there are peculiar joys which the old Christian has, of another sort; and that is, he has peculiar fellowship with Christ, more than we have. At least, if I understand John Bunyan rightly, I think he tells us that when we get very near to heaven there is a very glorious land. “They came into the country of Beulah, whose air was very sweet and pleasant; the way lying directly through it, they solaced themselves there for a season. Yes, here they heard continually the singing of birds, and saw every day the flowers appear on the earth, and heard the voice of the turtle in the land. In this country the sun shineth night and day; wherefore this was beyond the valley of the Shadow of Death, and also out of the reach of Giant Despair; neither could they from this place so much as see Doubting-castle. Here they were within sight of the City they were going to: also here met them some of the inhabitants thereof: for in this land the shining ones commonly walked, because it was upon the borders of heaven. In this land also the contract between the Bride and the Bridegroom was renewed; yea, here, ‘as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so doth their God rejoice over them.’ Here they had not want of corn and wine; for in this place they met with abundance of what they had sought for in all their pilgrimages. Here they heard voices from out of the

City, loud voices, saying, ‘Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh! Behold, His reward is with him!’ Here all the inhabitants of the country called them, ‘the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord.’“ There are peculiar communings, peculiar openings of the gates of paradise, peculiar visions of glory, just as you come near to it. It stands to reason that the nearer you get to the bright light of the celestial city, the clearer shall be the air. And therefore there are peculiar blessednesses belonging to the old, for they have more of this peculiar fellowship with Christ. But all this only proves that Christ is the same; because, when there are fewer earthly joys, he gives more spiritual ones. Therefore, again, it becomes the fact — “Even to old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you.”

(5.) And now, lastly, the aged saint has peculiar duties. There are certain things which a good man can do, which nobody else ought to do, or can do well. And that is one proof of divine faithfulness; for he says of his aged ones, “They shall bring forth fruit in old age;” and so they do. I will just tell you some of them.

Testimony is one of the peculiar duties of old men. Now, suppose I should get up, and say, “I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread,” some one would reply, “Why, you are not twenty-two yet; what do you know about it?” But if an old man gets up, and says, “I have been young, and now am I old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread,” with what power that testimony comes! Suppose I say to you, “Trust in God, with all thy troubles and trials; I can bear witness that he will not forsake you;” you will reply, “Oh! yes, young man, but you have not had many troubles; you have not been a child of God above these six years; how should you know?” But up gets an old Christian — and well do I remember an ancient Christian rising up at the sacramental table, and saying, “Dear brethren, we are met again around this table, and I think all an old man can do is to bear testimony to his master. These five-and-forty years, I have walked in his truth. Young people, hear what I have to say. He has been my God these five-and-forty years, and I have no fault to find with him; I have found religion’s ways to be ways of pleasantness, and her paths to be paths of peace.” You know, if you hear an old man talk, you pay greater attention to what he says, from the fact that he is old. I remember hearing the late Mr. Jay. I fancy that if I had heard the same sermon preached by a young man, I should not

have thought so much of it; but there appeared such a depth in it because is came from an old man, standing on the borders of the grave; it was like an echo of the past, coming to me, to let me hear my God's faithfulness, that I might trust for the future. Testimony is the duty of old men and women; they should labor whenever they can to bear testimony to God's faithfulness, and to declare that now also, when they are old and grey-headed, their God forsakes them not.

There is another duty which is peculiarly the work of the aged, and that is, the work of comforting the young believer. There is no one more qualified that I know of than a kindhearted old men to convert the young. I know that down in some parts of the country there is a peculiar breed of old man, who for the good of the Church I heartily hope will soon become extinct. As soon as they see a young believer, they look at him with suspicion, expecting him to be a hypocrite; they go off to his house, and find everything satisfactory; but they say, "I was not so confident as that when I was young; young man, you must be kept back a bit." Then there are some hard questions put, and the poor young child of God gets hardly pressed, and is looked upon with suspicion, because he does not come up to their standard. But the men I allude to are such as some I have here, with whom I delight to speak, who tell you not hard things, but utter gentle words: who say, "I was imprudent when I was a young man. I know that when I was a little child I could not have answered these questions; I do not expect so much from you as from one who is a little older." And when the young Christian comes to them they say, "Do not fear; I have gone through the waters, and they have not overflown me; and through the fire, and have not been burned. Trust in God; 'for down to old age he is the same, and to hoar hairs he will carry you.'"

Then there is another work that is the work of the old, and that is, the work of warning. If an old man were to go out in the middle of the road, and shout out to you to stop, you would stop sooner than you would if a boy were to do it; for then you might say, "Out of the way, you young rascal," and go on still. The warnings of the old have great effect; and it is their peculiar work to guide the imprudent, and warn the unwary.

Now I have done, except the application. And I want to speak to three classes of persons.

What a precious thought, young men and women, is contained in this text — “That even to old age God will be the same to you; and even down to you hoar hairs he will not forsake you!” You want a safe investment; well, here is an investment safe enough. A bank may break; but heaven cannot. A rock may be dissolved, and if I build a house on that it may be destroyed; but if I build on Christ, my happiness is secure for ever. Young man! God’s religion will last as long as you will; his comforts you will never be able to exhaust in all your life; but you will find that the bottle of your joys will be as full when you have been drinking seventy years, as it was when you first began. Oh! do not buy a thing that will not last you: “eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.” Oh! how pleasant it is to be a young Christian! How blessed it is to begin in the early morning to love and serve God! The best old Christians are those who were once young Christians. Some aged Christians have but little grace, for this reason — that they were not young Christians. Oh! I have sometimes thought, that if there is any man who will have an abundant entrance into heaven, it is the man who in early life was brought to know the Lord. You know, going into heaven will be like the ships going into harbour. There will be some tugged in almost by miracle, “saved so as by fire;” others will be going in just with a sheet or two of canvas — they will “scarcely be saved!” but there will be some who will go in with all their canvas up, and unto these “an abundant entrance shall be ministered into the kingdom of their God and Savior.” Young people! it is the ship that is launched early in the morning that will get an abundant entrance, and come into God’s haven in full sail.

Now, you middle aged men, you are plunged in the midst of business, and are sometimes supposing what will become of you in your old age. But is there any promise of God to you when you suppose about to-morrows? You say, “Suppose I should live to be as old as so-and-so, and be a burden upon people, I should not like that.” Don’t get meddling with God’s business; leave his decrees to him. There is many a person who thought he would die in a workhouse, that has died in a mansion; and many a woman that thought she would die in the streets, has died in her bed, happy and comfortable, singing of providential grace and everlasting mercy. Middle aged man! listen to what David says, again, “I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging

bread." Go on, then, unsheath thy sword once more. "The battle is the Lord's;" leave thy declining years to him, and give thy present years to him. Live to him now, and he will never cast you away when you are old. Do not lay up for old age and keep back from the cause of God; but rather trust God for the future. Be "diligent in business;" but take care you do not hurt your spirit, by being too diligent, by being grasping and selfish. Remember you will

"Want but little here below,
Nor want that little long."

And lastly, my dear venerable fathers in the faith, and mothers in Israel, take these words for your joy. Do not let the young people catch you indulging in melancholy, sitting in your chimney corner, grumbling and growling, but go about cheerful and happy, and they will think how blessed it is to be a Christian. If you are surly and fretful, they will think the Lord has forsaken you; but keep a smiling countenance, and they will think the promise is fulfilled. "And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you; I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you." Do, I beseech you, my venerable friends, try to be of a happy temperament and cheerful spirit, for a child will run away from a surly old man; but there is not a child in the world but loves his grand-papa if he is cheerful and happy. You can lead us to heaven if you have got heaven's sunlight on your face; but you will not lead us at all if you are cross and ill-tempered, for then we shall not care about your company. Make yourselves merry with the people of God, and try to live happily before men; for so will you prove to us — to a demonstration, that even to old age God is with you, and that when your strength faileth, he is still your preservation. May God Almighty bless you, for the Savior's sake! Amen.

The foregoing sermon exceeding the limits of the usual Penny Number, and it being desirous that it should be given in full, it has been deemed advisable to make the present a double number.

THE INFIDEL'S SERMON TO THE PIRATES.

A native of Sweden who had imbibed infidel views, had occasion to go from one port to another in the Baltic Sea. When he came to the place whence he expected to sail, the vessel was gone. On inquiring, he found a fishing boat going the same way, in which he embarked. After being for some time out to sea, the men observing that he had several trunks and chests on board, concluded he must be very rich, and therefore agreed among themselves to throw him overboard. This he heard them express, which gave him great uneasiness. However, he took occasion to open one of his trunks, which contained some books. Observing this, they remarked among themselves that it was not worth while to throw him into the sea, as they did not want any books, which they supposed were all the trunks contained. They asked him if he were a priest. Hardly knowing what reply to make them, he told them he was; and at this they seemed much pleased, and said they would have a sermon on the next day, as it was the Sabbath. This increased the anxiety and distress of his mind, for he knew himself to be as incapable of such an undertaking as it was possible for any one to be, as he knew very little of the Scriptures; neither did he believe in the inspiration of the Bible. At great length they came to a small rocky island, perhaps a quarter of a mile in circumference, where was a company of pirates, who had chosen this little sequestered spot to deposit their treasures. He was taken to a cave, and introduced to an old woman, to whom they remarked that they were to have a sermon preached the next day. She said she was very glad of it, for she had not heard the Word of God for a great while. His was a trying case, for preach he must; still he knew nothing about preaching. If he refused, or undertook to preach and did not please, he expected it would be his death. With these thoughts he passed a sleepless night; and in the morning his mind was not settled upon anything. To call upon God, whom he believed to be inaccessible, was altogether vain. He could devise no way whereby he might be saved. He walked to and fro, still shut up in darkness striving to collect something to say to them, but could not think of even a single sentence. When the appointed time for the service arrived, he entered the cave, where he found the men assembled. There was a seat prepared for him, and a table with a Bible on it. They sat for the space of half an hour in profound silence; and

even then the anguish of his soul was as great as human nature was capable of enduring. At length these words came to his mind: “Verily, there is a reward for the righteous: verily, there is a God that judgeth in the earth.” He arose and delivered them; then others words presented themselves, and so on, till his understanding became opened, and his heart enlarged in a manner astonishing to himself. He spoke upon subject suited to their condition; the reward of the righteous, the judgments of the wicked, the necessity of repentance, and the importance of a change of life. The matchless love of God to the children of men had such a powerful effect upon the minds of these wretched beings, that they were melted into tears. Nor was he less astonished at the unbounded goodness of Almighty God, in thus interposing to save his spiritual as well as his natural life; and well might he exclaim, “This is the Lord’s doing and marvellous in our eyes.” Under a deep sense of God’s goodness, his heart became filled with thankfulness, which it was out of his power to express. What a marvellous change was thus suddenly brought about by Divine interposition! He who a little while before disbelieved in communion with God and the soul, became as humble as a little child; and they who were so lately meditating on his death, now were filled with love and goodwill towards each other, particularly towards him; manifesting affectionate kindness, and willing to render him all the assistance in their power. The next morning they fitted out one of their vessels, and conveyed him whither he desired. From that time he became a changed man; from being a slave to the influence of infidelity, he was brought to be a sincere believer in the power and efficacy of the truth as it is in Jesus. [How marvellous the providence of God, and the sovereignty of his grace! Who is he that has stepped beyond the range of Almighty love? or has sinned too much to be forgiven? Reader! are you an infidel? What would you do in a similar situation? What other doctrine than that of Scripture would benefit pirates? Certainly not your own. What would you like to teach your own children? Certainly not your own sentiments. You feel that you would not wish to hear your own offspring blaspheming God. Moreover, forgive us, if we declare our opinion that thou knowest that there is a God, though with thy lips thou deniest him. Think, we beseech thee, of thy Maker, and of his Son, the Savior; and may Eternal love bring even thee to the Redeemer. — C. H. S.]

NO. 3 — THE ACTRESS.

An actress in one of the English provincial or country theatres, was, one day, passing through the streets of the town in which she then resided, when her attention was attracted by the sound of voices, which she heard in a poor cottage before her. Curiosity prompted her to look in at an open door, when she saw a few poor people sitting together, one of whom, at the moment of her observation, was giving out the following hymn, which the others joined in singing: — "Depth of mercy! can there be Mercy still reserved for me?" The tune was sweet and simple, but she heeded it not. The words had riveted her attention, and she stood motionless, until she was invited to enter by the woman of the house, who had observed her standing at the door. She complied, and remained during a prayer which was offered up by one of the little company; and uncouth as the expressions might seem in her ears, they carried with them a conviction of sincerity on the part of the person then employed. She quitted the cottage, but the words of the hymn followed her; she could not banish them from her mind, and at last she resolved to procure the book which contained the hymn. The more she read it, the more decided her serious impressions became. She attended the ministry of the Gospel, read her hitherto neglected and despised Bible, and bowed herself in humility and contrition of heart before him whose mercy she felt she needed, whose sacrifices are those of a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and who has declared that therewith he is well pleased. Her profession she determined at once, and for ever, to renounce; and for some little time excused herself from appearing on the stage, without, however, disclosing her change of sentiments, or making known her resolution finally to leave it. The manager of the theater called upon her one morning, and requested her to sustain the principal character in a new play which was to be performed the next week for his benefit. She had frequently performed this character to general admiration; but she now, however, told him her resolution never to appear as an actress again, at the same time giving her reasons. At first he attempted to overcome her scruples by ridicule, but this was unavailing; he then represented the loss he should incur by her refusal, and concluded his arguments by promising, that if to oblige him she would act on this occasion, it should be the last request of the kind he would ever make.

Unable to resist his solicitations, she promised to appear, and on the appointed evening went to the theater. The character she assumed required her, on her first entrance, to sing a song; and when the curtain was drawn up, the orchestra immediately began the accompaniment; but she stood as if lost in thought and as one forgetting all around her, and her own situation. The music ceased, but she did not sing; and supposing her to be overcome by embarrassment, the band again commenced. A second time they paused for her to begin, and still she did not open her lips. A third time the air was played, and then, with clasped hands, and eyes suffused with tears, she sang, not the words of the song, but — "Depth of mercy! can there be Mercy still reserved for me!" It is almost needless to add, that the performance was suddenly ended; many ridiculed, though, some were induced from that memorable night to "consider their ways," and to reflect on the wonderful power of that religion which could so influence the heart and change the life of one hitherto so vain, and so evidently pursuing the road which leadeth to destruction. It would be satisfactory to the reader to know, that the change in Miss — — — was as permanent as it was singular; she walked consistently with her profession of religion for many years, and at length became the wife of a minister of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. [Perhaps, dear reader, you are a great transgressor, then you fear there is no forgiveness for you; let this remove your fears. You may be the vilest creature out of hell, and yet grace can make you as pure as the angels in heaven. God would be just should he damn you, but he can be just and yet save you. Do you feel that the Lord has a right over you to do as he pleases? Do you feel that you have no claim upon him? Then, rejoice, for Jesus Christ has borne your guilt, and carried your sorrows, and you shall assuredly be saved. You are a sinner in the true sense of that word, then remember Jesus came to save sinners, and you among the rest, if you know yourself to be a sinner. — C. H. S.]

"Lo, th' incarnate God ascended, Pleads the merit of his blood: Venture on him, venture wholly, Let no other trust intrude; None but Jesus Can do helpless sinners good."

INDWELLING SIN

SERMON NO. 83

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JUNE 1, 1856,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"Then Job answered the Lord and said, Behold, I am vile." — Job 11:3, 4.

Surely, if any man had a right to say, I am not vile, it was Job; for, according to the testimony of God himself, he was "a perfect and an upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil." Yet we find even this eminent saint, when by his nearness to God he had received light enough to discover his own condition, exclaiming, "Behold I am vile." We are sure that what Job was forced to say, we may each of us assent unto, whether we be God's children or not; and if we be partakers of divine grace, it becomes a subject of great consideration for us, since even we, although we be regenerated, must exclaim, each one for himself, "Behold, I am vile."

It is a doctrine, as I believe, taught us in Holy Writ, that when a man is saved by divine grace, he is not wholly cleansed from the corruption of his heart. When we believe in Jesus Christ all our sins are pardoned; yet the power of sin, albeit that it is weakened and kept under by the dominion of the new-born nature which God doth infuse into our souls, doth not cease, but still tarrieth in us, and will do so to our dying day. It is a doctrine held by all the orthodox, that there dwelleth still in the regenerate, the lusts of the flesh, and that there doth still remain in the hearts of those who are converted by God's mercy, the evil of carnal nature. I have found it very difficult to distinguish, in experimental matters, concerning sin. It is usual with many writers, especially with hymn writers, to confound the two natures of a Christian. Now, I hold that there is in every Christian two natures, as distinct as were the two natures of the God-Man Christ Jesus. There is one nature which cannot sin, because it is born of God — a spiritual nature, coming directly from heaven, as pure and as perfect as

God himself, who is the author of it; and there is also in man that ancient nature which, by the fall of Adam, hath become altogether vile, corrupt, sinful, and devilish. There remains in the heart of the Christian a nature which cannot do that which is right, any more than it could before regeneration, and which is as evil as it was before the new birth — as sinful, as altogether hostile to God's laws, as ever it was — a nature which, as I said before, is curbed and kept under by the new nature in a great measure, but which is not removed and never will be until this tabernacle of our flesh is broken down, and we soar into that land into which there shall never enter anything that defileth.

It will be my business this morning, to say something of that evil nature which still abides in the righteous. That is does remain, I shall first attempt to prove; and the other points I will suggest to you as we proceed.

I. The FACT, the great and terrible fact, that EVEN THE RIGHTEOUS HAVE IN THEM EVIL NATURES. Job said, "Behold, I am vile." He did not always know it. All through the long controversy he had declared himself to be just and upright: he had said, "My righteousness I will hold fast, and I will not let it go;" and notwithstanding he did scrape his body with a potsherd, and his friends did vex his mind with the most bitter revilings, yet he still held fast his integrity, and would not confess his sin; but when God came to plead with him, he had no sooner listened to the voice of God in the whirlwind, and heard the question, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" than at once he put his finger on his lips, and would not answer God, but simply said, "Behold, I am vile." Possibly some may say, that Job was an exception to the rule; and they will tell us, that other saints had not in them such a reason for humiliation; but we remind them of David, and we bid them read the 51st penitential Psalm, where we find him declaring that he was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did his mother conceive him; confessing, that he had sin within him. In many other places in the Psalms, David doth continually acknowledge and confess, that he is not perfectly rid of sin; that still the evil viper doth twist itself around his heart. Turn also, if you please, to Isaiah. There you have him, in one of his visions, saying that he was a man of unclean lips, and that he dwelt among a people of unclean lips. But more especially, under the gospel dispensation, you find Paul, in that memorable chapter we have been reading, declaring, that he found in "his members a law warring against the

law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin." Yea, we hear that remarkable exclamation of struggling desire and intense agony, "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Do you expect to find yourselves better saints than Job? do you imagine that the confession which befitted the mouth of David is too mean for you? are ye so proud, that ye will not exclaim with Isaiah, "I also am a man of unclean lips?" Or rather, have ye progressed so far in pride, that ye dare to exalt yourselves above the laborious Apostle Paul, and to hope that in you, that is, in your flesh, there dwelleth any good thing? If ye do think yourselves to be perfectly pure from sin, hear ye the word of God: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we say we have no sin, we make God a liar."

But scarcely do I need to prove this, beloved; for all of you, I am sure, who know anything about the experience of a living child of God, have found that in your best and happiest moments sin still dwells in you; that when you would serve your God the best, sin frequently works in you the most furiously. There have been many saints of God who have abstained, for a time, from doing anything they have known to be sin; but still there has not been one who has been inwardly perfect. If a being were perfect, the angels would come down in ten minutes, and carry him off to heaven, for he would be ripe for it as soon as he had attained perfection. I have found in talking to men who have said a good deal about perfection, that after all they really did not believe in any such thing. They have taken with the word and attached a different meaning to it, and either then proved a doctrine which we all knew before, or else supposed a perfection so absurd and worthless, that I would not give three half-pence for it if I might have it. In many of them it is a fault, I believe, of their brains, rather than their hearts; and as John Berridge says, "God will wash their brains before they get to heaven." But why should I stay to prove this, when you have daily proofs of it yourselves? how many times do you feel that corruption is still within you? Mark how easily you are surprised into sin. You rise in the morning, and dedicate yourselves by fervent prayer to God, thinking what a happy day you have before you. Scarce have you uttered your prayer, when something comes to ruffle your spirit, your good resolutions are cast to the winds, and you say, "This day, which I thought would be such a happy one, has suffered, a terrific inroad; I cannot live to God as I

would." Perhaps you have thought, "I will go up stairs, and ask my God to keep me." Well, you were in the main kept by the power of God, but on a sudden something came; an evil temper on a sudden surprised you; your heart was taken by storm, when you were not expecting an attack; the doors were broken open, and some unholy expression came forth from your lips, and down you went again on your knees in private, exclaiming, "Lord, I am vile." I have found out that I have a something in my heart, which, when I have bolted my doors, and think all is safe, creeps forth and undoes every bolt, and lets in the sin. Besides, beloved, you will find in your heart, even when you are not surprised into sin, such an awful tendency to evil, that it is as much as you can do to keep it in check, and to say, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further." Nay, you will find it more than you can do, unless a divine power is with you, and preventing grace restrains your passions and prevents you from indulging your inbred lusts. Ah, soldiers of Jesus, ye have felt — I know ye have felt the uprisings of corruption, for ye know the Lord in sincerity and in truth; and ye dare not, unless you would make yourselves liars to your own hearts, hope to be in this world perfectly free from sin.

Having stated that fact, I must just make a remark upon it, and leave it. How wrong it is of any of us, from the fact of our possessing evil hearts, to excuse our sins. I have known some persons, who profess to be Christians, speak very lightly of sin. There was corruption still remaining, and therefore they said they could not help it. Such persons have no visible part nor lot in God's covenant. The truly loving child of God, though he knows sin is there, hates that sin; it is a pain and misery to him, and he never makes the corruption of his heart as an excuse for the corruption of his life; he never pleads the evil of his nature, as an apology for the evil of his conduct. If any man can, in the least degree, clear himself from the conviction of his own conscience, on account of his daily failings, by pleading the evil of his heart, he is not one of the broken-hearted children of God; he is not one of the tried servants of the Lord, for they groan concerning sin, and carry it to God's throne; they know it is in them — they do not, therefore, leave it, but seek with all their minds to keep it down, In order that it may not rise and carry them away. Mind that, unless you should make what I say a cloak to your licentiousness, and a covering to your guilt.

II. Thus we have mentioned the fact, that the best of men have sin still remaining in them. Now, I will tell you what are the doings of this sin. What does the sin which still remains in our hearts do? I answer —

1. Experience will tell you that this sin exerts a checking power upon every good thing. You have felt, when you would do good, that evil was present with you. Just like the chariot, which might go swiftly down the hill, you have had a clog put upon your wheels; or, like the bird that would mount towards heaven, you have found your sins, like the wires of a cage, preventing your soaring towards the Most High. You have bent your knee in prayer, but corruption has distracted your thoughts. You have attempted to sin, but you have felt "hosannah's languish on your tongue." Some insinuation of Satan has taken fire, like a spark in tinder, and well nigh smothered your soul with its abominable smoke. You would run in your holy duties with all alacrity; but the sin that doth so easily beset you entangles your feet, and when you would be nearing the goal, it trips you up, and down you fall, to your own dishonor and pain. You will find indwelling sin frequently retarding you the most, when you are most earnest. When you desire to be most alive to God — you will generally find sin most alive to repel you. The "evil heart of unbelief" puts itself straight in the road, and saith, "Thou shalt not come this way;" and when the souls says, "I will serve God — I will worship in his temple," the evil heart saith, "Get thee to Dan and Beersheba, and bow thyself before false gods, but thou shalt not approach Jerusalem; I will not suffer thee to behold the face of the Most High." You have often felt this to be the case: a cold hand has been placed upon your hot spirit when you have been full of devotion and prayer. And when you have had the wings of the dove, and thought you could flee away and be at rest, a clog has been put upon your feet, so that you could not mount. Now, that is one of the effects of indwelling sin.

2. But indwelling sin does more than that: it not only prevents us from going forward, but at times even assails us, as well as seeks to obstruct us. It is not merely that I fight with indwelling sin; it is indwelling sin that sometimes makes an assault on me. You will notice, the Apostle says, "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Now, this proves that he was not attacking his sin, but that this sin was attacking him. I do not seek to be delivered from a man against

whom I lead the attack: but it is the man who is opposing from whom I seek to be delivered. And so sometimes the sin that dwelleth in believers flies at us, like some foul tiger of the woods, or some demon, jealous of the celestial spirit within us. The evil nature riseth up: it doth not only seek to stop us in the way, but, like Amalek, it labors to destroy us and cut us off utterly. Did you ever feel, beloved, the attacks of inbred sin? It may be, you have not: but if not, depend upon it you will. Before you get all the way to heaven, you will be attacked by sin. It will not be simply your driving out the Canaanite; but the Canaanite, with chariot of iron, will attempt to overcome you, to drive you out, to kill your spiritual nature, damp the flame of your piety, and crush the new life which God has implanted in you.

3. The evil heart which still remaineth in the Christian, doth always, when it is not attacking or obstructing, still reign and dwell within him. My heart is just as bad when no evil emanates from it, as when it is all over vileness in its external developments. A volcano is ever a volcano; even when it sleeps, trust it not. A lion is a lion, even though he play like a kid; and a serpent, is a serpent, even though you may stroke it while for a season it slumbers; there is still a venom in its sting when its azure scales invite the eye. My heart, even though for an hour, it may not have had an evil thought, is still evil. If it were possible that I could live for days without a single temptation from my own heart to sin, it would be still just as evil as it was before; and it is always either displaying its vileness, or else preparing for another display. It is either loading its cannon to shoot against us, or else it is positively at warfare with us. You may rest assured that the heart is never other than it originally was; the evil nature is still evil; and when there is no blaze, it is heaping up the wood, wherewith it is to blaze another day. It is gathering up from my joys, from my devotions, from my holiness, and from all I do, some materials to attack me at some future period. The evil nature is only evil, and that continually, without the slightest mitigation or element of good. The new nature must always wrestle and fight with it; and when the two natures are not wrestling and fighting, there is no truce between them. When they are not in conflict, still they are foes. We must not trust our heart at any time; even when it speaks most fair, we must call it liar; and when it pretends to the most good, still we must remember its nature, for it is evil, and that continually.

The doings of indwelling sin I will not mention at length: but it is sufficient to let you recognize some of your own experience, that you may see that it is in keeping with that of the children of God, for that you may be as perfect as Job, and yet say, “Behold, I am vile.”

III. Having mentioned the doings of indwelling sin, allow me to mention, in the third place, THE DANGER WE ARE UNDER FROM SUCH EVIL HEARTS. There are few people who think what a solemn thing it is to be a Christian. I guess there is not a believer in the world who knows what a miracle it is to be kept a believer. We little think the miracles that are working all around us. We see the flowers grow; but we do not think of the wondrous power that gives them life. We see the stars shine; but how seldom do we think of the hand that moves them. The sun gladdens us with his light; yet we little think of the miracles which God works to feed that sun with fuel, or to gird him like a giant to run his course. And we see Christians walking in integrity and holiness; but how little do we suspect what a mass of miracles a Christian is. There are as great a number of miracles expended on a Christian every day, as he hath hairs on his head. A Christian is a perpetual miracle. Every hour that I am preserved from sinning, is an hour of as divine a might as that which saw a new-born world swathed in its darkness, and heard “the morning stars sing for joy.” Did ye never think how great is the danger to which a Christian is exposed from his indwelling sin? Come let me tell you.

One danger to which we are exposed from indwelling sin arises from the fact that sin is within us, and therefore it has a great power over us. If a captain has a city, he may for a long preserve it from the constant attacks of enemies without. He may have walls so strong, and gates so well secured, that he may laugh at all the attacks of besiegers; and their sallies may have no more effect upon his walls than sallies of wit. But if there should happen to be a traitor inside the gates — if there should be one who hath charge of the keys, and who could unlock every door and let in the enemy, how is the toil of the commander doubled! for he hath not merely to guard against foes without, but against foes within. And here is the danger of the Christian. I could fight the devil; I could overcome every sin that ever tempted me, if it were not that I had an enemy within. Those Diabolians within do more service to Satan than all the Diabolians without. As Bunyan says in his Holy War, the enemy tried to get some of his

friends within the City of Mansoul, and he found his darlings inside the walls did him far more good than all those without. Ah! Christians, thou couldst laugh at thine enemy, if thou hadst not thine evil heart within; but remember, thine heart keeps the keys, because out of it are the issues of life. And sin is there. The worst thing thou has to fear is the treachery of thine own heart.

And moreover, Christian, remember how many backers thy evil nature has. As for thy gracious life, it finds few friends beneath the sky; but thine original sin hath allies in every quarter. It looks down to hell, and it finds them there, demons ready to let slip the dogs of hell upon thy soul. It looks out into the world, and sees "the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life." It looks around, and it seeth all kinds of men, seeking, if it be possible, to lead the Christian from his steadfastness. It looks into the Church, and it finds all manner of false doctrine ready to inflame lust, and guide the soul from the sincerity of its faith. It looks to the body, and it finds head, and hand, and foot, and all other members ready to be subservient to sin. I could overcome my evil heart if it had not such a mighty host of allies, but it makes my position doubly dangerous, to have foes without the gates, in league and amity with a foe more vile within.

And I would have thee recollect, Christian, one more thing, and that is, that this evil nature of thine is very strong and very powerful — stronger than the new nature, if the new nature were not sustained by Divine power. How old is my old nature? "It is as old as myself," the aged saint may say, "and has become all the stronger from its age." There is one thing which seldom gets weaker through old age — that is, old Adam; he is as strong in his old age as he is in his young age, just as able to lead us astray when our head is covered with grey hairs, as he was in our youth. We have heard it said that growing in grace will make our corruptions less mighty; but I have seen many of God's aged saints, and asked them the question, and they have said, "No," their lusts have been essentially as strong, when they have been many years in their Master's service, as they were at first, although more subdued by the new principle within. So far from becoming weaker, it is my firm belief that sin increases in power. A person who is deceitful becomes more deceitful by practising deceit. So with our heart. It did inveigle us at first, and easily entrapped us, but having learnt a

thousand snares, it doth mislead us now perhaps more easily than before; and although our spiritual nature has been more fully developed, and grown in grace, yet still the old nature hath lost little of its energy. I do not know that the house of Saul waxeth weaker and weaker in our hearts; I know that the house of David waxeth stronger; but I do not know that my heart gets less vile, or that my corruptions become less strong. I believe that if I should ever say my corruptions are all dead, I should hear a voice, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson;" or, "The Philistines be in thee, Samson." Notwithstanding all former victories, and all the heaps upon heaps of sins I may have slain, I should yet be overcome if Almighty mercy did not preserve me. Christian! mind thy danger! There is not a man in battle so much in danger from the shot, as thou art from thine own sin. Thou carriest in thy soul an infamous traitor, even when he speaks thee fair he is not to be trusted; thou hast in thy heart a slumbering volcano, but a volcano of such terrific force that it may shake thy whole nature yet; and unless thou art circumspect, and art kept by the power of God, thou hast a heart which may lead thee into sins the most diabolical, and crimes the most infamous. Take care, O take care, ye Christians! If there were no devil to tempt you, and no world to lead you astray, you would have need to take care of your own hearts. Look, therefore, at home. Your worst foes are the foes of your own households. "Keep thine heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life," and out of it death may issue too, — death which would damn thee if sovereign mercy did not prevent. God grant, my brethren, that we may learn our corruptions in an easy way, and not discover them by their breaking out into open sin.

IV. And now I come to the fourth point, which is, THE DISCOVERY OF OUR CORRUPTION. Job said, "Behold, I am vile." That word "behold" implies that he was astonished. The discovery was unexpected. There are special times with the Lord's people, when they learn by experience that they are vile. They heard the minister assert the power of inbred lust, but perhaps they shook they heads and said, "I cannot go so far as that;" but after a little while they found, by some clearer light from heaven, that it was a truth after all — "Behold, I am vile." I remember preaching a little while ago from some deep text concerning the desperate evil of the heart; and one of my most esteemed friends said, "Well, I have not discovered that," and I thought within myself, what a blessing, brother! I wish I had

not; for it is a most fearful experience to pass through: I dare say there are many here now who say "I trust in no righteousness of my own. I trust in nothing in the world but the blood of Christ; but still I have not discovered the vileness of my heart in the way you have mentioned." Perhaps not, brother; but it may not be many years before you are made to learn it. You may be of a peculiar temperament. God has preserved from all contact with temptations which would have revealed your corruptions, or perhaps he has been pleased, as a reward of his grace for deeds which you have been enabled to do for him, to give you a peaceable life, so that you have not been often tossed about by the tumults of your own soul; but nevertheless, let me tell you, that you must expect to find, in the inmost depths of your heart, a lower depth still. God comfort you, and enable you, when you come out of the furnace, to lie lower than ever at the footstool of divine mercy! I believe we generally find out most of our failings when we have the greatest access to God. Job never had such a discovery of God as he had at this time. God spoke to him in the whirlwind, and then Job said, "I am vile." It is not so much when we are desponding, or unbelieving, that we learn our vileness; we do find out something of it then, but not all. It is when by God's grace we are helped to climb the mount, when we come near to God, and when God reveals himself to us, that we feel that we are not pure in his sight. We get some gleams of his high majesty; we see the brightness of his skirts, "dark — with insufferable light;" and after having been dazzled by the sight, there comes a fall: as if, smitten by the fiery light of the sun, the eagle should fall from his lofty heights, even to the ground. So with the believer. He soars up to God, and on a sudden down he comes. "Behold," he says, "I am vile. I had never known this if I had not seen God. Behold, I have seen him; and now I discover how vile I am." Nothing shows blackness like exposure to light. If I would see the blackness of my own character, I must put it side by side with spotless purity; and when the Lord is pleased to give us some special vision of himself, some sweet intercourse with his own blessed person, then it is that the soul learns, as it never knew before, with an agony perhaps which it never felt, even when at first convinced of sin, "Behold, I am vile." God is pleased to do this. Lest we should be "exalted above measure, by the abundance of the revelation," he sends us this "thorn in the flesh," to let us see ourselves after we have seen him.

There are many men who never know much of their vileness till after the blood of Christ has been sprinkled on their consciences, or even till they have been many years God's children. I met, some time ago, with the case of a Christian, who was positively pardoned before he had a strong sense of sin. "I did not," he said, "feel my vileness, until I heard a voice, 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions;' and after that, I thought how black I had been. I did not think of my filthiness," said he, "till after I saw that I had been washed." I think there are many of God's people, who, though they had some notion of their blackness before they came to Christ, never knew how thoroughly vile they were till afterwards. They thought then, "How great must have been my sin to need such a Savior! how desperate my filth, to require such a washing! how awful my guilt, to need such an atonement as the blood of Christ." You may rest assured, that the more you know of God and of Christ, the more you will know of yourself; and you will be obliged to say, as you did before, "Behold, I am vile;" vile in an extraordinary sense, even as you never guessed or fancies until now. "Behold, I am vile!" "I am vile, indeed!" No doubt many of you will still think, that what I say concerning your evil nature is not true, and you may, perhaps, imagine that grace has cut your evil nature up; but you know little about spiritual life, if you suppose that. It will not be long before you find the old Adam as strong in you as ever; here will be a war carried on in your heart to your dying day, in which grace shall prevail, but not without sighs, and groans, and agonies, and wrestlings, and a daily death.

V. Here is the way in which God discovers our vileness to ourselves. Now, if it be true that we are still vile, WHAT ARE OUR DUTIES? And here let me solemnly speak to such of you as are heirs of eternal life, desiring as your brother in Christ Jesus to urge you to some duties which are most necessary, on account of the continual filthiness of your heart.

In the first place, if your hearts be still vile, and there be still an evil nature in you, how wrong it is to suppose that all your work is done. There is one thing concerning which I have much reason to complain of some of you. Before your baptism you were extremely earnest; you were always attending the means of grace, and I always saw you here; but there are some, some even now in this place, who, as soon as they had crossed that rubicon, began from that moment to decrease in zeal, thinking that the

work was over. I tell you solemnly, that I know there are some of you who were prayerful, careful, devout, living close and near to your God, until you joined the church; but from that time forth, you have gradually declined. Now, it really appears to me a matter of doubt whether such persons are Christians. I tell you I have very grave doubts of the sincerity of some of you. If I see a man less earnest after baptism, I think he had no right to be baptized; for if he had had a proper sense of the value of that ordinance, and had been rightly dedicated to God, he would not have turned back to the ways of the world. I am grieved, when I see one or two who once walked very consistently with us, beginning to slide away. I have no fault to find with the great majority of you, as to your firm adherence to God's word. I bless God, that for the space of two years and more you have held firm and fast by God. I have not seen you absent from the house of prayer, nor do I think your zeal has flagged; but there are some few who have been tempted by the world, who have been led astray by Satan, or who, by some change in their circumstances, or some removal to a distance, have become cold, and not diligent in the work of the Lord. There are some of my hearers who are not as earnest as they once were. My dear friends, if you know the vileness of your hearts, you would see the necessity of being as earnest now as ever you were. Oh! if, when you were converted, your old nature were cut up, there would be no need of watchfulness now. If all your lusts were entirely gone, and all the strength of corruption dead within you, there would be no need of perseverance; but it is just because ye have evil hearts, that I bid you be just as earnest as ever you were, to stir up the gift of God which is in you, and look as well to yourselves as ever you did. Fancy not the battle is over, man; it is but the first trump, summoning to the warfare. The trump has ceased, and thou thinkest the battle is over; I tell thee, nay, the fight has but now begun; the hosts are only just led forth, and thou hast newly put on thine harness; thou hast conflicts yet to come. Be thou earnest, or else that first love of thine shall die, and thou shalt yet "go out from us, proving that thou wast not of us." Take care, my dear friends, of backsliding; it is the easiest thing in the world, and yet the most dangerous thing in the world. Take care of giving up your first zeal; beware of cooling in the least degree. Ye were hot and earnest once; be hot and earnest still, and let the fire which once burnt within you still animate you. Be ye still men of might and vigor, men who serve their God with diligence and zeal.

Again, if your evil nature is still within you, how watchful you ought to be! The devil never sleeps; your evil nature never sleeps; you ought never to sleep. “What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.” These are Jesus Christ’s words, and there is nothing needs repetition half so much as that word “watch.” We can do almost anything better than watch; for watching is very wearisome work, especially when we have sleepy souls to watch with. Watching is very fatiguing work. There is little open honor got by it, and therefore we do not have the hope of renown to cheer us up. Watching is a work that few of us, I am afraid, rightly perform; but if the Almighty had not watched over you, the devil would have carried you away long ago. Dear friends, I bid you watch constantly. When the adjoining house is on fire, how speedily do persons rise from their beds, and if they have combustibles, move them from the premises, and watch, lest their house also should become a prey to the devouring element! You have corruption in your heart: watch for the first spark, lest it set your soul on fire. “Let us not sleep as do others.” You might sleep over the crater of a volcano, if you liked; you might sleep with your head before the cannon’s mouth; you might, if you pleased, sleep in the midst of an earthquake, or in a pest-house; but I beseech you, do not sleep while you have evil hearts. Watch your hearts; you may think they are very good, but they will be your ruin if grace prevent not. Watch daily; watch perpetually; guard yourselves, lest you sin. Above all, my dear brethren, if our hearts be, indeed, still full of vileness, how necessary it is that we should still exhibit faith in God. If I must trust my God when I first set out, because of the difficulties in the way, if those difficulties be not diminished, I ought to trust God just as much as I did before. Oh! beloved, yield your hearts to God. Do not become self-sufficient. Self-sufficiency is Satan’s net, wherein he catcheth men, like poor silly fish, and doth destroy them. Be not self-sufficient. Think yourselves nothing, for ye are nothing, and live by God’s help. The way to grow strong in Christ is to become weak in yourself. God poureth no power into man’s heart till man’s power is all poured out. Live, then, daily, a life of dependence on the grace of God. Do not set thyself up as if thou wast an independent gentleman; do not start in thine own concerns as if thou couldst do all things thyself; but live always trusting in God. Thou has as much need to trust him now as ever thou hadst; for, mark thee, although thou wouldst have been damned without Christ, at first, thou wilt

be damned without Christ now, unless he still keeps thee, for thou has as evil a nature now as thou hadst then.

Dearly beloved, I have just one word to say, not to the saints, but to the ungodly — one cheering word, sinner, poor lost sinner! You think you must not come to God because you are vile. Now, let me tell you, that there is not a saint in this place but is vile too. If Job, and Isaiah, and Paul, were all obliged to say, "I am vile," oh, poor sinner, wilt thou be ashamed to join the confession, and say, "I am vile," too? If I come to God this night in prayer, when I am on my knees by my bedside, I shall have to come to God as a sinner, vile and full of sin. My brother sinner! dost thou want to have any better confession than that? Thou wantest to be better, dost thou? Why, saints in themselves are no better. If divine grace does not eradicate all sin in the believer, how dost thou hope to do it thyself? and if God loves his people, while they are yet vile, dost thou think thy vileness will prevent his loving thee? Nay, vile sinner, come to Jesus! vilest of the vile! Believe on Jesus, thou off-cast of the world's society, thou who art the dung and dross of the streets, I bid thee come to Christ. Christ bids thee believe on him.

"Not the righteous, not the righteous,
Sinners, Jesus came to save."

Come now; say, "Lord, I am vile; give me faith. Christ died for sinners; I am a sinner. Lord Jesus, sprinkle thy blood on me." I tell thee, sinner, from God, if thou wilt confess thy sin, thou shalt find pardon. If now with all thy heart thou wilt say, "I am vile; wash me;" thou shalt be washed now. If the Holy Spirit shall enable thee to say with thine heart now, "Lord, I am sinful —

'Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bid'st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.'"

Thou shalt go out of this place with all thy sins pardoned; and though thou comest in here with every sin that man hath ever committed on thy head, thou shalt go out as innocent, yea, more innocent than the new-born babe. Though thou comest in here all over sin, thou shalt go out with a robe of righteousness, white as angels are, as pure as God himself, so far as

justification is concerned. For “now,” mark it “now is the accepted time,” if thou believest on him who justifieth the ungodly. Oh! may the Holy Spirit give thee faith that thou mayest be saved now, for then thou wilt be saved for ever! may God add his blessing to this feeble discourse for his name’s sake!

SALVATION TO THE UTTERMOST

SERMON NO. 84

DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, JUNE 8, 1856,

AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

"Where he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." — Hebrews 7:25.

Salvation is a doctrine peculiar to revelation. Revelation affords us a complete history of it, but nowhere else can we find any trace thereof. God has written many books, but only one book has had for its aim the teaching of the ways of mercy. He has written the great book of creation, which is our duty and our pleasure to read. It is a volume embellished on its surface with starry gems and rainbow colors, and containing in its inner leaves marvels at which the wise may wonder for age, and yet find a fresh theme for their conjectures. Nature is the spelling-book of man, in which he may learn his Maker's name, he hath studded it with embroidery, with gold, with gems. There are doctrines of truth in the mighty stars, and there are lessons written on the green earth and in the flowers upspringing from the sod. We read the books of God when we see the storm and tempest, for all things speak as God would have them; and if our ears are open we may hear the voice of God in the rippling of every rill, in the roll of every thunder, in the brightness of every lightning, in the twinkling of every star, in the budding of every flower. God has written the great book of creation, to teach us what he is — how great, how mighty. But I read nothing of salvation in creation. The rocks tell me, "Salvation is not in us;" the winds howl, but they howl not salvation: the waves rush upon the shore, but among the wrecks which they wash up, the reveal no trace of salvation; the fathomless caves of ocean bear pearls, but they bear no pearls of grace; the starry heavens have their flashing meteors, but they have no voices of

salvation. I find salvation written nowhere, till in this volume of my Father's grace I find his blessed love unfolded towards the great human family, teaching them that they are lost, but that he can save them, and that in saving them he can be "just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly." Salvation, then, is to be found in the Scriptures, and in the Scriptures only; for we can read nothing of it elsewhere. And while it is to be found only in Scripture, I hold that the peculiar doctrine of revelation is salvation. I believe that the Bible was sent not to teach me history, but to teach me grace — not to give me a system of philosophy, but to give me a system of divinity — not to teach worldly wisdom, but spiritual wisdom. Hence I hold all preaching of philosophy and science in the pulpit to be altogether out of place. I would check no man's liberty in this matter, for God only is the Judge of man's conscience; but it is my firm opinion that if we profess to be Christians, we are bound to keep to Christianity; if we profess to be Christian ministers, we drivel away the Sabbath-day, we mock our hearers, we insult God, if we deliver lectures upon botany, or geology, instead of delivering sermons salvation. He who does not always preach the gospel, ought not to be accounted a true-called minister of God.

Well, then it is salvation I desire to preach to you. We have, in our text, two or three things. In the first place, we are told who they are who will be saved, "them that come into God by Jesus Christ;" in the second place we are told the extent of the Savior's ability to save, "He is able to save to the uttermost;" and in the third place, we have the reason given why he can save, "seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

I. First, we are told THE PEOPLE WHO ARE TO BE SAVED. And the people who are to be saved are "those who come unto God by Jesus Christ." There is no limitation here of sect or denomination: it does not say, the Baptist, the Independent, or the Episcopalian that come unto God by Jesus Christ, but it simply says, "them," by which I understand men of all creeds, men of all ranks, men of all classes, who do but come to Jesus Christ. They shall be saved, whatever their apparent position before men, or whatever may be the denomination to which they have linked themselves.

1. Now, I must have you notice, in the first place, where these people come to. They "come unto God." By coming to God we are not to

understand the mere formality of devotion, since this may be but a solemn means of sinning. What a splendid general confession is that in the Church of England Prayer Book: “We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep; we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and there is no health in us.” There is not to be found a finer confession in the English language. And yet how often, my dear friends, have the best of us mocked God by repeating such expressions verbally, and thinking we have done our duty! How many of you go to chapel, and must confess your own absence of mind while you have bowed your knee in prayer, or uttered a song of praise! My friends, it is one thing to go to church or chapel; it is quite another thing to go to God. There are many people who can pray right eloquently, and who do so; who have learned a form of prayer by heart, or, perhaps, use an extemporary form of words of their own composing: but who, instead of going to God, are all the while going from God. Let me persuade you all not to be content with mere formality. There will be many damned who never broke the Sabbath, as they thought, but who, all their lives were Sabbath-breakers. It is as much possible to break the Sabbath in a church as it is to break the Sabbath in the park; it is as easy to break it here in this solemn assembly as in your own houses. Every one of you virtually break the Sabbath when you merely go through a round of duties, having done which, you retire to your chambers, fully content with yourselves, and fancy that all is over — that you have done your day’s work — whereas, you have never come to God at all, but have merely come to the outward ordinance and to the visible means, which is quite another thing from coming to God himself.

And let me tell you, again, that coming to God is not what some of you suppose — now and then sincerely performing an act of devotion, but giving to the world the greater part of your life. You think that if sometimes you are sincere, if now and then you put up an earnest cry to heaven, God will accept you; and though your life may be still worldly, and your desires still carnal, you suppose that for the sake of this occasional devotion God will be pleased, in his infinite mercy, to blot out your sins. I tell you, sinners, there is no such thing as bringing half of yourselves to God, and leaving the other half away. If a man has come here, I suppose he has brought his whole self with him; and so if a man

comes to God, he cannot come, half of him, and half of him stay away. Our whole being must be surrendered to the service of our Maker. We must come to him with an entire dedication of ourselves, giving up all we are, and all we ever shall be, to be thoroughly devoted to his service, otherwise we have never come to God aright. I am astonished to see how people in these days try to love the world and love Christ too; according to the old proverb, they "hold with the hare and run with the hounds." They are real good Christians sometimes, when they think they ought to be religious; but they are right bad fellows at other seasons, when they think that religion would be a little loss to them. Let me warn you all. It is of no earthly use for you to pretend to be on two sides of the question. "If God be God, serve him; If Baal be God, serve him." I like an out-and-out man of any sort. Give me a man that is a sinner: I have some hope for him when I see him sincere in his vices, and open to acknowledging his own character; but if you give me a man who is half-hearted, who is not quite bold enough to be all for the devil, nor quite sincere enough to be all for Christ, I tell you, I despair of such a man as that. The man who wants to link the two together is in an extremely hopeless case. Do you think, sinners, you will be able to serve two masters, when Christ has said you cannot? Do you fancy you can walk with God and walk with mammon too? Will you take God on one arm, and the devil on the other? Do you suppose you can be allowed to drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of Satan at the same time? I tell you, ye shall depart, as cursed and miserable hypocrites, if so you come to God. God will have the whole of you come, or else you shall not come at all. The whole man must seek after the Lord; the whole soul must be poured out before him; otherwise it is no acceptable coming to God at all. Oh, halters between two opinions, remember this and tremble.

I think I hear one say, "Well, then, tell us what it is to come to God." I answer, coming to God implies, leaving something else. If a man comes to God, he must leave his sins; he must leave his righteousness; he must leave both his bad works and his good ones, and come to God, leaving them entirely.

Again, coming to God implies, there is no aversion towards him; for a man will not come to God while he hates God; he will be sure to keep away. Coming to God signifies having some love to God. Again: coming to God

signifies desiring God, desiring to be near to him. And, above all, it signifies praying to God and putting faith in him. This is coming to God; and those that have come to God in that fashion are among the saved. The come to God: that is the place to which their eager spirits hasten.

2. But notice, next, how they come. The "come unto God by Jesus Christ." We have known many persons who call themselves natural religionists. They worship the God of nature, and they think that they can approach God apart from Jesus Christ. There be some men we wot of who despise the mediation of the Savior, and, who, if they were in an hour of peril, would put up their prayer at once to God, without faith in the Mediator. Do such of you fancy that you will be heard and saved by the great God your Creator, apart from the merits of his Son? Let me solemnly assure you, in God's most holy name, there never was a prayer answered for salvation, by God the Creator, since Adam fell, without Jesus Christ the Mediator. "No man can come unto God but by Jesus Christ;" and if any one of you deny the Divinity of Christ, and if any soul among you do not come to God through the merits of a Savior, bold fidelity obliges me to pronounce you condemned persons; for however amiable you may be, you cannot be right in the rest, unless you think rightly of him. I tell you, ye may offer all the prayers that ever may be prayed, but ye shall be damned, unless ye put them up through Christ. It is all in vain for you to take your prayers and carry them yourself to the throne. "Get thee hence, sinner; get thee hence," says God; "I never knew thee. Why didst not thou put thy prayer into the hands of a Mediator? It would have been sure of an answer. But as thou presentest it thyself, see what I will do with it!" And he read your petition, and casts it to the four winds of heaven; and thou goest away unheard, unsaved. The Father will never save a man apart from Christ; there is not one soul now in heaven who was not saved by Jesus Christ; there is not one who ever came to God aright, who did not come through Jesus Christ. If you would be at peace with God, you must come to him through Christ, as the way, the truth, and the life, making mention of his righteousness, and of his only.

3. But when these people come, what do they come for? There are some who think they come to God, who do not come for the right thing. Many a young student cries to God to help him in his studies; many a merchant comes to God that he may be guided through a dilemma in his business.

They are accustomed, in any difficulty, to put up some kind of prayer which, if they knew its value, they might cease from offering, for “the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord.” But the poor sinner, in coming to Christ, has only one object. If all the world were offered to him, he would not think it worth his acceptance if he could not have Jesus Christ. There is a poor man, condemned to die, locked up in the condemned cell: the bell is tolling: he will soon be taken off to die on the gallows. There, man, I have brought you a fine robe. What! not smile at it? Look! it is stiff with silver! Mark you not how it is bedizened with jewels? Such a robe as that cost many and many a pound, and much fine workmanship was expended on it. Contemptuously he smile at it! See here, man, I present thee something else: here is a glorious estate for thee, with broad acres, fine mansions, parks and lawns; take that title deed, ‘tis thine. What! not smile, sir? Had I given that estate to any man who walked the street, less poor than thou art, he would have danced for very joy. And wilt not thou afford a smile, when I make thee rich and clothe thee with gold? Then let me try once more. There is Caesar’s purple for thee; put it on thy shoulders — there is his crown; it shall sit on no other head but thine. It is the crown of empires that know no limit. I’ll make thee a king; thou shalt have a kingdom upon which the sun shall never set; thou shalt reign from pole to pole. Stand up; call thyself Caesar. Thou art emperor. What! no smile? What dost thou want? “Take away that bauble,” says he of the crown; “rend up that worthless parchment; take away that robe; ay, cast it to the winds. Give it to the kings of the earth who live; but I have to die, and of what use are these to me? Give me a pardon, and I will not care to be a Caesar. Let me live a beggar, rather than die a prince.” So is it with the sinner when he comes to God: he comes for salvation. He says —

“Wealth and honor I disdain;
Earthly comforts, Lord, are vain,
These will never satisfy,
Give me Christ, or else I die.”

Mercy is his sole request. O my friends, if you have ever come to God, crying out for salvation, and for salvation only, then you have come unto God aright. It were useless then to mock you. You cry for bread: should I give you stones? You would but hurl them at me. Should I offer you wealth? It would be little. We must preach to the sinner who comes to

Christ, the gift for which he asks — the gift of salvation by Jesus Christ the Lord — as being his own by faith.

4. One more thought upon this coming to Christ. In what style do these persons come? I will try and give you a description of certain persons, all coming to the gate of mercy, as they think, for salvation. There comes one, a fine fellow in a coach and six! See how hard he drives, and how rapidly he travels; he is a fine fellow: he has men in livery, and his horses are richly caparisoned; he is rich, exceeding rich. He drives up to the gate, and says, "Knock at that gate for me; I am rich enough, but still I dare say it would be as well to be on the safe side; I am a very respectable gentleman; I have enough of my own good works and my own merits, and this chariot, I dare say, would carry me across the river death, and land me safe on the other side; but still, it is fashionable to be religious, so I will approach the gate. Porter! undo the gates, and let me in; see what an honorable man I am." You will never find the gates undone for that man; he does not approach in the right manner. There comes another; he has not quite so much merit, but still he has some; he comes walking along, and having leisurely marched up, he cries, "Angel! open the gate to me; I am come to Christ: I think I should like to be saved. I do not feel that I very much require salvation; I have always been a very honest, upright, moral man; I do not know myself to have been much of a sinner; I have robes of my own; but I would not mind putting Christ's robes on; it would not hurt me. I may as well have the wedding garment; then I can have mine own too." AH! the gates are still hard and fast, and there is no opening of them. But let me show you the right man. There he comes, sighing and groaning, crying and weeping al the way. He has a rope on his neck, for he thinks he deserves to be condemned. He has rags on him, he comes to the heavenly throne; and when he approaches mercy's gate he is almost afraid to knock. He lifts up his eyes and he sees it written, "Knock, and it shall be opened to you;" but he fears lest he should profane the gate by his poor touch; he gives at first a gentle rap, and if mercy's gate open not, he is a poor dying creature; so he gives another rap, then another and another; and although he raps times without number, and no answer comes, still he is a sinful man, and he knows himself to be unworthy; so he keeps rapping still; and at last the good angel smiling from the gate, says, "Ah! this gate was built for beggars not for princes; heaven's gate was made for spiritual paupers, not for rich

men. Christ died for sinners, not for those who are good and excellent. Hoe came into the world to save the vile.

‘Not the righteous —
Sinners, Jesus came to call.’

Come in, poor man! Come in. Thrice welcome!” And the angels sin, “Thrice welcome!” How many of you, dear friends, have come to God by Jesus Christ in that fashion? Not with the pompous pride of the Pharisee, not with the cant of the good man who thinks he deserves salvation, but with the sincere cry of a penitent, with the earnest desire of a thirsty soul after living water, panting as the thirsty hart in the wilderness after the water-brooks, desiring Christ as they that look for the morning; I say, more than they that look for the morning. As my God who sits in heaven liveth, if you have not come to God in this fashion, you have not come to God at all; but if you have thus come to God, here is the glorious word for you — “He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him.”

II. Thus we have disposed of the first point, the coming to God; and now, secondly, WHAT IS THE MEASURE OF THE SAVIOR’S ABILITY? This is a question as important as if it were for life or death — a question as to the ability of Jesus Christ. How far can salvation go? What are its limits and its boundaries? Christ is a Savior: how far is he able to save? He is a Physician: to what extent will his skill reach to heal diseases? What a noble answer the text gives! “He is able to save to the uttermost.” Now, I will certainly affirm, and no one can deny it, that no one here knows how far the uttermost is. David said, if he took the wings of the morning, to fly to the uttermost parts of the sea, even there should God reach him. But who knoweth where the uttermost is? Borrow the angel’s wing, and fly far, far beyond the most remote star: go where wing has never flapped before, and where the undisturbed ether is as serene and quiet as the breast of Deity itself; you still, beyond the bounds of creation, where space itself falls, and where chaos takes up its reign: you will not come to the uttermost. It is too far for mortal intellect to conceive of; it is beyond the range of reason or of thought. Now, our text tells us that Christ is “able to save to the uttermost.”

1. Sinner, I shall address thee first; and saints of God, I shall address you afterwards. Sinner, Christ is "able to save to the uttermost;" by which we understand that the uttermost extent of guilt is not beyond the power of the Savior. Can any one tell what is the uttermost amount to which a man might sin? Some of us conceive that Palmer has gone almost to the uttermost of human depravity; we fancy that no heart could be much more vile than that which conceived a murder so deliberate, and contemplated a crime so protracted; but I can conceive it possible that there might be even worse men than he, and that if his life were spared, and he were set at large, he might become even a worse man than he is now. Yea, supposing he were to commit another murder, and then another, and another, would he have gone to the uttermost? Could not a man be yet more guilty? As long as ever he lives, he may become more guilty than he was the day before. But yet my text says, Christ is "able to save to the uttermost." I may imagine a person has crept in here, who thinks himself to be the most loathsome of all beings, the most condemned of all creatures. "Surely," says he, "I have gone to the utmost extremity of sin; none could outstrip me in vice." My dear friend, suppose you had gone to the uttermost, remember that even then you would not have gone beyond the reach of divine mercy; for he is "able to save to the uttermost," and it is possible that you yourself might go a little further, and therefore you have not gone to the uttermost yet. However far you may have gone — if you have gone to the very artic regions of vice, where the sun of mercy seems to scatter but a few oblique rays, there can the light of salvation reach you. If I should see a sinner staggering on in his progress to hell, I would not give him up, even when he had advanced to the last stage of iniquity. Though his foot hung trembling over the very verge of perdition, I would not cease to pray for him; and though he should in his poor drunken wickedness go staggering on till one foot were over hell, and he were ready to perish, I would not despair of him. Till the pit had shut her mouth upon him I would believe it still possible that divine grace might save him. See here! he is just upon the edge of the pit, ready to fall; but ere he falls, free grace bids, "Arrest that man!" Down mercy comes, catches him on her broad wings, and he is saved, a trophy of redeeming love. If there be any such in this vast assembly — if there be any here of the outcast of society, the vilest of the vile, the scum, the draff of this poor world, — oh! ye chief of sinners! Christ is "able to save to the uttermost." Tell that everywhere, in

every garret, in every cellar, in every haunt of vice, in every kennel of sin; tell it everywhere! “To the uttermost!” “He is able to save them to the uttermost.”

2. Yet again: not only to the uttermost of crime, but to the uttermost of rejection. I must explain what I mean by this. There are many of you here who have heard the gospel from your youth up. I see some here, who like myself are children of pious parents. There are some of you upon whose infant forehead the pure heavenly drops of a mother’s tears continually fell; there are many of you here who were trained up by one whose knee, whenever it was bent, was ever bent for you, her first-born son. Your mother has gone to heaven, it may be, and all the prayers she ever prayed for you are as yet unanswered. Sometimes you wept. You remember well how she grasped your hand, and said to you, “Ah! John, you will break my heart by this your sin, if you continue running on in those ways of iniquity: oh! if you did but melt, and you would fly to Christ.” Do you not remember that time? The hot sweat stood upon your brow, and you said — for you could not break her heart — “Mother, I will think of it;” and you did think of it; but you met your companion outside, and it was all gone: your mother’s expostulation was brushed away; like the thin cobwebs of the gossamer, blown by the swift north wind, not a trace of it was left. Since then you have often stepped in to hear the minister. Not long ago you heard a powerful sermon; the minister spoke as though he were a man just started from his grave, with as much earnestness as if he had been a sheeted ghost come back from the realms of despair, to tell you his own awful fate, and warn you of it. You remember how the tears rolled down your cheeks. while he told you of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come; you remember how he preached to you Jesus and salvation by the cross, and you rose up from your seat in that chapel, and you said, “Please God I am spared another day, I will turn to him with full purpose of heart.” And there you are, still unchanged — perhaps worse than you were; and you have spent your Sunday afternoon the angel knows where: and your mother’s spirit knows where you have spent it too, and could she weep, she would weep over you who have this day despised God’s Sabbath, and trampled on his Holy Word. But doest thou feel in thine heart to-night the tender motions of the Holy Spirit? Dost thou feel something say, “Sinner! come to Christ now?” Dost thou hear

conscience whispering to thee, telling thee of thy past transgression? And is there some sweet angel voice, saying, “Come to Jesus, come to Jesus; he will save you yet?” I tell you, sinner, you may have rejected Christ to the very uttermost; but he is still able to save you. There are a thousand prayers on which you have trampled, there are a hundred sermons all wasted on you, there are thousands of Sabbaths which you have thrown away; you have rejected Christ, you have despised his Spirit; but still he ceases not to cry, “Return, return!” He is “able to save thee to the uttermost,” if thou comest unto God by him.

3. There is another case which demands my particular attention to-night. It is that of the man who has gone to the uttermost of despair. There are some poor creatures in the world, who from a course of crime have become hardened, and when at last aroused by remorse and the pricklings of conscience, there is an evil spirit which broods over them, telling them it is hopeless for such as they are to seek salvation. We have met with some who have gone so far that they have thought that even devils might be saved rather than they could. They have given themselves up for lost, and signed their own death-warrant, and in such a state of mind have positively taken the halter in their hand, to end their unhappy lives. Despair has brought many a man to a premature death; it hath sharpened many a knife, and mingled many a cup of poison. Have I a despairing person here? I know him by his sombre face and downcast looks. He wishes he were dead, for he thinks that hell itself could be scarce worse torment than to be here expecting it. Let me whisper to him words of consolation. Despairing soul! hope yet, for Christ is able to save to the uttermost;” and though thou art put in the lowest dungeon of the castle of despair, though key after key hath been turned upon thee, and the iron grating of thy window forbids all filing, and the height of thy prison-wall is so awful that thou couldst not expect to escape, yet let me tell thee, there is one at the gate who can break every bolt, and undo every lock; there is one who can lead thee out to God’s free air and save thee yet, for though the worst may come to the worst, he “is able to save thee to the uttermost.”

4. And now a word to the saint, to comfort him: for this text is his also. Beloved brother in the gospel! Christ is able to save thee to the uttermost. Art thou brought very low by distress? hast thou lost house and home, friend and property? Remember, thou hast not come “to the uttermost”

yet, Badly off as thou art, thou mightest be worse. He is able to save thee; and suppose it should come to this, that thou hadst not a rag left, nor a crust, nor a drop of water, still he would be able to save thee, for "he is able to save to the uttermost." So with temptation. If thou shouldst have the sharpest temptation with which mortal was ever tried, he is able to save thee. If thou shouldst be brought into such a predicament that the foot of the devil should be upon thy neck, and the fiend should say, "Now I will make an end of thee," God would be able to save thee then. Ay, and in the uttermost infirmity shouldst thou live for many a year, till thou art leaning on thy staff, and tottering along thy weary life, if thou shouldst outlive Methusaleh, thou couldst not live beyond the uttermost, and he would save thee then. Yes, and when thy little bark is launched by death upon the unknown sea of eternity, he will be with thee; and though thick vapours of gloomy darkness gather round thee, and thou canst not see into the dim future, though thy thoughts tell thee that thou wilt be destroyed, yet God will be "able to save thee to the uttermost."

Then, my friends, if Christ is able to save a Christian to the uttermost, do you suppose he will ever let a Christian perish? Wherever I go, I hope always to bear my hearty protest against the most accursed doctrine of a saint's falling away and perishing. There are some ministers who preach that a man may be a child of God (now, angels! do not hear what I am about to say, listen to me, ye who are down below in hell, for it may suit you) that a man may be a child of God to-day, and a child of the devil to-morrow; that God may acquit a man, and yet condemn him — save him by grace, and then let him perish — suffer a man to be taken out of Christ's hands, though he has said such a thing shall never take place. How will you explain this? It certainly is no lack of power. You must accuse him of a want of love, and will you dare to do that? He is full of love; and since he has also the power, he will never suffer one of his people to perish. It is true, and ever shall be true, that he will save them to the very uttermost.

III. Now, in the last place, WHY IS THAT JESUS CHRIST IS "ABLE TO SAVE TO THE UTTERMOST?" The answer is, that he "ever liveth to make intercession for them." This implies that he died, which is indeed the great source of his saving power. Oh! how sweet it is to reflect upon the great and wonderous works which Christ hath done, whereby he hath become "the high priest of our profession," able to save us! It is pleasant to look

back to Calvary's hill, and to behold that bleeding form expiring on the tree; it is sweet, amazingly sweet, to pry with eyes of love between those thick olives, and hear the groanings of the Man who sweat great drops of blood. Sinner, if thou askest me how Christ can save thee, I tell thee this — he can save thee, because he did not save himself; he can save thee, because he took thy guilt and endured thy punishment. There is no way of salvation apart from the satisfaction of divine justice. Either the sinner must die, or else some one must die for him. Sinner, Christ can save thee, because, if thou comest to God by him, then he died for thee. God has a debt against us, and he never remits that debt; he will have it paid. Christ pays it, and then the poor sinner goes free.

And we are told another reason why he is able to save: not only because he died, but because he lives to make intercession for us. That Man who once died on the cross is alive; that Jesus who was buried in the tomb is alive. If you ask me what he is doing; I bid you listen. Listen, if you have ears! Did you not hear him, poor penitent sinner? Did you not hear his voice, sweeter than harpers playing on their harps? Did you not hear a charming voice? Listen! what did it say? "O my Father! forgive —!" Why, he mentioned your own name! "O my Father, forgive him; he knew not what he did. It is true he sinned against light, and knowledge, and warnings; sinned wilfully and woefully; but, Father, forgive him!" Penitent, if thou canst listen, thou wilt hear him praying for thee. And that is why he is able to save.

A warning and a question, and I have done. First, a warning. Remember, there is a limit to God's mercy. I have told you from the Scriptures, that "he is able to save to the uttermost;" but there is a limit to his purpose to save. If I read the Bible rightly, there is one sin which can never be forgiven. It is the sin against the Holy Ghost. Tremble, unpardoned sinners, lest ye should commit that. If I may tell you what I think the sin against the Holy Ghost is, I must say that I believe it to be different in different people; but in many persons, the sin against the Holy Ghost consists in stifling their convictions. Tremble, my hearers, lest to-night's sermon should be the last you hear. Go away and scorn the preacher, if you like; but do not neglect his warning. Perhaps the very next time thou laughest over a sermon, or mockest at a prayer, or despisest a text, the very next oath thou swearest, God may say, "He is given to idols, let him

alone; my Spirit shall no more strive with that man; I will never speak to him again." That is the warning.

And now, lastly, the question. Christ has done so much for you: what have you ever done for him? Ah! poor sinner, if thou knewest that Christ died for thee — and I know that he did, if thou repentest — if thou knewest that one day thou wilt be his, wouldst thou spit upon him now? wouldst thou scoff at God's day, if thou knewest that one day it will be thy day? wouldst thou despise Christ, if thou knewest that he loves thee now, and will display that love by-and-bye? Oh! there are some of you that will loathe yourselves when you know Christ because you did not treat him better. He will come to you one of these bright mornings, and he will say, "Poor sinner, I forgive you;" and you will look up in his face, and say. "What! Lord, forgive me? I used to curse thee, I laughed at thy people, I despised everything that had to do with religion. Forgive me?" "Yes," says Christ, "give me thy hand; I loved thee when thou hatedst me: come here!" And sure there is nothing will break a heart half so much as thinking of the way in which you sinned against one who loved you so much.

Oh! beloved, hear again the text, — "He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him." I am no orator, I have no eloquence; but if I were the one, and had the other, I would preach to you with all my soul. As it is, I only talk right on, and tell you what I do know; I can only say again,

"He is able;
He is willing: doubt no more.
Come, ye thirsty, come and welcome,
God's free bounty glorify:
True belief and true repentance,
Every grace that brings us nigh —
Without money,
Come to Jesus Christ, and buy."

For he is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him." O Lord! make sinners come! Spirit of God! make them come! Compel them to come to Christ by sweet constraint, and let not our words be in vain, or our labor lost; for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

OMNISCIENCE

SERMON NO. 85

DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, JUNE 15, 1856,

AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

"Thou God seest me." — Genesis 16:13.

There are more eyes fixed on man than he wots of: he sees not as he is seen. He thinks himself obscure and unobserved, but let him remember that a cloud on witnesses hold him in full survey. Wherever he is, at every instant, there are beings whose attention is riveted by his doings, and whose gaze is constantly fixed by his actions. Within this Hall, I doubt not, there are myriads of spirits unseen to us — spirits good and spirits evil; upon us to-night the eyes of angels rest: attentively those perfect spirits regard our order; they hear our songs; they observe our prayers; it may be they fly to heaven to convey to their companions news of any sinners who are born of God, for there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. Millions of spiritual creatures walk this earth, both when we wake and when we sleep; midnight is peopled with shadows unseen, and daylight hath its spirits too. The prince of the power of the air, attended by his squadron of evil spirits, flits through the ether oft; evil spirits watch our halting every instant, while good spirits, battling for the salvation of God's elect, keep us in all our ways and watch over our feet, lest at any time we dash them against a stone. Hosts of invisible beings attend on every one of us at different periods of our lives. We must remember, also, that not only do the spirits of angels, elect or fallen, look on us, but "the spirits of the just made perfect" continually observe our conversation. We are taught by the Apostle that the noble army of martyrs, and the glorious company of confessors, are "witnesses" of our race to heaven, for he says, "seeing, then, that we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us." From yon blue heaven the eyes of

the glorified look down on us; there the children of God are sitting on their starry thrones, observing whether we manfully uphold the banner around which they fought; they behold our valor, or they detect our cowardice; and they are intent to witness our valiant deeds of noble daring, or our ignominious retreat in the day of battle.

Remember that, ye sons of men, ye are not unregarded; ye do not pass through this world in unseen obscurity. In darkest shades of night eyes glare on you through the gloom. In the brightness of the day angels are spectators of your labors. From heaven there look down upon you spirits who see all that finite beings are capable of beholding. But if we think that thought worth treasuring up, there is one which sums up that and drowns it, even as a drop is lost in the ocean; it is the thought, "Thou God seest me." It is nought that angels see me, it is nought that devils watch me, it is nought that the glorified spirits observe me, compared with the overwhelming truth, that thou God at all times seest me. Let us dwell on that now, and may God the Spirit make use of it to our spiritual profit!

In the first place, I shall notice the general doctrine, that God observes all men. In the second place, I shall notice the particular doctrine, "Thou God seest me." And in the third place, I shall draw from it some practical and comforting inferences to different orders of persons now assembled, each of whom may learn something from this short sentence.

II. In the first place, THE GENERAL DOCTRINE, that God sees us.

1. This may be easily proved, even from the nature of God. It were hard to suppose a God who could not see his own creatures; it were difficult in the extreme to imagine a divinity who could not behold the actions of the works of his hands. The word which the Greeks applies to God implied that he was a God who could see. They called him *Theos* (Theos); and they derived that word, if I read rightly, from the root *Theisthai* (Theisthai), to see, because they regarded God as being the all-seeing one, whose eye took in the whole universe at a glance, and whose knowledge extended far beyond that of mortals. God Almighty, from his very essence and nature, must be an Omniscient God. Strike out the thought that he sees me, and you extinguish Deity by a single stroke. There were no God if that God had no eyes, for a blind God were no God at all. We could not conceive such an one. Stupid as idolators may be, it were very hard to

think that even they had fashioned a blind god: even they have given eyes to their gods, though they see not. Juggernaut hath eyes stained with blood; and the gods of the ancient Romans had eyes, and some of them were called far-seeing gods. Even the heathen can scarce conceive of a god that hath no eyes to see, and certainly we are not so mad as to imagine for a single second that there can be a Deity without the knowledge of everything that is done by man beneath the sun. I say it were as impossible to conceive of a God who did not observe everything, as to conceive of a round square. When we say, "Thou God," we do, in fact, comprise in the word "God" the idea of a God who sees everything. "Thou God seest me."

2. Yet, further, we are sure that God must see us, for we are taught in the Scriptures that God is everywhere, and if God be everywhere, what doth hinder him from seeing all that is done in every part of his universe? God is here: I do not simply live near him, but "in him I live, and move, and have my being." There is not a particle of this mighty space which is not filled with God: go forth into the pure air, and there is not a particle of it where God is not. In every portion of this earth whereon I tread, and the spot whereon I moved, there is God.

"Within thy circling power I stand;
On every side I find thy hand:
Awake, asleep, at home, abroad,
I am surrounded still with God."

Take the wings of the morning and fly beyond the most distant star, but God is there. God is not a being confined to one place, but he is everywhere; he is there, and there, and there; in the deepest mine man ever bored; in the unfathomable caverns of the ocean; in the heights, towering and lofty; in the gulfs that are deep, which fathom can never reach; God is everywhere. I know from his own words that he is a God who filleth immensity; the heavens are not wide enough for him; he graspeth the sun with one hand and the moon with the other; he stretcheth himself through the unnavigated ether, where the wing of seraph hath never been flapped, there is God; and where the solemnity of silence has never been broken by the son of Cherub, there is God. God is everywhere. Conceive space, and God and space are equal. Well, then, if God be everywhere, how can I refrain from believing that God sees me wherever I am? He doth not look

upon me from a distance: if he did, I might screen myself beneath the shades of night; but he is here, close by my side, and not by me only, but in me; within this heart; where these lungs beat; or where my blood gushes through my veins; or where this pulse is beating, like a muffled drum, my march to death; God is there: within this mouth; in this tongue; in these eyes; in each of you God dwells; he is within you, and around you; he is beside you, and behind, and before. Is not much knowledge too wonderful you? Is it not high, and you cannot attain unto it? I say, how can you resist the doctrine, which comes upon you like a flash or lightning, that if God be everywhere he must see everything, and that therefore it is a truth, "Thou God seest me."

3. But, lest any should suppose that God may be in a place, and yet slumbering, let me remind him that in every spot to which he can travel, there is, not simply God, but also God's activity. Wherever I go I shall find, not a slumbering God, but a God busy about the affairs of this world. Take me to the green sward, and pleasant pasture — why, every little blade of grass there has God's hand in it, making it grow; and every tiny daisy, which a child likes to pluck, looks up with its little eye, and says, "God is in me, circulating my sap, and opening my little flower." Go where you will through this London, where vegetation is scarcely to be found, look up yonder and see those rolling stars; God is active there: it is his hand that wheels along the stars, and moves the moon, in her nightly course. But if there be neither stars nor moon, there are those clouds, heavy with darkness, like the cars of night, who steers them across the sea of azure? Doth not the breath of God blowing upon them drive them along the heavens? God is everywhere, not as a slumbering God, but as an active God. I am upon the sea; and there I see God making the everlasting pulse of nature beat in constant ebbs and flows. I am in the pathless desert, but above me screams the vulture, and I see God winging the wild bird's flight. I am shut up in a hermitage; but an insect drops from its leaf, and I see in that insect, life which God preserves and sustains; yea, shut me out from the animate creation, and put me on the barren rock, where moss itself cannot find a footing; and I shall there discern my God bearing up the pillars of the universe, and sustaining that bare rock as a part of the colossal foundation whereon he hath built the world.

"Where'er we turn our gazing eyes,
Thy radiant footsteps shine;
Ten thousand pleasing wonders rise,
And speak their source divine.
The living tribes of countless forms,
in earth, and sea, and air,
The meanest files, the smallest worms,
Almighty power declare."

Ye shall see God everywhere: if ye see him not around you, look within you; and is he not there? Is not your blood now flowing through every portion of your body, to and fro your heart? And is not God there active? Do you not know that every pulse you beat needs a volition of Deity as its permit, and yet more, needs an exertion of Divine power as its cause? Do you not know that every breath you breathe needs Deity for its inspiration and expiration, and that you must die if God withdraw that power? If we could look within us, there are mighty works going on in this mortal fabric — the garment of the soul — which would astonish you, and make you see, indeed, that God is not asleep, but that he is active and busy. There is a working God everywhere, a God with his eyes open everywhere, a God with his hands at work everywhere; a God doing something, not a God slumbering, but a God laboring. Oh! sirs, does not the conviction flash upon your mind with a brightness, against which you cannot shut your eyes, that since God is everywhere, and everywhere active, it follows, as a necessary and unavoidable consequence, that he must see us, and know all our actions and our deeds?

4. I have one more proof to offer which I think to be conclusive. God, we may be sure, sees us, when we remember that he can see a thing before it happens. If he beholds an event before it transpires, surely reason dictates, he must see a thing that is happening now. Read those ancient prophecies, read what God said should be the end of Babylon and of Nineveh; just turn to the chapter where you read of Edom's doom, or where you are told that Tyre shall be desolate; then walk through the lands of the East, and see Nineveh and Babylon cast to the ground, the cities ruined; and then reply to this question — "Is not God a God of foreknowledge? Can he not see the things that are to come?" Ay, there is not a thing which shall transpire in the next cycle of a thousand years which is not already past to the infinite mind of God; there is not a deed which shall be transacted to-

morrow, or the next day, or the next, through eternity, if days can be eternal, but God knoweth it altogether. And if he knows the future, does he not know the present. If his eyes look through the dim haze which veils us from the things of futurity, can he not see that which is standing in the brightness of the present? If he can see a great distance, can he not see near at hand! Surely that Divine Being who discerneth the end from the beginning, must know the things which occur now; and it must be true that "Thou God seest us," even the whole of us, the entire race of man. So much for the general and universally acknowledged doctrine.

II. Now, I come, in the second place, to the SPECIAL DOCTRINE: "Thou God seest me."

Come now, there is a disadvantage in having so many hearers, as there is always in speaking to more than one at a time, because persons are apt to think, "He does not speak to me." Jesus Christ preached a very successful sermon once when he had but one hearer, because he had the woman sitting on the well, and she could not say that Christ was preaching to her neighbor. He said to her, "Go, call thy husband, and come hither." There was something there which smote her heart; she could not evade the confession of her guilt. But in regard to our congregations, the old orator might soon see his prayer answered, "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears," for when the gospel is preached, we lend our ears to everybody; we are accustomed to hear for our neighbors, and not for ourselves. Now, I have no objection to your lending anything else you like, but I have a strong objection to you lending your ears; I shall be glad if you will keep them at home for a minute or two, for I want to make you hear for yourselves this truth "Thou God seest me."

Mark, God sees you — selecting any one out of this congregation — he sees you, he sees you as much as if there were nobody else in the world for him to look at. If I have as many people as there are here to look at, of course my attention must be divided; but the infinite mind of God is able to grasp a million objects at once, and yet to set itself, as much upon one, as if there were nothing else but that one; so that you, to-night, are looked at by God as much as if throughout space there were not another creature but yourself. Can you conceive that? Suppose the stars blotted out in darkness, suppose the angels dead; imagine the glorified spirits above are

all gone, and you are left alone, the last man, and there is God looking at you. What an idea it would be for you to think of — that there was only you to be looked at! how steadily he could observe you! how well he would discern you! But mark you, God does really look at you this night as much, as entirely, as absolutely without division of sight, as if you were the only being his hands had ever made. Can you grasp that? God sees you with all his eyes, with the whole of his sight — you — you — you — you are the particular object of his attention at this very moment. God's eyes are looking down upon you; remember that!

In the next place God sees you entirely. He does not merely note your actions; he does not simply notice what is the appearance of your countenance; he does not merely take into his eyesight what your posture may be; but remember, God sees what you are thinking of; he looks within. God has a window in every man's heart, through which he looks; he does not want you to tell him what you are thinking about — he can see that, he can read right through you. Do you not know that God can read what is written on the rocks at the bottom of the ocean, even though ten thousands fathoms of dark water roll above? And I tell you he can read every word that is in your breasts; he knows every thought, every imagination, every conception, yea every unformed imagination, the thought scarce shot from the bow, reserved in the quiver of the mind; he sees it all, every particle, every atom of it.

"My thoughts, scarce struggling into birth,
Great God! are known to thee:
Abroad, at home, still I'm enclosed
With thine immensity.
"Behind I glance, and thou art there:
Before me, shines thy name;
And 'tis thy strong almighty hand
Sustains my tender frame."

Can you appropriate that thought? From the crown of your head to the sole of your foot, God is examining you now; his scalpel is in your heart, his lancet in your breast. He is searching your heart and trying your reins; he knows you behind and before. "Thou God seest me;" thou seest me entirely.

Note again, God sees you constantly. You are sometimes watched by man, and then your conversation is tolerably correct; at other times you seek retirement, and you indulge yourselves in things which you would not dare to do before the gaze of your fellow creatures. But recollect, wherever you are, God sees you; you may lay yourselves down by the side of the hidden brook where the willows shelter you, where all is still, without a sound — God is there looking at you! You may retire to your chamber, and draw the curtains of your couch, and throw yourself down for repose in midnight's gloomiest shade — God sees you there! I remember going into a castle sometime ago, down many a winding stair, and round and round, and round, and round, where light never penetrated; at last I came to a space, very narrow, about the length of a man. "There," said the keeper, "such-and-such-a-one was shut for so many years, a ray of light never having penetrated: sometimes they tortured him, but his shrieks never reached through the thickness of these walls, and never ascended that winding staircase: here he died, and there, sir, he was buried," pointing to the ground. But though that man had none on earth to see him, God saw him. Yea, you may shut me up for ever, where ear shall never hear my prayer, where eye shall never see my misery; but one eye shall look upon me, and one countenance smile on me, if I suffer for righteousness' sake. If for Christ's sake I am in prison, one hand shall be upon me, and one voice shall say, "Fear not; I will help thee" — at all times, in all places, in all your thoughts, in all your acts, in all your privacy, in all your public doings, at every season; this is true, "Thou God seest me."

Yet once more, "Thou God seest me," supremely. I can see myself, but not as well as either my friends or foes. Men can see me better than I can see myself, but man cannot see me as God sees me. A man skilled in the human heart might interpret my deeds and translate their motives, but he could not read my heart as God can read it. None can tell another as God can tell us all: we do not know ourselves as God knows us: with all your self knowledge, with all you have been told by others, God knows you more fully than you know yourself: no eye can see you as God sees you — you may act in daylight; you may not be ashamed of your actions, you may stand up before men and say, "I am a public man, I wish to be observed and noticed:" you may have all your deeds chronicled, and all men may hear of them, but I wot men will never know you as God will

know you; and if you could be chained, as Paul was, with a soldier at your arm; if he were with you night and day, sleeping with you, rising with you; if he could hear all your thoughts, he could not know you as God knows you, for God sees you superlatively and supremely.

Let me now apply that to you: "Thou God sees me." This is true of each of you; try and think of it for a moment. Even as my eye rests on you, so, in a far, far greater sense does God's eye rest on you; standing, sitting, wherever you are, this is true, "Thou God sees me." It is said that when you heard Rowland Hill, if you were stuck in a window, or farther away at the door, you always had the conviction that he was preaching at you. Oh! I wish I could preach like that; if I could make you feel that I was preaching at you in particular; that I singled you out, and shot every word at you, then I should hope for some effect. Try and think, then, "Thou God seest me."

III. Now I come to DIFFERENT INFERENCES for different persons, to serve different purposes.

First, to the prayerful. Prayerful man, prayerful woman, here is a consolation — God sees you: and if he can see you, surely he can hear you. Why, we can often hear people, when we cannot see them. If God is so near to us, and if his voice is like the thunder, sure his ears are as good as his eyes, and he will be sure to answer us. Perhaps you cannot say a word when you pray. Never mind; God does not want to hear; he can tell what you mean even by seeing you. "There," says the Lord, "is a child of mine in prayer. He says not a word; but do you see that tear rolling down his cheek? do you hear that sigh?" Oh! mighty God, thou canst see both tear and sigh; thou canst read desire when desire hath not clothed itself in words. The naked wish God can interpret; he needs us not to light the candle of our desires with language; he can see the candle ere it is lit.

"He knows the words we mean to speak,
When from our lips they cannot break,"

by reason of the anguish of our spirit. He knows the desire, when words stagger under the weight of it; he knows the wish when language fails to express it. "Thou God seest me." Ah, God, when I cannot pray with words, I will throw myself flat on my face, and I will groan my prayer; and if I cannot groan it I will sigh it; and if I cannot sigh it I will wish it:

and when these eye-strings break, and when death has sealed these lips, I will enter heaven with a prayer, which thou wilt not hear but which thou wilt see — the prayer of my inmost spirit, when my heart and my flesh fail me, that God may be the strength of my life and portion for ever. There is comfort for you, you praying ones, that God sees you. That is enough; if you cannot speak he can see you.

I have given a word for the prayerful; now a word for the careful. Some here are very full of care, and doubts, and anxieties, and fears. “Oh! sir,” you say, “if you could come to my poor house, you would not wonder that I should feel anxious. I have had to part with much of my little furniture to provide myself with living; I am brought very low; I have not a friend in London; I am alone, alone in the wide world.” Stop, stop, sir! you are not alone in the world; there is at least one eye regarding you; there is one hand that is ready to relieve you. Don’t give up in despair. If your case be ever so bad, God can see your care, your troubles, and your anxieties. To a good man it is enough to see destitution to relieve it; and for God it is enough to see the distresses of his family at once to supply their wants. If you were lying wounded on the battle-field, if you could not speak, you know right well your comrades who are coming by with an ambulance will pick you up, if they do but see you; and that is enough for you. So if you are lying on the battle-field of life, God sees you; let that cheer you: he will relieve you; for he only needs to look at the woes of his children at once to relieve them. Go on then; hope yet; in night’s darkest hour, hope for a brighter morrow. God sees these, whatever thou art doing;

“He knows thy cares, thy tears, thy sighs;
He shall lift up thy head.”

And now a word to the slandered. There are some of us who come in for a very large share of slander. It is very seldom that the slander market is much below par; it usually runs up at a very mighty rate; and there are persons who will take shares to any amount. If men could dispose of railway stock as they can of slander, those who happen to have any scrip here would be rich enough by to-morrow at twelve o’clock. There are some who have a superabundance of that matter; they are continually hearing rumors of this, that, and the other; and there is one fool or another who has not brains enough to write sense, nor honesty sufficient to keep him to the truth, who, therefore, writes the most infamous libels upon some of God’s

servants, compared with whom he himself is nothing, and whom for very envy he chooses to depreciate. Well, what matters it? Suppose you are slandered; here is a comfort: “Thou God seest me.” They say that such-and-such is your motive, but you need not answer them; you can say, “God knows that matter.” You are charged with such-and-such a thing of which you are innocent; your heart is right concerning the deed, you have never done it: well, you have no need to battle for your reputation; you need only point your finger to the sky, and say, “There is a witness there who will right me at last — there is a Judge of all the earth, whose decision I am content to wait; his answer will be a complete exoneration of me, and I shall come out of the furnace, like gold seven times purified.” Young men, are you striving to do good, and do others impute wrong motives to you? Do not be particular about answering them. Just go straight on, and your life will be the best refutation of the calumny. David’s brethren said that in his pride and the naughtiness of his heart he had come to see the battle. “Ah!” thought David, “I will answer you by-and-bye.” Off he went across the plain to fight Goliath; he cut off his head, and then came back to his brethren with a glorious answer in his conquering hand. If any man desires to reply to the false assertions of his enemies, let him go and do good, and he needs not say a word — that will be his answer. I am the subject of detraction, but I can point to hundreds of souls that have been saved on earth by my feeble instrumentality, and my reply to all my enemies is this, “You may say what you like; but seeing these lame men are healed, can you say anything against them? You may find fault with the style or manner, but God saves souls, and we will hold up that fact, like giant Goliath’s head, to show you that although it was nothing but a sling or stone, so much the better, for God has gotten the victory.” Go straight on and you will live down your slanderers; and remember when you are most distressed, “Thou God seest me.”

Now, a sentence or two to some of you who are ungodly and know not Christ. What shall I say to you but this, — how heinous are your sins when they are put in the light of this doctrine! Remember, sinner, whenever thou sinnest, thou sinnest in the teeth of God. It is bad enough to steal in darkness, but he is a very thief who steals in daylight. It is vile, it is fearfully vile to commit a sin which I desire to cover, but to do my sin when man is looking at me shows much hardiness of heart. Ah! sinner,

remember, thou sinnest with God's eyes looking on thee. How black must be thy heart! how awful thy sin! for thou sinnest in the very face of justice when God's eye is fixed on thee. I was looking the other day at a glass bee-hive, and it was very singular to observe the motions of the creature inside. Well, now this world is nothing but a huge glass bee-hive. God looks down on you, and he sees you all. You go into your little cells in the streets of this huge city; you go to your business, your pleasure, your devotions, and your sins; but remember, whenever you go, you are like the bees under a great glass shade, you can never get away from God's observation. When children disobey before the eyes of their parents it shows that they are hardened. If they do it behind their parents' back, it proves that there is some shame left. But you, sirs, sin when God is present with you; you sin while God's eyes are searching you through and through. Even now you are thinking hard thoughts of God while God is hearing all those silent utterances of your evil hearts. Does not that render your sin extremely heinous? Therefore, I beseech you, think of it, and repent of your wickedness, that your sins may be blotted out through Jesus Christ.

And one more thought. If God sees thee, O sinner, how easy it will be to condemn thee. In the late horrible case of Palmer, witnesses were required, and a jury was empanelled to try the accused. But if the judge could have mounted the bench and have said, "I saw the man, myself, mix the poison; I stood by and saw him administer it; I read his thoughts; I knew for what purpose he did it; I read his heart; I was with him when he first conceived the black design, and I have tracked him in all his evasions, in all those acts by which he sought to blindfold justice; and I can read in his heart that he knows himself to be guilty now;" the case then would have been over; the trial would have been little more than a form. What wilt thou think, O sinner, when thou art brought before God, and God shall say, "Thou didst so-and-so," and will mention what you did in the darkness of the night when no eye was there? You will start back amazed, and say, "Oh, heavens! how shall God know? is there knowledge in the Most High?" He will say, "Stop, sinner; I have more to startle thee yet;" and he will begin to unfold the records of the past: leaf after leaf he will read of the diary he has kept of your existence. Oh! I can see you as he reads page after page, your knees are knocking together, your hair is standing on end, your blood is frozen in your veins, congealed for fright, and you stand like a second

Niobe, a rock bedewed with tears. You are thunder struck to find your thoughts read out before the sun, while men and angels hear. You are amazed beyond degree to hear your imaginations read, to see your deeds photographed on the great white throne, and to hear a voice saying, “Rebellion at such a time; uncleanness at such a time; evil thoughts at such an hour; hard thoughts of God at such a period; rejection of his grace on such a day; stiflings of conscience at another time;” and so on to the end of the chapter, and then the awful final doom. “Sinner, depart accursed! I saw thee sin; it needs no witnesses; I heard thy oath; I heard thy blasphemy; I saw thy theft; I read thy thought. Depart! depart! I am clear when I judge thee; I am justified when I condemn thee: for thou hast done this evil in my sight.”

Lastly, you ask me what you must do to be saved; and I will never let a congregation go, I hope, till I have told them that. Hear, then, in a few words, the way of salvation. It is this. Christ said to the Apostles, “Preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.” Or, to give you Paul’s version, when he spoke to the jailor, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” Thou asked what thou art to believe. Why, this: that Christ died and rose again; that by his death he did bear the punishment of all believers; and that by his resurrection he did wipe out the faults of all his children. And if God give thee faith, thou wilt believe that Christ died for thee; and wilt be washed in his blood, and thou wilt trust his mercy and his love to be thine everlasting redemption when the world shall end.

UNIMPEACHABLE JUSTICE

SERMON NO. 86

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JUNE 15, 1856,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." — Psalm 51:4.

Yesterday was to me a day of deep solemnity; a pressure rested on my mind throughout the whole of it, which I could not by any possibility remove, for at every hour I remembered that during that day one of the most fallen of my fellow-creatures was launched into an unknown world, and made to stand before his Maker. Some might have witnessed his execution without tears; I think I could not even have thought of it for long together without weeping, at the terrible idea of a man so guilty, about to commence that endless period of unmingled misery, which is the horrible doom of the impenitent, which God hath prepared for sinners. Yesterday morning the sun saw a sigh which sickened it — the sight of a man launched, by a judicial process, into eternity, for guilt which has rendered him infamous, and which will stamp his name with disgrace as long as it shall be remembered.

There is now agitating the public mind something which I thought I might improve this day, and turn to very excellent purpose. There are only two things concerning which the public have any suspicion. The verdict of the jury was the verdict of the whole of England; we were unanimous as to the high probability, the well-nigh absolute certainty of his guilt; but there were two doubts in our minds — one of them but small, we grant you, but if both could have been resolved we should have felt more easy than we do now. The one was concerning the criminal's guilt, and the other was concerning his punishment. At least some few of our fellow-countrymen have been afraid, lest we may not have been justified when we spoke

against him, and quite clear when he was judged. Two things were wanted: we should have liked to have had his own confession, and certainly we should have preferred something more than circumstantial evidence; we desired to have had the testimony of an eye-witness, who could swear to the deed of murder done. But, moreover, there is also a strong feeling in the mind of many, that the severity of the punishment is questionable. There are some who pronounce authoritatively, that the murderer's blood must be shed for murder; but there are some who think the Christian dispensation has ameliorated the law, and that now it is no longer "eye for eye, tooth for tooth." Many persons in England have shuddered at the thought of executing a penalty so fearful, on any man, however great his crime, seeing that it puts him beyond the pale of hope. I shall not enter into the question of the rightness of capital punishment; I have my opinion upon it, but this is not exactly the place to state it: I only wish to use these facts as an illustration of the text. David says, "O Lord, hear my own confession: 'against thee, thee only, have I sinned,' and by my own confession thou wouldst 'be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest.' And, Lord, there is something else besides my own confession. Thou, thyself, wast eye-witness of my deed. 'Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight;' and now thou art, indeed, 'justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest.' And as to the severity of my punishment, there can be no doubt of that." There may be doubt of the severity, when man executes punishment for a crime against man, but there can be no doubt when God himself executes vengeance for a crime that is committed against himself. "Thou art justified when thou speakest; thou art clear when thou judgest."

Our subject this morning, then, will be, both in the condemnation and in the punishment of every sinner, God will be justified: and he will be made most openly clear, from the two facts of the sinner's own confession, and God himself having been an eye-witness of the deed. And as for the severity of it, there shall be no doubt upon the mind of any man who shall receive it, for God shall prove to him in his own soul, that damnation is nothing more nor less than the legitimate reward of sin.

There are two kinds of condemnation: the one is the condemnation of the elect, which takes place in their hearts and consciences, when they have the sentence of death in themselves, that they should not trust in

themselves — a condemnation which is invariably followed by peace with God, because after that there is no further condemnation, for they are then in Christ Jesus, and they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. The second condemnation is that of the finally impenitent, who, when they die, are most righteously and justly condemned by God for the sins they have committed — a condemnation not followed by pardon, as in the present case, but followed by inevitable damnation from the presence of God. On both these condemnations we will discourse this morning. God is clear when he speaks, and he is just when he condemns, whether it be the condemnation which he passes on Christian hearts, or the condemnation which he pronounces from his throne, when the wicked are dragged before him to receive their final doom.

I. In the first place, CONCERNING THE CHRISTIAN, when he feels himself condemned by conscience and by God's Holy Spirit, and when he hears the thunders of God's law proclaiming against him a sentence which, if it had not been already executed on his Savior, would have been fulfilled on him, the man has no grounds whatever at that time to plead any excuse; but he will say in the words of the Psalmist, "Thou art justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest." Let me show you how.

1. In the first place, there is a confession. With regard to the man who was executed yesterday, there was no confession; we could not have expected it; such crimes could not have been committed by a man capable of confessing them. The fact that he died hardened in his guilt is proof well-nigh conclusive that he was guilty; for had he betrayed any emotion, or had he bowed his knees and cried for mercy, we might then have suspected that he had not been guilty of so dark a deed of blood; but from the very fact that he hardened his heart, we infer that he was capable of committing crimes, the infamy of which point them out as the offspring of a seared and torpid conscience. The Christian, when he is condemned by the Holy Law, makes a confession, a full and free confession. He feels, when God records the sentence against him, that the execution of it would be just, for his now honest heart compels him to confess the whole story of his guilt. Allow me to make some remarks on the confession which is followed by pardon.

First, such a confession is a sincere one. It is not the prattling confession used by the mere formalist, when he bends his knee and exclaims that he is a sinner; but it is a confession which is undoubtedly sincere, because it is attended by awful agonies of mind, and usually by tears, and sighs, and groans. There is something about the penitent's demeanour which puts it beyond the possibility of a fear that he is a deceiver when he is confessing his sin. There is an outward emotion, manifesting the inward anguish of the spirit. He stands before God, and does not merely turn king's evidence against himself, as the means of saving himself, but with tears in his eyes he cries, "O God, I am guilty;" and then he begins to recount the circumstances of his crime, even as if God had never seen him. He tells to God what God already knows, and then the Gracious One proves the truth of the promise, "He that confesseth his sin shall find mercy."

In the next place, that confession is always abundantly sufficient for our own condemnation. The Christian feels that if he had only half the sin to confess that he is obliged to tell out to God, it would be enough to damn his soul for ever — that if he had only one crime to acknowledge, it would be like a millstone round his neck, to sink him for ever in the bottomless pit. He feels that his confession is superabundantly enough to condemn him — that is almost a work of supererogation to confess all, for there is enough in one tenth of it to send his soul to hell, and make it abide there for ever. Have you ever confessed your sins like this? If not, as God liveth, you have never known what it is to make a true confession of your sin; you have never had the sentence of condemnation passed on you, in that way which is succeeded by mercy; but you are yet awaiting that terrible sentence which shall be succeeded by no words of love, but by the execution of the sentence of infinite indignation and displeasure.

This confession is attended with no apology on account of sin. We have heard of men who have confessed their guilt, and afterwards tried to extenuate their crime, and shew some reasons why they were not so guilty as apparently they would seem to be; but when the Christian confesses his guilt, you never hear a word of extenuation or apology from him. He says, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight:" and in saying this, he makes God just when he condemns him, and clear when he sentences him for ever. Have you ever made such a confession? Have you ever thus bowed yourselves before God? Or have you tried to

palliate your guilt, and call your sins by little names, and speak of your crimes as if they were but light offenses? If you have not, then you have not felt the sentence of death in yourselves, and you are still waiting till the solemn death-knell shall toll the hour of your doom, and you shall be dragged out, amidst the universal hiss of the execration of the world, to be condemned for ever to flames which shall never know abatement.

Again: after the Christian confesses his sin, he offers no promise that he will of himself behave better. Some, when they make confessions to God, say, "Lord, if thou forgive me I will not sin again;" but God's penitents never say that. When they come before him they say, "Lord, once I promised, once I made resolves, but I dare not make them now, for they would be so soon broken, that they would but increase my guilt; and my promises would be so soon violated, that they would but sink my soul deeper in hell. I can only say, if thou wilt create in me a clean heart, I will be thankful for it, and will sing to thy praise for ever; but I cannot promise that I will live without sin, or work out a righteousness of my own. I dare not promise, my Father, that I will never go astray again;

'Unless thou hold me fast,
I feel I must, I shall decline,
And prove like them at last.'

Lord, if thou dost damn me, I cannot murmur; if thou dost cast me into perdition, I cannot complain; but have mercy upon me, a sinner, for Jesus Christ's sake." In that case, you see, God is justified when he condemns, and he is clear when he judges, even clearer than any earthly judge can be, because it is seldom that such a confession as that is ever made before the bar.

2. Again: when the Christian is condemned by the law in his conscience, there is something else which makes God just in condemning him beside his confession, and that is the fact, that God himself, the Judge, comes forward as a witness to the crime. The convinced sinner feels in his own soul that his sins were committed to the face of God, in the teeth of his mercy, and that God was an exact and minute observer of every part and particle of the crime for which he is now to be condemned, and the sin which has brought him to the bar. "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,

and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest."

The convinced sinner who has just become a Christian feels at that time that God was a witness, and that he was a most veracious witness — that he saw, and saw most clearly; and when God, by his law, says to him, "Sinner, you did such-and-such a thing, and such-and-such a thing," the awakened conscience says, "Lord, that is true; it is true in every circumstance." And when God goes on to say, "Your motives were vile, your objects were sinful," conscience says, "Ay, Lord, that is true; I know that thou didst see it, and that thou art a sure observer; thou art no false witness, but all that thou sayest in thy law about me is true." When God says, "The poison of asps is under thy lips, thy throat is an open sepulcher, thou dost flatter with thy tongue," conscience says, "It is all true;" and when he says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," conscience says, "It is all true;" and the sinner has this awful thought, that every sin he ever sinned is written in heaven, and God records it there; he feels, therefore, that God is just when he condemns, and clear when he judges.

And, moreover, God is not simply a veracious witness, but the testimony God gives is an abundant one. You know that in some cases which are brought before our courts, the witness swears that he saw the man do so-and-so; but then he may be mistaken as to the identity of the person; perhaps he did not see the whole transaction; and then he has not pried into the man's heart to see what was the man's reasons, which may make the crime lighter or greater, as the case may be. But here we have a witness who can say, "I saw all the crime; I saw the lust when it was conceived; I saw the sin when it was brought forth; I saw the sin when it was finished, bringing forth death; I saw the motive; I beheld the first imagination; I saw the sin when, as a black rivulet, it started on its way, when it suddenly began to increase by contributions of evil, and I saw it when it became at last a broad ocean of unfathomable depth — an ocean of guilt which human foot could not pass, and over which the ship of mercy could not have sailed, unless some mighty pilot had steered it by shedding his own blood." Then the Christian feels that God having seen it all, is justified when he speaks, and clear when he condemns. I should feel a solemn responsibility, if I were a judge, in putting on the black cap, to condemn a

man to death; because, however carefully I may have weighed the evidence, and however clear the guilt of the prisoner may have seemed, there is possibility of mistake, and it seems a solemn thing to have consigned a fellow-creature's soul to a future world, even with a possibility of an error in that judgment; but if I had myself beheld the bloody act, with what ease of mind might I then put on the black cap, and condemn the man as being guilty, for I should know, and the world would know, that having been a witness I should be just when I spake, and clear when I condemned. Now, that is just what the Christian feels when God condemns him in his conscience, he puts his hand upon his mouth, and yields without a word to the justness of the sentence. Conscience tells him he was guilty, because God himself was a witness.

3. The other question which I hinted at as being on the public mind, is the severity of the punishment. In the case of a believer, when he is condemned, there is no doubt about the justice of the punishment. When God the Holy Ghost in the soul passes sentence on the old man, and condemns it for its sins, there is felt most solemnly in the heart the great truth, that hell itself is but a rightful punishment for sin. I have heard some men dispute whether the torments of hell were not too great for the sins which men can commit. We have heard men say that hell was not a right place to send such sinners to as they were; but we have always found that such men found fault with hell because they knew right well they were going there. As every man finds fault with the gallows who is going to be hung, so do many men find fault with hell because they fear that they are in danger of it. The opinion of a man about to be executed must not be taken with regard to the propriety of capital punishment, nor must we take the opinion of a man who is himself marching to hell concerning the justice of hell, for he is not an impartial judge. But the convinced sinner is a fair witness; God has made him so, for he feels in his soul that there will be pardon given to him, and that God, by grace, will never condemn him there; but at the same time he feels that he deserves it, and he confesses that hell is not too great a punishment, and that the eternity of it is not too long a duration of punishment for the sin which he has committed. I appeal to you, my beloved brethren and sisters. You may have had doubts as to the propriety of your being sent to hell before you knew your sins; but I ask you, when you were convinced of God, whether you did not solemnly

feel that he would be unjust if he did not damn your soul for ever. Did you not say in your prayer, “Lord, if thou shouldst now command the earth to open and swallow me up quick, I could not lift up my finger to murmur against thee; and if thou wert now to roll o’er my head the billows of eternal fire, I could not, in the midst of my howlings in misery, utter one single word of complaint about thy justice?” And did you not feel that if you were to be ten thousand, thousand years in perdition, you would not have been there long enough? You felt you deserved it all; and if you had been asked what was the right punishment for sin, you dare not, even if your own soul had been at stake, have written anything except that sentence, “everlasting fire.” You would have been obliged to have written that, for you felt it was but deserved doom. Now, was not God just then when he condemned, and clear when he judged? and did he not come off clear from the judgment seat? because you, yourself, said the sentence would not have been one whit too severe if it had been fulfilled instead of being simply recorded, and then you, yourself, set at liberty. Ah! my dear friends, there may be some who rail at God’s justice; but no convinced sinner ever will. He sees God’s law in all its glorious holiness, and he smites his hand upon his breast, and he says, “O sinner that I am! that I ever could have sinned against such a reasonable law and such perfect commandments!” He sees God’s love towards him, and that cuts him to the very quick. He says, “Oh! that I should ever have spit on the face of that Christ who died for me! Wretch that I am, that I could ever have crowned that bleeding head with the thorns of my sins, which gave itself to slumber in the grave for my redemption!” Nothing cuts the sinner to the quick more than the fact, that he has sinned against a great amount of mercy. This indeed, makes him weep; and he says, “O Lord, seeing I have been so ungrateful, the direst doom thou canst ever sentence me to, or the fiercest punishment thou canst ever execute upon my head, would not be too heavy for the sins I have committed against thee.”

And then the Christian feels too, what a deal of mischief he has done in the world by sin. Ah! if he has been spared to middle age before he is converted, he looks back and says, “Ah! I cannot tell how many have been damned by my sins; I cannot tell how many have been sent down to perdition by words which I have used, or deeds which I have committed.” I confess, before you all, that one of the greatest sorrows I had, when first

I knew the Lord, was to think about certain persons with whom I knew right well that I had held ungodly conversations, and sundry others that I had tempted to sin; and one of the prayers that I always offered, when I prayed for myself, was that such an one might not be damned through sins to which I had tempted him. And I dare say this will be the case with some of you when you look back. Your dear child has been a sad reprobate; and you think, "Did not I teach him very much that was wrong?" and you hear your neighbors swear, and you think, "I cannot tell how many I taught to blaspheme." Then you will recollect your boon companions, those you used to play cards or dance with, and you will think, "Ah! poor souls, I have damned them." And then you will say, "Lord, thou art just, if thou damnest me." When you reflect what a deal of mischief you have done by your sin, you will then say, "Lord, thou art clear when thou judgest; thou art justified when thou condemnest." I warn you who are going on in your sins, that one of the most fearful things you have to expect is, to meet those in another world who perished through being led astray by you. Think of that, O man! thou who hast been an universal tempter! There is a man now in perdition, who was taught to drink his first glass through you. There lies a soul on his death-bed, and he says, "Ah! John, I had not been here, as I now am, if you had not led me into evil courses which have weakened my body, and brought me to death's door." Oh! what a horrible fate will yours be, when, as you walk into the mouth of hell, you will see eyes staring at you, and hear a voice saying, "Here he comes! here comes the man that helped to damn my soul!" And what must be your fate, when you must lie for ever tossed on the bed of pain with that man whom you were the means of damning? As those who are saved will make jewels in the crowns of glory to the righteous, sure those whom you helped to damn will forge fresh fetters for you and furnish fearful faggots, to increase the flames of torment which shall blaze around your spirits. Mark that, and be you warned. The Christian feels this terrible fact, when he is convinced of sin, and that makes him feel that God would be clear if he judged him, and would be justified if he condemned him. So much concerning this first condemnation.

II. But now a little concerning THE SECOND CONDEMNATION, which is the more fearful of the two. Some of you have never been condemned by God's law in your conscience. Now, as I stated at first, that every man

must be condemned once, so I beg to repeat it. You must either have the sentence of condemnation passed on you by the law in your conscience, and then find mercy in Christ Jesus, or else you must be condemned to another world, when you shall stand with all the human race before God's throne. The first condemnation to the Christian, though exceedingly merciful, is terrible to bear. It is a wounded spirit, which none can endure. But, as for the second condemnation, if I could preach with sighs and tears, I could not tell you how horrible that must be. Ah, my friends, could some sheeted ghost start from its tomb, and be re-united to the spirit which has been for years in perdition, possibly such a man might preach to you, and let you know what a fearful thing it will be to be condemned at last. But as for my poor words, they are but air; for I have not heard the miserere of the condemned, nor have I listened to the sighs, and groans, and moans of lost spirits. If I had ever been permitted to gaze within the sheet of fire which walls the Gulf of Despair — if I had ever been allowed to walk for one moment o'er that burning marl whereon is built the dreadful dungeon of eternal vengeance, then I might tell you somewhat of its misery; but I cannot now, for I have not seen those doleful sights which might fright out eyes from their sockets, and make each individual hair stand upon your heads. I have not seen such things; yet, though I have not seen them, nor you either, we know sufficient of them to understand that God will be just when he condemns, and that he will be clear when he judges. And, now, I must go over the three points again; but I must be very brief about them.

1. God will be clear when he condemns a sinner, from this fact, that the sinner when he stands before God's bar, will either have made a confession, or else such will be his terror, that he will scarce be able to brazen it out before the Almighty. Look at Judas. When he comes before God's bar, will not God be clear in condemning him? for he himself confessed, "I have sinned against innocent blood," and he cast down the money in the temple. And few men are so hardened as to restrain themselves from acknowledging their guilt. How many of you, when you thought you were dying, made a confession upon your death-beds to you God! And mark you, there will be many of you, who, when you come to die, though you have never confessed, yet will lie there, and confess before God in your moments of wakefulness during the night, the sins of your youth, and your former transgressions; and it may be, that when you are

laying there, God's vengeance will be heavy on your conscience, that you will be obliged to tell those who stand about your bed, that you have been guilty of notorious sins. Ah! will not God be just when you shall go straight from your death-bed to his bar, and he shall say, "Sinner, thou art condemned on thine own confession; there is no need for me to open the book, no need for me to pronounce the sentence; thou hast thyself pronounced thine own guilt; ere thou didst die, thou didst stamp thyself with condemnation; 'depart ye cursed!'" And though there will be many die who never made a confession in this world, and perhaps there will be some professors so brazen-faced that they will even stand before God's throne, and say, "When saw we thee a hungered, and fed thee not? When saw we thee naked, and clothed thee not?" yet I cannot believe that most of them will be able to plead any excuse. I find Christ saying of one that he stood speechless when he was asked how he got in, not having on a wedding garment; and so it may be with you, sirs. You may brazen it out when here, you may scorn the law and despise the thunders of Sinai; but it will be different with you then. You may sit up in your bed, and rail against Christ, even when death is staring you in the face; but you will not do it then. Those bones of yours which you thought were of iron, will suddenly be melted; that heart of yours, which was like steel or the nether millstone, will be dissolved like wax in the midst of your bowels; you will begin to cry before God, and weep, and howl: you yourself will testify to your own guilt, when you say, "Rocks! hide me; mountains! on me fall;" for you would need no mountains and no rocks to fall upon you, if you were not guilty. You will be justly condemned, for you will make your own confession when you stand before God's bar. Ah! if you could see the criminal then, what a difference there is in him! Where now are those eyes that stared so impiously at the Bible? Where now are those lips which said, "I curse God and die!" Where now is that heart which once so stout, that spirit once so valiant, as to laugh at hell and talk familiarly with death? Ah! where is it? Is that the selfsame creature — he whose knees are knocking together, whose hair is standing up on end, whose blanched cheek displays the terror of his soul? Is that the selfsame man who just now was burning with impudent rage against his Maker? Yes, it is he; hear what he has to say, "O God, I hate thee; I confess it; I was unjust in the world tat has gone by, and I am unjust now; wreck thy vengeance on me; I dare ask no mercy, and no pardon, for fixed is my heart still to rebel against thee;

indissoluble are the bonds of my guilt: I am damned, I am damned, and I ought to be." Such will be the confession of every man, when he shall stand before his God at last, if he is out of Christ, and unwashed in the Savior's blood. Sinners! can ye hear that and not tremble? Then I have a wonder before me this day — a wonder of conscience, a wonder of hardness of heart, a wonder of impenitency.

2. But in the second place, God will be just, because there will be witnesses there to prove it. There will be none of you my dear friends, if you are ever condemned, who will be condemned on circumstantial evidence: there will be no necessity for the deliberation of a jury; there will be no conflicting evidence concerning your crimes; there will be no doubts to testify in your favor. In fact, if God himself should ask for witnesses in your case, all the witnesses would be against you. But there will be no need of witnesses; God himself will open his Book; and how astonished will you be, when all your crimes are announced, with every individual circumstance connected with them — all the minuteness of your motives, and an exact description of your designs! Suppose I should be allowed to open one of the books of God, and read that description, how astonished you would be! But what will be your astonishment, when God shall open his great book and say, "Sinner, here is thy case," and begin to read! Ah! mark how the tears run down the sinner's cheek; the sweat of blood comes from every pore; and the loud thundering voice still reads on, while the righteous execrate the man who could commit such acts as are recorded in that book. There may be no murder staining the page, but there may be the filthy imagination, and God reads what a man imagines; for to imagine sin is vile, though to do it is viler still. I know I should not like to have my thoughts read over for a single day. Oh! when you stand before God's bar, and hear all this, wilt thou not say, "Lord, thou wilt condemn me, but I cannot help saying thou art just when thou condemnest, and clear when thou judgest." There will be eye-witnesses there.

3. But lastly, in the sinner's heart there will be no doubt at last as to the righteousness of his punishment. The sinner may in this world think that he can never by his sins by any possibility deserve hell; but he will not indulge that thought when he gets there. One of the miseries of hell will be that the sinner will feel that he deserves it all. Tossed on a wave of fire he will see written in every spark that emanates therefrom, "Thou knewest

thy duty, and thou didst it not." Tossed back again by another wave of flame, he hears a voice saying, "Remember, you were warned!" He is hurled upon a rock, and whilst he is being wrecked there, a voice says, "I told thee it would be better for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for thee." Again he plunged under another wave of brimstone, and a voice says, "He that believeth not shall be damned;' thou didst not believe, and thou art here." And when again he is hurled up and down on some wave of torture, each wave shall bear to him some dreadful sentence, which he read in God's Word, in a tract, or in a sermon. Yes, it may be, my friends, that I shall be one of your tormentors in hell, if you should be damned. I trust in God that I myself shall be in heaven; and perhaps, if ye are lost, one of the most powerful things that shall tend to increase your misery will be the fact that I have always tried to warn you, and warn you as earnestly as possible; and when you lift up your eyes to heaven, you will shriek, and say, "O God! there is my minister looking down reprovingly on me, and saying, 'Sinner, I warned thee.'" If thou art lost, it is not for want of preaching; if thou art damned, it is not because I did not tell thee how thou mightest be saved; if thou art in hell, it is not because I did not weep over thee, and urge thee to flee from the wrath to come, for I did warn thee, and that will be the terror of thy doom — that thou hast despised warnings and invitations, and hast destroyed thyself. God is not accountable for thy damnation, and man is not accountable for it; but thou thyself hast done it. And thou wilt say, "O Lord, it is true I am now tossed in fire, but I myself lit the flame; it is true that I am tormented, but I forged the irons which now confine my limbs; I burned the brick that hath built my dungeon; I myself didst bring myself here; I walked to hell, even as a fool goeth to the stocks, or an ox to the slaughter; I sharpened the knife which is now cutting my vitals; I nursed the viper which is now devouring my heart; I sinned, which is the same as saying that I damned myself; for to sin is to damn myself — the two words are synonymous." Sin is damnation's sire; it is the root, and damnation is the horrible flower which must inevitably spring from it. Ay, my dear friends, I tell you yet again, there will be nothing more patent before the throne of God than the fact, that God will be just when he sends you to hell. You will feel that then, even though you do not feel it now.

I thought within myself just this minute, that I heard the whisper of some one saying, “Well, sir, I feel that such men as Palmer, a murderer, will feel that God is just in damning them; but I have not sinned as they have done.” It is true; but if thy sins be less, remember that thy conscience is more tender, for according to the amount of guilt, men’s consciences generally begin to get harder, and because thy conscience is more tender, thy little sin is a great sin, because it is committed against greater light and greater tenderness of heart; and I tell you — that a little sin against great light may be greater than a great sin against little light. You must measure your sins not by their apparent heinousness, but by the light against which you sinned. No crime could be much worse than the crime of Sodom; but even Sodom, filthy Sodom, shall not have so hot a place as a moral young lady, one who has fed the poor and clothed the naked, and done all she could, except loving Christ. What say you to that? Is it unjust? No. If I be a less sinner than another, I all the more deserve to be damned, if I do not come to Christ for mercy. Oh! my dear hearers, my beloved hearers, I cannot bring you to Christ. Christ has brought some of you himself, but I cannot bring you to Christ. How often have I tried to do it! I have tried to preach my Savior’s love, and this day I have preached my Father’s wrath; but I feel I cannot bring you to Christ. I may preach God’s law; but that will not affright you, unless God sends it home to your heart; I may preach my Savior’s love, but that will not woo you, unless my Father draw you. I am sometimes tempted to wish that I could draw you myself — that I could save you. Sure, if I could, ye should soon be saved! But ah! remember, your minister can do but little; he can do nothing else but preach to you. Do pray that God would bless that little, I beseech you, ye who can pray. If I could do more, I would do it; but it is very little I can do for a sinner’s salvation. Do, I beseech you, my dear people, pray to God to bless the feeble means that I use. It is his work and his salvation; but he can do it. O poor trembling sinner, dost thou now weep? Then come to Christ! O poor haggard sinner, haggard in thy soul! come to Christ! O poor sin-bitten sinner! look to Christ! O poor worthless sinner! come to Christ! O poor trembling, fearing, hungering, thirsting sinner! come to Christ! “Ho! everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come, buy wine and milk; yea, come buy wine and milk, without money and without price.” Come! Come! Come! God help you to come! for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

THE MAJESTIC VOICE

SERMON NO. 87

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JUNE 22, 1856,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"The voice of the Lord is full of majesty." — Psalm 29:4.

All God's works praise him, whether they be magnificent or minute, they all discover the wisdom, the power, and the benevolence of their Creator. "All thy works praise thee, O God." But there are some of his more majestic works which sing the song of praise louder than others. There are some of his doings, upon which there seems to be graven in larger letters than usual the name of God. Such are the lofty mountains, which worship God with uncovered heads both night and day; such are the rolling seas, too mighty to be managed by man, but held in check by God, and such, especially, are the thunders and the lightnings. The lightnings are the glances of the eyes of God, and the thunders are the utterings of his voice. The thunder has been usually attributed to God more especially, though philosophers assure us that it is to be accounted for by natural causes. We believe them, but we prefer, ourselves, to look to the first great cause, and we are content with that old and universal belief, that the thunder is the voice of God. It is marvellous what effect the thunder has had upon all kinds of men. In reading an ode of Horace the other day, I found him in the first two verses, singing like a true Ithurean, that he despised God, and intended to live merrily; but by-and-bye he hears the thunder, and acknowledging that there is a Jehovah, who lives on high, he trembles before him. The most wicked of men have been obliged to acknowledge that there must be a Creator, when they have heard that marvellous voice of his sounding through the sky. Men of the stoutest nerve and the boldest blasphemy have become the weakest of all creatures, when God has in some degree manifested himself in the mighty whirlwind, or in the storm. "He breaketh the cedars of Lebanon;" he bringeth down the stout hearts;

he layeth down the mighty, and he obliges those who never acknowledged him to reverence him when they hear his voice. The Christian will acknowledge the thunder to be the voice of God, from the fact, that if he be in the right frame of mind, it always suggest to him holy thoughts. I do not know how it may be with you, but I scarce ever hear the rolling thunder, but I begin to forget earth and look upwards to my God. I am unconscious of any feeling of terror or pain; it is rather a feeling of delight that I experience, for I like to sing that verse —

"The God that rules on high,
And thunders when he please,
That rides upon the stormy sky
And manages the seas;
This awful God is ours,
Our Father and our love,
He shall send down his heavenly powers
To carry us above."

He is our God, and I like to sing that, and think of it: but there is something so terrible in the tone of that voice when God is speaking, something so terrific to other men, and humbling to the Christian, that he is obliged to sink very low in his own estimation; then he looks up to God, and cries, "infinite Jehovah, spare a worm, crush not an unworthy wretch. I know it is thy voice; I reverence thee with solemn awe; I prostrate myself before thy throne; thou art my God, and beside thee there is none else." It might well have occurred to a Jewish mind to have called the thunder the voice of God, when he considered the loudness of it, when all other voices are hushed; even if they be the loudest voices mortals can utter, or the most mighty sounds; yet are they but indistinct whispers, compared with the voice of God in the thunder; and indeed, they are entirely lost when God speaks from his throne, and makes even the deaf hear, and those who are unwilling to acknowledge him hear his voice.

But we need not stop to prove, that the thunder is the voice of God, from any natural feeling of man; we have Scripture to back us up, and therefore we shall do our best to appeal to that. In the first place, there is a passage in the book of Exodus where I would refer you; where, in the margin, we are told that the thunder is the voice of God. In the 9th chapter and the 28th verse, Pharaoh says, "Entreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail." The original Hebrew has it, and my

margin has it, and the margin of all you who are wise enough to have marginal Bibles — “Voices of God.” “Let there be no more voices of God and hail.” So that it is not a mere illusion, but we are really warranted by Scripture, in saying, that “the thunder is the voice of God lifted up in the sky.” Now, for another proof; to what shall we refer you unless we send you to the book of Job? In his 37th chapter, 3rd verse, he says,

> “he directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth. After it a voice roareth: he thundereth with the voice of his excellency: and he will not stay them when his voice is heard. God thundereth marvellously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend.”

and so he says in the 40th chapter, at the 9th verse, “Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?” I am glad, in this age, when men are seeking to forget God, and put him entirely out of the creation, and trying to put laws in the place of God, as if laws could govern a universe without some one to execute those laws, and put power and force into them — I am glad, I say, to be able to bear testimony to something which men cannot deny to be caused immediately by God the mighty One himself.

There is one striking proof I would offer to you, that the thunder is the voice of God; and that is the fact, that when God spake on Sinai, and gave forth his law, his voice is then described, if not in the first passage, yet in the reference to it, as being great thunders. “There were thunders and lightnings, exceedingly loud and long.” God spoke then, and he spoke so terribly in thunder, that the people requested that they might hear that voice no more. And I must refer you to one passage in the New Testament, which will bear me out thoroughly in describing the thunder to be, indeed, the voice of God; and that is in the 11th chapter of the Gospel according to St. John, where Jesus lifted up his voice to heaven at the tomb of Lazarus, and asked his Father to answer him; and then a voice came from heaven, and they that stood by said, “that it thundered;” it was the voice of God which was then heard, and they ascribed it to the thunder. Here is a remarkable proof when God’s voice has been heard on any remarkable occasion, it has always been accompanied by the sound of thunder, or, rather, has been the sound of thunder itself.

Well, now, leaving these considerations altogether, we come to make some remarks, not upon the voice of God in the thunder, but upon the voice of God as elsewhere heard; for it is not only heard there naturally, but there are spiritual voices and other voices of the Most High. “The voice of the Lord is full of majesty.” God has spoken in various ways to man, in order that man might not think him a God so engrossed with himself that he does not observe his creatures. It has graciously pleased the Divine Being, sometimes to look upon man, at other times to stretch out his hand to man, sometimes to reveal himself in mortal appearance to man, and frequently to speak to man. At sundry times he has spoken absolutely without the use of means — by his own voice, as for instance, when he spoke from Sinai’s blazing mountain-top, or when he spoke to Samuel in his bed, and said unto him several times, “Samuel, Samuel;” or when he spoke to Elijah, and Elijah said, “he heard the whirlwind, and he saw the fire;” and after that there was “a still small voice.” He has spoken immediately from heaven by his own lips on one or two occasions in the life of Christ. He spoke to him at the waters of Jordan, when he said, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” He spoke to him on another occasion, to which we have already referred. He spoke — it was God that spoke, though it was Jesus Christ — he spoke to Saul, when on his way to Damascus, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” He has spoken several times immediately by his own voice, without the intervention of means at all; at other seasons, God has been pleased to speak to men by angels. He has, as it were, written the message, and sent it down by his messenger from on high: he hath told to man many wonders and secrets by the lips of those glorious beings, who are flaming spirits of his, that do his pleasure. As frequently, perhaps, God has spoken to men in dreams, in visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon them. Then, when the natural ear hath been closed, he hath opened the ear of the spirit, and he hath taught truths which, otherwise, men could never have known. More frequently still, God hath spoken to men by men. From the days of Noah even until now, God has raised up his prophets, by whose lips he hath spoken. It was not Jeremiah who uttered that lament which we read, but it was Jehovah, the God in Jeremiah, speaking through the natural organs of his voice. It was not Isaiah who foresaw the future, and foretold the doom of nations, it was God in Isaiah thus speaking. And so with every prophet of the Lord now living, and every minister whom God

hath raised up to speak: when we speak with power and efficacy, and unction, it is not we that speak, but it is the Spirit of our Father who dwelleth in us. God speaks through men; and now also, we know that God speaks through his own written Word of Inspiration. When we turn to the page of Scripture, we must not look upon these words as being in any degree the words of men, but as being the words of God. And though they be silent, yet do they speak; and though they cause no noise, yet, verily, "their sound hath gone forth throughout all the world, and their noise unto the ends of the earth." And yet, again, God even now speaks himself by the use of means; he does not make man speak, he does not make the Bible speak merely of itself, but he speaks through the Bible, and through the man, and there be times when the Spirit of God speaks in the heart of man without the use of means. I believe there be many secret impulses, many solemn thoughts, many mysterious directions given to us without a single word having been uttered, but by the simple motions of God's Spirit in the heart. This thing I know, that when I have neither heard nor read, I have yet felt the voice of God within me, and the Spirit hath, himself, revealed some dark mystery, opened some secret, guided me into some truth, given me some direction, led me in some path, or in some other way hath immediately spoken to me himself; and I believe it is so with every man at conversion; with every Christian, as he is carried on through his daily life, and especially as he nears the shores of the grave — that God, the Everlasting One, speaks himself to his soul, with a voice that he cannot resist, although he may have resisted the mere voice of man. The voice of the Lord is still heard, even as it was heard aforetime. Glory be to his name!

And now, my beloved, I come to the doctrine, "The voice of the Lord is full of majesty." First of all, essentially, "The voice of the Lord" must be "full of majesty;" secondly, constantly, "the voice of the Lord is full of majesty;" thirdly, efficaciously, in all it does, "The voice of the Lord is full of majesty."

I. First, then, "THE VOICE OF THE LORD IS FULL OF MAJESTY." Ay, and so it should be. Should not that voice be full of majesty which comes from Majesty? Is not God the King of kings, and the Ruler of the whole earth? Should he, then, speak with a voice below his own dignity? Should not the king speak with the voice of a king? Should not a mighty monarch speak

with a monarch's tongue? And surely, if God be God, and if he be the Master of all worlds, and the Emperor of the universe, he must, when he speaks, speak with the monarch's tongue and with a majestic voice. The very nature of God requires that all he does should be God-like. His looks are looks divine; his thoughts are thoughts divine; and should not his words be words divine, since they come from him? Verily, from the very essence of God, we might infer that his voice would be full of majesty.

But what do we mean by a voice having majesty? I take it that no man's voice can have majesty in it unless it is true; a lie, if it should be spoken in the noblest language, would never be majestic; a falsehood, if it be uttered by the most eloquent lips, would be a mean and paltry thing, however it might be spoken; and an untruth, wherever uttered, and by whomsoever, is not majestic; it never can be truth, and truth only can ever have majesty about it; and because God's word are pure truth, unalloyed with the least degree of error, therefore does it come to pass that his words are full of majesty. Whatever I hear my Father say in Scripture, whatever he speaks to me by the ministry, or by his Spirit, if he speaks it, there is not the slightest alloy of untruth about it. I may receive it just as it is.

"My faith may on his promise live,
May on his promise die."

I need not reason about it; it is enough for me to take it and believe it, because he has said it. I need not try to prove it to the worldling: if I were to prove it, he would believe it none the better; if the voice of God's majesty doth not convince him, sure the voice of my reasoning never can. I need not stand and cut and divide between the voice of God and the other; I know it must be true, if he has said it; and therefore I will believe all that I believe God has said, believing that his voice is full of majesty.

Then, again, when we speak of a majestical voice, we mean by it, that it is a commanding voice. A man may speak truth, and yet there may be but little majesty in what he says, because he speaks it in a tone that never can command attention and catch the ear of his fellow creatures. in fact, there are some men, expounders of truth, who had better hold their tongues, for they do truth an injury. We know full many who affect to preach God's truth, who go out to battle, who take the lance in their hands to defend the honor of Christ, but who wield the lance so ill, and who have so little of

God's Spirit, that they do but disgrace his holy name, and it would have been better had they remained at home. Oh! beloved, God's voice, when he speaks, is always a commanding voice. Let the monarch arise in the midst of his creatures; they may have been conversing with each other before; but hush! his majesty is about to speak. It is so with the majesty of God; if he should speak in heaven the angels would hush their hallelujahs, and suspend the notes of their golden harps, to hear him; and when he speaks on earth, it is at all times becoming in all his creatures to hush their rebellious passions, and make the voice of their reason be silent. When God speaks, either from the pulpit or from his Word, I hold it to be my duty to keep silence. Even while we sing the glories of our God, our soul stands trembling; but when he speaks forth his own glories, who is he that dares to reply? Who is he that shall life up his voice against the majesty of heaven? There is something so majestic in the voice of God, that when he speaks, it commands silence everywhere, and bids men hear.

But there is something very powerful in the voice of God, and that is the reason why it has majesty in it. When God speaks, he speaks not weakly, but with a voice full of power. We poor creatures, at times, are clothed by God with that might, and when we speak grace comes pouring from our lips; but there are oftentimes seasons when we meet with small success; we talk and talk, and have not our Master's feet behind us, nor our Master's spirit within us, and therefore but little is done. It is not so with God: he never wasted a word yet; never spoke a solitary word in vain. Whatever he intended he had but to speak and it was accomplished. Once he said, "Let there be light," and instantly light was. So he said in past eternity that Christ should be his first elect, and Christ was his first elect. He decreed out salvation; he spake the word, and it was done. He sent his Son to redeem, and proclaimed to his elect justification in him. And his voice was a powerful voice, for it did justify us. Any other man's voice could not pardon sin; none but the voice of the monarch can speak pardon to the subject; and God's is a majestic voice, for he has only to speak, and our pardon is at once signed, sealed, and ratified. God is not magniloquent in his words; he does not speak big, sounding words, without meaning. The simplest word he utters may have little meaning to man, but it has a power and meaning in it equal to the omnipotence of God. There is a majesty about the voice of God which might suffice to nerve my soul to

fight the dragon; to say, “Where is thy boasted victory, death? Where is the monster’s sting?” That one promise hath majesty enough in it to make the dwarf a giant, and the weakling one of the mighties of the Most High. It has might enough in it to feed a whole host in the wilderness; to guide a whole company through the mazes of mortal life; majesty enough to divide the Jordan, to open the gates of heaven, and admit the ransomed in. Beloved, I cannot tell you how it is that God’s voice is so majestic, except from the fact, that he is so mighty himself, and that his words are like him.

But just one thought more concerning the voice of God being essentially majestic; and I must trouble you to remember that, if you forget everything else that I have said. In some sense Jesus Christ may be called the voice of God, for you know he is called the Word of God frequently in Scripture; and I am sure this Word of God “is full of majesty.” The voice and the word are very much the same thing. God speaks: it is his Son. His Son is the Word; the Word is his Son, and the voice is his Son. Ah! truly the voice, the Word of God, “is full of majesty.” Angels! ye can tell what majesty sublime invested his blest person when he reigned at his Father’s right hand; ye can tell what were the brightnesses which he laid aside to become incarnate; ye can tell how sparkling was that crown, how mighty was that scepter, how glorious were those robes bedecked with stars. Spirits! ye who saw him when he stripped himself of all his glories, ye can tell what was his majesty. And oh! ye glorified, ye who saw him ascend up on high, leading captivity captive — ye beloved songsters, who bow before him, and unceasingly sing his love! ye can tell how full of majesty he is. High above all principalities and powers ye see him sit; angels are but servants at his feet; and the mightiest monarchs like creeping worms beneath his throne. High there, where God alone reigns, beyond the ken of angels or the gaze of immortal spirits — there he sits, not majestic merely, but full of majesty. Christian! adore your Savior; adore the Son of God; reverence him, and remember at all seasons and times, how little so ever you may be, your Savior, with whom you are allied, the Word of God, is essentially full of majesty.

II. Now the second point, IT IS CONSTANTLY FULL OF MAJESTY. God’s voice, like man’s voice, has its various tones and degrees of loudness; but it is full of majesty, constantly so — whatever tone he uses, it is always full of majesty. Sometimes God speaks to man with a harsh voice, threatening

him for sin; and then there is majesty in that harshness. When man is angry with his fellows, and he speaks harshly and severely, there is little majesty in that; but when the just God is angry with sinful mortals, and he says, "I will by no means spare the guilty;" "I, the Lord, am a jealous God;" when he declares himself to be exceedingly wroth, and asks who can stand before the fury of his countenance — when the rocks are cast down by him — there is a majesty in that terrific voice of his. Then he adopts another voice. Sometimes it is a gentle didactic voice, teaching us what he would have us learn. And then how full of majesty it is! He explains, he expounds, he declares: he tells us what we are to believe; and what a majesty there is in his voice then! Men may explain God's Word, and have no majesty in what they say; but when God teaches what his people are to hold to be truth, what majesty there is in it! So much majesty, that if any man take away from the words that are written in this Book, God shall take away his name out of the book of life and out of the holy city — so much majesty, that to seek to mend the Bible is a proof of a blasphemous heart, that to seek to alter one word of Scripture is a proof of alienation from the God of Israel. At another time God uses another voice — a sweet consoling voice. And oh! ye mourners that have ever heard God's comforting voice, is not that full of majesty! There is nothing of the mere trifling that sometimes we employ to comfort poor sick souls. Mothers will often talk to those who are sick in some gentle strain; but somehow it appears to be affected, and is, therefore, not full of majesty; but when God speaks to comfort, he uses his majestic words. "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." Oh! is there not majesty in this sweet voice? "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I never forget thee." How sweet, but yet how majestic! We cannot avoid being comforted by it if God speaks it to our souls. Sometimes God's voice is a reproving voice; and then it is full of majesty. "The ox knoweth his owner," he says, "and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider;" and he speaks reprovingly, as if he had a controversy with them, and calls the mountains and the hills to hear his reproof of them on account of sin; "I have nourished and brought up children, but they have rebelled against me." But God's reproving voice is

always full of majesty. At other times it is a voice of command to his children, when he appears to them and says, “Speak to the children of Israel that they go forward,” And how majestic are God’s commands, how mighty is his voice, when he tells us what to do! Some of you have a very poor estimation of what God’s voice is. God tells you to be baptized in honor of your Lord and Master; he speaks to you, and he tells you to come round his table, and to remember his dying sufferings; but you do not think much of it: it seems to be lost upon you. But let me tell you, that God’s voice of command is as full of majesty, and ought to be as much regarded by his people as his word of promise or his word of doctrine. Whenever he speaks there is a majesty about his voice, whatever tone he may adopt. Ah! beloved, and there are times coming when God will speak words which will be evidently full of majesty — when he will speak and say, “Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment.” There will be majesty in that voice; for Hades shall then be unlocked, and the gates of the grave sawn in twain; the spirits of the dead shall again be clothed with flesh, and the dry bones shall be made alive once more. And he will speak by-and-bye, and summon all men to stand before his bar; and there will be majesty in his voice then, when he shall say, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you;” and oh! dread thought, there will be tremendous majesty in his voice, when he shall exclaim, “Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

Again. God’s voice is full of majesty in all the different degrees of its loudness. Even in calling there is a difference in the loudness of God’s voice; many of you were called gently to Christ, and you did not seem to hear the thunders of Sinai, like many of God’s people; but whether the voice be loud or soft, it is always full of majesty.

And in all its mediums it is full of majesty. God has sometimes chosen the poor to speak his wisdom by. If I go and hear a countryman or an untaught man preach, who makes many mistakes in grammar, yet if it is God’s word that he preaches, it “is full of majesty.” And sometimes, when a little child has repeated a text, we have not noticed the child, by reason of the majesty of the voice. In fact, the meaner the instrument employed, the greater the majesty in the voice itself. I have noticed a tendency in many to despise their poorer brethren, members of smaller churches, where there is a more humble minister than one they are in the habit of hearing; but this is all

wrong, for God's voice is full of majesty; and he can as well speak by one as the other.

III. In the last place, I must briefly refer to the majesty of God's voice WHEN IT IS REVEALED IN ITS EFFECTS — when it is spoken home to the heart of man. Just look at the Psalm, and let me briefly refer to the facts here mentioned. I shall not understand them naturally, though, doubtless, they were so intended by David, but I shall understand them spiritually. As Dr. Hawker remarks, "Doubtless they were intended to set out gracious operations, as well as natural ones."

First, the voice if the Lord is a breaking voice. "The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars." The proudest and most stubborn sinner is broken before him when he speaks. I believe that even the spirit of Voltaire, stubborn as that spirit was, and hard as a millstone, would have been broken in a single instant, if God had but spoken to him; the hardest heart I have here needs only one syllable from God to break it in a moment. I might hammer away to all eternity, but I could not do it; but "the voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon."

In the next place it is a moving voice, an overcoming voice. "He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn." Who would ever think of a mountain moving? It stands so fast and firm. But God's voice, like his voice in Zerubbabel, speaks to that mountain, and says, "Who art thou, great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." There is not a mountain standing in this world that God cannot move away by his voice, whether it be the mountains of Rome, or the mountain of the false prophet, or the mountains of colossal systems of heresy, or infidelity, or idolatry. God has only to speak the word, and the idols shall fall from their thrones, and the firm mountains of priest-craft shall skip like a calf.

In the next place, the voice of God is a dividing voice. "The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire;" or, as it should be, "The voice of the Lord cutteth out with flames of fire." You saw the lightning on Friday, and you remarked then, when God's voice was heard, that the flash seemed to part the cloud and divide the sky. Just so with God's word. Where God's word is faithfully preached, and his voice is spiritually heard, it is always a dividing voice. You bring all kinds of different characters into a chapel, and

God's word splits them all in twain. It is in this place God divides you. The son of God holds his throne, and sits in judgment here. It divides men from men; it divides sinners from their sins; it divides sinners from their righteousness; it splits through clouds and darkness; it divides our troubles, breaks a way for us to heaven. In fact, there is nothing that the voice of God cannot divide. It is a dividing voice.

And then, again, the voice of the Lord is such a loud voice, that it is said to shake the wilderness. "The Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh." Stand in the middle of a wilderness or a desert, and conceive if you would make anything hear; but when God speaks, his voice ringeth through the wilderness, and startleth the desert itself. Minister of God! you have only to speak God's voice, and you will be heard; if you have only half-a-dozen to hear you, you will be heard further than you know of. None of us can preach a gospel sermon, but it is heard and talked of more than we imagine. Yea, there is not a pious conversation with a poor woman but may be carried all over the world, and produce the most wonderful effects. Nobody can tell how loud is God's voice, and how far it may be heard. "Lift up thy voice; lift it up; be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God." And your voice may be ever so weak, and your ability ever so little: only lift it up, and God Almighty, by his grace, may make the very wilderness to shake, yea, he may make the very wilderness of Kadesh to tremble.

And then in the 9th verse there is another idea, which I must not pass over, although I might have preferred to do so, possibly. "The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve." By this I understand what the ancients believed — that so affrighted were the hinds by the noise of the thunder, that the period of calving was often hastened on, and frequently prematurely. It is just so with God's voice. If a man has in him a desire towards Christ, the voice of God makes him bring forth that desire, to the joy and rejoicing of his soul. And very frequently, when a man has a bad design towards God, God has only to speak, and his design becomes abortive. It is brought forth, as it were, before its time, and falls like an untimely fruit to the ground. Whatever man has within him, God can make it come out of him in a single moment: if he has a desire towards God, God can bring forth that desire, and he can bring forth the soul, and make it alive; and if it be a desire against God, God can frustrate that desire, kill it,

overwhelm it, and overthrow it; for “the voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve.”

And in the next place, the voice of God is a discovering voice. It “discovereth the forests.” The trees were your former hiding-place; but in the forest, however thick it may be, there doth the lightning gleam; and under the mighty trees, however thick their covering, the voice of the Lord is heard. God’s voice is a discovering voice. You hypocrites! you get hiding yourselves under the trees of the forest; but God’s voice thundereth after you when it speaks. Some of you get hiding under ceremonies, good lives, resolutions, and hopes; but God’s voice will discover the forests; and recollect, there will be a day with some of you, when you will hide yourselves, or seek to do it, under rocks and mountains, or in the deepest parts of the forests; but when he sits upon his throne, the voice of the Lord will discover the forests. Ye may stand under the old oak, or creep within its trunk, and feel that there you are hidden; but his eyes like balls of fire, shall see you through and through, and his voice, like a voice of thunder, shall say, “Come forth, culprit; come forth, man; I can see thee;

‘Mine eye can pierce the shades, and find thy soul as soon
In midnight’s darkness as in blazing noon.’

Come forth, come forth!” And vain then will be thy disguises, vain thy subterfuges. “The voice of the Lord discovereth the forests.” Oh! I would to God that he would speak to some of you this morning, and discover your souls! I wish he would discover to you your lost and hopeless condition; that you are damned without Christ, every one of you! Oh that he would discover to you how horrible is your position, considered apart from the Savior; discover to you the fallacy of all your legal hope, and of all your experiences, if they are not experiences allied to Christ! I pray that he would discover to you that all your good works will come tumbling on your head at last, if you build them for a house, and that you must stand surrounded by no covering, but unveiled before the God who discovers the forests.

I would have preached to you this morning; but I cannot. Yet, perhaps, amidst the multitude of my words there may be some still small voice of God, which shall reach your heart. And if the rest of you should despise it, what of that? The voice of God will be as full of majesty in the reprobate

as in the elect; and if ye be cast away into hell, God shall get as much glory from the voice which ye heard and which ye despised, as he does from his voice which the elect heard, and at which they trembled and fled to God. Do not think that your damnation will rob God of any of his honor. Why, sirs, he can be as much glorified in your destruction as in your salvation. You are but little creatures in the account of his glory. He can magnify himself anyhow. Oh! humble yourselves, therefore, before God; bow down yourselves before his love and his mercy; and hear now what the plan of salvation is, whereby God brings out his elect. It is this: “He that believeth,” in that voice, that Word, that Son of his; “He that believeth,” — not merely he that hopeth; “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.” Ah! hearers, if I could leap out of my body, and could lay aside the infirmities of my spirit, methinks that then I might preach to you; but I know right well that even then it must be God that speaks; and therefore I leave the words. My God! My God! Save these my people; for Jesus’ precious name’s sake. Amen and Amen.

THE PLEA OF FAITH

SERMON NO. 88

DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, JUNE 22, 1856,

AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

"Do as thou hast said.' — 2 Samuel 7:25.

Nathan had been giving to David, on God's behalf, sundry exceeding great and precious promises. David expresses his gratitude to God for having so promised, and he says,

> "Now, O Lord God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said.'

It is a prayer to God. Those words naturally flowed from his lips: after hearing such precious promises, he was anxious for their fulfillment. Such words will be equally in place, if they shall be adopted by us in these modern times, and if, after reading a promise, on turning to God's Word, we should finish by saying, "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope," it will be a practical application of the text, "Do as thou hast said."

I shall not commence my sermon to-night by endeavoring to prove that this Bible is what God has said; I do not come here to give you arguments to prove the inspiration of Scripture; I assume that I speak to a Christian congregation, and I assume, therefore, at starting, that this is God's word and none other. Leaving that matter, then, altogether, permit me to proceed at once to the text, understanding by what God has said, the Scriptures of his truth; and I trust there are some here who will be led, to-night, to cry to God in behalf of some promise made to their souls, "O Lord, do as thou hast said."

I. Our first remark shall be HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO KNOW WHAT GOD HAS SAID, for unless we know what God has said, it will be folly to say, "do as thou hast said." Perhaps there is no book more neglected in these days than the Bible. I do verily believe there are more mouldy Bibles in this world than there are of any sort of neglected books. We have stillborn books in abundance; we have innumerable books which never see any circulation except the circulation of the butter shop, but we have no book that is so much bought, and then so speedily laid aside, and so little used, ad the Bible. If we buy a newspaper, it is generally handed from one person to another, or we take care to peruse it pretty well; indeed some go so far as to read advertisements and all. If a person purchases a novel, it is well known how he will sit and read it all the way through, till the midnight candle is burnt out; the book must be finished in one day, because it is so admirable and interesting; but the Bible, of course, in the estimation of many, is not an interesting book; and the subjects it treats of are not of any very great importance. So most men think; they think it is a very good book to carry out on a Sunday, but never meant to be used as a book of pleasure, or a book to which one could turn with delight. Such is the opinion of many; but no opinion can be more apart from the truth; for what book can treat of truths one-half so important as those that concern the soul. What book can so well deserve my attention as that which is written by the greatest of all authors, God himself? If I must read a valuable book with attention, how much more ought I to give my mind to the study of that book which is invaluable, and which contains truth without the slightest admixture of error? And if books upon my health, or books which only concern the doings of my fellow creatures occupy some of my time, and deservedly so, how much more time should I spend in reading that which concerns my everlasting destiny; which reveals to me worlds hitherto unknown; which tells me how I may escape from hell and fly to heaven? But I must remark, that even among Christian people, the Bible is one of the least read books that they have in their house. What with our innumerable magazines, our religious newspapers, and our perpetual controversies about the Bible, it is too seldom that people read the Bible. There certainly is not that reading of it that there used to be. Our predecessors, the ancient Puritans, would scarcely read any book but that; and if a book was not concerning the Bible, they did not care about reading it at all. Perhaps therein they may have been too strait and narrow, and

may somewhat have cramped their minds; but I would rather have a little truth, and have a mind filled with that, though that mind should only be as large as a nutshell, than have the most gigantic intellect, and have that crammed with error. It is not the greatness of our intellect, it is the rightness of it, that makes us men in this world, and right men before God. I beseech you, therefore, you who are members of Christian churches, if you have but little time, do not expend it in reading ephemeral books, but take your Bible and read it constantly; and I promise you one thing, that if you are already Christians, the more you read the Bible the more you will love it. You may find it hard, perhaps, at present, to read a short passage and meditate upon it all day; but as you proceed you will see such depths unfathomable, such heights beyond your ken; and you will discover such unutterable sweetness in this precious honey-comb dropping with drops of honey, that you will say, "I must have more of it," and your spirit will always cry, "Give, give;" nor will it be content until you can have God's statutes upon your mind daily, to be your songs in the house of your pilgrimage.

The errors of this present age have sprung from a non-reading of the Bible. Do you think, my brethren, that if we all read the Scriptures with judgment, and desired to know them rightly, there would be so many sects as there are? Heresies and schisms have sprung from this; one man has gone a little astray upon a point; another man, without referring to Scripture, has endorsed all he has said; another one has added something else to it; and then another one, being cunning, full of subtlety of the devil, has twisted passages of Scripture, and has woven them into a system, which has been fashioned in the first place by mistake, has accumulated and become more colossal by sundry other mistakes which naturally accrued to it, and at last has been perfected by the craft of designing heretics.

And, again: bigotry, ill feeling, and uncharitableness, must all be traced, in a large degree, to our want of reading the Bible. What is the reason why yon man hates me, because I preach what I believe to be right? If I do speak the truth am I responsible for his hating me? Not in the least degree. I am sometimes told by my people that I attack certain parties very hard. Well, I cannot help it; if they are not right, it is not my fault — if they come in my way, that I am compelled to run over them. Suppose two of you

should be driving in the road to-morrow, and one of you should be on the right side of the road, and some accident should occur, you would say, "Sir, the other man ought to have pulled up, he must pay the damages, for he had no business there at all on his wrong side." And it will be the same with us if we preach God's truth; we must go straight on; if the greatest ill-feeling in the world rise up we have nothing to do with it. God's truth will sometimes bring about warfare; Jesus Christ, you know, said himself that he came to put warfare between man and man; to set the mother-in-law against the daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against mother-in-law; and that a man's foes should be those of his own household. But if there be ill-feeling, if there be clamouring of sects, to whom is it due? Who is responsible for it? Why, the man who makes the new sects, not the man who abides fast and firm by the old one. If I am safely moored by a good strong anchor of fundamental truth, and some other shall strike my vessel and sink himself, I will not pay the damages. I stand firm: if others chose to go away from the truth, to cut their cables and slip their moorings; then let them. God grant that we may not do the same. Hold the truth, my friends, and hold it as the easiest method of sweeping away heresies and false doctrines. But now-a-days, you know, you are told, "Oh, it does not matter what you believe; doctrines are nothing;" ad they have tried lately to make a very happy family of us, like the happy family near Waterloo Bridge, where all kinds of creatures are shut up together; but they are only kept in order by a lath which the man, when we turn our heads, applies between the bars of the cage. Just so with denominations; they want to amalgamate us all. We differ in various doctrines, and therefore some of us must be wrong, if we hold doctrines which are directly hostile to each other. But we are told, "It does not signify; doubtless, you are all right." Now, I cannot see that. If I say one thing, and another man says another, how, by all that is holy, can both speak the truth? Shall black and white be the same color? Shall falsehood and truth be the same? When they shall be, and fire shall sleep in the same cradle with the waves of the ocean, then shall we agree to amalgamate ourselves with those who deny our doctrines, or speak evil of what we believe to be the gospel. My brethren, no man has any right to absolve your judgment from allegiance to God; there is liberty of conscience between man and man, but there is none between God and man. No man has a right to believe what he likes; he is to believe what God tells him; and if he does not believe that though he is not

responsible to man, or to any set of men, or to any government, yet mark you, he is responsible to God. I beseech you, therefore, if you would avoid heresies, and bring the church to a glorious union, read the Scriptures. Read not so much man's comments, or man's books, but read the Scriptures, and keep your faith on this, — "God has said it." If you cannot make all God's truths agree, yet remember God has not made two sets of truth opposite to each other; that were an impossibility which even God himself could not accomplish mighty though he be. My brethren, always stand by what God has said, and do not be turned aside from it by all the arguments that can be brought to bear against you. "Search the Scriptures, for they testify of Christ."

II. And now for our second point, ALL THAT FAITH WANTS TO BUILD UPON IS WHAT GOD HAS SAID. "Do as thou hast said." The only solid foothold that faith has is, "It is written, God hath said it." When a sinner comes to God he must have nothing else to rely upon except this, "Do as thou hast said." There is a tendency in most men's minds to bring before God something which he did not say. Many of you, I dare say, will go and ask God in prayer for something for which you cannot prove a positive promise that he will ever give it to you. You go to God and say, "Lord, do as John Bunyan said, do as Whitfield said, let me have an experience like theirs." Now, that is all wrong. We must, when we come to God, say only, "Lord, do as thou hast said." And then, again, I do believe that many of those who are members of our churches have not put their faith simply in what God has said. If I were to go round to some of you and ask you why you believe yourselves to be Christians, it is marvellous what strange reasons many of you would bring. It is very singular what strange views persons often have as to the way of salvation. It is hard to bring a sinner to God simply with this, — "Lord, do as thou hast said."

I know some who think themselves to be God's children, because they dreamed they were. They had a very remarkable dream one night, and if you were to laugh at them they would be unutterably indignant; they would cut you at once out of the family of God, and call you an "accuser of the brethren." They do not rely upon what God has said in the Bible; but they had some singular vision, when deep sleep had fallen upon them, and because of that vision, they reckon they are children of God. In the course of my seeing persons who come to me, I hear every now and then a

story like this, “Sir, I was in such-and-such a room, and suddenly I thought I saw Jesus Christ, and heard a voice saying such-and-such a thing to me, and that is the reason why I hope I am saved.” Now, that is not God’s way of salvation; the sinner is not to say, “Lord, do as I dreamed, do as I fancy;” but “Do as thou hast said.” And if I have any one here who has never had a dream, or vision, he does not want to have, if he goes to God with this, “Lord, thou hast said Christ died to save sinners, I am a sinner, save me,” that is faith, “Do as thou hast said.” But there are other persons far more rational, who if they were asked the reason for their supposing that they are saved, would speak of some remarkable rhapsody which, on a particular occasion they had when hearing a certain minister; or of a particular text which struck them suddenly, and transported them to the seventh heaven, and they had such thoughts as they never had before. “Oh! sir,” they say, “it is marvellous, I thought my heart would break, it was so full of joy and gladness; I never felt so before in all my life; and when I went out of the house, I felt so light and so ready to run home, I thought I should sing al the way; so I know I must be a child of God.” Well, you may know it, but I don’t, because there are many persons who have been deluded by the devil in that fashion, who never had faith in Christ. Faith in Christ never rests in rhapsody; it rests on a “thou hast said it.” Ask faith whether it will ever take its standing on anything but a “thou hast said,” and faith will answer, “No; I cannot climb to heaven on a ladder made of dreams, they are too flimsy to bear my feet.” Faith, why dost thou not march on? Why dost thou not cross that bridge? “No,” says faith, “I cannot; it is made up of rhapsodies, and rhapsodies are intoxicating things, and I cannot place my feet upon them.” Faith will stand on a promise, though it be no bigger than grain of mustard seed; but it could not stand on a rhapsody if it was as large as the everlasting mountains. Faith can build on a “thou hast said it;” but it cannot build on frames and feelings, on dreams and experiences — it only relies on this — “Thou hast said it.” Let me caution my hearers against suppositions, which some of them have as to salvation. Some persons think that the Holy Spirit is a kind of electric shock working in the heart; that there is some mysterious and terrible thing they cannot understand, which they must feel, not only very different from what they ever felt before, but even superior to anything described in God’s Word. Now, I beg to tell you, that so far from the effectual operation of the Holy Spirit being a dark thing in its

manifestation, it is, because it is the Holy Spirit, a thing of simplicity and light. The way of salvation is no great mystery, it is very plain; it is "believe and live." And faith needs no mysteries to hang itself upon; it catches hold of the bare naked promise, and it says, "Lord, do as thou hast said."

My faith can on this promise live; I know that on this promise it never can die. But faith wants neither testimonies of man, nor learning of philosophers, nor eloquence of orators, nor rhapsodies, nor visions, nor revelations. It wants nothing else but what God has said applied to the heart; and it goes to God, and says, "Lord, do as thou hast said."

III. And now for the third remark. We see that faith is a very bold thing; when God says a thing it goes to God, and says, "Lord, do as thou hast said."

My third remark is, that FAITH IS QUITE RIGHT IN SO DOING. The Lord always meant, when he said a thing, that we should remind him of it. God's promises were never meant to be waste paper; he meant that they should be used. Whenever God gives a promise, if a man does not use that promise, the promise fails in effect to that man, and God's great intention therein is in some measure frustrated. God sent the promise on purpose to be used. If I see a Bank of England note, it is a promise for a certain amount of money, and I take it and use it. But oh! my friend, do try and use God's promises; nothing pleases God better than to see his promises put in circulation; he loves to see his children bring them up to him, and say, "Lord, do as thou hast said." And let me tell you that it glorifies God to use his promises. Do you think that God will be any the poorer for giving you the riches he has promised? Do you think he will be any the less holy for giving holiness to you? Do you think he will be any the less pure for washing you from your sins? And he has said, "Come now, let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool; though they be red, they shall be whiter than snow." Faith gets hold of that promise, and it does not stand saying, "this is a precious promise, I will look at it;" it goes right up to the throne, and says, "Lord, here is the promise, do as thou hast said." And God says, "Oh! faith, I am as glad to see the promise brought to me, as thou art to bring it; I meant my promise to be used, and the using of it glorifies me." Why, if any one gave us a

cheque, and we did not go to have it cashed, though we might want the money badly enough, suppose we said, “I don’t like to go,” there would be some slur cast upon the character of the man whose signature had made it valid. And so when a Christian gets a promise, if he does not take it to God, he dishonors him. But when faith in all its raggedness and poverty, and sickness about it, goes to God and says, “Lord, I have nothing to recommend me but this, ‘thou hast said it:’ there is the promise, Lord, give me the fulfillment.” God smiles, and says, “Ay, my child, I love to see thee trust me; there, take back the fulfillment, and go on thy way rejoicing.” Never think that God will be troubled by your asking him about his promises so much. God likes to be troubled, if I may use such an expression; he likes you to go to his door, and say, “Great Banker, cash this note; great Promiser, fulfill this promise; great covenant God, fulfill thy covenant, and send me not empty away.” “Do as thou hast said,” is a legitimate request; we ought to say it; it honors God, and God meant that we should so use his promises, “Do as thou hast said.”

Another remark. Faith has very good reasons for appealing to God to do as he has said. If you should say to faith, “Faith, why do you expect God to do as he has said it, why do you expect it?” Faith would answer, “I have a whole bundle of reasons that justify the act. And in the first place, I have a right to expect him to do as he has said, because he is a true God; I know he cannot lie. He has said he will give me such-and-such a thing; if he was not a truthful God, I would not say, ‘do as thou hast said!’ but since he is a true God, and never was known to break his promise, and since, moreover, by two immutable things, wherein it is impossible for God to lie — his oath and his promise — he has made the thing secure; and since I know that in Christ all the promises are yea and amen, I think I have good reason enough for going to him and saying, ‘do as thou hast said.’ If he were some fallible being who promised and would not perform, I might hesitate somewhat; but since he is always true and constantly precious, I will go and say to him, ‘Lord, do as thou hast said.’“ Poor sinner! God has said, “He that confesseth his sin shall find mercy.” Now, if you go to God, you want no other plea than this, — “Lord, do as thou hast said;’ ‘I have confessed my sins;’ ‘do as thou hast said.’“ “But, sinner, why should I do as I have said? you do not deserve it.” “Lord, thou art a true God.”

"Thou hast promised to forgive,
All who on thy Son believe;
Lord I know thou canst not lie,
Give me Christ or else I die."

Go, poor sinner, tell the Lord that, and as truly as he is God, he will never send you empty away. Faith has good reasons to feel that God is true, and therefore he will do as he has said. And not only so, but he is able to do it; his ability is infinite. His intentions also are the same, his promises never get worn out by being circulated, and they become all the more sure for being tried. Poor sinner, here again is a joyful thought: thou canst go to God, and say, "Lord thou hast promised to wash away all our iniquities, and cast them into the depths of the sea. Lord, if thou hadst been a changeable God, I might have thought thou wouldst not wash away mine, but thou didst wash Manasseh, and thou didst wash Paul; now, Lord, because thou art unchangeable, 'do as thou hast said.' For thou art just the same now, just as merciful, just as powerful, and just as kind as ever thou wert. What, wilt thou break thy promise, Lord? 'Do as thou hast said.'"

But faith puts it on stronger ground than this: it says, "Lord, if thou dost not do as thou hast said, thou wilt be dishonored, thou wilt be disgraced." If a man does not carry out his promise, he is cashiered; men care not to associate with on who breaks his promise; and what would become of God's great name if he were to break his promise? Poor black sinner! thou art coming to the fountain; God has given the promise that he will wash every sinner that comes to the fountain. Now, with reverence, let me speak it poor sinner; if Christ did not wash you, it would be a dishonor to his truth. If you were to go to Christ, and he were to cast you out, surely the devils in hell would despise the name of him who breaks his promise. Beloved, to suppose that God could violate his promise, is to suppose him divested of his Godhead. Take away God's honor from him, and he becomes less than man. Take away the honor which even man holds dear, and what do you make of God? "Oh! sir," you say, "but I do not deserve it; I am such a poor worthless creature, he will not keep his promise to me." I tell you that does not make a whit difference in God's promise; if he has promised, he is divinely bound to perform his promise, in whatever state you may be. Though you have slandered God, though you may have hated him and despised him, and run away from him, and in every way ill-treated him — if he has made a promise to you here, I will be bound for

my God. He would keep a promise to the devil if he had made one; and if he has made a promise to you who are ever so vile, he will keep that promise to you. Hear the promise, then, once more, Are you a sinner? "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinner, even the chief." And, again: "He is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him." And, again: "Come unto me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And let me say again, with the profoundest reverence, that if Christ did not give rest to every weary heavy laden sinner that came to him, he would be un-Christed, he would lose his truthfulness, he would be undeified, he would lose his veracity, and the loss of one poor believing sinner would be the loss of God's own godhead; it would be the dethroning of the immortal; it would be the pulling down of heaven, the breaking asunder of the universe, and the dissolution of creation's own earth, and of creation's self. Faith may well go to God, and say, "Lord, do as thou hast said; for if thou dost not, it will be a dishonor to thyself."

And now let us conclude by asking, what has God said? I cannot tell you all that he has said to you, because I cannot mark out all the different characters here. But, my dear friends, whatever may be your character, from the earliest stage of religion up to the last, there is always some special promise to you; and you have only to turn your Bible over and find it out, and then go to God with "Do as thou hast said." Let me just select a few characters. There is one here, exceeding faint in the ways of the Lord. "Oh!" he says, "I am faint, though I hope I am pursuing." Now, here is the promise, — "He giveth power unto the faint;" When you get such a promise, stick hard and fast to it; do not let the devil cheat you out of it, but keep on saying, "Lord, thou hast said, He giveth power unto the faint." "Do as thou hast said." Let it ring and ring again in the ears of the promiser, and he will be a performer yet. "Ah!" says another, "I am not faint; I am afraid I scarcely have life at all; I am a hungry and thirsty soul; I want Christ, but I cannot get at him." Hear this: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Take that promise to God, and keep to it: do not plead anything else, but go to God over and over again with this, — "Lord, thou hast said it; do as thou hast said." Are you covered all over with sin, and under a deep sense of your iniquities? Go and tell him this: "Thou hast said, 'I will cast their iniquities

into the depths of the sea.' Lord, I know I have these sins; I do not deny it; but thou hast said, 'I will pardon them.' I have no reason why thou shouldst pardon them; I cannot promise that I shall be better; but, Lord, thou hast said it, and that is enough; 'Do as thou hast said.'" Another one here is afraid lest he should not be able to hold on to the end, and lest after having been a child of God he should be a cast-away. Then, if that be thy state, go and take this to God: "The mountains may depart, and the hills may be removed, but the covenant of my love shall not depart from you;" and when you are thinking that Savior is going away, catch hold of his skirts, and say, "Jesus, do as thou hast said. Thou hast said, 'I will never leave thee;' 'do as thou hast said.'" Or, if thou hast lost his presence, remember the promise, "I will come again to you." Go and say, "Lord, I have lost the sweet comfort of thy presence in my heart, but thou hast said, 'I will come again to you.'" And if Satan says, "He is gone away, and will never come back again," tell Satan he has nothing to do with it; God has said it, and keep to this, "Do as thou hast said." If you do that, you will want no other argument and no other reason.

Let us suppose a case, and having tried to illustrate the truth by it, we will have done. There is a desperate ruffian; he has been concerned in twenty burglaries; it is said he has committed several murders; the police are on his track, they are hunting after him; he cannot be discovered. The principal point is to discover him, for it is hoped that by his discovery and his pardon more good might be done than even by his execution. Persons come to this desperately bad fellow, and they tell him, "If you give yourself up, I dare say you will get a free pardon." "I do not give myself up on daresays," he says. Another comes, and says, "If you were to give yourself up, I would intercede for you; I know my lord so-and-so, and such a man, member of parliament, would intercede for you." "No," he would say, "let well alone. I am pretty safe now; I am not going to give myself up on the mere speculation that some one will intercede for me." But by-and-bye there comes out a huge placard, "V.R. Free pardon to such a man if he surrenders himself." He walks straight up to the place. Some one says to him, "Stop, my dear fellow; they will hang you, perhaps." "No," says he, "they won't." Some one says, "They have been many years looking after you; you do not think that if you get into the fangs of the law now the Queen will pardon you?" "Yes," he says, "I can trust her?

she has never given a free pardon, and then executed anyone." He goes to the office, and they say, "We are astonished to see this fellow; he might have kept away; he had no necessity to give himself up." "See," says one, "there is a policeman, are you not afraid? There are the handcuffs; are you not afraid that they will be put on your wrists and that you will be put into jail?" "No," he says, "I will walk all through the prison, but there is not a cell in which I may be locked up. The Queen has said she will pardon me, and I do not want any thing else." "But look at your conduct; you know you deserve to be hanged." "I know I do, but I have received a free pardon, and I will surrender myself." "But who can tell how many buglaries you will commit if you are allowed to go free." "Never mind," she has promised to pardon me, and I know well that her word will not be violated. Sure the majesty of England will not lie against such an offender as I am." Now, you would not wonder at that, would you? It would be no very marvellous thing, because we can trust her Majesty pretty fairly. But it is the hardest thing to get sinners to come to God. "No," says one, "I have been a drunkard, God will not forgive me." My dear fellow, it is said, "All manner of sin and iniquity shall be forgiven to man." "Oh," says another, "I have been a swearer, I have been an infidel, I have blasphemed God, and broken all his statutes." My dear fellow-creature, it is said, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men," Cannot you believe it? God means what he says; and can you not come to God, trembling, though you be, and cast yourself before his feet, and say, "Lord, if thou dost damn me, I deserve it; if thou shouldst cast me down to hell, I know thou wouldst be just: but then Lord thou hast said, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.'" I tell you God will do as he has said. If you have but faith to believe that promise, you never need fear.

Worthless, vilest of the vile, sweepings of the universe, the very offal of creation, if you come to God he will take you in, for his promise is not to be broken by reason of your vileness; he will receive you, if you can but plead a promise of your own case, and say to him, "Do as thou hast said." Now, then, I will say in conclusion, it will be easy enough for every poor sinner, for every penitent sinner, for every weak saint, to go home, and turn his Bible over; and by a little diligence he will be able to find out a promise that will exactly suit his case; and if he does not find such a promise, it will be because he did not look long enough, for there is one

that just fits, and when he has got hold of it let him go to God, and say, “Lord, do as thou hast said,” and let him keep to that; and the heavens would sooner fall than one of God’s promises should be broken. Oh! trust my Master! oh! trust my Master; trust your souls to him! trust your bodies to him, I beseech you; do it, for his own name’s sake! Amen and Amen.

HATRED WITHOUT CAUSE

SERMON NO. 89

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JUNE 29, 1856,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"They hated me without a cause." — John 15:25.

It is usually understood, that the quotation our Savior here refers to is to be found in the 35th Psalm, at the 19th verse, where David says, speaking of himself immediately and of the Savior prophetically, "Let not them who are mine enemies rejoice over me, neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause." Our Savior refers to that as being applicable to himself, and thus he really tells us, in effect, that many of the Psalms are Messianic, or refer to the Messiah; and, therefore, Dr. Hawker did not err, when he said he believed the Psalms referred to the Savior, though he may have carried the truth too far. But it will be a good plan, in reading the Psalms, if we continually look at them as alluding not so much to David, as to the man of whom Dave was the type, Jesus Christ, David's Lord.

No being was ever more lovely than the Savior; it would seem almost impossible not to have affection for him. Certainly at first sight it would seem far more difficult to hate him than to love him. And yet, loveable as he was, yea, "altogether lovely," no being so early met with hatred, and no creature ever endured such a continual persecution as he had to suffer. He is no sooner ushered into the world, than the sword of Herod is ready to cut him off, and the innocents of Bethlehem, by their dreadful massacre, gave a sad foretaste of the sufferings which Christ would endure, and of the hatred that men would pour upon his devoted head. From his first moment to the cross, save the temporary lull while he was a child, it seemed as if all the world were in league against him, and all men sought to destroy him. In different ways that hatred displayed itself, sometimes in overt deed, as when they took him to the brow of the hill, and would have cast him down headlong, or when they took up stones again to stone him,

because he said that Abraham desired to see his day, and saw it, and was glad. At other times that hatred showed itself in words of slander, such as these, — “He is a drunken man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners;” or in looks of contempt, as when they looked suspiciously at him, because he did eat with publicans and sinners, and sat down to table with unwashed hands. At other times that hatred dwelt entirely in their thoughts, and they thought within themselves, “This man blasphemeth,” because he said, “Thy sins be forgiven thee.” But at almost every time there was a hatred towards Christ; and when they took him, and would have made him king, and a shallow fleeting flood of popular applause would have watted him on to an unsteady throne, even then there was a latent hatred towards him, only kept under by loaves and fishes, which only wanted an equal quantity of loaves and fishes offered by the priests, to develop it itself in the cry of “Crucify him, crucify him,” instead of the shout of “Hosannah! blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” All grades of men hated him. Most men have to meet with some opposition; but then it is frequently a class opposition, and there are other classes who look at them with respect. The demagogue, who is admired by the poor, must expect to be despised by the rich; and he who labors for the aristocracy, of course meets with the contempt of the many. But here was a man who walked among the people, who loved them, who spoke to rich and poor as though they were (as indeed they are) on one level in his blessed sight: and yet all classes conspired to hate him; the priests cried him down because he spoiled their dogmas; the nobles would put him to death because he spoke of being a king; while the poor, for some reasons best known to themselves, though they admired his eloquence, and frequently would have fallen prostrate in worship before him, on account of the wondrous deeds he did, even these, led by men who ought to have guided them better, conspired to put him to death, and to consummate their guilt by nailing him to the tree, and then wagging their heads, bade him, if he could build a temple in three days, to save himself and come down from the cross. Christ was the hated one, the slandered and scorned; he was “despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.”

Now, we shall try this morning, first, to justify the Savior’s remarks, that he was hated without a cause; and secondly, to dwell upon the sin of men

— that men hated him without a cause; in the third place, to give a lesson or two to Christ's own people, which they may well learn from the fact, that their Savior was hated without a cause.

I. First, then, beloved, let us JUSTIFY WHAT THE SAVIOR SAID, — "They hated me without a cause." And we remark, that, apart from the consideration of man's sinfulness, and Christ's purity, there certainly is not cause, whatever to be discovered why the world should have hated him.

First let us regard Christ in his person. Was there anything in Christ's person as a man, when he lived in this world, which had a natural tendency to make any person hate him? Let us remark, that there was an absence of almost everything which excites hatred between man and man. In the first place there was no great rank in Christ to excite envy. It is a well known fact that let a man be ever so good, if he be at all lifted above his fellow-creatures by riches, or by title, though one by one men will respect him, yet the many often speak against him, not so much for what he is, as for his rank and his title. It seems to be natural to men in the mass to despise nobles; each man, individually, thinks it a wonderful fine thing to know a lord; but put men together, and they will despise lords and bishops, and speak very lightly of principalities and powers. Now Christ had none of the outward circumstances of rank, he had no chariot, no long sleeves, no elevation above his fellows; when he walked abroad there were no heralds to attend him, there was no pomp to do him honor. In fact, one would think that Christ's appearance would naturally have engendered pity. Instead of being lifted above men, he did, in some sense, seem to be below them, for foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but the Son of Man had not where to lay his head. Many a democrat has railed against the archbishop when he has gone by Lambeth palace; but would he curse or despise him if he were told, the archbishop had not where to lay his head, but simply toiled for the truth's sake, and had no reward? The envy naturally excited by rank, station, and such-like, could not have operated in Christ's case; there was nothing in his garb to attract attention; it was the garb of the peasant of Galilee-"of one piece, woven from the top throughout." Nor was there anything in his rank. He might have been the son of an ancient royal family, but its royalty was apparently extinct, and

he was only known as the Son of the carpenter. The hated him, then, in that sense, “without a cause.”

Many persons seem to have envy excited in them against those who exercise rule or government over them. The very fact of a man having authority over me stirs up my evil passions, and I begin to look at him with suspicion, because he is invested with that authority. Some men naturally fall into the groove, and obey simply because the ruled is made; principalities and powers are established, and they submit themselves for the Lord’s sake; but the many, especially in these republican times, seem to have a natural tendency to kick against authority, simply because it is authority. But if authorities and governments were changed every month, I believe that in some countries, in France for instance, there would be revolutions as much under one government as under another; in fact, they hate all government there, and wish to be without law, that each man may do what is right in his own eyes. But this did not operate in Christ’s case, he was not a king; he did not assume sway over the multitude. It is true he was Lord over tempests and seas; it is true he could command demons, and, if he pleased, men must have been his obedient servants; but he did not assume power over them. He marshalled no armies, he promulgated no laws, he made himself no great one in the land; the people did just as they liked, for all the authority he exercised over them. In fact, instead of binding laws upon them which were severe, he seemed to have loosened the rigidity of their system; for when the adulterous woman, who, otherwise, would have been put to death, was brought before him, he said, “Neither do I condemn thee.” And he relaxed, to a certain extent, the rigidity of the Sabbatical ordinance, which was in some respects too burthensome, saying, “The Sabbath was made for man.” Surely, then, they hated him “without a cause.”

Some men make others dislike them because they are proud. I know some men that I should have liked very well if the starch had been left out of them; I should really sympathize with them and admire them if they had the least degree of condescension, but they seem to walk about the world with such a style of pride! They may not be proud — very likely they are not; but, as an old divine said, “When we see a fox’s tail sticking out of a hole, we naturally expect the fox is there.” And, somehow or other, the human mind cannot bear pride; we always kick against it. But there was

nothing of that in our Savior. How humble he was! Why he stooped to anything. He would wash his disciples' feet; and when he walked about among men, there was no parade about him, as if he would say to them, "See my talent, see my power, see my rank, see my dignity, stand by, I am greater than you." No, he takes his seat there. There is Matthew, the publican, sitting beside him, and he does not think he is hurt by the publican, although he is the worst of sinners; and there is a harlot, he speaks to her; there is another with seven devils, and he casts the devils out of her, and another, who has the leprosy, and he even touches the leper, to show how humble he was, and that there was nothing of pride about him. Oh! could you have seen the Savior; he was the very paragon of humility! There were none of your forms of etiquette and politeness about him; he had that true politeness which makes itself affable to all men, because it is kind and loving to all. There was no pride in the Savior, and consequently there was nothing to excite men's anger on that account. Therefore, they hated him "without a cause."

There are others that you cannot help disliking, because they are so snappish, and waspish, and angry; they look as if they were born on some terribly dark stormy day, and as if, in the mixture of their body, no small quantity of vinegar was employed. You could not sit long with them, without feeling that you have to keep your tongue in pretty tight chain; you must not talk freely, or there would be a quarrel, for they would make you an offender for a word. You may say, "Such an one is, no doubt a good man; but really, that temper of his I cannot bear it. And when a man stands prominently before the public, with a nasty sour disposition, one feels inclined to dislike him. But there was nothing of this about our Savior. "When he was reviled, he reviled not again;" if men spat in his face he said nothing to them; and when they smote him, he did not curse them; he sat still and bore their scorn. He walked through the world, with contempt and infamy constantly poured upon him; but "he answered not a word;" he was never angry. You cannot find, in reading the Savior's life, that he spake one angry word, save those words of holy wrath which he poured, like scalding oil, upon the head of Pharisaic pride; then, indeed, his wrath did boil, but it was holy wrath. With such a loving, kind, gentle spirit, one would have thought that he would have gone through the world

as easily as possible. But, notwithstanding all that, they hated him. Truly, we can say, “they hated him without a cause.”

There is another set of people you can scarcely help disliking; they are selfish people. Now, we know some persons who are very excellent in temper, who are extremely honest and upright, but they are so selfish! When you are with them, you feel that they are just friends to you for what they can get out of you; and when you have served their turn, they will just lay you aside, and endeavor to find another. In trying to do good, their good deed has an ulterior object, but, somehow or other, they are always found out; and no man in the world gets a greater share of public odium than the man who lives a selfish life. Among the most miserable men in the universe, kicked about the world like a football, is the selfish miser. But in Christ there was nothing selfish; whatever he did, he did for others. He had a marvellous power of working miracles, but he would not even change a stone into bread for himself; he reserved his miraculous power for others; he did not seem to have a particle of self in his whole nature. In fact, the description of his life might be written very briefly: “he saved others, himself he did not save.” He walked about; he touched the poorest, the meanest, and those who were the most sick; he cared not what men might say of him; he seemed to have no regard for fame, or dignity, or ease, or honor. Neither his bodily nor his mental comforts were in the least regarded by him. Self-sacrifice was the life of Christ; but he did it with such an ease that it seemed no sacrifice. Ah! beloved, in that sense certainly they hated Christ without a cause; for there was nothing in Christ to excite their hatred — in fact, there was everything, on the other hand, to bind the whole world to love and reverence a character so eminently unselfish.

Another sort of people there are that I do not like, viz., the hypocritical; nay, I think I could even live with the selfish man, if I knew him to be selfish; but the hypocrite, do not let him come anywhere near where I am. Let a public man be a hypocrite once, and the world will scarcely trust him again; they will hate him. But Christ was, in this particular, free from any blame; and if they hated him, they hated him not for that, for there never was a more unvarnished man than Christ. He was called, you know, the child Jesus; because as a child speaks itself out, and has no reserve, and no craftiness, even so was it with Jesus; he had no affectation, no deceit.

There was no change about him; he was “without variableness or shadow of turning.” Whatever the world may say of Christ, they never said they believed he was a hypocrite; and among all the slanders they brought against him, they never disputed his sincerity. Had they been able to show that he really had been imposing upon them, they might have had some grounds for hating him; but he lived in the sunlight of sincerity and walked on the very mountain-top of continual observation. He could not be a hypocrite, and men knew he could not; and yet men hated him. Verily, my friends, if you survey the character of Christ, in all its loveliness, in all its benevolence, in all its sincerity, in all its self-devotion, in all intense eagerness to benefit man, you must say, indeed, “They hated him without a cause.” there was nothing in Christ’s person to lead men to hate him.

In the next place, was there anything in Christ’s errand which could make people hate him? If they had asked him, for what reason have you come from heaven? would there have been anything in his answer likely to excite their indignation and hatred? I trow not. For what purpose did he come? He came, first of all, to explain mysteries — to tell them what was meant by the sacrificial lamb, what was the significance of the scape-goat, what was intended by the ark, the brazen serpent, and the pot of manna; he came to rend the veil of the holy of holies, and to show men secrets they had never seen before. Should they have hated one who lifted the veil of mystery, and made dark things light, and expounded riddles? Should they have hated him who taught them what Abraham desired to see, and what prophets and kings had longed to know, but died without a knowledge of? Was there anything in that to make them hate him? What else did he come for? He came on earth to reclaim the wanderer; and is there anything in that that should make men hate Christ? If he came to reform the drunkard, to reclaim the harlot, and gather in the publicans and sinners, and bring prodigals to their father’s house again, sure that is an object with which every philanthropist should agree; it is that for which our governments are formed and fashioned, to bring men to a better state; and if Christ came for that purpose, was there anything in that to make men hate him? For what else did he come? He came to heal the diseases of the body; is that a legitimate object of hatred? Shall I hate the physician who goes about gratuitously healing all manner of diseases? Are deaf ears unstopped, are mouths opened, are the dead raised, are the blind made to see, and widows

blest with their sons? Are these causes why a man should be obnoxious? Surely, he might well say, “For which of these works do ye stone me? If I have done good works wherefore speak ye against me?” But none of these works were the cause of men’s hatred; they hated him without a cause. And he came on earth to die, that sinners might not die? Was that a cause of hatred? Ought I to hate the Savior, because he came to quench the flames of hell for me? Should I despise him who allowed his father’s flaming sword to be quenched in his own vital blood? Shall I look with indignation upon the substitute who takes my sin and griefs upon him, and carries my sorrows? Shall I hate and despise the man who loved me better than he loved himself — who loved me so much that he visited the gloomy grave for my salvation? Are these the causes of hatred? Surely his errand was one that ought to have made us sing his praise for ever, and join the harps of angels in their rapturous songs. “They hated me without a cause.”

But once more: was there anything in Christ’s doctrine that should have made us hate him? No, we answer; there was nothing in his doctrine that should have excited men’s hatred. Take his preceptive doctrines. Did he not teach us to do to others as we would they should to us? Was he not also the exponent of everything lovely and honorable, and of good report? And was not his teaching the very essence of virtue, so that if virtue’s self had written it, it could not have written such a perfect code of lovely morals, and excellent virtues. Was it the ethical part of his doctrines that men hated? He taught that rich and poor must stand on one level; he taught that his gospel was not to be confined to one particular nation, but was to be gloriously expansive, so as to cover the world? This perhaps, was one principal reason of their hating him; but surely there was no justifiable cause for their indignation in this. There was nothing in Christ to lead men to hate him. “They hated him without a cause.”

II. And now, in the second place, I come to dwell on MAN’S SIN, that he should have hated the Savior without a cause. Ah! beloved, I will not tell you of man’s adulteries, and fornications, and murders, and poisonings, and sodomies. I will not tell you of man’s wars, and bloodsheds, and cruelties, and rebellions; If I want to tell you man’s sin, I must tell you that man is a decide — that he put to death his God, and slew his Savior; and when I have told you that, I have given you the essence of all sin, the master-piece of crime, the very pinnacle and climax of the terrific pyramid

of mortal guilt. Man outdid himself when he put his Savior to death, and sin did out-Herod Herod when it slew the Lord of the universe, the lover of the race of man, who came on earth to die. Never does sin appear so exceedingly sinful as when we see it pointed at the person of Christ, whom it hated without a cause. In every other case, when man has hated goodness, there have always been some extenuating circumstances. We never do see goodness in this world without alloy; however great may be any man's goodness, there is always some peg whereon we may hang a censure; however excellent a man may be, there is always some fault which may diminish our admiration of our love. But in the Savior there was nothing of this. There was nothing that could blot the picture; holiness stood out to the very life; there was holiness — only holiness. Let a man hate Whitfield, one of the holiest men that ever lived, he would tell you, he did not hate his goodness, but he hated his ranting preaching, and the extraordinary anecdotes he told; or he would pull out something that dropped from his lips, and hold it up to derision. But in Christ's case men could not do that; for though they sought for false witnesses, yet their witnesses agreed not together. There was nothing in him but holiness: and any person with half an eye can see, that the thing men hated was simply that Christ was perfect; they could not have hated him for anything else. And thus you see the abominable, detestable evil of the human heart — that man hates goodness simply because it is such. It is not true that we Christian people are hated because of our infirmities; men make our infirmities a nail whereon to hang their laughter; but if we were not Christians they would not hate our infirmities. They hold our inconsistencies up to ridicule; but I do not believe our inconsistencies are what they care about; we might be as inconsistent as all the rest of the world if we did not profess religion, of if they did not think we had any. But because the Savior had no inconsistencies or infirmities, men were stripped of all their excuses for hating him, and it came out that man naturally hates goodness, because he is so evil that he cannot but detest it.

And now let me appeal to every sinner present, and ask him whether he ever had any cause for hating Christ. But some one says, "I do not hate him; if he were to come to my house I would love him very much." But it is very remarkable that Christ lives next door to you, in the person of poor Betty there. She goes to such-and-such a chapel, and you say she is

nothing but a poor canting Methodist. Why don't you like Betty? She is one of Christ's members, and "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me." You say you do not hate Christ. Now, look across the chapel. Don't you know a man, a member of this place, a very holy man, but somehow or other you cannot bear him, because he told you of your faults once. Ah! sir, if you loved Christ you would love his members. What! tell me you love my head, but you do not love my hands? My dear fellow, you cannot cut my head off and let me be the same person. If you love Christ the head, you must love his members. But you say, "I do love his people." Very well, then you have passed from death unto life, if you love the brethren. But you say, "I am not sure that I am a changed character, still, I am not aware that there is any opposition in my heart to Christ and his gospel." You may not be aware of it, but it is your not being aware of it that makes you case all the more sad. Perhaps if you knew it, and wept over it, you would come to Christ; but since you do not know it and do not feel it, that is a proof of your hostility. Now come! I must suppose you to be hostile to Christ, unless you love him; for I know there are only two opinions of him. You must either hate him or love him. As for indifference with regard to Christ, it is just a clear impossibility. A man might as well say, "I am indifferent towards honesty." Why, then he is dishonest, is he not? You are indifferent to Christ? Then you hate him. And why is it that you hate him? Many a time you have been wooed by the gospel; you have resisted appeals, many of them; come, now, for which of Christ's works do you hate him? Have I a persecutor here? Sinner! for what dost thou hate Christ? Dost thou curse him? Tell me what he has done, that thou shouldst be angry with him. Point to a single fault of his in his carriage towards thee. has Christ ever hurt thee? "Oh!" says one, "he has taken my wife and made her one of his children, and she has been baptized and comes to chapel, and I cannot bear that." Ah! sinner, is that why thou hatest Christ? Wouldst thou have hated Christ if he had snatched thy wife from the flames, if he had saved her from going down to death. No, thou wouldst love him. And he has saved thy wife's soul. Ah! if he never saves thee; if thou lovest thy wife, thou wilt have enough cause to love him, to think he has been so good to thee. I tell thee, if thou hatest Christ, thou not only hatest him without a cause, but thou hatest him when thou hast simple cause to love him. Come, poor sinner, what hast thou got by hating Christ?

Thou hast stings of conscience. Many a sinner, by hating Christ, has been locked up in jail, has a ragged coat, a diseased body, a nasty filthy house, with broken windows, a poor wife, nearly beaten to death, and children that scamper out of the way as soon as father comes home. What hast thou got by hating Christ? Oh! if thou wert to estimate thy gains, thou wouldst find that getting Christ would be a gain, but that hating him is a dead loss to thee. Now, if you hate Christ and Christ's religion, I tell you that you hate Christ without a cause; and let me give you one solemn warning, which is this, that if you keep on hating Christ till you die, you will not hurt Christ by it, but you will hurt yourself most awfully. Oh! may God deliver you from being haters of Christ! There is nothing to get by it, but everything to lose by it. For what cause do you hate Christ, sinner? For what cause do you hate Christ, persecutor? For what cause do you hate Christ, ye carnal, ungodly men? What do you hate Christ's gospel for? His ministers — what hurt have they done you? What hurt can they do you, when they long to do you all the good in the world? Why is it you hate Christ? AH! it is only because you are so desperately set on mischief — because the poison of asps is under your lips, and your throat is an open sepulcher. Otherwise, ye would love Christ. They hated him "without a cause."

And now, Christian men, I must preach at you for just a moment. Sure ye have great reason to love Christ now, for ye once hated him without a cause. Did ye ever treat a friend ill, and did not know it? It has been the misfortune of most of us to do it sometimes. We had some suspicion that a friend had done us an injury; we quarrelled with him for weeks, and he had not done it at all. What he had done was only to warn us. AH! there are never tears like those we shed when we have injured a friend. And should we not weep when we have injured the Savior? Did he not come to my door one cold damp night, and I shut my door against him? Oh! I have done what I cannot undo; I have slighted my Lord, I have insulted my friend, I have thrown dishonors upon him whom I admire. Shall I not weep for him? Oh! shall I not spend my very life for him? for my sins, my own treachery spilled his blood. Monuments, ah! monuments I will build; where'er I live, where'er I go. I'll pile up monuments of praise, that his name may be spread; and where'er I wander, I'll tell what he did, with many a tear, that I so long have ill-treated him and so fearfully

misunderstood him. We hated him without a cause; therefore, let us love him.

III. Two Lessons To The Saints.

In the first place, if your Master was hated without a cause, do not you expect to get off very easily in this world. If your Master was subject to all this contempt and all this pain, do you suppose you will always ride through this world in a chariot? If you do, you will be marvellously mistaken. As your Master was persecuted, you must expect to be the same. Some of you pity us when we are persecuted and despised. Ah! save your pity, keep it for those of whom the world speaks well; keep it for those against whom the woe is pronounced. "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you." Save your pity for earth's favorites; save your pity for this world's lords, that are applauded by all men. We ask not for your pity; nay, sirs, in all these things we rejoice, and "glory in tribulations also, knowing that the things which happen unto us, happen for the furtherance of the gospel;" and we count it all joy when we fall into manifold temptations, for we rejoice that the name of Christ is known and his kingdom extended.

The other lesson is, take care, if the world does hate you, that it hates you without a cause. If the world is to oppose you, it is of no use making the world oppose you. This world is bitter enough, without my putting vinegar in it. Some people seem to fancy the world will persecute them; therefore, they put themselves into a fighting posture, as if they invited persecutions. Now, I do not see any good in doing that. Do not try and make other people dislike you. Really, the opposition some people meet with is not for righteousness' sake, but for their own sin's sake, or their own nasty temper's sake. Many a Christian lives in a house — a Christian servant girl perhaps; she says she is persecuted for righteousness' sake. But she is of a bad disposition; she sometimes speaks sharp, and then her mistress reproves her. That is not being persecuted for righteousness' sake. There is another, a merchant in the city, perhaps; he is not looked upon with much esteem. He says he is persecuted for righteousness' sake; whereas, it is because he did not keep a bargain sometime ago. Another man says he is persecuted for righteousness' sake; but he goes about assuming authority over everybody, and now and then persons turn round

and upbraid him. Look to it, Christian people, that if you are persecuted, it is for righteousness' sake; for if you get any persecution yourself you must keep it yourself. The persecutions you bring on yourself for your own sins, Christ has nothing to do with them; they are chastisements on you. They hated Christ without a cause; then fear not to be hated. They hated Christ without a cause; then court not to be hated, and give the world no cause for it.

And now may you who hate Christ love him; Oh! that he would bring himself to you now! Oh! that he would show himself to you! And then sure you must love him at once. He that believeth on the Lord Jesus will be sure to love him and he that loveth him shall be saved. Oh! that God would give you faith, and give you love, for Christ Jesus' sake! Amen.

MEN CHOSEN — FALLEN ANGELS REJECTED

SERMON NO. 90

DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, JUNE 29, 1856,

AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

"Verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." — Hebrews 2:16.

The Almighty God, who dwelt alone, was pleased to manifest himself by created works, which should display his wisdom and his power. When he set about the mighty work of creation, he determined in his own mind that he would fashion a variety of works, and that all his creatures should not be of one form, nature, grandeur, or dignity; hence he made some grains of dust, and others mountains of stupendous magnitude; he created some drops and some oceans; some mighty hills and some valleys. Even in his inanimate works he preserved a wonderful variety; he gave not to all stars the same glory, neither to all worlds the same ponderous mass; he gave not to all rocks the same texture, nor unto all seas the same shape of fashion, but he was pleased, in the work of his hands, to observe an infinite variety. When he came to create living creatures, there, too, are distinctions that we must note. From the worm up to the eagle, from the eagle to the man, from the man to the angel; such are the steps of creating goodness in the fashion of things that are animate. He hath not made all creatures eagles, neither hath he fashioned al beings worms, but having a right to do what he wills with his own, he has exercised the right in making one creature — the majestic lion — king of the forest, and another, the harmless lamb, which shall be devoured, without power to resist its enemy, or defend itself. He has made his creatures just as it seemed him fit; he has given to one swiftness of foot, to another, speed of wing; to one, clearness of eye, to another, force of sinew. He hath not followed any fixed rule in his creation;

but he hath done exactly as it pleased him in the arrangement of the forms which he hath animated. So, also, we must observe a great difference in the rational beings which he has created. He has not made all men alike; they differ mightily; from the man of the smallest intellect to the man of majestic mind, there are no few steps. And then there is the higher order of rational creatures, more superior to unrenewed man than man ever can be to his fellows; namely — the order of angels. And in the fashioning of angels and men, God, again, has exercised his own right to create as he pleases; to do just as he wills with his own. Thence, all angels may not be alike in dignity, and all men are not alike in intellect. He hath made them to differ.

But now we wish to draw your attention to two instances of God's doing as he pleases in the fashioning of the works of his hands — the case of angels, and in the case of men. Angels were the elder born. God created them, and it pleased him to give unto them a free will to do as they pleased; to choose the good or to prefer the evil, even as he did to man: he gave them this stipulation — that if they should prefer the good, then their station in heaven should be for ever fixed and firm; but if they sinned, they should be punished for their guilt, and cast out from the presence of his glory into flames of fire. In an evil hour, Satan, one of the chiefs of the angels, rebelled; he tempted others, and he led astray a part of the stars of heaven. God, in his divine vengeance, smote those rebel angels, drove them from their heavenly seats, banished them from their abodes of happiness and glory, and sent them down to dwell for ever in the abyss of hell; the rest he confirmed, calling them the elect angels; he made their thrones eternally secure, and gave them an entail of those crowns which, sustained by his grace, they had preserved by the rectitude of their holy conduct. After that it pleased him to make another race of beings, called men. He did not make them all at once; he made but two of them, Adam and Eve, and he committed to their keeping the safety of their entire progeny throughout all generations; he said to Adam, as he had said to the angels, "I give unto thee free-will; thou mayest obey or disobey, as thou pleasest. There is my law; thou art not to touch yon tree. The command is by no means irksome. To keep that command will not be difficult to thee, for I have given thee free-will to choose the good." However, so it happened, much to the misery of man, that Adam broke the covenant of works; he

touched the accursed fruit, and in that day he fell. Ah! what a fall was there! Then you, and I, and all of us fell down, while cursed sin did triumph over us; there were no men that stood; there were some angels that stood, but no men, for the fall of Adam was the fall of our entire race. After one portion of the angels had fallen, it pleased God to stamp their doom, and make it fast and firm; but when man had fallen, it did not so please God; he had threatened to punish him, but in his infinite mercy he selected the major portion of the human race, whom he made the objects of his special affection, for whom he provided a precious remedy, to whom he covenanted salvation, and secured it by the blood of his everlasting Son. These are the persons whom we call the elect; and those whom he has left to perish, perish on account of their own sins, most justly, to the praise of his glorious justice. Now, here you notice divine sovereignty; sovereignty, that God chose to put both men and angels on the footing of their free-will; sovereignty, in that he chose to punish all the fallen angels with utter destruction; sovereignty, in that he chose to reprieve the whole human race, and to grant an eternal pardon to a number, whom no man can number, selected out of men, who shall infallibly be found before his right hand above. My text mentions this great fact, for when properly translated it reads thus: — "He took not up angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham." As this text has two translations, I shall give you the two meanings as briefly as I can.

I. In the first place, the translation of our authorised version runs thus: — "He took not on him the nature of angels." Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, when he came from heaven to die, did not take upon himself the nature of angels. It would have been a stoop, more immense than if a seraph should have changed himself into an emmet, for the Almighty Son of God to have been clothed in the garb of even the archangel Gabriel; but his condescension dictated to him, that if he did stoop, he would descend to the very lowest degree; that if he did become a creature, he would become, not the noblest creature, but one of the most ignoble of rational beings, that is to say, man; therefore, he did not stoop to the intermediate step of angelship, but he stooped right down and became a man. "He took not on him the nature of angels: but he took on him the seed of Abraham." Let us notice the wisdom and the love of this, and I think there will be something to cause us to glorify God for so doing.

1. In the first place, if Christ had taken upon himself the nature of angels, he could never have made an atonement for man. Setting aside the thought that if he came to save man it would have seemed improper if he had come in the garb of angels, you must allow, that if he had done so, he could not have seen death. How could angels die? We can suppose that their spirit may become extinct, if God should will it; we can suppose the entire annihilation of that to which God alone supplies immortality; but since angels have no bodies, we cannot suppose them capable of death, for death is the separation of the body and the soul; therefore, it behooved Christ that he should take upon himself the form of a man, that he might become obedient to death, even the death of the cross. Had angels been standing by, they would have said, "Oh! mighty Master, take our radiant robes. Oh! take not the poor every-day garb of humanity, take our glittering garments all bedight with pearls." And Gabriel would have said, "Come, take my wings, thou mighty Maker, and I shall count myself too honored to have lost them for thy sake. There, take this crown and this mantle of azure, wherewith to clothe thyself, thou Son of God; put my silver sandals on thy feet; become not man, but an angel, if thou wilt stoop." "But no," he would have said, "Gabriel, if I were in thy dress I could not fight with death; I could not sleep in the tomb; I could not feel the pangs and agony of dissolution, therefore, I must, I will, become a man." "He took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham."

2. Had our Savior become an angel, we must note, in the next place, that he would never have been a fitting example for us. I cannot imitate an angelic example in all points, it may be very good, so far as I can imitate, but it cannot, in all points, be my pattern. If you would give me something to imitate, give me a man like myself; then I may attempt to follow him. An angel could not have set us the same holy and pious example that our Savior did. Had he descended from on high in the garb of one of those bright spirits, he might have been a fine example for those brilliant cherubs who surround his throne; but we, poor mortal men, condemned to drag the chain of mortality along this earthly existence, would have turned aside and said, "Ah! such a thing is too high for us, we cannot attain unto it;" and we, therefore, should have stopped short. If I am to carve marble, give me a marble statue which I am to copy; and if this mortal clay is to be cut out into the very model of perfection, as it is to be by God's Spirit, then give

me man for my example; for a man I am, and as a man, I am to be made perfect. Not only could not Christ have been a Redeemer, but he could not have been our exemplar, if he had taken upon himself the nature of angels.

3. Sweetly, also, let us remember that if Christ had been an angel, he could not have sympathised with us. In order to sympathise with our fellow-creatures we must be something like them. Suppose a man made of iron, or of brass; could be told of sickness or of illness: could he understand it? I would not have him for a nurse; I would not care to have such a being for my physician; he could not feel for me; he could not sympathise with me. No, even our own fellow-creatures cannot sympathise with us unless they have suffered as we have done. I have heard of a lady who never knew poverty in all her life, and consequently she could not sympathise with the poor. She heard the complaint that bread was extremely dear, when it was running up to fourteen-pence a loaf. “Oh!” she said, “I have no patience with the poor people, grumbling about the dearness of bread. If bread is so dear, let them live on penny buns; they are always cheap enough.” She had not been in the position of the poor, and, therefore, she could not sympathise with them; and no man can sympathise with another, to any great extent, unless he has been in some measure in the same position, and endured the same trouble. “It behooved him, therefore, that he should be made in all points like unto his brethren, that he might be a faithful high priest;” “for we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, for he was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.” But if he had been an angel, what sympathy could he have had for me? Suppose I should tell an angel that I could scarcely resist my corruptions: the angel would look at me, and wonder what I meant. If I should tell him that I find this world a vast howling wilderness: how could he believe me, for he has never heard howlings, his ears have only been saluted by golden harps and sweet choral symphonies of praise. If I should tell him that I found it hard work to hold on my way, and keep close to my Savior, the angel could only say, “I cannot sympathise with you, for I am not tempted as you are; I have no clogging nature to abate my ardent zeal, but day without night, with unflagging wing, I circle his throne rejoicing; nor have I a wish nor will to depart from my great Maker.” There you see the Savior’s wisdom. He would become a man and not an angel.

4. Once more, Christ became a man, and not an angel, because he desired to be one with his dear church. Christ was betrothed to his church ere time began; and when he came into the world he virtually said, "I will go with thee, my bride, and I will delight myself in thy company. Angels' garments were not a fitting wedding dress for me to wear, if I am to be bone of thy bone, and flesh of thy flesh. I am allied to thee by a union firm and strong. I have called thee Hephzibah, my delight is in thee; and I have said, thy land shall be called Beulah, that is, married. Well, if I am married to thee, I will live in the same condition with thee; it were not fit that husband should live in palace, and that wife would live in cottage; it were not meet that husband should be arrayed in gorgeous robes, and wife in meaner garments." "No," said he to his church, "if thou dwellest upon earth, I will; if thou dwellest in a tabernacle of clay, I will do the same;

"Yea, said the Lord, with her I'll go,
Through all the depths of care and woe,
And on the cross will even dare
The bitter pangs of death to bear."

Christ cannot bear to be different from his church. You know, he would not be in heaven without her, therefore, did he make that long, long journey, to redeem her and visit her, and when he came on this good errand, he would not that she should be made of clay, and he should not be made of clay too; he was the head, and it would have been out of order that the head should have been of gold, and the body of clay; it would have been like Nebuchadnezzar's image, that must be broken. "Since the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he must also take part in the same," for he became "perfect through suffering," since he was "the captain of our salvation." Thus, again, you see his love and his wisdom, that he "took not on him the nature of angels, but took upon him the seed of Abraham."

5. Again, if Christ had not taken upon him the nature of man, then manhood would not have been so honorable or so comfortable as it is. I consider that to be a Christian man is to be the greatest thing that God has made. Little as I am, I can say of myself, if I am a child of God, I am next to my Maker. There is an infinite, an awful, an immeasurable distance; but, save Jesus Christ himself, there is no being between man and God. As for an angel, he is less than redeemed man. "Are they not ministering spirits,

sent forth to be ministers unto us who are heirs of salvation?" Without controversy, the less is minister unto the greater, and the greater shall not attend the less; therefore, the angels are less than men, for they minister to us. Manhood is a noble thing, for God worse manhood once; manhood is a glorious thing, for it was the robe of the eternal; "God was made flesh and dwelt among us;" therefore, flesh is dignified and glorified. As I said, it would not be so comfortable to be a man, if Christ had not been a man. For I know that I must die; now, my comfort is, that I shall rise again; but I should not have had that comfort if Christ had not been a man, and if he had not died and risen again. Oh! death, I have often seen thy dungeon, and I have thought, how can it be that any should escape therefrom; the walls thereof are thick, and against the door is a ponderous stone; it is sealed fast, and watchers guard it. Oh! death, where is the man that can rend thy sepulcher, or open thy door? Thine iron bars, O death, cannot be filed by mortal, and thy chains are too heavy to be snapped by the finite; but I take comfort, for there was a man who broke the bonds of death; there was one who snapped the fetter, cut the bars of brass, unlocked the gates, and made his way triumphant through the sky; in that man I see an instance of what I, too, shall do; when the loud trump of the archangel shall startle my sleeping atoms, I, too, shall find it easy to rise, for as the Lord my Savior rose, so all his followers must; and therefore, death, I look upon thy dungeon as one that must be opened again, for it has been opened once; I look upon thy worm as but a little thing that must yield up its prey, and give back the flesh whereon it fed; I look upon the stone of thy sepulcher as but some pebble of oceans' shingly beach, which I shall cast away with eager hand, when I shall burst the cerements of the grave, and mount to immortality. It is a comfortable thing to be a man, because Christ died and rose again; but had he been an angel, the resurrection would not have had that great and glorious proof, nor should we have been so content to be human, seeing there would be death, but no immortality and life.

II. Thus I have tried to explain the first part of the subject; and now for the second. The literal translation, according to the marginal reading, is, "He took not up angels, but he took up the seed of Abraham," by which is meant, that Christ did not die to save angels, though many of them needed salvation, but he died to save fallen man. Now, I like every now and then to give the opponents of the great doctrines of grace something hard to put

between their teeth. I have often been told, that election is a most dreadful doctrine and to teach that God saves some, and lets other perish, is to make God unjust. Sometimes I have asked how that was; and the usual answer I have got is this: Suppose a father should have a certain number of children, and he were to put some of his children into a terrible dungeon, and make the rest of them happy, would you think that father was just? Well, I reply, you have supposed a case, and I will answer you. Of course I should not: the child has a claim upon his father, and the father is bound to give him his claim; but I want to know what you mean by asking that question. How does that apply to the case of God? I did not know that all men were God's children; I knew that they were God's rebellious subjects, but I did not know that they were his children. I thought they did not become his children till they were born again, and that when they were his children, he did treat them all alike, and did carry them all to heaven, and give them all a mansion; and I never did hear that he sent any of his children to hell; true, I have heard you</> say that some of his children fall from grace, and he therefore sends them to hell, and I leave you to solve the problem how that is just; but, sir, I do not allow that all God's creatures are his children, and I have got a small question for you. How do you explain this — that the devils and fallen angels are all lost, and yet, according to your own showing, fallen men have all a chance of being saved? How do you make that out? "Oh!" say you, "that is a different matter; I was not calculating about fallen angels." But if you were to ask the devil about it, he would not tell you it was a different matter; he would say, "Sir, if all men are God's children, all devils are quite as much so. I am sure they ought to stand on the same footing as men, and a fallen angel has as much right to call himself one of God's children as a fallen man." And I should like you to answer that devil on that subject on your own hypothesis. Let Satan, for once, ask you a question, "You say it is unfair of God to send one of his children to hell, and take another to heaven. Now, you have said all creatures are his children. Well, I am a creature, and, therefore, I am his child. I want to know, my friend," says Satan, "how you make it just that my Father should send me to hell, and let you go to heaven?" Now, you must settle that question with the devil; I will not answer for you. I never supposed such a case; my views never bring me into such a dilemma, but you are in for the trouble, and you may get out of it the best way you can. On my principle, the deed is just enough;

men and devils have both sinned and have both deserved to be damned for their sins; God, if he shall so resolve, can justly destroy them all, or he may save them all, if he can do it with justice; or, he may save one of them if he pleases, and let the others perish; and if as he has done, he chooses to save a remnant, and that remnant shall be men, and if he allows all the fallen angels to sink to hell, all that we can answer is, that God is just, and he has a right to do as he pleases with his creatures. You know, you give to the queen the right to pardon a rebel when she sees fit, and will you not give that right to God? "No," say you, "not unless he pardons all." Well, sir, then there were no right at all in that; the queen would not thank you if you gave her liberty to pardon all; she would say, "No, there are instances where it is to my honor and to the honor of my laws not to pardon, and, therefore, I will not do it; there are other instances where it is to the honor of my clemency, and not hurtful to my laws, and, therefore, these I pardon, and I uphold my right to do it." Now, what you will give to a king or an emperor you will deny to God; but I stand here to claim this right for him, and deny it, if you please; you will have to deny it in the teeth of the Scriptures, for they do authoritatively declare, that God is a Sovereign; that he "hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardens."

Now, come, if our friend will let us, we will, for a moment, just consider this case: how it is that devils are lost, and some men are saved.

1. In the first place, I do not think it is because of any difference in the sin. When two criminals are brought before a judge, if one of them is to be saved, and the other punished, very likely the judge will say, "Who is the greatest offender? Let the greatest offender die, and let the less offender be saved." Now, I do not know that Satan was a greater offender than man; I am not sure that the fallen angels sinned more than man did. "Why, sir," you say, "man's sin was a very little one; he only stole some of his Master's fruit." Ay, but if it was such a thing to do, what a little thing it would have been not to do it! If it were so little a thing, how easily he might have avoided it! and, therefore, because he did it, it became all the greater sin. "Oh!" you say, "but Satan was proud, and the fallen angels were proud." And are not you pretty tolerably in the same direction my friend? at any rate, Adam was. "But," you say, "Satan was rebellious." Well if you were not a rebel, you would not talk so; if you had not rebelled

against God, you would not set yourself up to deny his sovereignty. “But,” you say, “the devil was a liar from the beginning.” I wonder how long it is since you have spoken the truth, sir; you know how to lie as well as he, and though you may not have developed your sin as much as the fallen angels have done, if God were to let you alone, and take the curb off, I wonder that would be the difference between you and the devil. I believe, that if men were allowed to do just as they liked, and there were no government over them, they would almost go beyond Satan. Look at Robespierre, in France; look at the doings of the Reign of Terror; turn to heathen countries; I dare not tell you what abominable vices, what lascivious sins are committed there in public; I point you to Sodom and Gomorrah, and I ask you what man may become; and I say that I do not know but that a man might become as vile as a devil, if God’s restraining mercy were taken from him; at any rate I do not say but that Adam’s sin was as great as Satan’s. “Ah!” you say, “but Adam was tempted to do it.” Yes, that was some excuse; but so were the greater part of the devils. It is true, Satan was not tempted; he did it of his own free will; but he tempted the other spirits, and therefore, the excuse which will do for man will do for the great mass of fallen spirits; and why did not God, therefore, select a portion of the fallen spirits to be saved? I answer, that you can never find any reason except this, “Shall I not do what I will with mine own;” and we must fall down, and breathlessly admire the infinite sovereignty that passed by angels, and saved man.

2. But suppose there is not much difference in their sin, the next question is, which of those two beings is the most worth saving? Which is the most valuable creature? Which would serve his Maker most, if his Maker should spare him? And I defy any of you to hold, that a sinful man is a more valuable creature than an angel. Why, if God had looked at profit, speaking after the manner of men, it would be more profitable to him to save the angel. Could not the restored angel serve him better than restored man? If I serve God, day after day, yet at night I must rest; but the angels serve day without night in his temple. If my zeal be ever so intense, yet my body must flag; but angels know not weariness; and if saved, I shall make but a poor courtier to stand around his throne, but yon bright fallen seraph would, if he had been delivered, have made a very peer to grace the halls of the Almighty. If I shall ever be carried to heaven, I have no bright angelic

honors, and my nature when ennobled, will not surpass what an angel might have been if God has so decreed; but if Satan had been saved, oh! how loudly would he have sun, and with what glory would he have marched through heaven, to the praise and glory of the grace which rescued him from hell! Therefore, if God had in that thought of his own profit, he would sooner have saved angels than have saved men.

3. Another thought. Sometimes the government will say, “Well, here are two persons to be executed; we desire to save one; which of the two would be the most dangerous character to allow to continue an enemy?” Now, which could hurt God the most, speaking as man would speak, a fallen angel, or a man? I answer, that fallen man can do but little injury to divine government, compared to a fallen angel; a fallen angel is so subtle, so powerful, so swift, so able to fly on the lightning’s wings, that he can do ten times more injury to his Maker, if indeed, his Maker can be injured, than ever man could do; so that if there had been any consideration of this kind in the divine mind, God would have selected the devils to save them, since they could, if saved, do him the most glory, and if not saved, do him the most injury.

4. And yet one more consideration here, to show you still further how sovereign is the divine will in this matter. Perhaps it would be said, if one is to be saved, let that one be saved who would take the least trouble to saved. Now, which could be saved with the greatest ease, should you suppose a fallen angel, or a fallen man? For my part, I can see no difference; but if there be any, it strikes me that a restoration does not put things one-half so much out of order as a revolution; and to have restored the angels to the place from which they had fallen, speaking as a man must speak, would not have been so hard as to have taken fallen man out of the place from which he had fallen, and placed him where fallen angels had once stood.

If Satan had entered heaven, it would have been like a restoration — an old king come back to his ancient throne; but when man goes there, it is like a king going to a new dynasty — a new kingdom; it is man entering into the angel’s place; and for that you know, there must be sanctifying grace and purchasing love. That might have been needed for fallen angels, but certainly not more for them than for fallen man. Here, then, we are brought

back to the one only answer, that God saves men, and not angels, just because he chooses to do it; and he says to angels who have perished, "nay, but O! Satan, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?"

5. But, you may say, God saved man because he pitied him. But then why did not he pity the devils? I know two men living on three or four shillings a week. I pity one of them very much, indeed; but the other, who is no better off, I pity him the most, for he once knew better times. Man, it is true, fell out of Eden; but Satan fell out of heaven, and is the more to be pitied on account of the greatness of his fall; and, therefore, if pity had ruled the day, God would have decided for the fallen angels, and not for fallen man.

But I think I hear some one whispering again, "Ay, but I do not see that first part: you said, that you did not know but the sin of man was as great as the sin of Satan." Well, I beg to repeat it; and I say another thing, that, mighty wise as you may be, you do not know any difference either; for do you think, if the sins were different, the punishment would be the same? Certainly not, you say; the same punishment for the same sin. Well, now, devils and men are to be in the same hell; the lake of fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels is the place into which men are cast; and therefore I defy you to prove that their sin is not the same. I believe, if it be not the same in degree, it is the same in quality, and the same in nature. And, therefore, a fallen angel and a fallen man stand on a par; so that if God makes a difference, he makes it only because he will make it, and gives no account of his dealings. This is a knife which cuts up root and branch everything like merit; it takes away from the free-willer any chance of charging God with injustice; for how can he prove God unjust in saving one man and not another, when he dares not hint that he is unjust in saving some men, and letting devils perish?

And now I have closed this subject; and I must just make a practical reflection or so, and then I shall have done. Some may rail at this doctrinal preaching, and they will go out and call me an Antinomian. I will not be at all particular about that, so long as I can make them angry; for if a man hates the truth, I shall never be backward in stirring up his wrath; and if any man offends my God then let him be offended. Far better for him to

show his opposition; for then, perhaps, he may know that it is in him, and repent of it before God. But I will show you that this is a practical subject. It is practical in this way: that if any man does not submit to God's right to do with him as he pleases, he has very grave reason to doubt his own piety. "Ay," you say, "too cutting by half." Now, I do not mean to say anything harsh or bigoted; but I do mean to say that again. I do not assert that if you doctrinally deny it, but if you in your hearts hate the doctrine, that God has a right to save or to destroy you, you give me very grave cause to suspect whether you ever knew your own position in the sight of God; for I am quite sure that no humble sinner will doubt God's right to destroy him, and I believe that no man who has any love to his fellow-creatures, believing that God has a right to destroy him will ever quarrel with God, if he chose to save another who is only as bad as himself. I tell you, it is your unhumbled pride that kicks against these doctrines; it is your infernal self-conceit, born of hell, that makes you hate this truth. Men have always kicked at it, and they always will. When Christ preached it once, they would have dragged him out to the brow of the hill, and cast him down headlong; and I expect always to meet with opposition, if I speak out broadly and plainly; but let me tell you solemnly, if you do not believe God's right over you, I am afraid your heart has never been right before God.

But another practical conclusion. If you do feel this to be true, that God has a right to send you soul to hell, and that if he saves another, and not you, he will be just, but if he save you it will be an act of free distinguishing love, you show a spirit which is very near to the kingdom of heaven. I do not think a man will admit this truth unless he has a change of heart: he may admit it in his mind, but he will not feel it to be true, unless he has got a new heart and a right spirit. I will not go so far as to say that a man who believes divine sovereignty must be a Christian; that were to stretch the truth; but I do say, that if a man is humble enough, meek enough, contrite enough, to lay himself down at the Savior's feet with this,

"Nothing in my hands I bring;"

"I have no righteousness, no claims; if thou shouldst damn me, thou wouldst be just; if thou savest me I will thank thee for ever;" such a man must have had a work of grace in his heart to bring him to such a

conclusion. If thou canst say that, then, poor sinner, come to Jesus, come to Jesus; for he will never cast you out. Let me tell you a story about the prodigal, and then I have done. The prodigal set out one morning, and he had a long, long journey to go; he had a high hill to climb, called the hill of his own sins and follies. He had scarcely got to the top of it, and was getting near the tower, called the tower of true repentance, when his father, who was sitting on the top of the house, saw him; and when he saw him, he ran out immediately, and ere his son had got to the door, he had fallen on his neck and kissed him. He took his son into his house, and a feast was prepared, and they sat down to it; but after the son had sat down, the farther turned his eye to him, and he was not eating, but the tears were rolling down his cheeks. "My son," said the father, "why don't you eat? Why dost thou weep, my son? The feast is all prepared for thee." Bursting into tears, the son said, "Father, dost thou forgive me all?" "Yes," says the father, "I do. Eat my son. Do not weep." The prodigal went on. The father turned his eye to the other guests, and by-and-bye, looking on his son, he saw that he was weeping again, and not eating. Said the father, "Son, why don't you eat? The feast is all for you. Why do you weep, my son?" "Father," said he, with the tears rolling down his cheeks again, "will you let me stay here?" "Oh, yes, my son," said the father, "eat; do not weep; you shall stay here; you are my beloved son." Well, the prodigal went on, and the father looked at the other guests; but by-and-bye he turned his eyes again, and there was his son weeping once more. "My dear son," he asks, "why do you weep?" "Oh, father," said he, "will you keep me here? for if you do not, I know I shall run away. Father, will you make me stop here?" "yes, my son," said he, "that I will."

"My grace shall like a fetter bind
That wandering heart to me."

The son wiped his eyes, went on with his meal, and never wept again. There, poor prodigal, there is something for thee; if thou wilt come to Christ, thou shalt always stay there; and over and above that, he will keep thee there. Therefore rejoice; for though he has a right to destroy thee, recollect, he will not; for his heart is full of love and pity towards thee. Only come to him, and thou shalt be saved.

CHRIST EXALTED

SERMON NO. 91

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JULY 6TH, 1856,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"This man, after he had offered on sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool." — Hebrews 10:12, 13.

At the Lord's table we wish to have no subject for contemplation but our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, and we have been wont generally to consider him as the crucified One, "the Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," while we have had before us the emblems of his broken body, and of his blood shed for many for the remission of sins; but I am not quite sure that the crucified Savior is the only appropriate theme, although, perhaps, the most so. It is well to remember how our Savior left us — by what road he traveled through the shadows of death; but I think it is quite as well to recollect what he is doing while he is away from us — to remember the high glories to which the crucified Savior has attained; and it is, perhaps, as much calculated to cheer our spirits to behold him on his throne as to consider him on his cross. We have seen him one his cross, in some sense; that is to say, the eyes of men on earth did see the crucified Savior; but we have no idea of what his glories are above; they surpass our highest thought. Yet faith can see the Savior exalted on his throne, and surely there is no subject that can keep our expectations alive, or cheer our drooping faith better than to consider, that while our Savior is absent, he is absent on his throne, and that when he has left his Church to sorrow for him, he has not left us comfortless — he has promised to come to us — that while he tarries he is reigning, and that while he is absent he is sitting high on his father's throne.

The Apostle shews here the superiority of Christ's sacrifice over that of every other priest. "Every priest standeth daily ministering and offering

oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but this man," or priest — for the word "man" is not in the original "after he had offered one sacrifice for sins," had finished his work, and for ever, he "sat down." You see the superiority of Christ's sacrifice rests in this, that the priest offered continually, and after he had slaughtered one lamb, another was needed; after one scape-goat was driven into the wilderness, a scape-goat was needed the next year, "but this man, when he had offered only one sacrifice for sins," did what thousands of scape-goats never did, and what hundreds of thousands of lambs never could effect. He perfected our salvation, and worked out an entire atonement for the sins of all his chosen ones.

We shall notice, in the first place, this morning, the completeness of the Savior's work of atonement — he has done it: we shall gather that from the context: secondly, the glory which the Savior has assumed; and thirdly, the triumph which he expects. We shall dwell very briefly on each point, and endeavor to pack our thoughts as closely together as we can.

I. We are taught here in the first place, THE COMPLETENESS OF THE SAVIOR'S WORK. He has done all that was necessary to be done, to make an atonement and an end of sin. He has done so much, that it will never be needful for him again to be crucified. His side, once opened, has sent forth a stream deep, deep enough, and precious enough, to wash away all sin; and he needs not again that his side should be opened, or, that any more his hands should be nailed to the cross. I infer that his work is finished, from the fact that he is described here as sitting down. Christ would not sit down in heaven if he had more work to do. Sitting down is the posture of rest. Seldom he sat down on earth; he said, "I must be about my Father's business." Journey after journey, labor after labor, preaching after preaching, followed each other in quick succession. His was a life of incessant toil. Rest was a word which Jesus never spelled. he may sit for a moment on the well; but even there he preaches to the woman of Samaria. He goes into the wilderness, but not to sleep; he goes there to pray. His midnights are spent in labors as hard as those of the day — labors of agonising prayer, wrestling with his Father for the souls of men. His was a life of continual bodily, mental, and spiritual labor; his whole man was exercised. But now he rests; there is no more toil for him now; here is no more sweat of blood, no more the weary foot, no more the aching head. No

more has he to do. He sits still. But do you think my Savior would sit still if he had not done all his work? Oh! no beloved; he said once, “For Zion’s sake I will not rest until her glory goeth forth like a lamp that burneth.” And sure I am he would not rest, or be sitting still, unless the great work of our atonement were fully accomplished. Sit still, blessed Jesus, while there is a fear of thy people being lost? Sit still, while their salvation is at hazard? No; alike thy truthfulness and thy compassion tell us, that thou wouldst still labor if the work were still undone. Oh! if the last thread had not been woven in the great garment of our righteousness, he would be spinning it now; if the last particle of our debt had not been paid, he would be counting it down now; and if all were not finished and complete, he would never rest, until, like a wise builder, he had laid the top-stone of the temple of our salvation. No; the very fact that he sits still, and rests, and is at ease, proves that his work is finished and is complete.

And then note again, that his sitting at the right hand of God implies, that he enjoys pleasure; for at God’s right hand “there are pleasures for evermore.” Now, I think, that the fact that Christ enjoys infinite pleasure has in it some degree of proof that he must have finished his work. It is true, he had pleasure with his Father ere that work was begun; but I cannot conceive that if, after having been incarnate, his work was still unfinished, he would rest. He might rest before he began the work, but as soon as ever he had begun it, you will remember, he said he had a baptism wherewith he must be baptised, and he appeared to be hastening to receive the whole of the direful baptism of agony. He never rested on earth till the whole work was finished; scarcely a smile passed his brow till the whole work was done. He was “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,” until he could say, “it is finished;” and I could scarcely conceive the Savior happy on his throne if there were any more to do. Surely, living as he was on that great throne of his, there would be anxiety in his breast if he had not secured the meanest lamb of his fold, and if he had not rendered the eternal salvation of every blood-bought one as sacred as his own throne. The highest pleasure of Christ is derived from the fact, that he has become the “head over all things to his Church,” and has saved that Church. He has joys as God; but as the man-God, his joys spring from the salvation of the souls of men. That is his joy, which is full, in the thought that he has finished his work and has cut it short in righteousness. I think there is some degree of proof,

although not perhaps positive proof there, that Jesus must have finished his work.

But now, something else. The fact that it is said he has sat down for ever proves that he must have done it. Christ has undertaken to save all the souls of the elect. If he has not already saved them, he is bound to do something that will save them, fir he has given solemn oath and promise to his Father, that he will bring many souls unto glory, and that he will make them perfect through his own righteousness. He has promised to present our souls unblemished and complete, —

"Before the glory of his face
With joys divinely great."

Well, if he has not done enough to do that, then he must come again to do it; but from the fact that he is to sit there for ever, that he is to wear no more the thorny crown, that he is never again to leave his throne, to cease to be king any more, that he is still to be girded by his grandeur and his glory, and sit for ever there, is proof that he has accomplished the great work of propitiation. It is certain that he must have done all, from the fact that he is to sit there for ever, to sit on his throne throughout all ages, more visibly in the ages to come, but never to leave it, again to suffer and again to die.

Yet, the best proof is, that Christ sits at his Father's right hand at all. For the very fact that Christ is in heaven, accepted by his Father proves that his work must be done. Why, beloved, as long as an ambassador from our country is at a foreign court, there must be peace; and as long as Jesus Christ our Savior is at his Father's court, it shows that there is real peace between his people and his Father. Well, as he will be there for ever, that shows that our peace must be continual, and like the waves of the sea, shall never cease. But that peace could not have been continual, unless the atonement had been wholly made, unless justice had been entirely satisfied; and, therefore, from that very fact it becomes certain that the work of Christ must be done. What! Christ enter heaven — Christ sit on his Father's right hand before all the guilt of his people was rolled away? AH! no; he was the sinner's substitute; and unless he paid the sinner's doom, and died the sinner's death, there was no heaven in view for me. He stood in the sinner's place, and the guilt of all his elect was imputed to

him. God accounted him as a sinner, and as a sinner, he could not enter heaven until he had washed all that sin away in a crimson flood of his own gore — unless his own righteousness had covered up the sins which he had taken on himself, and unless his own atonement had taken away those sins which had become his by imputation; and the fact that the Father allowed him to ascend up on high — that he gave him leave, as it were, to enter heaven, and that he said, "Sit thou on my right hand," proves that he must have perfected his Father's work, and that his Father must have accepted his sacrifice. But he could not have accepted it if it had been imperfect. Thus, therefore, we prove that the work must have been finished, since God the Father accepted it. Oh! glorious doctrine! This Man has done it; this Man has finished it: this Man has completed it. He was the Author, he is the Finisher; he was the Alpha, he is the Omega. Salvation is finished, complete; otherwise, he would not has ascended up on high, nor would he also sit at the right hand of God. Christian! rejoice! Thy salvation is a finished salvation; atonement is wholly made; neither stick nor stone of thine is wanted; not one stitch is required to that glorious garment of his — not one patch to that glorious robe that he has finished. 'Tis done — 'tis done perfectly; thou art accepted perfectly in his righteousness; thou art purged in his blood. "By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

II. And now, our second point — THE GLORY WHICH HE HAS ASSUMED. "After he has offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" — the glory which Christ has assumed.

Now, by this you are to understand the complex person of Christ; for Christ, as God, always was on his Father's throne; he always was God; and even when on earth he was still in heaven. The Son of God did not cease to be omnipotent and omnipresent, when he came wrapped in the garments of clay. He was still on his Father's throne; he never left it, never came down from heaven in that sense; he was still there, "God over all, blessed for ever." As he has said, "The Son of Man who came down from heaven, who, also," at that very moment, was "in heaven." But Jesus Christ, as the Man-God, has assumed glories and honors which once he had not; for as man, he did not at one time sit on his Father's throne; he was a man, a suffering man, a man full of pains and groans, more than mortals have ever known: but as God-man, he has assumed a dignity next

to God; he sits at the right hand of God: at the right hand of the glorious Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, sits the person of the man Jesus Christ, exalted at the right hand of the Majesty on High. From this we gather, that the dignity which Christ now enjoys is surpassing dignity. There is no honor, there is no dignity to be compared to that of Christ. No angel flies higher than he does. Save only the great Three-One God, there is none to be found in heaven who can be called superior to the person of the man Christ Jesus. He sits on the right hand of God, "Far above all angels, and principalities, and powers, and every name that is named." His Father "hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and of things on earth, and of things under the earth." No dignity can shine like his. The sons of righteousness that have turned many to God, are but as stars compared with him, the brightest of the suns there. As for angels, they are but flashes of his own brightness, emanations from his own glorious self. He sits there, the great masterpiece of Deity.

"God, in the person of his Son,
Hath all his mightiest works outdone."

That glorious man, taken into union with Deity, that mighty Man-God, surpasses everything in the glory of his majestic person. Christian! remember, thy Master has unsurpassed dignity.

In the next place, Christ has real dignity. Some persons have mere empty titles, which confer but little power and little authority. But the Man-Christ Jesus, while he has many crowns and many titles, has not one tinsel crown or one empty title. While he sits there he sits not there pro forma; he does not sit there to have nominal honor done to him; but he has real honor and real glory. That Man-Christ, who once walked the streets of Jerusalem, now sits in heaven, and angels bow before him. That Man-Christ, who once hung on Calvary, and there expired in agonies the most acute, now, on his Father's throne exalted sins, and sways the scepter of heaven — nay, devils at his presence tremble, the whole earth owns the sway of his providence, and on his shoulders the pillars of the universe rest. "He upholdeth all things by the word of his power." He overruleth all mortal things, making the evil work a good, and the good produce a better, and a better still, in infinite progression. The power of the God-Man Christ is infinite; you cannot tell how great it is. He is "able to save unto

the uttermost them that come unto God by him." He is "able to keep us from falling, and to present us spotless before his presence." He is able to make "all things work together for good." He is "able to subdue all things unto himself." He is able to conquer even death, for he hath the power of death, and he hath the power of Satan, who once had power over death; yea, he is Lord over all things, for his Father hath made him so. The glorious dignity of our Savior! I cannot talk of it in words, beloved: all I can say to you must be simple repetition. I can only repeat the statements of Scripture. There is no room for flights; we must just keep where we ever have been, telling out the story that his Father hath exalted him to real honors and real dignities.

And once more: this honor that Christ hath now received (I mean the Man-God Christ, not the God-Christ, for he already had that, and never lost it, and therefore could never obtain it; he was Man-God, and as such he was exalted;) was deserved honor; that dignity which his Father gave him he well deserved. I have sometimes thought, if all the holy spirits in the universe had been asked what should be done for the man whom the King delighteth to honor, they would have said, Christ must be the man whom God delighteth to honor, and he must sit on his Father's right hand. Why, if I might use such a phrase, I can almost suppose his mighty Father putting it to the vote of heaven as to whether Christ should be exalted, and that they carried it by acclamation, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive honor and glory for ever and ever." His Father gave him that; but still the suffrages of all the saints, and of all the holy angels, said to it, amen; and this thing I am certain of, that every heart here — every Christian heart, says amen to it. Ah, beloved, we would exalt him, we would crown him, "crown him Lord of all;" not only will his Father crown him, but we, ourselves, would exalt him if we had the power; and when we shall have power to do it, we will cast our crowns beneath his feet, and crown him Lord of all. It is deserved honor. No other being in heaven deserves to be there; even the angels are kept there, and God "chargeth his angels with folly," and gives them grace, whereby he keeps them; and none of his saints deserve it; they feel that hell was their desert. But Christ's exaltation was a deserved exaltation. His father might say to him, "Well done, my Son, well done; thou hast finished the work which I had given thee to do; sit thou for ever first of all men, glorified by union with the

person of the Son. My glorious co-equal Son, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy foot-stool."

One more illustration, and we have done with this. We must consider the exaltation of Christ in heaven as being in some degree a representative exaltation. Christ Jesus exalted at the Father's right hand, though he has eminent glories, in which the saints must not expect to share, essentially he is the express image of the person of God, and the brightness of his Father's glory, yet, to a very great degree, the honors which Christ has in heaven he has as our representative there. Ah! brethren it is sweet to reflect, how blessedly Christ lives with his people. Ye all know that we were

One, when he died, one, when he rose,
One, when he triumphed o'er his foes;
One, when in heaven he took his seat,
And angels sang all hell's defeat."

To-day you know that you are one with him, now, in his presence. We are at this moment "raised up together," and may, afterwards, "sit together in heavenly places, even in him." As I am represented in parliament, and as you are, so is ever child of God represented in heaven; but as we are not one with our parliamentary representatives, that figure fails to set forth the glorious representation of us which our forerunner, Christ, carries on in heaven, for we are actually one with him; we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones, and his exaltation is our exaltation. He will give us to sit upon his throne, for as he has overcome, and is set down with his Father on his throne; he has a crown, and he will not wear his crown, unless he gives us crowns too; he has a throne, but he is not content with having a throne to himself; on his right hand there must be his bride in gold of Ophir. And he cannot be there without his bride; the Savior cannot be content to be in heaven unless he has his Church with him, which is "the fullness of him that filleth all in all." Beloved, look up to Christ now; let the eye of your faith catch a sight of him; behold him there, with many crowns upon his head. Remember, as ye see him there, ye will one day be like him, and when ye shall see him as he is; ye shall not be as great as he is, ye shall not be as glorious in degree, but still ye shall, in a measure, share the same honors, and enjoy the same happiness and the same dignity which he possesses. Be then, content to live unknown for a little while; be

content to bear the sneer, the jest, the joke, the ribald song; be content to walk your weary way, through the fields of poverty, or up the hills of affliction; by-and-bye ye shall reign with Christ, for he has "made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign for ever and ever." By-and-bye we shall share the glories of the Head; the oil has been poured on his head; it has not trickled down to us yet, save only in that faithful fellowship which we have; but by-and-bye that oil shall flow to the very skirts of the garments, and we, the meanest of his people, shall share a part in the glories of his house by being made kings with him, to sit on his throne, even as he sit on his Father's throne.

III. And now, in the last place, WHAT ARE CHRIST'S EXPECTATIONS? We are told, he expects that his enemies shall be made his footstool. In some sense that is already done; the foes of Christ are, in some sense, his footstool now. What is the devil but the very slave of Christ? for he doth no more than he is permitted against God's children. What is the devil, but the servant of Christ, to fetch his children to his loving arms? What are wicked men, but the servants of God's providence unwittingly to themselves? Christ has even now "power over all flesh that he may give eternal life to as many as God has given him," in order that the purposes of Christ might be carried out. Christ died for all, and all are now Christ's property. There is not a man in this world who does not belong to Christ in that sense, for he is God over him and Lord over him.

He is either Christ's brother, or else Christ's slave, his unwilling vassal, that must be dragged out in triumph, if he follow him not willingly. In that sense all things are now Christ's.

Be we expect greater things than these, beloved, at his coming, when all enemies shall be beneath Christ's feet upon earth. We are, therefore, many of us, "looking for that blessed hope; that glorious appearing of the kingdom of our Savior Jesus Christ;" many of us are expecting that Christ will come; we cannot tell you when, we believe it to be folly to pretend to guess the time, but we are expecting that even in our life the Son of God will appear, and we know that when he shall appear he will tread his foes beneath his feet, and reign from pole to pole, and from the river even to the ends of the earth. Not long shall anti-christ sit on her seven hills; not long shall the false prophet delude his millions; not long shall idol gods mock

their worshippers with eyes that cannot see, and hands that cannot handle, and ears that cannot hear —

"Lo! he comes, with clouds descending;"

In the winds I see his chariot wheels; I know that he approaches and when he approaches he "breaks the bow and cuts the spear in sunder, and burns the chariot in the fire;" and Christ Jesus shall then be king over the whole world. He is king now, virtually; but he is to have another kingdom; I cannot see how it is to be a spiritual one, for that is come already; he is as much king spiritually now as he ever will be in his Church, although his kingdom will assuredly be very extensive; but the kingdom that is to come, I take it, will be something even greater than the spiritual kingdom; it will be a visible kingdom of Christ on earth. Then kings must bow their necks before his feet; then at his throne the tribes of earth shall bend; then the rich and mighty, the merchants of Tyre, and the travelers where gold is found, shall bring their spices and myrrh before him, and lay their gold and gems at his feet;

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun,
Does his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more."

Once more, beloved; Christ will have all his enemies put beneath his feet, in that great day of judgment. Oh! that will be a terrible putting of his foes beneath his feet, when at that second resurrection the wicked dead shall rise; when the ungodly shall stand before his throne, and his voice shall say, "Depart, ye cursed." Oh! rebel, thou that hast despised Christ, it will be a horrible thing for thee, that that man, that gibbeted, crucified man, whom thou hast often despised, will have power enough to speak thee into hell; that the man whom thou hast scoffed and laughed at, and of whom thou hast virtually said, "If he be the Son of God, let him come down from the cross," will have power enough, in two or three short words, to damn thy soul to all eternity: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Oh! what a triumph that will be, when men, wicked men, persecutors, and all those who opposed Christ, are all cast into the lake that burneth! But, if possible, it will be a greater triumph, when he who led men astray shall be dragged forth.

“Shall lift his brazen front, with thunder scarred,
Receive the sentence, and begin anew his hell.”

Oh! when Satan shall be condemned, and when the saints shall judge angels, and the fallen spirits shall all be under the feet of Christ, “then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, he hath put all things under him.” And when death, too, shall come forth, and the “death of death and hell’s destruction” shall grind his iron limbs to powder, then shall it be said, “Death is swallowed up in victory,” for the great shout of “Victory, victory, victory,” shall drown the shrieks of the past; shall put out the sound of the howlings of death; and hell shall be swallowed up in victory. He is exalted on high — he sitteth on his Father’s right hand, “from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.”

PROFIT AND LOSS

SERMON NO. 92

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING, JULY 6, 1856,

AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

"What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole word, and lose his own soul?" — Mark 8:36.

Many men have been made bankrupts through inattention to their books. No man ever loses anything by counting the cost, knowing his own expenditure, and keeping his debtor and creditor pretty closely up; but many men have been ruined by attempts which have been suggested by a spirit of speculation, and fostered by a negligence of their own concerns, combined with absolute ignorance of their real financial position. Spiritually man is a great trader — he is trading for his own welfare; he is trading for time and for eternity; he keeps two shops: one shop is kept by an apprentice of his, a rough unseemly hand, of clayey mould, called the body; the other business, which is an infinitely more vast concern, is kept by one that is called "the soul" a spiritual being, who does not traffic upon little things, but who deals with hell or heaven, and trades with the mighty realities of eternity. Now, a merchant would be very unwise who should pay all attention to some small off-hand shop of his, and take no account whatever of a large establishment. And he would, indeed, be negligent, who should very carefully jot down every trifle of the expenditure of his own household, but should never think of reckoning the expenses of some vast concern that may be hanging on his hands. But the most of men are just as foolish — they estimate the profits (as they conceive them to be) which are gained in that small corner shop called the body, but they too seldom reckon up the awful loss which is brought about by a negligence of the soul's concerns in the great matters of eternity. Let me beseech you, my brethren, while you are not careless of the body, as, indeed, you ought not to be, seeing that it is, in the case of believers, the temple of the Holy

Ghost, to take more especial care of your souls. Decorate the tenement, but suffer not the inhabitant to die of starvation; paint not the ship while you are letting the crew perish for want of stores on board. Look to your soul, as well as to your body; to the life, as well as to that by which you live. Oh that men would take account of the soul's vast concerns, and know their own standing before God. Oh that ye would examine yourselves. It men would do so, if all of you would now search within, how many of you would be bankrupts? You are making a pretty little fortune with regard to the body; you are doing tolerably well and comfortable; you are providing for yourselves things as you would desire them. Your mortal body, perhaps, if even pampered, and has no fault to find with its owner; but as your poor soul how that is getting on, and you will find it not a gainer, but in many instances, I fear, a loser. Let me solemnly tell you, that if your soul be a loser, however much your body may be a gainer, you have not profited in the least degree. Let me ask you all this question in the name of Jesus Christ, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

We shall divide our text, and consider, in the first place, the gain a man would get if he gained the whole world; in the second place, the fearful loss if a man should lose his soul; and then, afterwards, we will try to finish up by some practical lesson.

1. In the first place, WHAT IS A MAN PROFITED IF HE SHOULD GAIN THE WHOLE WORD? Many Christian people, who do not exactly talk common sense, sum this all up by saying, that to gain the whole world is to gain nothing at all. Perhaps they are right, but I question if they believe what they assert. They sing just as we have been singing —

"Jewels to thee are gaudy toys,
And gold is sordid dust."

And so they are compared with Christ; but there are some who find unnecessary and absurd fault with the things of this world, and call jewels "gaudy toys," and gold "sordid dust." I have often admired some of my friends, when I have heard them talking about gold as sordid dust; for I wonder why they did not give it to the dustman the next time he came round. If they were to do that, I would not mind going round myself for once with the bell, particularly as it might be rather convenient to us,

seeing that we want some of that sordid dust to erect a tabernacle for the Most High. Many who affect to despise wealth are the greatest hoarders of it. I suppose they are afraid it might injure other people's hearts, and, therefore, they put it away very carefully, so that others may not touch the dangerous thing. That may be all very kind of them; but we do not exactly appreciate their benevolent intention, and should think it fully as kind if they were every now and then to distribute some of it. You hear them saying, very often, that "money is the root of all evil." Now, I should like to find that text. But it is not to be found anywhere, from Genesis to Revelation. I found a text once, which said, "The love of money is the root of all evil;" but as for the money itself, I can see very little evil in it. If a man will but rightly use it, I conceive that it is a talent sent from heaven, bestowed by God for holy purposes, and I am quite sure God's talents are not bad ones. My brethren, it is all cant for a man to say that he does not really care for these things, because every one does in some degree; every one wishes to have some of this world; and there really is, in possessing a competency in this world, something considerable with regard to profit; and I am not going to deceive you, by striking off all the profits, and saying you are losers on every point. No, I will go the whole length which any of you like to go, with regard to the profit of this world; if it be considerable. I will admit its greatness; if you think it possible to make a fine thing of this world, I will grant it, if you like; and after having admitted that, I will ask you. "Will it answer your purpose to gain the whole world, in the largest sense of that word, and yet lose your own soul?"

Now, I will try, if I can, to add your bills up for you, and strike a balance. We will suppose a case which must very seldom occur, in fact, which never has occurred. There never was a man who gained the whole world. Some have been monarchs of almost all the known globe; but it is remarkable, if you look at a map of the ancient world, how little their territories were, compared with the whole globe, indeed they have not much greater than those of modern monarchs. It is but a small portion of the world that was known to the ancients; and even then no man possessed it all. But to put this question somewhat in a point of view, wherein the thing might be possible; I think there are three or four cases in which a man may be said, with some reservation, to have gained the whole world.

1. In the first place, a man who has power over extensive empires may be supposed, in some measure, to have gained the whole world. Take, for instance, ALEXANDER; I cannot bring you a fairer specimen of a man having possession of the whole world than he. He could say of his dominions, that although they had their limits, he did not know the nations who were able to bound his territories. He could travel thousands of miles without arriving at the boundaries; he had at his foot millions of armed men, ready to avenge his quarrels, and uphold his banner; when he rose to fight, he was invincible; when he stood in his council chamber, his will was law; in his service thousands were slain, but at his summons, an equal number gathered round his standard. Alexander, I summon thee! What thinkest thou: is it worth much to gain the world? Is its scepter the wand of happiness? Is its crown the security of joy? See Alexander's tears! he weeps! Yes, he weeps for another world to conquer! Ambition is insatiable! the gain of the whole world is not enough. Surely to become a universal monarch, is to make one's self universally miserable.

Perhaps you think there is very much pleasure in having power. I believe there is. I do not think any man who has any power over his fellow-creatures will deny that it is gratifying to his fallen nature; or else, why is it that the politician seeks for it so continually, and toils for it days without number, and wastes the sap of his life in midnight debate? There is a pleasure in it. But mark you, that pleasure is counter-balanced by its anxiety. Popularity has its head in the clouds, but its feet are in the sands; and while the man's head is among the stars he trembles for his feet. There is an anxiety to increase his power, or else to maintain it; and that anxiety takes away much of the enjoyment of it. Lord Bacon has justly compared those who move in higher spheres to those heavenly bodies in the firmament which have much admiration but little rest. And it is not necessary to invest a wise man with power, to convince him that it is a garment bedizened with gold, which dazzles the beholder with its splendor, but oppresses the wearer with its weight. I do verily believe, that the winning of the whole world of power, is in itself so slight a gain, that it were fair to strike the balance, and say there is little left; for even Alexander, himself, envied the peasant in his cottage, and thought there was more happiness on the plains among the shepherds, than in his palace amongst his gold and silver. Oh! my friends, if I were to compare all this

with the loss of the soul, indeed you might be startled. But I leave it to strike its own balance. I say, that to gain the whole world is but little, and especially when we are sinners against God. And, moreover, if an empire over the world entails that fearful responsibility which will not allow the eyes to slumber, or the heart to cease its throbbings; if it puts into the hand the power of committing gigantic crimes, and if those gigantic crimes like ghosts haunt men's midnight slumbers, the gaining of power over the whole world is a loss instead of a gain, even considered in itself.

2. There is another way of gaining the whole world, not so much by power, but by something next door to it, namely — riches. CROESUS shall be my specimen here. He amassed a world of riches, for his wealth was beyond estimation. As for his gold and his silver, he kept little account of them, and his precious stones were without number. He was rich, immensely rich; he could buy an empire, and after that, could spend another empire's worth. Perhaps you think that to be immensely rich is a great gain; but I believe that to be enormously rich is in itself far from desirable. Ask CROESUS. Dying, he exclaimed, "O! Solon, Solon." And when they asked him what he meant, he replied, that Solon had once told him that no man could be pronounced happy until death; and, therefore, he cried "O! Solon, Solon," for the misery of his death had swept away the joys of his life. Such is the slavery of great riches; such are its anxieties; and such, too often, is that miserly avarice which wealth doth beget, that the rich man is often a loser by his wealth, even apart from the loss of his soul. Many a man would be happier if he had walked the pavement in rags, than if he rode through the streets in his chariot. "Many a heavy heart rides in a carriage," is an old saying, but a marvellously true one. Well said the poet,

"If thou art rich, thou art poor;
For like an ass, whose back with ingots bows,
Thou bear'st thy heavy riches but a journey,
And death unloads thee."

Suppose a man's wealth to have been gained dishonestly, then I pronounce it a terrible and infallible curse to him; in itself it constitutes a plague apart from a world to come. My friends, estimate that gold at what price you like, I say, if you were to put the soul as a debt against it, you would find that there would be a fearful loss. But even apart from that, I believe that

to gain a world of riches would be a loss in itself, at least to most men; there would be few men living who would be able to steer the boat of pleasure through a sea so thick with weeds. The less a man has the better, so that he comes within the moderate competence which every man may desire. Agur was right, when he said, "Give me neither poverty nor riches." Great wealth is certainly no great gain.

3. But there was another man who gained the world in a higher sense; his name was SOLOMON. His treasures were not so much those of wealth or power, (though he had both,) as the treasures of wisdom and the pleasures of the body. Solomon had all things that could delight the mind, please the eye, and charm the body; he had but to speak, and music chanted the sweetest air that Israel's psalmody could give; he had but to lift his finger, and noble armies followed him, and treasures were spread beneath his feet. The wines of every vintage were quaffed from his bowl, and maidens gathered from every clime awaited his command; he was master over men — he was lord. He enjoyed all kinds of delight, every sort of pleasure; he mingled in his cup all that flesh calls paradise, all that men dream of happiness. There was nothing which Solomon did not try; he ransacked the world to find joys. He was a wise man: he knew where to search for earth's happiness, and he found it. Solomon, what didst thou find? O! thou preacher, open thy lips, and tell us. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity;" thus saith the preacher. Oh! my friends, if we could have all the pleasures of the flesh we desire, I question whether they would be, in themselves, a profit; but of this I am certain, that compared with the loss of our soul, it would, indeed, be a dreadful loss. I think that if many of us could indulge all the pleasure of the body we desire, we should destroy our bodies, and actually waste our happiness. Many a man has hunted his pleasures too fast to win them; many a racer has lost the prize by overstraining in the contest; and many a man might have had more pleasure, even to the body, if he had been more moderate in seeking it. He is a fool who grills a pound of butter; the rake does that; he grills himself away by too fast pleasures, and wastes his life till it is gone, and there is nothing left of it. Ah! if ye could have all the world of sensual delights, and if ye had all the wisdom of men, apart from the grace of God to restrain your pleasures, I believe you would find it then to be a dead loss. And I will affirm the words of the

text, “It would not profit you if you had the whole world, and should lose your own soul.”

Even in this world, you see, these great winnings are but little gains. They are great to look at, but they are very small when you get hold of them. This world is like the boy’s butterfly — it is pretty sport to chase it; but bruise its wings by an over-earnest grasp, and it is nothing but a disappointment.

But, my friends, if there is little profit in this world by these magnificent gains I have mentioned, and in these extreme cases, what shall it profit a man, if he does not gain the world, and should lose his soul? Put the question in this way: — What shall it profit a man, if he lose this present world, and the next too? What shall it profit a man, if he gain but a small portion of this world — and this is the most that we may expect — and yet loses his soul? I have sometimes thought, with regard to the rich man, “Well, such a man has a portion in this life; but with regard to the poor man, I cannot see what there is to make him happy if he has not something better to look to when he dies.” I have seen the weary horny-handed sons of toil, often oppressed and down trodden as they are by their masters, and I have thought, “Oh! poor souls, if you cannot look to another world, you are of all men most miserable; for you do not get either world; you go fagging along, just like a pack-horse, without the hope of a secure place in which you may rest at last.” The rich man, at least, makes as much as can be made of this world, little as that is, apart from grace; but the poor man makes the least of this world, and then he goes from poverty to damnation, from his squalor to perdition, and from his poorhouse and his rags to the flames of hell. What a horrid state to have such an existence; to live in this world a life of misery, and to find a starving existence to be only the preface and the prelude of a more doleful and fearful life hereafter. Oh, what shall it profit you, if you gain a little of this world, and lose your own soul?

Now, I have only cast up accounts for this life; but what will it profit a man, when he comes to die, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? There he lies dying: he has no God to console him. Bring to him his heaps of gold. What! do they not still the throbbings of thy heart? What! cannot thy bags of gold ferry thee across the Jordan? What, man! thou hast

lived for thy heaps of glittering wealth; will they not live with thee? Wilt thou not take them with thee to heaven? No, he shakes his head; for hoarded wealth is but of little use to help a man to die. You have heard of a sailor, who, when the ship was sinking, rushed into the cabin, broke open the captain's chest, extracted all the money he could — tied it in a belt round his waist — leaped into the sea, and sank, thus hurrying himself before his Creator with the witness of his sins about his loins. Oh! it were a bad thing to die with gold so gained. And do you think gold will do you much good, however you may have come by it, when you lie on your last couch? No; you must bow to inevitable death, in spite of all your riches; and if you gain the whole world's applause or fame, can that help you on your dying bed?

"Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are."

But how little will the applause of man seem, when you come to die? Oh! I sometimes think, what poor fools we are to value ourselves by what our fellow-creatures think of us; but oh! when we come to die, we shall not care about the din and noise which have followed us all our lives. What will fame and honor be, when we are in the last article? Bubbles! Can souls feed on bubbles? No, we shall then despise such vanities. We shall say, "Fame! cease thy trump; let me die alone; for alone must I hear the trump of the archangel. Thou babbling fame, I hate thee, for thou dost but disturb my slumbers, and wake me in my bed." Oh! there will be no gain in wealth, or power, or pomp, or fame, when we come to die, they will profit a man nothing, if he lose his own soul.

And what will it profit a man in the day of judgment, if he has gained the whole world? Suppose he comes before God's bar clothed in purple, with a crown upon his brow, for there the diadem attracts no attention. I see whole hosts of men gathered before God's white throne; but monarchs and their slaves are mixed indiscriminately; princes and peasants stand upon a level there, and I see no distinction. God says, "Depart, ye cursed," and the monarch is damned; or he pronounces, "Come, ye blessed," and the monarch is saved. But the same voice speaks to each alike. If they be saints, there is a voice of joy, lifting them to their home; and if they be lost, the voice of denunciation sending them to their appointed doom. Ah! there will be no profit to man, in all he has achieved, when he comes before

God's judgment bar. Suppose him standing up to tell his Maker, "Lord, I had a deal of fame on earth, they stuck me up on the top of a column, to bear all weathers, and they called that glory, to be gazed at by fools, or to be admired by the populace; and, O Lord, wilt thou send such a man as I am to perdition?" "Oh," says Justice, "what care I for thy statute? what care I for thy fame? If thy soul be not saved, if thou art not in Christ — with all thy statues and all thy fame — thou shalt sink to perdition." For these things avail not in the day of judgment; men shall stand alike there; all shall be on a level. If Christ hath saved us, we shall be saved; but if we are out of Christ, great and mighty may we be, but the sentence shall be as impartial to the rich as to the poor.

Once more: what will it profit a man, when he gets to hell, if he has gained the whole world? Profit him, sir! profit him! It will be the other way. In ages long ago a monarch went to hell; whenever he had entered a city, nobles saluted him, and monarchs did him reverence; when he went to hell, it was known he was come; there, in their dungeons, lay the monarchs whom he had chained and dragged at his chariot wheels; there were the men whom he had slaughtered, and whose nations he had cut up, root and branch; and when he entered into hell, lying on their beds of fire, and looking on him with scorn, a thousand voices shouted, "Aha! aha! art thou become like one of us?" Then he found that by so much the more glory he had on earth, by so much the more hot was hell; and while, as a common sinner, he had received a hell, he found that as an extraordinary sinner, and a great one, hells rolled on hells, like waves of the ocean o'er his guilty head. He found himself the worse for all his greatness. Go, wicked, rich man; heap up thy gold; mayhap it shall be turned to brimstone one day, and thou shalt swallow it. Go, man of fame; blow the trump, or bid others blow it; the breath of fame shall fan the coals of God Almighty's vengeance. Go, thou man of power, and get to thy dignity: the higher thy flight, the greater thy fall, when thou shalt be cast down from thy loftiness, and shalt lie for ever to howl in perdition; because having gained all this, thou hast gained nothing at all.

II. We have summed up, then, the first point: it is but little to gain the whole world; apart from religion there is very little in it. But now we come to the contrast: that is, THE LOSING THE SOUL.

I shall request your attention for a brief period, while I endeavor to dilate on that. To lose the soul, my friends, to lose the soul! how shall we tell what it is to lose the soul? You can conceive how fearful is the loss of the soul in three ways. First, from its intrinsic value; secondly, from its capabilities; and thirdly, from its doom, if it be lost.

1. You may tell how serious it is to lose the soul, from its intrinsic value. The soul is a thing worth ten thousand worlds; in fact, a thing which worlds on worlds heaped together, like sand upon the sea shore, could not buy. It is more precious than if the ocean had each drop of itself turned into a golden globe, for all that wealth could not buy a soul. Consider! The soul is made in the image of its Maker; "God made man," it is said, "in his own image." The soul is an everlasting thing like God; God has gifted it with immortality; and hence it is precious. To lose it, then, how fearful! Consider how precious a soul must be, when both God and the devil are after it. You never heard that the devil was after a kingdom, did you? No, he is not so foolish; he knows it would not be worth his winning; he is never after that; but he is always after souls. You never heard that God was seeking after a crown, did you! No, he thinketh little of dominions; but he is after souls every day; his Holy Spirit is seeking his children; and Christ came to save souls. Do you think that which hell craves for, and that which God seeks for, is not precious?

The soul is precious again, we know, by the price Christ paid for it. "Not with silver and gold," but with his own flesh and blood did he redeem it. Ah! it must be precious, if he gave his heart's core to purchase it. What must it be to lose your soul?

2. But it is precious, because it is everlasting; and that brings me to note — (I am running over these points; you can enlarge upon them at home) — that the soul is precious, on account of its capabilities. Do you see, up there, yon starry crown? Do you mark there that throne, with the palm branch at its foot? Do you see that pearly-gated city, with its light brighter than the sun? Do you mark its golden streets, and its thrice happy inhabitants? There is a paradise which eye has not seen, which outvieth dreams, and which imagination could not picture; but if the soul be lost, that is lost. We see many lost things advertised. Now, if a man's soul be lost, let me advertise what he has lost. He has lost a crown, he has lost a

harp, he has lost a throne, he has lost a heaven, he has lost an eternity. When I consider how happy a soul may be, it appears to me to be a tremendous thing for it to be lost, even thou it should gain the world; in fact, I cannot set the world in contrast; it is as though I should measure the Alps by a mole-hill. I cannot tell you what size the world is, if you give me for its standard a grain of dust; nor can I tell you heaven's worth, if you only allow me to value it by a world. Oh! sirs, because the soul is capable of heaven, its loss is a dreadful and terrific thing.

3. But consider, lastly, where the soul must go to that is lost. There is a place, as much beneath imagination as heaven is above it; a place of murky darkness, where only lurid flames make darkness visible; a place where beds of flame are the fearful couches upon which spirits groan; a place where God Almighty from his mouth pours a stream of brimstone, kindling that "pile of fire and of much wood," which God has prepared of old as a Tophet for the lost and ruined. There is a spot, whose only sights are scenes are fearful woe; there is a place — I do not know where it is; it is somewhere, not in the bowels of this earth, I trust, for that were a sad thing for this world to have hell within its bowels — but somewhere, in a far-off world there is a place where the only music is the mournful symphony of damned spirits; where howling, groaning, moaning, wailing and gnashing of teeth, make up the horrid concert. There is a place where demons fly, swift as air, with whips of knotted burning wire, torturing poor souls; where tongues, on fire with agony, burn the roofs of mouths that shriek for drops of water — that water all denied. There is a place where soul and body endure as much of infinite wrath as the finite can bear; where the inflictions of justice crush the soul, where the continual flagellations of vengeance beat the flesh; where the perpetual pourings out of the vials of eternal wrath scald the spirit, and where the cuttings of the sword strike deep into the inner man. AH! sirs, I cannot picture this; within an hour some of you may know it. If you curtain of life be rent in twain, some of you may soon find yourselves face to face with lost souls. Then, sirs, you will know what it is to lose your souls; but you will never know it till then, nor can I hope to set it forth to you. Vain are these words; light are the things I utter. They are but the daubings of a painter who cannot pourtray a scene so dreadful, for earth hath not colors black

enough or fiery enough to depict it. Ah! sinners, if you knew what hell meant, then might ye tell what it is to lose your own souls.

III. What, then, is THE PRACTICAL LESSON with which we finish? If, as most certainly is the case in the most favorable circumstances, a sinner loses fearfully by the gain of the world — if he loses his soul — then how absurd it is for a man at any time to sell his soul for a little! There is a man who has sold his soul for half-a-sovereign. "Where?" say you. Ah! let him answer himself; many a man has done that. Says one, "I think I should earn two shillings on Sunday by keeping one of my shutters down in my shop and selling a little." Ay, fine pay that, to damn your souls for two shillings a week! Another man says, "I think I should get a good situation if I was not one of those Calvinists;" and he leaves off going to the house of God, and begins to be a more fashionable religionist. A fine thing that — to ruin your everlasting interest for a good situation! It will bring you into a bad situation one day. It is astonishing for how little a man will sell his soul. I remember an anecdote — I believe it is true; I had almost said I hope it is. A minister, going across some fields, met a countryman, and said to him. "Well, friend, it is a most delightful day." "Yes, sir, it is." And having spoken to him about the beauties of the scenery, and so forth, he said, "How thankful we ought to be for our mercies! I hope you never come out without praying." "Pray, sir!" said he, "why, I never pray; I have got nothing to pray for." "What a strange man," said the minister; "don't your wife pray?" "If she likes," "Don't your children pray?" "If they like, they do." "Well, you mean to say you do not pray," said the minister, (as I think, not very rightly; no doubt he saw that the man was superstitious,) "now, I will give you half-a-crown if you will promise me not to pray as long as you live." "Very well," said the man, "I don't see what I have got to pray for;" and he took the half-crown. When he went home, the thought struck him, "What have I done?" And something said to him, "Well, John, you will die soon, and you will want to pray then; you will have to stand before your Judge, and it will be a sad thing not to have prayed." Thoughts of this kind came over him, and he felt dreadfully miserable; and the more he thought the more miserable he felt. His wife asked him what was the matter; he could hardly tell her for some time; and last he confessed he had taken half-a-crown never to pray again, and that was preying on his mind. The poor ignorant soul thought it was the evil

one that had appeared to him. “Ay, John,” said she, “sure enough it was the devil, and you have sold your sold to him for that half-crown.” The poor creature could not work for several days, and he became perfectly miserable, from the conviction that he had sold himself to the evil one. However, the minister knew what he was about, and there was a barn close by, and he was going to preach there; he guessed the man would be there to ease his terror of mind, and sure enough he was there one Sabbath evening, and he heard the same man who gave him the half-crown take for his text these words, “What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” “Ay,” said he, “what will it profit a man, who sold his soul for half-a-crown?” Up gets the man, crying out, “Sir, take it back! take it back!” “Why,” said the minister, “you want the half-crown, and you said you did not need to pray.” “But, sir,” he said, “I must pray; if I do not pray, I am lost;” and after some testing by parleying, the half-crown was returned, and the man was on his knees, praying to God. And it came to pass that that very circumstance was the means of saving his soul, and making him a changed man. Now, I cannot do anything so eccentric as that; but I send some of you away with this in your mind, that though you think you could not do so, yet actually, there are many of those whom I have here who have sold themselves to Satan, by doing something for their worldly profit, which, in the end, must lead to the loss of their souls. Do any of you desire to know how your souls may be saved? Here is the answer; “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be baptized, and ye shall be saved.” And whosoever among you knoweth himself to be a sinner, let him take this for his consolation, — “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, even the chief.” Go away with that, thou chief of sinners, and rejoice, for Jesus Christ came to save thee. May God add his blessing for Christ’s sake! Amen.

GOD IN THE COVENANT

SERMON NO. 93

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 3RD, 1856,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"I will be their God." — Jeremiah 31:33.

What a glorious covenant the second covenant is! Well might it be called "a better covenant, which was established upon better promises." Hebrews 8:6. It is so glorious that the very thought of it is enough to overwhelm the soul, when it discerns the amazing condescension and infinite love of God, in having framed a covenant for such unworthy creatures, for such glorious purposes, with such disinterested motives. It is better than the other covenant, the covenant of works, which was made with Adam; or that covenant which is said to have been made with Israel, on the day when they came out of Egypt. It is better, for it is founded upon a *better principle*. The old covenant was founded on the principle of merit; it was, "Serve God and thou shalt be rewarded for it; if thou walkest perfectly in the fear of the Lord, God will walk well towards thee, and all the blessings of Mount Gerizim shall come upon thee, and thou shalt be exceedingly blessed in this world, and the world which is to come." But that covenant fell to the ground, because, although it was just that man should be rewarded for his good works, or punished for his evil ones, yet man being sure to sin, and since the fall infallibly tending towards iniquity, the covenant was not suitable for his happiness, nor could it promote his eternal welfare. But the new covenant, is not founded on works at all, it is a covenant of pure unmingled grace; you may read it from its first word to its last, and there is not a solitary syllable as to anything to be done by us. The whole covenant is a covenant, not so much between man and his Maker as between Jehovah and man's representative, the Lord Jesus Christ. The human side of the covenant has been already fulfilled by Jesus, and there remains nothing now but the covenant of giving, not the covenant

of requirements. The whole covenant with regard to us, the people of God, now stands thus: “I will give this, I will bestow that; I will fulfill this promise; I will grant that favor.” But there is nothing for us to do; he will work all our works in us; and the very graces that are sometimes represented as being stipulations of the covenant, are promised to us. He gives us faith; he promises to give us the law in our inward parts, and to write it on our hearts. It is a glorious covenant, I say, because it is founded on simple mercy and unmixed grace; quite irrespective of creature-doings, or anything that is to be performed by man; and hence this covenant surpasses the other in *stability*. Where there is anything of man, there is always a degree of mutability; for creatures, and change, and uncertainty always go together. But since this new covenant hath now nothing whatever to do with the creature, so far as the creature has to do anything, but only so far he is to receive: the idea of change is utterly and entirely gone. It is God’s covenant, and therefore it is an unchanging covenant. If there be something which I am to do in the covenant, then is the covenant insecure; and although happy as Adam, I may yet become miserable as Satan. But if the covenant be all on God’s part, then if my name be in that covenant, my soul is as secure as if I were now walking the golden streets; and if any blessing be in the covenant, I am as certain to receive that blessing as if I already grasped it in my hands; for the promise of God is sure to be followed by fulfillment; the promise never faileth; it always bringeth with it the whole of that which it is intended to convey, and the moment I receive it by faith, I am sure of the blessing itself. Oh! how infinitely superior is this covenant to the other in its manifest security! It is beyond the risk or hazard of the least uncertainty.

But I have been thinking for the last two or three days, that the covenant of grace excels the other covenant most marvelously in the *mighty blessings* which it confers. What does the covenant of grace convey? I had thought this morning of preaching a sermon upon “The covenant of grace; what are the blessings it gives to God’s children?” But when I began to think of it, there was so much in the covenant, that if I had only read a catalogue of the great and glorious blessings, wrapped up within its folds, I should have needed to occupy nearly the whole of the day in making a few simple observations upon each of them. Consider the great things God has given in the covenant. He sums them up by saying he hath given “all

things." He has given you eternal life in Christ Jesus; yea, he has given Christ Jesus to be yours; he has made Christ heir of all things, and he has made you joint-heir with him; and hence he has given you everything. Were I to sum up that mighty masks of unutterable treasure which God has conveyed to every elect soul by that glorious covenant, time would fail me. I therefore commence with one great blessing conveyed to us by the covenant, and then on other Sabbaths I will, by Divine permission, consider separately, one by one, sundry other things which the covenant conveys.

We commence then by the first thing, which is enough to startle us by its immense value; in fact, unless it had been written in God's Word, we never could have dreamed that such a blessing could have been ours. God himself, by the covenant becomes the believer's own portion and inheritance. "I will be their God."

And now we shall begin with this subject in this way. We shall show you first that this is a *special blessing*. God is the special possession of the elect, whose names are in the covenant. Secondly, for a moment or two we shall speak of this as being an *exceedingly precious blessing*, "I will be their God." Thirdly, we shall dwell upon *the security of this blessing*, "I *will*> be their God." And fourthly we shall endeavor to stir you up to *make good use of this blessing*, so freely and liberally conveyed to you by the eternal covenant of grace; "I will be their God."

Stop just one moment and think it over before we start. In the covenant of grace God himself conveys himself to you and becomes yours. Understand it: *God* — all that is meant by that word — eternity, infinity, omnipotence, omniscience, perfect justice, infallible rectitude, immutable love — all that is meant by God — Creator, Guardian, Preserver, Governor, Judge, — all that that great word "GOD" can mean, all of goodness and of love, all of bounty and of grace — all that, this covenant gives you, to be your absolute property as much as anything you can call your own. "I will be their God." We say, pause over that thought. If I should not preach at all, there is enough in that, if opened up and applied by the all-glorious Spirit, to excite your you during the whole of the Sabbath-day. "I will be their God."

"My God! — how cheerful is the sound!
How pleasant to repeat!
Well may that heart with pleasure bound,
Where God hath fixed his seat."

I. How is GOD ESPECIALLY THE GOD OF HIS OWN CHILDREN? For God is the God of all men, of all creatures; he is the God of the worm, of the flying eagle, of the star, and of the cloud; he is God everywhere. How then is he more my God and your God than he is God of all created things? We answer, that in some things God is the God of all his creatures; but even there, there is a special relationship existing between himself and his chosen creatures, whom he has loved with an everlasting love. And in the next place, there are certain relationships in which God does not exist towards the rest of his creatures, but only towards his own children.

I. First then, God is the God of all his creatures, seeing that *he has the right to decree* to do with them as he pleases. He is the Creator of us all: he is the potter, and hath power over the clay, to make of the same lump, one vessel to honor and another to dishonor. However men may sin against God, he is still their God in that sense — that their destiny is immovably in his hand; that he can do with them exactly as he chooses; however they may resent his will, or spurn his good pleasure, yet he can make the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of that wrath he can restrain. He is the God of all creatures, absolutely so in the matter of predestination, seeing that he is their Creator, and has an absolute right to do with them as he wills. But here again he has a special regard to his children, and he is *their* God even in that sense; for to them, while he exercises the same sovereignty, he exercises it in the way of grace and grace only. He makes them the vessels of mercy, who shall be to his honor for ever; he chooses them out of the ruins of the fall, and makes them heirs of everlasting life, while he suffers the rest of the world to continue in sin, and to consummate their guilt by well-deserved punishment, and thus, while his relationship is the same, so far as his sovereignty is concerned and his right of decree, there is something special in its loving aspect towards his people; and in that sense he is *their* God.

Again: he is the God of all his creatures, in the sense *that he has a right to command obedience of all*. He is the God of every man that was ever born into this earth, in the sense that they are bound to obey him. God can

command the homage of all his creatures, because he is their Creator, Governor, and Preserver; and all men are, by the fact of their creation, so placed in subjection to him, that they cannot escape the obligation of submission to his laws. But even here there is something special in regard to the child of God. Though God is the ruler of all men, yet his rule is special towards his children; for he lays aside the sword of his rulership, and in his hand he grasps the rod for his child, not the sword of punitive vengeance. While he gives the world a law upon stone, he gives to his child a law in his heart. God is my governor and yours, but if you are unregenerate, he is your governor in a different sense from what he is mine. He has ten times as much claim to my obedience as he has to yours. Seeing that he has done more for me, I am bound to do more for him; seeing that he has loved me more, I am bound to love him more. But should I disobey, the vengeance on my head shall not fall so heavily as on yours, if you are out of Christ; for that vengeance incurred by me has already fallen upon Christ, my substitute, and only the chastisement shall remain for me; so that there again you see where the relationship to all men is universal, there is something special in it in reference to God's children.

Again: God has a universal power over all his creatures *in the character of a Judge.* He will "judge the world in righteousness *and his people with equity*." He will judge all men with equity it is true; but, as if his people were not of the world, it is added afterwards, "his people with equity." God is the God of all creatures, we repeat, in the sense that he is their Judge; he will summon them all before his bar, and condemn or acquit them all, but even there, there is something peculiar with regard to his children, for to them the condemnation sentence shall never come, but only the acquittal. While he is Judge of all, he especially is *their* judge; because he is the judge whom they love to reverence, the judge whom they long to approach, because they know his lips will confirm that which their hearts have already felt — the sentence of their full acquittal through the merits of their glorious Savior. Our loving God is the Judge who shall acquit our souls, and in that respect we can say he is *our* God. So, then, whether as Sovereign, or as Governor enforcing law, or as Judge punishing sin; although God is in some sense the God of all men, yet in this matter there is something special towards his people, so that they can say, "He is our God, even in those relationships."

2. But now, beloved, there are points to which the rest of God's creatures cannot come; and here the great pith of the matter lies; here the very soul of this glorious promise dwells. God is our God in a sense, with which the unregenerate, the unconverted, the unholy, can have no acquaintance, in which they have no share whatever. We have just considered other points with regards to what God is to man generally; let us now consider what he is to us, as he is to none other.

First, then, God is my God, seeing that he is *the God of my election*. If I be his child, then has he loved me from before all worlds, and his infinite mind has been exercised with plans for my salvation. If he be my God, he has seen me when I have wandered far from him, and when I have rebelled, his mind has determined when I shall be arrested — when I shall be turned from the error of my ways. He has been providing for me the means of grace, he has applied those means of grace in due time, but his everlasting purpose has been the basis and the foundation of it all; and thus he is my God, as he is the God of none else beside his own children. My glorious, gracious God in eternal election; for he thought of me and chose me from before the foundation of the world, that I should be without blame before him in love. Looking back, then, I see election's God, and election's God is my God if I be in election. But if I fear not God, neither regard him, then he is another man's God and not mine. If I have no claim and participation in election, then I am compelled to look upon him as being in that sense the God of a great body of men whom he has chosen, but not my God. If I can look back and see my name in life's fair book set down, then indeed he is my God in election.

Furthermore, the Christian can call God his God, from the fact of his *justification*. A sinner can call God — God, but he must always put in an adjective, and speak of God as an angry God, an incensed God, or an offended God. But the Christian can say, "my God," without putting in any adjective except it be a sweet one wherewithal to extol him; for now we who were sometime afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ; we who were enemies to God by wicked works are his friends; and looking up to him, we can say, "my God;" for he is my friend, and I am his friend. Enoch could say, "my God," for he walked with him. Adam could not say, "my God," when he hid himself beneath the trees of the garden. So that while I, a sinner, run from God, I cannot call him mine; but when I have

peace with God, and am brought nigh to him, then indeed is he my God and my friend.

Again: he is the believer's God by *adoption*, and in that the sinner hath no part. I have heard people represent God as the Father of the whole universe. It surprises me that any reader of the Bible should so talk. Paul once quoted a heathen poet, who said that we are his offspring; and it is true in some sense that we are, as having been created by him. But in the high sense in which the term "childhood" is used in the Scripture to express the holy relationship of a regenerate child towards his Father, in that sense none can say, "Our father," but those who have the "Abba Father" printed on their hearts by the spirit of adoption. Well, by the spirit of adoption, God becomes my God, as he is not the God of others. The Christian has a special claim to God, because God is his Father, as he is not the Father of any else save his brethren. Ay, beloved, these three things are quite enough to show you, that God is in a special sense the God of his own people; but I must leave that to your own thoughts, which will suggest twenty different ways in which God is special the God of his own children, more than he is of the rest of his creatures. "God," say the wicked; but "*my* God," say God's children. If then God be so specially your God, let your clothing be according to your feeding. Be clothed with the sun; put on the Lord Jesus. The king's daughter is (and so let all the king's sons be) all glorious within; let their clothing be of wrought gold. Be clothed with humility, put on love, bowels of compassion, gentleness, meekness; put on the garments of salvation. Let your company and converse be according to your clothing. Live amongst the excellent, amongst the generation of the just; get you up to the general assembly and church of the first-born, to that innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of the just men made perfect. Live in the courts of the great King; behold his face, wait at his throne, bear his name, shew forth his virtues, set forth his praises, advance his honor, uphold his interest; let vile persons and vile ways be contemned in your eyes: be of more noble spirits than to be companions with them. Regard not their societies, nor their scorns; their flatteries or their frowns; rejoice not with their joys, fear not their fear, care not their care, feed not on their danties; get you up from among them, to your country, your city, where no unclean thing can enter or annoy. Live by faith in the power of the Spirit, in the beauty of

holiness, in the hope of the Gospel, in the joy of your God, in the magnificence, and yet the humility of the children of the great King.

II. Now, for a moment, let us consider THE EXCEEDING PRECIOUSNESS OF THIS GREAT MERCY, "I will be their God." I conceive that God, himself, could say no more than that. I do not think if the Infinite were to stretch his powers, and magnify his grace by some stupendous promise which could outdo every other, I do not believe that it could exceed in glory this promise, "I will be their God." Oh! Christian, do but consider what it is to have God to be thine own; consider what it is, compared with anything else.

"Jacob's portion is the Lord;
What can Jacob more require?
What can heaven more afford —
Or a creature more desire?"

Compare this portion with the lot of thy fellow-men! Some of them have their portion in the field, they are rich and increased in goods, and their yellow harvests are even now ripening in the sun; but what are harvests compared with thy God, the God of harvests? Or, what are granaries compared with him who is thy husbandman, and feeds thee with the bread of heaven? Some have their portion in the city; their wealth is superabundant, and in constant streams it flows to them, until they become a very reservoir of gold; but what is gold compared with thy God? Thou couldst not live on it; thy spiritual life could not be sustained by it. Apply it to thy aching head, and would it afford thee any ease? Put it on a troubled conscience, and could thy gold allay its pangs? Put it on thy desponding heart, and see if it could stay a solitary groan, or give thee one grief the less? But thou hast God, and in Him thou hast more than gold or riches e'er could buy, more than heaps of brilliant ore could ever purchase thee. Some have their portion in this world, in that which most men love, applause and fame; but ask thyself, is not thy God more to thee than that? What, if a thousand trumpets should blow thy praise, and if a myriad clarions should be loud with thine applause; what would it all be to thee if thou hadst lost thy God? Would this allay the turmoils of a soul ill at ease with itself? Would this prepare thee to pass the Jordan, and to breast those stormy waves which ere long must be forded by every man, when he is called from this world to lands unknown? Would a puff of wind serve

thee then, or the clapping of the hands of thy fellow-creatures bless thee on thy dying bed? No, there are griefs here with which men cannot intermeddle, and there are griefs to come with which men cannot interfere to alleviate the pangs, and pains, and agonies, and dying strife. But when thou hast this — "I will be thy God" — thou hast as much as all other men can have put together; for this is all they have, and more. How little ought we to estimate the treasures of this world compared with God, when we consider that God frequently gives the most riches to the worst of his creatures! As Luther said, God gives food to his children, and husks to his swine; and who are the swine that get the husks? It is not often that God's people get the riches of this world, and that does but prove that riches are little worth, else God would give them to us. Abraham gave the sons of Keturah a portion and sent them away; let me be Isaac and have my Father, and the world may take all the rest. Oh! Christian, ask for nothing in this world, but that thou mayest live on this, and that thou mayest die on this, "I will be their God." This exceedeth all the world besides.

But *compare this with what thou requirest, Christian*. What does thou require? Is there not here all that thou dost require? To make thee happy thou wantest something that shall satisfy thee; and come I ask thee, is not this enough? Will not this fill thy pitcher to its very brim, aye, till it runs over? If thou canst put this promise inside thy cup, will not thou be forced to say, with David, "My cup runneth over; I have more than heart can wish?" When this is fulfilled, "I am thy God," let thy cup be ever so empty of earthly things, suppose thou hast not one solitary drop of creature joy, yet is not this enough to fill it until thy unsteady hand cannot hold the cup by reason of its fullness? I ask thee if thou art not complete when God is thine. Dost thou want anything but God? If thou thinkest thou dost, it were well for thee still to want; for all thou wantest save God, is but to gratify thy lust. Oh! Christian, is not this enough to satisfy thee if all else should fail?

But thou wantest more than quiet satisfaction; thou desirest, sometimes, rapturous delight. Come, soul, is there not enough here to delight thee? Put this promise to thy lips; didst e'er drink wine one-half so sweet as this, "I will be their God?" Didst ever harp or viol sound half so sweetly as this, "I will be their God?" Not all the music blown from sweet instruments, or drawn from living strings, could ever give such melody as this sweet

promise, “I will be their God.” Oh! here is a very sea of bliss, a very ocean of delight; come, bathe thy spirit in it; thou mayest swim, ay, to eternity, and never find a shore; thou may’st dive to the very infinite and never find the bottom, “*I will be their God*.” Oh! if this does not make thine eyes sparkle, if this make not thy foot dance for joy, and thy heart beat high with bliss, then assuredly thy soul is not in a healthy state.

But then thou wantest something more than present delights, something concerning which thou mayest exercise hope; and what more dost thou ever hope to get than the fulfillment of this great promise, “I will be their God?” Oh! hope, thou art a great-handed thing; thou layest hold of mighty things, which even faith hath not power to grasp; but though large thine hand may be, this fills it, so that thou canst carry nothing else. I protest, before God, I have not a hope beyond this promise. “O,” say you, “you have a hope of heaven.” Ay, I have a hope of heaven, but this is heaven — “I will be their God.” What is heaven, but to be with God, to dwell with him, to realize that God is mine, and I am his? I say I have not a hope beyond that; there is not a promise beyond that; for all promises are couched in this, all hopes are included in this, “I will be their God.” This is the master-piece of all promises; it is the top-stone of all the great and precious things, which God has provided for his children, “I will be their God.” If we could really grasp it, if it could be applied to our soul and we could understand it, we might clap our hands and say, “Oh! the glory, oh! the glory, oh! the glory of that promise!” it makes a heaven below, and it must make a heaven above, for nothing else will be wanted but that, “I will be their God.”

III. Now, for a moment, dwell on the CERTAINTY OF THIS PROMISE; it does not say, “I *may* be their God;” but “I *will* be their God.” There is a sinner who says he won’t have God for his God. He will have God to be his preserver, to take care of him, and keep him from accident. He does not object to having God to feed him, to give him his bread, and water, and raiment; nor does he mind making God somewhat of a showthing, that he may take out on Sunday, and bow before it, but he will not have God for his *God*; he will not take him to be his all. He makes his belly his God, gold his God, the world his God. How then is this promise to be fulfilled? There is one of God’s chosen people there; he does not know that he is chosen yet, and he says he will not have God; how then is this promise to

be carried out? “Oh!” say some, “if the man wont have God, then, of course, God cannot get him;” and we have heard it preached, and we read it frequently, that salvation entirely depends upon man’s will — that if man stands out and resists God’s Holy Spirit, the creature can be the conqueror of the Creator, and finite power can overcome the infinite. Frequently I take up a book and I read, “Oh! sinner, be willing, for unless thou art, God cannot save thee;” and sometimes we are asked, “How is it that such an one is not saved?” And the answer is, “He is not willing to be; God strove with him, but he would not be saved.” Ay, but suppose he had striven with him, as he did with those who are saved, would he have been saved then? “No, he would have resisted.” Nay, we answer, it is not in man’s will, it is not of the will of the flesh, nor of blood, but of the power of God; and we never can entertain such an absurd idea as, that man can conquer Omnipotence, that the might of man is greater than the might of God. We believe, indeed, that certain usual influences of the Holy Spirit may be overcome; we believe that there are general operations of the Spirit in many men’s hearts which are resisted and rejected, but the effectual working of the Holy Ghost with the determination to save, could not be resisted, unless you suppose God overcome by his creatures, and the purpose of Deity frustrated by the will of man, which were to suppose something akin to blasphemy. Beloved, God has power to fulfill the promise, “I will be their God.” “Oh!” cries the sinner, “I will not have thee for a God.” “Wilt thou not?” says he, and he gives him over to the hand of Moses; Moses takes him a little and applies the club of the law, drags him to Sinai, where the mountain totters over his head, the lightnings flash, and thunders bellow, and then the sinner cries, “O God, save me!” “Ah! I thought thou wouldst not have me for a God?” “O Lord, thou shalt be my God.” says the poor trembling sinner, “I have put away my ornaments from me; O Lord, what wilt thou do unto me? Save me! I will give myself to thee. Oh! take me!” “Ay,” says the Lord, “I knew it; I said that I will be their God; and I have made thee willing in the day of my power.” “I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

IV. Now, lastly, I said we would conclude, by URGING YOU TO MAKE USE OF GOD, if he be yours. It is strange that spiritual blessings are our only possessions that we do not employ. We get a great spiritual blessing, and we let the rust get on it for many a day. There is the mercy seat, for

instance. Ah, my friends, if you had the cash box as full of riches as that mercy seat is, you would go often to it; as often as your necessities require. But you do not go to the mercy seat half so often as you need to go. Most precious things God has given to us, but we never over-use them. The truth is, they cannot be over-used; we cannot wear a promise thread-bare; we can never burn out the incense of grace; we can never use up the infinite treasures of God's loving kindness. But if *the blessings* God gives us are not used, perhaps *God* is the least used of all. Though he is our God, we apply ourselves less to him, than to any of his creatures, or any of his mercies, which he bestows upon us. Look at the poor heathen; they use their gods, though they be no gods. They put up a piece of wood or stone, and call it God; and how they use it! They want rain: the people assemble and ask for rain, in the firm but foolish hope that their god can give it. There is a battle, and their god is lifted up; he is brought out from the house, where he usually dwells, that he may go before them, and lead them on to victory. But how seldom do we ask counsel at the hands of the Lord! How often do we go about our business without asking his guidance! In our troubles how constantly do we strive to bear our burdens, instead of casting them upon the Lord, that he may sustain us! And this is not because we may not, for the Lord seems to say, "I am thine, soul, come and make use of me as thou wilt; thou mayest freely come to my store, and the oftener the better welcome." Have thou not a God lying by thee to no purpose; let not thy God be as other gods, serving only for a show: have not a name only that thou hast a God. Since he allows thee, having such a friend, use him daily. My God shall supply all your wants: never want whilst thou hast a God, never fear or faint whilst thou hast a God; go to thy treasure and take whatever thou needest; there is bread, and clothes, and health, and life, and all that thou needest. O Christian, learn the divine skill to make God all things, to make bread of thy God, and water, and health, and friends, and ease; he can supply thee with all these; or what is better, he can be instead of all these, thy food, thy clothing, thy friend, thy life of thee. All this he hath said to thee in this one word, I am thy God; and hereupon thou mayest say, as a heaven-born saint once did, "I have no husband, and yet I am no widow, my Maker is my husband. I have no father or friend, and yet I am neither fatherless nor friendless; my God is both my father and my friend. I have no child, but is not he better to me than ten children? I have no house, but yet I have a home, I have made the

Most High my habitation. I am left alone, but yet I am not alone, my God is good company for me; with him I can walk, with him I can take sweet counsel, find sweet repose; at my lying down, at my rising up, whilst I am in the house, or as I walk by the way, my God is ever with me; with him I ravel, I dwell, I lodge, I live, and shall live for ever." Oh! child of God, let me urge thee to make use of thy God. Make use of him in prayer; I beseech thee, go to him often, because he is *thy* God. If he were another man's God, thou mightest weary him; but he is *thy* God. If he were my God and not thine, thou wouldst have no right to approach him, but he is *thy* God; he has made himself over to thee, if we may use such an expression, (and we think we may) he has become the positive property of all his children, so that all he has, and all he is, is theirs. O child, wilt thou let thy treasury lie idle, when thou wantest it? No; go and draw from it by prayer.

"To him in every trouble flee,
Thy best, thy only friend."

Fly to him, tell him all thy wants. Use him constantly by faith, at all times. Oh! I beseech thee, if some dark providence has come over thee, use thy God as a sun, for he is a sun. If some strong enemy has come out against thee, use thy God for a shield, for he is a shield to protect thee. If thou hast lost thy way in the mazes of life, use him as a guide, for the great Jehovah will direct thee. If thou art in storms, use him for the God who stilleth the raging of the sea, and saith unto the waves, "Be still." If thou art a poor thing, knowing not which way to turn, use him for a shepherd, for the Lord is thy Shepherd, and thou shalt not want. Whate'er thou art, where'er thou art, remember God is just what thou wantest, and he is just where thou wantest. I beseech thee, then, make use of thy God; do not forget him in thy trouble, but flee to him in the midst of thy distresses, and cry,

"When all created streams are dried,
Thy fullness is the same;
May I with this be satisfied,
And glory in thy name!
No good in creatures can be found
But may be found in thee;
I must have all things and abound,
While God is God to me."

Lastly, Christian, let me urge thee again to use God to be thy delight this day. If thou hast trial, or if thou art free from it, I beseech thee make God thy delight; go from this house of prayer and be happy this day in the Lord. Remember it is a commandment, “Rejoice in the Lord, always, and again I say, rejoice.” Do not be content to be moderately happy; seek to soar to the heights of bliss and to enjoy a heaven below; get near to God, and you will get near to heaven. It is not as it is with the sun here, the higher you go the colder you find it, because on the mountain there is nothing to reflect the rays of the sun; but with God, the nearer you go to him the brighter he will shine upon you, and when there are no other creatures to reflect his goodness, his light will be all the brighter. Go to God continually, importunately, confidently; “delight thyself also in the Lord and he shall bring it to pass;” “commit thy way unto the Lord, and he shall “guide thee by his counsel, and afterwards receive thee to glory.”

Here is the first thing of the covenant; the second is like unto it. We will consider that another Sabbath-day. And now may God dismiss you with his blessing. Amen.

TO-MORROW

SERMON NO. 94

DELIVERED ON MONDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 25, 1856,

AT MABERLEY CHAPEL, KINGSLAND,

On Behalf of the Metropolitan Benefit Societies' Asylum, Ball's Pond Road, Islington.

"Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." — Proverbs 27:1.

God's most holy Word was principally written to inform us of the way to heaven, and to guide us in our path through this world, to the realms of eternal life and light. But as if to teach us that God is not careless concerning our doings in the present scene, and that our benevolent Father is not inattentive to our happiness even in this state, he has furnished us with some excellent and wise maxims, which we may put in practice, not only in spiritual matters, but in temporal affairs also. I have always looked upon the book of Proverbs with pleasure, as being a book not only teaching us the highest spiritual wisdom, but as also more especially speaking on the "now"-the time that is present with us-giving us maxims that will make us wise for this world, and that will instruct us in conducting our affairs whilst we are here amongst our fellow-men. We need some temporal wisdom as well as spiritual illumination; it need not always be that the children of the kingdom should be more foolish than the children of darkness. It is well that we should be wise to order our common affairs aright, as well as to set out house in order for the grave; and hence we find in Scripture maxims and teachings for them both. Since God has been pleased thus to instruct us in the avocations of life, I shall not, then, be out of place, if I use my text, in some degree, in a merely temporal manner, and endeavor to give advice to my friends concerning the business of this life. Afterwards, I shall dwell upon it more spiritually.

There is first, *the abuse of to-morrow* forbidden in the text; in the second place, I shall mention *the right use of to-morrow.*

I. First, then, there is THE ABUSE OF TO-MORROW mentioned in the text; and we shall look upon it first in a worldly point of view, and yet, I trust, in a way of wisdom. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow." Oh! my brethren, whoso'er ye be, whether ye be Christians or no, this passage hath a depth of wisdom in it for you. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow," and this, for many very wise reasons.

First of all, *because it is extremely foolish to boast at all*. Boasting never makes a man any the greater in the esteem of others, nor does it improve the real estate either of his body or soul. Let a man brag as he will, he is none the greater for his bragging; nay, he is the less, for men invariably think the worse of him. Let him boast as much as he pleases of anything that he possesses, he shall not increase its value by his glorying. He cannot multiply his wealth by boasting of it; he cannot increase his pleasures by glorying in them. True, to be content with those pleasures, and feel a complacency in them, may render them very sweet; but not so with such a treasure as this, for it is a treasure which he has not yet, and, therefore, how foolish is he to glory in it! There is an old, old proverb, which I dare not quote here; it is something to do with chickens. Perhaps you can recollect it; it bears very well upon this text, for to-morrow is a thing that we have not yet obtained, and, therefore, not only if we had it would it be foolish to boast of it, but because we have it not, and may never have it, it becomes the very extremity of foolishness to glory in it. Glory, O man, in the harvest that may come to thee next year when thy seed is sown; but glory not in to-morrow, for thou canst sow no seeds of morrows. Morrows come from God; thou hast no right to glory in them. Glory if thou wilt, O fowler, that the birds have once flown to thy net, for they may come again; but glory not too soon, for they my find another decoy that shall be better to their taste than thine, or they may rove far off from thy snare. Though many a day has come to thee, think not that another will certainly arrive. Days are not like links of a chain; one does not ensure the other. We have one, but we may never see its fellow; each may be the last of its kind. Each springs of a separate birth. There are no twin days. To-day hath no brother, it stands alone, and to-morrow must come alone, and the next and the next, also, must be born into this world without a

brother. We must never look upon two days at once, nor expect that a whole herd of days shall be brought forth at one time.

We need not boast of to-morrow, for *it is one of the frailest things in all creation*, and, therefore, the least to be boasted of. Boast of the bubbles on the breaker, boast of the foam upon the sea, boast of the clouds that skim the sky, boast of what thou wilt, O man, but boast not of to-morrow, for it is too unsubstantial. To-morrow, it is a fleeting thing. Thou hast not seen it; why dost thou boast of it? To-morrow, it is a fleeting thing. Thou hast not seen it; why dost thou boast of it? To-morrow, it is the cup which the idiot dreams lieth at the foot of the rainbow. It is not there, nor hath he found it. To-morrow-it is the floating island of Loch Lomond; many have talked of it, but none have seen it. To-morrow-it is the wrecker's beacon, enticing men to the rock of destruction. Boast not thyself of to-morrow; it is the frailest and most brittle thing thou canst imagine. Not glass were half so easily broken as thy to-morrow's joys and thy to-morrow's hopes; a puff of wind shall crush them, while yet they seem not to be full blown. He said, good easy man, full surely my greatness is a ripening, but there came a frost-a killing, frost which nipped his shoot and then he fell. Boast not of to-morrow; thou hast it not. Boast not of to-morrow; thou mayest never have it. Boast not of to-morrow; if thou hadst it, it would deceive thee. Boast not of to-morrow, for to-morrow thou mayest where morrows will be dreadful things to tremble at.

Boast not thyself of to-morrow, not only because it is extremely foolish, but *because it is exceedingly hurtful*. Boasting of to-morrow is hurtful to us every way. It is hurtful to us *now*. I never knew a man who was always hoping to do great things in the future, that ever did much in the present. I never knew a man who intended to make a fortune by-and-bye, who ever saved sixpence a week now. I never knew a man who had a very great and grand hopes on the death of some old grandmother, or the coming-in of some property from chancery, or the falling to him of something because his name was Jenyns, I never saw him very prosperous in the mean time. I have heard of a man going to be rich to-morrow, and boasting of it; but I never knew him do much. Such men spend so much time in building castles in the air, that they have no stones left wherewith to build so much as a cottage on the ground. They were wasting all their energies on to-morrow, consequently they had no time to reap the fields of the present, for they

were waiting for the heavy harvests of the future. The heavily laden boats of to-day come in with abundance of fish from the depths of time; but they said of them, “They are nothing; there will be heavier draughts to-morrow; there will be greater abundance then. Go away, little ships; an argosy shall come home to-morrow-a very fleet of wealth;” and so they let to-day’s wealth go by because they expected the greater wealth of to-morrow; therefore, they were hurt even for the present.

And worse than that. *Some men were led into extraordinary extravagance* from their hopes of the future. They spend what they are going to have, or rather what they never will have. Many have been ruined by the idle dream of speculation; and what is that but boasting of to-morrow? They have said, “True, I cannot pay for this which I now purchase; but I shall to-morrow, for to-morrow I shall roll in wealth, to-morrow, perhaps, I shall be the richest of men. A lucky turn of business (as they term it) will lift me off this shoal.” So they keep still, and not only do they refuse to toil, to push themselves off the sand, but worse than that, they are throwing themselves away and wasting what they have, in the hope of better times coming in the future. Many a man has been made halt, and lame, and blind, and dumb, in the present, because he hoped to be greater than a man in the future. I always laugh at those who say to me, “Sir, rest a while; you will work all the longer of it. Stay while, lest you wast your strength, for you may work to-morrow.” I bid them remember that such is not the teaching of Scripture, for that says, “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might;” and I would count myself worse than a fool, if I should throw away my to-days in the expectation of to-morrows, and rest upon the couch of idleness to-day, because I thought the chariot of to-morrow would make up for all my sloth. No, beloved, if we love our God, we shall find enough to do, if we have all our to-morrows, and use all our to-days too. If we serve our God as we ought to serve him, considering what he has done for us, we shall find that we shall have more than our handsfull, let our life be spared as long as Methuselah’s-enough for every moment, enough for every hour, long as life may be. But hoping to do things in the future takes away our strength in the present, unnerves our resolution, and unstrings our diligence. Let us take care that we are not hurt in the present by boasting of to-morrow.

And, remember, that if you boast of to-morrow, it will not only hurt you to-day, but *hurt you to-morrow also*. Do you know why? because, as sure as you are alive, you will be disappointed with to-morrow, if you boast of it before it comes. To-morrows would be very good things if you did not give them such a very good character. I believe one of the very worst things a minister can possess is to have anybody to recommend him; for the people say, "Here comes a man, how he will preach, how eloquent he will be!" The poor creature cannot come up to their expectations, and so they are disappointed. So with to-morrow; you give him such flattering enconiums; "Oh! he is everything; he is perfection." To-days-they are nothing; they are the very sweepings of the floors; but to-morrows-they are the solid gold. Todays-they are exhausted mines, and we get little from them; but to-morrows-they are the very mines of wealth. We have only to get them, and we are rich, immensely rich. The to-morrows are everything; and then the to-morrows come laden with mercy and big with blessings of God; but, notwithstanding, we are disappointed, because to-morrow is not what we expected it to be, even when to-morrow is marvellously abundant. But sometimes to-morrow comes with storms, and clouds, and darkness, when we expected it to be full of light and sunshine, and oh, how terrible is our feeling then, from the very reason that we expected something different. It is not at all a bad beatitude, "Blessed is the man that expecteth nothing, for he shall never be disappointed."

If we know how to practice that, and expect nothing, we shall not be disappointed, it is certain; and the less we expect, and the less we boast of our expectations, the more happy will the future be; because we shall have far less likelihood of being disappointed. Let us recollect, then, that if we would kill the future, if we would ruin the to-morrows, if we would blast their hopes, if we would take away their honey, we must press them in the hand of boasting, and then we shall have done it. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow;" for thou spoilest the to-morrow by boasting of it.

And then, remember, *what disastrous circumstances have occurred to men in this life* after to-morrow had gone, from boasting of to-morrows. Ay, there is many a man that set all his hope upon one single thing; and the to-morrow came which he did not expect-perhaps a black and dark to-morrow, and it crushed his hopes to ashes; and how sad he felt afterwards! He was in his nest; he said, "Peace, peace, peace;" and sudden destruction

came upon his happiness and his joy. He had boasted of his to-morrow by over security, and see him there, what a very wreck of a man he is, because he had set his hope on that; now his joy is blasted. Oh! my friends, never boast too much of the to-morrows, because if you do, your disappointment will be tremendous, when you shall find your joys have failed you, and your hopes have passed away. See there that rich man; he has piled heaps on heaps of gold; but now for a desperate venture, he is about to have more than he ever possessed before, and he reckons on that to-morrow. Nothingness is his; and what is his disappointment? because he boasted of imagined wealth. See that man! his ambition is to raise his house, and perpetuate his name; see that heir of his-his joy, his life, his fullness of happiness. A handful of ashes and a coffin are left to the weeping father. Oh! if he had not boasted too much of the certainty of that son's life, he had not wept so bitterly, after the to-morrow had swept over him, with all its blast and mildew of his expectations. See yonder, another; he is famous, he is great; to-morrow comes a slander, and his fame is gone, and his name disgraced. Oh! had he not set his love on that, he had not cared whether men cried, "crucify," or "hallelujah;" he had disregarded both alike. But believing that fame was a stable thing, whereas its foot is on the sand, he reckoned on to-morrows; and mark how sad he walks the earth, because to-morrow has brought him nothing but grief. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow."

And I would have you remember just one fact; and that I think to be a very important one; that very often when men boast of to-morrow, and are over confident that they shall live, *they not only entail great sorrow upon themselves, but upon others also.* I have, when preaching, frequently begged of my friends to be quite sure to make their wills, and see to their family affairs. Many are the solemn instances which should urge you to do so. One night a minister happened to say, in the course of his sermon, that he held it to be a Christian duty for every man to have his house set in order, so that if he were taken away, he would know, that as far as possible, everything would be right. And there was one member of his church there, who said to himself, "What my minister has said is true. I should not like to see my babes and my wife left with nothing, as they must be if I were to die." So he went home. That night he made his will and cleared up his accounts. That night he died! It must have been a joyful

thing for the widow, in the midst of her sadness, to find herself amply provided for, and everything in order for her comfort. Good Whitfield said he could not lie down in bed of a night, if he did not know that even his gloves were in their place; for he said he should not like to die with anything in his house out of order. And I would have every Christian very careful, to be so living one day, that if he were never to see another, he might feel that he had done the utmost that he could, not only to provide for himself, but also for those who inherit his name and are dear to him. Perhaps you call this only worldly teaching; very good; you will find it very much like heavenly teaching one of these dark days, if you do not practice it. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow."

II. But now I come to dwell upon this *in a spiritual manner,* for a moment or two. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow." Oh! my beloved friends, never boast of to-morrow with regard to your soul's salvation.

They do so in the first place, *who think that it will be easier for them to repent to-morrow than it is to-day*. Felix said there would be a more convenient season, and then he would again send for Paul, that he might hear him seriously. And many a sinner thinks that just now it is not easy to turn and to repent, but that by-and-bye it will be. Now, is not that a very string of falsehoods? In the first place, is it ever easy for a sinner to turn to God? Must not that be done, at any time, by divine power? And again, if that be not easy for him *now*, how will it be easier in after life? Will not his sins bind fresh fetters to his soul, so that it will be even more impossible for him to escape from his iron bondage? If he be dead now, will he not be corrupt before he reaches to-morrow? And when to-morrow comes, to which he looks forward as being easier for a resurrection, will not his soul be yet more corrupt, and, therefore, if we may so speak, even further from the possibility of being raised? Oh! sirs, ye say it is easy for ye to repent to-morrow; why, then, not to-day? Ye would find the difficulty of it, if you should try it; yea, you would find your own helplessness in that matter. Possibly you dream that on a future day repentance will be more agreeable to your feelings. But how can you suppose that a few hours will make it more pleasant? If it be vinegar to your taste now, it shall be so then; and if ye love your sins now, ye will love them better then; for the force of habit will have confirmed you in your course. Every moment of your lives is driving in another rivet to your

eternal state. So far as we can see, it becomes less and less likely (speaking after the manner of men) that the sinner should burst his chains each sin that he commits; for habit has bound him yet faster to his guilt, and his iniquity has got another hold upon him. Let us take care, then, that we do not boast of to-morrow, by a pretense that it will be so much easier to repent to-morrow; whereas, it is one of Satan's lies, for it will only be the more difficult.

He boasts of to-morrow, again, *who supposes that he shall have plenty of time to repent and to return to God*. Oh! there are many who say, "When I come to die, I shall be on my death-bed, and then I shall say, 'Lord, have mercy upon me a sinner.'" I remember an aged minister telling me a story of a man whom he often warned, but who always said to him, "Sir, when I am dying, I shall say 'Lord, have mercy on me;' and I shall go to heaven as well as anybody else." Returning home from market one night, rather "fou" with liquor, he guided his horse with a leap right over the parapet of a bridge into the river; the last words he was heard to utter, were a most fearful imprecation; and in the bed of the river he was found dead, killed by the fall. So it may be with you. You think you will have space for repentance, and it may be that sudden doom will devour you: or, perhaps, even while you are sitting there in the pew, your last moment is running out. There is your hour-glass. See! it is running. I marked another grain just then, and then another fell; it fell so noiselessly, yet methought I heard it fall. Yes! there it is! The clock's tick is the fall of that grain of dust down from your hour-glass. Life is getting shorter every moment with all of you; but with some the sand is almost out; there is not a handful left. A few more grains. See, now they are less, two or three. Oh! in a moment it may be said, "The is not one left." Sinner! never think that thou hast time to spare! thou never hadst; man never had. God says, "Haste thee," when he bids men flee from Sodom. Lot had to haste; and depend upon it, when the Spirit speaks in a man's heart, he doth always bid him haste. Under natural convictions, men are very prone to tarry; but the Spirit of God, when he speaks in the heart of man, always says, "to-day." I never knew a truly anxious soul yet, who was willing to put off till to-morrow. When God the Holy Ghost has dealings with a man, they are always immediate dealings. The sinner is impatient to get deliverance; he must have pardon now; he must have present mercy, or else he fears that mercy will come too late to

him. Let me beseech you, then, (and may God the Holy Spirit grant that my entreaty may become successful in your case) let me beseech every one of you to take this into consideration-that there is never time to spare, and that your thought that there is time to spare, is an insinuation of Satan; for when the Spirit pleads with man, he pleads with him with demands of immediate attention. "*To-day*, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation."

"Boast not thyself of to-morrow," O sinner, as I doubt not thou art doing in another fashion. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow," *in the shape of resolves to do better.* I think I have given up resolutions now; I have enough of the *debris* and the rubbish of my resolutions to build a cathedral with, if they could but be turned into stone. Oh! the broken resolutions, the broken vows, all of us have had! Oh! we have raised castles of resolutions, structures of enormous size, that outvied Babylon itself, in all its majesty. Says one, "I know I shall be better to-morrow; I shall renounce this vice and the other; I shall forsake this lust; I shall give up that darling sin; true, I shall not do so now-a little more sleep and a little more slumber; but I know I shall do it to-morrow." Fool! thou knowest not that thou shalt see to-morrow. Oh! greater fool! thou oughtest to know, that what thou art not willing to do to-day, thou wilt not be willing to do to-morrow. I believe there are many souls that have been lost by good intentions, which were never carried out. Resolutions strangled at their birth brought on men the guilt of spiritual infanticide; and they have been lost, with resolutions sticking in their mouths. Many a man has gone down to hell with good resolution on his lip, with a pious resolve on his tongue. Oh! if he had lived another day, he said he would have been so much better; if he had lived another week, oh, then he thought he would begin to pray. Poor soul! if he had been spared another week, he would only have sunk the deeper into sin! But he did not think so, and he went to hell with a choice morsel rolling under his tongue-that he should do better directly, and that meant to amend by-and-bye. There are many of you present, I dare say, who are making good resolutions. You are apprentices: well, you are not going to carry them out till you get to be journeymen. You have been breaking the Sabbath: but you intend to leave it off when you are in another situation. You have been accustomed to swear: you say, "I shall not swear any more when I get out of this company, they try my

temper so." You have committed this or that petty theft: to-morrow you will renounce it, because to-morrow you will have enough, and you can afford to do it. But of all the lying things-and there are many things that are deceptive-resolutions for to-morrow are the worst of all. I would not trust one of them; there is nothing stable in them; you might sooner sail to America across the Atlantic on a sere leaf, than float to heaven on a resolution.

It is the frailest thing in the world, tossed about by every circumstance, and wrecked with all its precious freight-wrecked to the dismay of the man who ventured his soul in it-wrecked, and wrecked for aye. Take care, my dear hearers, that none of you are reckoning on to-morrows. I remember the strong but solemn words of Jonathan Edwards, where he says, "Sinner, remember, thou art at this moment standing over the mouth of hell upon a single plank, and that plank is rotten; thou art hanging over the jaws of perdition by a solitary rope, and lo! the strands of that rope are creaking-breaking now, and yet thou talkest of to-morrows!" If thou wert sick, man, wouldst thou send for thy physician to-morrow? If thine house were on fire, wouldst thou call "fire" to-morrow? If thou wert robbed in the street on thy road home, wouldst thou cry "stop thief" to-morrow? No, surely; but thou art wiser than that in natural concerns. But man is foolish, oh! too foolish in the things that concern his soul; unless divine and infinite love shall teach him to number his days, that he may apply his heart unto true wisdom, he will still go on boasting of to-morrows, until his soul has been destroyed by them.

Just one hint to the child of God. Ah! my beloved brother or sister, do not, I beseech thee, boast of to-morrow thyself. David did it once: he said, "My mountain standeth firm, I shall never be moved." Do not boast of your to-morrows. You have feathered your nest pretty well; ay, but you may have a thorn in it before the sun has gone down, and you will be glad enough to fly aloft. You are very happy and joyful, but do not say you will always have as much faith as you have now-do not be sure you will always be as blessed. The next cloud that sweeps the skies may drive many of your joys away. Do not say you have been kept hitherto, and you are quite sure you will be preserved from sin to-morrow. Take care of to-morrows. Many Christians go tumbling on without a bit of thought; and then, on a sudden, they tumble down and make a mighty mess of their

profession. If they would only look sharp after the to-morrows-if they would only watch their paths instead of star-gazing and boasting about them, their feet would be a great deal surer. True, God's child need not think of to-morrow as regards his soul's eternal security, for that is in the hand of Christ and safe for ever; but as far as his profession, and comfort, and happiness are concerned, it will well become him to take care of his feet every day. Do not get boasting; if you get boasting of to-morrow, you know the Lord's rule is always to send a canker where we put our pride. And so if you boast of to-morrow, you will have a moth in it before long. As sure as ever we glory in our wealth, it becomes cankered, or it takes to itself wings and flies away; and as certainly as we boast of to-morrow, the worm will gnaw its root, as it did Jonah's gourd, and the to-morrow under which we rested shall, with dropping leaves, only stand a monument to our disappointment. Let us take care, Christian brethren, that we do not waste the present time with hopes of to-morrow-that we do not get proud, and so off our guard, by boasting of what we most assuredly shall be then, as we imagine.

III. And now, in the last place, if to-morrows are not to be boasted of, are they good for nothing? No, blessed be God! There are great many things we may do with to-morrows. We may not boast of them, but I will tell you what we may do with them if we are the children of God. We may always look forward to them with *patience and confidence*, that they will work together for our good. We may say of the to-morrows, "I do not boast of them, but I am not frightened at them; I would not glory in them, but I will not tremble about them."

"What may be my future lot,
Well I know concerns me not;
This doth set my heart at rest,
What my God appoints is best."

We may be very easy and very comfortable about to-morrow; we may remember that all our times are in his hands, that all events are at his command; and though we know not all the windings of the path of providence, yet *He* knows them all. They are all settled in his book, and our times are all ordered by his wisdom; whether they be

"Times of trial and of grief;
Times of triumph and relief;
Times the tempter's power to prove,
Times to taste a Savior's love:
All must come, and last, and end,
As shall please my heavenly Friend."

And, therefore, we may look upon the to-morrows as we see them in the rough bullion of time, about to be minted into every day's expenditure, and we may say of them all, "They shall all be gold; they shall all be stamped with the King's impress, and, therefore, let them come; they will not make me worse-they will work together for my good."

Yea, more, a Christian may rightly look forwards to his to-morrows, not simply with resignation, but also with *joy.* To-morrow to a Christian is a happy thing, it is one stage nearer glory. To-morrow! It is one step nearer heaven to a believer; it is just one knot more that he has sailed across the dangerous sea of life, and he is so much the nearer to his eternal port-his blissful heaven. To-morrow, it is a fresh lamp of fulfilled promise that God has placed in his firmament, that the Christian may hail it as a guiding star, in the future, or at least as a light to cheer his path. To-morrow, the Christian may rejoice at it; he may say of to-day, "O day, thou mayest be black, but I shall bid thee good-bye, for lo, I see the morrow coming, and I shall mount upon its wings, and shall flee away and leave thee and thy sorrows far behind me."

And, moreover, the Christian may await to-morrow with even more than simple hope and joy; he may look forward to it with *ecstacy* in some measure, for he does not know but that to-morrow his Lord may come. To-morrow Christ may be upon this earth, "for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh." To-morrow, all the glories of millennial splendor may be revealed; to-morrow, the thrones of judgment may be set, and the King may summon the people to judgment. To-morrow, we may be in heaven; to-morrow, we may be on the breast of Christ; to-morrow, ay, before then, this head may wear a crown, this hand may wave the palm, this lip may sing the son, this foot may tread the streets of gold, this heart may be full of bliss, immortal, everlasting, eternal. Be of good cheer, oh, fellow-Christian; to-morrow can have nothing black in it to thee, for it must work for thy good, but it may have in it a precious, precious jewel. It

is an earthen pitcher, and it may have in it some dark black waters, but their bitterness is taken away by the cross. But mayhap, also, it may have in it the precious jewel of eternity; for wrapt up within to-morrow may be all the glories of immortality. Anoint thine head with fresh oil of gladness at the prospect of each coming day. Boast not of to-morrow, but often comfort thyself with it. Thou hast a right to do so; it cannot be a bad tomorrow to thee; it may be the best day of thy life, for it may be thy last.

And yet, another hint. To-morrow ought to be observed by Christians in the way of providence. Though we may not boast of to-morrow, yet we may seek to provide for the morrow. On one occasion I pleaded for a benefit society, and not knowing a more appropriate text, I selected this, "Take no thought for the morrow, for to-morrow shall take thought for the things of itself." Some of my hearers, when I announced my text, feared the principle of it was altogether hostile to anything like an insurance, or providing for the future, but I just showed them that it was not, as I looked upon it. It is a positive command that we are to take no anxious thought concerning to-morrow. No, how can I do that? How can I put myself into such a position that I can carry out this command of taking no thought for the morrow! If I were a man struggling in life, and had it in my power to insure for something which would take care of wife and family in after days, if I did not do it, you might preach to me all eternity about not taking thought for the morrow; but I could not help doing it, when I saw those I loved around me unprovided for. Let it be in God's word, I could not practice it; I should still be at some time or other taking thought for the morrow. But let me go to one of the many of the excellent institutions which exist, and let me see that all is provided for, I come home and say, "Now, I know how to practice Christ's command of taking no thought for the morrow; I pay the policy-money once a year, and I take no further thought about it, for I have no occasion to do so now, and have obeyed the very spirit and letter of Christ's command." Our Lord meant that we were to get rid of cares; now it is apparent that those distressing cares are removed, and we are able to live above anxiety by that single process.

Now, if that is so, if there is anything that enables us to carry out Christ's commands, is it not in the very bowels of the commandments to do that? If God has pleased to put into the hearts of wise men to devise something that should in some way ameliorate the misfortunes of their kind, and

relieve them from the distresses and casualties of God's providence, how can it but be our duty to avail ourselves of that wisdom which, doubtless, God gave to men, that we might thereby in these times be enable to carry out in the fullest extent the meaning of that passage, "Take no thought for the morrow." Why, if a man says, "I shall take no thought for the morrow, I will just spend all I get, and not think of doing anything or taking any thought for the morrow," how is he going to pay his rent? Why, the text could not be carried out, if it meant what some people think. It cannot mean that we should carelessly live by the day, or else a man would spend all his money on Monday, and have nothing left for the rest of the week; but that would be simple folly. It means that we should have no anxious, distressing thought about it. I am preaching about benefit societies; I would not attempt to recommend many of them, and I do not believe in the principles of half of them; I believe a great deal of mischief is done by their gatherings in alehouses and pothouses; but wherever there is a Christian society, I must endeavor to promote its welfare, for I look on the principle as the best means of carrying out the command of Christ, "Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for itself." Allow me to recommend this Asylum to your liberality as a refuge in adversity for those who were careful in prosperity. It is a quiet retreat for decayed members of Benefit Societies, and I am sorry to inform you that many of its rooms are vacant, not from want of candidates, but from a lack of funds. It is a pity that so much public property should lie unemployed. Help the committee then to use the houses.

And, now, in concluding, let me remind the Christian that there is one thing he has not do, and that is, he has not to provide salvation, nor grace, nor sustenance, nor promises for the morrow. No, beloved; but we often talk as if we had. We say, "How shall I persevere through such and such a trial?" "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." You must not boast of to-day's grace, as though it were enough for to-morrow. But you need not be afraid. With to-morrow's difficulties there will be to-morrow's help; with to-morrow's foes, to-morrow's friends; with to-morrow's dangers, to-morrow preservations. Let us look forward, then, to to-morrow as a thing we have not to provide for in spiritual matters, for the atonement is finished, the covenant ratified, and therefore every promise shall be

fulfilled, and be “yea and amen” to us, not only in one to-morrow, but in fifty thousand to-morrows, if so many could run over our heads.

And now just let us utter the words of the text again, very solemnly and earnestly. O young men in all your glory! O maidens in all your beauty! “Boast not yourselves of to-morrow.” The worm may be at your cheeks very soon. O strong men, whose bones are full of marrow! O ye mighty men, whose nerves seem of brass, and your sinews of steel! “Boast not of to-morrow.” “How, fir tree,” for cedars have fallen ere now; and though you think yourselves great, God can pull you down. Above all, ye grey heads, “Boast not yourselves of to-morrow,” with one foot hanging over the unfathomable gulf of eternity, and the other just tottering on the edge of time! I beseech you do not boast yourselves of to-morrow. In truth I do believe that grey heads are not less foolish on this point than very childhood. I remember reading a story of a man who wanted to buy his neighbour’s farm next to him, and he went to him and asked him whether he would sell it. He said, “No; I will not;” so he went home, and said, “Never mind, Farmer So-and-so is an old man; when he is dead, I shall buy it.” The man was seventy, and his neighbor sixty-eight; he thought the other would be sure to die before him. It is often so with men. They are making schemes that will only walk over their graves, when they will not feel them. The winds shall soon howl across the green sward that covers their tomb, but they shall not hear its wailing. Take care of the “to-days.” Look not through the glass of futurity; but look at the things of to-day. “Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.”

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

SERMON NO. 95

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 10, 1856,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"This shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year." -Leviticus 16:34.

The Jews had many striking ceremonies which marvellously set forth the death of Jesus Christ as the great expiation of our guilt and the salvation of our souls. One of the chief of these was the day of atonement, which I believe was pre-eminently intended to typify that great day of vengeance of our God, which was also the great day of acceptance of our souls, when Jesus Christ "died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." That day of atonement happened only *once a year,* to teach us that only once should Jesus Christ die; and that though he would come a second time, yet it would be without a sin offering unto salvation. The lambs were perpetually slaughtered; morning and evening they offered sacrifice to God, to remind the people that they always needed a sacrifice; but the day of atonement being the type of the one great propitiation, it was but once a year that the high priest entered within the vail with blood as the atonement for the sins of the people. And this was on a certain set and *appointed time*; it was not left to the choice of Moses, or to the convenience of Aaron, or to any other circumstance which might affect the date; it was appointed to be on a peculiar set day, as you find at the 29th verse: "In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month;" and at no other time was the day of atonement to be, to show us that God's great day of atonement was appointed and predestinated by himself. Christ's expiation occurred but once, and then not by any chance; God had settled it from before the foundation of the world; and at that hour when God had predestinated, on that very day that God had decreed that Christ should die, was he led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her

shearers he was dumb. It was but once a year, because the sacrifice should be once; it was at an appointed time in the year, because in the fullness of time Jesus Christ should come into the world to die for us.

Now, I shall invite your attention to the ceremonies of this solemn day, taking the different parts in detail. First, we shall consider the *person who made the atonement*; secondly, *the sacrifice whereby the atonement was typically made*; thirdly, *the effects of the atonement*; and fourthly, *our behavior on the recollection of the atonement*, as well set forth by the conduct prescribed to the Israelites on that day.

I. First, THE PERSON WHO WAS TO MAKE THE ATONEMENT. And at the outset, we remark that *Aaron, the high priest*, did it. "Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place; with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering." Inferior priests slaughtered lambs; other priests at other times did almost all the work of the sanctuary; but on this day nothing was done by any one, as a part of the business of the great day of atonement, except by the high priest. Old rabbinical traditions tell us that everything on that day was done by him, even the lighting of the candles, and the fires, and the incense, and all the offices that were required, and that, for a fortnight beforehand, he was obliged to go into the tabernacle to slaughter the bullocks and assist in the work of the priests and Levites, that he might be prepared to do the work which was unusual to him. All the labor was left to him. So, beloved, Jesus Christ, the High Priest, and he only, works the atonement. There are other priests, for "he hath made *us* priests and kings unto God." Every Christian is a priest to offer sacrifice of prayer and praise unto God, but none save the High Priest must offer atonement; he, and he alone, must go within the vail; he must slaughter the goat and sprinkle the blood; for though thanksgiving is shared in by all Christ's elect body, atonement remains alone to him, the High Priest.

Then it is interesting to notice, that the high priest on this day was *a humbled priest.* You read in the 4th verse, "He shall put on the holy *linen* coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments." On other days he wore what the people were accustomed to call the golden garments; he had the mitre with a plate of pure gold around his brow, tied with brilliant blue; the splendid breastplate, studded with

gems, adorned with pure gold and set with precious stones; the glorious ephod, the tinkling bells, and all the other ornaments, wherewith he came before the people as the accepted high priest. But on this day he had none of them. The golden mitre was laid aside, the embroidered vest was put away, the breastplate was taken off, and he came out simply with the holy linen coat, the linen breeches, the linen mitre, and girded with a linen girdle. On that day he humbled himself just as the people humbled themselves. Now, that is a notable circumstance. You will see sundry other passages in the references which will bear this out, that the priest's dress on this day was different. As Mayer tells us, he wore garments, and glorious ones, on other days, but on this day he wore four humble ones. Jesus Christ, then, when he made atonement, was a humbled priest. He did not make atonement arrayed in all the glories of his ancient throne in heaven. Upon his brow there was no diadem, save the crown of thorns; around him was cast no purple robe, save that which he wore for a time in mockery; on his head was no scepter, save the reed which they thrust in cruel contempt upon him; he had no sandals of pure gold, neither was he dressed as king; he had none of those splendours about him which should make him mighty and distinguished among men; he came out in his simple body, ay, in his naked body, for they stripped off even the common robe from him, and made him hang before God's sun and God's universe, naked, to his shame, and to the disgrace of those who chose to do so cruel and dastardly a deed. Oh! my soul, adore thy Jesus, who when he made atonement, humbled himself and wrapped around him a garb of thine inferior clay. Oh! angels, ye can understand what were the glories that he laid aside. Oh! thrones, and principalities, and powers, ye can tell what was the diadem with which he dispensed, and what, the robes he laid aside to wrap himself in earthly garbs. But, men, ye can scarce tell how glorious is your High Priest now, and ye can scarce tell how glorious he was before. But oh! adore him, for on that day it was the simple clean linen of his own body, of his own humanity, in which he made atonement for your sins.

In the next place, the high priest who offered the atonement must be a *spotless high priest*; and because there were none such to be found, Aaron being a sinner himself as well as the people, you will remark that Aaron had to sanctify himself and make atonement for his own sin before he

could go in to make an atonement for the sins of the people. In the 3rd verse you read,

> "Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering."

These were for himself. In the 6th verse it is said,

> "And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house."

Yea, more, before he went within the vail with the blood of the goat which was the atonement for the people, he had to go within the vail to make atonement there for himself. In the 11th, 12th, and 13th verses, it is said,

> "And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself. And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail. And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not." "And he shall take of the blood of the bullock (that is, the bullock that he killed for himself), and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times."

This was before he killed the goat, for it says, "Then shall he kill the goat." Before he took the blood which was a type of Christ within the vail, he took the blood (which was a type of Christ in another sense), wherewith he purified himself. Aaron must not go within the vail until by the bullock his sins had been typically expiated, nor even then without the burning smoking incense before his face, lest God should look on him, and he should die, being an impure mortal. Moreover, the Jews tell us that Aaron had to wash himself, I think, five times in the day; and it is said in this chapter that he had to wash himself many times. We read in the 4th verse,

> "These are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on."

And at the 24th verse,

> "He shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place,
> and put on his garments."

So you see it was strictly provided for that Aaron on that day should be a spotless priest. He could not be so as to nature, but, ceremonially, care was taken that he should be clean. He was washed over and over again in the sacred bath. And besides that, there was the blood of the bullock and the smoke of the incense, that he might be acceptable before God. Ah! beloved, and we have a spotless High Priest; we have one who needed no washing, for he had no filth to wash away; we have one who needed no atonement for himself, for he, for ever, might have sat down at the right hand of God, and ne'er have come on earth at all. He was pure and spotless; he needed no incense to wave before the mercy seat to hide the angry face of justice; he needed nothing to hide and shelter him; he was all pure and clean. Oh! bow down and adore him, for if he had not been a holy High Priest, he could never have taken thy sins upon himself, and never have made intercession for thee. Oh! reverence him, that, spotless as he was, he should come into this world and say, "For this cause I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth." Adore and love him, the spotless High Priest, who, on the day of atonement took away the guilt.

Again, the atonement was made by a solitary high priest-alone and unassisted. You read in the 17th verse,

> "And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel."

No other man was to be present, so that the people might be quite certain that everything was done by the high priest alone. It is remarkable, as Matthew Henry observes, that no disciple died with Christ. When he was put to death, his disciples forsook him and fled; they crucified none of his followers with him, lest any should suppose that the disciple shared the honor of atonement. Thieves were crucified with him because none would suspect that they could assist him; but if a disciple had died, it might have

been imagined that he had shared the atonement. God kept that holy circle of Calvary select to Christ, and none of his disciples must go to die there with him. O glorious High Priest, thou hast done it all alone. O, glorious antitype of Aaron, no son of thine stood with thee; no Eliezer, no Phineas, burned incense; there was no priest, no Levite save himself. "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me." Then give all the glory unto his holy name, for alone and unassisted he made atonement for your guilt. The bath of his blood is your only washing; the stream of water from his side is your perfect purification. None but Jesus, none but Jesus, has wrought out the work of our salvation.

Again, it was a *laborious high priest* who did the work on that day. It is astonishing how, after comparative rest, he should be so accustomed to his work as to be able to perform all that he had to do on that day. I have endeavored to count up how many creatures he had to kill, and I find that there were fifteen beasts which he slaughtered at different times, besides the other offices, which were all left to him. In the first place, there were the two lambs, one offered in the morning, and the other in the evening; they were never omitted, being a perpetual ordinance. On this day the high priest killed those two lambs. Further, if you will turn to Numbers 29:7-11,

> "And ye shall have on the tenth day of this seventh month an holy convocation; and ye shall afflict your souls: ye shall not do any work therein: But ye shall offer a burnt unto the Lord for a sweet savor; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year; they shall be unto you without blemish: And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals to a bullock, and two tenth deals to one ram. A several tenth deal for one lamb, throughout the seven lambs: One kid of the goats for a sin offering: besides the sin offering of atonement, and the continual burnt offering, and the meat offering of it, and their drink offerings."

Here, then, was one bullock, a ram, seven lambs, and a kid of the goats; making ten. The two lambs made twelve. And in the chapter we have been studying, it is said in the 3rd verse:

"Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering;"

which makes the number fourteen. Then, after that, we find there were two goats, but only one of them was killed, the other being allowed to go away. Thus, then, there were fifteen beasts to be slaughtered, besides the burnt offerings of thanksgiving which were offered by way of showing that the people now desired to dedicate themselves to the Lord from gratitude, that the atonement of sin offering had been accepted. He who was ordained priest in Jeshurun, for that day, toiled like a common Levite, worked as laboriously as priest could do, and far more so than on any ordinary day. Just so with our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, what a labor the atonement was to him! It was a work that all the hands of the universe could not have accomplished; yet he completed it alone. It was a work more laborious than the treading of the wine-press, and his frame, unless sustained by the divinity within, could scarce have borne such stupendous labor. There was the bloody sweat in Gethsemane; there was the watching all night, just as the high priest did for fear that uncleanness might touch him; there was the hooting and the scorn which he suffered every day before-something like the continual offering of the Lamb; then there came the shame, the spitting, the cruel flagellations in Pilate's hall; then there was the *via dolorosa* through Jerusalem's sad streets; then came the hanging on the cross, with the weight of his people's sins on his shoulders. Ay, it was a Divine labor that our great High Priest did on that day-a labor mightier than the making of the world: it was the new making of a world, the taking of its sins upon his Almighty shoulders and casting them into the depths of the sea. The atonement was made by a toilsome laborious High Priest, who worked, indeed, that day; and Jesus, thought he had toiled before, yet never worked as he did on that wondrous day of atonement.

II. Thus have I led you to consider the person who made the atonement: let us now consider for a moment or two THE MEANS WHEREBY THIS ATONEMENT WAS MADE. You read at the 5th verse,

"And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering."

And at the 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th verses,

> "And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness."

The first goat I considered to be the great type of Jesus Christ the atonement: *such I do not consider the scapegoat to be*. The first is a type of the means whereby the atonement was made, and we shall keep to that first.

Notice that this goat, of course, answered all the pre-requisites of every other thing that was sacrificed; it must be *a perfect, unblemished goat of the first year*. Even so was our Lord a perfect man, in the prime and vigor of his manhood. And further, this goat was an eminent type of Christ from the fact that *it was taken of the congregation of the children of Israel*, as we are told at the 5th verse. The public treasury furnished the goat. So, beloved, Jesus Christ was, first of all, purchased by the public treasury of the Jewish people before he died. Thirty pieces of silver they had valued him at, a goodly price; and as they had been accustomed to bring the goat, so they brought him to be offered: not, indeed, with the intention that he should be their sacrifice, but unwittingly they fulfilled this when they brought him to Pilate, and cried, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Oh, beloved! Indeed, Jesus Christ came out from the midst of the people, and the people brought him. Strange that it should be so! "He came unto his own, and his own received him not;" his own led him forth to slaughter; his own dragged him before the mercy seat.

Note, again, that though this goat, like the scapegoat, was brought by the people, *God's decision was in it still*. Mark, it is said,

> "Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats: one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat.

I conceive this mention of lots is to teach that although the Jews brought Jesus Christ of their own will to die, yet, Christ had been appointed to die;

and even the very man who sold him was appointed to it-so saith the Scripture. Christ's death was fore-ordained, and there was not only man's hand in it, but God's. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." So it is true that man put Christ to death, but it was of the Lord's disposal that Jesus Christ was slaughtered, "the just for the unjust, to bring us to God."

Next, behold the goat that destiny has marked out to make the atonement. Come and *see it die*. The priest stabs it. Mark it in its agonies; behold it struggling for a moment; observe the blood as it gushes forth. Christians, ye have here your Savior. See his Father's vengeful sword sheathed in his heart; behold his death agonies; see the clammy sweat upon his brow; mark his tongue cleaving to the roof of his mouth; hear his sighs and groans upon the cross; hark to his shriek, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani," and you have more now to think of than you could have if you only stood to see the death of a goat for your atonement. Mark the blood as from his wounded hands it flows, and from his feet it finds a channel to the earth; from his open side in one great river see it gush. As the blood of the goat made the atonement typically, so, Christian, thy Savior dying for thee, made the great atonement for thy sins, and thou mayest go free.

But mark, this goat's blood was not only shed for many for the remission of sins as a type of Christ, but that blood was *taken within the vail*, and there it was sprinkled. So with Jesus's blood, "Sprinkled now with blood the throne." The blood of other beasts (save only of the bullock) was offered before the Lord, and was not brought into the most holy place; but this goat's blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat, to make an atonement. So, O child of God, thy Savior's blood has made atonement within the vail; he has taken it there himself; his own merits and his own agonies are now within the vail of glory, sprinkled now before the throne. O glorious sacrifice, as well as High Priest, we would adore thee, for by thy one offering hot hast made atonement for ever, even as this one slaughtered goat made atonement once in a year for the sins of all the people.

III. We now come to the EFFECTS.

One of the first effects of the death of this goat was *sanctification of the holy things which had been made unholy*. You read at the end of the 15th verse,

> "He shall sprinkle it upon the mercy seat: and he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness."

The holy place was made unholy by the people. Where God dwelt should be holy, but where man comes there must be some degree of unholiness. This blood of the goat made the unholy place holy. It was a sweet reflection to me as I came here this morning. I thought, "I am going to the house of God, and that house is a holy place;" but when I thought how many sinners had trodden its floors, how many unholy ones had joined in its songs, I thought, "Ah! it has been made defiled; but oh! there is no fear, for the blood of Jesus has made it holy again." "Ah!" I thought, "there is our poor prayer that we shall offer: it is a holy prayer, for God the Holy Spirit dictates it, but then it is an unholy prayer, for *we* have uttered it, and that which cometh out of unholy lips like ours, must be tainted." "But ah!" I thought again, "it is a prayer that has been sprinkled with blood, and therefore it must be a holy prayer." And as I looked on all the harps of this sanctuary, typical of your praises, and on all the censers of this tabernacle, typical of your prayers, I thought within myself, "There is blood on them all; our holy service this day has been sprinkled with the blood of the great Jesus, and as such it will be accepted through him." Oh! beloved, it is not sweet to reflect that our holy things are now really holy; that through sin is mixed with them all, and we think them defiled, yet they are not, for the blood has washed out every stain; and the service this day is as holy in God's sight as the service of the cherubim, and is acceptable as the psalms of the glorified; we have washed our worship in the blood of the Lamb, and it is accepted through him.

But observe, the second great fact was that *their sins were taken away.* This was set forth by the scapegoat. You read at the 20th,

> "And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the

> live goat: And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited, and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness."

When that was done, you see, the great and wonderful atonement was finished, and the effects of it were set forth to the people. Now, I do not know how many opinions there are about this scapegoat. One of the most strange opinions to me is that which is held by a very large portion of learned men, and I see it is put in the margin of my Bible. Many learned men thing that this word scapegoat, Azazel, was the name of the devil who was worshipped by the heathen in the form of a goat; and they tell us that the first goat was offered to God as an atonement for sin, and the other went away to be tormented by the devil, and was called *Azazel*, just as Jesus was tormented by Satan in the wilderness. To this opinion, it is enough to object that it is difficult to conceive when the other goat was offered to God, this should be sent among demons. Indeed, the opinion is too gross for belief. It needs only to be mentioned to be refuted. Now the first goat is the Lord Jesus Christ making atonement by his death for the sins of the people; the second is sent away into the wilderness, and nothing is heard of it any more for ever; and here a difficulty suggests itself-"Did Jesus Christ go where he was never heard of any more for ever?" That is what we have not to consider al all. The first goat was a type of the atonement; the second is the type of the effect of the atonement. The second goat went away, after the first was slaughtered, carrying the sins of the people on its head, and so it sets froth, as a scapegoat, how our sins are carried away into the depth of the wilderness. There was this year exhibited in the Art Union a fine picture of the scapegoat dying in the wilderness: it was represented with a burning sky above it, its feet sticking in the mire, surrounded by hundreds of skeletons, and there dying a doleful and miserable death. Now, that was just a piece of gratuitous nonsense, for there is nothing the Scripture that warrants it in the least degree. The rabbis tell us that this goat was taken by a man into the wilderness and here tumbled down a high rock to die; but, as an

excellent commentator says, if the man did push it down the rock he more than God ever told him to do. God told him to take a goat and let it go: as to what became of it neither you nor I know anything; that is purposely left. Our Lord Jesus Christ has taken away our sins upon his head, just as the scapegoat, and he is gone from us-that is all: the goat was not a type in its dying, or in regard to its subsequent fate. God has only told us that it should be taken by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. The most correct account seems to be that of one Rabbi Jarchi, who says that they generally took the goat twelve miles out of Jerusalem, and at each mile there was a booth provided where the man who took it might refresh himself till he came to the tenth mile, when there was no more rest for him till he had seen the goat go. When he had come to the last mile he stood and looked at the goat till it was gone, and he could see it no more. Then the people's sins were all gone too. Now, what a fine type that is if you do not enquire any further! But if you will get meddling where God intended you to be in ignorance, you will get nothing by it. This scapegoat was not designed to show us the victim or the sacrifice, but simply what became of the sins. The sins of the people are confessed upon that head; the goat is going; the people lose sight of it; a fit man goes with it; the sins are going from them, and now the man has arrived at his destination; the man sees the goat in the distance skipping here and there overt the mountains, glad of its liberty; it is not quite gone; a little farther, and now it is lost to sight. The man returns, and says he can no longer see it; then the people clap their hands, for their sins are all gone too. Oh! soul; canst thou see thy sins all gone? We may have to take a long journey, and carry our sins with us; but oh! how we watch and watch till they are utterly cast into the depths of the wilderness of forgetfulness, where they shall never be found any more against us for ever. But mark, this goat did not sacrificially make the atonement; it was a type of the sins going away, and so it was a type of the atonement; for you know, since our sins are thereby lost, it is the fruit of the atonement; but the sacrifice is the means of making it. So we have this great and glorious thought before us, that by the death of Christ there was full, free, perfect remission for all those whose sins are laid upon his head. For I would have you notice that on this day all sins were laid on the scapegoat's head-sins of presumption, sins of ignorance, sins of uncleanness, sins little and sins great, sins few and sins many, sins against the law, sins against morality, sins against ceremonies, sins of all kinds

were taken away on that great day of atonement. Sinner, oh, that thou hadst a share in my Master's atonement! Oh! that thou couldst see him slaughtered on the cross! Then mightest thou see him go away leading captivity captive, and taking thy sins where they might ne'er be found.

I have now an interesting fact to tell you, and I am sure you will think it worth mentioning. Turn to Leviticus 25:9, and you will read:

> "Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of *the jubilee* to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall yet make the trumpet sound throughout all your land."

So that one of the effects of the atonement was set forth to us in the fact that when the year of jubilee came, it was not on the first day of the year that it was proclaimed, but "on the tenth day of the seventh month." Ay, methinks, that was the best part of it. The scapegoat is gone, and the sins are gone, and no sooner are they gone than the silver trumpet sounds,

"The year of jubilee is to come,
Return, ye ransomed sinners, home."

On that day sinners go free; on that day our poor mortgaged lands are liberated, and our poor estates which have been forfeited by our spiritual bankruptcy are all returned to us. So when Jesus dies, slaves win their liberty, and lost ones receive spiritual life again; when he dies, heaven, the long lost inheritance is ours. Blessed day! Atonement and jubilee ought to go together. Have you ever had a jubilee, my friends, in your hearts? If you have not, I can tell you it is because you have not had a day of atonement.

One more thought concerning the effects of this great day of atonement, and you will observe that it runs throughout the whole of the chapter-*entrance within the vail*. Only on one day in the year might the high priest enter within the vail, and then it must be for the great purposes of the atonement. Now, beloved, the atonement is finished, and you may enter within the vail: "Having boldness, therefore, to enter into the holiest, let us come with boldness into the throne of the heavenly grace." The vail of the temple is rent by the atonement of Christ, and access to the throne is now ours. O child of God, I know not of any privilege which thou hast, save fellowship with Christ, which is more valuable than access to the throne. Access to the mercy seat is one of the greatest blessings mortals can enjoy.

Precious throne of grace! I never should have had any right to come there if it had not been for the day of atonement; I never should have been able to come there if the throne had not been sprinkled with the blood.

IV. Now we come to notice, in the fourth place, what is our PROPER BEHAVIOUR WHEN WE CONSIDER THE DAY OF ATONEMENT. You read at the 29th verse,

> "And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall *afflict your souls*."

That is one thing that we ought to do when we remember the atonement. Sure, sinner, there is nothing that move thee to repentance like the thought of that great sacrifice of Christ which is necessary to wash away thy guilt. "Law and terrors do but harden." but methinks, the thought that Jesus died is enough to make us melt. It is well, when we hear the name of Calvary, always to shed a tear, for there is nothing that ought to make a sinner weep like the mention of the death of Jesus. On that day "ye shall afflict your souls." And even you, ye Christians, when ye think that your Savior died, should afflict your souls: ye should say,

"Alas! and did my Savior bleed?
And did my Sov'reign die?
Would he devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?"

Drops of grief ought to flow, ay, streams of undissembled sympathy with him; to show our grief for what we did to pierce the Savior. "Afflict your souls," O ye children of Israel, for the day of atonement is come. Weep o'er your Jesus; weep for him that died; weep for him who was murdered by your sins, and "afflict your souls."

Then, better still, we are to "*do not work at all*," as ye find the same verse, 29th. When we consider the atonement, we should rest, and "do no work at all." Rest from your works as God did from his on the great Sabbath of the world; rest from your own righteousness; rest from your toilsome duties: rest in him. "We that believe do enter into rest." As soon as thou seest the atonement finished, say, "it is done, it is done? Now will I serve my God with zeal, but now I will no longer seek to save myself, it is done, it is done for aye."

Then there was another thing which always happened. When the priest had made the atonement, it was usual for him, after he had washed himself, to *come out again in his glorious garments.* When the people saw him they attended him to his house with joy, and they offered burnt offerings of praise on that day: he being thankful that his life was spared, (having been allowed to go into the holy place and to come out of it) and they being thankful that the atonement was accepted; both of them offering burnt offerings as a type that they desired now to be "a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God." Beloved, let us go into our houses with joy; let us go into our gates with praise. The atonement is finished; the High Priest is gone within the vail; salvation is now complete. He has laid aside the linen garments, and he stands before you with his breastplate, and his mitre, and his embroidered vest, in all his glory. Hear how he rejoices over us, for he hath redeemed his people, and ransomed them out of the hands of his enemies. Come, let us go home with the High Priest; let us clap our hands with joy, for he liveth, he liveth; the atonement is accepted, and we are accepted too; the scapegoat is gone, our sins are gone with it. Let us then go to our houses with thankfulness, and let us come up to his gates with praise, for he hath loved his people, he hath blessed his children, and given unto us a day of atonement, and a day of acceptance, and a year of jubilee. Praise ye the Lord? Praise ye the Lord!

LOVE'S COMMENDATION

SERMON NO. 104

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, NOVEMBER 23, 1856,

AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." — Romans 5:8.

I shall have nothing new to tell you; it will be as old as the everlasting hills, and so simple that a child may understand it. Love's commendation. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." God's commendation of himself and of his love is not in words, but in deeds. When the Almighty God would commend his love to poor man, it is not written, "God commendeth his love towards us in an eloquent oration"; it is not written that he commendeth his love by winning professions; but he commendeth his love toward us by an act, by a deed; a surprising deed, the unutterable grace of which eternity itself shall scarce discover. He "commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Let us learn, then upon the threshold of our text, that if we would commend ourselves it must be by deeds, and not by words. Men may talk fairly, and think that thus they shall win esteem; they may order their words aright, and think that so they shall command respect; but let them remember, it is not the wordy oratory of the tongue, but the more powerful eloquence of the hand which wins the affection of "the world's great heart." If thou wouldst commend thyself to thy fellows, go and do — not go and say; if thou wouldst win honor from the excellent, talk not, but act; and if before God thou wouldst show that thy faith is sincere, and thy love to him real: remember, it is no fawning words, uttered either in prayer or praise, but it is the pious deed, the holy act, which is the justification of thy faith, and the proof that it is the faith of God's elect. Doing, not saying — acting, not talking — these are the things which commend a man.

"No big words of ready talkers,
No fine boastings will suffice;
Broken hearts and humble walkers,
These are dear in Jesus' eyes."

Let us imitate God, then, in this. If we would commend our religion to mankind, we cannot do it by mere formalities, but by gracious acts of integrity, charity and forgiveness, which are the proper discoveries of grace within. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." "Let your conversation be such as becometh the gospel of Christ;" and so shall you honor him, and "adorn the doctrine" which you profess.

But now for this mighty deed whereby God commended his love. We think that it is twofold. We believe the apostle has given us a double commendation of love. The first is, "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, Christ died for us"; the second commendation arises from our condition, "In that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

I. The first commendation of love, then, is this — that "CHRIST DIED FOR US"; and as the whole text is double, so this sentence also contains a twofold commendation There is a commendation of love in the person who died — Christ; and then in the act which he performed — "Christ died for us."

First, then, it is the highest commendation of love, that it was CHRIST who died for us. When sinful man erred from his Maker, it was necessary that God should punish his sin. He had sworn by himself, "The soul that sinneth it shall die;" and God — with reverence to his all-holy name be it spoken — could not swerve from what he had said. He had declared on Sinai that he would by no means clear the guilty; but inasmuch as he desired to pardon the offending, it was necessary that some one else should bear the sufferings which the guilty ought to have endured, that so by the vicarious substitution of another, God might be "just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly." Now, the question might have arisen, "Who is he that shall be the scapegoat for man's offence? Who is he that shall bear his transgressions and take away his sins?" If I might be allowed to picture in my imagination (and mark, it is nothing more than imagination), I could almost conceive a parliament in heaven. The angels are assembled; the

question is proposed to them: — ”Cherubim and seraphim, cohorts of the glorified, ye spirits that like flames of fire, swift at my bidding fly; ye happy beings, whom I have created for my honor! here is a question which I condescend to offer for your consideration: — Man has sinned; there is no way for his pardon but by some one suffering and paying blood for blood. Who shall it be?” I can conceive that there was silence throughout the august assembly. Gabriel spoke not: he would have stretched his wings and flapped the ether in a moment, if the deed had been possible; but he felt that he could never bear the guilt of a world upon his shoulders, and, therefore, still he sat. And there the mightiest of the mighty, those who could shake a world if God should will it, sat still, because they felt all powerless to accomplish redemption. I do not conceive that one of them would have ventured to hope that God himself would assume flesh and die. I do not think it could have entered even into angelic thought to conceive that the mighty Maker of the skies should bow his awful head and sink into a grave. I cannot imagine that the brightest and most seraphic of these glorified ones would for an instant have suffered such a thought to abide with him. And when the Son of God, upstarting from his throne, spoke to them and said, “Principalities and powers! I will become flesh, I will veil this Godhead of mine in robes of mortal clay, I will die!” — I think I see the angels for once astonished. They had seen worlds created; they had beheld the earth, like a spark from the incandescent mass of unformed matter, hammered from the anvil of Omnipotence, and smitten off into space; and yet they had not wondered. But on this occasion I conceive that they ceased not to marvel. “What! wilt thou die, O Word! Creator! Master! Infinite! Almighty! wilt thou become a man and die?” “Yes,” saith the Savior, “I will.” And are you not astonished, mortal men? Do you not wonder? What, will you not marvel? The hosts of heaven still are wondering. Though it is many an age since they heard it, they have not yet ceased to admire; and do not you begin to marvel yet? Shall the theme which stirs the marvel of the seraph not move your hearts? That God himself should become man, and then should die for you! “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, Christ should die. Roll that thought over in your mind; ponder it in your meditations; weigh it in your hearts. If ye have right ideas of Godhead, if ye know what Christ is, if ye can conceive him who is the everlasting God, and yet the man — if ye can picture him, the pure, holy, perfect creature, and yet the everlasting

Creator — if ye can conceive of him as the man who was wounded, and yet the God who was exalted for ever — if ye can picture him as the Maker of all worlds, as the Lord of providence, by whom all things exist and consist — if ye can conceive of him now, as robed in splendor, surrounded with the choral symphonies of myriads of angels, then perhaps ye may guess how deep was that stride of condescension, when he stepped from heaven to earth, from earth into the grave, from the grave down, it is said, into the lowest "sheol," that he might make his condescension perfect and complete. "He hath commended his love" to you, my brethren, in that it was Christ, the Son of God, who died for us.

The second part of the first commendation lieth here, that Christ died for us. It was much love when Christ became man for us, when he stripped himself of the glories of his Godhead for awhile, to become an infant of a span long, slumbering in the manger of Bethlehem. It was no little condescension when he divested himself of all his glories, hung his mantle on the sky, gave up his diadem and the pleasures of his throne, and stooped to become flesh. It was moreover, no small love when he lived a holy and a suffering life for us; it was love amazing, when God with feet of flesh did tread the earth, and teach his own creatures how to live, all the while bearing their scoffs and jests with cool unangered endurance. It was no little favor of him that he should condescend to give us a perfect example by his spotless life; but the commendation of love lieth here — not that Christ lived for us, but that Christ died for us.

Come, dear hearers, for a moment weigh those words. "Christ died for us!" Oh, how we love those brave defenders of our nation who but lately died for us in a far-off land! Some of us showed our sympathy to their sons and daughters, their wives and children, by contributing to support them, when the fathers were laid low. We feel that the wounded soldier is a friend to us, and that we are his debtors for ever. We may not love war; we may not, some of us, think it a Christian act to wield the sword; but, nevertheless, I am sure we love the men who sought to defend our country with their lives, and who died in our cause. We would drop a tear over the silent graves of Balaclava, if we were there now. And, if it should ever come to pass that any one of them should be called to die for us, should we not henceforth love them? Do any of us know what is contained in that great word "die?" Can we measure it? Can we tell its depths of suffering or

its heights of agony? “Died for us!” Some of you have seen death; you know how great and dread is its power; you have seen the strong man bowing down, his knees quivering; you have beheld the eyestrings break, and seen the eyeballs glazed in death; you have marked the torture and the agonies which appal men in their dying hours; and you have said, “Ah! it is a solemn and an awful thing to die.” But, my hearers, “Christ died for us.” All that death could mean Christ endured; he yielded up the ghost, he resigned his breath; he became a lifeless corpse, and his body was interred, even like the bodies of the rest that died. “Christ died for us.”

Consider the circumstances which attended his death. It was no common death he died; it was a death of ignominy, for he was put to death by a legal slaughter; it was a death of unutterable pain, for he was crucified; and what more painful fate than to die nailed to a cross? It was a long protracted death, for he hung for hours, with only his hands and his feet pierced — parts which are far away from the seat of life, but in which are situated the most tender nerves, full of sensibility. He suffered a death which for its circumstances still remain unparalleled. It was no speedy blow which crushed the life out of the body, and ended it; but it was a lingering, long, and doleful death, attended with no comforts and no sympathy, but surrounded with scorn and contempt. Picture him! They have hurled him on his back; they have driven nails through his hands and his feet; they have lifted him up. See! They have dashed the cross into its place. It is fixed. And now behold him! Mark his eyes, all full of tears; behold his head, hanging on his breast. Ah! mark him, he seems all silently to say, “I am poured out like water; all my bones are out of joint; I am brought into the dust of death.” Hear him, when he groans, “I thirst.” Above all, listen to him, whilst he cries, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” My words cannot picture him; my thoughts fail to express it. No painter ever accomplished it, nor shall any speaker be able to perform it. Yet I beseech you regard the Royal Sufferer. See him, with the eye of your faith, hanging on the bloody tree. Hear him cry, before he dies, “It is finished!”

“See from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e’er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?”

Oh! how i wish I could stir you! If I should tell you some silly story of a love-sick maid, ye would weep; if I should turn novelist, and give you some sad account of a fabled hero who had died in pain — if it were a fiction, I should have your hearts; but this is a dread and solemn reality, and one with which you are intimately connected, for all this was done for as many of you as sincerely repent of your sins.

"All ye that pass by,
to Jesus draw nigh:
To you is it nothing that Jesus should die?"

Bethink you, that if you are saved, it is something to you, for the blood which trickles from his hands, distils for you. That frame which writhes in torture writhes for you; those knees, so weak with pain, are weak for you; those eyes, dripping with showers of tears, do drop for you. Ah! think of him, then, ye who have faith in him; look to him, and as many of you as have not yet believed, I will pray for you, that ye may now behold him as the expiation of your guilt; as the key which opens heaven to all believers.

Our second point was this: "God commendeth his love towards us," not only because Christ died for us, but that CHRIST DIED FOR US WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS."

Let us for a moment consider what sort of sinners many of us have been, and then we shall see it was marvellous grace that Christ should die for men — not as penitents"but as sinners. Consider how many of us have been continual sinners. We have not sinned once, nor twice, but ten thousand times. Our life, however upright and moral it has been, is stained by a succession of sins. If we have not revolted against God in the outward acts which proclaim the profligate to be a great sinner, yet the thoughts of our heart and the words of our lips are swift witnesses against us that we have continually transgressed. And oh! my brethren, who is there among us who will not likewise confess to sins of act? Who among us has not broken the Sabbath-day? Who among us has not taken God's name in vain? Who of us shall dare to say that we have loved the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength? Have we never by any act whatsoever showed that we have coveted our neighbour's goods? Verily, I know we have; we have broken his commands, and it is well for us to join in that general confession — "We have done those things

which we ought not to have done; we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and there is no health in us." Now, the sweet thought is, that Christ died for us, whilst he knew that we should be continual transgressors. Men, brethren, and fathers, he did not die for you as those who have committed but one fault, but as those who were emphatically "sinners;" sinners of years' standing; some of you sinners with grey heads; sinners who have persevered in a constant course of iniquity. As sinners we are redeemed, and by it we become saints. Does not this commend Christ's love to us, that he should die for sinners, who have dyed themselves with sin as with crimson and with scarlet; great and continual sinners.

Note again, he has died for us, although our sins were aggravated. Oh! there are some of us here who are great sinners — not so much in the acts we have performed, as in the aggravation of our guilt. I reckon that when I sin, I sin worse than many of you, because I sin against better training than many of my hearers received in their youth. Many of you, when you sin, sin against faithful ministers, and against the most earnest warnings. It has been your wont to sit under truthful pastors; you have often been told of your sins. Remember, sirs, when you sin you do not sin so cheap as others: when you sin against the convictions of your consciences, against the solemn monitions of your pastors, you sin more grossly than others do. The Hottentot sinneth not as the Briton doth. He who has been brought up in this land may be openly more righteous, but he may be inwardly more wicked, for he sins against more knowledge. But even for such Christ died — for men who have sinned against the wooings of his love, against the strivings of their consciences, against the invitations of his Word, against the warnings of his providence — even for such Christ died, and therein he commendeth his love towards us, that he died for sinners. My hearer, if thou hast so sinned, do not therefore despair, it may be he will yet make thee rejoice in his redemption.

Reflect again, When we were sinners, we were sinners against the very person who died for us. "Tis strange, 'tis passing strange, 'tis wonderful," that the very Christ against whom we have sinned died for us. If a man should be injured in the street, if a punishment should be demanded of the person who attacked him, it would be passing strange if the injured man should for love's sake bear the penalty, that the other might go free; but

‘twas so with Christ. He had been injured, yet he suffers for the very injury that others did to him. He dies for his enemies — dies for the men that hate and scorn him. There is an old tradition, that the very man who pierced Christ’s side was converted; and I sometimes think that peradventure in heaven we shall meet with those very men who drove the nails into his hands and pierced his side. Love is a mighty thing; it can forgive great transgressors. I know my Master said, “Begin at Jerusalem,” and I think he said that because there lived the men who had crucified him, and he wanted them to be saved. My hearer, hast thou ever blasphemed Christ? Hast thou ever mocked him, and scoffed at his people? Hast thou done all thou couldst to emulate the example of those who spat in his holy face? Dost thou repent of it? Dost thou feel thou needst a Savior? Then I tell thee, in Christ’s name, he is thy Savior; yes, thy Savior, though thus hast insulted him — thy Savior, though thou hast trampled on him — thy Savior though thou hast spoken evil of his people, his day, his Word, and his gospel.

Once more, let us remember, that many of us as sinners have been persons who for a long time have heard this good news, and yet have despised it. Perhaps there is nothing more wonderful in the depravity of man than that it is able to forget the love of Christ. If we were not so sinful as we are, there is not one of us here this morning who would not weep at the thought of the Savior’s love, and I believe there is not a solitary man, woman, or child here, who would not say, “I love thee, O my God! because thou hast done so much for me.” It is the highest proof of our depravity that we do not at once love the Christ who died for us. There is a story told of the convenanters — of one named Patrick Welwood — whose house was surrounded at a time when a minister had for security been hidden there. Claverhouse’s dragoons were at the door, and the minister had fled. The master of the house was summoned, and it was demanded of him, “Where is the minister?” “He is gone; I cannot tell whither, for I know not.” But they were not satisfied with that; they tortured him, and since he could not tell them where he was (for in reality he did not know), they left him, after inflicting upon him the torture of the thumbscrew; and they took his sister, a young girl who was living in the house. I believe she did know where the minister was concealed; but on taking her they asked her, and she said, “No, I can die myself, but I can

never betray God's servant, and never will, as he may help me." They dragged her to the water's edge, and making her kneel down, they determined to put her to death. But the captain said, "Not yet; we will try to frighten her"; and sending a soldier to her, he knelt down, and applying a pistol to her ear, she was bidden to betray the minister or die. The click of the pistol was heard in her ear, but the pistol was not loaded. She slightly shivered, and the question was again asked of her. "Tell us now," said they, "where he is, or we will have your life." "Never, never," said she. A second time the endeavour was made; this time a couple of carabines were discharged, but into the air, in order to terrify her. At last they resolved upon really putting her to death, when Trail, the minister, who was hidden somewhere near, being aroused by the discharge of guns, and seeing the poor girl about to die for him, sprang forward, and cried, "Spare that maiden's blood, and take mine; this poor innocent girl, what hath she done?" The poor girl was dead even there with the fright, but the minister had come prepared to die himself, to save her life. Oh, my friends, I have sometimes thought that her heroic martyrdom was somewhat like the blessed Jesus. He comes to us, and says, "Poor sinner, wilt thou be my friend?" We answer, "No," He comes to us, and says, "Ah, I will make thee so," saith he, "I will die for thee"; and he goes to die on the cross. Oh! methinks I could spring forward and say, "Nay, Lord Jesus, nay, thou must not die for such a worm." Surely such a sacrifice is a price too large to pay for poor sinful worms! And yet, my hearers, to return again to what I have uttered before, you will hear all this, and nine out of ten will retire from this place, and say, "It was an old, old story"; and while ye can drop a tear for aught else, ye will not weep one tear for Jesus, nor sigh one sigh for him, nor will ye afford him even a faint emotion of love. Would it were different! Would to God he would change your hearts, that so ye might be brought to love him.

Further, to illustrate my text, let me remark again, that inasmuch as Christ died for sinners, it is a special commendation of his love for the following reasons: — It is quite certain that God did not consider man's merit when Christ died; in fact, no merit could have deserved the death of Jesus. Though we had been holy as Adam, we could never have deserved a sacrifice like that of Jesus for us. But inasmuch as it says, "He died for sinners," we are thereby taught that God considered our sin, and not our

righteousness. When Christ died, he died for men as black, as wicked, as abominable, not as good and excellent. Christ did not shed his blood for us as saints, but as sinners. He considered us in our loathsomeness, in our low estate and misery — not in that high estate to which grace afterwards elevates us, but in all the decay into which we had fallen by our sin. There could have been no merit in us; and therefore, God commendeth his love by our ill desert.

Again: it is quite certain, because Christ died for us as sinners, that God had no interest to serve by sending his Son to die. How could sinners serve him? Oh! if God had pleased, he might have crushed this nest of rebels, and have made another world all holy. If God had chosen, the moment that man sinned he might have said unto the world, “Thou shalt be burned”; and like as a few years ago astronomers told us that they saw the light of a far-off world burning, myriads of miles away, this world might have been consumed with burning heat, and sin scorched out of its clay. But no. Whilst God could have made another race of beings, and could have either annihilated us, or consigned us to eternal torment, he was pleased to veil himself in flesh, and die for us. Surely then it could not have been from any motive of self-interest. God had nothing to get by man’s salvation. What are the attractions of human voices in Paradise. What are the feeble symphonies which mortal lips can sing on earth, compared with the death of our Lord? He had angels enough. Do they not day without night circle his throne rejoicing? Are not their golden harps sufficient? Is not the orchestra of heaven large enough? Must our glorious Lord give up his blood to buy poor worms, that they may join their little notes with the great swell of a choral universe? Yes, he must; and inasmuch as we are sinners, and could by no possibility repay him for his kindness, “God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

But there is another commendation of love. Christ died for us “unasked.” Christ did not consider me as an awakened heir of heaven, but as a dead, corrupt, lost, and ruined heir of hell. If he had died for me as an awakened heir of heaven, then I could have prayed for him to die, for then I have power to pray, and will to pray; but Christ died for me when I had no power nor will to lift my voice in prayer to him. It was entirely unasked. Where did ye ever hear that man was first in mercy? Did man ask God to

redeem? Nay, rather, it is almost the other way; it is as if God did entreat man to be redeemed. Man never asked that he might be pardoned, but God pardons him, and then turns round and cries, “Return unto me, backsliding children of men, and I will have mercy upon you.” Sinners! if you should go down on your knees, and were for months to cry for mercy, it would be great mercy if mercy should look upon you; but without asking, when we are hardened and rebellious, when we will not turn to Christ, he still comes to die for us. Tell it in heaven; tell it in the lower world! God’s amazing work surpasses thought; for love itself did die for hatred — holiness did crucify itself to save poor sinful men, and unasked for and unsought, like a fountain in the desert sparkling spontaneously with its native waters, Jesus Christ came to die for man, who would not seek his grace. “God commendeth his love towards us.”

And now, my dear hearers, I want to close up, if the Spirit of God will help me, by endeavouring to commend God’s love to you, as much as ever I can, and inviting as many of you as feel your need of a Savior, to lay hold of him and embrace him now as your all-sufficient sacrifice. Sinner! I can commend Christ to thee for this reason: I know that thou needest him. Thou mayest be ignorant of it thyself, but thou dost need him. Thou hast a leprosy within thine heart — thou needest a physician; thou sayest, “I am rich;” but sinner, thou art not — thou art naked, and poor, and miserable. Thou sayest, “I shall stand before God accepted at last”; but, sinner, without Christ thou wilt not; for whosoever believeth not on Christ “hath not life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” Hear that, my dear hearers: “The wrath of God abideth on him.” Oh! that wrath of God! Sinner, thou needest Christ, even though thou dost not think so. Oh, that the Lord would impress this upon thee! Again, a day is coming when thou wilt feel thy need of Christ if thou dost not now. Within a few short years, perhaps months or days, thou wilt lie upon the last bed that shall ever bear thy weight; soon thou shalt be stayed up by soft pillows; thy frame will be weak, and thy soul full of sorrow. Thou mayest live without Christ now, but it will be hard work to die without him. Thou mayest do without this bridge here; but when thou gettest to the river thou wilt think thyself a fool to have laughed at the only bridge which can carry thee safely over. Thou mayest despise Christ now, but what wilt thou do in the swellings of Jordan. Canst thou face death, and not be afraid? Nay, man, thou art

affrighted now if the cholera is in the city; or if some little sickness is about thee thou shakest for fear; what wilt thou do when thou art in the jaws of death, when his bony hand is squeezing thee, and when his dart is in thy vitals? What wilt thou do then without a Savior? Ah! thou wilt want him then. And what wilt thou do when thou hast passed that black stream, when thou findest thyself in the realm of spirits — in that day of judgment, when the thunders shall be loosed, and the wings of the lightning shall be unbound — when tempests shall herald with trumpet voice the arrival of the great Assize? What wilt thou do when thou shalt stand before his bar before whom, in astonishment, the stars shall flee, the mountains quake, and the sea be licked up with tongues of forked flame? What wilt thou do, when from his throne he shall exclaim, "Come hither, sinner," and thou shalt stand there alone, to be judged for every deed done in the body? Thou wilt turn thine head, and say, "Oh! for an advocate!" And he shall look on thee, and say, "I called, and ye refused; I stretched out my hand and no man regarded; I also will now laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh." Ah! what wilt thou do then sinner, when the judgment-seat is set? Oh! there will be weeping — there will be weeping at the judgment-seat of Christ. And what wilt thou do in that day when he shall say, "Depart, ye cursed;" and when the black angel, with a countenance more fierce than lightening, and with a voice louder than ten thousand thunders, shall cry, "Depart!" and smite thee down where lie for ever those accursed spirits, bound in fetters of iron, who, long long ago, were cast into perdition? Say not, I tell thee terrible things: if it be terrible to speak of, how terrible it must be to bear! If you believe not what I say, I shall not wonder if you laugh at me; but as the most of you believe this, I claim your most solemn attention to this subject.

Sirs! Do ye believe there is a hell, and that you are going there? And yet do you still march heedless on? Do you believe that beyond you, when the stream of life is ended, there is a black gulf of misery? and do you still sail downwards to it, quaffing still your glass of happiness, still merry as the live-long day? O stay, poor sinner, stay! Stay! It may be the last moment thou wilt ever have the opportunity to stay in. Therefore stay now I beseech thee. And if thou knowest thyself to be lost and ruined, if the Holy Spirit has humbled thee and made thee feel thy sin, let me tell thee how thou shalt be saved. "He that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ and

is baptized, shall be saved. “He that believeth not,” saith the Scripture “shall be damned.” Do you not like that message? Ought I to have said another word instead of that? If you wish it, I shall not; what God says I will say; far be it from me to alter the messages from the Most High; I will, if he help me, declare his truth without altering. He saith “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.” What is it to believe? To tell you as simply as possible: to believe is to give up trusting in yourself and to trust in Jesus Christ as your Savior. The negro said, you know, “Massa dis here is how I believe — when I see a promise, I do not stand on de promise; but I say, dat promise firm and strong; I fall flat on it; if de promise will not bear me, den it is de promise fault; but I fall flat on it.” Now, that is faith. Christ says, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Faith is to say, “Well, then, sink or swim, that is my only hope; lost or saved, that is my only refuge. I am resolved, for this my last defense,

“If I perish there and die,
At his cross I still will lie’.”

“What!” says one, “no good works?” Good works will come afterwards, but they do not go with it. You must come to Christ, not with your good works, but with your sins; and coming with your sins, he will take them away, and give you good works afterwards. After you believe, there will be good works as the effect of your faith; but if you think faith will be the effect of good works, you are mistaken. It is “believe and live.” Cowper calls them the soul-quickening words, “believe and live.” This is the sum and substance of the gospel.

Now, do any of you say this is not the gospel? I shall ask you one day what it is. Is not this the doctrine Whitfield preached? Pray what else did Luther thunder, when he shook the Vatican? what else was proclaimed by Augustine and Chrysostom, but this one doctrine of salvation in Christ by faith alone? And what did Paul write? Turn ye to his epistles. And what did our Savior himself say, when he left these words on record — ”Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost?” And what did he command his disciples to teach them? To teach them this. The very words I have now repeated to you

were his last commission. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.”

But again you say, “How can I believe that Christ died for me?” Why, thus, — He says he died for sinners: canst thou say thou art a sinner? I do not mean with that fine complimentary phrase which many of you use, when you say, “Yes, I am a sinner;” and if I sit down to ask you, “Did you break that commandment?” “Oh, no,” you will say: “Did you commit that offence?” “Oh, no;” you never did anything wrong. And yet you are sinners. Now that is the sort of sinners I do not think I shall preach to. The sort of sinners I would call to repentance are those whom Christ invited — those who know that they have been guilty, vile, and lost. If thou knowest thy sinnership, so truly Christ died for thee. Remember that striking saying of Luther. Luther says, Satan once came to him and said, “Martin Luther, thou art lost, for thou art a sinner.” Said I to him, “Satan, I thank thee for saying I am a sinner, for inasmuch as thou sayest I am a sinner, I answer thee thus — Christ died for sinners; and if Martin Luther is a sinner, Christ died for him.” Now, canst thou lay hold on that, my hearer? It is not on my authority, but on God’s authority. Go away and rejoice; for if thou be the chief of sinners thou shalt be saved, if thou believest.

“Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
‘Midst flaming worlds in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.
Bold shall I stand in that great day.
For who aught to my charge shall lay?
While, thro’ thy blood, absolv’d I am
From sin’s tremendous curse and shame.”

Sing that, poor soul, and thou hast begun to sing the song of Paradise. May the Lord, the Holy Spirit, apply these simple statements of truth to the salvation of your souls.

TURN OR BURN

SERMON NO. 106

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 7, 1856,

AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

"If he turn not, he will whet his sword;
he hath bent his bow and made it ready." — Psalm 7:12.

"If the sinner turn not, God will whet his sword." So, then, God has a sword, and he will punish man on account of his iniquity. This evil generation hath labored to take away from God the sword of his justice; they have endeavored to prove themselves that God will "clear the guilty," and will by no means "punish iniquity, transgression and sin." Two hundred years ago the predominant strain of the pulpit was one of terror: it was like Mount Sinai, it thundered forth the dreadful wrath of God, and from the lips of a Baxter or a Bunyan, you heard most terrible sermons, full to the brim with warnings of judgment to come. Perhaps some of the Puritanic fathers may have gone too far, and have given too great a prominence to the terrors of the Lord in their ministry: but the age in which we live has sought to forget those terrors altogether, and if we dare to tell men that God will punish them for their sins, it is charged upon us that want to bully them into religion, and if we faithfully and honestly tell our hearers that sin must bring after it certain destruction, it is said that we are attempting to frighten them into goodness. Now we care not what men mockingly impute to us; we feel it our duty, when men sin, to tell them they shall be punished, and so long as the world will not give up its sin we feel we must not cease our warnings. But the cry of the age is, that God is merciful, that God is love. Ay; who said he was not? But remember, it is equally true, God is just, severely and inflexibly just. He were not God, if he were not just; he could not be merciful if he were not just, for punishment of the wicked is demanded by the highest mercy to the rest of mankind. Rest assured, however, that he is just, and that the words I am

about to read you from God's Word are true — "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God;' "God is angry with the wicked every day;" "If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors." Forsooth, because this age is wicked it is to have no hell; and because it is hypocritical it would have but feigned punishment. This doctrine is so prevalent as to make even the ministers of the gospel flinch from their duty in declaring the day of wrath. How few there are who will solemnly tell us of the judgment to come. The preach of God's love and mercy as they ought to do, and as God has commanded them; but of what avail is it to preach mercy unless they preach also the doom of the wicked? And how shall be hope to effect the purpose of preaching unless we warn men that if they "turn not, he will whet his sword?" I fear that in too many places the doctrine of future punishment is rejected and laughed as a fancy and a chimera; but the day will come when it shall be known to be a reality. Ahab scoffed at Micaiah, when he said he should never come home alive; the men of Noah's generation laughed at the foolish old man, (as they thought him), who bid them take heed, for the world should be drowned; but when they were climbing to the tree-tops, and the floods were following them, did they then say that the prophecy was untrue: and when the arrow was sticking in the heart of Ahab, and he said, "Take me from the battle, for I must die;" did he then think that Micaiah spoke an untruth? And so it is now. Ye tell us we speak lies, when we warn you of judgment to come; but in that day when your mischief shall fall on yourselves, and when destruction shall overwhelm you, will you say we were liars then? Will ye then turn round and scoff, and say we spake not the truth? Rather, my hearers, the highest need of honor will then be given to him who was the most faithful in warning men concerning the wrath of God. I have often trembled at the thought that, here I am standing before you, and constantly engaged in the work of the ministry, and what if, when I die, I should be found unfaithful to your souls, how doleful will be our meeting in the world of spirits. It would be a dreadful thing if you were able to say to me in the world to come, "Sir, you flattered us; you did not tell us of the solemnities of eternity; you did not rightly dwell upon the awful wrath of God; you spoke to us feebly and faintly; you were somewhat afraid of us; you knew we could not bear to hear of eternal

torment, and therefore you kept it back and never mentioned it!" Why, methinks you would look me in the face and curse me throughout eternity, if that should be my conduct. But by God's help it never shall be. Come fair or foul, when I die I shall, God helping me, be able to say, "I am clear of the blood of all men." So far as I know God's truth I will endeavor to speak it; and though on my head opprobrium and scandal be poured to a ten-fold greater extent than ever, I'll hail it and welcome it, if I may but be faithful to this unstable generation, faithful to God, and faithful to my own conscience. Let me, then, endeavor — and by God's help I will do it as solemnly and as tenderly as I can — to address such of you as have not yet repented, most affectionately reminding you of your future doom, if you should die impenitent. "If he turn not, he will whet his sword."

In the first place, *what is the turning here meant*? In the second place let us dwell on the *necessity there is for men's turning, otherwise God will punish them*; and then thirdly, let me remind you of the *means whereby men can be turned from the error of their ways, and the weakness and frailty of their nature amended by the power of divine grace*.

I. In the first place, my hearers, let me endeavor to explain to you the NATURE OF THE TURNING HERE MEANT. It says — "if he *turn* not he will whet his sword."

To commence then. The turning here meant is *actual,* not fictitious — not that which stops with promises and vows, but that which deals with the real acts life. Possible one of you will say, this morning "Lo I turn to God; from this forth I will not sin, but I will endeavor to walk in holiness; my vices shall be abandoned, my crimes shall be thrown to the winds, and I will turn unto God with full purpose of heart;" but, mayhap, to-morrow you will have forgotten this; you will weep a tear or two under the preaching of God's word, but by to-morrow every tear shall have been dried, and you will utterly forget that you ever came to the house of God at all. How many of us are like men who see their faces in a glass, and straightway go away and forget what manner of men they are! Ah! my hearer, it is not thy promise of repentance that can save thee; it is not thy vow, it is not thy solemn declaration, it is not the tear that is dried more easily than the dew-drop by the sun, it is not the transient emotion of the heart which constitutes a real turning to God. There must be a true and

actual abandonment of sin, and a turning unto righteousness in real act and deed in every-day life. Do you say you are sorry, and repent, and yet go on from day to day, just as you always went? Will your now bow your heads, and say, “Lord, I repent,” and in a little while commit the same deeds again? If ye do, your repentance is worse than nothing, and shall but make your destruction yet more sure; for he that voweth to his Maker, and doth not pay, hath committed another sin, in that he hath attempted to deceive the Almighty, and lie against the God that made him. Repentance to be true, to be evangelical, must be a repentance which really affects our outward conduct.

In the next place, repentance to be sure *must be entire.* How many will say, “Sir, I will renounce this sin and the other; but there are certain darling lusts which I must keep and hold.” O sirs, In God’s name let me tell you, it is not the giving up of one sin, nor fifty sins, which is true repentance; it is the solemn renunciation of every sin. If thou dost harbour one of those accursed vipers in thy heart, thy repentance is but a sham. If thou dost indulge in but one lust, and dost give up every other, that one lust, like one leak in a ship, will sink thy soul. Think it not sufficient to give up thy outward vices; fancy it not enough to cut off the more corrupt sins of thy life; it is all or none which God demands. “Repent,” says he; and when he bids you repent, he means repent for all thy sins, otherwise he never can accept thy repentance as being real and genuine. The true penitent hates sin in the race, not in the individual — in the mass, not in the particular. He says, “Gild thee as thou wilt, O sin, I abhor thee! Ay, cover thyself with pleasure, make thyself guady, like the snake with its azure scales — I hate thee still, for I know thy venom, and I flee from thee, even when thou comest to me in the most specious garb.” All sin must be given up, or else you shall never have Christ: all transgression must be renounced, or else the gates of heaven must be barred against you. Let us remember, then, that for repentance to be sincere it must be entire repentance.

Again, when God says, “If he turn not, he will whet his sword,” he means *immediate* repentance. Ye say, when we are nearing the last extremity of mortal life, and when we are entering the borders of the thick darkness of futurity, then we will change our ways. But, my dear hearers, do not delude yourselves. It is few who have ever changed after a long life of sin. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?” If so, let

him that is accustomed to do evil learn to do well. Put no faith in the repentances which you promise yourselves on your death beds. There are ten thousand arguments against one, that if you repent not in health, you will never repent in sickness. Too many have promised themselves a quiet season before they leave the world, when they could turn their face to the wall and confess their sins; but how few have found that time of repose! Do not men drop down dead in the streets — ay, even in the house of God? Do they not expire in their business? And when death is gradual, it affords but an ill season for repentance. Many a saint has said on his death-bed, "Oh! if I had now to seek my God, if I had now to cry to him for mercy, what would become of me? These pangs are enough, without the pangs of repentance. It is enough to have the body tortured, without having the soul wrung with remorse." Sinner! God saith, "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, when your fathers tempted me and proved me." When God the Holy Spirit convinces men of sin, they will never talk of delays. You may never have another to repent in. Therefore saith the voice of wisdom, "Repent now." The Jewish rabbis said, "Let every man repent one day before he dies, and since he may die to-morrow, let him take heed to turn from his evil ways to-day." Even so we say; immediate repentance is that which God demands, for he hath never promised thee that thou shalt have any hour to repent in, except the one that thou hast now.

Furthermore; the repentance here described as absolutely necessary is *hearty* repentance. It is not a mock tear; it is not hanging out the ensigns of grief, whilst you are keeping merriment in your hearts. It is not having an illumination within, and shutting up all the windows by a pretended repentance; it is the putting out of the candles of the heart; it is sorrow of soul which is true repentance. A man may renounce every outward sin, and yet not really repent. True repentance is a turning of the heart as well as of the life; it is the giving up of the whole soul to God, to be his for ever and ever; it is a renunciation of the sins of the heart, as well as the crimes of the life. Ah! dear hearers, let none of us fancy that we have repented when we have only a false and fictitious repentance; let none of us take that to be the work of the Spirit which is only the work of poor human nature; let us not dream that we have savingly turned to God, when, perhaps, we have only turned to ourselves. And let us not think it enough

to have turned from one vice to another, or from vice to virtue; let us remember, it must be a turning of the whole soul, so that the old man is made anew in Christ Jesus; otherwise we have not answered the requirement of the text — we have not turned unto God.

And lastly, upon this point, this repentance must be *perpetual.* It is not my turning to God during to-day that will be a proof that I am a true convert; it is forsaking of my sin throughout the entire of my life, until I sleep in the grave. You need not fancy that to be upright for a week will be a proof that you are saved; it is a perpetual abhorrence of evil. The change which God works is neither a transitory nor a superficial change; not a cutting off the top of the weed, but an away of that which is the cause of the defilement. In old times, when rich and generous monarchs came into their cities they made the fountains run milk and wine; but the fountain was not therefore a fountain of milk and wine always; one the morrow it ran with water as before. So you may to-day go home and pretend to pray; you may to-day be serious, to-morrow you may be honest, and the next day you may pretend to be devout, but yet if thou return, as Scripture has it, “like the dog to its vomit, and like the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire,” your repentance shall but sink you deeper into hell, instead of being a proof of divine grace in your hearts.

It is very hard to distinguish between legal repentance and evangelical repentance; however, there are certain marks whereby they may be distinguished, and at the risk of tiring you, we will just notice one or two of them; and may God grant that you may find them in your own souls! Legal repentance is a fear of damning: evangelical repentance is a fear of sinning. Legal repentance makes us fear the wrath of God; evangelical repentance makes us fear the cause of that wrath, even sin. When a man repents with that grace of repentance which God the Spirits works in him, he repents not of the punishment which is to follow the deed, but of the deed itself; and he feels that if there were not pit digged for the wicked, if there were no ever-gnawing worm, and no fire unquenchable, he would still hate sin. It is such repentance as this which every one of you must have, or else you will be lost. It must be a hatred of sin. Do not suppose, that because when you come to die you will be afraid of eternal torment, therefore that will be repentance. Every thief is afraid of the prison; but he will steal to-morrow if you set him free. Most men who have committed

murder tremble at the sight of the gallows-tree, but they would do the deed again could they live. It is not the hatred of the punishment that is repentance; it is the hatred of the deed itself. Do you feel that you have such a repentance as that? If not, these thundering words must be preached to you again, — "If he turn not, he will whet his sword."

But one more hint here. When a man is possessed of true and evangelical repentance — I mean the gospel repentance which saves the soul — he not only hates sin for its own sake, but loathes it so extremely and utterly that he feels that no repentance of his own can avail to wash it out, and he acknowledges that it is only by an act of sovereign grace that his sin can be washed away. Now, if any of you suppose that you repent of your sins, and yet imagine that by a course of holy living you can blot them out — if you suppose that by walking uprightly in future you can obliterate your past transgressions — you have not yet truly repented; for true repentance makes a man feel, that

"Could his zeal no respite know,
Could his tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone,
Christ must save, and Christ alone."

And if it is so killed in thee that thou hatest as a corrupt and abominable thing, and wouldst bury it out of thy sight, but that thou feelest that it will never be entombed, unless Christ shall dig the grave, then thou hast repented of sin. We must humbly confess that we deserve God's wrath, and that we cannot avert it by any deeds of our own, and we must put our trust solely and entirely in the blood and merits of Jesus Christ. If ye have not so repented, again we exclaim in the words of David, "If you turn not, he will whet his sword."

II. And now the second point; it is a yet more terrible one to dwell upon, and if I consulted my own feelings I should not mention it; but we must not consider our feelings in the work of ministry, any more than we should if we were physicians of men's bodies. We must sometimes use the knife, where we feel that mortification would ensue without it. We must frequently make sharp gashes into men's consciences, in the hope that the Holy Spirit will bring them to life. We assert, then, that there is a NECESSITY that God should whet his sword and punish men, if they will

not turn. Earnest Baxter used to say, “Sinner! turn or burn; it is thine only alternative: TURN OR BURN!” And it is so. We think we can show you why men must turn, or else they must burn.

1. First we cannot suppose the God of the Bible could suffer sin to be unpunished. Some may suppose it; they may dream their intellects into a state of intoxication, so as to suppose a God apart from justice; but no man whose reason is sound and whose mind is in a healthy condition can imagine a God without justice. Ye cannot suppose a king without it to be a good king; ye cannot dream of a good government that should exist without justice, much less of God, the Judge and King of all the earth, without justice in his bosom. To suppose him all love, and no justice, were to undeify him, and make him no longer God; he were not capable of ruling this world if he had not justice in his heart. There is in man a natural perception of the fact, that if there be a God, he must be just; and I can scarcely imagine that ye can believe in a God without believing also in the punishment of sin. It were difficult to suppose him elevated high above his creatures, beholding their disobedience, and yet looking with the same serenity upon the good and upon the evil; you cannot suppose him awarding the same need of praise to the wicked and to the righteous. The idea of God, suppose justice; and it is but to say justice when you say God.

2. But to imagine that there shall be no punishment for sin, and that man can be saved without repentance, is to fly in the face of all the Scriptures. What! Are the records of divine history nothing? And if they be anything must not God have mightily changed, if he doth not now punish sin? What! did he once blast Eden, and drive our parents out of that happy garden on account of a little theft, as man would style it? Did he drown a world with water, and inundate creation with the floods which he had buried in the bowels of this earth? And will he not punish sin? Let the burning hail which fell on Sodom tell you that God is just; let the open mouth of the earth which swallowed up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, warn you that he will not spare the guilty: let the mighty works of God which he did in the Red Sea, the wonders which he wrought on Pharaoh, and the miraculous destruction which he brought on Sennacherib, tell you that God is just. And it were perhaps out of place for me in the same argument to mention the judgments of God even in our age; but have there never been

such? This world is not the dungeon where God punishes sin, but still there are a few instances in which we cannot but believe that he actually did avenge it. I am no believer that every accident is a judgment; I am far from believing that the destruction of men and women in a theater is a punishment upon them for their sin, since the same thing has occurred in divine service to our perpetual sorrow. I believe judgment is reserved for the next world; I could not account for providence if I believed that God punishes here. “Those men upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you nay.” It has injured religion for men to take up every providence, and say, for instance, that because a boat was upset on the Sabbath-day it was a judgment on the persons that were in it. We assuredly believe that it was sinful to spend the day in pleasure, but we deny that it was a punishment from God. God usually reserves his punishment for a future state; but yet, we say, there have been a few instances in which we cannot but believe that men and women have been by Providence in this life punished for their guilt. I remember one which I scarcely dare relate to you. I saw the wretched creature myself. He had dared to imprecate on his head the most awful curses that man could utter. In his rage and fury he said he wished his head were twisted on one side, that his eyes were put out, and that his jaws were made fast: but a moment afterwards the lash of his whip — with which he had been cruelly treating his horse — entered his eye, brought on first inflammation, and then lock-jaw, and when I saw him he was just in the very position in which he had asked to be placed, for his head was twisted round, his eye-sight was gone, and he could not speak except through his closed teeth. You will remember a similar instance happening at Devizes, where a woman declared that she had paid her part of the price of a sack of meal, when she had it in her hand, and immediately dropped down dead on the spot. Some of these may have been singular coincidences; but I am not so credulous as to suppose that they were brought about by chance. I think the will of the Lord was in it. I believe they were some faint intimations that God was just, and that although the full shower of his wrath does not fall on men in this life, he does pour a drop or two on them, to let us see how he will one day chasten the world for its iniquity.

3. But why need I go far to bring arguments to bear on you, my hearers? Your own consciences tell you that God must punish sin. You may laugh at me, and say that you have no such *belief*. I do not say you have but I say that your conscience tells you so, and conscience has more power over men than what they think to be their belief. As John Bunyan said, Mr. Conscience had a very loud voice, and though Mr. Understanding shut himself up in a dark room, where he could not see, yet he used to thunder out so mightily in the streets, that Mr. Understanding used to shake in his house through what Mr. Conscience said. And it is often so. You say in your understanding, I cannot believe God will punish sin;" but you know he will. You would not like to confess your secret fears, because that were to give up what you have so often most bravely asserted. But because you assert it with such boast and bombast, imagine you do not believe it, for if you did, you would not need look so big while saying it. I know that when you are dying you will believe in a hell. Conscience makes cowards of us all, and makes us believe, even when we say we do not, that God must punish sin.

Let me tell you a story; I have told it before, but it is a striking one, and sets out in a true light how easily men will be brought in times of danger to believe in God, and a God of justice too, though they have denied him before. In the backwoods of Canada there resided a good minister, who one evening, went out to meditate, as Isaac did, in the fields. He soon found himself on the borders of a forest, which he entered, and walked along a track which had been trodden before him; musing, musing still, until at last the shadows of twilight gathered around him, and he began to think how he should spend a night in the forest. He trembled at the idea of remaining there, with the poor shelter of a tree into which he would be compelled to climb. On a sudden he saw a light in the distance among the trees, and imagining that it might be from the window of some cottage where he could find a hospitable retreat, he hastened to it, and to his surprise, saw a space cleared and trees laid down to make a platform, and upon it a speaker addressing a multitude. He thought to himself, "I have stumbled on a company of people, who in this dark forest have assembled to worship God, and some minister is preaching to them, at this late hour of the evening, concerning the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;" but to his surprise and horror, when he came nearer, he found a young man

declaiming against God, daring the Almighty to do his worst upon him, speaking terrible things in wrath against the justice of the Most High, and venturing most bold and awful assertions concerning his own disbelief in a future state. It was altogether a singular scene; it was lighted up by pine-knots, which cast a glare here and there, while the thick darkness in other places still reigned. The people were intent on listening to the orator, and when he sat down thunders of applause were given to him; each one seeming to emulate the other in his praise. Thought the minister, "I must not let this pass; I must rise and speak; the honor of my God, and his cause demands it." But he feared to speak, for he knew not what to say, having come there suddenly; but he would have ventured, had not something else occurred. A man of middle age, hale and strong, rose, and leaning on his staff he said, "My friends, I have a word to speak to you to-night. I am not about to refute any of the arguments of the orator; I shall not criticise his style; I shall say nothing concerning what I believe to be the blasphemies he has uttered; but I shall simply relate to you a fact, and after I have done that you shall draw your own conclusions. Yesterday, I walked by the side of yonder river; I saw on its floods a young man in a boat. The boat was unmanageable; it was going fast towards the rapids; he could not use the oars, and I saw that he was not capable of bringing the boat to the shore. I saw that young man wring his hands in agony; by-and-bye he gave up the attempt to save his life, kneeled down and cried with desperate earnestness, "O God! save my soul! If my body cannot be saved, save my soul.' I heard him confess that he had been a blasphemer, I heard him vow that if his life were spared he would never be such again; I heard him implore the mercy of heaven for Jesus Christ's sake, and earnestly plead that he might be washed in his blood. These arms saved that young man from the flood; I plunged in, brought the boat to shore, and saved his life. That same young man has just now addressed you, and cursed his Maker. What say you to this, sirs!" The speaker sat down. You may guess what a shadow ran through the young man himself, and how the audience in one moment changed their notes, and saw that after all, whilst it was a fine thing to brag and bravado against Almighty God on dry land, and when danger was distant, it was not quite so grand to think ill of him when near the verge of the grave. We believe there is enough conscience in every man to convince him that God must punish him for his sin; therefore

we think that our text will wake an echo in every heart — "If he turn not, he will whet his sword."

I am tired of this terrible work of endeavoring to show you that God must punish sin; let me just utter a few of the declarations of his Holy Word, and then let me tell you how repentance is to be *obtained.* O sirs! ye may think that the fire of hell is indeed a fiction, and that the flames of the nethermost pit are put popish dreams; but if ye are believers in the Bible ye must believe that it cannot be so. Did not our Master say, "Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." You say it is metaphorical fire. But what meant he by this — "He is able to cast both *body* and soul into hell?" Is it not written, that there is reserved for the devil and his angels fearful torment? and do you not know that our Master said, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment;" "Depart, ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?" "Yes," you say, "but it is not philosophical to believe that there is a hell; it does not consort with reason to believe there is." However, I should like to act as if there were, even if there is no such place; for as the poor and pious man once said, "Sir, I like to have two strings to my bow. If there should be no hell I shall be as well off as you will; but if there should, it will go hard with you." But why need I say "if?" You know there is. No man has been born and educated in this land without having his conscience so far enlightened as to know that to be a truth. All I need to do is to press upon your anxious consideration this thought: — Do you feel that you are a fit subject for heaven now? Do you feel that God has changed your heart and renewed your nature? If not, I beseech you lay hold of this thought, that unless you be renewed all that can be dreadful in the torments of the future world must inevitably be yours. Dear hearer, apply it to thyself, not to thy fellow-men, but to thine own conscience, and may God Almighty make use of it to bring thee to repentance.

III. Now briefly what are the MEANS of repentance? Most seriously I say, I do not believe any man can repent with evangelical repentance of himself. You ask me then to what purpose is the sermon I have endeavored to preach, proving the necessity of repentance? Allow me to make the sermon of some purpose, under God, by its conclusion. Sinner! thou art so desperately set on sin, that I have no hope thou wilt ever turn from it of thyself. But listen! He who died on Calvary is exalted on high "to give

repentance and remission of sin." Dost thou this morning feel that thou art a sinner? If so, ask of Christ to give thee repentance, for he can work repentance in thine heart by his Spirit, though thou canst not work it there thyself. Is thy heart like iron? he can put it into the furnace of his love and make it melt. Is thy soul like the nether millstone? His grace is able to dissolve it like the ice is melted before the sun. He can make thee repent, though thou canst not make thyself repent. If thou feelest thy need of repentance, I will not now say to thee "repent," for I believe there are certain acts that must precede a sense of repentance. I should advise you to go to your houses, and if you feel that you have sinned, and yet cannot sufficiently repent of your transgressions, bow your knees before God and confess your sins: tell him you cannot repent as you would; tell him your heart is hard; tell him it is as cold as ice. You *can* do that if God has made you feel your need of a Savior. Then if it should be laid to your heart to endeavor to seek after repentance, I will tell you the best way to find it. Spend an hour first in endeavoring to remember thy sins; and when conviction has gotten a firm hold on thee, then spend another hour — where? At Calvary, my hearer. Sit down and read that chapter which contains the history and mystery of the God that loved and died; sit down and think thou seest that glorious Man, with blood dropping from his hands, and his feet gushing rivers of gore; and if that does not make thee repent, with the help of God's Spirit, then I know of nothing that can. An old divine says, "If you feel you do not love God, love him till you feel you do: if you think you cannot believe, believe till you feel you believe." Many a man says he cannot repent, while he is repenting. Keep on with that repentance, till you feel you have repented. Only acknowledge thy transgressions; confess thy guiltiness; own that he were just if he should destroy thee; and say this, solemnly —

My faith doth lay its hand
On that dear head of thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.

Oh! what would I give if one of my hearers should be blessed by God to go home and repent! If I had worlds to buy one of your souls, I would readily give them, if I might but bring one of you to Christ. I shall never forget the hour when I hope God's mercy first looked on me. It was in a place very different from this, amongst a despised people, in an

insignificant little chapel, of a peculiar sect. I went there bowed down with guilt; laden with transgression. The minister walked up the pulpit stairs, opened his Bible, and read that precious text, “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and beside me there is none else;” and, as I thought, fixing his eyes on me, before he began to preach to others, he said, “Young man! look! look! look! You are one of the ends of the earth; you feel you are; you know your need of a Savior; you are trembling because you think he will never save you. He says this morning, ‘Look!’“ Oh, how my soul was shaken within me then! what! thought I, does that man know me, and all about me? He seemed as if he did. And it made me “look!” Well, I thought, lost or saved, I will try; sink or swim, I will run the risk of it; and in that moment I hope by his grace I looked upon Jesus, and though desponding, downcast, and ready to despair, and feeling that I could rather die than live as I had lived, at that very moment it seemed as if a young heaven had had its birth within my conscience. I went home, no more cast down; those about me, noticing the change, asked me why I was so glad, and I told them that I had believed in Jesus, and that it was written, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Oh! if one such should be here this morning! Where art thou, thou chief of sinners, thou vilest of the vile? My dear hearer, thou hast never been in the house of God perhaps these last twenty years; but here thou art, covered with thy sins, the blackest and vilest of all! Hear God’s Word. “Come, now let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool, and though they be red like crimson, they shall be white than snow.” And all this for Jesus’ sake; all this for his blood’s sake! “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved;” for his word and mandate is, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.”

SINNER! TURN OR BURN!

FAITH

SERMON NO. 107

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 14, 1856,

AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

"Without faith it is impossible to please God." — Hebrews 11:6.

THE OLD Assembly's Catechism asks, "What is the chief end of man?" and its answer is, "To glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever." The answer is exceedingly correct; but it might have been equally truthful if it had been shorter. The chief end of man is "to please God;" for in so doing — we need not say it, because it is an undoubted fact — in so doing he will please himself. The chief end of man, we believe, in this life and in the next, is to please God his Maker. If any man pleases God, he does that which conduces most to his own temporal and eternal welfare. Man cannot please God without bringing to himself a great amount of happiness; for if any man pleases God, it is because God accepts him as his son, gives him the blessings of adoption, pours upon him the bounties of his grace, makes him a blessed man in this life, and insures him a crown of everlasting life, which he shall wear, and which shall shine with unfading lustre when the wreaths of earth's glory have all been melted away; while, on the other hand, if a man does not please God, he inevitably brings upon himself sorrow and suffering in this life; he puts a worm and a rottenness in the core of all his joys; he fills his death-pillow with thorns, and he supplies the eternal fire with faggots of flame which shall for ever consume him. He that pleases God, is, through Divine grace, journeying onward to the ultimate reward of all those that love and fear God; but he who is ill-pleasing to God, must, for Scripture has declared it, be banished from the presence of God, and consequently from the enjoyment of happiness. If then, we be right in saying that to please God is to be happy, the one important question is, how can I please God? And there is something very solemn in the utterance of our text: "Without faith it is impossible to

please God." That is to say, do what you may, strive as earnestly as you can, live as excellently as you please, make what sacrifices you choose, be as eminent as you can for everything that is lovely and of good repute, yet none of these things can be pleasing to God unless they be mixed with faith. As the Lord said to the Jews, "With all your sacrifices you must offer salt;" so he says to us, "With all your doings you must bring faith, or else "without faith it is impossible to please God."

This is an old law; it is as old as the first man. No sooner were Cain and Abel born into this world, and no sooner had they attained to manhood, than God gave a practical proclamation of this law, that "without faith it is impossible to please him." Cain and Abel, one bright day, erected an altar side by side with each other. Cain fetched of the fruits of the trees and of the abundance of the soil, and placed them upon his altar; Abel brought of the firstlings of the flock, and laid it upon his altar. It was to be decided which God would accept. Cain had brought his best, but he brought it without faith; Abel brought his sacrifice, but he brought it with faith in Christ. Now, then, which shall best succeed? The offerings are equal in value; so far as they themselves are concerned that are alike good. Upon which will the heavenly fire descend? Which will the Lord God consume with the fire of his pleasure? Oh! I see Abel's offering burning, and Cain's countenance has fallen, for unto Abel and unto his offering the Lord had respect, but unto Cain and his offering the Lord had no respect. It shall be the same till the last man shall be gathered into heaven. There shall never be an acceptable offering which has not been seasoned with faith. Good though it may be, as apparently good in itself as that which has faith, yet, unless faith be with it, God never can, and never will, accept it, for he here declares, "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

I shall endeavor to pack my thoughts closely this morning, and be as brief as I can, consistently with a full explanation of the theme. I shall first have an exposition of what is faith; secondly, I shall have an argument, that without faith it is impossible to be saved; and thirdly, I shall ask a question — Have you that faith which pleases God? We shall have, then, an exposition, an argument, and a question.

I. First, for the EXPOSITION. What is faith?

The old writers, who are by far the most sensible — for you will notice that the books that were written about two hundred years ago, by the old Puritans, have more sense in one line than there is in a page of our new books, and more in a page than there is in a whole volume of our modern divinity — the old writers tell you, that faith is made up of three things: first knowledge, then assent, and then what they call affiance, or the laying hold of the knowledge to which we give assent, and making it our own by trusting in it.

1. Let us begin, then, at the beginning. The first thing in faith is knowledge. A man cannot believe what he does not know. That is a clear, self-evident axiom. If I have never heard of a thing in all my life, and do not know it, I cannot believe it. And yet there are some persons who have a faith like that of the fuller, who when he was asked what he believed, said, “I believe what the Church believes.” “What does the Church believe?” “The Church believes what I believe.” “And pray what do you and the Church believe?” “Why we both believe the same thing.” Now this man believed nothing, except that the Church was right, but in what he could not tell. It is idle for a man to say, “I am a believer,” and yet not to know what he believes; but yet I have seen some persons in this position. A violent sermon has been preached, which has stirred up their blood; the minister has cried, “Believe! Believe! Believe!” and the people on a sudden have got it into their heads that they were believers, and have walked out of their place of worship and said, “I am a believer.” And if they were asked, “Pray what do you believe?” they could not give a reason for the hope that was in them. They believe they intend to go to chapel next Sunday; they intend to join that class of people; they intend to be very violent in their singing and very wonderful in their rant; therefore they believe they shall be saved; but what they believe they cannot tell. Now, I hold no man’s faith to be sure faith unless he knows what he believes. If he says, “I believe,” and does not know what he believes, how can that be true faith? The apostle has said, “How can they believe on him of whom they have not heard? and how can they hear without a preacher? and how can they preach except they be sent?” It is necessary, then, to true faith, that a man should know something of the Bible. Believe me, this is an age when the Bible is not so much thought of as it used to be. Some hundred years ago the world was covered with bigotry, cruelty, and superstition. We always run to

extremes, and we have just gone to the other extreme now. It was then said, “One faith is right, down with all others by the rack and by the sword.” now it is said, “However contradictory our creeds may be, they are all right.” If we did but use our common sense we should know that it is not so. But some reply, “Such-and-such a doctrine need not be preached and need not be believed.”’ Then, sir, if it need not be preached, it need not be revealed. You impugn the wisdom of God, when you say a doctrine is unnecessary; for you do as much as say that God has revealed something which was not necessary, and he would be as unwise to do more than was necessary, as if he had done less than was necessary. We believe that every doctrine of God’s Word ought to be studied by men, and that their faith should lay hold of the whole matter of the Sacred Scriptures, and more especially upon all that part of Scripture which concerns the person of our all-blessed Redeemer. There must be some degree of knowledge before there can be faith. “Search the Scriptures,” then, “for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Christ;” and by searching and reading cometh knowledge, and by knowledge cometh faith, and through faith cometh salvation.

2. But a man may know a thing, and yet not have faith. I may know a thing, and yet not believe it. Therefore assent must go with faith: that is to say, what we know we must also agree unto, as being most certainly the verity of God. Now, in order to faith, it is necessary that I should not only read the Scriptures and understand them, but that I should receive them in my soul as being the very truth of the living God, and I should devoutly with my whole heart receive the whole of the Scripture as being inspired of the Most High, and the whole of the doctrine which he requires me to believe to my salvation. You are not allowed to halve the Scriptures, and to believe what you please; you are not allowed to believe the Scripture with a half-heartedness, for if you do this wilfully, you have not the faith which looks alone to Christ. True faith gives its full assent to the Scriptures; it takes a page and says, “No matter what is in the page, I believe it;” it turns over the next chapter ands says, “Herein are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable do wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their destruction; but hard though it be, I believe it.” It sees the Trinity; it cannot understand the Trinity in Unity, but it believes it. It sees an atoning sacrifice; there is something difficult in

the thought, but it believes it; and whatever it be which it sees in revelation, it devoutly puts its lips to the book, and says, “I love it all; I give my full, free and hearty assent to every word of it, whether it be the threatening or the promise, the proverb, the precept, or the blessing. I believe that since it is all the Word of God it is all most assuredly true.” Whosoever would be saved must know the Scriptures, and must give full assent unto them.

3. But a man may have all this, and yet not possess true faith; for the chief part of faith lies in the last head, namely, in an affiance to the truth; not the believing it merely, but the taking hold of it as being ours, and in the resting on it for salvation. Recumbency on the truth was the word which the old preachers used. You will understand that word. Leaning on it; saying, “This is truth, I trust my salvation on it.” Now, true faith, in its very essence rests in this — a leaning upon Christ. It will not save me to know that Christ is a Savior; but it will save me to trust him to be my Savior. I shall not be delivered from the wrath to come by believing that his atonement is sufficient, but I shall be saved by making that atonement my trust, my refuge, and my all. The pith, the essence of faith lies in this — a casting one-self on the promise. It is not the lifebuoy on board the ship that saves the man when he is drowning, nor is it his belief that it is an excellent and successful invention. No! He must have it around his loins, or his hand upon it, or else he will sink. To use an old and hackneyed illustration: suppose a fire in the upper room of a house, and the people gathered in the street. A child is in the upper story: how is he to escape? He cannot leap down — that were to be dashed to pieces. A strong man comes beneath, and cries, “Drop into my arms.” It is a part of faith to know that the man is there; it is another part of faith to believe that the man is strong; but the essence of faith lies in the dropping down into the man’s arms. That is the proof of faith, and the real pith and essence of it. So, sinner, thou art to know that Christ died for sin; thou art also to understand that Christ is able to save, and thou art to believe that; but thou art not saved, unless in addition to that, thou puttest thy trust in him to be thy Savior, and to be thine for ever. As Hart says in his hymn, which really expresses the gospel —

"Venture on him, venture wholly;
Let no other trust intrude;
None but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good."

This is the faith which saves; and however unholy may have been your lives up to this hour, this faith, if given to you at this moment, will blot out all your sins, will change your nature, make you a new man in Christ Jesus, lead you to live a holy life, and make your eternal salvation as secure as if an angel should take you on his bright wings this morning, and carry you immediately to heaven. Have you that faith? That is the one all-important question; for while with faith men are saved, without it men are damned. As Brooks hath said in one of his admirable works, "He that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ, shall be saved, be his sins never so many; but he that believeth not in the Lord Jesus must be damned, be his sins never so few." Hast thou faith? For the text declares, "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

II. And now we come to the ARGUMENT, — why, without faith, we cannot be saved.

Now there are some gentlemen present who are saying, "Now we shall see whether Mr. Spurgeon has any logic in him." No, you won't, sirs, because I never pretended to exercise it. I hope I have the logic which can appeal to men's hearts; but I am not very prone to use the less powerful logic of the head, when I can win the heart in another manner. But if it were needful, I should not be afraid to prove that I know more of logic and of many other things than the little men who undertake to censure me. It were well if they knew how to hold their tongues, which is at least a fine part of rhetoric. My argument shall be such as I trust will appeal to the heart and conscience, although it may not exactly please those who are always so fond of syllogistic demonstration —

"Who could a hair divide
Between the west and north-west side."

1. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." And I gather it from the fact that there never has been the case of a man recorded in Scripture who did please God without faith. The 11th chapter of Hebrews is the chapter of the men who pleased God. Listen to their names: "By faith Abel offered

unto God a more excellent sacrifice;" "By faith Enoch was translated;" "By faith Noah built an ark;" "By faith Abraham went out into a place that he should afterwards receive;" "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise;" "By faith Sarah bare Isaac;" "By faith Abraham offered up Isaac;" "By faith Moses gave up the wealth of Egypt;" "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob;" "By faith Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph;" "By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel;" "By faith the Red Sea was dried up;" "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down;" "By faith the harlot Rahab was saved;" "And what more shall I say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae, of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets." But all these were men of faith. Others mentioned in Scripture, have done something; but God did not accept them. Men have humbled themselves, and yet God has not saved them. Ahab did, and yet his sins were never forgiven. Men have repented, and yet have not been saved, because their's was the wrong repentance. Juda repented, and went and hanged himself, and was not saved. Men have confessed their sins, and have not been saved. Saul did it. He said to David, "I have sinned against thee, my son David;" and yet he went on as he did before. Multitudes have confessed the name of Christ, and have done many marvellous things, and yet they have never been pleasing to God, from this simple reason, that they had not faith. And if there be not one mentioned in Scripture, which is the history of some thousand years, it is not likely that in the other two thousand years of the world's history there would have been one, when there was not one during the first four thousand.

2. But the next argument is, faith is the stooping grace, and nothing can make a man stoop without faith. Now, unless man does stoop, his sacrifice cannot be accepted. The angels know this. When they praise God, they do it veiling their faces with their wings. The redeemed know it. When they praise God, they cast their crowns before his feet. Now, a man who has not faith proves that he cannot stoop; for he has not faith for this reason, because he is too proud to believe. He declares he will not yield his intellect, he will not become a child and believe meekly what God tells him to believe. He is too proud, and he cannot enter heaven, because the door of heaven is so low that no one can enter in by it unless they will bow their heads. There never was a man who could walk into salvation erect.

We must go to Christ on our bended knees; for though he is a door big enough for the greatest sinner to come in, he is a door so low that men must stoop if they would be saved. Therefore it is that faith is necessary, because a want of faith is certain evidence of absence of humility.

3. But now for other reasons. Faith is necessary to salvation, because we are told in Scripture that works cannot save. To tell a very familiar story, and even the poorest may not misunderstand what I say: a minister was one day going to preach. He climbed a hill on his road. Beneath him lay the villages, sleeping in their beauty, with the corn-fields motionless in the sunshine; but he did not look at them, for his attention was arrested by a woman standing at her door, and who, upon seeing him, came up to him with the greatest anxiety, and said, "O sir, have you any keys about you? I have broken the key of my drawers, and there are some things I must get directly." Said he, "I have no keys." She was disappointed, expecting that everyone would have some keys. "But suppose," he said, "I had some keys, they might not fit your lock, and therefore you could not get the articles you want. But do not distress yourself, wait till some one else comes up. But," said he, wishing to improve the occasion, "have you ever heard of the key of heaven?" "Ah! yes," she said, "I have lived long enough, and I have gone to Church long enough, to know that if we work hard and get our bread by the sweat of our brow, and act well towards our neighbors, and behave, as the catechism says, lowly and reverently to all our betters, and if we do our duty in that station of life in which it has pleased God to place us, and say our prayers regularly, we shall be saved." "Ah!" said he, "my good woman, that is a broken key, for you have broken the commandments, you have not fulfilled all your duties. It is a good key, but you have broken it." "Pray, sir," said she, believing that he understood the matter, and looking frightened, "What have I left out?" "Why," said he, the key of heaven is at his girdle; he openeth, and no man shutteth; he shutteth, and no man openeth?" And explaining it more fully to her, he said, "It is Christ, and Christ alone, that can open heaven to you, and not your good works." "What, minister," said she, "are our good works useless then?" "No," said he, "not after faith. If you believe first, you may have as many good works as you please; but if you believe, you will never trust in them, for if you trust in them you have spoilt them, and they are not good works any longer. Have as many good works as you

please, still put your trust wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ, for if you do not, your key will never unlock heaven's gate." So then, my hearers, we must have true faith, because the old key of works is so broken by us all, that we never shall enter Paradise by it. If any of you pretend that you have no sins, to be very plain with you, you deceive yourselves, and the truth is not in you. If you conceive that by your good works you shall enter heaven, never was there a more fell delusion, and you shall find at the last great day, that your hopes were worthless, and that, like sear leaves from the autumn trees, your noblest doings shall be blown away, or kindled into a flame within you yourselves must suffer for ever. Take heed of your good works; get them after faith, but remember, the way to be saved is simply to believe in Jesus Christ.

4. Again: without faith it is impossible to be saved, and to please God, because without faith there is no union to Christ. Now, union to Christ, is indispensable to our salvation. If I come before God's throne with my prayers, I shall never get them answered, unless I bring Christ with me. The Molossians of old, when they could not get a favor from their king, adopted a singular expedient; they took the king's only son in their arms, and falling on their knees cried, "O king, for thy son's sake, grant our request." He smiled and said, "I deny nothing to those who plead my son's name." It is so with God. He will deny nothing to them man who comes, having Christ at his elbow; but if he comes alone he must be cast away. Union to Christ is, after all, the great point in salvation. Let me tell you a story to illustrate this: the stupendous falls of Niagara have been spoken of in every part of the world; but while they are marvellous to hear of, and wonderful as a spectacle, they have been very destructive to human life, when by accident any have been carried down the cataract. Some years ago, two men, a bargeman and a collier, were in a boat, and found themselves unable to manage it, it being carried so swiftly down the current that they must both inevitably be borne down and dashed to pieces. Persons on the shore saw them, but were unable to do much for their rescue. At last, however, one man was saved by floating a rope to him, which he grasped. The same instant that the rope came into his hand a log floated by the other man. The thoughtless and confused bargeman instead of seizing the rope laid hold on the log. It was a fatal mistake; they were both in imminent peril, but the one was drawn to shore because he

had a connection with the people on the land, whilst the other, clinging to the log, was borne irresistibly along, and never heard of afterwards. Do you not see that here is a practical illustration? Faith is a connection with Christ. Christ is on the shore, so to speak, holding the rope of faith, and if we lay hold of it with the hand of our confidence, he pulls us to shore; but our good works having no connection with Christ, are drifted along down the gulf of fell despair. Grapple them as tightly as we may, even with hooks of steel, they cannot avail us in the least degree. You will see, I am sure, what I wish to show to you. Some object to anecdotes; I shall use them till they have done objecting to them. The truth is never more powerfully set forth to men than by telling them, as Christ did, a story of a certain man with two sons, or a certain householder who went a journey, divided his substance, and gave to some ten talents, to another one.

Faith, then, is an union with Christ. Take care you have it; for if not, cling to your works, and there you go floating down the stream! Cling to your works, and there you go dashing down the gulf! Lost because your works have no hold on Christ and no connection with the blessed Redeemer! But thou, poor sinner, with all thy sin about thee, if the rope is round thy loins, and Christ has hold of it, fear not!

"His honor is engaged to save
The meanest of his sheep;
All that his heavenly Father gave
His hands securely keep."

5. Just one more argument, and then I have done with it. "Without faith it is impossible to please God," because it is impossible to persevere in holiness without faith. What a multitude of fair-weather Christians we have in this age! Many Christians resemble the nautilus, which in fine smooth weather swims on the surface of the sea, in a splendid little squadron, like the mighty ships; but the moment the first breath of wind ruffles the waves, they take in their sails and sink into the depths. Many Christians are the same. In good company, in evangelical drawing-rooms, in pious parlors, in chapels and vestries, they are tremendously religious; but if they are exposed to a little ridicule, if some should smile at them and call them methodist, or presbyterian, or some name of reproach, it is all over with their religion till the next fine day. Then when it is fine weather, and religion will answer their purpose, up go the sails again, and they are as

pious as before. Believe me, that kind of religion is worse than irreligion. I do like a man to be thoroughly what he is — a downright man; and if a man does not love God, do not let him say he does; but if he be a true Christian, a follower of Jesus, let him say it and stand up for it; there is nothing to be ashamed of in it; the only thing to be ashamed of is to be hypocritical. Let us be honest to our profession, and it will be our glory. Ah! what would you do without faith in times of persecution? You good and pious people that have no faith, what would you do if the stake were again erected in Smithfield, and if once more the fires consumed the saints to ashes — if the Lollards' toward were again opened, if the rack were again piled, or if even the stocks were used, as they have been used by a Protestant Church as witness the persecution of my predecessor, Benjamin Keach, who was once set in the stocks at Aylesbury, for writing a book against infant baptism. If even the mildest form of persecution were revived, how would the people be scattered abroad! And some of the shepherds would be leaving their flocks. Another anecdote now, and I hope it will lead you to see the necessity of faith, while it may lead me on insensibly to the last part of my discourse. A slaveholding American on one occasion buying a slave, said to the person of whom he was purchasing him, "Tell me honestly what are his faults." Said the seller, "He has no faults that I am aware of but one, and that one is, he will pray." "Ah!" said the purchaser, "I don't like that, but I know something that will cure him of it pretty soon." So the next night Cuffey was surprised by his master in the plantation, while in earnest prayer, praying for his new master, and his master's wife and family. The man stood and listened, but said nothing at that time; but the next morning he called Cuffey, and said, "I do not want to quarrel with you, my man, but I'll have no praying on my premises: so you just drop it." "Massa," said he "me canna leave off praying; me must pray." "I'll teach you to pray, if you are going to keep on at it." "Massa, me must keep on." "Well, then, I'll give you five-and-twenty lashes a day till you leave off." "Massa, if you give me fifty, I must pray." "If that's the way you are saucy to your master, you shall have it directly." So tying him up he gave him five-and-twenty lashes, and asked him if he would pray again. "Yes, massa, me must pray always, me canna leave off." The master look astonished; he could not understand how a poor saint could keep on praying, when it seemed to do no good, but only brought persecution upon him. He told his wife of it. His wife said, "Why can't

you let the poor man pray? He does his work very well; you and I do not care about praying, but there's no harm in letting him pray, if he gets on with his work." "But I don't like it," said the master, "he almost frightened me to death. You should see how he looked at me." "Was he angry?" "No, I should not have minded that; but after I had beaten him, he looked at me with tears in his eyes, but as if he pitied me more than himself." That night the master could not sleep; he tossed to and fro on his bed, his sins were brought to his remembrance; he remembered he had persecuted a saint of God. Rising in his bed, he said, "Wife, will you pray for me?" "I never prayed in my life," said she "I cannot pray for you." "I am lost," he said, "if somebody does not pray for me; I cannot pray for myself." "I don't know any one on the estate that knows how to pray, except Cuffey," said his wife. The bell was rung, and Cuffey was brought in. Taking hold of his black servant's hand, the master said, "Cuffey, can you pray for your master?" "Massa," said he, "me been praying for you eber since you flogged me, and me mean to pray always for you." Down went Cuffey on his knees, and poured out his soul in tears, and both husband and wife were converted. That negro could not have done this without faith. Without faith he would have gone away directly, and said, "Massa, me leave off praying; me no like de white man's whip." But because he persevered through his faith, the Lord honored him, and gave him his master's soul for his hire.

III. And now in conclusion, THE QUESTION, the vital question. Dear hearer, have you faith? Dost thou believe on the Lord Jesus Christ with all thy heart? If so, thou mayest hope to be saved. Ay, thou mayest conclude with absolute certainty that thou shalt never see perdition. Have you faith? Shall I help you to answer that question? I will give you three tests, as briefly as ever I can, not to weary you, and then farewell this morning. He that has faith has renounced his own righteousness. If thou puttest one atom of trust in thyself thou hast no faith; if thou dost place even a particle of reliance upon anything else but what Christ did, thou hast no faith. If thou dost trust in thy works, then thy works are anti-christ, and Christ and anti-christ can never go together. Christ will have all or nothing; he must be a whole Savior, or none at all. If, then, you have faith, you can say,

"Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to the cross I cling."

The true faith may be known by this, that it begets a great esteem, for the person of Christ. Dost thou love Christ? Couldst thou die for him? Dost thou seek to serve him? Dost thou love his people? Canst thou say,

"Jesus, I love thy charming name,
'Tis music to my ear."

Oh! if thou dost not love Christ thou dost not believe in him; for to believe in Christ begets love. And yet more: he that has true faith will have true obedience. If a man says he has faith, and has no works, he lies; if any man declares that he believes on Christ, and yet does not lead a holy life, he makes a mistake; for while we do not trust in good works, we know that faith always begets good works. Faith is the father of holiness, and he has not the parent who loves not the child. God's blessings are blessings with both his hands. In the one hand he gives pardon; but in the other hand he always gives holiness; and no man can have the one unless he has the other.

And now, dear hearers, shall I down upon my knees, and entreat you for Christ's sake to answer this question in your own silent chamber: Have you faith? Oh! answer it, Yes, or No. Leave off saying, "I do not know," or "I do not care." Ah! you will care, one day, when the earth is reeling, and the world is tossing to and fro; ye will care when God shall summon you to judgment, and when he shall condemn the faithless and the unbelieving. Oh! that ye were wise — that ye would care now, and if any of you feel your need of Christ, let me beg of you, for Christ's sake, now to seek faith in him who is exalted on high to give repentance and remission, and who, if he has given you repentance, will give you remission too. Oh sinners, who know your sins! "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and ye shall be saved." Cast yourselves upon his love and blood, his doing and his dying, his miseries and his merits; and if you do this you shall never fall, but you shall be saved now, and saved in that great day when not to be saved will be horrible indeed. "Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Lay hold on him, touch the hem of his garment, and ye shall be healed. May God help you so to do; for Christ's sake! Amen and Amen.

THE QUESTION OF FEAR AND THE ANSWER OF FAITH

SERMON NO. 108

DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, AUGUST 31, 1856,

AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

"Will he plead against me with his great power?
No; but he would put strength in me." — Job 23:6.

I SHALL not to-night consider the connection of these words, or what was particularly intended by Job. I shall use them in, perhaps, another sense from that which he intended. No doubt Job meant to say, that if God would allow him to argue his case before him, it was his firm belief that God, so far from taking advantage of his superior strength in the controversy, would even strengthen him, that the controversy might be fair, and that the judgment might be unbiased. "He would not plead against me with his great strength; no, but he would put strength in me." We shall use the text, however, to-night, in another sense.

It is one of the sure marks of a lost and ruined state when we are careless and indifferent concerning God. One of the peculiar marks of those who are dead in sin is this: they are the wicked who forget God. God is not in all their thoughts; "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." The sinful man is ever anxious to keep out of his mind the very thought of the being, the existence, or the character of God; and so long as man is unregenerate, there will be nothing more abhorrent to his taste, or his feelings, than anything which deals with the Divine Being. God perhaps, as Creator, he may consider; but the God of the Bible, the infinite Jehovah, judging righteously among the sons of men — condemning and acquitting — that God he has no taste for, he is not in all his thoughts, nor does he regard him. And mark you, it is a blessed sign of the work of grace in the heart, when man begins to consider God. He is not far from God's heart

who hath meditations of God in his own heart. If we desire to seek after God, to know him, to understand him, and to be at peace with him, it is a sign that God has dealings with our soul, for otherwise we should still have hated his name and abhorred his character.

There are two things in my text, both of which have relation to the Divine Being. The first is, the question of fear: "Will he plead against me with his great power?" and the second is, the answer of faith: "No, but he will put strength in me." The fearful and the prayerful, who are afraid of sin and fear God, together with those who are faithful and believe in God, are in a hopeful state; and hence, both the question of the one, and the answer of the other, have reference to the great Jehovah, our God, who is for ever to be adored.

I. We shall consider, in the first place, to-night THE INQUIRY OF FEAR: "Will he plead against me with his great power?" I shall consider this as a question asked by the convinced sinner. He is seeking salvation, but, when he is bidden to come before his God and find mercy, he is compelled by his intense anxiety to make the trembling inquiry, "Will he plead against me with his great power?"

1. And, first, I gather from this question the fact that a truly penitent sinner has a right idea of many of God's attributes. He does not understand them all, for instance, he does not yet know God's great mercy; he does not yet understand his unbounded compassion; but so far as his knowledge of God extends, he has an extremely correct view of him. To him the everlasting Jehovah appears GREAT in every attribute, and action, and supremely GREAT in his Majesty. The poor worldling knows there is a God; but he is to him a little God. As for the justice of God, the mere worldly man scarcely ever thinks of it. He considers that there is a God, but he regards him as a Being who has little enough respect for justice. Not so, however, the sinner. When God has once convinced him of his sin, he sees God as a great God, a God of great justice, and of great power. Whoever can misunderstand God's great justice or God's great power, a convinced sinner never will. Ask him what he thinks of God's justice, and he will tell you it like the great mountains; it is high, he cannot attain unto it. "Ah," saith he, "God's justice is very mighty; it must smite me. He must hurl an avalanche of woe upon my devoted head. Justice

demands that he should punish me. I am so great a sinner that I cannot suppose he would ever pass by my transgression, my iniquity, and my sin." It is all in vain for you to tell such a man that God is little in his justice; he replies, "No," most solemnly, "No," and you can most plainly read his earnestness in his visage, when he replies, "No." He replies, "I feel that God is just; I am even now consumed by his anger; by his wrath am I troubled." "Tell me God is not just," says he; "I know he is; I feel that within an hour or two hell must swallow me up, unless Divine mercy delivers me. Unless Christ shall wash me in his blood, I feel I can never hope to stand among the ransomed." He has not that strange idea of God's justice that some of you have. You think sin is a trifle! You suppose that one brief prayer will wipe it all away. You dream that by attendance at your churches and at your chapels, you will wash away your sins. You suppose that God, for some reason or other, will very easily forgive your sin. But you have no right idea of God's justice. You have not learned that God never does forgive until he has first punished, and that if he does forgive any one, it is because he has punished Christ first in the stead of that person. But he never forgives without first exacting the punishment. That would be an infringement on his justice; and shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? You have, many of you, lax enough ideas of the justice of the Divine Being; but not so the sinner who is laboring under a knowledge of sin.

An awakened soul feels that God is greatly powerful. Tell him that God is but a weak God, and he will answer you; and shall I tell you what illustrations he will give you, to prove that God is great in power. He will say, "Oh, sir, God is great in power as well in justice; look up yonder: can you not see in the dark past, when rebel angels sinned against God, they were so mighty that each one of them might have devastated Eden and shaken the earth. But God, with ease, hurled Satan and the revels angels out of heaven, and drove them down to hell." "Sir," saith the sinner, "is he not mighty?" And then he will go on to tell you how God unbound the swaddling bands of the great ocean, that it might leap upon the earth; and how he bade it swallow up the whole of mortal race, save those who were hidden in the ark. And the sinner says, with his eyes well nigh starting from their sockets, "Sir, does not this prove that he is great in power, and will by no means acquit the wicked?" And then he proceeds, "Look again

at the Red Sea; mark how Pharaoh was enticed into its depths, and how the parted sea, that stood aloof for awhile to give the Israelites an easy passage, embraced with eager joy, locked the adverse host within their arms, and swallowed them up quick;" and as he thinks he sees the Red Sea rolling o'er the slain, he exclaims, "Sir, God is great in power; I feel he must be, when I think of what he has done." And as if he had not finished his oration, and would let us know the whole of the greatness of God's power, he continues his narration of the deeds of vengeance. "O sir, remember, he must be great in power, for I know that he hath digged a hell, which is deep and large, without bottom. He hath made a Tophet — the pile thereof is fire and much wood, and the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, shall kindle it." "Yes, beyond a doubt," groans the trembling soul, "he must be great in power. I feel he is, and I feel more than that; I feel that justice has provoked God's arm of power to smite me, and unless I am covered in that righteousness of Christ, I shall ere long be dashed to pieces, and utterly devoured by the fury of his wrath." The sinner, as far as the harsher attributes of God's nature are concerned, when he is under conviction, has a very fair and a just idea of the Divine Being, though, as I have remarked before, not yet understanding the mercy and the infinite compassion of God towards his covenant people, he has too harsh a view of God, dwelling only upon the darker side, and not upon those attributes which shed a more cheering light upon the darkness of our misery. That is the first truth which I gleam from the text.

2. The second truth which I gather from this question, "Will he plead against me with his great power?" is this: that the trembling sinner feels that every attribute of God is against him as a sinner. "Oh!" he will say, "I look to God, and I can see nothing in him but a consuming fire. I look to his justice, and I see it, with sword unsheathed, ready to smite me low. I look to his power, and I behold it, like a mighty mountain, tottering to its fall, to crush me. I look to his immutability, and methinks I see stern justice written on its brow, and I hear it cry, 'Sinner, I will not save, I will condemn thee.' I look to his faithfulness, and I mark that all his threatenings are as much 'yea and amen' as his promises. I look to his love, but even his love frowns, and accuses me, saying, 'thou hast slighted me.' I look to his mercy, but even his mercy launches out the thunderbolt, with accusing voice, reminding me of my former hardness of heart, and harshly

chiding me thus, ‘Go thou to justice, and glean what thou canst there. I, even I, am against thee, for thou hast made me wroth!’“

Oh! trembling penitent, where art thou to-night? Somewhere here, I know thou art. Would to God there were many like thee! I know thou wilt agree with me in this statement, for thou hast a dread apprehension that every attribute of the Divine Being’s character is armed with fire and sword to destroy thee. Thou seest all his attributes like heavy pieces of ordnance, all pointed at thee and ready to be discharged. Oh that thou mayest find a refuge in Christ! And oh! ye who never were convinced of sin, let me for one moment lay judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet. Know ye this — perhaps ye laugh at it — that all God’s attributes are against you, if you are not in Christ! If you are not sheltered beneath the wings of Jesus, there is not one single glorious name of God, nor one celestial attribute, which does not curse you. What wouldst thou think, if at thy door to-night there should be planted great pieces of heavy cannon, all loaded, to be discharged against thee? But dost thou know, that where thou sittest to-night there are worse than heavy cannons to be discharged at thee? Yes, I see them, I see them! There is God’s justice, and there is the angel of vengeance, standing with the match, ready to bid it hurl vengeance at thee. There is his power; there is his bare arm, ready to break thy bones, and crush thee into powder. There is his love, all blazing, turned to hate because thou hast rejected it; and there is his mercy, clad with mail, going forth like a warrior to overthrow thee. What sayest thou, O sinner, to-night? Against thee all God’s attributes are pointed. He hath bent his bow and made it ready. The sword of the Lord has been bathed in heaven; it is bright and sharp; it is furbished. How wilt thou escape, when a mighty arm shall bring it down upon thee? or how wilt thou flee, when he shall draw his bow and shoot his arrows at thee, and make thee a mark for all the arrows of his vengeance? Beware, beware, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver! For tear you in pieces, he will yet, unless you shelter in the Rock of Ages, and wash yourselves in the stream of his wondrous blood. Fly to him, then, ye chief of sinners, fly. But if ye will not, now ye this, God is against you! He will plead against thee with his great power, unless thou hast our all-glorious Jesus to be thine advocate.

3. And just one more hint here. The sinner, when he is laboring on account of guilt, feels that God would be just if he were to "plead against him with his great power?" "Oh," saith he, "If I go to God in prayer, perhaps instead of hearing me he will crush me as I would a moth." What, soul, would he be just if he did that? "Ay," saith the sinner, "just, supremely just. Perhaps I shall have stripped myself of all my ornaments, and like a naked one have flown to him; perhaps then he will lash me harder than before, and I shall feel it all the worse for this my nakedness." And will he be just, should the flagellation of his vengeance fall upon thy shoulders? "Yes," he saith, "infallibly just." And should he smite thee to the lowest hell, would he be just? "Yes," saith the penitent, "just, infinitely just. I should have no word to say against him. I should feel that I deserved it all. My only question is, not whether he would be just to do it, but will he do it?" "Will he plead against me with his great power?" This is the question of fear. Some here, perhaps, are asking that question.

Now let them hear the reply of faith; God give them a good deliverance!

II. THE REPLY OF FAITH IS, "No." O sinner, hear that word, "No;" there are sonnets condensed into it. "Will he plead against me with his great power?" "No, no," say the saints in heaven; "no," say the faithful on earth; "no," say the promises; "no," unanimously exclaim the oracles of Scripture; no, most emphatically no, he will not plead against you with his great power, but he will put strength into you.

1. And here we make a similar remark to that with which we commenced the former part of the sermon, namely, this: the fearful soul has a very right view of God in many respects, but the faithful soul has a right view of God in all respects. He that hath faith in God knows more of God better than any man. Why, if I believe God, I can see all his attributes vindicated. I can see the wrath of justice expiated by yonder bleeding sufferer on the accursed tree. I can see his mercy and his justice joining hands with his wrath. I can see his power now turned on my behalf, and no longer against me. I can see his faithfulness become the guardian of my soul instead of the slaughterer of my hopes. I can see all his attributes standing, each of them conjoined, each of them glorious, each of them lovely, and all united in the work of man's salvation. He that feareth God, knows half of God; he that believeth God, knoweth all of God that he can know; and the more he

believeth God, the more he understandeth God, the more he comprehendeth his glory, his character, his nature, and his attributes.

2. The next thing is, that the believer when he is brought into peace with God does not tremble at the thought of God's power. He does not ask, "Will he plead against me with his great power?" But he says, "No, that very power, once my terror, and fear, is now my refuge and my hope, for he shall put that very power in me. I rejoice that God is Almighty, for he will lend me his omnipotence — 'he will put strength into me.'" Now, here is a great thought; if I had power to handle it, it would give me opportunity indeed to preach to you. But I cannot reach the heights of eloquence, I shall therefore simply exhibit the thought for a moment to you. The very power which would have damned my soul, saves my soul. The very power that would have crushed me, God puts into me, that the work of salvation may be accomplished. No, he will not use it to crush me, but he will put that very strength into me. Dost see there the Mighty One upon his throne? Dread Sovereign, I see thine awful arm. What, wilt thou crush the sinner? Wilt thou utterly destroy him with thy strength? "No," saith he, "Come hither, child." And if you go to his Almighty throne, "There," saith he "that self-same arm which made thee quake, see there, I give it to thee. Go out and live. I have made thee mighty as I am, to do my works; I will put strength into thee. The same strength which would have broken thee to pieces on the wheel shall now be put into thee, that thou mayest do mighty works."

Now, I will show you how this great strength displays itself. Sometimes it goes out in prayer. Did you ever hear a man pray in whom God had put strength? You have heard some of us poor puny souls pray, I dare say; but have you ever heard a man pray that God had made into a giant? Oh, if you have, you will say it is a mighty thing to hear such a man in supplication. I have seen him now and then slip in his wrestling; but, like a giant, he has recovered his footing, and seemed like Jacob, to hurl the angel to the ground. I have marked the many lay hold upon the throne of mercy, and declare, "Lord, I will never let go, except thou bless me." I have seen him, when heaven's gates have been apparently barred, go up to them, and say, "Ye gates, open wide in Jesus' name;" and I have seen the gates fly open before him, as if the man were God himself; for he is armed with God Almighty's strength. I have seen that man, in prayer, discover some great

mountain in his hills and made them like chaff, by the immensity of his might. Some of you think I am talking enthusiasm; but such cases have been, and are now. Oh! to have heard Luther pray! Luther, you know, when Melancthon was dying, went to his death-bed, and said, "Melancthon, you shall not die!" "Oh," said Melancthon, "I must die! It is a world of toil and trouble," "Melancthon," said he, "I have need of thee, and God's cause has need of thee, and as my name is Luther, thou shalt not die!" The physician said he would. Well, down went Luther on his knees, and began to tug at death. Old death struggled mightily for Melancthon, and he had got him well nigh on his shoulders. "Drop him," said Luther, "drop him, I want him." "No," said death, "he is my prey, I will take him!" "Down with him," said Luther, "down with him, death, or I will wrestle with thee!" And he seemed to take hold of the grim monster, and hurl him to the ground; and he came off victorious, like an Orpheus, with his wife, up from the very shades of death; he had delivered Melancthon from death by prayer! "Oh," say you, "that is an extraordinary case." No, beloved, not one-half so extraordinary as you dream. I have men and women here who have done the same in other cases; that have asked a thing of God, and have had it; that have been to the throne, and showed a promise, and said they would not come away without its fulfillment, and have come back fro God's throne conquerors of the Almighty; for prayer moves the arm that moves the world. "Prayer is the sinew of God," said one, "it moves his arm;" and so it is. Verily, in prayer, with the strength of the faithful heart, there is a beautiful fulfillment of the text, "He will put strength in me."

A second illustration. Not only in prayer, but in duty, the man who has great faith in God, and whom God has girded with strength, how gigantic does he become! Have you never read of those great heroes who put to flight whole armies, and scattered kings like the snow on Salmon? Have you never read of those men that were fearless of foes, and stalked onward before all their opposers, as if they would as soon die as live? I read, this day, of a case in the old kirk of Scotland, before that King James who wished to force the black prelacy upon them. Andrew Melville and some of his associates were deputed to wait upon the king, and as they were going with a scroll ready written, they were warned to take care and return, for their lives were at stake. They paused a moment, and Andrew said, "I

am not afraid, thank God, nor feeble-spirited in the cause and message of Christ; come what pleases God to send, our commission shall be executed." At these words the deputation took courage, and went forward. On reaching the palace, and having obtained an audience, they found his majesty attended by Lennox and Arran, and several other lords, all of whom were English. They presented their remonstrance. Arran lifted it from the table, and glancing over it, he then turned to the ministers, and furiously demanded, "Who dares sign these treasonable articles?" "WE DARE." said Andrew Melville, "and will render our lives in the cause." Having thus spoken, he came forward to the table, took the pen, subscribed his name, and was followed by his brethren. Arran and Lennox were confounded; the king looked on in silence, and the nobles in surprise. Thus did our good forefathers appear before kings, and yet were not ashamed. "The proud had them greatly in derision, yet they declined not from the law of God." Having thus discharged their duty, after a brief conference, the ministers were permitted to depart in peace. The king trembled more at them than if a whole army had been at his gates; and why was this? It was because God had put his own strength into them, to make them masters of their duty. And you have some such in your midst now. Despised they may be; but God has made them like the lion-like men of David, who would go down into the pit in the depth of winter, and take the lion by the throat and slay him. We have some in our churches — but a remnant, I admit — who are not afraid to serve their God, like Abdiel, "faithful amongst the faithless found." We have some who are superior to the customs of the age, and scorn to bow at mammon's knee, who will not use the trimming language of too many modern ministers, but stand out for God's gospel, and the pure white banner of Christ, unstained and unsullied by the doctrines of men. Then are they mighty! Why they are mighty is, because God has put strength in them.

Still, some say, I have dealt with extraordinary cases. Come then, now we will have a home-case, one of your own sort, that will be like yourselves. Did you ever stand and take a view of heaven? Have you discerned the hills which lie between your soul and paradise? Have you counted the lions you have to fight, the giants to be slain, and the rivers to be crossed? Did you ever notice the many temptations with which you must be beset, the trials you have to endure, the difficulties you have to overcome, the

dangers you have to avoid? Did you ever take a bird's-eye view of heaven, and all the dangers which are strewn thickly along the path thither? And didst thou ever ask thyself this question, "How shall I, a poor feeble worm, ever get there?" Didst thou ever say within thyself, "I am not a match for all my foes, how shall I arrive at paradise?" If thou hast ever asked this question, I will tell thee what is the only answer for it: thou must be girded with Almighty strength, or else thou wilt never gain the victory. Easy thy path may be, but it is too hard for thy infantile strength, without the Almighty power. Thy path may be one of little temptation, and of shallow trial; but thou wilt be drowned in the floods yet, unless Almighty power preserve thee. Mark me! however smooth thy way, there is nothing short of the bare arm of Deity that can land any one of you in heaven. We must have Divine strength, or else we shall never get there. And there is an illustration of these words: "No, but he will put his strength in me."

"And shall I hold on to the end?" says the believer. Yes, thou wilt, for God's strength is in thee. "Shall I be able to bear such-and-such a trial?" Yes, thou wilt. Cannot Omnipotence stem the torrent? And Omnipotence is in thee; for, like Ignatius of old, thou art a God-bearer; thou bearest God about with thee. Thy heart is a temple of the Holy Ghost, and thou shalt yet overcome. "But can I ever stand firm in such-and-such evil day?" Oh! yes you will, for he will put his strength in you. I was in company, some time ago, with some ministers; one of them observed, "Brother, if there were to be stakes in Smithfield again, I am afraid they would find very few to burn among us." "Well," I said, "I do not know anything about how you would burn; but this I know right well, that there never will be any lack of men who are ready to die for Christ." "Oh!" said he, "but they are not the right sort of men." "Well," said I, "but do you think they are the Lord's children?" "Yes, I believe they are, but they are not the right sort." "Ah!" said I, "but you would find them the right sort, if they came to the test every one of them; they have not got burning grace yet. What would be the use of it?" We do not want the grace till the stakes come; but we should have burning grace in burning moments. If now, to-night, a hundred of us were called to die for Christ, I believe there would not only be found a hundred, but five hundred, that would march to death, and sing all the way. Whenever I find faith, I believe that God will put strength into the man;

and I never think anything to be impossible to a man with faith in God, while it is written, “He will put strength in me.”

3. But now the last observation shall be, we shall all want this at the last; and it is a mercy for us that this is written, for never shall we require it, perhaps, more than then. O believer, dost thou think thou wilt be able to swim the Jordan with thine own sinews? Caesar could not swim the Tiber, accoutered as he was; and dost thou hope to swim the Jordan with thy flesh about thee? No, thou wilt sink then, unless Jesus, as Aeneas did Anchises, from the flames of Rome, upon his shoulders, lift thee from Jordan, and carry thee across the stream, thou wilt never be able to walk across the river; thou wilt ne’er be able to face that tyrant and smile in his face, unless thou hast something more than mortal. Thou wilt need then to be belted about with the girdle of divinity, or else thy loins will be loosed, and thy strength will fail thee, when thou needst it most. Many a man has ventured to the Jordan in his own strength; but oh! how he has shrieked and howled, when the first wave has touched his feet! But never weakling went to death with God within him, but he found himself mightier than the grace. Go on, Christian, for this is thy promise. “He will put strength in me.”

“Weak, though I am, yet through his might,
I all things can perform.”

Go on; dread not God’s power, but rejoice at this, he will put his strength in you; he will not use his power to crush you.

Just one word, and then farewell. There is within reach of my voice, I am thoroughly convinced, one who is seeking Christ, whose only fear is this: “Sir, I would, but I cannot pray; I would, but I cannot believe; I would, but I cannot love; I would, but I cannot repent.” Oh! hear this, soul: “He will put his strength in thee.” Go home; and down on thy knees; if thou canst not pray, groan; if thou canst not groan, weep; if thou canst not weep, feel; if thou canst not feel, feel because thou canst not feel; for that is as far as many get. But stop there, mark you, stop there, and he will give you his blessing; do not get up till you have got the blessing. Go there in all thy weakness; if you do not feel it, say, “Lord, I do not feel as I ought to feel; but oh that I could! Lord, I cannot repent, as I would repent — oh that thou wouldst help me!” “Oh! sir,” you say, “but I could not go so far as

that, for I don't think I have got a strong desire." Go and say, "Lord I would desire; help me to desire." And then sit down and think of your lost estate. Think of your ruin and the remedy, and muse on that; and mark thee, whilst thou art in the way, the Lord will meet with thee. Only believe this, that if thou triest Christ he will never let thee try in vain. Go and risk thy soul on Christ to-night, neck or nothing, sinner. Go now, break or make; go and say, "Lord, I know I must be damned if I have not Christ." Stay there, and say, "If I perish, I perish only here;" and I tell you, you will never perish. I am bondsman for God. This head to the block if your soul goes to hell, if you pray sincerely and trust Christ. This neck to the gallows, again I say, this neck to the rope and to the hangman's gallows, if Christ reject you after your have earnestly sought him. Only try that, I beseech thee, poor soul. "Oh," you say, "but I have not strength enough; I cannot do that." Well, poor soul, crawl to the mercy-seat, and there lie flat, just as you are. You know that misery often speaks when it utters not a word. The poor mendicant squats himself down in the street. He says nothing, There protrudes a ragged knee, and there is a wounded hand. He says nothing; but with his hands folded on his breast he looks at every passer-by; and though not a word is spoken, he winneth more than if he daily drawled out his tale, or sung it along the street. So do thou sit like Bartimeus by the way-side begging; and if thou hearest him pass by, then cry, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy upon me." But if thou canst scarce say that, sit there, and exhibit thy poor wounds; tell the Lord thy desperate condition; strip thy loathsome sores, and let the Almighty see the venom. Turn out thy heart, and let the rank corruption be all inspected by the Almighty eye. "And he hath mercies rich and free." Who can tell, poor sinner, who can tell? He may look on thee.

"Jesus died upon the tree,
And why, poor sinner, not for thee?
His Sovereign grace is rich and free,
And why, poor sinner, not for thee?
"Our Jesus loved and saved me,
Say why, poor sinner, why not thee?"

Only do this; and if thou art a sinner, hear this: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." He will not "Plead against you with his great

power; no, he will put his strength in you!” The Lord dismiss you with his blessing!

GOING HOME — A CHRISTMAS SERMON

SERMON NO. 109

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 21, 1856,

AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

"Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." — Mark 5:19.

THE CASE of the man here referred to is a very extraordinary one: it occupies a place among the memorabilia of Christ's life, perhaps as high as anything which is recorded by either of the evangelists. This poor wretch being possessed with a legion of evil spirits had been driven to something worse than madness. He fixed his home among the tombs, where he dwelt by night and day, and was the terror of all those who passed by. The authorities had attempted to curb him; he had been bound with fetters and chains, but in the paroxysms of his madness he had torn the chains in sunder, and broken the fetters in pieces. Attempts had been made to reclaim him; but no man could tame him. He was worse than the wild beasts, for they might be tamed; but his fierce nature would not yield. He was a misery to himself, for he would run upon the mountains by night and day, crying and howling fearfully, cutting himself with the sharp flints, and torturing his poor body in the most frightful manner. Jesus Christ passed by; he said to the devils, "Come out of him." The man was healed in a moment; he fell down at Jesus' feet; he became a rational being — an intelligent man, yea, what is more, a convert to the Savior. Out of gratitude to his deliverer, he said, "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest; I will be thy constant companion and thy servant; permit me so to be." "No," said Christ, "I esteem your motive; it is one of gratitude to me; but if you would show your gratitude, 'go home to thy friends and tell them

how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.'"

Now, this teaches us a very important fact, namely, this, that true religion does not break in sunder the bonds of family relationship. True religion seldom encroaches upon that sacred, I had almost said divine institution called home; it does not separate men from their families, and make them aliens to their flesh and blood. Superstition has done that; an awful superstition, which calls itself Christianity, has sundered men from their kind; but true religion has never done so. Why, if I might be allowed to do such a thing, I would seek out the hermit in his lonely cavern, and I would go to him and say, "Friend, if thou art what thou dost profess to be, a true servant of the living God, and not a hypocrite, as I guess thou art — if thou art a true believer in Christ, and would show forth what he has done for thee, upset that pitcher, eat the last piece of thy bread, leave this dreary cave, wash thy face, untie thy hempen girdle; and if thou wouldst show thy gratitude, go home to thy friends, and tell them what great things the Lord hath done for thee. Canst thou edify the sere leaves of the forest? Can the beasts learn to adore that God whom thy gratitude should strive to honor? Dost thou hope to convert these rocks, and wake the echoes into songs? Nay, go back; dwell with thy friends, reclaim thy kinship with men, and unite again with thy fellows, for this is Christ's approved way of showing gratitude." And I would go to every monastery and every nunnery, and say to the monks, 'Come out brethren, come out! If you are what you say you are, servants of God, go home to your friends. No more of this absurd discipline; it is not Christ's rule; you are acting differently from what he would have you; go home to your friends!" And to the sisters of mercy we would say, "Be sisters of mercy to your own sisters; go home to your friends; take care of your aged parents; turn your own houses into convents; do not sit here nursing your pride by a disobedience to Christ's rule, which says, "go home to thy friends." "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." The love of a solitary and ascetic life, which is by some considered to be a divine virtue, is neither more nor less than a disease of the mind. In the ages when there was but little benevolence, and consequently few hands to build lunatic asylums, superstition supplied the lack of charity, and silly men and women were

allowed the indulgence of their fancies in secluded haunts or in easy laziness. Young has most truly said, —

"The first sure symptoms of a mind in health
Are rest of heart and pleasure found at home."

Avoid, my friends, above all things, those romantic and absurd conceptions of virtue which are the offspring of superstition and the enemies of righteousness. Be not without natural affection, but love those who are knit to you by time of nature.

True religion cannot be inconsistent with nature. It never can demand that I should abstain from weeping when my friend is dead. "Jesus wept." It cannot deny me the privilege of a smile, when providence looks favorably upon me; for once "Jesus rejoiced in the spirit, and said, Father, I thank thee." It does not make a man say to his father and mother, "I am no longer your son." That is not Christianity, but something worse than what beasts would do, which would lead us to be entirely sundered from our fellows, to walk among them as if we had no kinship with them. To all who think a solitary life must be a life of piety, I would say, "It is the greatest delusion." To all who think that those must be good people who snap the ties of relationship, let us say, "Those are the best who maintain them." Christianity makes a husband a better husband, it makes a wife a better wife than she was before. It does not free me from my duties as a son; it makes me a better son, and my parents better parents. Instead of weakening my love, it gives me fresh reason for my affection; and he whom I loved before as my father, I now love as my brother and co-worker in Christ Jesus; and she whom I reverenced as my mother, I now love as my sister in the covenant of grace, to be mine for ever in the state that is to come. Oh! suppose not, any of you, that Christianity was ever meant to interfere with households; it is intended to cement them, and to make them households which death itself shall never sever, for it binds them up in the bundle of life with the Lord their God, and re-unites the several individuals on the other side of the flood.

Now, I will just tell you the reason why I selected my text. I thought within myself, there are a large number of young men who always come to hear me preach; they always crowd the aisles of my chapel, and many of them have been converted to God. Now, here is Christmas-day come

round again, and they are going home to see their friends. When they get home they will want a Christmas Carol in the evening; I think I will suggest one to them — more especially to such of them as have been lately converted. I will give them a theme for their discourse on Christmas evening; it may not be quite so amusing as "The Wreck of the Golden Mary," but it will be quite as interesting to Christian people. It shall be this: "Go home and tell your friends what the Lord hath done for your souls, and how he hath had compassion on you." For my part, I wish there were twenty Christmas days in the year. It is seldom that young men can meet with their friends; it is rarely they can all be united as happy families; and though I have no respect to the religious observance of the day, yet I love it as a family institution, as one of England's brightest days, the great Sabbath of the year, when the plough rests in its furrow, when the din of business is hushed, when the mechanic and the working man go out to refresh themselves upon the green award of the glad earth. If any of you are masters you will pardon me for the digression, when I most respectfully beg you to pay your servants the same wages on Christmas-day as if they were at work. I am sure it will make their houses glad if you will do so. It is unfair for you to make them feast or fast, unless you give them wherewithal to feast and make themselves glad on that day of joy.

But now to come to the subject. We are going home to see our friends, and here is the story some of us have to tell. "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for them, and hath had compassion on thee." First, here is what they are to tell; secondly, why they are to tell it; and then thirdly, how they ought to tell it.

I. First, then, HERE IS WHAT THEY ARE TO TELL. It is to be a story of personal experience. "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." You are not to repair to your houses and forthwith begin to preach. That you are not commanded to do. You are not to begin to take up doctrinal subjects and expatiate on them, and endeavor to bring persons to your peculiar views and sentiments. You are not to go home with sundry doctrines you have lately learned, and try to teach these. At least you are not commanded so to do; you may, if you please, and none shall hinder you; but you are to go home and tell not what you have believed, but what you have felt — what you really know to be your own; not what great

things you have read, but what great things the Lord hath done for you; not alone what you have seen done in the great congregation, and how great sinners have turned to God, but what the Lord has done for you. And mark this: there is never a more interesting story than that which a man tells about himself. The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner derives much of its interest because the man who told it was himself the mariner. He sat down, that man whose finger was skinny, like the finger of death, and began to tell that dismal story of the ship at sea in the great calm, when slimy things did crawl with legs over the shiny sea. The Wedding guest sat still to listen, for the old man was himself a story. There is always a great deal of interest excited by a personal narrative. Virgil, the poet, knew this, and therefore he wisely makes Aeneas tell his own story, and makes him begin it by saying, "In which I also had a great part myself." So if you would interest your friends, tell them what you felt yourself. Tell them how you were once a lost abandoned sinner, how the Lord met with you, how you bowed your knees, and poured out your soul before God, and how at last you leaped with joy, for you thought you heard him say within you, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my name's sake." Tell your friends a story of your own personal experience.

Note, next, it must be a story of free grace. It is not, "Tell thy friends how great things thou hast done thyself," but "how great things the Lord hath done for thee." The man who always dwells upon free will and the power of the creature, and denies the doctrines of grace, invariably mixes up a great deal of what he has done himself in telling his experience; but the believer in free grace, who holds the great cardinal truths of the gospel, ignores this, and declares, "I will tell what the Lord hath done for me. It is true I must tell how I was first made to pray; but I will tell it thus —

'Grace taught my soul to pray,
Grace made my eyes o'erflow.'

It is true, I must tell in how many troubles and trials God has been with me; but I will tell it thus: —

''Twas grace which kept me to this day,
And will not let me go.'"

He says nothing about his own doings, or willings, or prayings, or seekings, but he ascribes it all to the love and grace of the great God who

looks on sinners in love, and makes them his children, heirs of everlasting life. Go home, you man, and tell the poor sinner's story; go home, young woman, and open your diary, and give your friends stories of grace. Tell them of the mighty works of God's hand which he hath wrought in you from his own free, sovereign, undeserved love. Make it a free grace story around your family fire.

In the next place, this poor man's tale was a grateful story. I know it was grateful, because the man said, "I will tell thee how great things the Lord hath done for me;" and (not meaning a pun in the least degree) I may observe, that a man who is grateful is always full of the greatness of the mercy which God has shown him; he always thinks that what God has done for him is immensely good and supremely great. Perhaps when you are telling the story one of your friends will say, "And what of that?" And your answer will be, "It may not be a great thing to you, but it is to me. You say it is little to repent, but I have not found it so; it is a great and precious thing to be brought to know myself to be a sinner, and to confess it; do you say it is a little thing to have found a Savior." Look them in the face and say, "If you had found him too you would not think it little. You think it little I have lost the burden from my back; but if you had suffered with it, and felt its weight as I have for many a long year, you would think it no little thing to be emancipated and free, through a sight of the cross." Tell them it is a great story, and if they cannot see its greatness shed great tears, and tell it to them with great earnestness, and I hope they may be brought to believe that you at least are grateful, if they are not. May God grant that you may tell a grateful story. No story is more worth hearing than a tale of gratitude.

And lastly, upon this point: it must be a tale told by a poor sinner who feels himself not to have deserved what he has received. "How he hath had compassion on thee." It was not a mere act of kindness, but and act of free compassion towards one who was in misery. Oh! I have heard men tell the story of their conversion and of their spiritual life in such a way that my heart hath loathed them and their story too, for they have told of their sins as if they did boast in the greatness of their crime, and they have mentioned the love of God not with a tear of gratitude, not with the simple thanksgiving of the really humble heart, but as if they as much exalted themselves as they exalted God. Oh! when we tell the story of our own

conversion, I would have it done with deep sorrow, remembering what we used to be, and with great joy and gratitude, remembering how little we deserve these things, I was once preaching upon conversion and salvation, and I felt within myself, as preachers often do, that it was but dry work to tell this story, and a dull, dull tale it was to me; but on a sudden the thought crossed my mind, "Why, you are a poor lost ruined sinner yourself; tell it, tell it, as you received it; begin to tell of the grace of God as you trust you feel it yourself." Why, then, my eyes began to be fountains of tears; those hearers who had nodded their heads began to brighten up, and they listened, because they were hearing something which the man felt himself, and which they recognised as being true to him, if it was not true in them. Tell your story, my hearers, as lost sinners. Do not go to your home, and walk into your house with a supercilious air, as much as to say, "Here's a saint come home to the poor sinners, to tell them a story;" but go home like a poor sinner yourself; and when you go in, your mother remembers what you used to be, you need not tell her there is a change — she will notice it, if it is only one day you are with her; and perhaps she will say, "John, what is this change that is in you?" and if she is a pious mother, you will begin to tell her the story, and I know, man though you are, you will not blush when I say it, she will put her arms round your neck, and kiss you as she never did before, for you are her twice-born son, hers from whom she shall never part, even though death itself shall divide you for a brief moment. "Go home, then, and tell your friends what great things the Lord hath done for you, and how he hath had compassion on you."

II. But now, in the second place, WHY SHOULD WE TELL THIS STORY? For I hear many of my congregation say, "Sir, I could relate that story to any one sooner than I could to my own friends; I could come to your vestry, and tell you something of what I have tasted and handled of the Word of God; but I could not tell my father, nor my mother, nor my brethren, nor my sisters." Come, then; I will try and argue with you, to induce you to do so, that I may send you home this Christmas-day, to be missionaries in the localities to which you belong, and to be real preachers, though you are not so by name. Dear friends, do tell this story when you go home.

First, for your Master's sake. Oh! I know you love him; I am sure you do, if you have proof that he loved you. You can never think of Gethsemane and of its bloody sweat, of Gabbatha and of the mangled back of Christ, flayed by the whip: you can never think of Calvary and his pierced hands and feet, without loving him; and it is a strong argument when I say to you, for his dear sake who loved you so much, go home and tell it. What! do you think we can have so much done for us, and yet not tell it? Our children, if anything should be done for them, do not stay many minutes before they are telling all the company, "such an one hath give me such a present, and bestowed on me such-and-such a favor." And should the children of God be backward in declaring how they were saved when their feet made haste to hell, and how redeeming mercy snatched them as brands from the burning? You love Jesus, young man! I put it to you, then, will you refuse to tell the tale of his love to you? Shall your lips be dumb, when his honor is concerned? Will you not, wherever you go, tell of the God who loved you and died for you? This poor man, we are told, "Departed and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him, and all men did marvel." So with you. If Christ has done much for you, you cannot help it — you must tell it. My esteemed friend, Mr. Oncken, a minister in Germany told us last Monday evening, that so soon as he was converted himself, the first impulse of his new-born soul was to do good to others. And where should he do that good? Well, he thought he would go to Germany. It was his own native land, and he thought the command was, "Go home to thy friends and tell them." Well, there was not a single Baptist in all Germany, nor any with whom he could sympathise, for the Lutherans had swerved from the faith of Luther, and gone aside from the truth of God. But he went there and preached, and he has now seventy or eighty churches established on the continent. What made him do it? Nothing but love for his Master, who had done so much for him, could have forced him to go and tell his kinsmen the marvellous tale of Divine goodness.

But, in the next place, are your friends pious? Then go home and tell them, in order to make their hearts glad. I received last night a short epistle written with a trembling hand by one who is past the natural age of man, living in the country of Essex. His son, under God, had been converted by hearing the Word preached, and the good man could not help writing to the

minister, thanking him, and blessing most of all, his God, that his son had been regenerated. “Sir,” he begins, “an old rebel writes to thank you, and above all to thank his God, that his dear son has been converted.” I shall treasure up that epistle. It goes on to say, “Go on! and the Lord bless you.” And there was another case I heard some time ago, where a young woman went home to her parents, and when her mother saw her, she said, “There! if the minister had made me a present of all London, I should not have thought so much of it as I do of this — to think that you have really become a changed character, and are living in the fear of God.” Oh! if you want to make your mother’s heart leap within her, and to make your father glad — if you would make that sister happy who sent you so many letters, which sometimes you read against a lamp-post, with your pipe in your mouth — go home and tell your mother that her wishes are all accomplished, that her prayers are heard, that you will no longer chaff her about her Sunday-school class, and no longer laugh at her because she loves the Lord, but that you will go with her to the house of God, for you love God, and you have said, “Your people shall be my people, and your God shall be my God, for I have a hope that your heaven shall be my heaven for ever.” Oh! what a happy thing it would be if some here who had gone astray, should thus go home! It was my privilege a little while ago to preach for a noble institution for the reception of women who had led abandoned lives — and before I preached the sermon I prayed to God to bless it, and in the printed sermon you will notice that at the end of it there is an account of two persons who were blessed by that sermon and restored. Now, let me tell you a story of what happened to Mr. Vanderkist, a city missionary, who toils all night long to do good in that great work. There had been a drunken broil in the street; he stepped between the men to part them, and said something to a woman who stood there concerning how dreadful a thing it was that men should thus be intemperate. She walked with him a little way, and he with her, and she began to tell him such a tale of woe and sin too — how she had been lured away from her parents’ home in Somersetshire, and have been brought up here to her soul’s eternal hurt. He took her home with him, and taught her the fear and love of Christ; and what was the first thing she did, when she returned to the paths of godliness, and found Christ to be the sinner’s Savior? She said, “Now, I must go home to my friends.” Her friends were written to; they came to meet her at the station at Bristol, and you can

hardly conceive what a happy meeting it was. The father and mother had lost their daughter, they had never heard from her; and there she was, brought back by the agency of this institution,1 and restored to the bosom of her family. Ah! if such an one be here! I know not; among such a multitude there may be such an one. Woman! hast thou strayed from thy family? Hast thou left them long? "Go home to thy friends," I beseech thee, ere thy father totters to his grave, and ere thy mother's grey hairs sleep on the snow-white pillow of her coffin. Go back. I beseech thee! Tell her thou art penitent; tell her that God hath met with thee — that the young minister said, "Go back to thy friends." And if so, I shall not blush to have said these things, though you may think I ought not to have mentioned them; for if I may but win one such soul, I will bless God to all eternity. "Go home to thy friends. Go home and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee." Cannot you imagine the scene, when the poor demoniac mentioned in my text went home? He had been a raving madman; and when he came and knocked at the door, don't you think you see his friends calling to one another in affright, "Oh! there he is again," and the mother running up stairs and locking all the doors, because her son had come back that was raving mad; and the little ones crying because they knew what he had been before — how he cut himself with stones, because he was possessed with devils. And can you picture their joy, when the man said, "Mother! Jesus Christ has healed me; let me in; I am no lunatic now!" And when the father opened the door, he said, "Father! I am not what I was; all the evil spirits are gone; I shall live in the tombs no longer. I want to tell you how the glorious man who wrought my deliverance accomplished the miracle — how he said to the devils, 'Get ye hence,' and they ran down a steep place into the sea, an I am come home healed and saved." Oh! if such an one, possessed with sin, were here this morning, and would go home to his friends, to tell them of his release, methinks this scene would be somewhat similar.

Once more, dear friends. I hear one of you say. "Ah! Sir, would to God I could go home to pious friends! But when I go home I go into the worst of places; for my home is amongst those who never knew God themselves, and consequently never prayed for me, and never taught me anything concerning heaven." Well, young man, go home to your friends. If they are ever so bad they are your friends. I sometimes meet with young men

wishing to join the church, who say, when I ask them about their father, “Oh, sir, I am parted from my father.” Then I say, “Young man, you may just go and see your father before I have anything to do with you; if you are at ill-will with your father and mother I will not receive you into the church; if they are ever so bad they are your parents.” Go home to them, and tell them, not to make them glad, for they will very likely be angry with you; but tell them for their soul’s salvation. I hope, when you are telling the story of what God did for you, that they will be led by the Spirit to desire the same mercy themselves. But I will give you a piece of advice. Do not tell this story to your ungodly friends when they are all together, for they will laugh at you. Take them one by one, when you can get them alone, and begin to tell it to them, and they will hear you seriously. There was once a very pious lady who kept a lodging-house for young men. All the young men were very gay and giddy, and she wanted to say something to them concerning religion. She introduced the subject, and it was passed off immediately with a laugh. She thought within herself, “I have made a mistake.” The next morning, after breakfast, when they were all going, she said to one of them, “Sir, I should like to speak with you a moment or two,” and taking him aside into another room she talked with him. The next morning she took another, and the next morning another, and it pleased God to bless her simple statement, when it was given individually: but, without doubt, if she had spoken to them altogether, they would have backed each other up in laughing her to scorn. Reprove a man alone. A verse may hit him whom a sermon flies. You may be the means of bringing a man to Christ who has often heard the Word and only laughed at it, but who cannot resist a gentle admonition. In one of the states of America, there was an infidel who was a great despiser of God, a hater of the Sabbath and all religious institutions. What to do with him the ministers did not know. They met together and prayed for him. But among the rest, one Elder B_____ resolved to spend a long time in prayer for the man; after that he got on horseback, and rode down to the man’s forge, for he was a blacksmith. He left his horse outside, and said, “Neighbour, I am under very great concern about your soul’s salvation; I tell you I pray day and night for your soul’s salvation.” He left him, and rode home on his horse. The man went inside to his house after a minute or two, and said to one of his faithful friends, “Here’s a new argument; here’s Elder B_____ been down here, he did not dispute, and never said a word to

me except this, 'I say, I am under great concern about your soul; I cannot bear that you should be lost.' Oh! that fellow," he said, "I cannot answer him;" and the tears began to roll down his cheeks. He went to his wife, and said, "I can't make this out; I never cared about my soul, but here's an elder, that has no connection with me, but I have always laughed at him, and he has come five miles this morning on horseback just to tell me he is under concern about my salvation. After a little while he thought it was time he should be under concern about his salvation too. He went in, shut the door, began to pray, and the next day he was at the deacon's house, telling him that he too was under concern about his salvation, and asking him to tell him what he must do to be saved. Oh! that the everlasting God might make use of some of those now present in the same way, that they might be induced to

"Tell to others round
What a dear Savior they have found;
To point to his redeeming blood,
And say, Behold the way to God!"

III. I shall not detain you much longer; but there is a third point, upon which we must be very brief. HOW IS THIS STORY TO BE TOLD?

First, tell it truthfully. Do not tell more than you know; do not tell John Bunyan's experience, when you ought to tell your own. Do not tell your mother you have felt what only Rutherford felt. Tell her no more than the truth. Tell your experience truthfully; for mayhap one single fly in the pot of ointment will spoil it, and one statement you may make which is not true may ruin it all. Tell the story truthfully.

In the next place, tell it very humbly. I have said that before. Do not intrude yourselves upon those who are older, and know more; but tell your story humbly; not as a preacher, not ex-cathedra, but as a friend and as a son.

Next, tell it very earnestly. Let them see you mean it. Do not talk about religion flippantly; you will do not good if you do. Do not make puns on texts; do not quote Scripture by way of joke: if you do, you may talk till you are dumb, you will do no good, if you in the least degree give them occasion to laugh by laughing at holy things yourself. Tell it very earnestly.

And then, tell it very devoutly. Do not try to tell your tale to man till you have told it first to God. When you are at home on Christmas-day, let no one see your face till God has seen it. Be up in the morning, wrestle with God; and if you friends are not converted, wrestle with God for them; and then you will find it easy work to wrestle with them for God. Seek, if you can, to get them one by one, and tell them the story. Do not be afraid; only think of the good you may possibly do. Remember, he that saves a soul from death hath covereth a multitude of sins, and he shall have stars in his crown for ever and ever. Seek to be under God — Saviors in your family, to be the means of leading your own beloved brethren and sisters to seek and to find the Lord Jesus Christ, and then one day, when you shall meet in Paradise, it will be a joy and blessedness to think that you are there, and that your friends are there too, whom God will have made you the instrument of saving. Let your reliance in the Holy Spirit be entire and honest. Trust not yourself, but fear not to trust him. He can give you words. He can apply those words to their heart, and so enable you to "minister grace to the hearers."

To close up, by a short, and I think, a pleasant turning of the text, to suggest another meaning to it. Soon, dear friends, very soon with some of us, the Master will say, "Go home to thy friends." You know where the home is. It is up above the stars.

"Where our best friends, our kindred dwell,
Where God our Savior reigns."

Yon grey-headed man has buried all his friends; he has said, "I shall go to them, but they will not return to me." Soon his Master will say, "Thou hast had enough tarrying here in this vale of tears: goo home to thy friends!" Oh! happy hour! Oh! blessed moment, when that shall be the word — "Go home to thy friends!" And when we go home to our friends in Paradise, what shall we do? Why, first we will repair to that blest seat where Jesus sits, take off our crown and cast it at his feet, and crown him Lord of all. And when we have done that, what shall be our next employ? Why, we will tell the blessed ones in heaven what the Lord hath done for us, and how he hath had compassion on us. And shall such a tale be told in heaven? Shall that be the Christmas Carol of the angels? Yes, it shall be; it has been published there before — blush not to tell it yet again — for Jesus has told it before, "When he cometh home, he calleth together his

friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost." And thou, poor sheep, when thou shall be gathered in, wilt thou not tell how thy Shepherd sought thee, and how he found thee? Will thou not sit in the grassy meads of heaven, and tell the story of thine own redemption? Wilt thou not talk with thy brethren and thy sisters, and tell them how God loved thee and hath brought thee there? Perhaps thou sayest, "It will be a very short story." Ah! it would be if you could write now. A little book might be the whole of your biography; but up there when your memory shall be enlarged, when your passion shall be purified and your understanding clear, you will find that what was but a tract on earth will be a huge tome in heaven. You will tell a long story there of God's sustaining, restraining, constraining grace, and I think that when you pause to let another tell his tale, and then another, and then another, you will at last, when you have been in heaven a thousand years, break out and exclaim, "O saints, I have something else to say." Again they will tell their tales, and again you will interrupt them with "Oh, beloved, I have thought of another case of God's delivering mercy." And so you will go on, giving them themes for songs, finding them the material for the warp and woof of heavenly sonnets. "Go home," he will soon say, "go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." Wait awhile; tarry his leisure, and ye shall soon be gathered to the land of the hereafter, to the home of the blessed, where endless felicity shall be thy portion. God grant a blessing for his name's sake!

HEAVENLY WORSHIP

SERMON NO. 110

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 28TH, 1856,

AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

"And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps; And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders; and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth." — Revelation 14:1-3.

THE SCENE of this marvellous and magnificent vision is laid upon Mount Sion; by which we are to understand, not Mount Sion upon earth, but Mount Sion which is above, "Jerusalem, the mother of us all." To the Hebrew mind Mount Sion was a type of heaven, and very justly so. Among all the mountains of the earth none was to be found so famous as Sion. It was there that patriarch Abraham drew his knife to slay his son; it was there, too, in commemoration of that great triumph of faith, Solomon built a majestic temple, "beautiful for situation and the joy of the whole earth." That Mount Sion was the center of all the devotions of the Jews.

"Up to her courts, with joys unknown,
The sacred tribes repaired."

Between the wings of the cherubim Jehovah dwelt; on the one altar there all the sacrifices were offered to high heaven. They loved Mount Sion, and often did they sing, when they drew nigh to her, in their annual pilgrimages, "How amiable are thy tabernacles O Lord God of hosts, my King and my God!" Sion is now desolate; she hath been ravished by the enemy; she hath been utterly destroyed; her vail hath been rent asunder, and the virgin daughter of Sion is now sitting in sackcloth and ashes; but, nevertheless, to the Jewish mind it must ever, in its ancient state, remain

the best and sweetest type of heaven. John, therefore, when he saw this sight might have said, “I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood in heaven, and with him an hundred and forty and four thousand having his Father’s name written in their foreheads: And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.”

This morning I shall endeavor to show you, first of all, the object of heavenly worship — the Lamb in the midst of the throne; in the next place we shall look at the worshippers themselves, and note their manner and their character; in the third place we shall listen to hear their song, for we may almost hear it; it is like “the noise of many waters and like great thunder;” and then we shall close by noting, that it is a new song which they sing, and by endeavoring to mention one or two reasons why it must necessarily be so.

I. In the first place, then, we wish to take a view of THE OBJECT OF HEAVENLY WORSHIP. The divine John was privileged to look within the gates of pearl; and on turning round to tell us what he saw — observe how he begins — he saith not, “I saw streets of gold or walls of Jasper;” he saith not, “I saw crowns, marked their lustre, and saw the wearers.” That he shall notice afterwards. But he begins by saying, “I looked, and, lo, a Lamb!” To teach us that the very first and chief object of attraction in the heavenly state is “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world.” Nothing else attracted the Apostle’s attention so much as the person of that Divine Being, who is the Lord God, our most blessed Redeemer: “I looked, and, lo a Lamb!” Beloved, if we were allowed to look within the vail which parts us from the world of spirits, we should see, first of all, the person of our Lord Jesus. If now we could go where the immortal spirits “day without night circle the throne rejoicing,” we should see each of them with their faces turned in one direction; and if we should step up to one of the blessed spirits, and say, “O bright immortal, why are thine eyes fixed? What is it that absorbs thee quite, and wraps thee up in vision?” He, without deigning to give an answer, would simply point to the center of the sacred circle, and lo, we should see a Lamb in the midst of

the throne. They have not yet ceased to admire his beauty, and marvel at his wonders and adore his person.

"Amidst a thousand harps and songs,
Jesus, our God, exalted reigns."

He is the theme of song and the subject of observation of all the glorified spirits and of all the angels in paradise. "I looked, and, lo, a Lamb!"

Christian, here is joy for thee; thou hast looked, and thou hast seen the Lamb. Through thy tearful eyes thou hast seen the Lamb taking away thy sins. Rejoice, then! In a little while, when thine eyes shall have been wiped from tears, thou wilt see the same Lamb exalted on his throne. It is the joy of the heart to hold daily fellowship and communion with Jesus; thou shalt have the same joy in heaven; "there shalt thou see him as he is, and thou shalt be like him." Thou shalt enjoy the constant vision of his presence, and thou shalt dwell with him for aye. "I looked, and, lo, a Lamb!" Why, that Lamb is heaven itself; for as good Rutherford says, "Heaven and Christ are the same things; to be with Christ is to be in heaven, and to be in heaven is to be with Christ." And he very sweetly says in one of his letters, wrapped up in love to Christ. "Oh! my Lord Christ, if I could be in heaven without thee, it would be a hell; and if I could be in hell, and have thee still, it would be a heaven to me, for thou art all the heaven I want." It is true, is it not Christian? Does not thy soul say so?

"Not all the harps above
Could make a heavenly place,
Should Christ his residence remove,
Or but conceal his face."

All thou needest to make thee blessed, supremely blessed, is "to be with Christ, which is far better."

And now observe the figure under which Christ is represented in heaven. "I looked, and, lo, a Lamb." Now, you know Jesus, in Scripture, is often represented as a lion: he is so to his enemies, for he devoureth them, and teareth them to pieces. "Beware, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." But in heaven he is in the midst of his friends, and therefore he

Looks like a lamb that has been slain,
And wears his priesthood still."

Why should Christ in heaven choose to appear under the figure of a lamb, and not in some other of his glorious characters? We reply, because it was as a lamb that Jesus fought and conquered, and, therefore as a lamb he appears in heaven. I have read of certain military commanders, when they were conquerors, that on the anniversary of their victory they would never wear anything but the garment in which they fought. On that memorable day they say, "Nay, take away the robes; I will wear the garment which has been embroidered with the sabre-cut, and garnished with the shot that hath riddled it; I will wear no other garb but that in which I fought and conquered." It seems as if the same feeling possessed the breast of Christ. "As a Lamb," saith he, "I died, and worsted hell; as a Lamb I have redeemed my people, and therefore as a Lamb I will appear in paradise."

But, perhaps, there is another reason; it is to encourage us to come to him in prayer. Ah, believer, we need not be afraid to come to Christ, for he is a Lamb. To a lion-Christ we need fear to come; but the Lamb-Christ! — oh, little children, were ye ever afraid of lambs? Oh, children of the living God, should ye ever fail to tell your griefs and sorrows into the breast of one who is a Lamb? Ah, let us come boldly to the throne of the heavenly grace, seeing a Lamb sits upon it. One of the things which tend very much to spoil prayer-meetings is the fact that our brethren do not pray boldly. They would practice reverence, as truly they ought, but they should remember that the highest reverence is consistent with true familiarity. No man more reverent than Luther; no man more fully carried out for the passage, "He talked with his Maker as a man talketh with his friend." We may be as reverent as the angels, and yet we may be as familiar as children in Christ Jesus. Now, our friends, when they pray, very frequently say the same thing every time. They are Dissenters; they cannot bear the Prayer Book; they think that forms of prayer are bad, but they always use their own form of prayer notwithstanding; as much as if they were to say that the bishop's form would not do, but their own they must always use. But a form of prayer being wrong, is as much wrong when I make it as when the bishop makes it; I am as much out of order in using what I compose myself continually and constantly, as I am when I am using one that has been composed for me; perhaps far more so, as it is not likely to be one-half so good. If our friends, however, would lay aside the form into which they grow, and break up the stereotyped plates with which they

print their prayers so often, they might come boldly to the throne of God, and need never fear to do so; for he whom they address is represented in heaven under the figure of a Lamb, to teach us to come close to him, and tell him all our wants, believing that he will not disdain to hear them.

And you will further notice that this Lamb is said to stand. Standing is the posture of triumph. The Father said to Christ, "Sit thou on my throne, till I make thine enemies thy footstool." It is done; they are his footstool, and here he is said to stand erect, like a victor over all his enemies. Many a time the Savior knelt in prayer; once he hung upon the cross; but when the great scene of our text shall be fully wrought out, he shall stand erect, as more than conqueror, through his own majestic might. "I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion." Oh, if we could rend the veil — if now we were privileged to see within it — there is no sight would so enthrall us as the simple sight of the Lamb in the midst of the throne. My dear brethren and sisters in Christ Jesus, would it not be all the sight you would ever wish to see, if you could once behold him whom your soul loveth? Would it not be a heaven to you, if it were carried out in your experience — "Mine eye shall see him, and not another's?" Would you want anything else to make you happy but continually to see him? Can you not say with the poet —

"Millions of years my wondering eyes
Shall o'er my Savior's beauty rove,
And endless ages I'll adore
The wonders of his love?"

And if a single glimpse of him on earth affords you profound delight; it must be, indeed, a very sea of bliss, and an abyss of paradise, without a bottom or a shore, to see him as he is; to be lost in his splendours, as the stars are lost in the sunlight, and to hold fellowship with him, as did John the beloved, when he leaned his head upon his bosom. And this shall be thy lot, to see the Lamb in the midst of the throne.

II. The second point is, THE WORSHIPPERS, WHO ARE THEY? Turn to the text, and you will not, first of all, their numbers — "I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand." This is a certain number put for an uncertain — I mean uncertain to us, though not uncertain to God. It is a vast number, put for

that “multitude which no man can number,” who shall stand before the throne of God. Now, here is something not very pleasant to my friend Bigot yonder. Note the number of those who are to be saved; they are said to be a great number, even a “hundred forty and four thousand,” which is but a unit put for the vast innumerable multitude who are to be gathered home. Why, my friend, there are so many as that belonging to your church. You believe that none will be saved but those who hear your minister, and believe your creed; I do not think you could find one hundred and forty-four thousand anywhere. You will have to enlarge your heart I think; you must take in a few more, and not be so inclined to shut out the Lord’s people, because you cannot agree with them. I do abhor from my heart that continual whining of some men about their own little church as the “remnant” — the “few that are to be saved.” They are always dwelling upon strait gates and narrow ways, and upon what they conceive to be a truth, that but few shall enter heaven. Why, my friends, I believe there will be more in heaven than in hell. If you ask me why I think so, I answer, because Christ, in everything, is to “have the pre-eminence,” and I cannot conceive how he could have the pre-eminence if there are to be more in the dominions of Satan than in paradise. Moreover, it is said there is to be a multitude that no man can number in heaven; I have never read that there is to be a multitude that no man can number in hell. But I rejoice to know that the souls of all infants, as soon as they die, speed their way to paradise. Think what a multitude there is of them! And then there are the just, and the redeemed of all nations and kindreds up till now; and there are better times coming, when the religion of Christ shall be universal; when he shall reign from pole to pole with illimitable sway; when kingdoms shall bow before him, and nations be born in a day; and in the thousand years of the great millennial state there will be enough saved to make up all the deficiencies of the thousands of years that have gone before. Christ shall have the pre-eminence at last; his train shall be far larger than that which shall attend the chariots of the grim monarch of hell. Christ shall be master everywhere, and his praise sounded in every land. One hundred and forty-four thousand were observed, the types and representatives of a far larger number who are ultimately to be saved.

But notice, whilst the number is very large, how very certain it is. By turning over the leaves of your Bible to a previous chapter of this book,

you will see that at the 4th verse it is written, that one hundred and forty-four thousand were sealed; and now we find there are one hundred and forty-four thousand saved; not 143,999, and 144,001, but exactly the number that are sealed. Now, my friends may not like what I am going to say; but if they do not like it, their quarrel is with God's Bible, not with me. There will be just as many in heaven as are sealed by God — just as many as Christ did purchase with his blood; all of them, and no more and no less. There will be just as many there as were quickened to life by the Holy Spirit, and were, "born again, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." "Ah," some say, "there is that abominable doctrine of election." Exactly so, if it be abominable; but you will never be able to cut it out of the Bible. You may hate it, and gnash and grind your teeth against it; but, remember, we can trace the pedigree of this doctrine, even apart from Scripture, to the time of the apostles. Church of England ministers and members, you have no right to differ from me on the doctrine of election, if you are what you profess by your own Articles. You who love the old Puritans, you have no right to quarrel with me; for where will you find a Puritan who was not a strong Calvinist? You who love the fathers, you cannot differ from me. What say you of Augustine? Was he not, in his day, called a great and mighty teacher of grace? And I even turn to Roman Catholics, and, with all the errors of their system, I remind them that even in their body have been found those who have held that doctrine, and, though long persecuted for it, have never been expelled the church. I refer to the Jansenists. But, above all, I challenge every man who reads his Bible to say that that doctrine is not there. What saith the 9th of Romans? "The children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth: It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger." And then it goes on to say to the carping objector — "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" But enough on this subject.

One hundred and forty-four thousand, we say, is a certain number made to represent the certainty of the salvation of all God's elect, believing people. Now, some say that this doctrine has a tendency to discourage men from

coming to Christ. Well, you say so; but I have never seen it, and blessed be God I have never proved it so. I have preached this doctrine ever since I began to preach; but I can say this, — ye shall not (and I am now become a fool in glorying) ye shall not find among those who have not preached the doctrine, one who has been the instrument of turning more harlots, more drunkards, and more sinners of every class, from the error of their ways, than I have, by the simple preaching of the doctrine of free grace; and, while this has been so, I hold that no argument can be brought to prove that it has a tendency to discourage sinners, or bolster them up in sin. We hold, as the Bible says, that all the elect, and those only, shall be saved; all who go to Christ are elect. So that if any of you have in your heart a desire after heaven and after Christ; if you carry out that desire in sincere and earnest prayer, and are born again, you may as certainly conclude your election as you can conclude that you are alive. You must have been chosen of God before the foundation of the world, or you would never have done any of these things, seeing they are the fruits of election.

But why should it keep any one from going to Christ? “Because,” says one, “if I go to Christ I may not be elect.” No, sir, if you go, you prove that you are elect. “But,” says another, “I am afraid to go, in case I should not be elect.” Say as an old woman once said, “If there were only three persons elected, I would try to be one of them; and since he said, ‘He that believeth shall be saved,’ I would challenge God on his promise, and try if he would break it.” No, come to Christ; and if you do so, beyond a doubt you are God’s elect from the foundation of the world; and therefore this grace has been given to you. But why should it discourage you? Suppose there are a number of sick folk here, and a large hospital has been built. There is put up over the door, “All persons who come shall be taken in:” at the same time it is known that there is a person inside the hospital, who is so wise that he knows all who will come, and has written down the names of all who will come in a book, so that, when they come, those who open the doors will only say, “How marvellously wise our Master was, to know the names of those who would come.” Is there anything despiriting in that? You would go, and you would have all the more confidence in that man’s wisdom, because he was able to know before that they were going. “Ah, but,” you say, “it was ordained that some should come.” Well, to give you another illustration; suppose there is a rule that there always

must be a thousand persons, or a very large number in the hospital. You say, “When I go perhaps they will take me in, and perhaps they will not.” “But,” says someone, “there is a rule that there must be a thousand in: somehow or other they must make up that number of beds, and have that number of patients in the hospital.” You say, ‘Then why should not I be among the thousand; and have not I the encouragement that whosoever goes shall not be cast out? And have I not again the encouragement, that if they will not go, they must be fetched in somehow or other; for the number must be made up; so it is determined and so it is decreed.” You would therefore have a double encouragement, instead of half a one; and you would go with confidence, and say, “They must take me in, because they say they will take all in that come; and on the other hand, they must take me in, because they must have a certain number: that number is not made up, and why should not I be one?” Oh, never doubt about election; believe in Christ, and then rejoice in election; do not fret about it till you have believed in Christ.

“I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand.” And who were these people, “having his Father’s name written in their foreheads?” Not Bs for “Baptists,” not Ws for “Wesleyans,” not Es for “Established Church:” they had their Father’s name and nobody else’s. What a deal of fuss is made on earth about our distinctions! We think such a deal about belonging to this denomination, and the other. Why, if you were to go to heaven’s gates, and ask if they had any Baptists there, the angel would only look at you, and not answer you; if you were to ask if they had any Wesleyans, or members of the Established Church, he would say, “Nothing of the sort;” but if you were to ask him whether they had any Christians there, “Ay,” he would say, “an abundance of them: they are all one now — all called by one name; the old brand has been obliterated, and now they have not the name of this man or the other; they have the name of God, even their Father, stamped on their brow.” Learn then dear friends, whatever the connection to which you belong, to be charitable to your brethren, and kind to them, seeing that, after all, the name you now hold here will be forgotten in heaven, and only your Father’s name will be there known.

One more remark here, and we will turn from the worshippers to listen to their song. It is said of all these worshippers that they learned the song

before they went there. At the end of the third verse it is said, “No man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.” Brethren, we must begin heaven’s song here below, or else we shall never sing it above. The choristers of heaven have all had rehearsals upon earth, before they sing in that orchestra. You think that, die when you may, you will go to heaven, without being prepared. Nay, sir; heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people, and unless you are “made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,” you can never stand there among them. If you were in heaven without a new heart and a right spirit, you would be glad enough to get out of it; for heaven, unless a man is heavenly himself, would be worse than hell. A man who is unrenewed and unregenerate going to heaven would be miserable there. There would be a song — he could not join in it; there would be a constant hallelujah, but he would not know a note: and besides, he would be in the presence of the Almighty, even in the presence of the God he hates, and how could he be happy there? No, sirs; ye must learn the song of paradise here, or else ye can never sing it. Ye must learn to sing —

“Jesus, I love thy charming name,
‘Tis music to my ears.”

You must learn to feel that “sweeter sounds than music knows mingle in your Savior’s name,” or else you can never chaunt the hallelujahs of the blest before the throne of the great “I AM.” Take that thought, whatever else you forget; treasure it up in your memory, and ask grace of God that you may here be taught to sing the heavenly song, that afterwards in the land of the hereafter, in the home of the beautified, you may continually chaunt the high praises of him that loved you.

III. And now we come to the third and most interesting point, namely, THE LISTENING TO THEIR SONG. “I heard a voice form heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps;” singing — how loud and yet how sweet!

First, then, singing how loud! It is said to be “like the voice of many waters.” Have you never heard the sea roar, and the fullness thereof? Have you never walked by the sea-side, when the waves were singing, and when

every little pebble-stone did turn chorister, to make up music to the Lord God of hosts? And have you never in time of storm beheld the sea, with its hundred hands, clapping them in gladsome adoration of the Most High? Have you never heard the sea roar out his praise, when the winds were holding carnival — perhaps singing the dirge of mariners, wrecked far out on the stormy deep, but far more likely exalting God with their hoarse voice, and praising him who makes a thousand fleets sweep over them in safety, and writes his furrows on their own youthful brow? Have you never heard the rumbling and booming of ocean on the shore, when it has been lashed into fury and has been driven upon the cliffs? If you have, you have a faint idea of the melody of heaven. It was "as the voice of many waters." But do not suppose that it is the whole of the idea. It is not the voice of one ocean, but the voice of many, that is needed to give you an idea of the melodies of heaven. You are to suppose ocean piled upon ocean, sea upon sea, — the Pacific piled upon the Atlantic, the Arctic upon that, the Antarctic higher still, and so ocean upon ocean, all lashed to fury, and all sounding with a mighty voice the praise of God. Such is the singing of heaven. Or if the illustration, fails to strike, take another. We have mentioned here two or three times the mighty falls of Niagara. They can be heard at a tremendous distance, so awful is their sound. Now, suppose waterfalls dashing upon waterfalls, cataracts upon cataracts, Niagaras upon Niagaras, each of them sounding forth their mighty voices, and you have got some idea of the singing of paradise. "I heard a voice like the voice of many waters." Can you not hear it? Ah! if our ears were opened we might almost cast the song. I have thought sometimes that the voice of the Aeolian harp, when it has swollen out grandly, was almost like an echo of the songs of those who sing before the throne; and on the summer eve, when the wind has come in gentle zephyrs through the forest, you might almost think it was the floating of some stray notes that had lost their way among the harps of heaven, and come down to us, to give us some faint foretaste of that song which hymns out in mighty peals before the throne of the Most High. But why so loud? The answer is, because there are so many there to sing. Nothing is more grand than the singing of multitudes. Many have been the persons who have told me that they could but weep when they heard you sing in this assembly, so mighty seemed the sound when all the people sang —

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

And, indeed, there is something very grand in the singing of multitudes. I remember hearing 12,000 sing on one occasion in the open air. Some of our friends were then present, when we concluded our service with that glorious hallelujah. Have you ever forgotten it? It was indeed a mighty sound; it seemed to make heaven itself ring again. Think, then, what must be the voice of those who stand on the boundless plains of heaven, and with all their might shout, "Glory and honor and power and dominion unto him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever."

On reason, however, why the song is so loud is a very simple one, namely, because all those who are there think themselves bound to sing the loudest of all. You know our favorite hymn —

"Then loudest of the crowd I'll sing,
While heav'n's resounding mansions ring
With shouts of sov'reign grace."

And every saint will join that sonnet, and each one lift up his heart to God, then how mighty must be the strain of praise that will rise up to the throne of the glorious God our Father!

But note next, while it was a loud voice, how sweet it was. Noise is not music. There may be "a voice like many waters." and yet no music. It was sweet as well as loud; for John says, "I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps." Perhaps the sweetest of all instruments is the harp. There are others which give forth sounds more grand and noble, but the harp is the sweetest of all instruments. I have sometimes sat to hear a skillful harper, till I could say, "I could sit and hear myself away," whilst with skillful fingers he touched the chords gently, and brought forth strains of melody which flowed like liquid silver, or like sounding honey into one's soul. Sweet, sweet beyond sweetness; words can scarcely tell how sweet the melody. Such is the music of heaven. No jarring notes there, no discord, but all one glorious harmonious song. You will not be there, formalist, to spoil the tune; nor you, hypocrite, to mar the melody; there will be all those there whose hearts are right with God, and therefore the strain will be one great harmonious whole, without a discord. Truly do we sing —

"No groans to mingle with the songs
That warble from immortal tongues."

And there will be no discord of any other sort to spoil the melody of those before the throne. Oh! my beloved brethren, that we might be there! Lift us up, ye cherubs! Stretch your wings, and bear us up where the sonnets fill the air. But if ye must not, let us wait our time.

"A few more rolling suns at most,
Will land us on fair Canaan's coast;"

and then we shall help to make the song, which now we can scarcely conceive, but which yet we desire to join.

IV. We now close with a remark upon the last point: WHY IS THE SONG SAID TO BE A NEW SONG? But one remark here. It will be a new song, because the saints were never in such a position before as they will be when they sing this new song. They are in heaven now; but the scene of our text is something more than heaven. It refers to the time when all the chosen race shall meet around the throne, when the last battle shall have been fought, and the last warrior shall have gained his crown. It is not now that they are thus singing, but it is in the glorious time to come, when all the hundred and forty and four thousand — or rather, the number typified by that number — will be all safely housed and all secure. I can conceive the period. Time was — eternity now reigns. The voice of God exclaims, "Are my beloved all safe?" The angel flies through paradise and returns with this message, "Yea, they are." "Is Fearful safe? Is Feeble-mind safe? Is Ready-to-Halt safe? Is Despondency safe?" "Yes, O king, they are," says he. "Shut-to the gates," says the Almighty, "they have been open night and day; shut them to now." Then, when all of them shall be there, then will be the time when the shout shall be louder than many waters, and the song shall begin which will never end. There is a story told in the history of brave Oliver Cromwell, which I use here to illustrate this new song. Cromwell and his Ironsides before they went to battle bowed the knee in prayer, and asked for God's help. Then, with their Bibles in their breasts, and their swords in their hands — a strange and unjustifiable mixture, but which their ignorance must excuse — they cried, "The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge;" and rushing to battle they sang —

"O Lord our God, arise and let
Thine enemies scattered be,
And let all those that do thee hate
Before thy presence flee.

They had to fight up hill for a long time, but at last the enemy fled. The Ironsides were about to pursue them and win the booty, when the stern harsh voice of Cromwell was heard — "Halt! halt! now the victory is won, before you rush to the spoil return thanks to God;" and they sang some such song as this — "Sing unto the Lord, for he has gotten us the victory! Sing unto the Lord." It was said to have been one of the most majestic sights in that strange, yet good man's history. (I say that word without blushing, for good he was.) For a time the hills seemed to leap, whilst the vast multitude, turning from the slain, still stained with blood, lifted up their hearts to God. We say, again, it was a strange sight, yet a glad one. But how great shall be that sight, when Christ shall be seen as a conqueror, and when all his warriors, fighting side by side with him, shall see the dragon beaten in pieces beneath their feet. Lo, their enemies are fled; they were driven like thin clouds before a Biscay gale. They are all gone, death is vanquished, Satan is cast into the lake of fire, and here stands the King himself, crowned with many crowns, the victor of the victors. And in the moment of exaltation the Redeemer will say, "Come let us sing unto the Lord;" and then, louder than the shout of many waters, they shall sing, "Hallelujah! the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." Ah! that will be the full carrying out of the great scene! My feeble words cannot depict it. I send you away with this simple question, "Shall you be there to see the conqueror crowned?" Have you "a good hope through grace" that you shall? If so, be glad; if not, go to your houses, fall on your knees, and pray to God to save you from that terrible place which must certainly be your portion, instead of that great heaven of which I preach, unless you turn to God with full purpose of heart.

A MIGHTY SAVIOR

SERMON NO. 111

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JANUARY 4, 1857,

AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

"Mighty to save." — Isaiah 63:1.

THIS, of course, refers to our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, who is described as "coming from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah," and who, when it is questioned who he is, replies, "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." It will be well, then, at the commencement of our discourse to make one or two remarks concerning the mysteriously complex person of the man and God whom we call our Redeemer, Jesus Christ our Savior. It is one of the mysteries of the Christian religion, that we are taught to believe that Christ is God, and yet a man. According to Scripture, we hold that he is "very God," equal and co-eternal with the Father, possessing, as his Father doth, all divine attributes in an infinite degree. He participated with his Father in all the acts of his divine might; he was concerned in the decree of election, in the fashioning of the covenant; in the creation of the angels, in the making of the world, when it was wheeled from nothing into space, and in the ordering of this fair frame of nature. Before any of these acts the divine Redeemer was the eternal Son of God. "From everlasting to everlasting he is God." Nor did he cease to be God when he became man. He was equally "God over all, blessed for evermore," when he was "the man of sorrows, acquainted with grief," as before his incarnation. We have abundant proof of that in the constant affirmations of Scripture, and, indeed, also in the miracles which he wrought. The raising of the dead, the treading of the billows of the ocean, the hushing of the winds and the rending of the rocks, with all those marvellous acts of his, which we have not time here to mention, were strong and potent proofs that he was God, most truly God, even when he condescended to be man. And Scripture, most certainly teaches us, that he is God now, that he shares the throne of

his Father — that he sits “high above all principalities and powers, and every name that is named,” and is the true and proper object of the veneration, the worship, and the homage of all worlds. We are equally taught to believe that he is man. Scripture informs us that, on a day appointed, he came from heaven and did become man as well as God, taking upon himself the nature of a babe in the manager in Bethlehem. From that babe, we are told, he did grow to the stature of manhood, and became “bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh,” in everything except our sin. His sufferings, his hunger, above all, his death and burial, are strong proofs that he was man, most truly man; and yet it is demanded of us by the Christians religion, to believe, that while he was man he was most truly God. We are taught that he was a “child born, a son given,” and yet, at the same time, the “Wonderful, the Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father.” Whosoever would have clear and right view of Jesus, must not mingle his natures. We must not consider him as a God diluted into deified manhood, or as a mere man officially exalted to the Godhead, but as being two distinct natures in one person; not God melted into man, nor man made into God, but man and God taken into union together. Therefore, do we trust in him, as the Daysman, the Mediator, Son of God, and Son of Man. This is the person who is our Savior. It is this glorious, yet mysterious being, of whom the text speaks, when it says, he is mighty — “mighty to save.”

That he is mighty we need not inform you; for as readers of the Scriptures you all believe in the might and majesty of the Incarnate Son of God. You believe him to be the Regent of providence, the King of death, the Conqueror of hell, the Lord of angels, the Master of storms, and the God of battles, and, therefore, you can need no proof that he is mighty. The subject of this morning is one part of his mightiness. He is “mighty to save.” May God the Holy Spirit help us in briefly entering upon this subject, and make use of it to the salvation of our souls!

First, we shall consider what is meant by the words “to save;” secondly, how we prove the fact that he is “mighty to save;”, thirdly, the reason why he is “mighty to save;” and then, fourthly, the inferences which are to be deduced from the doctrine that Jesus Christ is “mighty to save.”

I. First, then, WHAT ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND BY THE WORDS "TO SAVE?"

Commonly, most men, when they read these words, consider them to mean salvation from hell. They are partially correct, but the notion is highly defective. It is true Christ does save men from the penalty of their guilt; he does take those to heaven who deserve the eternal wrath and displeasure of the Most High; it is true that he does blot out "iniquity, transgression, and sin," and that the iniquities of the remnant of his people are passed over for the sake of his blood and atonement. But that is not the whole meaning of the words "to save." This deficient explanation lies at the root of mistakes which many theologians have made, and by which they have surrounded their system of divinity with mist. They have said that to save is to pluck men as brands from the burning — to save them from destruction if they repent. Now, it means vastly, I had almost said, infinitely more than this. "To save" means something more than just delivering penitents from going down to hell. By the words "to save," I understand the whole of the great work of salvation, from the first holy desire, the first spiritual conviction, onward to complete sanctification. All this done of God through Jesus Christ. Christ is not only mighty to save those who do repent, but he is able to make men repent; he is engaged not merely to carry those to heaven who believe, but he is mighty to give men new hearts and to work faith in them; he is mighty not merely to give heaven to one who wishes for it, but he is mighty to make the man who hates holiness love it, to constrain the despiser of his name to bend his knee before him, and to make the most abandoned reprobate turn from the error of his ways.

By the words "to save," I do not understand what some men say they mean. They tell us in their divinity that Christ came into the world to put all men into a salvable state — to make the salvation of all men possible by their own exertions. I believe that Christ came for no such thing — that he came into the world not to put men into a salvable state, but into a saved state; not to put them where they could save themselves, but to do the work in them and for them, from the first even to the last. If I believe that Christ came only to put you, my hearers, and myself into a state where we might save ourselves, I should give up preaching henceforth and for ever; for knowing a little of the wickedness of men's hearts, because I know

something of my own — knowing how much men naturally hate the religion of Christ — I should despair of any success in preaching a gospel which I had only to offer, its effects depending upon the voluntary acceptance of it by unrenewed and unregenerate men. If I did not believe that there was a might power, and which turns them from the error of their ways by the mighty, overwhelming, constraining force of a divine and mysterious influence, I should cease to glory in the cross of Christ. Christ, we repeat, is mighty, not merely to put men into a salvable condition, but mighty absolutely and entirely to save them. This fact I regard as one of the grandest proofs of the divine character of the Bible revelation. I have many a time had doubts and fears, as most of you have had; and where is the strong believer that he not sometimes wavered? I have said, within myself, "Is this religion true, which, day after day, I incessantly preach to the people? Is it the correct one? Is it true that this religion has an influence upon mankind?" And I will tell you how I have reassured myself. I have looked upon the hundreds, nay, upon the thousands whom I have around me, who were once the vilest of the vile — drunkards, swearers, and such like — and I now see then "clothed and in their right mind, "This must be the truth, then, because I see its marvellous effects. It is true, because it is efficient for purposes which error never could accomplish. It exerts an influence among the lowest order of mortals, and over the most abominable of our race. It is a power, an irresistible agent of good; who then shall deny its truth. I take it that the highest proof of Christ's power is not that he offers salvation, not that he bids you take it if you will, but that when you reject it, when you hate it, when you despise it, he has a power whereby he can change your mind, make you think differently from your former thoughts, and turn you from the error of your ways. This I conceive to be the meaning of the text: "mighty to save."

But it is not all the meaning. Our Lord is not only mighty to make men repent, to quicken the dead in sin, to turn them from their follies and their iniquities. But he is exalted to do more than that: he is mighty to keep them Christians after he has made them so, and mighty to preserve them in his fear and love, until he consummates their spiritual existence in heaven. Christ's might doth not lie in making a believer, and then leaving him to shift for himself afterwards; but he who begins the good work carries it on; he who imparts the first germ of life which quickens the dead soul, gives

afterwards the life which prolongs the divine existence, and bestows that mighty power which at last bursts asunder every bond of sin, and lands the soul perfected in glory. We hold and teach, and we believe upon Scriptural authority, that all men unto whom Christ has given repentance must infallibly hold on their way. We do believe that God never begins a good work in a man without finishing it; that he never makes a man truly alive to spiritual things without carrying on that work in his soul even to the end, by giving him a place amongst the choirs of the sanctified. We do not think that Christ's power dwells in merely bringing me one day into grace, and then telling me to keep myself there, but in so putting me into a gracious state, and giving me such an inward life and such a power within myself that I can no more turn back than the very sun in the heavens can stay itself in its course, or cease to shine. Beloved, we regard this as signified by the terms "mighty to save." This is commonly called Calvinistic doctrine; it is none other than Christian doctrine, the doctrine of the holy Bible; for despite that it is now called Calvinism, it could not be so called in Augustine's days; and yet in Augustine's works you find the very same things. And it is not to be called Augustinism; it is to be found in the writings of the apostle Paul. And yet it was not called Paulism, simple for this reason, that it is the expansion, the fullness of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. To repeat what we have before said, we hold and boldly teach that Jesus Christ is not merely able to save men who put themselves in his way and who are willing to be saved, but that he is able to make men willing — that he is able to make the drunkard renounce his drunkenness and come to him — that he is able to make the despiser bend his knee, and make hard hearts melt before his love. Now, it is ours to show that he is able to do so.

II. How Can We Prove That Christ Is "Mighty To Save?"

We will give you the strongest argument first; and we shall need but one. The argument is, that he has done it. We need no other; it were superfluous to add another. He has saved them, in the full extent and meaning of the word which we have endeavored to explain. But in order to set this truth in a clear light, we will suppose the worst of cases. It is very easy to imagine, say some, that when Christ's gospel is preached to some here who are amiable and lovely, and have always been trained up in the fear of God, they will receive the gospel in the love of it. Very well, we will not take

such a case. You see this South Sea Islander. He has just been eating a diabolical meal of human flesh; he is a cannibal; at his belt are slung the scalps of men whom he has murdered, and in whose blood he glories. If you land on the coast he will eat you, too, unless you mind what you are after. That man bows himself before a block of wood. He is a poor ignorant debased creature, but very little removed from the brute. Now, has Christ's gospel power to tame that man, to take the scalps from his girdle, to make him give up his bloody practices, renounce his gods, and become a civilised and Christian man? You know, my dear friends, you talk about the power of education in England; there may be a great deal in it; education may do very much for some who are here, not in a spiritual, but in a natural way; but what would education do with this savage: go and try. Send the best schoolmaster in England over to him: he will eat him before the day is up. That will be all the good of it. But if the missionary goes with Christ's gospel, what will become of him? Why, in multitudes of cases, he has been the pioneer of civilisation, and under the providence of God has escaped a cruel death. He goes with love in his hands and in his eyes; he speaks to the savage. And mark ye, we are telling facts now, not dreams. The savage drops his tomahawk. Says he, "It is marvellous; the things that this man tells me are wonderful, I will sit down and listen." He listens, and the tears roll down his cheeks; a feeling of humanity which never burned within his soul before is kindled in him. He says, "I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ;" and soon he is clothed and in his right mind, and becomes in every respect a man — such a man as we could desire all men to be. Now, we say, that this is proof that Christ's gospel does not come to the mind that is prepared for it, but prepares the mind for itself; that Christ does not merely put the seed into the ground that has been prepared beforehand, but ploughs the ground too — ay, and harrows it, and does the whole of the work. He is so able to do all this. Ask our missionaries who are in Africa, in the midst of the greatest barbarians in the world — ask them whether Christ's gospel is able to save, and they will point to the kraal of the Hottentot, and then they will point to the houses of the Kuraman, and they will say, "What has made this difference, but the word of the gospel of Christ Jesus?" Yes, dear brethren, we have had proofs enough in heathen countries; and why need we say more, but merely to add this — we have had proofs enough at home. There are some who preach a gospel which is very well fitted to train man in morals, but utterly

unfitted to save him, a gospel which does well enough to keep men sober when they have become drunkards. It is a good thing enough to supply them with a kind of life, when they have it already, but not to quicken the dead and save the soul, and it can give up to despair the very characters whom Christ's gospel was most of all intended to affect. I could a tale unfold, of some who have plunged head-first into the blackest gulfs of sin, which would horrify you and me, if we could allow them to recount their guilt. I could tell you how they have come into God's house with their teeth set against the minister, determined that say what he would they might listen, but it would be to scoff. They stayed a moment; some word arrested their attention; they thought within themselves, "I will hear that sentence." It was some pointed, terse saying, that entered into their souls. The knew not how it was, but they were spell-bound, and stood to listen a little longer; and by-and-bye, unconsciously to themselves, the tears began to fall, and when they went away, they had a strange, mysterious feeling about them that led them to their chambers. Down they fell on their knees; the story of their life was all told before God; he gave them peace through the blood of the Lamb, and they went to God's house, many of them to say, "Come and hear what God hath done for my soul," and to

"Tell to sinners round
What a dear Savior they had found."

Remember the case of John Newton, the great and mighty preacher of St. Mary, Woolnoth, — an instance of the power of God to change the heart, as well as to give peace when the heart is changed. Ah! dear hearers, I often think within myself, "This is the greatest proof of the Savior's power." Let another doctrine be preached: will it do the same? If it will, why not let every man gather a crowd round him and preach it. Will it really do it? If it will, then the blood of men's souls must rest upon the man who does not boldly proclaim it. If he believes his gospel does save souls, how does the account for it that he stands in his pulpit from the first of January till the last of December, and never hears of a harlot made honest, nor of a drunkard reclaimed? Why? For this reason, that it is a poor dilution of Christianity. It is something like it, but it is not the bold, broad Christianity of the Bible; it is not the full gospel of the blessed God, for that has power to save. But if they do believe that theirs is the gospel, let them come out to preach it, and let them strive with all their might to win

souls from sin, which is rife enough, God knows. We say again, that we have proof positive in cases even here before us, that Christ is mighty to save even the worst of men — to turn them from follies in which they have too long indulged, and we believe that the same gospel preached elsewhere would produce the same results.

The best proof you can ever have of God's being mighty to save, dear hearers, is that he saved you. Ah! my dear hearer, it were a miracle if he should save thy fellow that stands by thy side; but it were more a miracle if he should save thee. What art thou this morning? Answer! "I am an infidel," says one; "I hate and despise Christ's religion." But suppose, sir, there should be such a power in that religion that one day thou shouldst be brought to believe it! What wouldst thou say then? Ah! I know thou wouldst be in love with that gospel for ever; for thou wouldst say, "I above al men was the last to receive it; and yet here am I, I know now how, brought to love it." Oh! such a man when constrained to believe makes the most eloquent preacher in the world. "Ah! but," says another, "I have been a Sabbath-breaker upon principle, I despise the Sabbath, I hate utterly and entirely everything religious." Well, I can never prove religion to you to be true, unless it should ever lay h old of you, and make you a new man. Then you will say there is something in it. "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." When we have felt the change it works in ourselves, then we speak of facts, and not of fancies, and we speak very boldly too. We say again, then, he is "mighty to save."

III. But now it is asked, WHY IS CHRIST "MIGHTY TO SAVE?" To this there are sundry answers.

First, if we understand the word "save," in the popular acceptation of the word, which is not, after all, the full one, though a true one — if we understand salvation to mean the pardon of sin and salvation from hell, Christ is mighty to save, because of the infinite efficacy of his atoning blood. Sinner! black as thou art with sin, Christ this morning is able to make thee whiter than the driven snow. Thou askest why. I will tell thee. He is able to forgive, because he has been punished for thy sin. If thou dost know and feel thyself to be a sinner, if thou hast no hope or refuge before God but in Christ, then be it known that Christ is able to forgive, because he was once punished for the very sin which thou hast committed,

and therefore he can freely remit, because the punishment has been entirely paid by himself. Whenever I get on this subject I am tempted to tell a story; and though I have told it times enough in the hearing of many of you, others of you have never heard it, and it is the simplest way I know of setting out the belief I have in the atonement of Christ. Once a poor Irishman came to me in my vestry. He announced himself something in this way: "Your reverence, I'm come to ax you a question." "In the first place," said I, "I am not a reverend, nor do I claim the title; and in the next place, why don't you go and ask your priest that question?" Said he "Well, your riv — sir, I meant — I did go to him but he did not answer me to my satisfaction, exactly; so I have come to ask you, and if you will answer this you will set my mind at peace, for I am much disturbed about it." "What is the question?" said I. "Why this. You say, and others say too, that God is able to forgive sin. Now, I can't see how he can be just, and yet forgive sin: for," said this poor man, "I have been so greatly guilty that if God Almighty does not punish me he ought; I feel that he would not be just if he were to suffer me to go without punishment. How, then, sir, can it be true that he can forgive, and still retain the title of just?" "Well," said I, "it is through the blood and merits of Jesus Christ." "Ah!" said he, "but then I do not understand what you mean by that. It is the kind of answer I got from the priest, but I wanted him to explain it to me more fully, how it was that the blood of Christ could make God just. You say it does, but I want to know how." "Well, then," said I, "I will tell you what I think to be the whole system of atonement, which I think is the sum and substance, the root, the marrow, and the essence of the gospel. This is the way Christ is able to forgive. Suppose," said I, "you had killed some one. You were a murderer; you were condemned to die, and you deserved it." "Faith," said he, "Yes I should deserve it." "Well, her Majesty is very desirous of saving your life, and yet at the same time universal justice demands that some one should die on account of the deed that is done. Now, how is she to manage?" Said he, "That is the question. I cannot see how she can be inflexibly just, and yet suffer me to escape." "Well," said I, "suppose, Pat, I should go to her and say, 'Here is this poor Irishman, he deserved to be hanged, your Majesty; I don't want to quarrel with the sentence, because I think it just; but, if you please, I so love him that if you were to hang me instead of him I should be very willing.' Pat, suppose she should agree to it, and hang me instead of you;

what then? would she be just in letting you go?" "Ay," said he, "I should think she would. Would she hang two for one thing? I should say not. I'd walk way, and there isn't a policeman that would touch me for it." "Ah!" said I, "that is how Jesus saves. 'Father,' he said, 'I love these poor sinners; let me suffer instead of them!' 'Yes,' said God, 'thou shalt;' and on the tree he died, and suffered the punishment which all his elect people ought to have suffered; so that now all who believe on him, thus proving themselves to be his chosen, may conclude that he was punished for them, and that therefore they never can be punished." "Well," said he, looking me in the face once more, "I understand what you mean; but how is it, if Christ died for all men, that notwithstanding, some men are punished again? For that is unjust." "Ah!" said I, "I never told you that. I say to you that he has died for all that believe on him, and all who repent, and that was punished for their sins so absolutely and so really, that none of them shall ever be punished again." "Faith," said the man, clapping his hands, "that's the gospel; if it isn't, then I don't know anything, for no man could have made that up; it is so wonderful. Ah!" he said, as he went down the stairs, "Pat's safe now; with all his sins about him he'll trust in the man that died for him, and so he shall be saved." Dear hearer, Christ is mighty to save, because God did not turn away the sword, but he sheathed it in his own Son's heart; he did not remit the debt, for it was paid in drops of precious blood; and now the great receipt is nailed to the cross, and our sins with it, so that we may go free if we are believers in him. For this reason he is "mighty to save," in the true sense of the word.

But in the large sense of the word, understanding it to mean all that I have said it does mean, He is "mighty to save." How is it that Christ is able to make men repent, to make men believe, and to make them turn to God? One answers, "Why by the eloquence of preachers." God forbid we should ever say that! It is "not by might nor by power." Other replying, "It is by the force of moral suasion." God forbid we should say "ay" to that; for moral suasion has been tried long enough on man, and yet it has failed of success. How does he do it? We answer, by something which some of you despise, but which, nevertheless, is a fact. he does it by the Omnipotent influence of his Divine Spirit. Whilst men are hearing the word (in those whom God will save) the Holy Spirit works repentance; he changes the heart and renews the soul. True, the preaching is the instrument, but the

Holy Spirit is the great agent. It is certain that the truth is the means of saving, but it is the Holy Ghost applying the truth which saves souls. Ah! and with this power of the Holy Ghost e may go to the most debased and degraded of men, and we need not be afraid but that God can save them. If God should be please, the Holy Spirit could at this moment make every one of you fall on your knees, confess your sins, and turn to God. He is an Almighty Spirit, able to do wonders. In the life of Whitfield, we read that sometimes under one of his sermons two thousand persons would at once profess to be saved, and were really so, many of them. We ask why it was. At other times he preached just as powerfully, and not one soul was saved. Why? Because in the one case the Holy Spirit went with the Word, and in the other case it did not. All the heavenly result of preaching is owing to the Divine Spirit sent from above. I am nothing; my brethren in the ministry around are all nothing; it is God that doeth everything. "Who is Paul, who is Apollos, and who is Cephas, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as God gave to every man." It must be "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." Go forth, poor minister! Thou has no power to preach with polished diction and elegant refinement; go and preach as thou canst. The Spirit can make thy feeble words more mighty than the most ravishing eloquence. Alas! alas! for oratory! Alas! for eloquence! It hath long enough been tried. We have had polished periods, and finely turned sentences; but in what place have the people been saved by them? We have had grand and gaudy language; but where have hearts been renewed! But now, "by the foolishness of preaching," by the simple utterance by a child of God's Word, he is pleased to save them that believe and to save sinners from the error of their ways. May God prove his Word again this morning!

IV. The fourth point was, WHAT ARE THE INFERENCES TO BE DERIVED FROM THE FACT THAT JESUS CHRIST IS MIGHTY TO SAVE?

Why, first, there is a fact for ministers to learn — that they should endeavor to preach in faith, nothing wavering. "O God," cries the minister at times, when he is on his knees, "I am weak; I have preached to my hearers, and have wept over them; I have groaned for them; but they will not turn to thee. Their hearts are like the nether mill-stone; they will not weep for sin, nor will they love the Savior." Then I think I see the angel standing at his elbow, and whispering in his ear, "Thou art weak, but he is

strong; thou canst do nothing, but he is ‘mighty to save.’“ Bethink thyself of this. It is not the instrument, but the God. It is not the pen wherewith the author writes which is to have the praise of his wisdom or the making of the volume, but it is the brain that thinks it, and the hand that moves the pen. So in salvation. It is not the minister, it is not the preacher, but the God who first designs the salvation, and afterwards uses the preacher to work it out. Ah! poor disconsolate preacher, if thou hast had but little fruit of thy ministry, go on still in faith, remembering it is written, “My word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” Go on; be of good courage; God shall help thee; he shall help thee, and that right early.

Again, here is another encouragement for praying men and women, who are praying to God for their friends. Mother, you have been groaning for your son for many a year; he is now grown up and has left your roof, but your prayers have not been heard. So you think. He is as gay as ever; not yet has he made your breast rejoice. Sometimes you think he will bring your grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. It was but yesterday you said, “I will give him up, I will never pray for him again.” Stop, mother, stop! By all that is holy and that is heavenly, stop! Utter not that resolution again; begin once more! Thou hast prayed over him; thou didst weep over his infant forehead, when he lay in his cradle; thou didst teach him when he came to years of understanding and thou hast often warned him since; but all of no avail. Oh! give not up thy prayers; for remember, Christ is “mighty to save.” It may be that he waits to be gracious, and he keeps thee waiting, that thou mayest know more of his graciousness when the mercy comes. But pray on. I have heard of mothers who have prayed for their children twenty years; ay, and some who have died without seeing them converted, and then their very death has been the means of saving their children, by leading them to think. A father once had been a pious man for many years, yet never had he the happiness of seeing one of his sons converted. He had his children round his bed, and he said to them when dying, “My sons, I could die in peace, if I could but believe you would follow me to heaven; but this is the most sorrowful thing of all — not that I am dying, but that I am leaving you to meet you no more.” They looked at him, but they would not think on their ways. They went away. Their father was suddenly overtaken with great clouds and darkness of mind;

instead of dying peacefully and happily, he died in great misery of soul, but still trusting in Christ. He said, when he died, “Oh! that I had died a happy death, for that would have been a testimony to my sons; but now, O God, this darkness and these clouds have in some degree taken away my power to witness to the truth of thy religion.” Well, he died, and was buried. The sons cam to the funeral. The day after, one of them said to his brother, “Brother, I have been thinking, father was always a pious man, and if his death was yet such a gloomy one, how gloomy must ours be, without God and without Christ!” “Ah!” said the other, “that thought struck me too.” They went up to God’s house, heard God’s Word, they came home and bent their knee in prayer, and to their surprise they found that the rest of the family had done the same, and that the God who had never answered their father’s prayer in his life had answered it after his death, and by his death too, and by such a death as would appear to be most unlikely to have wrought the conversion of any. Pray on, then, my sister; pray on, my brother! God shall yet bring thy sons and daughters to his love and fear, and thou shalt rejoice over them in heaven, if thou never dost on earth.

And finally, my dear hearers, there are many of you here this morning who have no love to God, no love to Christ; but you have a desire in your hearts to love him. You are saying, “Oh! can he save me? Can such a wretch as I be saved?” In the thick of the crowd there you are standing, and you are now saying within yourself, “May I one day sing among the saints above? May I have all my sins blotted out by blood divine?” “Yes, sinner, he is ‘mighty to save;’ and this is comfort for thee.” Dost thou think thyself the worst of men? Does conscience smite thee as with a mailed fist, and does he say it is all over with thee; thou wilt be lost; thy repentance will be of no avail; thy prayers never will be heard; thou art lost to all intents and purposes? My hearer, think not so. He is “mighty to save.” If thou canst not pray, he can help thee to do it; if thou canst not repent, he can give thee repentance; if thou feelest it hard to believe, he can help thee to believe, for he is exalted on high to give repentance, as well as to give remission of sins. O poor sinner, trust in Jesus; cast thyself on him. Cry, and may God help thee to do it now, the first Sabbath of the year; may he help thee this very day to cast thy soul on Jesus; and this will be one of the best years of all thy life. “Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die, O

house of Israel?” Turn unto Jesus, ye wearied souls; come unto him, for lo, he bids you come. “The Spirit and the bride say come; and let him that heareth say come; and whosoever will let him come and take of the water of life,” and have Christ’s grace freely. It is preached to you, and to all of you who are willing to receive it, it has been already given.

May God of his grace make you willing, and so save your souls, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen.

THE WAR OF TRUTH

SERMON NO. 112

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JANUARY 11, 1857,

AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

"And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men and go out, fight with Amalek; to-morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand." — Exodus 17:9.

THE CHILDREN of Israel were led out of Egypt with a strong hand and an out-stretched arm. They were conducted into the vast howling wilderness, where there were few, if any, permanent abodes of men. For some time they pursued their march in solitude, discovering wells and other traces of a nomadic population, but not meeting with any to disturb their loneliness. But it appears that then, as now, there were wandering tribes who, like the Bedouin Arabs, wandered to and fro through that very country which the people of Israel were now treading with their feet. These people, excited by the hope of spoil, fell suddenly upon the rear of the children of Israel, smote the hindmost of them in a most cowardly manner, took their spoil, and then swiftly decamped. Gathering strength and courage from this successful foray, they then dared to attack the whole host of Israel, which at that time must have amounted to two or three millions of souls, who had been brought out of Egypt and fed by miracle in the wilderness. This time Israel was not to be surprised; for Moses had said unto Joshua —

> "Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to-morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand;"

pleading with God, in order that every blow struck with the sword might be made doubly powerful by the mighty assistance of God. We are told that a great victory was achieved; the Amalekites were put to the rout, and because of their unprovoked attack upon the children of Israel, they were condemned to extermination; for we find it written thus: —

> "Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi. For he said, Because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."

Now, beloved, this scene of warfare is not recorded in Scripture as in interesting circumstance to amuse the lover of history, but it is written for our edification; for we remember the text which says — "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our profit." There is some profit to be derived from this — and we believe a peculiar profit, too, since God was pleased to make this the first writing commanded by Divine authority as a record for generations to come. We think that the journeys of the children of Israel furnish us with many emblems of the journey of God's church through the world; and we believe, that this fight with Amalek is a metaphor and an emblem of that constant and daily fight which all God's people must carry on with sins without and sins within. This morning I shall more particularly confine myself to sin without; I shall speak of the great battle which at the present moment is being waged for God and for his truth, against the enemies of the Cross of Christ. I shall endeavor, first, to make a few remarks upon the war itself, then to review the authorised method of warfare, which is twofold — hard blows and hard prayers, and then I shall finish by stirring up God's church to great and earnest diligence in the warfare for God and for his truth.

I. First, then, we shall make some remarks upon THE GREAT WARFARE which we think is typified by the content between the children of Israel and Amalek.

First of all, note that this crusade, this sacred, holy war of which I speak, is not with men, but with Satan and with error. "We wrestle not with flesh and blood." Christian men are not at war with any man that walks the earth. We are at war with infidelity, but the persons of infidels we love and pray for; we are at warfare with any heresy, but we have no enmity against heretics; we are opposed to, and cry war to the knife with everything that opposes God and his truth: but towards every man we would still endeavor to carry out the holy maxim, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you." The Christian soldier hath no gun and no

sword, for he fighteth not with men. It is with “spiritual wickedness in high places” that he fights, and with other principalities and powers than with those that sit on thrones and hold scepters in their hands. I have marked, however, that some Christian men — and it is a feeling to which all of us are prone — are very apt to make Christ’s war a war of flesh and blood, instead of a war with wrong and spiritual wickedness. Have you never noticed in religious controversies how men will fall foul of each other, and make personal remarks and abuse each other? What is that but forgetting what Christ’s war is? We are not fighting against men; we are fighting for men rather than against them. We are fighting for God and his truth against error and against sin; but not against men. Woe, woe, to the Christian who forgets this sacred canon of warfare. Touch not the persons of men, but smite their sin with a stout heart and with strong arm. Slay both the little ones and the great; let nothing be spared that is against God and his truth; but we have no war with the persons of poor mistaken men. Rome we hate even as we abhor hell, yet for her votaries we ever pray. Idolatry and infidelity we fiercely denounce, but the men who debase themselves by either of them are the objects not of wrath, but pity. We fight not against the men, but against the things which we consider in God’s sight to be wrong. Let us always make that distinction, otherwise the conflict with Christ’s church will be degraded into a mere battle of brute force and garments rolled in blood; and so the world will again be an Aceldama — a field of blood. It is this mistake which has nailed martyrs to the stake and cast confessors into prison, because their opponents could not distinguish between the imaginary error and the man. While they spoke stoutly against the seeming error; in their ignorant bigotry they felt that they must also persecute the man, which they need not and ought not to have done. I will never be afraid to speak out my mind with all the Saxon words I can get together, and I am not afraid of saying hard things against the devil, and against what the devil teaches; but with every man in the wide world I am friends, nor is there one living with whom I am at enmity for a moment any more than with the babe that has just been brought into the world. We must hate error, we must abhor falsehood; but we must not hate men, for God’s warfare is against sin. May God help us always to make that distinction.

But now let us observe that the warfare which the Christian carries on, may be said for his encouragement, to be a most righteous warfare. In every other conflict in which men have engaged, there have been two opinions, some have said the war was right, and some have said it was wrong; but in regard to the sacred war in which all believers have been engaged, there has been only one opinion among right-minded men. When the ancient priest stirred up the Crusaders to the fight, he made them shout Deus vult — God wills it. And we may far more truly say the same. A war against falsehood, a war against sin, is God's war; it is a war which commends itself to every Christian man, seeing he is quite certain that he has the seal of God's approval when he goes to wage war against God's enemies. Beloved, we have no doubt whatever, when we lift up our voices like a trumpet against sin, that our warfare is justified by the eternal laws of justice. Would to God that every war had so just and true an excuse as the war which God wages with Amalek — with sin in the world!

Let us recollect again, that it is a war of the greatest importance. In other wars it is sometimes said — "Britons! fight for your hearths and your homes, for your wives and for your children — fight and repel the foe!" But in this war it is not merely for our hearths and for our homes, for our wives and for our children, but it is for something more than this. It is not against them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do; but it is a fight for souls, for eternity, against those who would plunge man into eternal perdition, a fight for God, for the deliverance of men's souls from wrath to come. It is a war which ought, indeed, to be commenced, to be followed up, and carried out in spirit, by the whole army of God's elect, seeing that no war can be more important. The instrumental salvation of men is above all things the highest object to which we can attain, and the routing of the foes of truth is a victory beyond all things to be desired. Religion must be the foundation of every blessing which society can hope to enjoy. Little as men think it, religion has much to do with our liberty, our happiness, and our comfort. England would not have been what it now is, if it had not been for her religion; and in that hour when she shall forsake her God, her glory shall have fallen, and "Ichabod" shall be written upon her banners.

In that day when the Gospel shall be silenced, when our ministers shall cease to preach; when the Bible shall be chained; in that day — God forbid

it should ever come to pass — in that day, England may write herself among the dead, for she hath fallen, since God hath forsaken her, seeing she hath cast off her allegiance to him. Christian men, in this fight for right, ye are fighting for your nation, for your liberties, your happiness and your peace; for unless religion, the religion of heaven be maintained, these will most certainly be destroyed.

Let us reflect, in the next place, that we are fighting with insidious and very powerful foes, in this great warfare for God and Christ. Let me again make the remark, that whilst speaking of certain characters, I am not speaking of the men, but of their errors. At this time we have peculiar difficulties in the great content for truth — peculiar, because very few appreciate them. We have enemies of all classes, and all of them far wider awake than we are. The infidel hath his eyes wide open, he is spreading his doctrines everywhere; and while we think — good easy men — that full surely our greatness is ripening, that frost is nipping many of our fair shoots, and unless we awaken, God help us! In almost every place infidelity seems to have a great away; not the bold bragging infidelity of Tom Payne, but a more polite and moderate infidelity; not that which slayeth religion with a bludgeon, but that which seeks to poison it with a small dose of poison, and goeth its way, and saith still it hath not hurt public morals. Everywhere this is increasing; I fear that the great mass of our population are imbued with an infidel spirit. Then we have more to fear than some of us suppose from Rome; not from Rome openly; from that we have little to fear; God hath given to the people of England such a bold Protestant spirit, that any open innovation from the Pope of Rome would be instantly repelled; but I mean the Romanism that has crept into the Church of England under the name of Puseyism. Everywhere that has increased; they are beginning to light candles on the altar, which is only a prelude to those greater lights with which they would consume our Protestantism. Oh! that there were men who would unmask them! We have much to fear from them; but I would not care one whit for that if it were not for something which is even worse. We have to deal with a spirit, I know not how to denominate it, unless I call it a spirit of moderatism in the pulpits of protestant churches. Men have begun to rub off the rough edges of truth, to give up the doctrines of Luther and Zwingle, and Calvin, and to endeavor to accommodate them to polished tastes. You might go

into a Roman Catholic chapel now-a-days, and hear as good a sermon from a Popish priest as you hear in many cases from a Protestant minister, because he does not touch disputed points, or bring out the angular parts of our Protestant religion. Mark, too, in the great majority of our books what a dislike there is to sound doctrine! the writers seem to fancy that truth is of no more value than error; that as for the doctrines we preach, it cannot matter what they are; still holding that

"He can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

There is creeping into the pulpits of Baptists and every other denomination, a lethargy and coldness, and with that a sort of nullification of all truth. While they for the most part preach but little notable error, yet the truth itself is uttered in so minute a form that no one detects it, and in so ambiguous a style, that no one is struck with it. So far as man can do it, God's arrows are blunted, and the edge of his sword is turned in the day of battle. Men do not hear the truth as they used to. The velvet mouth is succeeding to the velvet cushion, and the organ is the only thing in the building which giveth forth a certain sound. From all such things, "good Lord deliver us!" May heaven put an end to all this moderatism; we want out-and-out truth in these perilous days; we want a man just now to speak as God tells him, and care for nobody. Oh! if we had some of the old Scotch preachers! Those Scotch preachers made kings tremble; they were no men's servants; they were very lords, wherever they went, because each of them said, "God has given me a message; my brow is like adamant against men; I will speak what God bids me." Like Micah, they said, "As the Lord my God liveth, whatsoever my God saith unto me, that will I speak." Heroes of the truth, soldiers of Christ awake! Even now there are enemies. Think not that the fight is over; the great warfare of truth waxes more hot and fierce than ever. Oh! soldiers of Christ! take your swords from your scabbards! stand up for God and for his truth again, lest a free grace gospel should be forgotten.

Let me just say, once more, concerning this war, that it is one that is to be of perpetual duration. Let us recollect, my beloved, that this war between right and wrong must be continued, and never must cease until truth has the victory. If you suppose that our forefathers did enough for truth and for God, and that you may be idle, you have made a great mistake. Until

that day when the might with the right, and the right with the might shall be, we must never sheathe our swords; until that happy hour when Christ shall reign, when he shall be Master of all lands, when “swords shall be beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks,” and men shall not learn way any more; until that day the conflict is to be kept up. Let no man think we are in such a position that we have no need for watchfulness: terrible as the war has been before, it is as terrible now, though in another manner. We have not now to resist unto blood, striving against sin, but we have need of as stern a power of resistance as ever was possessed by martyrs and confessors in days gone by. Brethren, we must awake; the army must be aroused, the soldiers of the Lord must be quickened to a consciousness of their position. Now, now, we blow the trumpet; rush to the fight ye slumbering soldiers! Up, up, up! Let your banners wave, and let your swords be taken from your scabbards; it is a day of fight — a day of war and contention.

I cannot, however, conclude this section of my discourse without remarking that it is not merely error in religion with which we have to fight, but error in practice. Oh! beloved this world is a wicked world still, and London is an abominable city still. We have a fine gloss everywhere — a fair exterior, but, alas, within the hidden parts sin is still dominant. This is the great city of pretense, the gaudy house of sham, the foul home of pollution. Our streets are lined with fair houses; but what have we behind them? what have we there, in the very vitals of our city? This city is a colossal culprit, it is a behemoth sinner, and everywhere there are those who live in the vilest of vices, and yet go unchecked and unreproved, for it is unfashionable to tell men of their sins and there are few who have the spirit to speak out plainly of men’s sins. When we consider the mass of female profligacy which numbers it votaries by tens of thousands, are we not driven to conclude that the same sin must be rife enough with men. And ah! that there should be need to utter it. Are not the men who ensnare and seduce the poor unfortunates, allowed to enter society as respectable and moral. What is this but abominable hypocrisy. We are greater sinners in London than many suppose. Everything is painted over. But think not that you can deceive God in this way? Sin is stalking through the land at a horrid pace; iniquity still runs down our streets, covered up, it is true, not open sin, but still offensive alike to God and to good men. Oh! my

brethren, the world is not good yet; it is filmed over, but all the while the loathsome disease lurks within. Up, again, I say, soldiers of Christ; the war against sin is not finished, it is scarce begun.

II. But now, secondly, we have to notice, briefly the APPOINTED MEANS OF WARFARE. When Amalek came out against Israel, God appointed two means of combating them. If he had chosen, he could have sent a wind and driven them away, or have cut off their hosts by the blast of the pestilence; but it did not so please him; for he would put honor upon human effort, and, therefore, he said to Joshua, "Choose out your men, and go fight with Amalek." It is true Joshua might, by God's strength, have overcome the foe; but says God, "While I honor human effort, I will still make men see that God doeth all. Moses! go up to yonder hill; stand there in prayer, hold up thy rod, and whilst the soldiers of Joshua rush into the fight, Moses shall plead, and you shall be unitedly successful. Your prayer, O Moses, without the sword of Joshua, shall not prosper; and the sword of Joshua, without the rod of Moses, shall not be effectual." The two ways of fighting sin are these — hard blows and hard prayers.

First, the church must employ hard blows and hard fighting against sin. It is of no use for you to shut yourselves up in your houses, and pray to God to stay sin, unless you go and do something yourselves. If you pray away till you are dumb, you shall never have a blessing unless you exert yourselves. Let the farmer pray for a harvest; will he ever have it, unless he ploughs the field and then sows his seed? Let the warrior pray for victory, and let his soldiers stand peacefully to be shot at, will he gain a triumph? No, there must be an active exercise of the power given by God, or else prayer without it will be of no avail. Let us, then, brethren and sisters, each in our spheres, deal hard blows at the enemy. This is a fight in which all can do something who are the Lord's people. Those who halt upon there crutches can use them for weapons of war, as well as the mighty men can wield their swords! We have each an allotted work to do, if we are the Lord's elect; let us take care that we do it. You are a tract distributor; go on with your work, do it earnestly. You are a Sunday-school teacher; go on, do not stay in that blessed work, do it as unto God, and not as unto man. You are a preacher; preach as God giveth you ability, remembering that he requireth of no man more than he hath given to him; therefore, be not discouraged if you have little success, still go on. Are you

like Zebulon, one that can handle the pen? Handle it wisely; and you shall smite through the loins of kings therewith. And if you can do but little, at least furnish the shot for others, that so you may help them in their works of faith and their labors of love. But let us all do something for Christ. I will never believe there is a Christian in the world who cannot do something. There is not a spider hanging on the king's wall but hath its errand; there is not a nettle that groweth in the corner of the churchyard but hath its purpose; there is not a single insect fluttering in the breeze but accomplisheth some divine decree; and I will never have it that God created any man, especially any Christian man, to be a blank, and to be a nothing. He made you for an end. Find out what that end is; find our your niche, and fill it. If it be ever so little, if it is only to be a hewer of wood and drawer of water, do something in this great battle for God and truth. Joshua must go out and take his men. I think I see him; he appears to have been a man of war from his youth; but what a motley host he had to choose from! Why, they were a set of slaves; they had never seen a sword in their lives, except in the hands of the Egyptians; they were poor, miserable creatures; they were cowards when they saw their old enemies at the Red Sea, and now their weapons were those which were washed up from the Red Sea, and their regimentals were of all descriptions upon earth. Joshua, however, chooses out the strongest of them, and says, "Come with me." It was indeed, as one called it, a "ragged regiment" with which he went to fight: and yet the ragged regiment was the victorious one. Joshua won the day against the Amalekites, who had been trained to a predatory life. So, ye children of God, ye may know little of the tactics of warfare, your enemies may overthrow you in arguments, and annihilate you in logic; but, if you are God's children, they that are with you are more than a match for your foes; you shall live to see them yet dead upon the field; only fight on with faith in God, and you shall be victorious.

But this is not all. Joshua might have fought; but he would have been routed, had it not been for Moses on the brow of the hill. They were both necessary. Do you not see the battle! It is not on a very large scale, but it is still worthy of your earnest attention. There is Amalek, rushing to the war with discordant cries; see, Israel is repulsing them, and Amalek flees! But what is it that I notice? Now Israel turns back and flees; now again they rally and Amalek is put to the flight! Lo! they are cut to pieces by

the sword of Joshua, and mighty Amalek wavers like the corn beneath the mower's scythe. The crowd of Amalek are dropping. But again! again the battle wavers; Joshua flees; but once again he rallies his troops! And have you not observed the wonderous phenomenon? There, on the brow of the hill stands Moses. You will notice that when his hands were outstretched, Israel routed Amalek; but the moment when from weariness he dropped his hands, then Amalek had a temporary victory; and when again he held up his rod, Israel routed the foe. Each time the hand of prayer fell down, victory wavered between the combatants. Do you see the venerable intercessor? Moses, being an aged man, becomes weary from standing so many hours, they seat him upon a stone; still, arms are not iron, and the hands are drooping; but see! his eyes are flashing fire, and his hands are lifted up to heaven; tears are beginning to flow down his cheeks and his ejaculatory prayers are going to heaven like so many darts, which shall find their target in the ear of God. Do you see him, He is the hinge of victory; as he falters Amalek prevails; and as he is strong the chosen people gain the victory. See! Aaron is holding his hand for a moment; and anon Hur is supporting it, and the good old man changes his hands, for the battle lasts all day long, and in the hot sun it is wearisome work to hold them in one position. But see how manfully he holds them; stiff, as though they were cut out of stone; weary and worn, still his hands are out-stretched, as if he were a statue, and his friends assist his zeal. And see now, the ranks of Amalek are broken like thin clouds before a Biscay gale. They fly! they fly! Still his hands are motionless; still they fight; still the Amalekites fly; still Joshua prevails, until at last all the foes lie dead on the plain, and Joshua returns with the shout of joy.

Now this teaches that there must be prayer as well as effort. Minister! preach on; you shall have no success unless you pray. If you do not know how to wrestle with God on your knees, you will find it hard work to wrestle with men on your feet in the pulpit. You may make efforts to do so, but you shall not be successful, unless you back up your efforts with prayer. You are not so likely to fail in your efforts as in your prayers. We never read that Joshua's hand was weary with wielding the sword, but Moses' hand was weary with holding the rod. The more spiritual the duty, the more apt we are to tire of it. We could stand and preach all day, but we could not be in our closets all day one-half so easily. To spend a night with

God in prayer would be far more difficult than to spend a night with men in preaching. Oh! take care, take care, church of Christ, that thou dost not cease thy prayers! Above all, I speak to my own much loved church, my own people. You have loved me, and I have loved you, and God has given us great success, and blessed us. But, mark, I trace all of it to your prayers. You have assembled together in multitudes, perfectly unparalleled, to pray for me on each Monday evening, and I know I am mentioned at your family altars, as one who is very dear to your hearts; but I am afraid lest you should cease your prayers. Let the world say, "Down with him;" I will stand against them all, if you will pray for me; but if you cease your prayers it is all up with me and all over with you. Your prayers make us mighty; the praying legion is the thundering legion. If I might compare myself to a military commander, I should say, that when I see my men rise to pray in such large numbers, I feel like Napoleon, when he sent out his old guards. The battle had wavered; "There," said he, "they go; now the victory is sure." Or, like our own guards, the black caps, who, wherever they went carried victory with them. The praying legion is a thundering legion everywhere. Men can stand against anything but prayer. We would pray the very gates of hell off their hinges, if we could pray as some men have done. Oh! that we had might in prayer. Do not, I beseech you, I entreat you, do not cease to pray; cease what you please, but do not give up that; down on your knees, wrestle with God, and verily the Lord our God will bless us, "and all the ends of the earth shall fear him."

III. And now I am to close up with just a few remarks, in the third place, TO STIR YOU UP TO THE WARFARE. Remember, O children of God, that there are many things that should make you valiant for God and for his truth. The first thing I will bring to your remembrance is the fact, that this warfare in which you are engaged is an hereditary warfare; it is not one which you began, but it is one which has been handed to you from the moment when the blood of Abel cried aloud for vengeance. Each martyr that has died has passed the blood-red flag to the next, and he in his turn has passed it on to another. Every confessor who has been nailed to the stake to burn, has lit his candle, and handed it to another, and said, "Take care of that!" And now here is the old "sword of the Lord and of Gideon." Remember what hands have handled the hilt; remember what arms have wielded it; remember how often it has "pierced to the dividing asunder of

the joints and marrow." Will you disgrace it. Will you disgrace it? There is the great banner: it has waved in many a breeze; long ere the flag of this our land was made, this flag of Christ was born aloft, Will you stain it? Will you stain it? Will you not hand it to your children, still unsullied, and say, "Go on, go on; we leave you the heritage of war; go on, go on, and conquer. What your fathers did, do you again; still keep up the war, till time shall end." I love my Bible because it is a Bible baptized with blood; I love it all the better, because it has the blood of Tyndal on it; I love it, because it has on it the blood of John Bradford, and Rowland Taylor, and Hooper; I love it, because it is stained with blood. I sometimes think I like the baptismal pool because that has been stained with blood, and is now upon the continent, forbidden by law. I love it, because I see in it the blood of men and of women who had been martyred, because they loved the truth. Will you not, then, stand by the banner of truth, after such an illustrious pedigree of warriors have held it in their hands?

I would that I could have addressed you as I desired, but my voice fails me; I cannot, therefore, urge you, except by one consideration, and that is, the prospect of ultimate victory. It is certain that ere long we shall triumph; therefore let us not give up the fight. I have been much gratified of late to hear that there is a revival in the ranks of Christ's church; here and there I hear of great evangelists who are starting up. Some have said to me, when they have mentioned their names, "What say you to them?" My answer is, "Would God that all the Lord's servants were prophets!" Oh! that God might send thousands and thousands of men, who would gather multitudes together to hear his word. I would that the day were come, when every church and every chapel in England were as full of souls as this, and as large as this. I do think the churches are reviving; but if they are not, still victory is certain — God will still get the victory; Jehovah will triumph. Satan may dream he will, but he will not. Therefore, men and brethren, on to victory; let the crown that is before you, nerve you to the fight; to victory; to victory; and on, on, on! for God is with you. Remember the great intercessor; Christ is on the hill, and whilst you are in the valley he pleads, and must prevail, therefore, go on, and conquer, for Christ's sake!

I can no longer address you, but must finish up by repeating the words with which I always like to conclude my sermons: "He that believeth on

the Lord Jesus and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned!” Oh! that ye would believe in Christ; oh! that God would give you faith to put your trust in him; this is the only way of salvation. “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved.”

CONFESSION OF SIN — A SERMON WITH SEVEN TEXTS

SERMON NO. 113

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JANUARY 18, 1857,

AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

My sermon this morning will have seven texts, and yet I pledge myself that there shall be but three different words in the whole of them; for it so happens that the seven texts are all alike, occurring in seven different portions of God's holy Word. I shall require, however, to use the whole of them to exemplify different cases; and I must request those of you who have brought your Bibles with you to refer to the texts as I shall mention them.

The subject of this morning's discourse will be this — CONFESSION OF SIN. We know that this is absolutely necessary to salvation. Unless there be a true and hearty confession of our sins to God, we have no promise that we shall find mercy through the blood of the Redeemer. "Whosoever confesseth his sins and forsaketh them shall find mercy." But there is no promise in the Bible to the man who will not confess his sins. Yet, as upon every point of Scripture there is a liability of being deceived, so more especially in the matter of confession of sin. There be many who make a confession, and a confession before God, who notwithstanding, receive no blessing, because their confession has not in it certain marks which are required by God to prove it genuine and sincere, and which demonstrate it to be the work of the Holy Spirit. My text this morning consists of three words, "I have sinned." And you will see how these words, in the lips of different men, indicate very different feelings. While one says, "I have sinned," and receives forgiveness; another we shall meet with says, "I have sinned," and goes his way to blacken himself with worse crimes than

before, and dive into greater depths of sin than heretofore he had discovered.

THE HARDENED SINNER.

PHARAOH — "I have sinned." — Exodus 9:27.

I. The first case I shall bring before you is that of the HARDENED SINNER, who, when under terror, says, "I have sinned." And you will find the text in the book of Exodus, the 9th chap. and 27th verse:

> "And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked."

But why this confession from the lips of the haughty tyrant? He was not often wont to humble himself before Jehovah. Why doth the proud one bow himself? You will judge of the value of his confession when you hear the circumstances under which it was made. "And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven; and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So that there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation." "Now," says Pharaoh, whilst the thunder is rolling through the sky, while the lightning-flashes are setting the very ground on fire, and while the hail is descending in big lumps of ice, now, says he, "I have sinned." He is but a type and specimen of multitudes of the same class. How many a hardened rebel on shipboard, when the timbers are strained and creaking, when the mast is broken, and the ship is drifting before the gale, when the hungry waves are opening their mouths to swallow the ship up alive and quick as those that go into the pit — how many a hardened sailor has then bowed his knee, with tears in his eyes, and cried, "I have sinned!" But of what avail and of what value was his confession? The repentance that was born in the storm died in the calm; that repentance of his that was begotten amidst the thunder and the lightning, ceased so soon as all was hushed in quiet, and the man who was a pious mariner when on board ship, became the most wicked and abominable of sailors when he placed his foot on terra firma. How often, too, have we seen this in a storm of thunder and

lightning? Many a man's cheek is blanched when he hears the thunder rolling; the tears start to his eyes, and he cries, "O God, I have sinned!" while the rafters of his house are shaking, and the very ground beneath him reeling at the voice of God which is full of majesty. But alas, for such a repentance! When the sun again shines, and the black clouds are withdrawn, sin comes again upon the man, and he becomes worse than before. How many of the same sort of confessions, too, have we seen in times of cholera, and fever, and pestilence! Then our churches have been crammed with hearers, who, because so many funerals have passed their doors, or so many have died in the street, could not refrain from going up to God's house to confess their sins. And under that visitation, when one, two, and three have been lying dead in the house, or next door, how many have thought they would really turn to God! But, alas! when the pestilence had done its work, conviction ceased; and when the bell had tolled the last time for a death caused by cholera, then their hearts ceased to beat with penitence, and their tears did flow no more.

Have I any such here this morning? I doubt not I have hardened persons who would scorn the very idea of religion, who would count me a cant and hypocrite if I should endeavor to press it home upon them, but who know right well that religion is true, and who feel it in their times of terror! If I have such here this morning, let me solemnly say to them, "Sirs, you have forgotten the feelings you had in your hours of alarm; but, remember, God has not forgotten the vows you then made." Sailor, you said if God would spare you to see the land again, you would be his servant; you are not so, you have lied against God, you have made him a false promise, for you have never kept the vow which your lips did utter. You said, on a bed of sickness, that if he would spare your life you would never again sin as you did before; but here you are, and this week's sins shall speak for themselves. You are no better than you were before your sickness. Couldst thou lie to thy fellow-man, and yet go unreproved? And thinkest thou that thou wilt lie against God, and yet go unpunished? No; the vow, however rashly made, is registered in heaven; and though it be a vow which man cannot perform, yet, as it is a vow which he has made himself, and made voluntarily too, he shall be punished for the non-keeping it; and God shall execute vengeance upon him at last, because he said be would turn from his ways, and then when the blow was removed he did it not. A great outcry

has been raised of late against tickets-of-leave; I have no doubt there are some men here, who before high heaven stand in the same position as the ticket-of-leave men stand to our government. They were about to die, as they thought; they promised good behavior if they might be spared, and they are here to-day on ticket-of-leave in this world: and how have they fulfilled their promise? Justice might raise the same outcry against them as they do against the burglars so constantly let loose upon us. The avenging angel might say, "O God, these men said, if they were spared they would be so much better; if anything they are worse. How have they violated their promise, and how have they brought down divine wrath upon their heads!" This is the first style of penitence; and it is a style I hope none of you will imitate, for it is utterly worthless. It is of no use for you to say, "I have sinned," merely under the influence of terror, and then to forget it afterwards.

THE DOUBLE-MINDED MAN.

BALAAM — "I have sinned." — Numbers 22:34.

II. Now for a second text. I beg to introduce to you another character — the double-minded man, who says, "I have sinned," and feels that he has, and feels it deeply too, but who is so worldly-minded that he "loves the wages of unrighteousness." The character I have chosen to illustrate this, is that of Balaam. Turn to the book of Numbers, the 22nd chap. and the 34th verse: "And Balaam said unto the angel of the Lord, I have sinned."

"I have sinned," said Balaam; but yet he went on with his sin afterwards. One of the strangest characters of the whole world is Balaam. I have often marvelled at that man; he seems really in another sense to have come up to the lines of Ralph Erskine —

"To good and evil equal bent,
And both a devil and a saint."

For he did seem to be so. At times no man could speak more eloquently and more truthfully, and at other times he exhibited the most mean and sordid covetousness that could disgrace human nature. Think you see Balaam; he stands upon the brow of the hill, and there lie the multitudes of Israel at his feet; he is bidden to curse them, and he cries, "How shall I

curse whom God hath not cursed?" And God opening his eyes, he begins to tell even about the coming of Christ, and he says, "I shall see him, but not now. I shall behold him, but not nigh." And then he winds up his oration by saying — "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" And ye will say of that man, he is a hopeful character. Wait till he has come off the brow of the hill, and ye will hear him give the most diabolical advice to the king of Moab which it was even possible for Satan himself to suggest. Said he to the king, " You cannot overthrow these people in battle, for God is with them; try and entice them from their God." And ye know how with wanton lusts they of Moab tried to entice the children of Israel from allegiance to Jehovah; so that this man seemed to have the voice of an angel at one time, and yet the very soul of a devil in his bowels. He was a terrible character; be was a man of two things, a man who went all the way with two things to a very great extent. I know the Scripture says, "No man can serve two masters." Now this is often misunderstood. Some read it, "No man can serve two masters." Yes he can; he can serve three or four. The way to read it is this: "No man can serve two masters," They cannot both be masters. He can serve two, but they cannot both be his master. A man can serve two who are not his masters, or twenty either; he may live for twenty different purposes, but he cannot live for more than one master purpose — there can only be one master purpose in his soul. But Balaam labored to serve two; it was like the people of whom it was said, "They feared the Lord, and served other gods." Or like Rufus, who was a loaf of the same leaven; for you know our old king Rufus painted God on one side of his shield, and the devil on the other, and had underneath, the motto: "Ready for both; catch who can." There are many such, who are ready for both. They meet a minister, and how pious and holy they are; on the Sabbath they are the most respectable and upright people in the world, as you would think; indeed they effect a drawling in their speech, which they think to be eminently religious. But on a week day, if you want to find the greatest rogues and cheats, they are some of those men who are so sanctimonious in their piety. Now, rest assured, my hearers, that no confession of sin can be genuine, unless it be a whole hearted one. It is of no use for you to say, "I have sinned," and then keep on sinning. "I have sinned," say you, and it is a fair, fair face you show; but, alas! alas! for the sin you will go away and commit. Some men seem to be born with two characters. I remarked when in the library at

Trinity College, Cambridge, a very fine statue of Lord Byron. The librarian said to me, “Stand here, sir.” I looked, and I said, “What a fine intellectual countenance! What a grand genius he was!” “Come here,” he said, “to the other side.” “Ah! what a demon! There stands the man that could defy the deity.” He seemed to have such a scowl and such a dreadful leer in his face; even as Milton would have painted Satan when he said — “Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven.” I turned away and said to the librarian, “Do you think the artist designed this?” “Yes,” he said, “he wished to picture the two characters — the great, the grand, the almost superhuman genius that he possessed, and yet the enormous mass of sin that was in his soul.” There are some men here of the same sort. I dare say, like Balaam, they would overthrow everything in argument with their enchantments; they could work miracles; and yet at the same time there is something about them which betrays a horrid character of sin, as great as that which would appear to be their character for righteousness. Balaam, you know, offered sacrifices to God upon the altar of Baal: that was just the type of his character. So many do; they offer sacrifices to God on the shrine of Mammon; and whilst they will give to the building of a church, and distribute to the poor, they will at the other door of their counting-house grind the poor for bread, and press the very blood out of the widow, that they may enrich themselves. Ah! it is idle and useless for you to say, “I have sinned,” unless you mean it from your heart. That double minded man’s confession is of no avail.

THE INSINCERE MAN.

SAUL — “I have sinned.” — 1 Samuel 15:24.

III. And now a third character, and a third text. In the first book of Samuel, the 15th chap. and 24th verse:

“And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned.”

Here is the insincere man — the man who is not like Balaam, to a certain extent sincere in two things; but the man who is just the opposite — who has no prominent point in his character at all, but is moulded everlastingly by the circumstances that are passing over his head. Such a man was Saul. Samuel reproved him, and he said, “I have sinned.” But he did not mean

what he said: for if you read the whole verse you will find him saying, “I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words; because I feared the people:” which was a lying excuse. Saul never feared anybody; he was always ready enough to do his own will — he was the despot. And just before he had pleaded another excuse, that he had saved the bullocks and lambs to offer to Jehovah, and therefore both excuses could not have been true. You remember, my friends, that the most prominent feature in the character of Saul. was his insincerity. One day he fetched David from his bed, as bethought, to put him to death in his house. Another time he declares, “God forbid that I should do aught against thee, my son David.” One day, because David saved his life, he said, “Thou art more righteous than I; I will do so no more.” The day before he had gone out to fight against his own son-in-law, in order to slay him. Sometimes Saul was among the prophets, easily turned into a prophet, and then afterwards among the witches; sometimes in one place, and then another, and insincere in everything. How many such we have in every Christian assembly; men who are very easily moulded! Say what you please to them, they always agree with you. They have affectionate dispositions, very likely a tender conscience; but then the conscience is so remarkably tender, that when touched it seems to give, and you are afraid to probe deeper, — it heals as soon it is wounded. I think I used the very singular comparison once before, which I must use again: there are some men who seem to have india-rubber hearts. If you do but touch them, there is an impression made at once; but then it is of no use, it soon restores itself to its original character. You may press them whatever way you wish, they are so elastic you can always effect your purpose; but then they are not fixed in their character, and soon return to be what they were before. O sirs, too many of you have done the same; you have bowed your heads in church, and said, “We have erred and strayed from thy ways;” and you did not mean what you said. You have come to your minister; you have said, “I repent of my sins;” you did not then feel you were a sinner; you only said it to please him. And now you attend the house of God; no one more impressible than you; the tear will run down your cheek in a moment, but yet. notwithstanding all that, the tear is dried as quickly as it is brought forth, and you remain to all intents and purposes the same as you were before. To say, “I have sinned,” in an unmeaning manner, is worse than

worthless, for it is a mockery of God thus to confess with insincerity of heart.

I have been brief upon this character; for it seemed to touch upon that of Balaam; though any thinking man will at once see there was a real contrast between Saul and Balaam, even though there is an affinity between the two. Balaam was the great bad man, great in all he did; Saul was little in everything except in stature, little in his good and little in his vice; and he was too much of a fool to be desperately bad, though too wicked to be at any time good: while Balaam was great in both: the man who could at one time defy Jehovah, and yet at another time could say, "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more."

THE DOUBTFUL PENITENT.

ACHAN — "I have sinned." — Joshua 7:20.

IV. And now I have to introduce to you a very interesting case; it is the case of the doubtful penitent, the case of Achan, in the book of Joshua, the 7th chap. and the 20th verse: —

"And Achan answered Joshua, indeed I have sinned."

You know that Achan stole some of the prey from the city of Jericho — that he was discovered by lot, and put to death. I have singled this case out as the representative of some whose characters are doubtful on their death beds; who do repent apparently, but of whom the most we can say is, that we hope their souls are saved at last, but indeed we cannot tell. Achan, you are aware, was stoned with stones, for defiling Israel. But I find in the Mishna, an old Jewish exposition of the Bible, these words, "Joshua said to Achan, the Lord shall trouble thee this day." And the note upon it is — He said this day, implying that he was only to be troubled in this life, by being stoned to death, but that God would have mercy on his soul, seeing that he had made a full confession of his sin." And I, too, am inclined, from reading the chapter, to concur in the idea of my venerable and now glorified predecessor, Dr. Gill, in believing that Achan really was saved, although he was put to death for the crime, as an example. For you will observe how

kindly Joshua spoke to him. He said, “My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me.” And you find Achan making a very full confession. He says, “Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done. When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.” It seems so full a confession, that if I might be allowed to judge, I should say, “I hope to meet Achan the sinner, before the throne of God.” But I find Matthew Henry has no such opinion; and many other expositors consider that as his body was destroyed, so was his soul. I have, therefore, selected his case, as being one of doubtful repentance. Ah! dear friends, it has been my lot to stand by many a death-bed, and to see many such a repentance as this; I have seen the man, when worn to a skeleton, sustained by pillows in his bed; and he has said, when I have talked to him of judgment to come, “Sir, I feel I have been guilty, but Christ is good; I trust in him.” And I have said within myself, “ I believe the man’s soul is safe.” But I have always come away with the melancholy reflection that I had no proof of it, beyond his own words; for it needs proof in acts and in future life, in order to sustain any firm conviction of a man’s salvation. You know that great fact, that a physician once kept a record of a thousand persons who thought they were dying, and whom he thought were penitents; he wrote their names down in a book as those, who, if they had died, would go to heaven; they did not die, they lived; and he says that out of the whole thousand he had not three persons who turned out well afterwards, but they returned to their sins again, and were as bad as ever. Ah! dear friends, I hope none of you will have such a death-bed repentance as that; I hope your minister or your parents will not have to stand by your bedside, and then go away and say, “Poor fellow, I hope he is saved. But alas! death-bed repentances are such flimsy things; such poor, such trivial grounds of hope, that I am afraid, after all, his soul may be lost.” Oh! to die with a full assurance; oh! to die with an abundant entrance, leaving a testimony behind that we have departed this life in peace! That is a far happier way than to die in a doubtful manner, lying sick, hovering between two worlds, and neither ourselves nor yet our friends knowing to which of the two worlds we are going. May God grant

us grace to give in our lives evidences of true conversion, that our case may not be doubtful!

THE REPENTANCE OF DESPAIR.

JUDAS — "I have sinned." — Matthew 27:4.

V. I shall not detain you too long, I trust, but I must now give you another bad case; the worst of all. It is the REPENTANCE OF DESPAIR. Will you turn to the 27th chap. of Matthew, and the 4th verse? There you have a dreadful case of the repentance of despair. You will recognize the character the moment I read the verse: "And Judas said, I have sinned." Yes, Judas the traitor, who had betrayed his Master, when be saw that his Master was condemned, "repented, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood, and cast down the pieces in the temple, and went" and what? — " and hanged himself." Here is the worst kind of repentance of all; in fact, I know not that I am justified in calling it repentance; it must be called remorse of conscience. But Judas did confess his sin, and then went and hanged himself. Oh! that dreadful, that terrible, that hideous confession of despair. Have you never seen it? If you never have, then bless God that you never were called to see such a sight. I have seen it once in my life, I pray God I may never see it again, — the repentance of the man who sees death staring him in the face, and who says, "I have sinned." You tell him that Christ has died for sinners; and he answers, "There is no hope for me; I have cursed God to his face; I have defied him; my day of grace I know is past; my conscience is seared with a hot iron; I am dying, and I know I shall be lost!" Such a case as that happened long ago, you know, and is on record — the case of Francis Spira — the most dreadful ease, perhaps, except that of Judas, which is upon record in the memory of man. Oh! my hearers, will any of you have such a repentance? If you do, it will be a beacon to all persons who sin in future; if you have such a repentance as that, it will be a warning to generations yet to come. In the life of Benjamin Keach — and he also was once of my predecessors — I find the case of a man who had been a professor of religion, but had departed from the profession, and had gone into awful sin. When he came to die, Keach, with many other friends, went

to see him, but they could never stay with him above five minutes at a time; for he said, “Get ye gone; it is of no use your coming to me; I have sinned away the Holy Ghost; I am like Esau, I have sold my birthright, and though I seek it carefully with tears, I can never find it again.” And then he would repeat dreadful words, like these: `My mouth is filled with gravel stones, and I drink wormwood day and night. Tell me not tell me not of Christ! I know he is a Savior, but I hate him and he hates me. I know I must die; I know I must perish!” And then followed doleful cries, and hideous noises, such as none could bear. They returned again in his placid moments only to stir him up once more, and make him cry out in his despair, “I am lost! I am lost! It is of no use your telling me anything about it!” Ah! I there may be a man here who may have such a death as that; let me warn him, ere he come to it ; and may God the Holy Spirit grant that that man may be turned unto God, and made a true penitent, and then he need not have any more fear; for he who has had his sins washed away in a Savior’s blood, need not have any remorse for his sins, for they are pardoned through the Redeemer.

THE REPENTANCE OF THE SAINT.

JOB — “I have sinned.” — Job 7:20

VI. And now I come into daylight. I have been taking you through dark and dreary confessions; I shall detain you there no longer, but bring you out to the two good confessions which I have to read to you. The first is that of Job in 7th chap., at the 20th verse: “I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men?” This is the repentance of the saint. Job was a saint, but he sinned. This is the repentance of the man who is a child of God already, an acceptable repentance before God. But as I intend to dwell upon this in the evening, I shall now leave it, for fear of wearying you. David was a specimen of this kind of repentance, and I would have you carefully study his penitential psalms, the language of which is ever full of weeping humility and earnest penitence.

THE BLESSED CONFESSION.

THE PRODIGAL — "I have sinned." — Luke 15:18.

VII. I come now to the last instance, which I shall mention; it is the case of the prodigal. In Luke 15:18, we find the prodigal says: "Father I have sinned." Oh, here is a blessed confession! Here is that which proves a man to be a regenerate character — " Father, I have sinned." Let me picture the scene. There is the prodigal; he has run away from a good home and a kind father, and he has spent all his money with harlots, and now he has none left. He goes to his old companions, and asks them for relief. They laugh him to scorn. "Oh," says he, "you have drunk my wine many a day; I have always stood paymaster to you in all our revelries; will you not help me?" "Get you gone" they say; and he is turned out of doors. He goes to all his friends with whom he had associated, but no man gives him anything. At last a certain citizen of the country said, — "You want something to do, do you? Well go and feed my swine." The poor prodigal, the son of a rich landowner, who had a great fortune of his own, has to go out to feed swine; and he a Jew too! — the worst employment (to his mind,) to which he could be put. See him there, in squalid rags, feeding swine; and what are his wages? Why, so little, that he "would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine eat, but no man gave to him." Look, there he is, with the fellow commoners of the sty, in all his mire and filthiness. Suddenly a thought put there by the good Spirit, strikes his mind. "How is it," says he, "that in my father's house there is bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger? I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." Off he goes. He begs his way from town to town. Sometimes he gets a lift on a coach, perhaps, but at other times he goes trudging his way up barren hills and down desolate vales, all alone. And now at last he comes to the hill outside the village, and sees his father's house down below. There it is; the old poplar tree against it, and there are the stacks round which he and his brother used to run and play; and at the sight of the old homestead all the feelings and associations of his former life rush upon him, and tears run down his cheeks, and he is almost ready to run away again. He says "I wonder whether father's dead? I dare say mother broke her heart when I

went away; I always was her favorite. And if they are either of them alive, they will never see me again; they will shut the door in my face. What am I to do? I cannot go back, I am afraid to go forward." And while he was thus deliberating, his father had been walking on the housetop, looking out for his son; and though he could not see his father, his father could see him. Well, the father comes down stairs with all his might, runs up to him, and whilst he is thinking of running away, his father's arms are round his neck, and he falls-to kissing him, like a loving father indeed, and then the son begins, — "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son," and he was going to say, "Make me as one of thy hired servants." But his father puts his hand on his mouth. "No more of that," says he; "I forgive you all; you shall not say anything about being a hired servant — I will have none of that. Come along," says he, "come in, poor prodigal. Ho!" says he to the servants, "bring hither the best robe, and put it on him, and put shoes on his poor bleeding feet; and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it; and let us eat and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found. And they began to be merry." Oh, what a precious reception for one of the chief of sinners! Good Matthew Henry says — " His father saw him, there were eyes of mercy; he ran to meet him, there were legs of mercy; he put his arms round his neck, there were arms of mercy; he kissed him, there were kisses of mercy; he said to him — there were words of mercy, — Bring hither the best robe, there were deeds of mercy, wonders of mercy — all mercy. Oh, what a God of mercy he is."

Now, prodigal, you do the same. Has God put it into your heart? There are many who have been running away a long time now. Does God say "return?" Oh, I bid you return, then, for as surely as ever thou dost return he will take thee in. There never was a poor sinner yet who came to Christ, whom Christ turned away. If he turns you away, you will be the first. Oh, if you could but try him! "Ah, sir, I am so black, so filthy, so vile." Well come along with you — you cannot be blacker than the prodigal. Come to your Father's house, and as surely as he is God he will keep his word — "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

Oh, if I might hear that some had come to Christ this morning, I would indeed bless God! I must tell here for the honor of God and Christ, one remarkable circumstance, and then I have done. You will remember that

one morning I mentioned the case of an infidel who had been a scorner and scoffer, but who, through reading one of my printed sermons, had been brought to God's house and then to God's feet. Well, last Christmas day, the same infidel gathered together all his books, and went into the market-place at Norwich, and there made a public recantation of all his errors, and a profession of Christ, and then taking up all his books which he had written, and had in his house, on evil subjects, burned them in the sight of the people. I have blessed God for such a wonder of grace as that, and pray that there may be many more such, who, though they be born prodigal will yet return home, saying, "I have sinned."

PREACHING FOR THE POOR

SERMON NO. 114

DELIVERED ON THE SABBATH MORNING, JANUARY 25, 1857,

AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

"The poor have the gospel preached to them." — Matthew 11:5

JOHN, the forerunner of Christ, had some followers who continued with him after Christ had come in the flesh, and openly manifested himself among the people. These disciples were in doubt as to whether Jesus was the Messiah or no. I believe that John himself had no doubt whatever upon the matter, for he had received positive revelations, and had given substantial testimonies on the subject. But in order to relieve their doubts, John said to his disciples, in some such words, "Go and ask him yourselves;" and, therefore, he dispatched them with this message, "Tell us whether thou art he that should come, or do we look for another?" Jesus Christ continuing his preaching for a while, said, "Stay and receive your answer;" and instead of giving them an affirmative reply, "I am that Messiah," he said, "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." As much as to say, "That is my answer; these things are my testimonies-on the one hand, that I come from God, and, on the other hand, that I am *the Messiah.*" You will see the truth and force of this reply, if you will observe that it was prophesied of the Messiah, that he should do the very things which Jesus at that moment was doing. It is said of Messias, in the 35th chap. of Isaiah, at the 5th and 6th verses,

> "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert."

The Jews had forgotten this too much; they only looked for a Messiah who should be clothed with temporal grandeur and dignity, and they overlooked the teaching of Isaiah, that he should be "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." And besides that, you observe, they overlooked the miracles which it was prophesied should attend the coming of the glorious one, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Jesus gave this as his answer-a practical demonstration of John's problem, proving to an absolute certainty. But he not only referred to the miracles, he gave them a further proof. "The poor have the gospel preached to them." This, also, was one evidence that he was Messias. For Isaiah, the great Messianic prophet, had said, "He shall preach the gospel unto the meek;" that is, the poor. And in that Jesus did so, it was proved that he was the man intended by Isaiah. Besides, Zechariah mentions the congregation of the poor who attend on him, and therein evidently foretold the coming of Jesus Christ, the preacher to the poor.

I shall not, however, dwell upon these circumstances this morning; it must be apparent to every hearer, that here is sufficient proof that Jesus Christ is the person who had been foretold under the name of Shiloh, or Messiah. We all believe *that,* and, therefore, there is little need that I should try to prove what you have already received. I rather select my text this morning as one of the constant marks of the gospel in all ages and in every land. "The poor have the gospel preached to them." This is to be its *semper idem* its constant stamp. And we believe, where the poor have not the gospel preached unto them, there is a departure from the dispensation of the gospel, the forsaking of this which was to be a fundamental trait and characteristic of the gospel dispensation: "The poor have the gospel preached to them."

I find that these words will bear three translations; I shall, therefore, have three heads, which shall be composed of three translations of the text. The first is that of the authorised version: "The poor have the gospel preached to them;" it is also Tyndal's version. The second is *the version of Crammer*, and *the version of Geneva*, which is the best, "The poor are evangelized," that is to say, they not only hear the gospel, but they are influenced by it;-the poor receive it. The last is a translation of *some eminent writers*, and above all, of *Wyckliffe*, which amused me when I read it, although I believe it to be as correct as any of the others. Wyckliffe

translates it-"pore men ben taken to prechynge of the gospel." The verb may be equally well translated in the active as in the passive sense: "The poor have taken to the preaching of the gospel." That is to be one of the marks of the gospel dispensation in all times.

I. First, then, THE AUTHORISED VERSION, "The poor have the gospel preached to them." It was so in Christ's day; it is to be so with Christ's gospel to the end of time. Almost every impostor who has come into the world has aimed principally at the rich, and the mighty, and the respectable; very few impostors have found it to be worth their while to make it prominent in their preaching that they preach to the poor. They went before princes to promulgate their doctrines; they sought the halls of nobles where they might expatiate upon their pretended revelations. Few of them thought it worth their while to address themselves to those who have been most wickedly called "the swinish multitude," and to speak to them the glorious things of the gospel of Christ. But it is one delightful mark of Christ's dispensation, that he aims first at the poor. "The poor have the gospel preached to them." It was wise in him to do so. If we would fire a building, it is best to light it at the basement; so our Savior, when he would save a world, and convert men of all classes, and all ranks, begins at the lowest rank, that the fire may burn upwards, knowing right well that what was received by the poor, will ultimately by his grace be received by the rich also. Nevertheless, he chose this to be given to his disciples, and to be the mark of his gospel-"The poor have the gospel preached to them." Now, I have some things to say this morning, which I think are absolutely necessary, if the poor are to have the gospel preached unto them.

In the first place, let me say then, *that the gospel must be preached where the poor can come and hear it.* How can the poor have the gospel preached to them, if they cannot come and listen to it? And yet how many of our places of worship are there into which they cannot come, and into which, if they could come, they would only come as inferior creatures. They may sit in the back seats, but are not to be known and recognised as anything like other people. Hence the absolute necessity of having places of worship large enough to accommodate the multitude; and hence, moreover, the obligation to go out into the highways and hedges. If the poor are to have the gospel preached unto them, then we must take it where they can

get it. If I wanted to preach to English people, it would be of no use for me to go and stand on one of the peaks of the Himalayas, and begin preaching; they could not hear me there. And it is of little avail to build a gorgeous structure for a fashionable congregation, and then to think of preaching to the poor; they cannot come any more than the Hottentots can make their journey from Africa and listen to me here. I should not expect them to come to such a place, nor will they willingly enter it. The gospel should be preached, then, where the poor will come; and if they will not come after it, then let it be taken to them. We should have places where there is accommodation for them, and where they are regarded and respected as much as any other rank and condition of men. It is with this view alone that I have labored earnestly to be the means of building a large place of worship, because I feel that although the bulk of my congregation in New Park-street Chapel are poor, yet there are many poor who can by no possibility enter the doors, because we cannot find room for the multitudes to be received. You ask me why I do not preach in the street. I reply, I would do so, and am constantly doing so in every place except London, but here I cannot do it, since it would amount to an absolute breach of the peace, it being impossible to conceive what a multitude of people must necessarily be assembled. I trembled when I saw twelve thousand on the last occasion I preached in the open air; therefore I have thought it best, for the present at least, to desist, until happily there shall be fewer to follow me. Otherwise my heart is in the open air movement; I practice it everywhere else, and I pray God to give to our ministers zeal and earnestness, that they may take the gospel into the streets, highways and byeways, and compel the people to come in, that the house may be filled. Oh that God would give us this characteristic mark of his precious grace, that the poor might have the gospel preached unto them!

“But,” you reply, “there are plenty of churches and chapels to which they might come.” I answer, yes, but that is only one half of the matter. *The gospel must be preached attractively* before the poor will have the gospel preached unto them. Why, there is no attraction in the gospel to the great mass of our race, as it is currently preached. I confess that when I have a violent headache, and cannot sleep, I could almost wish for some droning minister to preach to me; I feel certain I could go to sleep then, for I have heard some under the soporific influence of whose eloquence I could most

comfortably snore. But it is not at all likely that the poor will ever go to hear such preachers as these. If they are preached to in fine terms-in grandiloquent language which they cannot lay hold of-the poor will not have the gospel preached to them, for they will not *go* to hear it. They must have something attractive to them; we must preach as Christ did; we must tell anecdotes, and stories, and parables, as he did; we must come down and make the gospel attractive. The reason why the old puritan preachers could get congregations was this-they did not give their hearers dry theology; they illustrated it; they had an anecdote from this and a quaint passage from that classic author; here a verse of poetry; here and there even a quip or pun-a thing which now-a-days is a sin above all sins, but which was constantly committed by these preachers, whom I have ever esteemed as the patterns of pulpit eloquence. Christ Jesus was an attractive preacher; he sought above all means to set the pearl in a frame of gold, that it might attract the attention of the people. He was not willing to place himself in a parish church, and preach to a large congregation of thirteen and a-half, like our good brethren in the city, but would preach in such a style that people felt they must go to hear him. Some of them gnashed their teeth in rage and left his presence in wrath, but the multitudes still thronged to him to hear and to be healed. It was no dull work to hear this King of preachers, he was too much in earnest to be dull, and too humane to be incomprehensible. I believe that until this is imitated, the poor will not have the gospel preached to them. There must be an interesting style adopted, to bring the people to hear. But if we adopt such a style they will call us clownish, vulgar, and so on. Blessed be God, we have long learnt that vulgarity is a very different thing from what some men suppose. We have been so taught, that we are willing to be even clowns for Christ's sake, and so long as we are seeing souls saved we are not likely to alter our course. During this last week I have seen, I believe, a score of persons who have been in the lowest ranks, the very meanest of sinners, the greatest of transgressors, who have, through preaching in this place, been restored and reclaimed. Do you think then I shall shear my locks to please the Philistine? Oh, no; by the grace of God, Samson knoweth where his strength lieth, and is not likely to do that to please any man or any set of men. Preaching must reach the popular ear; and to get at the people it must be interesting to them, and by the grace of God we hope it shall be.

But, in the next place, if the poor are to have the gospel preached unto them, *it must be preached simply*. It is a waste of time to preach Latin to you, is it not? To the multitude of people it is of no use delivering a discourse in Greek. Possibly five or six of the assembly might be mightily edified, and go away delighted; but what of that? The mass would retire unedified and uninstructed. You talk about the education of the people, don't you, and about the vast extent of English refinement? For the most part it is a dream. Ignorance is not buried yet. The language of one class of Englishmen is a dead language to another class; and many a word which is very plain to many of us, is as hard and difficult a word to the multitude as if it had been culled out of Hindostani or Bengali. There are multitudes who cannot understand words composed of Latin, but must have the truth told them in round homely Saxon, if it is to reach their hearts. There is my friend the Rev. So-and-so, Doctor of Divinity; he is a great student, and whenever he finds a hard word in his books he tells it next Sunday to his congregation. He has a little intellectual circle, who think his preaching must be good, because they cannot understand it, and who think it proven that he must be an intelligent man because all the pews are empty. They believe he must be a very useful member of society; in fact, they compare him to Luther, and think he is a second Paul, because nobody will listen to him, seeing it is impossible to understand him. Well, we conceive of that good man that he may have a work to do, but we do not know what it is. There is another friend of ours, Mr. Cloudyton, who always preaches in such a style that if you should try to dissect the sermon for a week afterwards, you could by no possibility tell what he meant. If you could look at things from his point of view you might possibly discover something; but it does appear by his preaching as if he himself had lost his way in a fog, and were scattering a whole mass of mist about him everywhere. I suppose he goes so deep down into the subject that he stirs the mud at the bottom, and he cannot find his way up again. There are some such preachers, whom you cannot possibly understand. Now, we say, and say very boldly too, that while such preaching may be esteemed by some people to be good, we have no faith in it all. If ever the world is to be reclaimed, and if sinners are to be saved, we can see no likelihood in the world of its being done by such means. We think the word must be understood before it can really penetrate the conscience and the heart; and we would always be preaching such as men can understand, otherwise the

poor will not “have the gospel preached to them.” Why did John Bunyan become the apostle of Bedfordshire, and Huntingdonshire, and round about? It was because John Bunyan, while he had a surpassing genius, would not condescend to cull his language from the garden of flowers, but he went into the hayfield and the meadow, and plucked up his language by the roots, and spoke out in words that the people used in their cottages. Why is it that God has blessed other men to the stirring of the people, to the bringing about of spiritual revivals, to the renewal of the power of godliness? We believe it has always been owing to this-under God’s Spirit-that they have adopted the phraseology of the people, and have not been ashamed to be despised because they talked as common people did.

But now we have something to say more important than this. We may preach, very simply too, and very attractively, and yet it may not be true that “the poor have the gospel preached to them,” for the poor may have something else preached to them beside the gospel. It is, then, highly important that we should each of us ask what the gospel is, and that when we think we know it we should not be ashamed to say, “This is the gospel, and I will preach it boldly, though all men should deny it.” Oh! I fear that there is such a thing as preaching another gospel, “which is not another, but there be some that trouble us.” There is such a thing as preaching science and philosophy attractively, but not preaching the gospel. Mark, it is not preaching, but it is preaching the gospel that is the mark of Christ’s dispensation and of his truth. Let us take care to preach fully the depravity of man, let us dwell thoroughly upon his lost and ruined estate under the law, and his restoration under the gospel; let us preach of these three things, for, as a good brother said, “The gospel lies in three things, the Word of God only, the blood of Christ only, and the Holy Spirit only.” These three things make up the gospel. “The Bible; the Bible alone the religion of Protestants; the blood of Christ the only salvation from sin, the only means of the pardon of our guilt; and the Holy Spirit the only regenerator, the only converting power that will alone work in us to will and to do of his good pleasure.” Without these three things there is no gospel. Let us take heed, then, for it is a serious matter, that when the people listen to us, it is *the gospel* that we preach, or else we may be as guilty as was Nero, the tyrant, who, when Rome was starving, sent his ships to Alexandria, where there was corn in plenty, not for wheat, for

sand to scatter in the arena for his gladiators. Ah! there be some who seem to do so-scattering the floor of their sanctuary, not with the good corn of the kingdom, upon which the souls of God's people may feed and grow thereby, but with sand of controversy, and of logic, which no child of God can ever receive to his soul's profit. "The poor have the gospel preached to them." Let us take heed that it is the gospel. Hear then, ye chief of sinners, the voice of Jesus. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." "Whosoever believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." "For the Son of man is come to seek and save that which is lost."

And just one more hint on this point, namely, this,-it must be said of us, if we would keep true to Christ's rule and apostolic practice, that "the poor have the gospel *preached* to them." In these days there is a growing hatred of the pulpit. The pulpit has maintained its ground full many a year, but partially by its becoming inefficient, it is losing its high position. Through a timid abuse of it, instead of a strong stiff use of the pulpit, the world has come to despise it; and now most certainly we are not a priest-ridden people one-half so much as we are press-ridden people. By the press we are ridden indeed. Mercuries, Despatches, Journals, Gazettes and Magazines, are now the judges of pulpit eloquence and style. They thrust themselves into the censor's seat, and censure those whose office it should rather be to censure them. For my own part, I cheerfully accord to all men the liberty of abusing me; but I must protest against the lying conduct of at least one editor, who has misquoted in order to pervert my meaning, and has done more; he has, to his eternal disgrace, manufactured a quotation from his own head, which never did occur in my works or words. The pulpit has become dishonored; it is esteemed as being of very little worth and of no esteem. Ah! we must always maintain the dignity of the pulpit. I hold that it is the Thermopylae of Christendom; it is here the battle must be fought between right and wrong-not so much with the pen, valuable as that is as an assistant, as with the living voice of earnest men, "contending earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints." In some churches the pulpit is put away; there is a prominent altar, but the pulpit is omitted. Now, the most prominent thing under the gospel dispensation is not the altar which belonged to the Jewish dispensation, but the pulpit.

"We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle;" that altar is Christ; but Christ has been pleased to exalt "the foolishness of preaching" to the most prominent position in his house of prayer. We must take heed that we always maintain preaching. It is this that God will bless; it is this that he has promised to crown with success. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." We must not expect to see great changes nor any great progress of the gospel until there is greater esteem for the pulpit-more said of it and thought of it. "Well," some may reply, "you speak of the dignity of the pulpit; I take it, you lower it yourself, sir, by speaking in such a style to your hearers." Ah! no doubt you think so. Some pulpits die of dignity. I take it, the greatest dignity in the world is the dignity of converts-that the glory of the pulpit is, if I may use such a metaphor, to have captives at its chariot-wheels, to see converts following it, and where there are such, and those from the very worst of men; there is a dignity in the pulpit beyond any dignity which a fine mouthing of words and a grand selection of fantastic language could ever give to it. "The poor have the gospel preached to them."

II. now, the next translation is, THE TRANSLATION OF GENEVA, principally used by Calvin in his commentary; and it is also the translation of Thomas Crammer, whose translation, I believe, was at least in some degree moulded by the Genevan translation. He translates it thus: — "The poor receive the gospel." The Genevan translation has it, "The poor receive the glad tidings of the gospel," which is a tautology, since glad tidings mean the same thing as gospel. The Greek has it, "The poor are evangelised." Now, what is the meaning of this word "evangelised?" They talk with a sneer in these days of evangelical drawing-rooms and evangelicals, and so on. It is one of the most singular sneers in the world; for to call a man an evangelical by way of joke, is the same as calling a man a gentleman by way of scoffing at him. To say a man is one of the gospellers by way of scorn, is like calling a man a king by way of contempt. It is an honorable, a great, a glorious title, and nothing is more honorable than to be ranked among the evangelicals. What is meant, then, by the people being evangelised? Old Master Burkitt, thinking that we should not easily understand the word, says, that as a man is said to be Italianised by living among the Italians, getting their manners and customs, and becoming a citizen of the state, so a man is evangelised when he lives

where the gospel is preached and gets the manners and customs of those who profess it. Now, that is one meaning of the text. One of the proofs of our Savior's mission is not only that the poor hear the Word, but are influenced by it and are gospelized. Oh! how great a work it is to gospelize any man, and to gospelize a poor man. What does it mean? It means, to make him *like* the gospel. Now, the gospel is holy, just, and true, and loving, and honest, and benevolent, and kind, and gracious. So, then, to gospelize a man is to make a rogue honest, to make a harlot modest, to make a profane man serious, to make a grasping man liberal, to make a covetous man benevolent, to make the drunken man sober, to make the untruthful man truthful, to make the unkind man loving, to make the hater the lover of his species, and, in a word, to gospelize a man is, in his outward character, to bring him into such a condition that he labors to carry out the command of Christ, "Love thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." Gospelizing, furthermore, has something to do with an inner principle; gospelizing a man means saving him from hell and making him a heavenly character; it means blotting out his sins, writing a new name upon his heart-the new name of God. It means bringing him to know his election, to put his trust in Christ, to renounce his sins, and his good works too, and to trust solely and wholly upon Jesus Christ as his Redeemer. Oh! what a blessed thing it is to be gospelized! How many of you have been so gospelized? The Lord grant that the whole of us may feel the influence of the gospel. I contend for this, that to gospelize a man is the greatest miracle in the world. All the other miracles are wrapped up in this one. To gospelize a man, or, in other words, to convert him, is a greater work than to open the eyes of the blind; for is it not opening the eyes of the blind soul that he may see spiritual matters, and understand the things of heavenly wisdom, and is not a surgical operation easier than operation on the soul? Souls we cannot touch, although science and skill have been able to remove films and cataracts from the eyes. "The lame walk." Gospelizing a man is more than this. It is not only making a lame man walk, but it is making a dead man who could not walk in the right way walk in the right way ever afterwards. "The lepers are cleansed." Ah! but to cleanse a sinner is greater work than cleansing a leper. "The deaf hear." Yes, and to make a man who never listened to the voice of God hear the voice of his Maker, is a miracle greater than to make the deaf hear, or even to raise the dead. Great though that be, it is not a more stupendous effort

of divine power than to save a soul, since men are naturally dead in sins, and must be quickened by divine grace if they are saved. To gospelize a man is the highest instance of divine might, and remains an unparalleled miracle, a miracle of miracles. “The poor are evangelized.”

Beloved, there have been some very precious specimens of poor people who have come under the influence of the gospel. I think I appeal to the hearts of all of you who are now present, when I say there is nothing we more reverence and respect than the piety of the poor and needy. I had an engraving sent to me the other day which pleased me beyond measure. It was an engraving simply but exquisitely executed. It represented a poor girl in an upper room, with a lean-to roof. There was a post driven in the ground, on which was a piece of wood, standing on which were a candle and a Bible. She was on her knees at a chair, praying, wrestling with God. Everything in the room had on it the stamp of poverty. There was the mean coverlet to the old stump bedstead; there were the walls that had never been papered, and perhaps scarcely whitewashed. It was an upper story to which she had climbed with aching knees, and where perhaps she had worked away till her fingers were worn to the bone to earn her bread at needlework. There it was that she was wrestling with God. Some would turn away and laugh at it; but it appeals to the best feelings of man, and moves the heart far more than does the fine engraving of the monarch on his knees in the grand assembly. We have had lately a most excellent volume, the Life of Captain Hedley Vicars; it is calculated to do great good, and I pray God to bless it; but I question whether the history of Captain Hedley Vicars will last as long in the public mind as the history of the Dairyman’s Daughter, or the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain. The histories of those who have come from the ranks of the poor always lay hold of the Christian mind. Oh! we love piety anywhere; we bless God where coronets and grace go together; but if piety in any place do shine more brightly than anywhere else, it is in rags and poverty. When the poor woman in the almshouse takes her bread and her water, and blessed God for both-when the poor creature who has not where to lay his head, yet lifts his eye and says, “My Father will provide,” it is then like the glow-worm in the damp leaves, a spark the more conspicuous for the blackness around it. Then religion gleams in its true brightness, and is seen in all its lustre. It is a mark of Christ’s gospel that the poor are gospelized-that

they can receive the gospel. True it is, the gospel affects all ranks, and is equally adapted to them all; but yet we say, “If one class be more prominent than another, we believe that in Holy Scripture the poor are most of all appealed to.” “Oh!” say some very often, “the converts whom God has given to such a man are all from the lower ranks; they are all people with no sense; they are all uneducated people that hear such-and-such a person.” Very well, if you say so; we might deny it if we pleased, but we do not know that we shall take the trouble, because we think it no disgrace whatever; we think it rather to be an honor that the poor are evangelized, and that they listen to the gospel from our lips. I have never thought it a disgrace at any time. When any have said, “Look, what a mass of uneducated people they are.” Yes, I have thought, and blessed be God they are, for those are the very people that want the gospel most. If you saw a physician’s door surrounded by a number of ladies of the sentimental school, who are sick about three times a week, and never were ill at all-if it were said he cured them, you would say, “No great wonder too, for there never was anything the matter with them.” But if you heard of another man, that people with the worst diseases have come to him, and that God has made use of him, and his medicine has been the means of healing their diseases, you would then say, “There is something in it, for the people that want it most have received it.” If, then, it be true that the poor will come to hear the gospel more than others, it is no disgrace to the gospel, it is an honor to it, that those who most want it do freely receive it.

III. And now I must close up by briefly dwelling on the last point. It was the third translation, WYCKLIFFE’S TRANSLATION. To give it you in old English-”Poor men are taking to the preaching of the gospel.” “Ah!” say some, “they had better remain at home, minding their ploughs or their blacksmith’s hammer; they had better have kept on which their tinkering and tailoring, and not have turned preachers.” But it is one of the honors of the gospel that poor men have taken to the preaching of it. There was a tinker once, and let the worldly-wise blush when they hear of it-there was a tinker once, a tinker of whom a great divine said he would give all his learning if he could preach like him. There was a tinker once, who never so much as brushed his back against the walls of a college, who wrote a “Pilgrim’s Progress. Did ever a doctor in divinity write such a book. There was a pot-boy once-a boy who carried on his back the pewter pots for his

mother, who kept the Old Bell. That man drove men mad, as the world had it, but led them to Christ, as we have it, all his life long, until, loaded with honors, he sank into his grave, with the good will of a multitude round about him, with an imperishable name written in the world's records, as well as in the records of the church. Did you ever hear of any mighty man, whose name stood in more esteem among God's people than the name of George Whitfield? And yet these were poor men, who, as Wyckliffe said, were taking to the preaching of the gospel. If you will read the life of Wyckliffe, you will find him saying there, that he believed that the Reformation in England was more promoted by the labors of the poor men whom he sent out from Lutterworth than by his own. He gathered round him a number of the poor people whom he instructed in the faith, and then he sent them two and two into every village, as Jesus did. They went into the market-place, and they gathered the people around; they opened the book and read a chapter, and then they left them a manuscript of it which for months and years after the people would assemble to read, and would remember the gospellers that had come to tell them the gospel of Christ. These men went from market-place to market-place, from town to town, and from village to village, and though their names are unknown to fame, they were the real reformers. You may talk of Cranmer, and Latimer, and Ridley; they did much, but the real reformers of the English nation were people whose names have perished from the annals of time, but are written in the records of eternity. God has blessed the poor man in preaching the truth. Far be it from me to depreciate learning and wisdom. We should not have had the Bible translated without learning and the more learning a man can have, if he be a sanctified man, the better; he has so many more talents to lay out in his Master's service; but it is not absolutely necessary for preaching of the Word. Rough, untamed, untaught energy, has done much in the church. A Boanerges has stood up in a village; he could not put three words together in grammatical English; but where the drowsy parson had for many a year lulled all his people into an unhallowed rest, this man started up, like the herdsman Amos, and brought about a great awakening. He began to preach in some cottage; people thronged around him, then a house was built, and his name is handed down to use as the Rev. So-and-so, but then he was known as Tom the ploughman, or John the tinker. God has made use of men whose origin was the most obscure, who seemed to have little, except the gifts of nature, which could be made use of in God's

service; and we hold that this is no disgrace, but on the contrary an honor, that poor men are taking to preaching the gospel.

I have to ask you this morning to help some poor men in preaching the gospel. We are constantly receiving letters from our poor brethren, and it is very seldom that we say “No,” to their appeals for assistance, but we must do so, unless our friends, more especially those who love the gospel, really will do something towards the maintenance of God’s faithful servants. I have, during the past year, preached many times for ministers on this ground, that they could not live unless some preached a sermon and made a collection for them. In some places the population was so small that they could not maintain their minister, and in others it was a new movement, and therefore they were unable to support him. Some of you subscribe to the Church Pastoral Aid Society. That is a very excellent society, but I never could see any good in it. There are many poor clergy in the Church of England who want assistance bad enough; but if you want to know the right way of keeping poor curates, I will tell you. Split a bishop up into fifty, and that will do it. If that could be done at once and speedily, there would be no need of Pastoral Aid Societies. You will say, perhaps, “Let such a thing be done in our denomination.” I answer that we have no bishops with whom such a thing could be done. I believe there is not to be found one minister in the whole Baptist denomination whose salary has ever exceeded *L*600, and there are only three, I believe, who receive as much as that, of which I am not one, and these three men are in such a position that their demands are great, and they have not one penny too much, while the great mass of our denomination receive *L*20, *L*30, *L*40, *L*50, *L*60, and so on, but below *L*100. The sum collected to-day will be given to those whose incomes are below *L*80, and whose needs are great.

And now, beloved, I have opened my mouth for the dumb, and pleaded the cause of the poor, let me end by entreating the poor of the flock to consider the poor man’s Christ; let me urge them to give Him their thoughts, and may the Lord enable them to yield him their hearts. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

May God bless the high and low, the rich and poor; yea, all of you, for his name’s sake.

WHY ARE MEN SAVED?

SERMON NO. 115

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 1, 1857,

AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

"Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake." -Psalm 106:8.

IN looking upon the works of God in creation, there are two questions which at once occur to the thoughtful mind, and which must be answered before we can procure a clue to the philosophy and science of creation itself. The first one is the question of authorship: Who made all these things? And the next question is that of design: For what purpose were all these things created? The first question, "Who made all these things?" is one which is easily answered by a man who has a honest conscience and a sane mind, for when he lifts eyes up yonder to read the stars, he will see those stars spell out in golden letters this word-*God*; and when he looks below upon the waves, if his ears are honestly opened, he will hear each wave proclaiming, *God*. If he looks to the summits of the mountains, they will not speak, but with a dignified answer of silence they seem to say,

"The hand that made us is Divine."

If we listen to the rippling of the freshet at the mountain side, to the tumbling of the avalanche, to the lowing of the cattle, to the singing of the birds, to every voice and sound of nature, we shall hear this answer to the question, "God is our maker; he hath made us, and not we ourselves."

The next question, as to design-Why were these things made?-is not so easy to answer, apart from Scripture; but when we look at Scripture we discover this fact-that as the answer to the first question is God, so the answer to the second question is the same. Why were these things made? The answer is, for God's glory, for his honor, and for his pleasure. No other answer can be consistent with reason. Whatever other replies men may propound, no other can be really sound. If they will for one moment

consider that there was a time when God had no creatures-when he dwelt alone, the mighty maker of ages, glorious in an uncreated solitude, divine in his eternal loneliness-"I am and there is none beside me"-can any one answer this question-Why did God make creatures to exist?-in any other way than by answering it thus: "He made them for his own pleasure and for his own glory." You may say he made them for his creatures; but we answer, there were then no creatures to make them for. We admit that the answer may be a sound one *now*. God makes the harvest for his creatures; he hangs the sun in the firmament to bless his creatures with light and sunshine; he bids the moon walk I her course by night, to cheer the darkness of his creatures upon earth. But the first answer, going back to the origin of all things, can be nothing else than this: "For his pleasure they are and were created." "He made all things for himself and by himself."

Now, this which holds good in the works of creation, holds equally good in the works of salvation. Lift up your eyes on high; higher than those stars which glimmer on the floor of heaven; look up, where spirits in white, clearer than light, shine like stars in their magnificence; look there, where the redeemed with their choral symphonies "circle the throne of God rejoicing," and put this question: "Who saved those glorified beings, and for what purpose were they saved." We tell you that the same answer must be given as we have previously given to the former question-"*He* saved them-he saved them for his name's sake." The text is an answer to the two great questions concerning salvation: Who saved men, and why are they saved? "He saved them for his name's sake."

Into this subject I shall endeavor to look this morning. May God make it profitable to each of us, and may we be found among the number who shall be saved "for his name's sake." Treating the text verbally-and that is the way most will understand-here are four things. First, *a glorious Savior*-"*He* saved them;" secondly, *a favored people*-"He saved *them*;" thirdly *a divine reason why he saved them*-"for his names sake;" and fourthly, *an obstruction conquered*, in the word "nevertheless," implying that there was some difficulty that was removed. "Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake." A Savior; the saved; the reason; the obstruction removed.

I. First, then, here is A GLORIOUS SAVIOR-"*He* saved them." Who is to be understood by that pronoun "he?" Possibly man of my hearers may

answer, “Why, the Lord Jesus Christ is the Savior of men.” Right, my friends; but not all the truth. Jesus Christ is the Savior; but not more so than God the Father, or God the Holy Ghost. Some persons who are ignorant of the system of divine truth think of God the Father as being a great Being full of wrath, and anger, and justice, but having no love, they think of God the Spirit perhaps as a mere influence proceeding from the Father and the Son. Now, nothing can be more incorrect than such opinions. It is true the Son redeems me, but then the Father gave the Son to die for me, and the Father chose me in the everlasting election of his grace. The Father blots out my sin; the Father accepts me and adopts me into his family through Christ. The Son could not save without the Father any more than the Father without the Son; and as for the Holy Spirit, if the Son redeems, know ye not that the Holy Ghost regenerates? It is he that makes us new creatures in Christ, who begets us again unto a lively hope, who purifies our soul, who sanctifies our spirit, and who, at last, presents us spotless and faultless before the throne of the Most High, accepted in the beloved. When thou sayest, “Savior,” remember there is a Trinity in that word-the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, this Savior being three persons under one name. Thou canst not be saved by the Son without the Father, nor by the Father without the Son, nor by Father and Son without the Spirit. But as they are one in creation, so are they one in salvation, working together in one God for our salvation, and unto that God be glory everlasting, world without end, Amen.

But, not here, how this Divine being claims salvation wholly to himself. “Nevertheless HE saved them.” But, Moses, where art thou? Didst not thou save them, Moses? Thou didst stretch the rod over the sea, and it clave in halves; thou didst lift up thy prayer to heaven, and the frogs came, and the flies swarmed, and the water was turned into blood, and the hail smote the land of Egypt. Was not thou their Savior, Moses? And thou Aaron, thou didst offer the bullocks which God accepted; thou didst lead them, with Moses, through the wilderness. Wast not thou their Savior? They answer, “Nay, we were the instruments, but *he* saved them. God made use of us, but unto his name be all the glory, and none unto ourselves.” But, Israel, thou wast a strong and mighty people; didst not thou save thyself? Perhaps it was by thine own holiness that the Red Sea was dried up; perhaps the parted floods were frighted at the piety of the

saints that stood upon their margin; perhaps it was Israel that delivered itself. Nay, nay, saith God's Word; *he* saved them; they did not save themselves, nor did their fellow-men redeem them. And yet, mark you, there are some who dispute this point, who think that men save themselves, or, at least, that priests and preachers can help to do it. We say that the preacher, under God, may be the instrument of arresting man's attention, of warning him and arousing him; but the preacher is nothing; God is everything. The most mighty eloquence that ever distilled from the lips of seraphic preacher is nothing apart from God's Holy Spirit. Neither Paul, nor Apollos, nor Cephas, are anything: God gave the increase and God must have al the glory. There are some we meet with here and there who say, "I am Mr. So-and-so's convert; I am a convert of the Rev. Dr. this or that." Well, if you are, sir, I cannot give you much hope of heaven. Only God's converts go there; not proselytes of man, but the redeemed of the Lord. Oh, it is very little to convert a man to our own opinions; it is something to be the means of converting him to the Lord our God. I had a letter some time ago from a good Baptist minister in Ireland, who very much wanted me to cover over to Ireland, as he said, to represent the Baptist interest, because it was low there, and perhaps it might lead the people to think a little more of Baptists. I told him I would not go across the street merely to do that, much less would I cross the Irish Channel. I should not think of going to Ireland for that; but if I might go there to make Christians, under God, and be the means of bringing men to Christ, I would leave it to them what they should be afterwards, and trust to God's Holy Spirit to direct and guide them as to what denomination they should consider nearest akin to God's truth. Brethren, I might make all of you Baptists, perhaps, and yet you would be none the better for it; I might convert you all in that way, but such a conversion would be that you would be washed to greater stains, converted into hypocrites, and not into saints. I have seen something of wholesale conversion. Great revivalists have rise up; they have preached thundering sermons that have made men's knees knock together. "What a wonderful man!" people have said. "He has converted so many under one sermon." But look for his converts in a month, and where will they be? You will see some of them in the alehouse, you will hear others of them swear, you will find many of them rogues, and cheats, because they were not God's converts, but only man's. Brethren, if the work be done at all, it must be

done of God, for if God do not convert there is nothing done that shall last, and nothing that shall be of any avail for eternity.

But some reply, "Well, sir, but men convert themselves." Yes, they do, and a fine conversion it is. Very frequently they convert themselves. But then that which man did, man undoes. He who converts himself one day, unconverts himself the next; he tieth a knot which his own fingers can loosen. Remember this-you may convert yourselves a dozen times over, but "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," and "cannot see the kingdom of God." It is only "that which is born of the Spirit" that "is Spirit," and is therefore able to be gathered at last into the spirit-realm, where only spiritual things can be found before the throne of the Most High. We must reserve this prerogative wholly to God. If any man state that God is not Creator, we call him infidel; if any man entrench upon this doctrine, that God is the absolute Maker of all things, we hiss him down in a moment; but he is an infidel of the worst kind, because more specious, who puts God out of the mercy throne, instead of putting him out of the creation throne, and who tells men that they may convert themselves, whereas God doth it all. "*He*' only, the great Jehovah-Father, Son, and Holy Ghost-"he saved them for his name's sake.

Thus have I endeavored to set out clearly the first truth of the divine and glorious Savior.

II. Now, secondly, THE FAVORED PEOPLE-"He saved *them.*" Who are they? You will reply, "They were the most respectable people that could be found in the world; they were a very prayerful, loving, holy, and deserving people; and, therefore, because they were good he saved them." Very well, that is your opinion, I will tell you what Moses says,-"Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitudes of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red Sea. Nevertheless he saved them." Look at the 7th verse, and you will have their character. In the first place, they were a stupid people-"Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt." In the next place, they were an ungrateful people-"they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies." In the third place, they were a provoking people-"they provoked him at the sea, even at the Red Sea." Ah, these are the people whom free grace saves,

these are the men and these the woman whom the God of all grace condescends to take to his bosom and to make anew.

Note, first, *that they were a stupid people*. God sends his gospel not always to the wise and prudent, but unto fools;

"He takes the fool and makes him know
The wonders of his dying love."

Do not suppose, my hearer, because you are very unlettered and can scarcely read-do not imagine, because you have always been brought up in extreme ignorance, and have scarcely learnt to spell your name, that therefore you cannot be saved. God's grace can save you, and then enlighten you. A brother minister once told me a story of a man who was known in a certain village as a simpleton, and was always considered to be soft in the head; no one thought he could ever understand anything. But one day he came to hear the gospel preached. He had been a drunken fellow, having wit enough to be wicked, which is a very common kind of wit. The Lord was pleased to bless the word to his soul, so that he became a changed character; and what was the marvel of all was, his religion gave him a something which began to develop his latent faculties. He found he had a something to live for, and he began to try what he could do. In the first place he wanted to read his Bible, that he might read his Savior's name; and after much hammering and spelling away, at last he was able to read a chapter. Then he was asked to pray at a prayer-meeting; here was an exercise of his vocal powers. Five or six words made up his prayer, and down he sat abashed. But by continually praying in his own family at home, he came to pray like the rest of the brethren, and he went on till he became a preacher, and, singularly enough, he had a fluency-a depth of understanding and a power of thought, such as are seldom found among ministers who only occasionally occupy pulpits. Strange it was, that grace should even tend to develop his natural powers, giving him an object, setting him devoutly and firmly upon it, and so bringing out all his resources that they were fully shown. AH, ignorant ones, ye need not despair. He saved them; not for *their* sakes-there was nothing in them why they should be saved. He saved them, not for their wisdom's sake; but, ignorant though they were, understanding not the meaning of his miracles, "he saved them for his name's sake."

Note, again, *they were a very ungrateful people*, and yet he saved them. He delivered them times without number, and worked for them mighty miracles; but they still rebelled. Ah, that is like you, my hearer. You have had many deliverances from the borders of the grave; God has given you house and food day after day, and provided for you, and kept you to this hour; but how ungrateful you have been! As Isaiah said, "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but my people doth not know, Israel doth not consider." How many there are of this character, who have favors from God, the history of which they could not give in a year; but yet what have they ever done for him? They would not keep a horse that did not work for them, nor as much as a dog that would not notice them. But here is God; he has kept them day by day, and they have done a great deal against him, but they have done nothing for him. He has put the bread into their very mouths, nurtured them, and sustained their strength, and they have spent their strength in defying him, in cursing his name and breaking his Sabbath. "Nevertheless he saved them." Some of this sort have been saved. I hope I have some here now who will be saved by conquering grace, made new men by the mighty power of God's Spirit. "Nevertheless he saved them." When there was nothing to recommend them, but every reason why they should be cast away for their ingratitude, "Nevertheless he saved them."

And note, once more, *they were a provoking people*-"They provoked him at the sea, even at the Red Sea." Ah! how many people there are in this world that are a provoking people to God! If God were like man, who among us would be here to-day? If we are provoked once or twice, up goes the hand. With some men their passion stirs at the very first offense; others, who are somewhat more placid will bear offense after offense, till at last they say, "there is an end to everything, and I can bear that no longer; you must stay it, or else I must stay you!" Ah! if God had that temper, where should we be? Well might he say, "My thoughts are not as your thoughts; I am God, I change not, or else ye sons of Jacob had been consumed." They were a provoking people, "nevertheless he saved them." Have you provoked him? Take heart, if you repent, God has promised to save you; and what is more, he may this morning give you repentance, and even give you remission of sins, for he saves provoking people for his name's sake. I hear one of my hearers say,-"Well, sir, that is encouraging

sin with a vengeance!" Is it, indeed, sir! Why? "Because you are talking to the very worst of men, and you are saying that they may yet be saved." Pray, sirs, when I spoke to the worst of men, did I speak to *you* or not? You say, "No; I am one of the most respectable and best of men." Well then, sir, I have no need to preach to you, for you think you do not need mercy. "The whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." But these poor people, whom you say I am encouraging in sin, need to be spoken to. I will leave you. Good morning to you! You keep to your own gospel, and I wonder whether you will find your way to heaven by it. Nay, I do not wonder, I know you will not, unless you are brought as a poor sinner to take Christ at his word, and be saved for his name's sake. But I say farewell to you, and I will keep on in my course. But why did you say I encourage men in sin? I encourage them to turn from it. I did not say he saved the provoking people, and then let them still provoke him as they had done before; I did not say he saved the wicked people, and then let them sin as they did before. But you know the meaning of the word "saved;" I explained it the other morning. The word "saved" does not mean merely taking men to heaven; it means more-it means saving them from their sin; it means giving them a new heart, new spirits, new lives; it means making them into new men. Is there anything licentious in saying that Christ takes the worst of men to make them into saints? If there be, I cannot see it. I only wish he would take the worst of this congregation and make them into the saints of the living God, and then there would be far less licentiousness. Sinner, I comfort thee; not in thy sin, but in thy repentance. Sinner, the saints of heaven were once as bad as thou hast been. Art thou a drunkard, a swearer, an unclean person? "Such were some of them; but they have been washed-but they have been sanctified." Is thy robe black? Ask them whether their robes were ever black, they would not have wanted washing, "We have washed our robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Then sinner, if they were black, and were saved, why not thyself?

"Are not his mercies rich and free?
Then say, my soul, why not for thee?
Our Jesus died upon the tree,
Then why, my soul, why not for thee?"

Take heart, penitents, God will have mercy on you. "Nevertheless, he saved them for his name's sake."

III. Now we come to the third point-THE REASON OF SALVATION: "He saved them for his name's sake." There is no other reason why God should save a man, but for his name's sake; there is nothing in a sinner which can entitle him to salvation, or recommend him to mercy; it must be God's own heart which must dictate the motive why men are to be saved. One person says, "God will save me, because I am so upright." Sir, he will do no such thing. Says another, "God will save me because I am so talented." Sir, he will not. *Your talent!* Why thou drivelling, self-conceited idiot, thy talent is nothing compared with that of the angel that once stood before the throne, and sinned, and who now is cast into the bottomless pit for ever! If he would save men for their talent, he would have saved Satan; for he had talents enough. As for thy morality and goodness, it is but filthy rags, and he will never save thee for aught thou doest. None of us would ever be saved, if God expected anything of us: we must be saved purely and solely for reasons connected with himself, and lying in his own bosom. Blessed be his name, he saves us for "his name's sake." What does that mean? I think it means this: the name of God is his person, his attributes, and his nature. For his nature's sake, for his very attribute's sake, he saved men; and, perhaps, we may include this also, "My name is in him"-that is, in Christ; he saves us for the sake of Christ, who is the name of God. And what does that mean? I think it means this:

He saved them, first, that he might manifest his nature. God was all love, and he wanted to manifest it; he did show it when he made the sun, the moon, and the stars, and scattered flowers o'er the green and laughing earth. He did show his love when he made the air balmy to the body, and the sunshine cheering to the eye. He gives us warmth even in winter, by the clothing and by the fuel which he has stored in the bowels of the earth; but he wanted to reveal himself still more. "How can I show them that I love them with all my infinite heart? I will give my Son to die to save the very worst of them, and so I will manifest my nature." And God has done it, he has manifested his power, his justice, his love, his faithfulness, and his truth; he has manifested his whole self on the great platform of salvation. It was, so to speak, the balcony on which God stepped to show himself to man-the balcony of salvation-here it is he manifests himself, by saving men's souls.

He did it, again, to vindicate his name. Some say God is cruel; they wickedly call him tyrant. “Ah!” says God, “but I will save the worst of sinners, and vindicate my name; I will blot out the stigma; I will remove the slur: they shall not be able to say that, unless they be filthy liars, for I will be abundantly merciful. I will take away this stain, and they shall see that my great name is a name of love.” And said he, again, “I will do this for my name’s sake; that is, to make these people love my name; but if I take the worst of men, oh, how they will love me! If I go and take some of the offscouring of the earth, and make them my children, oh, how they will love me! Then they will cleave to my name; they will think it more sweet than music; it will be more precious to them than the spikenard of the Eastern merchants; they will value it as gold, yea, as much fine gold. The man who loves me best, is the man who has most sins forgiven: he owes much, therefore he will love much.” This is the reason why God often selects the worst of men to make them his. Saith an old writer, “All the carvings of heaven were made out of knots; the temple of God, the king of heaven, is a cedar one, but the cedars were all knotty trees before he cut them down.” He chose the worst, that he might display his workmanship and his skill, to make unto himself a name; as it is written, “It shall be unto me for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.” Now, dear hearers, of whatever class you are, here is something I have to offer well worthy of your consideration, namely-that if saved, we are saved for the sake of God, for his name’s sake, and not for our own.

Now this puts all men on a level with regard to salvation. Suppose that in coming into this garden, the rule had been that every one should have made mention of my name as the key of admittance; the law is, that no man is to be admitted for his rank or title, but only by the use of a certain name. Up comes a lord; he makes use of the name and comes in; up comes a beggar, all in patches; he makes use of the name-the law says it is only the use of the name that will admit you-he makes use of it and he enters, for there is no distinction. So, my lady, if you come, with all your morality, you must make use of His name: if you come, poor filthy inhabitant of a cellar or a garret, and make use of His name, the doors will fly wide open, for there is salvation for every one who makes mention of the name of Christ, and for none other. This pulls down the pride of the moralist, abases the self exaltation of the self righteous, and puts us all, as guilty sinners, on an

equal footing before God, to receive mercy at his hands, “For his name’s sake,” and for that reason alone.

IV. I have detained you too long; let me close by noticing the OBSTACLES REMOVED in the word “nevertheless.” I shall do that in somewhat of an interesting form, by way of parable.

Once on a time, Mercy sat upon her snow-white throne, surrounded by the troops of love. A sinner was brought before her, whom Mercy designed to save. The herald blew the trumpet, and after three blasts thereof, with a loud voice, he said-”O heaven and earth, and hell, I summon you this day to come before the throne of Mercy, to tell why this sinner should not be saved.” There stood the sinner, trembling with fear; he knew that there were multitudes of opponents, who would press into the hall of Mercy, and with eyes full of wrath would say, “He must not, and he shall not escape, he must be lost!” The trumpet was blown, and Mercy sat placidly on her throne, until there stepped in one with a fiery countenance; his head was covered with light; he spoke with a voice like thunder, and out of his eyes flashed lightning! “Who art thou?” said Mercy. He replied, “I am Law; the law of God.” “And what hast thou to say?” “I have this to say,” and he lifted up a stony tablet, written on both sides; “these ten commands this wretch has broken. My demand is blood; for it is written, ‘The soul that sinneth it shall die.’ Die he, or justice must.” The wretch trembles, his knees knock together, the marrow of his bones melts within him, as if they were ice dissolved by fire, and he shakes with very fright. Already he thought he saw the thunderbolt launched at him, he saw the lightning penetrate into his soul, hell yawned before him in imagination, and he thought himself cast away for ever. But Mercy smiled, and said, “Law, I will answer thee. This wretch deserves to die; justice demands that he should perish-I award thee thy claim.” And oh! how the sinner trembles. “But there is one yonder who has come with me to-day, my king, my Lord; his name is Jesus; he will tell you how the debt can be paid, and the sinner can go free.” Then Jesus spake, and said, “O Mercy, I will do thy bidding. Take me Law; put me in a garden; make me sweat drops of blood; then nail me to a tree; scourge my back before you put me to death; hang me on the cross; let blood run from my hands and feet; let me descend into the grave; let me pay all the sinner oweth; I will die in his stead.” And the Law went out and scourged the Savior, nailed him to the cross, and

coming back with his face all bright with satisfaction, stood again at the throne of Mercy, and Mercy said, “Law, what hast thou now to say?” “Nothing,” said he, “fair angel, nothing.” “What! not one of these commands against him?” “No, not one. Jesus, his substitute, has kept them all-has paid the penalty for his disobedience; and now, instead of his condemnation, I demand as a debt of justice that he be acquitted.” “Stand thou here,” said Mercy, “sit on my throne; I and thou together will now send forth another summons.” The trumpet rang again. “Come hither, all ye who have aught to say against this sinner, why he should not be acquitted;” and up comes another-one who often troubled the sinner, one who had a voice not so loud as that of the Law, but still piercing and thrilling-a voice whose whispers were like the cuttings of a dagger. “Who art thou?” says Mercy. “I am Conscience; this sinner must be punished; he has done so much against the law of God that he must be punished; I demand it; and I will give him no rest till he is punished, nor even then, for I will follow him even to the grave, and persecute him after death with pangs unutterable.” “Nay,” said Mercy, “hear me,” and while he paused for a moment, she took a bunch of hyssop and sprinkled Conscience with the blood, saying, “Hear me, Conscience, ‘The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth us from all sin;’ Now hast thou ought to say,?” “No,” said Conscience, “nothing.”

‘Covered is his unrighteousness;
From condemnation he is free.’

Henceforth I will not grieve him; I will be a good conscience unto him, through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The trumpet rang a third time, and growling from the innermost vaults, up there came a grim black fiend, with hate in his eyes, and hellish majesty on his brows. He is asked, “Hast thou anything against that sinner?” “Yes,” said he, “I have; he has made a league with hell, and a covenant with the grave, and here it is signed with his own hand. He asked God to destroy his soul in a drunken fit, and vowed he would never turn to God; see, here is his covenant with hell!” “Let us look at it,” said Mercy; and it was handed up, whilst the grim fiend looked at the sinner, and pierced him through with his black looks. “Ah! but,” said Mercy, “this man had no right to sign the deed; a man must not sign away another’s property. This man was bought and paid for long beforehand; he is not his own; the covenant with death is disannulled,

and the league with hell is rent in pieces. Go thy way Satan," "Nay," said he, howling again, "I have something else to say: that man was always my friend; he listened ever to my insinuations; he scoffed at the gospel; he scorned the majesty of heaven; is he to be pardoned, whilst I repair to my hellish den, for ever to bear the penalty of guilt?" Said Mercy, "Avaunt, thou fiend; these things he did in the days of his unregeneracy; but this word 'nevertheless' blots them out. Go thou to thy hell; take this for another lash upon thyself-the sinner shall be pardoned, but thou-never, treacherous fiend!" And then Mercy, smilingly turning to the sinner, said, "Sinner, the trumpet must be blown for the last time!" Again it was blown, and no one answered. Then stood the sinner up, and Mercy said, "Sinner ask thyself the question-ask thou of heaven, of earth, of hell-whether any can condemn thee?" And the sinner stood up, and with a bold loud voice said, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" And he looked into hell, and Satan lay there, biting his iron bonds; and he looked on earth, and earth was silent; and in the majesty of faith the sinner did even climb to heaven itself, and he said, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? God?' And the answer came, "No; he justifieth." "Christ?" Sweetly it was whispered, "No; he died." Then turning round, the sinner joyfully exclaimed, "Who shall separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." And the once condemned sinner came back to Mercy; prostrate at her feet he lay, and vowed henceforth to be hers for ever, if she would keep him to the end, and make him what she would desire him to be. Then no longer did the trumpet ring, but angels rejoiced, and heaven was glad, for the sinner was saved.

Thus, you see, I have what is called, dramatized the thing; but I don't care what it is called; it is a way of arresting the ear, when nothing else will. "Nevertheless;" there is the obstruction taken away! Sinner, whatever be the "nevertheless," it shall never the less abate the Savior's love; not the less shall it ever make it, but it shall remain the same.

"Come, guilty soul, and flee away
To Christ and heal thy wounds;
This is the glorious gospel-day,
Wherein free grace abounds.
Come to Jesus, sinner, come."

On thy knee weep out a sorrowful confession; look to his cross, and see the substitute; believe, and live. Ye almost demons, ye that have gone farthest in sin, now, Jesus says, “If you know your need of me, turn unto me, and I will have mercy upon you: and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

SECRET SINS

SERMON NO. 116

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 8, 1857,

AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

"Cleanse thou me from secret faults. — Psalm 19:12.

SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS arises partly from pride but mainly from ignorance of God's law. It is because men know little or nothing concerning the terrible character of the divine law, that they foolishly imagine themselves to be righteous. They are not aware of the deep spirituality, and the stern severity of the law, or they would have other and wiser notions. Once let them know how strictly the law deals with the thoughts, how it brings itself to bear upon every emotion of the inner man, and there is not one creature beneath God's heaven who would dare to think himself righteous in God's sight in virtue of his own deeds and thoughts. Only let the law be revealed to a man; let him know how strict the law is, and how infinitely just, and his self-righteousness will shrivel into nothing-it will become a filthy rag in his sight, whereas before he thought it to be a goodly garment.

Now, David, having seen God's law, and having praised it in this Psalm, which I have read in your hearing, he is brought, by reflecting on its excellency, to utter this thought, "Who can understand his errors?" and then to offer this prayer, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults."

In the Lateran Council of the Church of Rome, a decree was passed that every true believer must confess his sins, all of them, once a year to the priest, and they affixed to it this declaration, that there is no hope of pardon but in complying with that decree. What can equal the absurdity of such a decree as that? Do they suppose that they can tell their sins as easily as they can count their fingers? Why, if we could receive pardon for all our sins by telling every sin we have committed in one hour, there is not one of us who would be able to enter heaven, since, besides the sins that

are known to us and that we may be able to confess, there are a vast mass of sins, which are as truly sins as those which we do observe, but which are secret, and come not beneath our eye. Oh! if we had eyes like those of God, we should think very differently of ourselves. The sins that we see and confess are but like the farmer's small samples which he brings to market, when he has left his granary full at home. We have but a very few sins which we can observe and detect, compared with those which are hidden to ourselves and unseen by our fellow creatures. I doubt not it is true of all of us who are here, that in every hour of our existence in which we are active, we commit tens of thousands of unholinesses for which conscience has never reproved us, because we have never seen them to be wrong, seeing we have not studied God's laws as we ought to have done. Now, be it known to us all that sin is sin, whether we see it or not-that a sin secret to us is a sin as truly as if we knew it to be a sin, though not so great a sin in the sight of God as if it had been committed presumptuously, seeing that it lacks the aggravation of willfulness. Let all of us who know our sins, offer this prayer after all our confessions: "Lord, I have confessed as many as I know, but I must add an etcetera after them, and say, 'Cleanse thou me from secret faults.'"

That, however, will not be the pith of my sermon this morning. I am going after a certain class of men who have sins not unknown to themselves, but secret to their fellow creatures. Every now and then we turn up a fair stone which lies upon the green sward of the professing church, surrounded with the verdure of apparent goodness, and to our astonishment we find beneath it all kinds of filthy insects and loathsome reptiles, and in our disgust as such hypocrisy, we are driven to exclaim, "All men are liars; there are none in whom we can put any trust at all." It is not fair to say so of all; but really, the discoveries which are made of the insincerity of our fellow-creatures are enough to make us despise our kind, because they can go so far in appearances, and yet have so little soundness of heart. To you, sirs, who sin secretly, and yet make a profession; you break God's covenants in the dark and wear a mask of goodness in the light-to you, sirs, who shut the doors and commit wickedness in secret-to you I shall speak this morning. O may God also be pleased to speak to you, and make you pray this prayer: "Cleanse thou me from secret faults."

I shall endeavor to urge upon all pretenders present to give up, to renounce, to detest, to hate, to abhor all their secret sins. And, first, I shall endeavor to show *the folly of secret sins*; secondly, *the misery of secret sins*; thirdly, *the guilt of secret sins*; fourthly, *the danger of secret sins*; and then I shall try to apply some words by way of remedy, that we may all of us be enabled to avoid secret sins.

I. First, then, THE FOLLY OF SECRET SINS.

Pretender, thou art fair to look upon; thy conduct outwardly upright, amiable, liberal, generous and Christian; but thou dost indulge in some sin which the eye of man has not yet detected. Perhaps it is private drunkenness. Thou dost revile the drunkard when he staggers through the street; but thou canst thyself indulge in the same habit in private. It may be some other lust or vice; it is not for me just now to mention what it is. But, pretender, we say unto thee, thou art a fool to think of harbouring a secret sin; and thou art a fool for this one reason, that thy sin is not a secret sin; *it is known*, and shall one day be revealed; perhaps very soon. Thy sin is not a secret; the eye of God hath seen it; thou hast sinned before his face. Thou hast shut-to the door, and drawn the curtains, and kept out the eye of the sun, but God's eye pierceth through the darkness; the brick walls which surrounded thee were as transparent as glass to the eye of the Almighty; the darkness which did gird thee was as bright as the summer's noon to the eye of him who beholdeth all things. Knowest thou not, O man, that "all things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do?" As the priest ran his knife into the entrails of his victim, discovered the heart and liver, and what else did lie within, so art thou, O man, seen by God, cut open by the Almighty; thou hast no secret chamber where thou canst hide thyself; thou hast no dark cellar where thou canst conceal thy soul. Dig deep, ay, deep as hell, but thou canst not find earth enough upon the globe to cover thy sin; if thou shouldst heap the mountains on its grave, those mountains would tell the tale of what was buried in their bowels. If thou couldst cast thy sin into the sea, a thousand babbling waves would tell the secret out. There is no hiding it from God. Thy sin is photographed in high heaven; the deed when it was done was photographed upon the sky, and there it shall remain, and thou shalt see thyself one day revealed to the gazing eyes of all men, a hypocrite, a pretender, who didst sin in fancied secret, observed in all thine acts by the

all-seeing Jehovah. O what fools men are, to think they can do anything in secret. This world is like the glass hives wherein bees sometimes work: we look down upon them, and we see all the operations of the little creatures. So God looketh down and seeth all. Our eyes are weak; we cannot look through the darkness; but his eye, like an orb of fire, penetrateth the blackness; and readeth the thoughts of man, and seeth his acts when he thinks himself most concealed. Oh; it were a thought enough to curb us from all sin, if it were truly applied to us-"Thou, God, seest me!" Stop thief! Drop thou that which thou hast taken to thyself. God seeth thee! No eye of detection on earth hath discovered thee, but God's eyes are now looking through the clouds upon thee. Swearer! scarce any for whom thou carest heard thy oath; but God heard it; it entered into the ears of the Lord God of Sabbaoth. Ah! thou who leadest a filthy life, and yet art a respectable merchant bearing among men a fair and goodly character; thy vices are all known; written in God's book. He keepeth a diary of all thine acts; and what wilt thou think on that day when a crowd shall be assembled, compared with which this immense multitude is but a drop of a bucket, and God shall read out the story of thy secret life, and men and angels shall hear it. Certain I am there are none of us who would like to have all our secrets read, especially our secret thoughts. If I should select out of this congregation the most holy man, should bring him forward and say, "Now, sir, I know all your thoughts, and am about to tell them," I am sure he would offer me the largest bribe that he could gather if I would be pleased to conceal at least some of them. "Tell," He would say, "of my acts; of them I am not ashamed; but do not tell my thoughts and imaginations-of them I must ever stand ashamed before God." What, then, sinner, will be thy shame when thy privy lusts, thy closet transgressions, thy secret crimes shall be gazetted from God's throne, published by his own mouth, and with a voice louder than a thousand thunders preached in the ears of an assembled world? What will be thy terror and confusion then, when all the deeds thou hast done shall be published in the face of the sun, in the ears of all mankind. O renounce the foolish hope of secresy, for thy sin is this day recorded, and shall one day be advertised upon the walls of heaven.

II. In the next place, let us notice THE MISERY OF SECRET SINS.

Of all sinners the man who makes a profession of religion, and yet lives in iniquity, is the most miserable. A downright wicked man, who takes a glass in his hand, and says, "I am a drunkard, I am not ashamed of it," he shall be unutterably miserable in worlds to come, but brief though it be, he has his hour of pleasure. A man who curses and swears, and says, "That is my habit, I am a profane man," and makes a profession of it, he has, at least, some peace in his soul; but the man who walks with God's minister, who is united with God's Church, who comes out before God's people, and unites with them, and then lives in sin, what a miserable existence he must have of it! Why, he has a worse existence than the mouse that is in the parlour, running out now and then to pick up the crumbs, and then back again to his hole. Such men must run out now and then to sin; and oh! how fearful they are to be discovered! One day, perhaps, their character turns up; with wonderful cunning they manage to conceal and gloss it over; but the next day something else comes, and they live in constant fear, telling lie after lie, to make the last lie appear truthful, adding deception to deception, in order that they may not be discovered.

"Oh! 'tis a tangled web we weave,
When once we venture to deceive."

If I must be a wicked man, give me the life of a roystering sinner, who sins before the face of day; but, if I must sin, let me not act as a hypocrite and a coward; let me not profess to be God's, and spend my life for the devil. That way of cheating the devil is a thing which every honest sinner will be ashamed of. He will say, "Now, if I do serve my master I will serve him out and out, I will have no sham about it; if I make a profession, I will carry it out; but if I do not, if I live in sin, I am not going to gloss it over by cant and hypocrisy." One thing which has hamstringed the church, and cut her very sinews in twain, has been this most damnable hypocrisy. Oh! in how many places have we men whom you might praise to the very skies, if you could believe their words, but whom you might cast into the nethermost pit if you could see their secret actions. God forgive any of you who are so acting! I had almost said, I can scarce forgive you. I can forgive the man who riots openly, and makes no profession of being better, but the man who fawns, and cants, and pretends, and prays, and then lives in sin, that man I hate, I cannot bear him, I abhor him from my very soul. If he will turn from his ways, I will love him, but in his hypocrisy he is to

me the most loathsome of all creatures. ‘Tis said the toad doth wear a jewel in her head, but this man hath none, but beareth filthiness about him, while he pretends to be in love with righteousness. A mere profession, my hearers, is but painted pageantry to go to hell in; it is like the plumes upon the hearse and the trappings upon the black horses which drag men to their graves, the funeral array of dead souls. Take heed above everything of a waxen profession that will not stand the sun; take care of a life that needs to have two faces to carry it out; be one thing, or else the other. If you make up your mind to serve Satan, do not pretend to serve God; and if you serve God, serve him with all your heart. “No man can serve two *masters*;” do not try it, do not endeavor to do it, for no life will be more miserable than that. Above all, beware of committing acts which it will be necessary to conceal. There is a singular poem by Hood, called “The Dream of Eugene Aram”-a most remarkable piece it is indeed, illustrating the point on which I am now dwelling. Aram has murdered a man and cast his body into the river-”a sluggish water, black as ink, the depth was so extreme.” The next morning he visited the scene of his guilt:

“And sought the black accursed pool,
With a wild misgiving eye;
And he saw the dead in the river bed,
For the faithless stream was dry.”

Next he covered the corpse with heaps of leaves, but a mighty wind swept through the wood and left the secret bare before the sun:

“Then down I cast me on my face,
And first began to weep,
For I knew my secret then was one
The earth refused to keep;
On land or sea though it should be
Ten thousand fathoms deep.”

In plaintive notes he prophesies his own discovery. He buried his victim in a cave, and trod him down with stones, but when years had run their weary round the foul deed was discovered and the murderer put to death.

Guilt is a “grim chamberlain,” even when his fingers are not bloody red. Secret sins bring fevered eyes and sleepless nights, until men burn out their consciences, and become in very deed ripe for the pit. Hypocrisy is a hard game to play at, for it is one deceiver against many observers; and for

certain it is a miserable trade, which will earn at last, as its certain climax, a tremendous bankruptcy. Ah! ye who have sinned without discovery, “Be sure your sin will find you out;” and bethink you, it may find you out ere long. Sin, like murder, will come out; men will even tell tales about themselves in their dreams. God has sometimes made men so pricked in their consciences that they have been obliged to stand forth and confess the story. Secret sinner! If thou wantest the foretaste of damnation upon earth, continue in thy secret sins; for no man is more miserable than he who sinneth secretly, and yet trieth to preserve a character. Yon stag, followed by the hungry hounds, with open mouths, is far more happy than the man who is followed by his sins. Yon bird, taken in the fowler’s net, and laboring to escape, is far more happy than he who hath weaved around himself a web of deception, and labors to escape from it day by day by making the toils more thick and the web more strong. Oh! the misery of secret sins! Truly, one may pray, “Cleanse thou me from secret faults.”

III. But now, next, the guilt THE SOLEMN GUILT OF SECRET SIN.

Now, John, you do not think there is any evil in a thing unless somebody sees it, do you? You feel that it is a very great sin if your master finds you out in robbing the till-but there is no sin if he should not discover it-none at all. And you, sir, you fancy it to be very great sin to play a trick in trade, in case you should be discovered and brought before the court; but to play a trick and never be discovered, that is all fair-do not say a word about it Mr. Spurgeon, it is all business; you must not touch business; tricks that are not discovered, of course you are not to find fault with them. The common measure of sin is the notoriety of it. But I do not believe in that. A sin is a sin, whether done in private or before the wide world. It is singular how men will measure guilt. A railway servant puts up a wrong signal, there is an accident; the man is tried, and severely reprimanded. The day before he put up the wrong signal, but there was no accident, and therefore no one accused him for his neglect. But it was just the same, accident or no accident, the accident did not make the guilt, it was the deed which made the guilt, not the notoriety nor yet the consequence of it. It was his business to have taken care; and he was as guilty the first time as he was the second, for he negligently exposed the lives of men. Do not measure sin by what other people say of it; but

measure sin by what God says of it, and what your own conscience says of it.

Now, I hold that secret sin, if anything, is the worst of sin; because secret sin implies that the man who commits it has Atheism in his heart. You will ask how that can be. I reply, he may be a professing Christian, but I shall tell him to his face that he is a practical Atheist, if he labors to keep up a respectable profession before man, and then secretly transgresses. Why, is he not an Atheist, who will say there is a God, yet at the same time thinks more of man than he does of God? Is it not the very essence of Atheism-is it not a denial of the divinity of the Most High when men lightly esteem him and think more of the eye of a creature than of the observation of their Creator? There are some who would not for the life of them say a wicked word in the presence of their minister, but they can do it, knowing God is looking at them. They are Atheists. There are some who would not trick in trade for all the world if they thought they would be discovered, but they can do it while God is with them; that is, they think more of the eye of man than of the eye of God; and they think it worse to be condemned by man than to be condemned by God. Call it by what name you will, the proper name of that is practical Atheism. It is dishonoring God; it is dethroning him; putting him down below his own creatures; and what is that, but to take away his divinity? Brethren, do not, I beseech you, incur the fearful guilt of secret sins. No man can sin a little in secret, it will certainly engender more sin; no man can be a hypocrite and yet be moderate in guilt; he will go from bad to worse, and still proceed, until when his guilt shall be published, he shall be found to be the very worst and most hardened of men. Take heed of the guilt of secret sin. AH, now if could I preach as Rowland Hill did, I would make some people look to themselves at home, and tremble too! It is said that when he preached, there was not a man in the window, or standing in the crowd, or perched up anywhere, but said, “There, he is preaching at me; he is telling me about my secret sins.” And when he proclaimed God’s omniscience, it is said men would almost think they saw God bodily present in the midst of them looking at them. And when he had done his sermon, they would hear a voice in their ears, “Can any hide himself in secret places that I cannot see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.” I would I could do that; that I could make every man look to himself, and

find out his secret sin. Come my hearer, what is it? Bring it forth to the daylight; perhaps it will die in the light of the sun. These things love not to be discovered. Tell thine own conscience, now, what it is. Look it in the face; confess it before God, and may he give thee grace to remove that sin and every other, and turn to him with full purpose of heart! But this know-that thy guilt is guilt discovered or undiscovered, and that if there be any difference it is worse, because it has been secret. God save us from the guilt of secret sin! "Cleanse thou me from secret faults."

IV. And note, next, THE DANGER OF SECRET SIN. One danger is, that a man cannot commit a little sin in secret, without being by-and-by betrayed into a public sin. You cannot, sir, though you may think you can preserve a moderation in sin. If you commit one sin, it is like the melting of the lower glacier upon the Alps; the others must follow in time. As certainly as you heap one stone upon the cairn to-day, the next day you will cast another, until the heap, reared stone by stone, shall become a very pyramid. See the coral insect at work, you cannot decree where it shall stay its work. It will not build its rock just as high as you please, it will not stay until it shall be covered with weeds, until the weeds shall decay; and there shall be soil upon it, and an island shall be created by tiny creatures. Sin cannot be held in with bit and bridle. "But I am going to have a little drink now and then, I am only going to be intoxicated once a week or so. Nobody will see it; I shall be in bed directly." You will be drunk in the streets soon. "I am only just going to read one lascivious book; I will put it under the sofa-cover when any one comes in." You will keep it in your library yet, sir. "I am only going into that company now and then." You will go there every day, such is the bewitching character of it; you cannot help it. You may as well ask the lion to let you put your head into his mouth. You cannot regulate his jaws: neither can you regulate sin. Once go into it, you cannot tell when you will be destroyed. You may be such a fortunate individual, that like Van Amburgh you may put your head in and out a great many times; reset assured that one of these days it will be a costly venture. Again, you may labor to conceal your vicious habit, but it will come out, you cannot help it. You keep your little pet sin at home; but mark this, when the door is ajar the dog will be out in the street. Wrap him up in your bosom, put over him fold after fold of hypocrisy to keep him secret, the wretch will be singing some day when you are in company;

you cannot keep the evil bird still. Your sin will gad abroad; and what is more, you will not mind it some of these days. A man who indulges in sin privately, by degrees gets his forehead as hard as brass. The first time he sinned, the drops of sweat stood on his brow at the recollection of what he had done; the second time, no hot sweat on his brow, only an agitation of the muscle; the third time there was the sly, sneaky look, but no agitation; the next time, he sinned a little further; and by degrees he became the bold blasphemer of his God, who exclaimed, "Who am I that I should fear Jehovah, and who is he that I should serve him?" Men go from bad to worse. Launch your boat in the current-it must go where the current takes it. Put yourself in the whirlwind-you are but a straw in the wind: you must go which way the wind carries you-you cannot control yourself. The balloon can mount, but it cannot direct its course; it must go whichever way the wind blows. If you once mount into sin there is no stopping. Take heed if you would not become the worst of characters, take heed of the little sins, they, mounting one upon another, may at last heave you from the summit and destroy your soul for ever. There is a great danger in secret sins.

But I have here some true Christians who indulge in secret sins. They say it is but a little one, and therefore do they spare it. Dear brethren, I speak to you, and I speak to myself, when I say this-let us destroy all our little secret sins. They are called little and if they be, let us remember that it is the foxes, even the little foxes, that spoil our vines; for our vines have tender shoots. Let us take heed of our little sins. A little sin, like a little pebble in the shoe, will make a traveler to heaven walk very wearily. Little sins, like little thieves, may open the door to greater ones outside. Christians, recollect that little sins will spoil your communion with Christ. Little sins, like little stains in silk, may damage the fine texture of fellowship; little sins, like little irregularities in the machinery, may spoil the whole fabric of your religion. The one dead fly spoileth the whole pot of ointment. That one thistle may seed a continent with noxious weeds. Let us, brethren, kill our sins as often as we can find them. One said "The heart is full of unclean birds; it is a cage of them." "Ah, but," said another divine, "you must not make that an apology, for a Christian's business is to wring their necks." And so it is; if there be evil things, it is our business to kill them. Christians must not tolerate secret sins. We must not harbour

traitors; it is high treason against the King of Heaven. Let us drag them out to light, and offer them upon the altar, giving up the dearest of our secret sins at the will and bidding of God. There is a great danger in a little secret sin; therefore avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and shun it; and God give thee grace to overcome it!

V. And now I come, in finishing up, to plead with all my might with some of you whom God has pricked in your consciences. I have come to intreat you, if it be possible, even to tears, that you will give up your secret sins. I have one here for whom I bless God; I love him, though I know him not. He is almost persuaded to be a Christian; he halteth between two opinions; he intendeth to serve God, he striveth to give up sin, but he findeth it a hard struggle, and as yet he knoweth not what shall become of him. I speak to him with all love: my friend, will you have your sin and go to hell, or leave your sin and go to heaven? This is the solemn alternative: to all awakened sinners I put it; may God choose for you, otherwise I tremble as to which you may choose. The pleasures of this life are so intoxicating, the joys of it so ensnaring, that did I not believe that God worketh in us to will and to do, I should despair of you. But I have confidence that God will decide the matter. Let me lay the alternative before you:-on the one hand there is a hour's merriment, a short life of bliss, and that a poor, poor bliss; on the other hand, there is everlasting life and eternal glory. On the one hand, there is a transient happiness, and afterwards overwhelming woe; in this case there is a solid peace and everlasting joy, and after it overflowing bliss. I shall not fear to be called an Arminian, when I say, as Elijah did, "Choose you this day whom you will serve. If God be God, serve him; if Baal be God serve him." But, now, make your choice deliberately; and may God help you to do it! Do not say you will take up with religion, without first counting the cost of it; remember, there is your lust to be given up, your pleasure to be renounced; can you do it for Christ's sake? Can you? I know you cannot, unless God's grace shall assist you in making such a choice. But can you say, "Yes, by the help of God, earth's gaudy toys, its pomps, pageantries, gewgaws, all these I renounce?-

"These can never satisfy,
Give me Christ or else I die."

Sinner, thou wilt never regret that choice, if God help thee to make it; thou wilt find thyself a happy man here, and thrice happy throughout eternity.

"But," says one, "Sir, I intend to be religious, but I do not hold with your strictness." I do not ask you to do so; I hope, however, you will hold with *God's* strictness, and God's strictness is ten thousand times greater than mine. You may say that I am puritanical in my preaching; God will be puritanical in judging in that great day. I may appear severe, but I can never be so severe as God will be. I may draw the harrow with sharp teeth across your conscience, but God shall drag harrows of eternal fire across you one day. I may speak thundering things! God will not speak them, but hurl them from his hands. Remember, men may laugh at hell, and say there is none; but they must reject their Bibles before they can believe the lie. Men's consciences tell them that

"There is a dreadful hell,
And everlasting pains;
Where sinners must with devils dwell,
In darkness, fire and chains."

Sirs, will ye keep your secret sins, and have eternal fire for them? Remember it is of no use, they must all be given up, or else you cannot be God's child. You cannot by any means have both; it cannot be God and the world, it cannot be Christ and the devil; it must be one or the other. Oh! that God would give you grace to resign all; for what are they worth? They are your deceivers now, and will be your tormentors for ever. Oh! that your eyes were open to see the rottenness, the emptiness and trickery of iniquity. Oh! that God would turn you to himself. Oh! may God give you grace to cross the Rubicon of repentance at this very hour; to say, "Henceforth it is war to the knife with my sins; not one of them will I willingly keep, but down with them, down with them; Canaanite, Hittite, Jebusite, they shall all be driven out."

"The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be;
Help me to tear it from its throne,
And worship only thee."

"But oh! sir, I cannot do it; it would be like pulling my eyes out." Ay, but hear what Christ says: "It were better for thee to enter into life with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire." "But it would be like cutting my arms off." Ay, and it would be better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, than to be cast into hell fire for ever. Oh! when the sinner

comes before God at last, do you think he will speak as he does now? God will reveal his secret sins: the sinner will not then say, "Lord, I thought my secret sins so sweet, I could not give them up." I think I see how changed it will be then. "*Sir*" you say now, "*you are too strict*;" will you say that when the eyes of the Almighty are glowering on you? You say now, "*Sir, you are too precise*;" will you say that to God Almighty's face? "*Sir, I mean to keep such-and-such a sin.*" Can you say it at God's bar at last? You will not dare to do it then. Ah! when Christ comes a second time, there will be a marvellous change in the way men talk. Methinks I see him; there he sits upon his throne. Now, Caiaphas, come and condemn him now! Judas! comes and kiss him now! What do you stick at, man? Are you afraid of him? Now, Barrabbas! go; see whether they will prefer you to Christ now. Swearer, now is your time; you have been a bold man; curse him to his face now. Now drunkard; stagger up to him now. Now infidel; tell him there is no Christ now-now that the world is lit with lightning and the earth is shaken with thunder till the solid pillars thereof do bow themselves-tell God there is no God now; now laugh at the Bible; now scoff at the minister. Why men, what is the matter with you? Why, can't you do it? Ah! there you are; you have fled to the hills and to the rocks-"Rocks hide us! mountains fall on us; hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne." Ah! where are now your boasts, your vauntings, and your glories? Alas! alas! for you, in that dread day of wonders.

Secret sinner, what will then become of thee? Go out of this place unmasked; go out to examine thyself, go out to bend thy knee, go out to weep, go out to pray. God give thee grace to believe! And oh, how sweet and pleasant the thought, that this day sinners have fled to Christ, and men have been born again to Jesus! Brethren, ere I finish, I repeat the words at which so many have cavilled-it is now, or never, it is ***turn or burn***. Solemnly in God's sight I say it; if it be not God's truth I must answer for it in the great day of account. Your consciences tell you it is true. Take it home, and mock me if you will; this morning I am clear of your blood: if any seek not God, but live in sin, I shall be clear of your blood in that day when the watchman shall have your souls demanded of him; oh, may God grant that you may be cleared in a blessed manner! When I went down those pulpit stairs a Sabbath or two ago, a friend said to me words which have been in my mind ever since-"Sir, there are nine thousand people this

day without excuse in the day of judgment." It is true of you this morning. If you are damned, it will be not for want of preaching to you, and it shall not be for want of praying for you. God knoweth that if my heart could break of itself, it would, for your souls, for God is my witness, how earnestly I long for you in the bowels of Christ Jesus. Oh, that he might touch your hearts and bring you to him! For death is a solemn thing, damnation is a horrible thing, to be out of Christ is a dreadful thing, to be dead in sin is a terrific thing. May God lead you to view these things as they are, and save you, for his mercy's sake! "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved."

"Lord, search my soul, try every thought;
Though my own heart accuse me not
Of walking in a false disguise,
I beg the trial of thine eyes.
Doth secret mischief lurk within?
Do I indulge some unknown sin?
O turn my feet whene'er I stray,
And lead me in thy perfect way."

LOVEST THOU ME?

SERMON NO. 117

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, SEPTEMBER 7TH, 1856,

AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

"Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, Lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep." — John 21:15-17.

HOW very much like to Christ before his crucifixion was Christ after his resurrection! Although he had lain in the grave, and descended into the regions of the dead, and had retraced his steps to the land of the living, yet how marvellously similar he was in his manners and how unchanged in his disposition. His passion, his death, and his resurrection, could not alter his character as a man any more than they could affect his attributes as God. He is Jesus for ever the same. And when he appeared again to his disciples, he had cast aside none of his kind manners; he had not lost a particle of interest in their welfare; he addressed them just as tenderly as before, and called them his children and his friends. Concerning their temporal condition he was mindful, for he said, "Children, have ye any meat?" And he was certainly quite as watchful over their spiritual state, for after he had supplied their bodies by a rich draught from the sea, with fish, (which possibly he had created for the occasion), he enquires after their souls' health and prosperity, beginning with the one who might be supposed to have been in the most sickly condition, the one who had denied his Master thrice, and wept bitterly — even Simon Peter. "Simon, son of Jonas," said Jesus, "lovest thou me?"

Without preface, for we shall have but little time this morning — may God help us to make good use of it! — we shall mention three things: first a solemn question — "Lovest thou me?" secondly, a discreet answer, "Yes, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee;" and thirdly, a required demonstration of the fact, "He saith unto him, Feed my lambs;" or, again, "Feed my sheep."

I. First, then, here was A SOLEMN QUESTION, which our Savior put to Peter, not for his own information, for, as Peter said, "Thou knowest that I love thee," but for Peter's examination. It is well, especially after a foul sin, that the Christian should well probe the wound. It is right that he should examine himself; for sin gives grave cause for suspicion, and it would be wrong for a Christian to live an hour with a suspicion concerning his spiritual estate, unless he occupy that hour in examination of himself. Self-examination should more especially follow sin, though it ought to be the daily habit of every Christian, and should be practiced by him perpetually. Our Savior, I say, asked this question of Peter, that he might ask it of himself; so we may suppose it asked of us this morning that we may put it to our own hearts. Let each one ask himself then, in his Savior's name, for his own profit, "Lovest thou the Lord? Lovest thou the Savior? Lovest thou the ever-blessed Redeemer?"

Note what this question was. It was a question concerning Peter's love. He did not say, "Simon, son of Jonas, fearest thou me." He did not say, "Dost thou admire me? Dost thou adore me?" Nor was it even a question concerning his faith. He did not say, "Simon, son of Jonas, believest thou in me?" but he asked him another question, "Lovest thou me?" I take it, that is because love is the very best evidence of piety. Love is the brightest of all the graces; and hence it becomes the best evidence. I do not believe love to be superior to faith; I believe faith to be the groundwork of our salvation; I think faith to be the mother grace, and love springs from it; faith I believe to be the root grace, and love grows from it. But, then, faith is not an evidence for brightness equal to love. Faith, if we have it, is a sure and certain sign that we are God's children; and so is every other grace a sure and certain one, but many of them cannot be seen by others. Love is a more sparkling one than any other. If I have a true fear of God in my heart, then am I God's child; but since fear is a grace that is more dim and hath not that halo of glory over it that love has, love becomes one of the very

best evidences and one of the easiest signs of discerning whether we are alive to the Savior. He that lacketh love, must lack also every other grace in the proportion in which he lacketh love. If love be little, I believe it is a sign that faith is little; for he that believeth much loveth much. If love be little, fear will be little, and courage for God will be little; and whatsoever graces there be, though faith lieth at the root of them all, yet do they so sweetly hang on love, that if love be weak, all the rest of the graces most assuredly will be so. Our Lord asked Peter, then, that question, "Lovest thou me?"

And note, again, that he did not ask Peter anything about his doings. He did not say, "Simon Peter, how much hast thou wept? How often hast thou done penance on account of thy great sin? How often hast thou on thy knees sought mercy at my hand for the slight thou hast done to me, and for that terrible cursing and swearing wherewith thou didst disown thy Lord, whom thou hadst declared thou wouldst follow even to prison and to death?" No; it was not in reference to his works, but in reference to the state of his heart that Jesus said, "Lovest thou me?" To teach us this; that though works do follow after a sincere love, yet love excelleth the works, and works without love are not evidences worth having. We may have some tears; but they are not the tears that God shall accept, if there be no love to him. We may have some works; but they are not acceptable works, if they are not done out of love to his person. We may perform very many of the outward, ritual observances of religion; but unless love lieth at the bottom, all these things are vain and useless. The question, then, "Lovest thou me?" is a very vital question; far more so than one that merely concerns the outward conduct. It is a question that goes into the very heart, and in such a way that it brings the whole heart to one question; for if love be wrong, everything else is wrong. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"

Ah! dear beloved, we have very much cause for asking ourselves this question. If our Savior were no more than a man like ourselves, he might often doubt whether we love him at all. Let me just remind you of sundry things which give us very great cause to ask this question: "Lovest thou me?" I will deal only with the last week. Come, my Christian brother, look at thine own conduct. Do not thy sins make thee doubt whether thou dost love thy Master? Come, look over the sins of this week: when thou wast

speaking with an angry word and with a sullen look, might not thy Lord have touched thee, and said, “Lovest thou me?” When thou wast doing such-and-such a thing, which thou right well knewest in thy conscience was not according to his precept, might he not have said, “Lovest thou me?” Canst thou not remember the murmuring word because something had gone wrong with thee in business this week, and thou wast speaking ill of the God of providence for it? Oh, might not the loving Savior, with pity in his languid eye, have said to thee, “What, speak thus? Lovest thou me?” I need not stop to mention the various sins of which ye have been guilty. Ye have sinned, I am sure, enough to give good ground for self-suspicion, if ye did not still hang on this; that his love to you, not your love to him, is the seal of your discipleship. Oh, do you not think within yourselves, “If I had loved him more, should I have sinned so much? And oh, can I love him when I have broken so many of his commandments! Have I reflected his glorious image to the world as I should have done? Have I not wasted many hours within this week that I might have spent in winning souls to him? Have I not thrown away many precious moments in light and frivolous conversation which I might have spent in earnest prayer? Oh! how many words have I uttered, which if they have not been filthy, (as I trust they have not) yet have not been such as have ministered grace to the hearers? Oh, how many follies have I indulged in? How many sins have I winked at? How many crimes have I covered over? How have I made my Savior’s heart to bleed? How have I done dishonor to his cause? How have I in some degree disgraced my heart’s profession of love to him?” Oh, ask these questions of thyself, beloved, and say, “Is this thy kindness to thy Friend?”

But I hope this week has been one wherein thou hast sinned little openly as to the world, or even in thine own estimation, as to open acts of crime. But now let me put another question to thee, Does not thy worldliness make thee doubt? How hast thou been occupied with the world, from Monday morning to the last hour of Saturday night? Thou hast scarce had time to think of him. What corners hast thou pushed thy Jesus into, to make room for thy bales of goods? How hast thou stowed him away into one short five minutes, to make room for thy ledger or thy day-book? How little time hast thou given to him! Thou hast been occupied with the shop, with the exchange, and the farmyard; and thou hast had little time to

commune with him! Come, just think! remember any one day this week; canst thou say that thy goal always flew upward with passionate desires to him? Didst thou pant like a hart for thy Savior during the week. Nay, perhaps there was a whole day went by, and thou scarcely thoughtest of him till the winding up of it; and then thou couldst only upbraid thyself, "How have I forgotten Christ to-day? I have not beheld his person; I have not walked with him; I have not done as Enoch did! I knew he would come into the shop with me; I knew he is such a blessed Christ that he would stand behind the counter with me; I knew he was such a joyous Lord Jesus that he would walk through the market with me! but I left him at home, and forgot him all the day long." Surely, surely, beloved, when thou rememberest thy worldliness, thou must say of thyself, "O Lord, thou mightest well ask, 'Lovest thou me?'"

Consider again, I beseech thee, how cold thou hast been this week at the mercy-seat. Thou hast been there, for thou canst not live without it; thou hast lifted up thy heart in prayer, for thou art a Christian, and prayer is as necessary to thee as thy breath. But oh! with what a poor asthmatic breath hast thou lived this week! How little hast thou breathed? Dost not remember how hurried was thy prayer on Monday morning, how driven thou wast on Tuesday night? Canst thou not recollect how languid was thy heart, when on another occasion thou wast on thy knees? Thou hast had little wrestling, mayhap, this week; little agonising; thou hast had little of the prayer which prevaileth; thou hast scarcely laid hold of the horns of the altar; thou hast stood in the distance, and seen the smoke at the altar, but thou hast not laid hold of the horns of it. Come, ask thyself, do not thy prayers make thee doubt? I say, honestly before you all, my own prayers often make me doubt; and I know nothing that gives me more grave cause of disquietude. When I labor to pray — oh! that rascally devil! — fifty thousand thoughts he tries to inject, to take me off from prayer; and when I will and must pray, oh, what an absence there is of that burning fervent desire; and when I would come right close to God, when I would weep my very eyes out in penitence, and would believe and take the blessing, oh, what little faith and what little penitence there is! Verily, I have thought that prayer has made me more unbelieving than anything else. I could believe over the tops of my sins, but sometimes I can scarcely believe over the tops of my prayers — for oh! how cold is prayer when it

is cold! Of all things that are bad when cold, I think prayer is the worst, for it becomes like a very mockery, and instead of warming the heart, it makes it colder than it was before, and seems even to damp its life and spirit, and fills it full of doubts whether it is really a heir of heaven and accepted of Christ. Oh! look at thy cold prayers, Christian, and say is not thy Savior right to ask this question very solemnly, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"

But stop, again; just one more word for thee to reflect upon. Perhaps thou hast had much prayer. and this has been a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. But yet, mayhap, thou knowest, thou hast not gone so far this week as thou mightest have done, in another exercise of godliness that is even better than prayer, I mean communion and fellowship. Oh! beloved, thou hast this week had but little sitting under the apple tree, and finding its shadow great delight to thee. Thou hast not gone much this week to the banqueting house, and had its banner of love over thee. Come, bethink thyself, how little hast thou seen thy Lord this week! Perhaps he has been absent the greater part of the time; and hast thou not groaned? hast thou not wept? hast thou not sighed after him? Sure, then, thou canst not have loved him as thou shouldst, else thou couldst not have borne his absence; thou couldst not have endured it calmly, if thou hadst the affection for him a sanctified spirit has for its Lord. Thou didst have one sweet visit from him in the week, and why didst thou let him go? Why didst thou not constrain him to abide with thee? Why didst thou not lay hold of the skirts of his garment, and say, "Why shouldst thou be like a wayfaring man, and as one that turneth aside, and tarrieth for a night? Oh! my lord, thou shalt dwell with me; I will keep thee; I will detain thee in my company; I cannot let thee go; I love thee, and I will constrain thee to dwell with me this night and the next day; long as I can keep thee, will I keep thee." But no; thou wast foolish; thou didst let him go. Oh! soul, why didst thou not lay hold of his arm, and say, "I will not let thee go." But thou didst lay hold on him so feebly, thou didst suffer him to depart so quickly, he might have turned round, and said to thee, as he said to Simon, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"

Now, I have asked you all these questions, because I have been asking them of myself. I feel that I must answer to nearly every one of them,

"Lord, there is great cause for me to ask myself that question;" and I think that most of you, if you are honest to yourselves, will say the same. I do not approve of the man that says, "I know I love Christ, and I never have a doubt about it;" because we often have reason to doubt ourselves; a believer's strong faith is not a strong faith in his own love to Christ — it is a strong faith in Christ's love to him. There is no faith which always believes that it loves Christ. Strong faith has its conflicts; and a true believer will often wrestle in the very teeth of his own feelings. Lord, if I never did love thee, nevertheless, if I am not a saint, I am a sinner. Lord, I still believe; help thou mine unbelief. The disciple can believe, when he feels no love; for he can believe that Christ loveth the soul; and when he hath no evidence he can come to Christ without evidence, and lay, hold of him, just as he is, with naked faith, and still hold fast by him. Though he see not his signs, though he walk in darkness and there be no light, still may he trust in the Lord, and stay upon his God; — but to be certain at all times that we love the Lord is quite another matter; about this we have need continually to question ourselves, and most scrupulously to examine both the nature and the extent of our evidences.

II. And now I come to the second thing, which is A DISCREET ANSWER. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" Simon gave a very good answer. Jesus asked him, in the first place, whether he loved him better than others. Simon would not say that: he had once been a little proud — more than a little — and thought he was better than the other disciples. But this time he evaded that question; he would not say that he loved better than others. And I am sure there is no loving heart that will think it loves even better than the least of God's children. I believe the higher a man is in grace, the lower he will be in his own esteem; and he will be the last person to claim any supremacy over others in the divine grace of love to Jesus. But mark how Simon Peter did answer: he did not answer as to the quantity but as to the quality of his love. He would aver that he loved Christ, but not that he loved Christ better than others. "Lord, I cannot say how much I love thee; but thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I do love thee. So far I can aver: as to the quantity of my love, I cannot say much about it."

But just notice, again, the discreet manner in which Peter answered. Some of us, if we had been asked that question, would have answered foolishly.

We should have said, “Lord, I have preached for thee so many times this week; Lord, I have distributed of my substance to the poor this week. Blessed be thy name, thou hast given me grace to walk humbly, faithfully, and honestly and therefore, Lord, I think I can say, ‘I love thee.’“ We should have brought forward our good works before our Master, as being the evidences of our love; we should have said, “Lord, thou hast seen me during this week; as Nehemiah did of old, “Forget not my good works. O Lord, I thank thee; I know they are thy gifts, but I think they are proofs of my love.” That would have been a very good answer if we had been questioned by our fellow man, and he had said, “You do not always love your Savior;” but it would be foolish for us to tell the Master that. Peter’s answer was wise; “Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.” You know the Master might have said to Peter, had he appealed to his works, “Yes, thou mayest preach, and yet not love me; thou mayest pray, after a fashion, and yet not love me; thou mayest do all these works, and yet have no love to me. I did not ask thee what are the evidences of thy love, I asked thee the fact of it.” Very likely all my dear friends here would not have answered in the fashion I have supposed; but they would have said, “Love thee Lord? Why, my heart is all on fire towards thee; I feel as if I could go to prison and to death for thee! Sometimes, when I think of thee, my heart is ravished with bliss; and when thou art absent, O Lord, I moan and cry like a dove that has lost its mate. Yes, I feel I love thee, O my Christ.” But that would have been very foolish, because although we may often rejoice in our own feelings — they are joyful things — it would not do to plead them with our Lord, for he might answer, “Ah! thou feelest joyful at the mention of my name. So, no doubt, has many a deluded one, because he had a fictitious faith, and a fancied hope in Christ; therefore the name of Christ seemed to gladden him. Thou sayest, ‘I have felt dull when thou hast been absent.’ That might have been accounted for from natural circumstances; you had a headache, perhaps, or some other ailment. ‘But,’ sayest thou, ‘I felt so happy when he was present that I thought I could die.’ Ah! in such manner Peter had spoken many a time before; but a sorry mess he made of it when he trusted his feelings; for he would have sunk into the sea but for Christ; and eternally damned his soul, if it had not been for his grace, when, with cursing and swearing he thrice denied his Lord. But no, Peter was wise; he did not bring forward his frames and feelings, nor did he bring his evidences: though they are good in themselves, he did

not bring them before Christ. But, as though he shall say, “Lord, I appeal to thine omnipotence. I am not going to tell thee that the volume of my heart must contain such-and-such matter, because there is such-and-such a mark on its cover; for, Lord, thou canst read inside of it; and, therefore, I need not tell thee what the title is, nor read over to thee the index of the contents. Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.”

Now, could we, this morning, dear friends, give such an answer as that to the question? If Christ should come here, if he were now to walk down these aisles, and along the pews, could we appeal to his own divine Omniscience, his infallible knowledge of our hearts, that we all love him? There is a test-point between a hypocrite and a real Christian. If thou art a hypocrite, thou mightest say, “Lord, my minister knows that I love thee; Lord, the deacons know that I love thee; they think I do, for they have given me a ticket; the members think I love thee; for they see me sitting at thy table; my friends think I love thee, for they often hear me talk about thee.” But thou couldst not say, “Lord, thou knowest that I love thee;” thine own heart is witness that thy secret works belie thy confession, for thou art without prayer in secret; and thou canst preach a twenty minutes’ prayer in public. Thou art niggardly and parsimonious in giving to the cause of Christ; but thou canst sport thy name to be seen. Thou art an angry, petulant creature; but when thou comest to the house of God, thou hast a pious whine, and talkest like a canting hypocrite, as if thou wert a very gentlemanly man, and never seemed angry. Thou canst take thy Maker’s name in vain; but if thou hear another do it thou wouldst be mighty severe upon him. Thou affectest to be very pious, and yet if men knew of that widow’s house that is sticking in thy throat, and of that orphan’s patrimony which thou hast taken from him, thou wouldst leave off trumpeting thy good deeds. Thine own heart tells thee thou art a liar before God. But thou, O sincere Christian, thou canst welcome thy Lord’s question, and answer it with holy fear and gracious confidence. Yes, thou mayest welcome the question. Such a question was never put to Judas. The Lord loved Peter so much that he was jealous over him, or he never would have thus challenged his attachment. And in this kind doth he often appeal to the affections of those whom he dearly loves. The response likewise is recorded for thee, “Lord, thou knowest all things.” Canst thou not look up, though scorned by men, though even rejected by thy minister,

though kept back by the deacons, and looked upon with disesteem by some — canst thou not look up, and say, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee?" Do it not in brag and bravado; but if you can do it sincerely, be happy, bless God that he has given you a sincere love to the Savior, and ask him to increase it from a spark to a flame, and from a grain to a mountain. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Yea, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."

III. And now here is A DEMONSTRATION REQUIRED — "Feed my lambs: feed my sheep." That was Peter's demonstration. It is not necessary that it should be our way of showing our love. There are different ways for different disciples. There are some who are not qualified to feed lambs, for they are only little lambs themselves. There are some that could not feed sheep, for they cannot at present see afar off; they are weak in the faith, and not qualified to teach at all. They have other means, however, of showing their love to the Savior. Let us offer a few words upon this matter.

"Lovest thou me?" Then one of the best evidences thou canst give is to feed my lambs. Have I two or three little children that love and fear my name? If thou wantest to do a deed, which shall show that thou art a true lover, and not a proud pretender; go and feed them. Are there a few little ones whom I have purchased with my blood in an infant class? Dost thou want to do something which shall evidence that thou art indeed mine? Then sit not down with the elders, dispute not in the temple; I did that myself; but go thou, and sit down with the young orphans, and teach them the way to the kingdom. "Feed my lambs."

Dearly beloved, I have been of late perplexing myself with one thought: that our church-government is not scriptural. It is scriptural as far as it goes; but it is not according to the whole of Scripture; neither do we practice many excellent things that ought to be practiced in our churches. We have received into our midst a large number of young persons; in the ancient churches there was what was called the catechism class — I believe there ought to be such a class now. The Sabbath-school, I believe, is in the Scripture; and I think there ought to be on the Sabbath afternoon, a class of the young people of this church, who are members already, to be taught by some of the elder members. Now-a-days, when we get the lambs, we just

turn them adrift in the meadow, and there we leave them. There are more than a hundred young people in this church who positively, though they are members, ought not to be left alone; but some of our elders, if we have elders, and some who ought to be ordained elders, should make it their business to teach them further, to instruct them in the faith, and so keep them hard and fast by the truth of Jesus Christ. If we had elders, as they had in all the apostolic churches, this might in some degree be attended to. But now the hands of our deacons are full, they do much of the work of the eldership, but they cannot do any more than they are doing, for they are toiling hard already. I would that some here whom God has gifted, and who have time, would spend their afternoons in taking a class of those who live around them, of their younger brethren, asking them to their houses for prayer and pious instruction, that so the lambs of the flock may be fed. By God's help I will take care of the sheep; I will endeavor under God to feed them, as well as I can, and preach the gospel to them. You that are older in the faith and stronger in it, need not that careful cautious feeding which is required by the lambs. But there are many in our midst, good pious souls who love the Savior as much as the sheep do; but one of their complaints which I have often heard is, "Oh I sir, I joined your church, I thought they would be all brothers and sisters to me, and that I could speak to them, and they would teach me and be kind to me. Oh! sir, I came, and nobody spoke to me." I say, "Why did not you speak to them first?" "Oh!" they reply, "I did not like." Well, they should have liked, I am well aware; but if we had some means of feeding the lambs, it would be a good way of proving to our Savior and to the world, that we really do endeavor to follow him. I hope some of my friends will take that hint; and if, in concert with me, my brethren in office will endeavor to do something in that way, I think it will be no mean proof of their love to Christ. "Feed my lambs," is a great duty; let us try to practice it as we are able.

But, beloved, we cannot all do that; the lambs cannot feed the lambs; the sheep cannot feed the sheep exactly. There must be some appointed to these offices. And therefore, in the Savior's name, allow me to say to some of you, that there are different kinds of proof you must give. "Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." Then preserve that prayer-meeting attend to it; see that it is kept going on, and that it does not fall to the ground. "Simon son of Jonas

lovest thou me?" See to thy servants; see that they go to the house of God, and instruct them in the faith. There is a sister: Lovest thou Christ? "Yea, Lord." Perhaps it is as much as you can do — perhaps it is as much as you ought to do — to train up your children in the fear of the Lord. It is of no use to trouble yourselves about duties that God never meant you to do, and leave your own vineyard at home to itself. Just take care of your own children; perhaps that is as good a proof as Christ wants of you that you are feeding his lambs. You have your own office, to which Christ has appointed you: seek not to run away from it, but endeavor to do what you can to serve your Master therein. But, I beseech you, do something to prove your love; do not be sitting down doing nothing. Do not be folding your hands and arms, for such people perplex a minister most, and bring the most ruin on a church — such as do nothing. You are always the readiest to find fault. I have marked it here, that the very people who are quarrelling with everything are the people that are doing nothing, or are good for nothing. They are sure to quarrel with everything else, because they are doing nothing themselves; and therefore they have time to find fault with other people. Do not O Christian, say that thou lovest Christ, and yet do nothing for him. Doing is a good sign of living; and he can scarce be alive unto God that does nothing for God. We must let our works evidence the sincerity of our love to our Master. "Oh!" say you, "but we are doing a little." Can you do any more? If you can, then do it. If you cannot do more, then God requires no more of you; doing to the utmost of your ability is your best proof; but if you can do more, inasmuch as ye keep back any part of what ye can do, in that degree ye give cause to yourselves to distrust your love to Christ. Do all you can to your very utmost; serve him abundantly; ay, and superabundantly: seek to magnify his name; and if ever you do too much for Christ, come and tell me of it; if you ever do too much for Christ, tell the angels of it — but you will never do that. He gave himself for you; give yourselves to him.

You see, my friends, how I have been directing you to search your own hearts, and I am almost afraid that some of you will mistake my intention. Have I a poor soul here who really deplores the langour of her affections? Perhaps you have determined to ask yourself as many questions as you can with a view of reviving the languid sparks of love. Let me tell you then that the pure flame of love must be always nourished where it was first

kindled. When I admonished you to look to yourself it was only to detect the evil; would you find the remedy, you must direct your eyes, not to your own heart, but to the blessed heart of Jesus — to the Beloved one — to my gracious Lord and Master. And wouldst thou be ever conscious of the sweet swellings up of thy heart towards him; thou canst only prove this by a constant sense of his tender love to thee. I rejoice to know that the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of love, and the ministry of the Spirit is endeared to me in nothing so much as this, that he takes of the things of Jesus, and shows them to me, spreading abroad the Savior's love in my heart, until it constrains all my passions, awakens the tenderest of all tender emotions, reveals my union to him, and occasions my strong desire to serve him. Let not love appear to thee as a stern duty, or an arduous effort; rather look to Jesus, yield thyself up to his gracious charms till thou art ravished with his beauty and preciousness. But ah! if thou art slack in the proofs thou givest, I shall know thou art not walking with him in holy communion.

And allow me to suggest one profitable way of improving the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. That is: while you are partaking of it, my friends, renew your dedication to Christ. Seek this morning to give yourselves over afresh to your Master. Say with your hearts, what I shall now say with my lips: "Oh I my precious Lord Jesus, I do love thee; thou knowest I have in some degree given myself to thee up to this time, thanks to thy grace! Blessed be thy name, that thou hast accepted the deeds of so unworthy a servant. O Lord, I am conscious that I have not devoted myself to thee as I ought; I know that in many things I have come short. I will make no resolution to live better to thine honor, but I will offer the prayer that thou wouldst help me so to do. Oh! Lord, I give to thee my health, my life, my talents, my power, and all I have! Thou hast bought me, and bought me wholly: then, Lord, take me this morning, baptize me in the Spirit; let me now feel an entire affection to thy blessed person. May I have that love which conquers sin and purifies the soul — that love which can dare danger and encounter difficulties for thy sake. May I henceforth and for ever be a consecrated vessel of mercy, having been chosen of thee from before the foundation of the world! Help me to hold fast that solemn choice of thy service which I desire this morning, by thy grace to renew." And when you drink the blood of Christ, and eat his flesh spiritually — in

the type and in the emblem, then I beseech you, let the solemn recollection of his agony and suffering for you inspire you with a greater love, that you may be more devoted to his service than ever. If that be done, I shall have the best of churches; if that be done by us, the Holy Spirit helping us to carry it out, we shall all be good men and true, holding fast by him, and we shall not need to be ashamed in the awful day.

As for you that have never given yourselves to Christ, I dare not tell you to renew a vow which you have never made, nor dare I ask you to make a vow, which you would never keep. I can only pray for you, that God the Savior would be pleased to reveal himself unto your heart, that “a sense of blood-bought pardon” may “dissolve your hearts of stone;” that you may be brought to give yourselves to him, knowing that if you have done that, you have the best proof that he has given himself for you. May God Almighty bless you: those of you who depart, may he dismiss with his blessing: and those who remain, may you receive his favor, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

THE BLOOD-SHEDDING

SERMON NO. 118

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, FEBRUARY 22, 1857,

AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS

"Without shedding of blood is no remission." — Hebrews 9: 22.

I will show you three fools. One is yonder soldier, who has been wounded on the field of battle, grievously wounded, well nigh unto death; the surgeon is by his side, and the soldier asks him a question. Listen, and judge of his folly. What question does he ask? Does he raise his eyes with eager anxiety and inquire if the wound be mortal, if the practitioner's skill can suggest the means of healing, or if the remedies are within reach and the medicine at hand? No, nothing of the sort; strange to tell, he asks, "Can you inform me with what sword I was wounded, and by what Russian I have been thus grievously mauled? I want," he adds, "to learn every minute particular respecting the origin of my wound." The man is delirious or his head is affected. Surely such questions at such a time are proof enough that he is bereft of his senses.

There is another fool. The storm is raging, the ship is flying impetuous before the gale, the dark scud moves swiftly over head, the masts are creaking, the sails are rent to rags, and still the gathering tempest grows more fierce. Where is the captain? Is he busily engaged on the deck, is he manfully facing the danger, and skilfully suggesting means to avert it? No sir, he has retired to his cabin, and there with studious thoughts and crazy fancies he is speculating on the place where this storm took its rise. "It is mysterious, this wind; no one ever yet" he says, "has been able to discover it." And, so reckless of the vessel, the lives of the passengers, and his own life, he is careful only to solve his curious questions. The man is mad, sir; take the rudder from his hand; he is clean gone mad! If he should ever run on shore, shut him up as a hopeless lunatic.

The third fool I shall doubtless find among yourselves. You are sick and wounded with sin, you are in the storm and hurricane of Almighty vengeance, and yet the question which you would ask of me, this morning, would be, “Sir, what is the origin of evil?” You are mad, Sir, spiritually mad; that is not the question you would ask if you were in a sane and healthy state of mind; your question would be: “How can I get rid of the evil?” Not, “How did it come into the world?” but “How am I to escape from it?” Not, “How is it that hail descends from heaven upon Sodom?” but “How may I, like Lot, escape out of the city to a Zoar.” Not, “How is it that I am sick?” but “Are there medicines that will heal me? Is there a physician to be found that can restore my soul to health ?” Ah! you trifle with subtleties while you neglect certainties. More questions have been asked concerning the origin of evil than upon anything else. Men have puzzled their heads, and twisted their brains into knots, in order to understand what men can never know — how evil came into this world, and how its entrance is consistent with divine goodness? The broad fact is this, there is evil; and your question should be, “How can I escape from the wrath to come, which is engendered of this evil?” In answering that question this verse stands right in the middle of the way (like the angel with the sword, who once stopped Balaam on his road to Barak,) “Without shedding of blood is no remission.” Your real want is to know how you can be saved; if you are aware that your sin must be pardoned or punished, your question will be, “How can it he pardoned?” and then point blank in the very teeth of your enquiry, there stands out this fact: “Without shedding of blood there is no remission.” Mark you, this is not merely a Jewish maxim; it is a world-wide and eternal truth. It pertaineth not to the Hebrews only, but to the Gentiles likewise. Never in any time, never in any place, never in any person, can there be remission apart from shedding of blood. This great fact, I say, is stamped on nature; it is an essential law of God’s moral government, it is one of the fundamental principles which can neither be shaken nor denied. Never can there be any exception to it; it stands the same in every place throughout all ages — “Without shedding of blood there is no remission.” It was so with the Jews; they had no remission without the shedding of blood. Some things under the Jewish law might be cleansed by water or by fire, but in no case where absolute sin was concerned was there ever purification without blood — teaching this doctrine, that blood, and blood alone, must be

applied for the remission of sin. Indeed the very heathen seem to have an inkling of this fact. Do not I see their knives gory with the blood of victims? Have I not heard horrid tales of human immolations, of holocausts, of sacrifices; and what mean these, but that there lies deep in the human breast, deep as the very existence of man, this truth, — "that without shedding of blood there is no remission." And I assert once more, that even in the hearts and consciences of my hearers there is something which will never let them believe in remission apart from a shedding of blood. This is the grand truth of Christianity, and it is a truth which I will endeavor now to fix upon your memory; and may God by his grace bless it to your souls. "Without shedding of blood is no remission."

First, let me show you the blood-shedding, before I begin to dwell upon the text. Is there not a special blood-shedding meant? Yes, there was a shedding of most precious blood, to which I must forthwith refer you. I shall not tell you now of massacres and murders, nor of rivers of blood of goats and rams. There was a blood-shedding once, which did all other shedding of blood by far outvie; it was a man — a God — that shed his blood at that memorable season. Come and see it. Here is a garden dark and gloomy; the ground is crisp with the cold frost of midnight; between those gloomy olive trees I see a man, I hear him groan out his life in prayer; hearken, angels, hearken men, and wonder; it is the Savior groaning out his soul! Come and see him. Behold his brow! O heavens! drops of blood are streaming down his face, and from his body; every pore is open, and it sweats! but not the sweat of men that toil for bread; it is the sweat of one that toils for heaven — he "sweats great drops of blood!" That is the blood-shedding, without which there is no remission. Follow that man further; they have dragged him with sacrilegious bands from the place of his prayer and his agony, and they have taken him to the hall of Pilate; they seat him in a chair and mock him; a robe of purple is put on his shoulders in mockery; and mark his brow — they have put about it a crown of thorns, and the crimson drops of gore are rushing down his cheeks! Ye angels! the drops of blood are running down his cheeks! But turn aside that purple robe for a moment. His back is bleeding. Tell me, demons who did this. They lift up the thongs, still dripping clots of gore; they scourge and tear his flesh, and make a river of blood to run down his shoulders! That is the shedding of blood without which there is no

remission. Not yet have I done: they hurry him through the streets; they fling him on the ground; they nail his hands and feet to the transverse wood, they hoist it in the air, they dash it into its socket, it is fixed, and there he hangs the Christ of God. Blood from his head, blood from his hands, blood from his feet! In agony unknown he bleeds away his life; in terrible throes he exhausts his soul. "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani." And then see! they pierce his side, and forthwith runneth out blood and water. This is the shedding of blood, sinners and saints; this is the awful shedding of blood, the terrible pouring out of blood, without which for you, and for the whole human race, there is no remission.

I have then, I hope, brought my text fairly out: without this shedding of blood there is no remission. Now I shall come to dwell upon it more particularly.

Why is it that this story doth not make men weep? I told it ill, you say. Ay, so I did; I will take all the blame. But, sirs, if it were told as ill as men could speak, were our hearts what they should be, we should bleed away our lives in sorrow. Oh! it was a horrid murder that! It was not an act of regicide; it was not the deed of a fratricide, or of a parricide; it was — what shall I say? — I must make a word — a deicide; the killing of a God; the slaying of him who became incarnate for our sins. Oh! if our hearts were but soft as iron, we must weep, if they were but tender as the marble of the mountains, we should shed great drops of grief; but they are harder than the nether millstone; we forget the griefs of him that died this ignominious death, we pity not his sorrows, nor do we account the interest we have in him as though he suffered and accomplished all for us. Nevertheless, here stands the principle — "Without shedding of blood is no remission."

Now, I take it, there are two things here. First, there is a negative expressed: "No remission without shedding of blood." And then there is a positive implied, forsooth, with shedding of blood there is remission.

I. First, I say, here is A NEGATIVE EXPRESSED: there is no remission without blood — without the blood of Jesus Christ. This is of divine authority; when I utter this sentence I have divinity to plead. It is not a thing which you may doubt, or which you may believe; it must be believed and received, otherwise you have denied the Scriptures and turned aside

from God. Some truths I utter, perhaps, have little better basis than my own reasoning and inference, which are of little value enough; but this I utter, not with quotations from God's Word to back up my assertion, but from the lips of God himself. Here it stands in great letters, "There is no remission." So divine its authority. Perhaps you will kick at it: but remember, your rebellion is not against me, but against God, If any of you reject this truth, I shall not controvert; God forbid I should turn aside from proclaiming his gospel, to dispute with men. I have God's irrevocable statute to plead now, here it stands: "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." You may believe or disbelieve many things the preacher utters; but this you disbelieve at the peril of your souls. It is God's utterance: will you tell God to his face you do not believe it? That were impious. The negative is divine in its authority; bow yourselves to it, and accept its solemn warning.

But some men will say that God's way of saving men, by shedding of blood, is a cruel way, an unjust way, an unkind way; and all kinds of things they will say of it. Sirs, I have nothing to do with your opinion of the matter; it is so. If you have any faults to find with your Maker, fight your battles out with him at last. But take heed before you throw the gauntlet down; it will go ill with a worm when he fighteth with his Maker, and it will go ill with you when you contend with him. The doctrine of atonement when rightly understood and faithfully received, is delightful, for it exhibits boundless love, immeasurable goodness, and infinite truth; but to unbelievers it will always be a hated doctrine. So it must be sirs; you hate your own mercies; you despise your own salvation. I tarry not to dispute with you; I affirm it in God's name: "Without shedding of blood there is no remission."

And note how decisive this is in its character: "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." "But, sir, can't I get my sins forgiven by my repentance? if I weep, and plead, and pray, will not God forgive me for the sake of my tears?" "No remission," says the text, "without shedding of blood." "But, sir, if I never sin again, and if I serve God more zealously than other men, will he not forgive me for the sake of my obedience?" "No remission," says the text, "without shedding of blood." "But, sir, may I not trust that God is merciful, and will forgive me without the shedding of blood?" "No," says the text, "without shedding of blood there is no

remission;" none whatever. It cuts off every other hope. Bring your hopes here, and if they are not based in blood. and stamped with blood, they are as useless as castles in the air, and dreams of the night. "There is no remission," says the text, in positive and plain words; and yet men will be trying to get remission in fifty other ways, until their special pleading becomes as irksome to us as it is useless for them. Sirs, do what you like, say what you please, but you are as far off remission when you have done your best, as you were when you began, except you put confidence in the shedding of our Savior's blood, and in the blood-shedding alone, for without it there is no remission.

And note again how universal it is in its character. "What! may not I get remission without blood-shedding?" says the king; and he comes with the crown on his head; "May not I in all my robes, with this rich ransom, get pardon without the blood-shedding?" "None," is the reply; "none." Forthwith comes the wise man, with a number of letters after his name — "Can I not get remission by these grand titles of my learning?" "None; none." Then comes the benevolent man — "I have dispersed my money to the poor, and given my bounty to feed them; shall not I get remission?" "None;" says the text, "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." How this puts everyone on a level! My lord, you are no bigger than your coachman; Sir, squire, you are no better off than John that ploughs the ground; minister, your office does not serve you with any exemption — your poorest hearer stands on the very same footing. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." No hope for the best, any more than for the worst, without this shedding of blood. Oh! I love the gospel, for this reason among others, because it is such a levelling gospel. Some persons do not like a levelling gospel; nor would I, in some senses of the word. Let men have their rank, and their titles, and their riches, if they will; but I do like, and I am sure all good men like, to see rich and poor meet together and feel that they are on a level; the gospel makes them so. It says "Put up your money-bags, they will not procure you remission; roll up your diploma, that will not get you remission; forget your farm and your park, they will not get you remission; just cover up that escutcheon, that coat of arms will not get you remission. Come, you ragged beggars, filthy off-scourings of the world, penniless; come hither; here is remission as much for you, ill-bred and ill-mannered though ye be, as for the noble, the

honorable, the titled, and the wealthy. All stand on a level here; the text is universal: “Without shedding of blood there is no remission.”

Mark too, how perpetual my text is. Paul said, “there is no remission;” I must repeat this testimony too. When thousands of years have rolled away, some minister may stand on this spot and say the same. This will never alter at all; it will always be so, in the next world as well as this: no remission without shedding of blood. “Oh! yes there is,” says one, “the priest takes the shilling, and he gets the soul out of purgatory.” That is a mere pretense; it never was in. But without shedding of blood there is no real remission. There may be tales and fancies, but there is no true remission without the blood of propitiation. Never, though you strained yourselves in prayer; never, though you wept yourselves away in tears; never, though you groaned and cried till your heart-strings break; never in this world, nor in that which is to come, can the forgiveness of sins be procured on any other ground than redemption by the blood of Christ, and never can the conscience be cleansed but by faith in that sacrifice. The fact is, beloved, there is no use for you to satisfy your hearts with anything less than what satisfied God the Father. Without the shedding of blood nothing would appease his justice; and without the application of that same blood nothing can purge your consciences.

II. But as there is no remission without blood-shedding, IT IS IMPLIED THAT THERE IS REMISSION WITHOUT IT. Mark it well, this remission is a present fact. The blood having been already shed, the remission is already obtained. I took you to the garden of Gethsemane and the mount of Calvary to see the bloodshedding. I might now conduct you to another garden and another mount to shew you the grand proof of the remission. Another garden, did I say? Yes, it is a garden, fraught with many pleasing and even triumphant reminiscences. Aside from the haunts of this busy world, in it was a new sepulcher, hewn out of a rock where Joseph of Arimathea thought his own poor body should presently be laid. But there they laid Jesus after his crucifixion.

He had stood surety for his people, and the law had demanded his blood; death had held him with strong grasp; and that tomb was, as it were, the dungeon of his captivity, when, as the good shepherd, he laid down his life for the sheep. Why, then, do I see in that garden, an open, untenanted

grave? I will tell you. The debts are paid, the sins are cancelled — , the remission is obtained. How, think you? That great Shepherd of the sheep hath been brought again from the dead by the blood of the everlasting covenant, and in him also we have obtained redemption through his blood. There, beloved, is proof the first.

Do you ask further evidence? I will take you to Mount Olivet. You shall behold Jesus there with his hands raised like the High Priest of old to bless his people, and while he is blessing them, he ascends, the clouds receiving him out of their sight. But why, you ask, oh why hath he thus ascended, and whither is he gone ? Behold he entereth, not into the holy place made with hands, but be entereth into heaven itself with his own blood, there to appear in the presence of God for us. Now, therefore, we have boldness to draw near by the blood of Christ. The remission is obtained, here is proof the second. Oh believer, what springs of comfort are there here for thee.

And now let me commend this remission by the shedding of blood to those who have not yet believed. Mr. Innis, a great Scotch minister, once visited an infidel who was dying. When he came to him the first time, he said, “Mr. Innis, I am relying on the mercy of God; God is merciful, and he will never damn a man for ever.” When he got worse and was nearer death, Mr. Innis went to him again, and he said, “ Oh! Mr. Innis, my hope is gone; for I have been thinking if God be merciful, God is just too; and what if, instead of being merciful to me, he should be just to me? What would then become of me? I must give up my hope in the mere mercy of God; tell me how to be saved!” Mr. Innis told him that Christ had died in the stead of all believers — that God could be just, and yet the justifier through the death of Christ. “ Ah!” said he, “ Mr. Innis, there is something solid in that; I can rest on that; I cannot rest on anything else;” and it is a remarkable fact that none of us ever met with a man who thought he had his sins forgiven unless it was through the blood of Christ. Meet a Mussulman; he never had his sins forgiven; he does not say so. Meet an Infidel; he never knows that his sins are forgiven. Meet a Legalist; he says, “I hope they will be forgiven;” but he does not pretend they are. No one ever gets even a fancied hope apart from this, that Christ, and Christ alone, must save by the shedding of his blood.

Let me tell a story to show how Christ saves souls. Mr. Whitfield had a brother who had been like him, an earnest Christian, but he had backslidden; he went far from the ways of godliness; and one afternoon, after he had been recovered from his backsliding, he was sitting in a room in a chapel house. He had heard his brother preaching the day before, and his poor conscience had been cut to the very quick. Said Whitfield's brother, when he was at tea, "I am a lost man," and he groaned and cried, and could neither eat nor drink. Said Lady Huntingdon, who sat opposite, "What did you say, Mr. Whitfield?" "Madam," said he, "I said, I am a lost man." "I'm glad of it," said she; "I'm glad of it." "Your ladyship, how can you say so? It is cruel to say you are glad that I am a lost man." " I repeat it, sir," said she; "I am heartily glad of it." He looked at her, more and more astonished at her barbarity. "I am glad of it," said she, "because it is written, 'The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost.' " With the tears rolling down his cheeks, he said, "What a precious Scripture; and how is it that it comes with such force to me ? Oh! madam," said he, "madam, I bless God for that; then he will save me; I trust my soul in his hands; he has forgiven me." He went outside the house, felt ill, fell upon the ground, and expired. I may have a lost man here this morning. As I cannot say much, I will leave you, good people; you do not want anything.

Have I got a lost man here? Lost man! Lost woman! Where are you? Do you feel yourself to be lost? I am so glad of it; for there is remission by the blood-shedding. O sinner, are there tears in your eyes? Look through them. Do you see that man in the garden? That man sweats drops of blood for you. Do you see that man on the cross? That man was nailed there for you. Oh! if I could be nailed on a cross this morning for you all, I know what you would do: you would fall down and kiss my feet, and weep that I should have to die for you. But sinner, lost sinner, Jesus died for you — for you; and if he died for you., you cannot be lost. Christ died in vain for no one. Are you, then, a sinner? Are you convinced of sin because you believe not in Christ? I have authority to preach to you. Believe in his name and you cannot be lost. Do you say you are no sinner? Then I do not know that Christ died for you. Do you say that you have no sins to repent of? Then I have no Christ to preach to you. He did not come to save the righteous; he came to save the wicked. Are you wicked? Do you feel it?

Are you lost? Do you know it? Are you sinful? Will you confess it? Sinner! if Jesus were here this morning, he would put out his bleeding hands, and say, " Sinner, I died for you, will you believe me ?" He is not here in person; he has sent his servant to tell you. Won't you believe him? "Oh!" but you say, "I am such a sinner;" "Ah!" says he, "that is just why I died for you, because you are a sinner." "But," you say, "I do not deserve it." "Ah!" says he, "that is just why I did it." Say you, "I have hated him." "But," says he, "I have always loved you." "But, Lord, I have spat on thy minister, and scorned thy word." "It is all forgiven," says he, "all washed away by the blood which did run from my side. Only believe me; that is all I ask. And that I will give you. I will help you to believe." "Ah!" says one, "but I do not want a Savior." Sir, I have nothing to say to you except this — "The wrath to come! the wrath to come!" But there is one who says, "Sir, you do not mean what you say! Do you mean to preach to the most wicked men or women in the place?" I mean what I say. There she is! She is a harlot, she has led many into sin, and many into hell, There she is; her own friends have turned her out of doors; her father called her a good-for-nothing hussey, and said she should never come to the house again. Woman I dost thou repent? Dost thou feel thyself to be guilty? Christ died to save thee, and thou shalt be saved. There he is. I can see him. He was drunk; he has been drunk very often. Not many nights ago I heard his voice in the street, as he went home at a late hour on Saturday night, disturbing everybody; and he beat his wife, too. He has broken the Sabbath; and as to swearing, if oaths be like soot, his throat must want sweeping bad enough, for he has cursed God often. Do you feel yourself to be guilty, my hearer? Do you hate your sins, and are you willing to forsake them? Then I bless God for you. Christ died for you. Believe! I had a letter a few days ago, from a young man who heard that during this week I was going to a certain town. Said he, "Sir, when you come, do preach a sermon that will fit me; for do you know, sir, I have heard it said that we must all think ourselves to be the wickedest people in the world, or else we cannot be saved. I try to think so, but I cannot, because I have not been the wickedest. I want to think so, but I cannot. I want to be saved, but I do not know how to repent enough." Now, if I have the pleasure of seeing him, I shall tell him, God does not require a man to think himself the wickedest in the world, because that would sometimes be to think a falsehood; there are some men who are not so wicked as others are. What

God requires is this, that a man should say, “I know more of myself than I do of other people; I know little about them, and from what I see of myself, not of my actions, but of my heart, I do think there can be few worse than I am. They may be more guilty openly, but then I have had more light, more privileges, more opportunities, more warnings, and therefore I am still guiltier.” I do not want you to bring your brother with you, and say, “I am more wicked than he is;” I want you to come yourself, and say, “Father, I have sinned;” you have nothing to do with your brother William, whether he has sinned more or less; your cry should be, “Father, I have sinned;” you have nothing to do with your cousin Jane, whether or not she has rebelled more than you. Your business is to cry, “Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner!” That is all. Do you feel yourselves lost? Again, I say, —

“Come, and welcome, sinner, come!”

To conclude. There is not a sinner in this place who knows himself to be lost and ruined, who may not have all his sins forgiven, and “rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.” You may, though black as hell, be white as heaven this very instant. I know ‘tis only by a desperate struggle that faith takes hold of the promise, but the very moment a sinner believes, that conflict is past. It is his first victory, and a blessed one. Let this verse be the language of your heart; adopt it, and make it your own:

“A guilty weak, and helpless worm.
In Christ’s kind arms I fall;
He is my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus and my all.”

RAHAB'S FAITH

SERMON NO. 119

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 1, 1857,

AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS

"By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace." — Hebrews 11:31.

IN ALMOST every capital of Europe there are varieties of triumphal arches or columns, upon which are recorded the valiant deeds of the country's generals, its emperors, or its monarchs. You will find, in one case, the thousand battles of a Napoleon recorded, and in another, you find the victories of a Nelson pictured. It seems, therefore, but right, that faith, which is the mightiest of the mighty, should have a pillar raised to its honor, upon which its valiant deeds should be recorded. The apostle Paul undertook to raise the structure, and he erected a most magnificent pillar in the chapter before us. It recites the victories of faith. It begins with one triumph of faith, and then proceeds to others. We have, in one place, faith triumphing over death; Enoch entered not the gates of hades, but reached heaven by another road from that which is usual to men. We have faith, in another place, wresting with time; Noah, warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, wrestled with time, which placed his deluge a hundred and twenty years away; and yet, in the confidence of faith, he believed against all rational expectation, against all probability, and his faith was more than a match for probability and time too. We have faith triumphing over infirmity — Abraham begetteth a son in his old age. And then we have faith triumphing over natural affection, as we see Abraham climbing to the top of the hill and raising the knife to slay his only and beloved son at the command of God. We see faith, again, entering the lists with the infirmities of old age and the pains of the last struggle, as we read, "By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff." Then we have faith combating the

allurements of a wealthy court. “By faith Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.” We see faith dauntless in courage when Moses forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, and equally patient in suffering when he endured as seeing him who is invisible. We have faith dividing seas, and casting down strong walls. And then, as though the greatest victory should be recorded last, we have faith entering the lists with sin, holding a tournament with iniquity, and coming off more than a conqueror. “Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.” That this woman was no mere hostess, but a real harlot, I have abundantly proved to every candid hearer while reading the chapter. I am persuaded that nothing but a spirit of distaste for free grace would ever have led any commentator to deny her sin.

I do think this triumph of faith over sin is not the least here recorded, but that if there be any superiority ascribable to any one of faith’s exploits, this is, in some sense, the greatest of all. What! faith, didst thou fight with hideous lust? What! wouldst thou struggle with the fiery passion which sendeth forth flame from human breasts? What! wouldst thou touch with thy hallowed fingers foul and bestial debauchery? “Yea,” says faith, “I did encounter this abomination of iniquity; I delivered this woman from the loathsome chambers of vice, the wily snares of enchantment, and the fearful penalty of transgression; yea, I brought her off saved and rescued, gave her purity of heart, and renewed in her the beauty of holiness; and now her name shall be recorded in the roll of my triumphs as a woman full of sin, yet saved by faith.”

I shall have some things to say this morning concerning this notable victory of faith over sin, such as I think will lead you to see that this was indeed a supereminent triumph of faith. I will make my divisions alliterative, that you may recollect them. This woman’s faith was saving faith, singular faith, stable faith, self-denying faith, sympathising faith, and sanctifying faith. Let no one run away, when I shall have expounded the first point, and miss the rest, for you can not apprehend the whole power of her faith unless you remember each of those particulars I am about to mention.

I. In the first place, this woman's faith was SAVING FAITH. All the other persons mentioned here were doubtless saved by faith; but I do not find it specially remarked concerning any of them that they perished not through their faith; while it is particularly said of this woman, that she was delivered amid the general destruction of Jericho purely and only through her faith. And, without doubt, her salvation was not merely of a temporal nature, not merely a deliverance of her body from the sword, but redemption of her soul from hell. O! what a mighty thing faith is, when it saves the soul from going down to the pit! So mighty is the ever-rushing torrent of sin, that no arm but that which is as strong as Deity can ever stop the sinner from being hurried down to the gulf of black despair, and, when nearing that gulf, so impetuous is the torrent of divine wrath, that nothing can snatch the soul from perdition but an atonement which is as divine as God himself. Yet faith is the instrument of accomplishing the whole work. It delivers the sinner from the stream of sin, and so, laying hold upon the omnipotence of the Spirit, it rescues him from that great whirlpool of destruction into which his soul was being hurried. What a great thing it is to save a soul! You can never know how great it is unless you have stood in the capacity of a savior to other men. You heroic man who, yesterday, when the house was burning, climbed the creaking stair-case, and, almost suffocated by the smoke, entered an upper chamber, snatched a babe from its bed and a woman from the window, bore them both down in his arms, and saved them at the peril of his own life, he can tell you what a great thing it is to save a fellow-creature. Yon noble-hearted youth who, yesterday, sprang into the river, at the hazard of himself, and snatched a drowning man from death, he felt, when he stood upon the shore, what a great thing it was to save life. Ah! but you can not tell what a great thing it is to save a soul. It is only our Lord Jesus Christ who can tell you that, for he is the only one who has ever been the Savior of sinners. And remember, you can only know how great a thing faith is by knowing the infinite value of the salvation of a soul. "Now, by faith, the harlot Rahab was delivered." That she was really saved in a gospel sense as well as temporally, seems to me to be proved from her reception of the spies which was an emblem of the entrance of the word into her heart, and her hanging out of the scarlet thread was an evidence of faith, not unaptly picturing faith in the blood of Jesus the Redeemer. But who can measure the length and breadth of that word — salvation. Ah! it was a mighty deed

which faith accomplished when he bore her off in safety. Poor sinner! take comfort. The same faith which saved Rahab can save thee. Art thou literally one of Rahab's sisters in guilt? She was saved, and so mayest thou be, if God shall grant thee repentance. Woman! art thou loathsome to thyself? Dost thou stand at this moment in this assembly, and say, "I am ashamed to be here; I know I have no right to stand among people who are chaste and honest?" I bid thee still remain; yea, come again and make this thy Sabbath house of prayer. Thou art no intruder! Thou art welcome! For thou hast a sacred right to the courts of mercy. Thou hast a sacred right; for here sinners are invited, and thou art such. Believe in Christ, and thou, like Rahab, shalt not perish with the disobedient, but even thou shalt be saved.

And now there is some gentleman in the audience who says, "There's a gospel for you; it is a kind of sanctuary for wicked men, unto which the worst of people may run and be saved." Yes, that is the stale objection which Celsus used against Oigen in his discussion. "But," said Origen, "it is true, Celsus, that Christ's gospel is a sanctuary for thieves, robbers, murderers, and harlots. But know this, it is not a sanctuary merely, it is an hospital too; for it heals their sins, delivers them from their diseases, and they are not afterwards what they were before they received the gospel." I ask no man to-day to come to Christ, and then continue his sins. If so, I should ask him to do an absurdity. As well might I talk of delivering a Prometheus, while his chains are allowed to remain upon him and bind him to his rock. It can not be. Christ taketh away the vulture from the conscience, but he taketh away the chains too, and maketh the man wholly free when he doeth it all. Yet, we repeat it again, the chief of sinners are as welcome to Christ as the best of saints. The fountain filled with blood was opened for black ones; the robe of Christ was woven for naked ones; the balm of Calvary was compounded for sick ones; life came into the world to raise the dead. And O! ye perishing and guilty souls, may God give you Rahab's faith, and you shall have this salvation, and shall with her stand yonder, where the white-robed spotless hosts sing unending hallelujah to God and the Lamb.

II. But mark, Rahab's faith was a SINGULAR FAITH. The city of Jericho was about to be attacked; within its walls there were hosts of people of all classes and characters, and they knew right well that if their city should be

sacked and stormed they would all be put to death; but yet, strange to say, there was not one of them who repented of sin, or who even asked for mercy, except this woman who had been a harlot. She, and she alone was delivered, a solitary one among a multitude. Now, have you ever felt that it is a very hard thing to have a singular faith? It is the easiest thing in the world to believe as every body else believes, but the difficulty is to believe a thing alone, when no one else thinks as you think; to be the solitary champion of a righteous cause when the enemy mustereth his thousands to the battle. Now, this was the faith of Rahab. She had not one who felt as she did, who could enter into her feelings and realize the value of her faith. She stood alone. O! it is a noble thing to be the lonely follower of despised truth. There be some who could tell you a tale of standing up alone. There have been days when the world poured continually a river of infamy and calumny upset them, but they stemmed the torrent, and, by continued grace, made strong in weakness, they held their own until the current turned, and they, in their success, were praised and applauded by the very men who sneered before. Then did the world accord them the name of "great." But where lay their greatness? Why, in this, that they stood as firm in the storm as they stood in the calm — that they were as content to serve God alone as they were to run by fifties. To be good we must be singular. Christians must swim against the stream. Dead fish always float down the stream, but the living fish forces its way against the current. Now, worldly religious men will go just as every body else goes. That is nothing. The thing is to stand alone. Like Elijah, when be said, "I only am left and they seek my life;" to feel in one's self that we believe as firmly as if a thousand witnesses stood up by our side. O! there is no great right in a man, no strong-minded right, unless he dares to be singular. Why, the most of you are as afraid as you ever can be to go out of the fashions, and you spend more money than you ought because you think you must be respectable. You dare not move in opposition to your brethren and sisters in the circle in which you move; and therefore you involve yourselves in difficulties. You are blindfolded by the rich fabric of fashion, and therefore many a wrong thing is tolerated because it is customary. But a strong-minded man is one who does not try to be singular, but who dares to be singular, when he knows that to be singular is to be right. Now, Rahab's faith, sinner as she was, had this glory, this crown about its head, that she stood alone, faithful among the faithless found."

And why should not God vouchsafe the same faith to thee, my poor, sinning, but contrite hearer? You live in a back street, in a house which contains none but Sabbath breakers, and irreligious men and women. But if you have grace in your heart you will dare to do right. You belong to an infidel club; if you should make them a speech after your own conscience, they would hiss you; and if you forsook their company, they would persecute you. Go and try them. Dare them. See, whether you can do it; for if you are afraid of men, you are taken in a snare which may prove your grief and is now your sin. Mark you, the chief of sinners can make the most daring of saints; the worst men in the devil's army, when they are converted, make the truest soldiers for Jesus. The forlorn hope of Christendom has generally been led by men who have proved the high efficacy of grace to an eminent degree by having been saved from the deepest sins. Go on, and the Lord give you that high and singular faith!

III. Furthermore, this woman's faith was A STABLE FAITH, which stood firm in the midst of trouble, I have heard of a church clergyman who was once waited upon by his church warden, after a long time of drought, and was requested to put up the prayer for rain. "Well," said he, "my good man, I will offer it, but it's not a bit of use while the wind is in the east, I'm sure." There are many who have that kind of faith: they believe just so far as probabilities go with them, but when the promise and the probability part, then they follow the probability and part with the promise. They say, "The thing is likely, therefore I believe it." But that is no faith, it is sight. True faith exclaims, "The thing is unlikely, yet I believe it." This is real faith. Faith is to say, that "mountains, when in darkness hidden, are as real as in day." Faith is to look through that cloud, not with the eye of sight, which seeth naught, but with the eye of faith, which seeth every thing, and to say, "I trust him when I can not trace him; I tread the sea as firmly as I would the rock; I walk as securely in the tempest as in the sunshine, and lay myself to rest upon the surging billows of the ocean as contentedly as upon my bed." The faith of Rahab was the right sort of faith, for it was firm and enduring.

I will just have a little talk with Rahab this morning, as I suppose old Unbelief did commune with her. Now, my good woman, don't you see the absurdity of this thing? Why, the people of Israel are on the other side of Jordan, and there is no bridge: how are they to get over? Of course they

must go up higher toward the fords; and then Jericho will be for a long time secure. They will take other cities before coming to Jericho; and, besides, the Canaanites are mighty, and the Israelites are only a parcel of slaves; they will soon be cut in pieces, and there will be an end of them; therefore, do not harbor these spies. Why put your life in jeapordy for such an improbability? "Ah," says she, "I do not care about the Jordan; my faith can believe across the Jordan, or else it were only a dry-land faith." By-and-by, they march through the Jordan dry shod, and then Faith gets firmer confidence. "Ah!" says she, secretly within herself, what she would willingly have said to her neighbors, "will you not now believe? will you not now sue for mercy?" "No," they say; "the walls of Jericho are strong; can the feeble host resist us? And lo on the morrow the troops are out, and what do they do? They simply blow a number of rams' horns; her neighbors say, "Why, Rahab, you do not mean to say you believe now? They are mad." The people just go round the city, and all hold their tongues, except the few priests blowing rams' horns. "Why, it is ridiculous. It were quite a new thing in warfare to hear of men taking a city by blowing rams' horns." That was the first day; probably the next day Rahab thought they would come with scaling-ladders and mount the walls; but no, rams' horns again, up to the seventh day; and this woman kept the scarlet thread in the window all the time, kept her father and mother, and brothers and sisters in the house, and would not let them go out; and on the seventh day, when the people made a great shout, the wall of the city fell flat to the ground; but her faith overcame her womanly timidity, and she remained within, although the wall was tumbling to the ground. Rahab's house stood alone upon the wall, a solitary fragment amid a universal wreck, and she and her household were all saved. Now would you have thought that such a rich plant would grow in such poor soil — that strong faith could grow in such a sinful heart as that of Rahab? Ah! but here it is that God exercises his great husbandry. "My Father is the husbandman," said Christ. Any husbandman can get a good crop out of good soil; but God is the husbandman who can grow cedars on rocks, who can not only put the hyssop upon the wall, but put the oak there too, and make the greatest faith spring up in the most unlikely position. All glory to his grace! the great sinner may become great in faith. "Be of good cheer, then, sinner! If Christ should make thee repent, thou hast no need to think that thou shalt be the least in the family. O! no; thy name may yet be

written among the mightiest of the mighty, and thou mayest stand as a memorable and triumphant instance of the power of faith.

IV. This woman's faith was A SELF-DENYING FAITH. She dared to risk her life for the sake of the spies. She knew that if they were found in her house she would be put to death; but though she was so weak as to do a sinful deed to preserve them, yet she was so strong that she would run the risk of being put to death to save these two men. It is some thing to be able to deny ourselves. An American once said, "I have got a good religion; it's the right sort of religion; I do not know that it costs me a cent a year; and yet I believe I am as truly a religious man as anybody." "Ah!" said one who heard it, "the Lord have mercy on your miserable stingy soul, for if you had been saved you would not have been con tent with a cent a year" — a halfpenny per annum! I hazard this assertion, that there is nothing in the faith of that man who does not exercise self-denial. If we never give any thing to Christ's cause, work for Christ, deny ourselves for Christ, the root of the matter is not in us. I might call some of you hypocrites: you sing,

"And if I might make some reserve,
And duty did not call,
I love my God with zeal so great,
That I could give him all."

Yes, but you would not, though; you know better than that, for you do not, as it is, give all, no, nor yet half, nor yet the thousandth part. I suppose you think you are poor yourselves, though you have got some thousand pounds odd a year, and so you keep it yourself, under the notion that "he that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord." I don't know how else it is you make your religion square with itself, and be at all consistent. This woman said, "If I must die for these men, I will; I am prepared, bad name as I have, to have a worse name still; as a traitor to my country I am prepared to be handed down to infamy, if it be necessary, for having betrayed my country in taking in these spies, for I know it is God's will it should be done, and do it I will at every hazard. "O men and brethren, trust not your faith, unless it has self-denial with it. Faith and self-denial, like the Siamese twins, are born together, and must live together, and the food that nourisheth one must nourish both. But this woman, poor sinner as she was, would deny herself. She brought her life, even as that other

woman, who was a sinner, brought the alabaster box of precious ointment, and broke it on the head of Christ.

V. Not to detain you too long, another point very briefly. This woman's faith was A SYMPATHISING FAITH. She did not believe for herself only; she desired mercy for her relations, Said she, "I want to be saved, but that very desire makes me want to have my father saved, and my mother saved, and my brother saved, and my sister saved." I know a man who walks seven miles every Sabbath to hear the gospel preached in a certain place — a place where they preach the gospel. You know that very particular, superfine sort — the gospel, a gospel, the spirit of which consists in bad temper, carnal security, arrogance, and a seared conscience. But this man was one day met by a friend, who said to him, "Where is your wife?" "Wife?" said he to him. "What! does she not come with you?" "O! no", said the man; "she never goes anywhere." "Well, but," said he, "don't you try to get her to go, and the children?" "No; the fact of it is, I think, if I look to myself that is quite enough." "Well," said the other, "and you believe that you are God's elect, do you?" "Yes." "Well, then," said the other, "I don't think you are, because you are worse than a heathen man and a publican, for you don't care for your own household; therefore I don't think you give much evidence of being God's elect, for they love their fellow-creatures." So sure as our faith is real, it will want to bring others in. You will say, "You want to make proselytes." Yes; and you will reply, that Christ said to the Pharisees, "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte." Yes, and Christ did not find fault with them for doing so; what he found fault with them for was this — "When ye have found him ye make him tenfold more the child of hell than yourselves."

The spirit of proselyting is the spirit of Christianity, and we ought to be desirous of possessing it. If any man will say, "I believe such and such a thing is true, but I do not wish any one else to believe it, I will tell you, it is a lie; he does not believe it, for it is impossible, heartily and really to believe a thing, without desiring to make others believe the same. And I am sure of this, moreover, it is impossible to know the value of salvation without desiring to see others brought in. Said that renowned preacher, Whitefield, "As soon as I was converted, I wanted to be the means of the conversion of all that I had ever known. There were a number of young men that I had played cards with, that I had sinned with, and transgressed

with: the first thing I did was, to go to their houses to see what I could do for their salvation, nor could I rest until I had the pleasure of seeing many of them brought to the Savior." This is a first-fruit of the Spirit. It is a kind of instinct in a young Christian. He must have other people feel what he feels. Says one young man, in writing to me this week, "I have been praying for my fellow-clerk in the office; I have desired that he might be brought to the Savior, but at present there is no answer to my prayers." Do not give a penny for that man's piety which will not spread itself. Unless we desire others to taste the benefits we have enjoyed, we are either inhuman monsters or outrageous hypocrites; I think the last is most likely. But this woman was so strong in faith that all her family were saved from destruction. Young woman! you have a father, and he hates the Savior. O! pray for him. Mother! you have a son: he scoffs at Christ. Cry out to God for him. Ay, my friends — young people like myself — we little know what we owe to the prayers of our parents. I feel that I shall never be able sufficiently to bless God for a praying mother. I thought it was a great nuisance to be had in at such a time to pray, and more especially to be made to cry, as my mother used to make me cry. I would have laughed at the idea of any body else talking to me about these things; but when she prayed, and said, "Lord, save my son Charles," and then was overcome, and could not get any further for crying, you could not help crying too; you could not help feeling; it was of no use trying to stand against it. Ah! and there you are young man! Your mother is dying, and one thing which makes her death-bed bitter is, that you scoff God and hate Christ. O! it is the last stage of impiety, when a man can think lightly of a mother's feelings. I would hope there are none such here, but that those of you who have been so blessed, as to have been begotten and brought forth by pious men and women may take this into consideration — that to perish with a mother's prayers is to perish fearfully; for if a mother's prayers do not bring us to Christ, they are like drops of oil dropped into the flames of hell that will make them burn more fiercely upon the soul for ever and ever. Take heed of rushing to perdition over your mother's prayers!

There is an old woman weeping — do you know why? I believe she has sons too, and she loves them. I met with a little incident in company, the other day, after preaching. There was a little boy at the corner of the table,

and his father asked him, “Why does your father love you, John?” Said the dear little lad, very prettily, “Because I’m a good boy.” “Yes.” said the father, “he would not love you if you were not a good boy.” I turned to the good father and remarked that I was not quite sure about the truth of the last remark, for I believed he would love him if he were ever so bad. “Well,” he said, “I think I should.” And said a minister at the table, “I had an instance of that yesterday. I stepped into the house of a woman who had a son transported for life, and she was as full of her son Richard as if be had been prime minister, or had been her most faithful and dutiful son.” Well, young man, will you kick against love like that — love that will bear your kicks, and will not turn round against you, but love you straight on still? But perhaps that woman — I saw her weep just now — had a mother, who has gone long ago, and she was married to a brutal husband, and at last left a poor widow; she calls to mind the days of her childhood, when the big Bible was brought out and read around the hearth, and “Our Father which art in heaven” was their nightly prayer. Now, perhaps, God is beginning some good thing in her heart. O! that he would bring her now, though seventy years of age, to love the Savior! Then would she have the beginning of life over again in her last days, which will be made her best days.

VI. One more head, and then we have done. Rahab’s faith was a SANCTIFYING FAITH. Did Rahab continue a harlot after she had faith? No, no, she did not. I do not believe she was a harlot at the time the men went to her house, though the name still stuck to her, as such ill names will; but I am sure she was not afterward, for Salmon the prince of Judah married her, and her name is put down among the ancestors of our Lord Jesus Christ. She became after that a woman eminent for piety walking in the fear of God. Now, you may have a dead faith which will ruin your soul. The faith that will save you is a faith which sanctifies. “Ah!” says the drunkard, “I like the gospel, sir; I believe in Christ;” then he will go over to the Blue Lion to-night, and get drunk. Sir, that is not the believing in Christ that is of any use. “Yes,” says another, “I believe in Christ;” and when he gets outside he will begin to talk lightly, frothy words, perhaps lascivious ones, and sin as before. Sir, you speak falsely; you do not believe in Christ. That faith which saves the soul is a real faith, and a real faith sanctifies men. It makes them say, “Lord, thou hast forgiven me my sins; I

will sin no more. Thou bast been so merciful to me, I will renounce my guilt; so kindly hast thou treated me, so lovingly hast thou embraced me, Lord, I will serve thee till I die; and if thou wilt give me grace, and help me so to be, I will be as holy as thou art." You can not have faith, and yet live in sin. To believe is to be holy. The two things must go together. That faith is a dead faith, a corrupt faith, which lives in sin that grace may abound. Rahab was a sanctified woman. O that God might sanctify some that are here! The world has been trying all manner of processes to reform men: there is but one thing that ever will reform them, and that is, faith in the preached gospel. But in this age preaching is much despised. You read the newspaper you read the book; you hear the lecturer; you sit and listen to the pretty essayist; but where is the preacher? Preaching is not taking out a manuscript sermon, asking God to direct your heart, and then reading pages prepared beforehand. That is reading — not preaching. There is a good tale told of an old man whose minister used to read. The minister called to see him, and said, "What are you doing John?" "Why, I'm prophesying, sir." "Prophesying; how is that? You mean you are reading the prophecies?" "No, I don't; I'm prophesying; for you read preaching, and call it preaching, and I read prophecies, and, on the same rule, that is prophesying." And the man was not far from right. We want to have more outspoken, downright utterances of truth and appeals to the conscience, and until we get these, we shall never see any very great and lasting reforms. But by the preaching of God's word, foolishness though it seem to some, harlots are reformed, thieves are made honest, and the worst of men brought to the Savior. Again let me affectionately give the invitation to the vilest of men, if so they feel themselves to be,

"Come, ye needy, come and welcome,
God's fine bounty glorify:
True belief and true repentance —
Every grace that brings us nigh —
Without money,
Come to Jesus Christ and buy."

Your sins will be forgiven, your transgressions cast away, and you shall henceforth go and sin no more, God having renewed you, and he will keep you even to the end. May God give his blessing, for Jesus sake! Amen.

A FAITHFUL FRIEND

SERMON NO. 120

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 8, 1857,

AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS

"There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." — Proverbs 18:24.

ICERO has well said, "Friendship is the only thing in the world concerning the usefulness of which all mankind are agreed." Friendship seems as necessary an element of a comfortable existence in this world as fire or water, or even air itself. A man may drag along a miserable existence in proud solitary dignity, but his life is scarce life, it is nothing but an existence, the tree of life being stripped of the leaves of hope and the fruits of joy. He who would be happy here must have friends; and he who would be happy hereafter, must, above all things, find a friend in the world to come, in the person of God, the Father of his people.

Friendship, however, though very pleasing and exceedingly blessed, has been the cause of the greatest misery to men when it has been unworthy and unfaithful; for just in proportion as a good friend is sweet, a false friend is full of bitterness. "A faithless friend is sharper than an adder's tooth." It is sweet to repose in some one; but O! how bitter to have that support snapped, and to receive a grievous fall as the effect of your confidence. Fidelity is an absolute necessary in a true friend; we can not rejoice in men unless they will stand faithful to us. Solomon declares that "there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." That friend, I suppose, he never found in the pomps and vanities of the world. He had tried them all, but he found them empty; he passed through all their joys, but he found them "vanity of vanities." Poor Savage spoke from sad experience when he said —

"You'll find the friendship of the world a show!
Mere outward show! 'Tis like the harlot's tears,
The statesman's promise, or false patriot's zeal,
Full of fair seeming, but delusion all."

And so for the most part they are. The world's friendship is ever brittle. Trust to it, and you have trusted a robber; rely upon it, and you have leaned upon a thorn; ay, worse than that, upon a spear which shall pierce you to the soul with agony. Yet Solomon says he had found "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." Not in the haunts of his unbridled pleasures, nor in the wanderings of his unlimited resources, but in the pavilion of the Most High, the secret dwelling-place of God, in the person of Jesus, the Son of God, the Friend of sinners.

It is saying a great thing to affirm that "there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother;" for the love of brotherhood has produced most valiant deeds. We have read stories of what brotherhood could do, which, we think, could hardly be excelled in the annals of friendship. Timoleon, with his shield, stood over the body of his slain brother, to defend him from the insults of the foe. It was reckoned a brave deed of brotherhood that he should dare the spears of an army in defense of his brother's corpse. And many such instances have there been, in ancient and modern warfare, of the attachment of brethren. There is a story told of a Highland regiment, who, while marching through the Highlands, lost their way; they were overtaken by one of the terrible storms which will sometimes come upon travelers unawares, and blinded by the snow, they lost their way upon the mountains. Well nigh frozen to death, it was with difficulty they could continue their march. One man after another dropped into the snow and disappeared. There were two brothers, however, of the name of Forsythe; one of them fell prostrate on the earth, and would have lain there to die, but his brother, though barely able to drag his own limbs across the white desert, took him on his back, and carried him along, and as others fell one by one, this brave, true-hearted brother carried his loved one on his back, until at last he himself fell down overcome with fatigue, and died. His brother, however, had received such warmth from his body that he was enabled to reach the end of his journey in safety, and so lived. Here we have an instance of one brother sacrificing his life for another. I hope there are some brothers here who would be prepared to do the same if they should ever be brought into the same difficulty. It is saying a great thing, to

declare that “there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” It is putting that friend first of all in the list of loving ones; for, surely, next to a mother’s love, there is, and there ought to be, no higher affection in the world than the love of a brother to one begotten of the same father, and dandled on the same knee. Those who have “grown in beauty side by side, and filled one house with glee,” ought to love one another. And we think there have been many glorious instances and mighty proofs of the love of brethren. Yet, says Solomon, “there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”

To repeat our assertion, we believe that this friend is the blessed Redeemer, Jesus Christ. It shall be ours, first, to prove, this morning, the fact that he sticks closer than a brother; then, as briefly as we can, to show you why he sticks closer than a brother; and then to finish up by giving you some lessons which may be drawn from the doctrine, that Jesus Christ is a faithful Friend.

I. First, then, beloved, we assert that CHRIST IS “A FRIEND THAT STICKETH CLOSER THAN A BROTHER.” And in order to prove this from facts, we appeal to such of you as have had him for a friend. Will you not, each of you, at once give your verdict, that this is neither more nor less than an unexaggerated truth? He loved you before all worlds; long ere the day star flung his ray across the darkness, before the wing of angel had flapped the unnavigated ether, before aught of creation had struggled from the womb of nothingness, God, even our God, had set his heart upon all his children. Since that time, has he once swerved, has he once turned aside, once changed? No; ye who have tasted of his love and know his grace, will bear me witness, that he has been a certain friend in uncertain circumstances.

“He, near your side hath always stood.
His loving-kindness. O! how good.”

You fell in Adam; did he cease to love you? No; he became the second Adam to redeem you. You sinned in practice, and brought upon your head the condemnation of God; you deserved his wrath and his utter anger; did he then forsake you? No!

“He saw you ruined in the fall,
Yet loved you notwithstanding all.”

He sent his minister after you; you despised him; he preached the gospel in your ears; you laughed at him; you broke God's Sabbath, you despised his Word. Did he then forsake you? No!

"Determined to save, he watched o'er your path,
Whilst, Satan's blind slave, you sported with death."

And at last he arrested you by his grace, he humbled you, he made you penitent, he brought you to his feet, and he forgave you all your sins. Since then, has he left you? You have often left him; has he ever left you? You have had many trials and troubles; has he ever deserted you? Has he ever turned away his heart, and shut up his bowels of compassion? No, children of God, it is your solemn duty to say "No," and bear witness to his faithfulness. You have been in severe afflictions and in dangerous circumstances; did your friend desert you then? Others have been faithless to you; he that eat bread with you has lifted up his heel against you; but has Christ ever forsaken you? Has there ever been a moment when you could go to him, and say, "Master, thou hast betrayed me?" Could you once, in the blackest hour of your grief, dare to impugn his fidelity? Could you dare to say of him, "Lord, thou hast promised what thou didst not perform?" Will you not bear witness now, "Not one good thing hath failed of all that the Lord God hath promised; all hath come to pass?" And do you fear he will yet forsake you? Ask, then, the bright ones before the throne — "Ye glorified spirits! did Christ forsake you? Ye have passed through Jordan's stream; did he leave you there? Ye have been baptized in the black flood of death; did he there forsake you? Ye have stood before the throne of God; did he then deny you?" And they answered, "No; through all the troubles of our life, in all the bitterness of death, in all the agonies of our expiring moments, and in all the terrors of God's judgment, he hath been with us, 'a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.'" Out of all the millions of God's redeemed, there is not one he hath forsaken. Poor they have been, mean and distressed, but he hath never abhorred their prayer, never turned aside from doing them good. He hath been ever with them.

"For his mercy shall endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure."

But I shall not longer stay, since I can not prove this to the ungodly, and to the godly it is already proven, for they know it by experience; therefore

it is but little necessary that I should do more than just certify the fact that Christ is a faithful friend — a friend in every hour of need and every time of distress.

II. And now I have to tell you THE REASONS WHY WE MAY DEPEND UPON CHRIST AS BEING A FAITHFUL FRIEND.

There are some things in himself which render it certain that he will stick close to his people.

1. True friendship can only be made between true men. Hearts are the soul of honor. There can be no lasting friendship between bad men. Bad men may pretend to love each other, but their friendship is a rope of sand, which shall be broken at any convenient season; but if a man have a sincere heart within him, and be true and noble, then we may confide in him. Spenser sings in fine old English verse —

"No, certes can that friendship long endure,
However gay and goodly be the style,
That doth ill cause or evil end enure,
For Vertue is the band that bindeth Harts most sure."

But who can find a stain in the character of Jesus, or who can tarnish his honor? Has there ever been a spot on his escutcheon? Has his flag ever been trampled in the dust? Does he not stand the true witness in heaven, the faithful and just? Is it not declared of him that he is God who can not lie? Have we not found him so up to this moment; and may we not, knowing that he is "Holy, holy, holy Lord," confide in him, that he will stick closer to us than a brother? His goodness is the guaranty of his fidelity; he can not fail us.

2. Faithfulness to us in our faults is a certain sign of fidelity in a friend. You may depend upon that man who will tell you of your faults in a kind and considerate manner. Fawning hypocrites, insidious flatterers, are the sweepings and offal of friendship. They are but the parasites upon that noble tree. But true friends put enough trust in you to tell you openly of your faults. Give me for a friend the man who will speak honestly of me before my face; who will not tell first one neighbor, and then another, but who will come straight to my house, and say, "Sir, I feel there is such-and-such a thing in you, which, as my brother, I must tell you of." That man is

a true friend; he has proved himself to be so; for we never get any praise for telling people of their faults; we rather hazard their dislike; a man will sometimes thank you for it, but he does not often like you any the better. Praise is a thing we all love. I met with a man the other day who said he was impervious to flattery; I was walking with him at the time, and turning round rather sharply, I said, "At any rate, sir, you seem to have a high gift in flattering yourself, for you are really doing so, in saying you are impervious to flattery." "You can not flatter me," he said. I replied, "I can, if I like to try; and perhaps may do so before the day is out." I found I could not flatter him directly, so I began by saying what a fine child that was of his; and he drank it in as a precious draught; and when I praised this thing and that thing belonging to him, I could see that he was very easily flattered; not directly, but indirectly. We are all pervious to flattery; we like the soothing cordial, only it must not be labeled flattery; for we have a religious abhorrence of flattery if it be so called; call it by any other name, and we drink it in, even as the ox drinketh in water. Now, child of God, has Christ every flattered you? Has he not told you of your faults right truly? Has he not pricked your conscience even upon what you thought to gloss over — your little secret sins? Has he not provoked conscience to thunder in your ears notes of terror, because of your misdeeds? Well, then, you may trust him, for he shows that faithfulness which renders a man right trustworthy. Thus I have pointed out to you that there are reasons in himself for which we may trust him.

3. In the next place, there are some things in his friendship which render us sure of not being deceived, when we put our confidence in him. True friendship must not be of hasty growth. As quaint old Master Fuller says: "Let friendship creep gently to a height; if it rush to it, it may soon run itself out of breath." It is even so. I think it was Joanna Baillie said —

"Friendship is no plant of hasty growth.
Though planted in esteem's deep fixed soil,
The gradual culture of kind intercourse
Must bring it to perfection."

In vain thou trustest the gourd over thy head, O Jonah; it will not be of much use to thee; it came up in a night, it may wither in a night. It is the strong stiff oak, of ages' growth, which shall abide the tempest; which shall alike put out its wings to shield thee from the sun, and shall afterward

find thee a hovel in its heart, if necessary, in its gray old age, when its branches tremble in the blast. Friendship is true when it begins; but we must have a man's friendship long before we can say of him, that he will stick closer than a brother. And how long has Christ loved you? That you can not tell. When the ages were not born he loved you; when this world was an infant, wrapped in the swaddling clothes of mist, he loved you; when the old pyramids had not begun to be builded, his heart was set upon you; and ever since you have been born he has had a strong affection for you. He looked on you in your cradle, and he loved you then; he was affianced to you when you were an infant of a span long, and he has loved you ever since. Some of you I see with gray hairs, some with heads all bald with age; he has loved you up till now, and will he now forsake you? O! no, his friendship is so old that it must last; it has been matured by so many tempests, it has been rooted by so many winds of trouble, that it can not but endure; it must stand. Even as the granite peak of the mountain shall not be melted, because, unlike the snow, it has braved the blast, and borne the heat of the burning sun; it has stood out always, catching in its face every blow from the face of nature, and yet been unmoved and uninjured. It shall last, for it has lasted. But when the elements shall melt, and in a stream of dissolving fire shall run away, then shall Christ's friendship still exist, for it is of older growth than they. He must be "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother;" for his friendship is a hoary friendship — hoary as his own head, of which it is said, "His head and his hair are white like snow, as white as wool."

4. But note, further, the friendship which lasts does not take it rise in the chambers of mirth, nor is it fed and fattened there. Young lady, you speak of a dear friend whom you acquired last night in a ball-room. Do not, I beseech you, misuse the word; he is not a friend if he was acquired merely there; friends are better things than those which grow in the hot-house of pleasure. Friendship is a more lasting plant than those. You have a friend, have you? Yes; and he keeps a pair of horses, and has a good establishment. Ah! but your best way to prove your friend is to know that he will be your friend when you have not so much as a mean cottage, and when, houseless and without clothing, you are driven to beg your bread. Thus you would make true proof of a friend. Give me a friend who was born in the winter time, whose cradle was rocked in the storm; he will last.

Our fair weather friends shall flee away from us. I had rather have a robin for a friend than a swallow; for a swallow abides with us only in the summer time, but a robin cometh to us in the winter. Those are tight friends that will come the nearest to us when we are in the most distress; but those are not friends who speed themselves away when ill times come. Believer, hast thou reason to fear that Christ will leave you now? Has he not been with you in the house of mourning? You found your friend where men find pearls, "in caverns deep, where darkness dwells;" you found Jesus in your hour of trouble. It was on the bed of sickness that you first learned the value of his name; it was in the hour of mental anguish that you first did lay hold of the hem of his garment; and since then, your nearest and sweetest intercourse has been held with him in the hours of darkness. Well, then, such a friend, proved in the house of sorrow — a friend who gave his heart's blood for you, and let his soul run out in one great river of gore — such a friend never can and never will forsake you; he sticketh closer than a brother.

5. Again, a friend who is acquired by folly is never a lasting friend. Do a foolish thing, and make a man your friend; 'tis but a confederacy in vice, and you will soon discover that his friendship is worthless; the friendship you acquire by doing wrong, you had better be without. O! how many silly friendships there are springing up, the mere fruit of a sentimentalism, having no root whatever, but like the plant of which our Savior tells us, "It sprang up because it had no depth of earth." Jesus Christ's friendship is not like that; there is no ingredient of folly in it; he loves us discreetly, not winking or conniving at our follies, but instilling into us his wisdom. His love is wise; he hath chosen us according to the counsel of his wisdom; not blindly and rashly, but with all judgment and prudence.

Under this head I may like wise observe, that the friendship of ignorance is not a very desirable one. I desire no man to call himself my friend, if he doth not know me. Let him love me in proportion to his knowledge of me. If he loves me for the little he knows, when he knoweth more he may cast me aside. "That man," says one, "seems to be a very amiable man." "I am sure I can love him," says another, as he scans his features. Ay, but do not write "friend" yet; wait a wee bit, until you know more of him; just see him, examine him, try him, test him, and not till then enter him on the sacred list of friends. Be friendly to all, but make none your friends until

they know you, and you know them. Many a friendship born in the darkness of ignorance, hath died suddenly in the light of a better acquaintance with each other. You supposed men to be different from what they were, and when you discovered their real character you disregarded them. I remember one saying to me, “I have great affection for you, sir,” and he mentioned a certain reason. I replied, “My dear fellow, your reason is absolutely false; the very thing you love me for, I am not, and hope I never shall be.” And so I said, “I really can not accept your friendship, if it be founded upon a misunderstanding of what I may have said.” But our Lord Jesus never can forsake those whom once he loves, because he can discover nothing in us worse than he knew, for he knew all about us beforehand. He saw our leprosy, and yet he loved us; he knew our deceitfulness and unbelief, and yet he did press us to his bosom; he knew what poor fools we were, and yet he said he would never leave us nor forsake us. He knew that we should rebel against him and despise his counsel often times; he knew that even when we loved him our love would be cold and languid, but he loved for his own sake. Surely, then, he will stick closer than a brother.

6. Yet again, friendship and love, to be real, must not lie in words, but in deeds. The friendship of bare compliment is the fashion of this age, because this age is the age of deceit. The world is the great house of sham. Go where you may in London, sham is staring you in the face; there are very few real things to be discovered. I allude not merely to tricks in business, adulterations in food, and such like. Deception is not confined to the tradesman’s shop. It prevails throughout society; the sanctuary is not exempt. The preacher adopts a sham voice. You hardly ever hear a man speak in the pulpit in the same way he would speak in the parlor. Why, I hear my brethren, sometimes, when they are at tea or dinner, speak in a very comfortable decent sort of English voice, but when they get into their pulpits they adopt a sanctimonious tone, and fill their mouths with inflated utterance, or else whine most pitifully. They degrade the pulpit by pretending to honor it; speaking in a voice which God never intended any mortal to have. This is the great house of sham; and such little things show which way the wind blows. You leave your card at a friend’s house; that is an act of friendship — the card! I wonder whether, if he were hard up for cash, you would leave your banker’s book! You write “My dear sir,”

“Yours very truly;” it is a sham; you do not mean it. “Dear!” that is a sacred word; it ought to be used to none but those you regard with affection; but we tolerate falsehoods now, as if they were truths; and we call them courtesies. Courtesies they may be; but untruths they are in many cases. Now, Christ’s love lieth not in words, but in deeds. He saith not, “My dear people;” but he let his heart out, and we could see what that was. He doth not come to us, and say, “Dearly beloved” simply; but he hangs upon the cross, and there we read “Dearly beloved” in red letters. He does not come to us with the kisses of his lips first — he giveth us blessings with both his hands; he giveth himself for us, and then he giveth himself to us. Trust no complimentary friend; rely upon the man who giveth you real tokens worth your having, who does for you deeds to show the truthfulness of his heart. Such a friend — and such is Jesus — “sticketh closer than a brother.”

7. Once more, and I shall not weary you, I trust. A purchased friend will never last long. Give to a man nineteen times, and deny him the twentieth, and he shall hate you; for his love sprang only from your gifts. The love which I could buy for gold I would sell for dross; the friendship that I could buy for pearls I would dispense with for pebbles; it were of no value, and therefore the sooner lost the better. But O believer, Christ’s love was unpurchased love. Thou broughtest him no present. Jacob said, when his sons went to Egypt, “Take the man a present, a little oil, a little balm, a few nuts and almonds;” but you took Christ no presents. When you came to him you said,

“Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling.”

You did not even promise that you would love him; for you had such a faithless heart, you durst not say so. You asked him to make you love him; that was the most you could do. He loved you for nothing at all — simply because he would love you. Well, that love which so lived on nothing but its own resources, will not starve through the scantiness of your returns; the love which grew in such a rocky heart as this, will not die for want of soil. That love which sprang up in the barren desert, in your unirrigated soul, will never, never die for want of moisture; it must live, it can not expire. Jesus must be “a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”

8. Shall I stay to urge more reasons? I may but mention one other, namely, this — that there can not, by any possibility, arise any cause which could make Christ love us less. You say, how is this? One man loves his friend, but he on a sudden grows rich, and now he says I am a greater man than I used to be, I forget my old acquaintances. But Christ can grow no richer; he is as rich as he can be, infinitely so. He loves you now; then it can not be possible that he will by reason of an increase in his own personal glory forsake you, for everlasting glories now crown his head; he can never be more glorious and great, and therefore he will love you still. Sometimes, on the other hand, one friend grows poorer, and then the other forsakes him; but you never can grow poorer than you are, for you are "a poor sinner and nothing at all" now; you have nothing of your own; all you have is borrowed, all given you by him. He can not love you, then, less, because you grow poorer; for poverty that hath nothing is at least as poor as it can be, and can never sink lower in the scale. Christ, therefore, must love thee for all thy nakedness and all thy poverty.

"But I may prove sinful," sayest thou. Yes, but thou canst not be more so than he foreknew thou wouldst be; and yet he loved thee with the foreknowledge of all thy sins. Surely, then, when it happens it will occasion no surprise to him; he knew it all beforehand, and he can not swerve from his love; no circumstance can possibly arise that ever will divide the Savior from his love to his people, and the saint from his love to his Savior. He is "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

III. Now, then, AN INFERENCE TO BE DERIVED FROM THIS. Lavater says, "The qualities of your friends will be those of your enemies; cold friends, cold enemies, half friends, half enemies, fervid enemies, warm friends." Knowing this to be a truth, I have often congratulated myself, when my enemies have spoken fiercely against me. Well, I have thought, "My friends love me hard and fast; let my enemies be as hot as they please; it only indicates that the friends are proportionately firm in affection. Then we draw this inference, that if Christ sticks close, and he is our friend, then our enemies will stick close, and never leave us till we die. O, Christian, because Christ sticks close, the devil will stick close too; he will be at you and with you; the dog of hell will never cease his howlings, till you reach the other side of Jordan; no place in this world is out of bow-shot of that great enemy; till you have crossed the stream his arrows can reach you,

and they will. If Christ gave himself for you, the devil will do all he can to destroy you; if Christ has been long-suffering to you, Satan will be persevering, in hopes that Christ may forget you; he will strive after you, and strive until he shall see you safely landed in heaven. But be not disappointed: the louder Satan roars, the more proof you shall have of Christ's love. "Give me," said old Rutherford, "give me a roaring devil rather than a sleeping one; for sleeping devils make me slumber, but roaring ones provoke me to run to my Master." O! be glad, then, if the world rant at thee, if thy foes attack thee fiercely. Christ is just as full of love to thee as they are of hatred. Therefore,

"Be firm and strong;
Be grace thy shield and Christ thy song."

And now I have a question to ask: that question I ask of every man and every woman in this place, and of every child too — Is Jesus Christ your friend? Have you a friend at court — at heaven's court? Is the judge of quick and dead your friend? Can you say that you love him, and has he ever revealed himself in the way of love to you? Dear hearer, do not answer that question for thy neighbor; answer it for thyself. Peer or peasant, rich or poor, learned or illiterate, this question is for each of you; therefore, ask it: Is Christ my friend? Did you ever consider that question? Have you ever asked it? O! to be able to say "Christ is my friend," is one of the sweetest things in the world. A man who had lived much in sin, one day casually entered a place of worship. Before the sermon, this hymn was sung —

"Jesus, lover of my soul."

The next day the man was met by an acquaintance who asked him how he liked the sermon. Said he, "I do not know, but there were two or three words that took such a hold of me that I did not know what to do with myself. The minister read that hymn, 'Jesus, lover of my soul.' Ah!' said he, though he was by no means a religious man, "to be able to say that, I would give up all I have got! But do you think," he asked "that Jesus ever will be the lover of such a man as I am? 'Jesus, lover of my soul!' O! could I say it." And then he buried his head in his hands and wept. I have every reason to fear that he went back to his sin, and was the same afterwards as before. But, you see, he had conscience enough to let him know how

valuable it was to have Christ for his lover and his friend. Ah! rich man, thou hast many friends. There be some here who have toiled for their country's good, and deserve a meed of honor at their country's hands, who, for one mistake — or what, perhaps, was a mistake — have been neglected by too many who once appeared to be their most trusty adherents. O! put no confidence, ye great men and ye rich, in the adherence of your friends. David said in his hast," All men are liars;" you may one day have to say it at your leisure. And O! ye kind and affectionate hearts, who are not rich in wealth, but who are rich in love — and that is the world's best wealth — put this golden coin among your silver ones, and it will sanctify them all. Get Christ's love shed abroad in your hearts, and your mother's love, your daughter's love, your husband's love, your wife's love, will become more sweet than ever. The love of Christ cast not out the love of relatives, but it sanctifies our loves, and makes them sweeter far. Remember, dear hearer, the love of men and women is very sweet; but all must pass away; and what will you do, if you have no wealth but the wealth that fadeth, and no love but the love which dies, when death shall come? O! to have the love of Christ! You can take that across the river of death with you; you can wear it as your bracelet in heaven, and set it up as a seal upon your hand; for his love is "strong as death and mightier than the grave." Good old Bishop Beveridge, I think it was, when dying, did not know his best friends. Said one, "Bishop Beveridge, do you know me?" Said he, "Who are you?" and when the name was mentioned, he said, "No." "But don't you know your wife, Bishop?" "What is her name?" said he. Said she, "I am your wife." "I did not know I had got one," said he. Poor old man! his faculties all failed him. At last one stooped down and whispered, "Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ?" "Yes," said he, making an effort to speak, "I have known him these forty years, and I never can forget him." It is marvelous how memory will hold the place with Jesus, when it will with no one else; and it is equally marvelous, that,

"When all created things are dry, Christ's fullness is the same."

My dear hearers, do think of this matter. O that you might get Christ for your friend; he will never be your friend while you are self-righteous; he will never be your friend while you live in sin. But do you believe yourselves guilty? Do you desire to leave off sin? Do you want to be

saved? Do you desire to be renewed? Then let me tell you, my Master loves you! Poor, weak, and helpless worms, my Master's heart if full of love to you; his eyes at this moment are looking down with pity on you. "O! Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" He now bids me tell you that he died for all of you who confess yourselves to be sinners, and feel it. He bids me say to you, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." He tells me to proclaim salvation full and free; full, needing nothing of yours to help it; free, needing nothing of yours to buy it.

"Come ye thirsty, come and welcome;
God's free bounty glorify:
True belief and true repentance,
Every grace that brings us nigh —
Without money,
Come to Jesus Christ, and buy."

There is nothing I feel that I fail so much in as addressing sinners. O! I wish I could cry my heart out, and preach my heart out, to you and at you.

"Dear Savior, draw reluctant hearts,
To thee let sinners fly,
And take the bliss thy love imparts;
And drink, and never die."

Farewell, with this one thought — we shall never all of us meet together here again. It is a very solemn thought, but according to the course of nature and the number of deaths, if all of you were willing to come here next Sabbath morning, it is not at all likely that all of you would be alive; one out of this congregation will be sure to have gone the way of all flesh. Farewell, thou that are appointed to death; I know not where thou art — yon strong man, or yon tender maiden with the hectic flush of consumption on her cheek. I know not who is appointed to death; but I do now most solemnly take my farewell of such an one. Farewell, poor soul; and is it farewell for ever? Shall we meet in the land of the hereafter, in the home of the blessed; or do I bid you farewell now for ever? I do solemnly bid farewell to you for ever, if you live and die without Christ. But I can not bear that dreary thought; and I therefore say, poor sinner! stop and consider — consider thy ways, and now "turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" "Why will ye die?" "Why will ye die?" "Why will ye die?" Ah! ye

can not answer that question. May God help you to answer it in a better fashion, by saying, “Here Lord!

Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
O Son of God I come to thee.

I trust my soul in thy kind hands.” The Lord bless you all for Christ’s sake! Amen.

JUSTIFICATION BY GRACE

SERMON NO. 126

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 5, 1857,

AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

"Being justified freely by his grace
through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." — Romans 3:24.

THE hill of comfort is the hill of calvary; the house of consolation is builded with the wood of the cross; the temple of heavenly cordials is founded upon the riven rock, riven by the spear which pierced its side. No scene in sacred history ever gladdens the soul like the scene on Calvary.

"Is it not strange, the darkest hour
That ever dawn'd on sinful earth
Should touch the heart with softer power
For comfort, than an angel's mirth?
That to the cross the mourner's eye should turn,
Sooner than where the stars of Bethlehem burn?"

Nowhere does the soul ever find such consolation as on that very spot where misery reigned, where woe triumphed, where agony reached its climax. There grace hath dug a fountain, which ever gusheth with waters pure as crystal, each drop capable of alleviating the woes and the agonies of mankind. Ye have had your seasons of woe, my brethren and my sisters in Christ Jesus; and ye will confess it was not at Olivet that ye ever found comfort, not on the hill of Sinai, nor on Tabor; but Gethsemane, Gabbatha, and Golgotha have been a means of comfort to you. The bitter herbs of Gethsemane have often taken away the bitters of your life; the scourge of Gabbatha hath often scourged away your cares, and the groans of Calvary have put all other groans to flight.

We have, this morning, then, a subject which I trust may be the means of comforting God's saints, seeing it takes its rise at the cross, and thence runs on in a rich stream of perennial blessing to all believers. You note, we

have in our text, first of all, the redemption of Christ Jesus; secondly, the justification of sinners flowing from it; and then thirdly, the manner of the giving of this justification, "freely by his grace."

I. First, then, we have THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN OR BY CHRIST JESUS.

The figure of redemption is very simple, and has been very frequently used in Scripture. When a prisoner has been taken captive, and has been made a slave by some barbarous power, it has been usual, before he could be set free, that a ransom price should be paid down. Now, we being, by the fall of Adam, prone to guiltiness, and, indeed, virtually guilty, we were by the irreproachable judgment of God given up to the vengeance of the law; we were given into the hands of justice; justice claimed us to be his bond slaves for ever, unless we could pay a ransom, whereby our souls could be redeemed. We were, indeed, poor as owlets, we had not wherewith to bless ourselves. We were, as our hymn hath worded it, "bankrupt debtors;" an execution was put into our house; all we had was sold; we were left naked, and poor, and miserable, and we could by no means find a ransom; it was just then that Christ stepped in, stood sponsor for us, and, in the room and stead of all believers, did pay the ransom price, that we might in that hour be delivered from the curse of the law and the vengeance of God, and go our way, clean, free, justified by his blood.

Let me just endeavor to show you some qualities of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. You will remember the multitude he has redeemed; not me alone, nor you alone, but "a multitude that no man can number," which shall as far exceed the stars of heaven for number, as they exceed all mortal reckoning. Christ hath bought for himself, some out of every kingdom, and nation, and tongue, under heaven; he hath redeemed from among men some of every rank, from the highest to the lowest; some of every color — black and white; some of every standing in society, the best and the worst. For some of all sorts hath Jesus Christ given himself a ransom that they might be redeemed unto himself.

Now, concerning this ransom, we have to observe, that it was all paid, and all paid at once. When Christ redeemed his people, he did it thoroughly; he did not leave a single debt unpaid, nor yet one farthing for them to settle afterwards. God demanded of Christ the payment for the sins of all his

people; Christ stood forward, and to the utmost farthing paid whate'er his people owed. The sacrifice of Calvary was not a part payment; it was not a partial exoneration, it was a complete and perfect payment, and it obtained a complete and perfect remittal of all the debts of all believers that have lived, do live, or shall live, to the very end of time. On that day when Christ hung on the cross, he did not leave a single farthing for us to pay as a satisfaction to God; he did not leave, from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, that he had not satisfied. The whole of the demands of the law were paid down there and then by Jehovah Jesus, the great high priest of all his people. And blessed be his name, he paid it all at once too. So priceless was the ransom, so princely and munificent was the price demanded for our souls, one might have thought it would have been marvellous if Christ had paid it by instalments; some of it now, and some of it then. King's ransoms have sometimes been paid part at once, and part in dues afterwards, to run through years. But not so our Savior: once for all he gave himself a sacrifice; at once he counted down the price, and said, "It is finished," leaving nothing for him to do, nor for us to accomplish. He did not drivel out a part-payment, and then declare that he would come again to die, or that he would again suffer, or that he would again obey; but down upon the nail, to the utmost farthing, the ransom of all people was paid, and a full receipt given to them, and Christ nailed that receipt to his cross, and said, "It is done, it is done; I have taken away the handwriting of ordinances, I have nailed it to the cross; who is he that shall condemn my people, or lay anything to their charge? for I have blotted out like a cloud their transgressions, and like a thick cloud their sins!"

And when Christ paid all this ransom, will you just notice, that he did it all himself! He was very particular about that. Simon, the Cyrenian, might bear the cross; but Simon, the Cyrenian, might not be nailed to it. That sacred circle of Calvary was kept for Christ alone. Two thieves were with him there; not righteous men, lest any should have said that the death of those two righteous men helped the Savior. Two thieves hung there with him, that men might see that there was majesty in his misery, and that he could pardon men and show his sovereignty, even when he was dying. There were no righteous men to suffer; no disciples shared his death; Peter was not dragged there to be beheaded, John was not nailed to a cross side by side with him; he was left there alone. He says, "I have trodden the

wine press alone; and of the people there was none with me." The whole of the tremendous debt was put upon his shoulders; the whole weight of the sins of all his people was placed upon him. Once he seemed to stagger under it: "Father, if it be possible." But again he stood upright: "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." The whole of the punishment of his people was distilled into one cup; no mortal lip might give it so much as a solitary sip. When he put it to his own lips, it was so bitter, he well nigh spurned it — "Let this cup pass from me." But his love for his people was so strong, that he took the cup in both his hands, and

"At one tremendous draught of love
He drank damnation dry,"

for all his people. He drank it all, he endured all, he suffered all; so that now for ever there are no flames of hell for them, no racks of torment; they have no eternal woes; Christ hath suffered all they ought to have suffered, and they must, they shall go free. The work was completely done by himself, without a helper.

And note, again, it was accepted. In truth, it was a goodly ransom. What could equal it? A soul "exceeding sorrowful even unto death;" a body torn with torture; a death of the most inhuman kind; and an agony of such a character, that tongue cannot speak of it, nor can even man's mind imagine its horror. It was a goodly price. But say, was it accepted? There have been prices paid sometimes, or rather offered, which never were accepted by the party to whom they were offered, and therefore the slave did not go free. But this was accepted. The evidence I will shew you. When Christ declared that he would pay the debt for all his people, God sent the officer to arrest him for it; he arrested him in the garden of Gethsemane, and seizing upon him, he dragged him to the bar of Pilate, to the bar of Herod, and to the judgment seat of Caiaphas; the payment was all made, and Christ was put into the grave. He was there, locked up in durance vile, until the acceptance should have been ratified in heaven. He slept there a portion of three days in his tomb. It was declared that the ratification was to be this: the surety was to go his way as soon as ever his suretyship engagements had been fulfilled. Now let your minds picture the buried Jesus. He is in the sepulcher. 'Tis true he has paid all the debt, but the receipt is not yet given; he slumbers in that narrow tomb. Fastened in with a seal upon a giant stone, he sleeps still in his grave; not yet has the

acceptance been given from God; the angels have not yet come from heaven to say, “The deed is done, God has accepted thy sacrifice.” Now is the crisis of this world; it hangs trembling in the balance. Will God accept the ransom, or will he not? We shall see. An angel comes from heaven with exceeding brightness; he rolls away the stone; and forth comes the captive, with no manacles upon his hands, with the grave clothes left behind him; free, never more to suffer, never more to die. Now,

“If Jesus had not paid the debt,
He ne’er had been at freedom set.”

If God had not accepted his sacrifice, he would have been in his tomb at this moment; he never would have risen from his grave. But his resurrection was a pledge of God’s accepting him. He said, “I have had a claim upon thee to this hour; that claim is paid now; go thy way.” And death gave up his royal captive, the stone was rolled into the garden, and the conqueror came forth, leading captivity captive.

And, moreover, God gave a second proof of acceptance; for he took his only begotten Son to heaven, and set him at his right hand, far above all principalities and powers; and therein he meant to say to him, “Sit upon the throne, for thou hast done the mighty deed; all thy works and all thy miseries are accepted as the ransom of men.” O my beloved, think what a grand sight it must have been when Christ ascended into glory; what a noble certificate it must have been of his Father’s acceptance of him! Do you not think you see the scene on earth? It is very simple. A few disciples are standing upon a hill, and Christ mounts into the air in slow and solemn movement, as if an angel sped his way by gentle degrees, like mist or exhalation from the lake into the skies. Can you imagine what is going on up yonder? Can you for a moment conceive how, when the mighty conqueror entered the gates of heaven, the angels met him,

“They brought his chariot from on high,
To bear him to his throne;
Clapp’d their triumphant wings, and cried,
‘The glorious work is done’“

Can you think how loud were the plaudits when he entered the gates of heaven? Can you conceive how they pressed on one another, to behold how he came conquering and red from the fight? Do you see Abraham,

Isaac, Jacob, and all the saints redeemed, come to behold the Savior and the Lord? They had desired to see him, and now their eyes behold him in flesh and blood, the conqueror over death and hell! Do you think you see him, with hell at his chariot- wheels, with death dragged as a captive through the royal streets of heaven? Oh, what a spectacle was there that day! No Roman warrior ever had such a triumph; none ever saw such a majestic sight. The pomp of a whole universe, the royalty of entire creation, cherubim and seraphim and all powers create, did swell the show; and God himself, the Everlasting One, crowned all, when he pressed his Son to his bosom, and said, "Well done, well done; thou hast finished the work which I gave thee to do. Rest here for ever, mine accepted one." Ah, but he never would have had that triumph, if he had not paid all the debt. Unless his Father had accepted the ransom-price, the ransomer had never been so honored; but because it was accepted, therefore did he so triumph. So far, then, concerning the ransom.

II. And now, by the help of God's Spirit, let me address myself to THE EFFECT OF THE RANSOM; being justified — "justified freely by his grace through the redemption."

Now, what is the meaning of justification? Divines will puzzle you, if you ask them. I must try the best I can to make justification plain and simple, even to the comprehension of a child. There is not such a thing as justification to be had on earth for mortal men, except in one way. Justification, you know, is a forensic term; it is employed always in a legal sense. A prisoner is brought to the bar of justice to be tried. There is only one way whereby that prisoner can be justified; that is, he must be found not guilty; and if he is found not guilty, then he is justified — that is, he is proved to be a just man. If you find that man guilty, you cannot justify him. The Queen may pardon him, but she cannot justify him. The deed is not a justifiable one, if he were guilty concerning it; and he cannot be justified on account of it. He may be pardoned; but not royalty itself can ever wash that man's character. He is as much a real criminal when he is pardoned as before. There is no means among men of justifying a man of an accusation which is laid against him, except by his being proved not guilty. Now, the wonder of wonders is, that we are proved guilty, and yet we are justified: the verdict has been brought in against us, guilty; and yet, notwithstanding, we are justified. Can any earthly tribunal do that? No; it

remained for the ransom of Christ to effect that which is an impossibility to any tribunal upon earth. We are all guilty. Read the 23rd verse, immediately preceding the text — " For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." There the verdict of guilty is brought in, and yet we are immediately afterwards said to be justified freely by his grace.

Now, allow me to explain the way whereby God justifies a sinner. I am about to suppose an impossible case. A prisoner has been tried, and condemned to death. He is a guilty man; he cannot be justified, because he is guilty. But now, suppose for a moment that such a thing as this could happen — that some second party could be introduced, who could take all that man's guilt upon himself, who could change places with that man, and by some mysterious process, which of course is impossible with men, become that man; or take that man's character upon himself; he, the righteous man, putting the rebel in his place, and making the rebel a righteous man. We cannot do that in our courts. If I were to go before a judge, and he should agree that I should be committed for a year's imprisonment, instead of some wretch who was condemned yesterday to a year's imprisonment, I could not take his guilt. I might take his punishment, but not his guilt. Now, what flesh and blood cannot do, that Jesus Christ by his redemption did. Here I stand, the sinner. I mention myself as the representative of you all. I am condemned to die. God says, "I will condemn that man; I must, I will — I will punish him." Christ comes in, puts me aside, and stands himself in my stead. When the plea is demanded, Christ says, "Guilty;" takes my guilt to be his own guilt. When the punishment is to be executed, forth comes Christ. "Punish me," he says; "I have put my righteousness on that man, and I have taken that man's sins on me. Father, punish me, and consider that man to have been me. Let him reign in heaven; let me suffer misery. Let me endure his curse, and let him receive my blessing." This marvellous doctrine of the changing of places of Christ with poor sinners, is a doctrine of revelation, for it never could have been conceived by nature. Let me, lest I should have made a mistake, explain myself again. The way whereby God saves a sinner is not, as some say, by passing over the penalty. No; the penalty has been all paid. It is the putting of another person in the rebel's place. The rebel must die; God says he must. Christ says, "I will be substitute for the rebel. The rebel shall take my place; I will take his." God consents

to it. No earthly monarch could have power to consent to such a change. But the God of heaven had a right to do as he pleased. In his infinite mercy he consented to the arrangement. " Son of my love," said he, "you must stand in the sinner's place; you must suffer what he ought to have suffered; you must be accounted guilty, just as he was accounted guilty; and then I will look upon the sinner in another light. I will look at him as if he were Christ; I will accept him as if he were my only- begotten Son, full of grace and truth. I will give him a crown in heaven, and I will take him to my heart for ever and ever." This is the way we are saved, "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."

And now, let me further go on to explain some of the characteristics of this justification. As soon as a repenting sinner is justified, remember, he is justified for all his sins. Here stands a man all guilty. The moment he believes in Christ, his pardon at once he receives, and his sins are no longer his; they are cast into the depths of the sea. They were laid upon the shoulders of Christ, and they are gone. The man stands a guiltless man in the sight of God, accepted in the beloved. "What!" say you, "do you mean that literally?" Yes, I do, That is the doctrine of justification by faith. Man ceases to be regarded by divine justice as a guilty being; the moment he believes on Christ his guilt is all taken away. But I am going a step further. The moment the man believes in Christ, he ceases to be guilty in God's esteem; but what is more, he becomes righteous, he becomes meritorious; for, in the moment when Christ takes his sins he takes Christ's righteousness; so that, when God looks upon the sinner who but an hour ago was dead in sins, he looks upon him with as much love and affection as he ever looked upon his Son. He himself has said it — "As the Father loved me, so have I loved you." He loves us as much as his Father loved him. Can you believe such a doctrine as that? Does it not pass all thought? Well, it is a doctrine of the Holy Spirit; the doctrine whereby we must hope to be saved. Can I to any unenlightened person illustrate this thought better? I will give him the parable we have given to us in the prophets — the parable of Joshua the high-priest. Joshua comes in, clothed in filthy garments; those filthy garments representing his sins. Take away the filthy garments; that is pardon. Put a mitre on his head; clothe him in royal raiment; make him rich and fair; that is justification. But where do these garments come from? and where do those rags go to? Why, the rags that

Joshua had on go to Christ, and the garments put on Joshua are the garments that Christ wore. The sinner and Christ do just what Jonathan and David did. Jonathan put his robes on David, David gave Jonathan his garments; so Christ takes our sins, we take Christ's righteousness; and it is by a glorious substitution and interchange of places that sinners go free and are justified by his grace.

"But," says one, "no one is justified like that, till he dies." Believe me, he is.

"The moment a sinner believes,
And trusts in his crucified God,
His pardon at once he receives;
Salvation in full, through his blood."

If that young man over there has really believed in Christ this morning, realizing by a spiritual experience what I have attempted to describe, he is as much justified in God's sight now as he will be when he stands before the throne. Not the glorified spirits above are more acceptable to God than the poor man below, who is once justified by grace. It is a perfect washing, it is perfect pardon, perfect imputation; we are fully, freely, and wholly accepted, through Christ our Lord. Just one more word here, and then I will leave this matter of justification. Those who are once justified are justified irreversibly. As soon as a sinner takes Christ's place, and Christ takes the sinner's place, there is no fear of a second change. If Christ has once paid the debt, the debt is paid, and it will never be asked for again; if you are pardoned, you are pardoned once for ever. God does not give man a free pardon under his own sign-manual, and then afterwards retract it and punish man: that be far from God so to do. He says, "I have punished Christ; you may go free." And after that, we may "rejoice in hope of the glory of God," that "being justified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." And now I hear one cry, "That is an extraordinary doctrine." Well, so some may think; but let me say to you, it is a doctrine professed by all protestant churches, though they may not preach it. It is the doctrine of the Church of England, it is the doctrine of Luther, it is the doctrine of the Presbyterian church; it is professedly the doctrine of all Christian churches; and if it seems strange in your ears, it is because your ears are estranged, and not because the doctrine is a strange one. It is the doctrine of holy writ, that none can condemn whom God

justifies, and that none can accuse those for whom Christ hath died; for they are totally free from sin. So that, as one of the prophets has it, God sees no sin in Jacob nor iniquity in Israel. In the moment they believe, their sins being imputed to Christ, they cease to be theirs, and Christ's righteousness is imputed to them and accounted theirs, so that they are accepted.

III. And now I close up with the third point, upon which I shall be brief, and I hope very earnest: THE MANNER OF GIVING THIS JUSTIFICATION. John Bunyan would have it, that there are some whose mouths are set a watering for this great gift of justification. Are there not some here who are saying, "Oh! if I could be justified! But, Sir, can I be justified? I have been a drunkard, I have been a swearer, I have been everything that is vile. Can I be justified? Will Christ take my black sins, and am I to take his white robes? Yes, poor soul, if thou desirest it; if God has made thee willing, if thou dost confess thy sins, Christ is willing to take thy rags, and give thee his righteousness, to be thine for ever. "Well, but how is it to be obtained?" says one "must I be a holy man for many years, and then get it?" Listen! "Freely by his grace;" "freely," because there is no price to be paid for it; "By his grace," because it is not of our deservings. "But, O Sir, I have been praying, and I do not think God will forgive me, unless I do something to deserve it." I tell you, Sir, if you bring in any of your deservings, you shall never have it. God gives away his justification freely; if you bring anything to pay for it, he will throw it in your face, and will not give his justification to you. He gives it away freely. Old Rowland Hill once went preaching at a fair; he noticed the chapmen selling their wares by auction; so Rowland said, "I am going to hold an auction too, to sell wine and milk, without money and without price. My friends over there," said he "find a great difficulty to get you up to their price; my difficulty is to bring you down to mine." So it is with men. If I could preach justification to be bought by you at a sovereign a piece, who would go out of the place without being justified? If I could preach justification to you by walking a hundred miles, would we not be pilgrims tomorrow morning, every one of us? If I were to preach justification which would consist in whippings and torture, there are very few here who would not whip themselves, and that severely too. But when it is freely, freely, freely, men turn away. "What! am I to have it for nothing at all, without doing

anything?" Yes, Sir, you are to have it for nothing, or else not at all; it is "freely." "But may I not go to Christ, lay some claim to his mercy, and say, Lord, justify me because I am not so bad as others?" It will not do, Sir, because it is "by his grace." "But may I not indulge a hope, because I go to church twice a day?" No, Sir; it is "by his grace." "But may I not offer this plea, I mean to be better?" No, sir; it is "by his grace." You insult God by bringing your counterfeit coin to pay for his treasures. Oh! what poor ideas men have of the value of Christ's gospel, if they think they can buy it! God will not have your rusty farthings to buy heaven with. A rich man once, when he was dying, had a notion that he could buy a place in heaven by building a row of almshouses. A good man stood by his bed-side, and said, "How much more are you going to leave?" "Twenty thousand pounds." Said he "That would not buy enough for your foot to stand on in heaven; for the streets are made of gold there, and therefore of what value can your gold be, it would be accounted nothing of, when the very streets are paved with it?" Nay, friends, we cannot buy heaven with gold nor good works, nor prayers, nor anything in the world. But how is it to be got? Why it is to be got for asking only. As many of us as know ourselves to be sinners may have Christ for asking for him. Do you know that you want Christ? You may have Christ! "Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely." But if you cleave to your own notions, and say, "No, Sir, I mean to do a great many good things, and then I will believe in Christ." — Sir, you will be damned if you hold by such delusions. I earnestly warn you. You cannot be saved so. "Well, but are we not to do good works?" Certainly you are; but you are not to trust in them. You must trust in Christ wholly, and then do good works afterwards. "But," says one, "I think if I were to do a few good works, it would be a little recommendation when I came." It would not, sir; they would be no recommendation at all. Let a beggar come to your house in white kid gloves, and say he is very badly off, and wants some charity; would the white kid gloves recommend him to your charity? Would a good new hat that he has been buying this morning recommend him to your charity? "No," you would say, "you are a miserable impostor; you do not want anything, and you shall not have anything either! Out with you!"

The best livery for a beggar is rags, and the best livery for a sinner to go to Christ in, is for him to go just as he is, with nothing but sin about him.

“But no;” say you, “I must be a little better, and then I think Christ will save me!” You cannot get any better, try as long as you please. And besides — to use a paradox — if you were to get better, you would be all the worse; for the worse you are, the better to come to Christ. If you are all unholy come to Christ; if you feel your sin, and renounce it, come to Christ; though you have been the most debased and abandoned soul, come to Christ; if you feel yourself to have nothing about you that can recommend you, come to Christ.

“Venture on him, venture wholly;
Let no other trust intrude.”

I do not say this to urge any man to continue in sin. God forbid! If you continue in sin, you must not come to Christ; you cannot; your sins will hamper you. You cannot be chained to your galley- oar — the oar of your sins — yet come to Christ, and be a free man. No, sir, it is repentance; it is the immediate leaving off the sin. But mark thee, neither by repentance, nor by leaving off thy sin, can save thee. It is Christ, Christ, Christ — Christ only.

But I know you will go away, many of you, and try to build up your own Babel-tower, to get to heaven. Some of you will go one way to work, and some another. You will go the ceremony way: you will lay the foundation of the structure with infant baptism, build confirmation on it, and the Lord’s supper. “I shall go to heaven,” you say; “Do not I keep Good Friday and Christmas-day? I am a better man than those dissenters. I am a most extraordinary man. Do I not say more prayers than any one?” You will be a long while going up that treadmill, before you get an inch higher. That is not the way to get to the stars. One says, “I will go and study the Bible, and believe right doctrine; and I have no doubt that by believing right doctrine I shall be saved.” Indeed you will not! You can be no more saved by believing right doctrine than you can by doing right actions. “There,” says another, “I like that; I shall go and believe in Christ, and live as I like.” Indeed you will not! For if you believe in Christ he will not let you live as your flesh liketh; by his Spirit he will constrain you to mortify its affections and lusts. If he gives you the grace to make you believe, he will give you the grace to live a holy life afterwards. If he gives you faith, he gives you good works after- wards. You cannot believe in Christ, unless you renounce every fault, and resolve to serve him with full purpose of

heart. Methinks at last I hear a sinner say, “Is that the only door? And may I venture through it? Then I will. But I do not quite understand you; I am something like poor Tiff, in that remarkable book ‘Dred.’ They talk a great deal about a door, but I cannot see the door; they talk a great deal about the way, but I cannot see the way. For if poor Tiff could see the way, he would take these children away by it. They talk about fighting, but I do not see any one to fight, or else I would fight.” Let me explain it then. I find in the Bible, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” What have you to do, but to believe this and trust in him? You will never be disappointed with such a faith as that. Let me give you over again an illustration I have given hundreds of times, but I cannot find another so good, so I must give it again. Faith is something like this. There is a story told of a captain of a man-of-war, whose son — a young lad — was very fond of running up the rigging of the ship; and one time, running after a monkey, he ran up the mast, till at last he got on to the maintruck. Now, the maintruck, you are aware, is like a large round table put on to the mast, so that when the boy was on the maintruck there was plenty of room for him; but the difficulty was — to use the best explanation I can — that he could not reach the mast that was under the table; he was not tall enough to get down from this maintruck, reach the mast, and so descend. There he was on the maintruck; he managed to get up there, somehow or other, but down he never could get. His father saw that, and he looked up in horror; what was he to do? In a few moments his son would fall down, and be dashed to pieces! He was clinging to the main-truck with all his might, but in a little time he would fall down on the deck, and there he would be a mangled corpse. The captain called for a speaking trumpet; he put it to his mouth, and shouted, “Boy, the next time the ship lurches, throw yourself into the sea.” It was, in truth, his only way of escape; he might be picked up out of the sea, but he could not be rescued if he fell on the deck. The poor boy looked down on the sea; it was a long way; he could not bear the idea of throwing himself into the roaring current beneath him; he thought it looked angry and dangerous. How could he cast himself down into it? So he clung to the main-truck with all his might, though there was no doubt that he must soon let go and perish. The father called for a gun, and pointing it up at him, said, “Boy, the next time the ship lurches, throw yourself into the sea, or I’ll shoot you!” He knew his father would keep

his word; the ship lurched on one side, over went the boy splash into the sea, and out went brawny arms after him; the sailors rescued him, and brought him on deck. Now, we, like the boy, are in a position of extraordinary danger, by nature, which neither you nor I can possibly escape of ourselves. Unfortunately, we have got some good works of our own, like that maintruck, and we cling to them so fondly, that we never will give them up. Christ knows that unless we do give them up, we shall be dashed to pieces at the last, for that rotten trust must ruin us. He, therefore, says, "Sinner, let go thine own trust, and drop into the sea of my love." We look down, and say, "Can I be saved by trusting in God? He looks as if he were angry with me, and I could not trust him." Ah, will not mercy's tender cry persuade you? — "He that believeth shall be saved." Must the weapon of destruction be pointed directly at you? Must you hear the dreadful threat — "He that believeth not shall be damned?" It is with you now as with that boy — your position is one of imminent peril in itself, and your slighting the Father's counsel is a matter of more terrible alarm, it makes peril more perilous. You must do it, or else you perish! Let go your hold! That is faith when the poor sinner lets go his hold, drops down, and so is saved; and the very thing which looks as if it would destroy him, is the means of his being saved. Oh! believe on Christ, poor sinners; believe on Christ. Ye who know your guilt and misery come, cast yourselves upon him; come, and trust my Master, and as he lives, before whom I stand, you shall never trust him in vain; but you shall find yourselves forgiven, and go your way rejoicing in Christ Jesus.