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LESSONS ABOUT SALVATION;

FROM THE

Life and Words of the Lord Jesus.

BEING A SECOND SERIES

OF

PLANTATION SERMONS.

BY THE
REV. A. F. DICKSON,
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PREFACE.

In sending forth from the press a second volume of Plantation Sermons, I cannot refrain from an expression of gratitude to God for the great, and, to me, utterly unexpected favour, with which the first has been received; not merely because success is itself a very pleasant thing, but also because this particular work so greatly needed to be done.

The Reformation now in progress throughout the South —which, after all, is a development and not a revolution— and in whose aid these books are written; viz., that reform which employs the time and powers of some white member of the family on the Sabbath in instructing the servants in holy things—uniting in their devotions, and holding up our common Lord and Saviour to their faith, is one of the very happiest, most hopeful, and most blessed of the signs of the times.

By far the most impressive and valuable defence of Southern Christianity from the imputation of the uncharitable is to be found in the vast work of christianization going on among the coloured people: a work begun by the conscience and zeal of our fathers, but now widening with unexampled rapidity and success; a work not

surpassed in its fruit by the labours of all of the foreign missionaries of the Christian world. Nearly all our churches address some portion of the Sabbath services specifically to the coloured people; *all* make special provision for their accommodation. But more encouraging still is the fact already alluded to—the vast number of masters and mistresses who gather their servants together, read to them, catechize them, and preside over and assist their worship.

The obligation incurred by the white man thus to help his servants toward Christ and heaven, need not be enlarged upon here. Abler pens than mine have treated largely of these duties. Presbyteries are yearly sending down pastoral letters to the churches, urging the work upon them, and pastors are more boldly and practically pressing it from the pulpit and by the wayside. Let me rather avail myself of this prefatory page to offer a few hints to those who seek to be faithful in this matter.

And first: Choose as convenient a time, and as comfortable a place, for their assembling as you can. I mean, of course, convenient and comfortable for them. They are sensitive to cold, to constrained attitudes, and to distracting influences of every kind; on the other hand, the subjects to be dwelt upon are more or less abstract, and therefore arduous to their awkward minds; and your language, simple and familiar as it seems to you, is yet somewhat removed from their colloquial dialect, and so far forth foreign to them. Then you need to make the whole business as inviting to them as possible. A sullen, discontented listener is already lost to any hope of benefit.

Give as much dignity to the occasion, as respects ex-

ternals, as you can conveniently. If possible, have a building especially appropriated to worship, unless there is some hall in your own dwelling that will answer the purpose. Even then, the other plan would be the best, because it would furnish them a good place for their own meetings, as well as their meeting with you. Insist, kindly and pleasantly, but strongly, on clean dress and cleanly persons. They are even more *impressionable* than *impressible*—to borrow a happy distinction; and the bright Sunday handkerchiefs, and clean white aprons, and shining faces, while they will stir your kindliest feelings, will react powerfully upon them. They will feel that they are "in church," and will put on their best behaviour, and their most reverent attention, accordingly.

It is of cardinal importance that what you do be brightly and cordially, as well as faithfully done. Let them see how pleasant a thing it is to you to teach and comfort and strengthen them. A warm heart and a sunshiny face are cordials to any of us, but to none else so much as to them. Enter the room with a brisk step, and a cheerful smile, and a ready response to those who salute you; and their hearts will be won at the outset.

Do not be afraid to entrust them with parts of the service. As for the singing, the white man must have rare tact and homely skill and power who can lead them as well as they can lead each other. Of course they make occasional mistakes—"raise" a tune of one metre to a hymn of another metre, or commence a tune at the third line instead of the first; but these are almost always the effect of embarrassment from the presence of the white people, and disappear after a few meetings. They are

but trifles beside the delightful and often overpowering-ly grand bursts of praise and holy song to which they attain. Many of the tunes they have caught from us have been modified in their edition of them, and have gained not a little in power and vivid expression by the changes.

But even their genius for music is often surpassed by their gifts in prayer. Some of the sublimest petitions, and many of the most pathetic that I have ever heard have fallen from their lips. It is not long since a foreigner of large literary attainments and unfeigned piety exclaimed, after hearing their prayers—"It is a kind of inspiration!" It was the inspiration of unaffected and fervent love pouring forth in simple, quaint, and homely diction the yearnings of a pious heart.

They prize such concessions, such wholesome levelings of master and servant before the common Lord and Father of all, very highly; nor have I ever seen them misunderstand or abuse it. And the removing all constraint, and throwing the burden of maintaining order and advancing worship on them, arouses a Christian self-respect, and a sense of the true dignity of an immortal soul, that by God's blessing refines and ennobles the servant, without in the least disqualifying him for his place.

But it is easier to describe than to prescribe. Let me suppose, then, that you whose eye now rests on this page, are a Christian matron and a planter's wife. Or perhaps you are only the timid bride of last week, just entering upon your exalted position, and only half aware of the high prerogatives with which the reverence and affectionate prepossessions of your servants have invested you.

It is the noon of the Sabbath. You remember your walk, yesterday evening, to the "quarters," or negro-houses, as they are often called; how you paused, on your way down, to hear the cheerful songs and light laughter of the field-hands returning in long procession from their toils; how feeble and disabled age had tottered forth to a seat in the open air, to rejoice in a bright look and kindly word from you as you passed along—to remember that simple word, and repeat it, and treasure it up, through all the failing days; how the troops of children laughed with glee at your arrival, lavished their uncouth bows and courtesies upon you, and scampered round the cabins to meet you and do you honour once more. You ended your round at the Hospital, freshly swept for your coming, heard the nurse's reports, cheered up the discouraged or down-hearted ones—for their spirits fail them at once in sickness—and gave the necessary orders for the morrow. Then you read them a few plain verses from the Bible; and as you caught their glistening eyes, and heard the murmured "Amen" and "Yes, Missis," the thought occurred to you that the well needed this kindness even more than the sick. And turning it over in your mind, you finally told the nurse and the "driver" that (as there was to be "no church"—*i. e.* no service to-morrow) they must all come up to the big dining-room in their Sunday clothes, just after dinner. That is proclamation enough; the veriest child, and the deafest ear, will know all about it before the sun goes down.

At your first awaking, this morning, the rude and touching choruses of their "daylight prayer-meeting" floated in on the still and hallowed air, as they sang,

"Free, oh free, my Lord,
Free from every sin!"

"Shall be over!—shall be over!
All my trials shall be over!"

"Hail, believer, hail!
Hail from the other shore!"

And you reflected, with a heart not unanxious, but your eyes bedewed with thankfulness, on the work you have undertaken. And the freshest and sweetest of your morning prayers were those which praised a Father's goodness for the opportunity, implored his aid for your weakness, and his pardon for your unworthiness of such a privilege, and entreated his blessing upon the work.

The hour appointed them has come at last, and here they are, shouldering their benches or chairs, and hastening to deposit them in good positions that they may kneel a moment in silent prayer before you begin. Now you enter, looking round kindly and *recognizingly* on all sides; a hundred voices are whispering their salutations, and twice a hundred eyes are flashing welcome and affection on you; while yonder white-headed patriarch rises and speaks out his "God bless you, my young Missis!" with the dignity and pathos of Jacob. Shake hands with him when he is done. His blessing is worth having.

Then say—"I want one of you to start a hymn for me now—one that all know, so that all can sing." You need not fear any confusion; they have their recognized leader of worship who will take charge of it. And when they "break forth into singing"—"On Jordan's stormy banks I stand," or "When I can read my title clear," or "Jesus, my all, to heaven is gone," join in their hymn,

if God has blessed you with a voice at all. Join in with all your heart and power; they will delight in it, and your heart will kindle at it.

Then let one of them lead in prayer, and let them be assured by your posture and manner that it is your worship as well as theirs. You will have to wait a little now before you can begin to read; all the letters are blurred before your eyes. That last tender, importunate plea for "the dear young Missis that is going to teach us" has betrayed you into tears.

When that difficulty is over, read them a short, plain tract, story, or sermon, of fifteen or twenty minutes' length. Read in a clear, cheerful voice, varying its tone, as much as you can, to give expression to what you read. If any word or phrase seems in the least above them, stop and explain familiarly and fully. Be short; rather sacrifice something of the connection than overtax their attention and interest.

When you have ended the reading, if you know any one of their favourite hymns, ask for it—or, better still, begin it yourself. If there is time, and they seem interested, indulge them in singing more than once. Then another prayer, and dismiss them for the day. Let them gather about you and shake hands—receive their quaint compliments and expressions of gratitude—let the gentle fervour of a Christlike heart appear in those last moments. They prize them, and you will be blessed and rewarded by them.

Two or three questions will probably occur to the inexperienced, which they would like to have noticed. As for instance—"What if any disorder should arise?" It would greatly surprise me if any *real* disorder should

arise. The rigorous decorum of our public services is not wanted, and could not be enforced without injury to the spirit of the meeting. Bear with trivial, spontaneous, religious irregularities; and if anything beyond these appears, a hint to the older ones will instantly set it right.

"But suppose any considerable number neglect the summons, and are missing at the service?" It would be a great mistake, in my judgment, to enforce attendance by punishment. The freedom of worship is one of its great charms to them. But make the meeting interesting, in the first instance; and then, by a few judicious words, rally public opinion among them around you; and you will soon conquer them.

Their proverbial drowsiness doubtless suggests itself to your mind. If only two or three succumb to it, you had better not notice it publicly; but if it becomes at all general, break off your reading at once, and call on them to stand up and sing. They prefer to sing standing; so they will not mistake the proposal for censure.

And now I hope the Christian masters of the land will bear with me, while I make a brief appeal to them to enter into this work with new zeal. I have already said that the solemn *obligations* that rest upon them are the proper theme of abler pens. But, my dear friends in Christ, allow one whose heart has glowed with warmer gratitude to God for being permitted to labour in this work, than for any other blessing, except his personal hope of heaven—allow such an one to bear humble witness to the *blessedness* of it. To give glad tidings to the poor was the daily office of the Lord Jesus himself; and of all the poor, they are the happiest objects of our care,

who anticipate our kindness with love and reverence; and who, depending on us for daily bread and government, are almost as dependent on our faithfulness for the Bread of Life. They are a people of religious predispositions, beyond any other race in the whole world. There is an undertone of plaintiveness in the negro character, which seems to find vent in devotion. In many of their tunes and improvised hymns there is a swell of yearning, forthreaching, longing, inexpressibly tender and beautiful.

This, of course, may or may not be genuinely religious; but it is in religion only that it finds its fit and satisfying object; and it is such a door of access to the African heart as invites and commands entrance.

Your reward for these humble labours will begin very soon, in the more affectionate and reverent respect of the better ones for you. Their eyes and voices on Monday will often bear the impress of your Sabbath favours. Your prayers will be more earnest and importunate; your toils will react upon yourself.

Then will follow, as the Lord blesses you, the great change in some that were "without God and having no hope in the world." Some of the Christians will be more intelligent, or more consistent, or more happy. And some day, you will stand by the death-bed of a reclaimed and faithful servant, converted to God by your means. His eye swims; his flesh fails; his heart falters in its beating. But he gathers up his dying strength, and with labouring breath blesses God for a faithful Master, or a pious Mistress. He points to that heaven he is about to enter, and tells you he will wait for you

yonder, till you come. He sobs out one more blessing, and is gone!

What are discouragements, what are toils, what the backsliding of the fickle, the reproaches of the ungrateful, what the waywardness of the perverse, with *only one* such hope in view? And then heaven, and then the King of Glory, and the blessing of his "little ones!" Brother, shall we be idle and faithless?

May the Great Shepherd bless this labour of his unworthy servant, and most richly bless all those who, either with these pages or in any other way, strive to save this ignorant and benighted race! Oh, that the Great Revival, sweeping on into these Southern States, might rest especially on these humble household labours, and quicken into millennial holiness and joy both masters and servants together!

PLANTATION SERMONS.

SERMON I.

GOOD NEWS.

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings." Is. lxi. 1.

MANY hundred years ago, that wonderful and holy man, Moses, "the servant of the Lord," stood all alone on a high mountain. God called him up there, into the black and dreadful cloud that came down and covered it; the lightnings blazed, mighty thunders roared, and the trumpet of God blew loud and fierce, till the people's hearts failed and fainted, away down at the foot of the mountain. Clear and loud, over all the tumult, the Lord spoke out the ten commandments, and wrote them with his own finger on two tables of stone. That good and terrible law! A good and beautiful law, fit to make the angels happy, and to show what a glorious Lord our God is. Ah, if we weren't so wicked, we wouldn't have to call it terrible! But now that's the true name for it—God's good and dreadful law!

God kept Moses so long in the mountain, that the people thought he was dead. They forgot the loud voice that told them not to make or to worship any gods of wood or stone; and they made a golden calf and worshipped it. Then God sent Moses down, and threatened to cut off the whole nation—men, women, and little children, for that great sin. And though he heard Moses's prayer and spared most of the people, yet he made them kill three thousand of the worst men, that day; and afterward, he "plagued the people"—that is, he sent sore afflictions on them—for this wickedness that they had done.

So Moses began to be afraid. He saw how foolish and headstrong the people would be, and how terribly God would have to punish them, if he was always so stern and swift to judge. He thought that soon the people would melt away and die in the desert, under God's heavy hand; or else that some great army would come against them, and the Lord leave them, and so they would perish. And he longed to see God, and know him better, and to see if there was any hope for them. He prayed—"O Lord, I beseech thee, show me thy face." But God said, "Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me and live; but I will hide thee in a cleft of the rock, and cause all my goodness to pass before thee." And so he did. "And the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed: THE LORD, THE LORD GOD, MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS, LONG-SUFFERING, AND ABUNDANT IN GOODNESS AND TRUTH,

KEEPING MERCY FOR THOUSANDS, FORGIVING INIQUTY AND TRANSGRESSION AND SIN." Wasn't that good news? It was the very comfort Moses wanted; and he got it from God himself.

Of course he believed what God himself had told him; he would have been very foolish and very wicked to doubt his word. Don't you all agree to that? Everybody's conscience cries out that it would be a sin and a shame, if Moses hadn't received it just as God said it. And yet I'm afraid a good many of you are guilty of that very sin—*doubting God's word.* If you don't doubt it, why are you yet in your sins? But we'll come back to that, after a while.

I say, of course Moses believed that God was willing to pardon sin, because God said so. But there was a good deal to perplex and trouble him about it, when he came to think it over. First of all, it was very certain God hated sin, and was angry with sinners. So God said, the very minute that he told Moses how gracious he was: "That will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and upon the children's children, unto the third and fourth generation." And no doubt Moses remembered the terrible things which God made him write down in the Book of Genesis: how, for one sin, Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden of Eden, and death fastened on them and their children; so that every man that is born, is born to die: how, after a time, when the

wickedness of man became great in the earth, he poured a mighty flood over the land, and swept away every soul into eternity, except Noah and his family: how he burned up Sodom and Gomorrha with fire from heaven: how, only a little while before this, Pharaoh's army was drowned in the Red Sea, because they would not obey God, and let his people go free. And even while Moses was up on Mount Sinai, God said, "The Lord thy God is a jealous God."

Well might the holy man tremble and wonder how such a God was to forgive sin. Who was there to plead for sinners? Who could quench the wrath of the Almighty?

Then again, it was very plain that God loved and honoured his law with all his heart. Nothing else ever brought him down from heaven in such pomp and dreadful glory as Sinai did; and that was to honour his law. Nothing else was ever written with the finger of God; but he wrote down his law on the stone and gave it to Moses. And yet now he promises to forgive sin, which is "the transgression of the law!" How was he to make people honour his law, if he did not punish them when they broke it?

It was all dark and strange, except God's glorious promise; that was clear, and bright, and sure! He would make a way of escape. Some mighty Saviour was to come into the world, or to arise among men;

the heavenly Father had said so to Adam and to Abraham, and to Jacob; and so it would be.

After a little while, God taught Moses to do a very strange thing. He made Aaron, the chief priest, take two goats up to the altar, and confess the sins of the people to God, laying his hands on the head of one of the goats. So, as God said, the sins of the people were all laid on the goat. What next? Why, one goat was killed and burned up on the altar, and the other one was turned loose in the wilderness. That was a very plain hint that *somebody* was going to bear the sins of men; but who could do it? "Who is able to stand before the holy Lord God," when his wrath burns like fire? Who can turn back *his* curse, or catch the flood in his hand, or stop the tremblings of Sinai?

As the years rolled on, God raised up prophets in the land; and they almost all had something to say about this Saviour that was to come. And at last they got all the good people to looking out for him, and wondering when he would come to set everything right. They didn't understand much about him, after all; they thought he would be a great friend to the Jews, and help them out of trouble, some day. So they called him the Consolation of Israel. And they needed a Comforter sadly.

Oh what a difference between the good old times in Israel, and those last days! When Solomon was king, all nations respected and honoured the Jews; they were rich and happy and free, for God loved

and blessed them. They built the most splendid house in the world to be God's temple; and when they prayed to him he came down in such clouds of glory, that for a little while nobody could stay in it, till the light from heaven went into the most holy place, behind the curtain, and shone over the ark of God that was there. Then came the prophets, one after another, to bring the word of the Lord to the kings or the people, to warn them about their sins, or to comfort them and help them when they repented. And yet they would sin against him in spite of all his goodness, and then the heathen nations were too strong for them; but if they turned back from their wickedness, and gave up their idols, and begged God to help them, oh, how swiftly he came, and how mightily he conquered their enemies! The king of Assyria brought a great army, and boasted how he would take Jerusalem, and spoke great swelling words against Jehovah himself. Then God sent one strong angel down from heaven and killed a hundred and eighty five thousand of his soldiers in one night! So he trembled and was afraid, and hurried back to his country.

But at last the Lord's patience was worn out, and he left them to those that hated them. Their holy and beautiful house, where their fathers worshipped, was burned with fire; God's glory, the light that was in the most holy place, went back to heaven; the prophets died, and no new ones rose up; the kings of the earth conquered them, robbed

them, slew them, and God let it be so. What miseries they suffered, what cruelties fell on them, no tongue can tell.

The people remembered those good and happy days that were gone, and the ancient promise of a Son of David to help them; and they thought he would bring back the old times just as they were. No doubt they often sat down in their poverty and fear and sorrow, and wept for the days that did not return; and said, "O Lord, how long?" When will Messiah come? (For that was what they called him, Messiah, the Anointed one). And as they talked about *him*, hope sprung up in their hearts again, and they dried their tears.

But it wasn't only the Jews that were in trouble; all the world was getting sick and tired of the old things, and looking out for something new. The old heathen religions were worn clear out. There *was* a time when the people believed in their idols, and worshipped them heartily—Dagon, and Baal, and all the rest of them; but not so now! They saw very well that the wood and stone gods couldn't hurt them or help them; but where was there any better God for them? The bad and heartless just mocked and blasphemed; the fools said, in their hearts, and out loud too, There is no God; the wise men disputed, and talked finely, and guessed, and imagined; but they couldn't find God. And of course, the less they believed in God, the less they cared for man; that's always the way. God made man to love

and fear and honour *him;* and if he don't do that, everything goes wrong.

So the world went on from bad to worse; the rulers were strong and wicked, and the people were wicked and miserable. But all over the world that wonderful and beautiful Hope kept beaming out: that a Saviour was coming to set everything right. They didn't know how he would do it; they made very strange mistakes about it, but they hoped and longed and prayed for him. Old Simeon knew he would live till the Lord's Christ was come; Anna the prophetess waited for the consolation of Israel; the Samaritans said, "When Messiah comes, he will tell us all things;" the wise men in the East watched for his star. So the blood of the poor was crying out from the ground, and the heart of the good was sadly praying, O Saviour, whosoever thou art, come!

At last he came. While the Virgin Mary was all alone in the house, a bright angel from heaven suddenly appeared, and said, "Hail, highly favoured one! the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women!" But lowly Mary couldn't see how such great things could be said to her; she was troubled in mind at it. Then Gabriel said, "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give him the throne of his father,

David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." And Mary, humble and good, and ready to do anything that was her heavenly Father's will—Mary answered, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word!"

Then the angel went to Joseph, her promised husband, and spoke to him by a dream in the night, and said, "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; FOR HE SHALL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS."

There! That's the word the whole world is waiting for! Jesus means—The Lord will save; and the angel says, "He will save his people from their sins." If he will do that, everything will come right. The wicked rulers will grow kind and wise; the miserable people will be comforted and turn from *their* wickedness. Wars will cease; home will be safe and happy; and best of all, when poor sinners come to die, they will die in peace, because Jesus has saved them from their sins.

Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are,
While on his breast I lean my head,
And breathe my life out sweetly there.

But the prophets long ago promised that Christ should be born in Bethlehem. Now Joseph didn't live there, but in a place called Nazareth, a long way off. But the king of all these countries passed a law, that everybody must go to the place where their forefathers lived, and have their names written down there. The king didn't know anything about Joseph, or about God either; but you see he fulfilled God's word, all the same. That's the way in the world; in spite of our wickedness, we help to carry on God's plans, whether we know it, or not; whether we like it, or fight against it.

So Joseph took Mary his wife, and travelled four or five days' journey to Bethlehem. But there were a great many other people, whose fathers had moved away from there, and they all had to go back. When Mary and her husband came, the tavern was full, and the people's houses were full, not a resting place could they find in all the town! That was the same way our dear Saviour himself suffered afterwards: "The Son of man had not where to lay his head."

At last, weary and lonely, as they could find no other place to go to, they went into the stable; and there among the horses and oxen, the Lord Jesus was born. Of course they had no cradle for the

little child, poor strangers that they were! So they laid him in a manger, a kind of trough where the cattle were fed.

The world cared very little about the Saviour, but heaven rejoiced. In a little valley, close by Bethlehem, in the still, cold, clear night, some men were watching their flocks of sheep. That was the way they did in that country; in the day time, the sheep wandered over the hills, while the shepherds followed them; at night the shepherds drove them into the fold, and stayed by all night, to keep them safe. All at once, a splendid light shone out in the sky; the old glory that was over the ark came back again, and God's angel spoke to the shepherds. "They were sore afraid," but the angel said, "Fear not; behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes," (that is, in tight cloths tied about him, which was the way infants were treated in that country,) "and laid in a manger."

That's what the angel said; and in a moment, instead of one angel there were thousands upon thousands of the heavenly hosts, with joyful hearts and mighty voices, pouring out sweet anthems of praise to God, because Jesus was born. And what did they sing? "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!" Ah,

that was a song worthy to be sung by "everything that hath breath,"—God's highest glory made sure to him, and his kindest love poured down on poor sinners, and the poor, stormy, bloody, ruined world to have peace at last!

What a whirl of wonder and joy the shepherds were in! Many a night they had watched their flocks, but never before that night—never before did they see a sight like that, or hear those heavenly sounds. Why, here was the good news come at last! The blessing that God promised Moses, that all the prophets talked about, that good old Simeon was waiting for, here it was now, sung by strong and shining angels over that little child Jesus in Bethlehem!

When at last the angels were vanished, gone back to heaven, to sing their new song before God's throne, the shepherds said one to another, "Let us go now even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass which the Lord hath made known to us." And they went, and found, just as the angel told them, the little child lying in a manger:

> Cold on his cradle the dew-drops are shining;
> Low lies his head, like the beasts of the stall;
> Angels adore him, in slumber reclining,
> Maker, and Monarch, and Saviour of all!

All this time, some wise men from a far country were travelling to Jerusalem to find the great king that was to be born there. Somehow or other, they were looking out for Christ too, and

studying the stars even, to find out something about him. At last, in the very place in the sky where they thought they would find out something, a new star came; shone out bright and clear, as much as to say, He is come, and I'm to show you the way! So they started on their long journey, carrying some beautiful gifts for the new king, when they should find him.

How astonished and angry cruel old king Herod must have been, when the wise men came and said, "Where it he that is born King of the Jews? We have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him." He meant to keep the Jews for himself, as long as he lived, and then make one of his sons king in his place; and now here the very stars shining on another king, and the wonderful wise men come to show him to everybody! In his rage he determined to kill the holy child if he could find him out. So he hid his anger, and pretended to be very much pleased. He called for the wisest of the Jews, and asked them what the old prophets said about it? Where was Christ to be born? Why, in Bethlehem; that's what Micah says, "And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda, for out of thee shall come a governor, that shall rule my people Israel."

Then Herod begged the wise men to come back and tell him, as soon as they found the young child, so that he might worship him too. He tried to deceive them, that he might kill Jesus, but God

took care of his Son, as you will see. The wise men started once more; and behold, there was the star again, going before them, to show them the way! "And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy." It went on, and stood over that poor little manger where the Lord of glory lay. There they found him, and gave him precious gifts, and worshipped him. So the angels, the shepherds, and the wise men, all found out the Lord Jesus, and rejoiced over him.

But Moses's question that he asked so many hundred years ago, wasn't answered yet. Here was the Saviour—this holy child, born of a virgin, but *how* was he to save us from our sins? Have patience, all people, and believe God's word! God is his own interpreter, and he will make it plain. Only trust in this Jesus, and God will surely save you from your sins—love you and teach you—comfort you, and make you good here below,—and bring you into his glory at last.

Blessings of Christ's Advent.

Raise your triumphant songs
To an immortal tune,
Let the wide earth resound the deeds
Celestial grace has done.

Sing how eternal Love
  Its chief Beloved chose,
And bade him raise our wretched race
  From their abyss of woes.

His hand no thunder bears,
  Nor terror clothes his brow;
No bolts to drive our guilty souls
  To fiercer flames below.

'Twas mercy filled the throne,
  And wrath stood silent by,
When Christ was sent with pardons down
  To rebels doomed to die.

Now, sinners, dry your tears,
  Let hopeless sorrows cease;
Bow to the sceptre of his love,
  And take the offered peace.

Lord, we obey thy call;
  We lay an humble claim
To the salvation thou hast brought,
  And love and praise thy name.

The Reign of Christ.

Joy to the world—the Lord is come!
  Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
  And heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the world—the Saviour reigns:
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods—rocks, hills, and plains,
Repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sin and sorrow grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness
And wonders of his love.

SERMON II.

JOHN THE BAPTIST.

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matt. iii. 1, 2.

MANY years after the things I told you, the singing of the angels, and the coming of the Lord Jesus into the world as a little child born in a stable, a poor man came out of the lonely woods and rocky hills and stood by the ford across the river Jordan. The road came winding down the hill out from under the trees, through the canes and bushes to the clear and rapid water; and there, close to the river, he came and stood, and looked around, to see who was there. He was about thirty years old; he had on a rough long coat, and it was fastened round his waist by a leather belt; poor and humble as he was, he was a brave and noble prophet, and he came there with a message from God. All at once, as some of the country people came to cross the river, he cried out with a loud and solemn voice, "Repent! the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" They stopped and listened, to know what it meant; and then he spoke such kind, true, and faithful

words about their sins, and told them such wonderful good news about the King and Saviour that was just coming, and would be there in a few days, that they gathered round him, and asked what he wanted them to do. They promised to give up their sins and ask God's pardon for them, and to look and wait for the Messiah, and to receive him when he came, for their Lord. Then John led them down to the river, and poured water on their heads, and baptized them in the name of him who was to come. So they called him John the Baptizer, or the Baptist.

Then these good people, as they went home, told everybody they met about this great Prophet that stood at the ford; and they hurried down to the river, too. They hadn't had a true prophet before for hundreds of years; no wonder they were astonished and rejoiced, and spread the news all over the land. Soon, even the wise and learned men from Jerusalem, the fierce and wicked soldiers, and the publicans and sinners flocked to John, to hear his message, and to wonder if he was the Christ that was to come. "Oh no," John said; "I'm not he, but he is coming,—I'm not worthy to untie his shoe. He baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."

Who was this "John the Baptizer?"

About a year before the Lord Jesus was born, a good old priest, named Zacharias, was burning incense in the temple before God. You know what that means? Far in the temple, in the holy place,

as far as anybody ever went, (except when the High Priest once a year passed through into the most holy place,) close by the curtain that hid the holy of holies, stood a small table, called an altar, covered with bright gold. On that altar the priest put a cup of brass or gold, with some live coals in it. Then on those coals he poured some sweet perfumes that burned and rolled up great clouds of sweet smelling smoke; while the people, that came to the temple to worship God, stood in the hall outside praying. That was what they called "burning incense." It was to show the people how God loves the prayers of his saints.

Thus Zacharias was burning incense, when all at once, close by him, and right alongside of the altar, there stood the angel Gabriel! The good old man was troubled at that sight, and fear fell on him. But the angel said, "Fear not: for thy prayer is heard, and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. He shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God: And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah." But Zacharias's faith failed him; he had made up his mind to live and die, a lonely old man. No son or daughter, he thought, would ever sleep in his wife's arms, or comfort his heart when old age was breaking him down. So when the angel said, "Thou shalt have

a son," he answered, "How shall I know it is to be so? My wife and I are too old to hope for such a thing." That was unbelief. He forgot the mighty power of God, that called the very earth out of nothing, and it came. He forgot how Abraham and Sarah received a son in their old age, and expected to receive him back, even from the dead, to fulfil God's word!

So the Angel gave him a sign, to help his weak faith; but it was a sad and terrible one, to punish his unbelief: "Behold thou shalt be dumb, not able to speak, until the day that these things be performed." And so it was; he remained speechless until after his son was born. But when his friends came together, and wanted to call the child Zacharias, Elizabeth said, "No, call him John;" they asked the father by signs, and he wrote down, "His name is John." Luke i. 62. And while they were wondering at it, his tongue was loosed, and the Holy Spirit inspired him, and he began to praise God, and to prophesy great things about this little child. He declared that God had visited his people at last, to redeem them according to his ancient promise; and that he would deliver them out of the hands of their enemies, so that they could serve him in holiness all their days. He said that John should be the prophet of the most high God, to go before the Lord's face and prepare his way; and the glorious sun was going to rise now, so the poor pilgrims to the heavenly Canaan, that had got discouraged and weary in the

deep darkness, would have his light to shine on them, to guide their feet into the way of peace. So the people rejoiced and wondered, and said to each other, What manner of child shall this be!

Thus God brought both John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus into the world with signs and wonders, and bore witness that he had sent them; but he did not keep on, pouring miracles and mighty deeds about them day after day, as long as they lived. That's not the way God works. When the time for spring comes, the roaring wind tears open the dark and heavy clouds of winter, and drives them swiftly out of the sky; then the glad sun beams on the black, chilly ground; leaves and flowers and tender grass wake out of their long sleep, and wrap the earth in beautiful robes; the rivers and all their little branches swell larger and run faster; the birds grow busy and sing sweet songs, and man looks out on the bright and glorious scene, and his heart rejoices because it is spring. But after that first wonderful change, things go on more silently, one season slides gently into another, until, almost before we thought of it, the harvest comes on us.

So it was with those great works of God. Wonderful stories, and true ones, went out all over the land about the birth of John the Baptizer and Jesus Christ; but then, for a long thirty years, there were no more miracles. Many of those who knew about them, passed away to the grave. Good old Simeon departed in peace, according to God's word,

for his eyes had seen this great salvation: Joseph, too, no doubt, the husband of Mary, had been gathered to the dead and "slept with his fathers." Others had forgotten all about it, as people do now; their hearts were in their farms and merchandise. But God does not grow weary or forget; he was making "all things ready" for Christ's great work, while the years rolled steadily on.

As for John, the Scriptures tell us that "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the desert till the day of his showing unto Israel." "Strong in spirit;" that is, he was a brave, true, sad-hearted boy and man; he loved God and hated evil; he saw how sin reigned among the people: he was weary of their endless worldliness and their hollow worship; and he had rather live alone in the woods, praying and thinking, and longing to save his nation from ruin, than to join in their pleasures and sins. He knew they were to have a Saviour at some time, and he saw that Christ must come soon or his country would perish; and surely he spent many days and nights, as Daniel used to do, in praying and weeping before God, confessing the sins of his nation, and beseeching the Lord to "bring salvation down." At last God sent him forth out of the wilderness, as we saw, to preach, "Repent! for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," and he promised John that he should see and know this prince and Saviour when he came, and have the joy and honour to show him to the people.

What did this message mean, that John brought from God? Why should men repent when the kingdom of heaven was at hand, if they wouldn't repent before? What had they to do with the kingdom of heaven? What was this kingdom, and what is repenting?

"Repentance is to leave
The things we loved before,
And show that we in earnest grieve,
By doing so no more."

Repenting is *finding out and feeling our sins.* Perhaps you have been breaking the Sabbath, or swearing, or hating people, or indulging a bad temper, year after year, and never *feeling* the wickedness of it, though you *knew* it all the time. So hard and dead do our hearts grow! But some kind word of a friend sets you thinking; God's Spirit softens your heart; you are struck with shame at your own badness; you can't forget it. Then presently you begin to *see what kind of a heart you must have*, to go on so in sin and not feel it; and still more, when you find the sin going on still, in spite of your feeling it! You *will* be better; you make up your mind; you resolve with all your might; and if sin came *from outside*, you might shut it out, being so much in earnest; but it doesn't, *it lives and springs up in you.* So, while you are resolving, you are also sinning.

And now great clouds of sorrow and fear begin to roll over your soul; for *you remember that God*

hates sin. "God is angry with the wicked every day." Oh how terrible the steadfast heavens begin to look to you! Not the nearest star, not the low flying clouds can you reach or change; the very mist that drifts round you drifts on without minding you; and what can you do with

> The mighty God, whose matchless power
> Is ever new and ever young;
> And firm endures while endless years
> Their everlasting circles run?

His holy heart abhors evil, and you are evil. You feel that he ought to be holy and just; but in your terror and shame you can't bear it. The more you think about it, however, the more you feel that he is right and you are wrong; and guided by his mighty Spirit, you learn at last to pray to him humbly and earnestly to make you good. He hears and blesses you at last; you give up everything to him; you hate sin and love your God and Father; you "*give yourself away*" *to the Saviour.* And this is repenting.

But now you will ask me, how comes the sinner, who was frightened at God's just anger, to pray to him, love him, and trust him? What we are afraid of, we hate, whether it's good or bad. And if we see so plainly that God *must* punish us for our wickedness, how can we help hating him too?

That's what made John bring the other part of his message: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." The kingdom of heaven is God coming down to be

our king. He ruled over the winds and the woods and the stormy seas, before; all things except man, obeyed him already. "He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke!" And now, if God wants to rule over the hearts of men also, he must *win* their hearts. He must find out a way to be gentle and gracious to us, while he is just and holy still. Now the Jews knew that already; and they knew the way God was to do it was, to bring *a Saviour* into the world. So when John said that God's kingdom was just coming, those who had any heart to feel their sins knew something of what he meant; and soon he made all plain, when Jesus came to the river, by crying out, "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world!"

So, when the poor sinner is mourning over his sins and his danger, feeling the holiness of God and trembling at it, the thunder of his wrath booming over his head and making his very soul faint within him, only one thing can comfort or help him out. We must go to him in his agony and rage and woe, and tell him, who it is that can still the mighty winds and the raging of the sea; tell him of the name that is above every name, tell him, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world."

Then, when he receives that message into his heart, when he turns to the Lord Jesus as his only comfort and his strong deliverer, when he goes

"just as he is," a poor, guilty, ruined rebel, to his Saviour's feet, trusting in his faithful word and mighty love, then the old things pass away and all things become new to him. He is no more afraid of God, because Christ has redeemed him from the curse of the law. He is no more in love with his sins, because he knows they ruined and nearly destroyed him. He feels that he owes everything to his Lord's tender pity, and he *must* live for him. He kneels at Jesus's cross; his stony heart breaks and melts; his sins roll off; he's a new man, God's child, Christ's soldier! So he has repented, and God's kingdom is come in his heart.

Now you can see what John meant by his message: "O lost and guilty people, God is going to send you a Saviour! He taketh away the sins of the world! Give up your sins, and get ready to be saved! Repent; it isn't everybody will be saved. When he comes, some will receive him, and some reject him: some will have life, and some will choose death. The time is short, and this gospel will go on dividing men from one another, the believers from the unbelievers, the chaff from the wheat, until the whole world is parted off between Christ's friends and Christ's foes. Repent, for he is coming!"

And by God's blessing, multitudes of the people were brought to repentance; they crowded about John and asked him to tell them just how they ought to live. So he told the soldiers and the tax-

gatherers, and everybody else what they must do and what they must leave off, and they obeyed him.

At last, there came a Man and stood near John, that had no need to ask such questions. His face was kind and grave and holy, for ever since he was a little child he had grown "in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." When king Herod killed all the little children in Bethlehem, to try and kill him, God watched over him, and sent Joseph and Mary and Jesus away down to Egypt, out of Herod's way. There he kept him for two years, until Herod died, and then brought them all back to Nazareth, where Joseph used to live before Jesus was born. And now, in God's good time, while John was preaching about him, and the people were all looking for him, here he stands! Oh how John's heart must have leaped for joy! This was what he was praying and weeping for, in the desert so long; this was the meek and mighty King of Israel he told them about. Then it was that he cried aloud, as I told you just now, and said, "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world!"

As the evening came on and the people scattered and went home, the Lord Jesus came to John the Baptist. He wanted John to baptize him. At first, the humble and holy man refused; all the others that came to him, came confessing their sins and seeking forgiveness; but Jesus had no sin to confess. So John said, "I have need to be baptized

of thee; and comest thou to me?" But the Lord wanted to show that John was a real prophet and that this message was God's own word from heaven. And no doubt he knew what God was going to do, as soon as he obeyed the command and was baptized. "Suffer it to be so now," he said; "for so it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Then they went down to the river, and John baptized him; and as Jesus came up again and was praying, God's Spirit came down like a dove and rested on his head; and a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

And now John knew that his day was nearly done. He said, "Jesus must increase, but I must decrease." The next day he sent some of his chosen disciples to the Lord, to be his followers. The crowd began to follow Jesus, because he could work miracles; but John wasn't angry and envious. He knew it must be so, and he went on declaring to everybody that Jesus was the Saviour, and they ought all to believe on him. He rebuked sinners of every sort, small and great. At last he rebuked king Herod himself, for taking his brother's wife while his brother was alive. Then Herod threw him into prison and kept him there. He couldn't make up his mind to kill such a good and noble man for being faithful and telling the truth; and yet he was too angry to let him go. That's the way one sin leads on to another.

But the wicked woman, Herodias, hated John

for what he had said about her, worse than Herod did. She could not rest till he was dead. And on a great feast day she sent her daughter in, to dance before the king and his generals and his mighty men; and she so delighted the rash and wicked man, that he swore he would give her whatever she asked, even if it was half his kingdom. Herodias told her to ask for John's head; and the wicked daughter was quite willing. She went back quickly to king Herod and said, "Give me here John the Baptist's head in a dish." Then Herod was troubled; he was almost afraid to kill John, and he wasn't brave enough to say, "No, that's too cruel a thing to ask." So at last he sent out to the prison, cut off the good man's head, and gave it to the fierce, vile woman that wanted it.

The world is very apt to treat its best friends that way. Jesus once said, "Behold, I send unto you prophets and wise men and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some ye shall scourge and chase from city to city." And Paul says, "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy." But it is a noble thing to be patient and true, meek and brave here, knowing that we serve the Lord Christ, and shall in no wise lose our reward. When that great day comes, and God takes his poor sorrowing saints into his rest, we shall not be sorry that we carried our crosses

for Jesus' sake, as John the Baptist did. Let us be holy and wait on the Lord with good courage, for there remaineth a rest for the people of God.

Sinners Invited and Entreated.

Sinners, the voice of God regard;
'Tis mercy speaks to-day;
He calls you by his sovereign word,
From sin's destructive way.

Like the rough sea that cannot rest,
You live devoid of peace;
A thousand stings within your breast,
Deprive your souls of ease.

Your way is dark, and leads to hell;
Why will you persevere?
Can you in endless torments dwell,
Shut up in black despair?

Why will you in the crooked ways
Of sin and folly go?
In pain you travel all your days,
To reap immortal wo.

But he that turns to God, shall live
Through his abounding grace:
His mercy will the guilt forgive
Of those that seek his face.

Bow to the sceptre of his word,
Renouncing every sin:
Submit to Him, your sovereign Lord,
And learn his will divine.

His love exceeds your highest thoughts;
He pardons like a God;
He will forgive your numerous faults,
Through a Redeemer's blood.

COME AND WELCOME.

Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore;
Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity, love, and power:
He is able,
He is willing; doubt no more.

Ho! ye needy, 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.

Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness he requireth,
Is to feel your need of him;
This he gives you;
'Tis the Spirit's rising beam.

Come, ye weary, heavy laden,
Lost and ruined by the fall;
If you tarry till you're better,
You will never come at all,
Not the righteous,
Sinners Jesus came to call.

Agonizing in the garden,
Lo! your Maker prostrate lies;
On the bloody tree behold him;
Hear him cry, before he dies;
"It is finished!"
Sinner, will not this suffice?

Lo! the incarnate God ascended
Pleads the merits of his blood;
Venture on him, venture wholly,
Let no other trust intrude;
None but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good.

Saints and angels, joined in concert,
Sing the praises of the Lamb;
While the blissful seats of heaven
Sweetly echo with his name;
Hallelujah!
Sinners here may sing the same.

SERMON III.

TEMPTATION.

"And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness; And he was there in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him." Mark i. 12, 13.

JESUS, our Friend and Master, knew what he was doing when he went down to the river to be baptized by John. He knew what a great, sad work he was beginning, what hard and unbelieving hearts people had, and how everything would depend on him. If he was faithful and wise and strong, he would work out a mighty salvation for all that took him for their Saviour; and if he failed, all would be lost. And he knew what that dreadful word "lost" means, better than anybody else. Oh what a glorious and fearful thing man's soul is! How it can suffer and rejoice, even in the world! It can rack and wear out these tough and hardy bodies, when its shame and rage are stirred up. It can give strength to the weak hand, and raise the sick from their beds and make them well again, by the power of hope and joy. More than all, IT LIVES FOR EVER!

I say the Lord Jesus knew all that; and he felt it was a mighty and solemn work. Instead of beginning to preach and work miracles right away, he had a great battle to fight in secret first. He had to meet Satan all alone, and conquer him, that the devils might know that *he* was king, and might obey him. So, when he came up from the river, God owned his Son by a voice from heaven; and then "immediately the Spirit drove him into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil."

And though we are so very different from the Lord Jesus, being so weak and wicked, and of so little use in the world, God often treats us in something the same way. He gives us great privileges, and then he sends sore trials on us. That shows you at once what a great mistake Christians often make; because they have great temptations, or great sorrows, they think God has forgotten them, or given them up. In truth, the trials are to get us ready for some great work and duty, as Christ's temptations were; and if we are brave and faithful, God will honour us because we honoured him. But if through unbelief or weakness we yield to the temptation, then our opportunity is gone, and the noble work that we might have done is taken away from us, and given to somebody else. And I believe that's one reason why so many Christians have so little to do for God, *they have thrown away their chance* by being weak in faith, and weak in principle, when their trials came. They are "weighed in the

balances," as Daniel said, "and found wanting." And the Lord Jesus gave us a very plain warning about it; he said, "If any man love father or mother more than me, he is not worthy of me; and if he love son or daughter more than me, he is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."

So, when "temptations sharp and strong" come to try us, let us feel, "Now is my time! now I must be patient, true, and full of faith, or the Lord will turn away from me!" That's the way soldiers do in war; when the thickest and hottest of the battle comes on, and the enemy is fierce and strong, they rejoice in the danger and the horrible uproar and blood, because they hope to show their courage and grow famous. But, as Paul says, they fight for a corruptible crown, and we for an incorruptible one. They may die in the battle and never hear men praise them; but we shall live for ever. They may have glory to-day and disgrace to-morrow; but if we are faithful, there is a crown of glory waiting for us, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, *will* give us in that day. Therefore "be thou strong, and show thyself a man, and keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways."

Oh that each in the day
Of His coming may say,
"I have fought my way through!
I have finished the work thou didst give me to do!"

Oh that each from his Lord
May receive the glad word,
"Well and faithfully done!
Enter into my joy, and sit down on my throne!"

For forty days and forty nights our dear Lord fasted and fought with Satan's temptations. But the Bible doesn't tell us what they were. We know he was in a waste and howling wilderness. Very few trees grow there; the great bare rock is split open in pits and great gulfs, the wild beasts live there in caves and dens, and he was with them. At last, when sore hunger fell on him, Satan came again and said, "If thou be the Son of God, command these stones that they be made bread."

That was a very cunning and dangerous thing. The Lord Jesus hadn't tried his wonderful power yet. The voice from heaven had told him that he was the Son of God; but how was he to know whether it was true? He was a poor woman's son, a carpenter, came from the town of Nazareth, that everybody despised, wandering in the desert without a friend or a home, or a morsel of bread to eat. *Could it be*, that he really was the King of all the earth, and yet left in hunger and poverty, beset by God's great enemy—nobody to pity him, nobody to help him?

Besides, if he *was* the Son of God, that is, the appointed Saviour, how could he fulfil his office if he died of hunger in the desert? Why not use his mighty powers to save his own life, and carry on

the great work God had given him? That's the way people reason, very often. Sometimes a man concludes, because he has children to provide for, he may do dishonest things without sin, for their sake. He thinks (or tries to think) that it would be worse to let them suffer, than it will be to steal or cheat for their benefit. And Abraham might have reasoned so, when God told him to take Isaac his only son and offer him up for a sacrifice. "God gave me Isaac, and promised that in him all the earth should be blessed; now if I kill him, that promise will fail," and so he might have disobeyed God, and lost the blessing! But he was not so foolish and obstinate; he obeyed God, and now all men bless him for it.

So the Lord Jesus felt; it was God's work he came into the world to do, and not his own, as he often said afterwards. He was to obey, and God was to take care of him. God *had* watched over him, and kept him alive those forty days without food already. Should he be so unbelieving and wilful as to find food for himself, while God was supporting him by a miracle? That showed that his heavenly Father had some especial reason for not supplying him; and he dared not take the very strength that came from heaven to disobey God. No: he answered; "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." All those wonderful days he had lived without bread, just on God's word. Bread

itself couldn't keep him alive *against* God's word. So he refused to make bread out of stone, when Satan invited and God forbade. Wasn't he right? Isn't it better, if it comes to that, to die for God, than to live for Satan?

But the battle wasn't over yet. The devil brought the Lord swiftly out from among the rocks and dens of the desert to the beautiful mountains round about Jerusalem, and up to the top of the Temple, where the sharp, high roof towered up over the lofty wall that Solomon built, from the deep valley to the top of the mountain. So that from the "pinnacle of the temple" to the ground was hundreds of feet; and if any man should fall there, he would be dashed to pieces. Now Satan said again, "If thou be the son of God, cast thyself down from hence; for it is written, 'He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands shall they bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.'"

That was a very cunning temptation, too. After this, when the Lord did offer himself to the Jews as their Saviour, they were continually asking him for "a sign from heaven," or "a sign in the heavens." There would have been a sign from heaven, verily, if he had shot down like a falling star from the top of the mountain into their crowded streets, and landed safe among them! Why, all Jerusalem would have run together and hailed him and crowned him, would have taken him by force, as they tried

to do afterwards, and made him king. What a short, easy, pleasant way to win the people! How much better than "going about doing good," being despised and rejected of men, and not having where to lay his head!

Ah, that's one of our constant mistakes, choosing the short way, or the easy way, or the popular way, instead of God's way! His way is always the way of the cross, and we don't love crosses. If the Lord Jesus had been like us, we should have lost our Saviour that day. But no; his answer was plain and quick, "It is written again, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.'"

In truth, the Jews *wanted the wrong kind of a Saviour*. They wanted a great general and a splendid earthly king; he must flatter their wicked pride, and carry out their fierce hatred against their enemies, and conquer all nations for them to rule over. And thus, if the Lord had gone to work their way, he would have had to give up all hope of saving the world. All his divine and beautiful glory of goodness, his great atonement, by which God can be just, and yet justify them that believe in Jesus; all our precious gospel, would have gone to ruin together. And remember, when our spiritual darkness and sorrow is so great, and we pray to have it taken away, but it clings to us still, it is this same trouble—we are looking for the wrong kind of Saviour. Christ cannot give up his wise and holy plan for our foolish and wicked one; and we will

not seek him in his way; and so our hearts go on aching and mourning when we might have peace. *Let Christ be King over us in his own way*, and all will be well.

But the great reason why the Lord Jesus refused was, that God had not commanded him to cast himself down off the pinnacle; and if he had leaped off, it would have been to try God, and see if he would take care of his Son. The right way with God is to *trust* him, not try him. If he says, Leap off, or walk on the sea, or plunge into the fire, do it without fear; he will take care of you. Till then, be patient and humble, and "wait for his law." That was what Jesus meant; "Thou shall not try the Lord thy God." Satan had failed again: for our Lord was able to trust everything to God, himself, and his work, and his honour—*everything*. And in that noble faith, so humble and so brave, he was too strong for Satan and all his temptations.

Once again the Lord's enemy tried to destroy him, but this temptation was very different from the others. It looks as if Satan's rage was kindled, because he couldn't deceive Christ: and he brought out all his wickedness and all his power in plain sight. "Again the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them in a moment of time; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." What a sight that must have been! All the splendid cities

and great armies, broad fields and mighty rivers, mountains, woods, and fruitful vales, all unfolding and showing their riches and glory to tempt Christ. Perhaps that evil spirit thought it would be such a wonderful sight that the Lord Jesus would be completely carried away, wouldn't even take time to think, but fall down and worship him at once, though he might repent ever so bitterly the next minute. That was his plan, and you can see how desperate he was growing. But there is one very strange thing here.

Satan claims everybody for his own that doesn't give himself to God. "All this is mine," he says; and then he invites the Lord Jesus to get it by worshipping him. That is, "everything else belongs to me, but the holy man's heart belongs to God." And Jesus doesn't contradict him, either. He seems to allow that the "kingdoms of this world and the glory of them" do belong to Satan. That's what this world has come to, by breaking away from God!

Now you can easily tell, to which kingdom you belong, the kingdom of darkness, or the kingdom of God's dear Son. You were born in Satan's kingdom, and if you have not come out of it by God's grace, you are there yet. How is it with you? Do you belong to Satan? Or have you honestly given yourself to God, with your whole heart?

But how did our Saviour answer the devil?

"Get thee behind me, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." It might look like a splendid offer to blind ungodly sinners; but not to Christ. He said once to his disciples, "Man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth;" that is, "It isn't *what a man has*, that makes him happy, but *what God blesses.*" Why should he want the kingdoms of this world, if he had to forsake God to get them? Is the devil happy, with all his power and glory? Wasn't Christ happy even then, poor and lonely and hungry as he was, there in the desert? He knew he was doing right, and God loved him. That was enough; and Satan's splendid-looking rewards would only have spoiled his joy.

Now you will hardly need me to tell you what lesson to learn from that temptation. *Satan's pay makes nobody rich.* It may look very fine for a while, and the blind world may flatter you, and tell you how wise you are; but you will be cheated and ruined at last. For what saith the Scripture? "Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man that doeth evil!" But God's blessing "maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow." It brings peace here, and glory hereafter.

Now when the devil had ended all his temptations, he departed from the Lord Jesus for a season, and behold angels came and ministered unto him. Ah, that was a pleasant sight, Satan hurrying away,

scowling and defeated; all his cunning words wasted, and the Lord's wisdom and goodness made clear and plain; and the bright angels flying down out of heaven with holy songs and shouts of praise, and comforting and waiting on our weary, hungry, fainting Saviour. Perhaps he was lying in the shadow of a great rock, or in some cave, "with the wild beasts," worn out with forty days of fasting, and praying, and contending against the devil. And now his loneliness and his warfare and his hunger are over. The dark shadows have fled; the angels that used to serve him in heaven rejoice to wait on him again, on the earth!

I know it was only "for a season" that Satan went away and the angels stayed with our Lord. But what a rest it was! And what a great work was done already! After this, whenever Jesus commanded the devils, as he did many a time, they felt that he was their master, and obeyed his word. And as he knew it would be so, now that this battle was over and these enemies were conquered, he could enjoy his rest without fear or trouble. He had heavenly food, without commanding the stones to be bread. God gave the angels charge concerning him, and they ministered unto him. And the kingdoms of this world were taken away from Satan and given to him. That was the reward he had, for enduring temptation!

There are three lessons for us all to learn out of this part of Christ's life. Let us never forget them.

1. You see *it is no proof of sin that we are tempted.* Christians are often cast down and grieved exceedingly, because they are tempted. They think it shows such great wickedness in them to be tried even by the thought of sin. But that's not so certain as you might suppose. If your masters trust their property in your hands, and *their* enemies attack *you*, it shows that you are faithful, or you wouldn't be disturbed. And the more bitterly those enemies hate and try to hurt you, the plainer it is that you are true and faithful. I don't suppose anybody else was ever so terribly beset by Satan as the Lord Jesus was; just because he was holier and better than anybody else.

Only let it be certain that the temptation does come from our great enemy; that it isn't our own wickedness rising up in us. Ah, that's the sorrow and shame of it! So many of our temptations come from our own hearts! But let it be certain, I say, that it is Satan tempting us, and we needn't be cast down about it, but "fight on" in faith and prayer, and all will be well.

2. Next the *Lord Jesus knows perfectly how it feels to be tempted by the devil*, and he can sympathize with us in our trials. What a comfort that is! When in God's providence we are shut out from friends and earthly help, and wicked thoughts come pouring into our souls like the waves of the stormy sea on the shore, thundering on us and almost beating us down, oh, what a comfort to see our dear Saviour

sitting above the mighty waters, and to remember that he was "tempted in all points like as we are!"

3. Once more, *if we are faithful we shall conquer.* "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able" to bear; "but will, with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." It must be so! When you resist temptation, you are fighting the Lord's battle and glorifying his name. Do you think he will ever forsake you? Never!

"That soul, though all hell should endeavour to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake!"

We haven't found out yet how Christ is to save us from sin, but here you see the great battle beginning. And you see how our Lord conquered Satan by his beautiful goodness. Let us all trust in him, for HE WILL NEVER FAIL!

WATCH AND PRAY.

My soul, be on thy guard,
Ten thousand foes arise;
And hosts of sin are pressing hard,
To draw thee from the skies.

Oh! watch, and fight, and pray,
The battle ne'er give o'er;
Renew it boldly every day,
And help divine implore.

Ne'er think the victory won,
Nor once at ease sit down;
Thy arduous work will not be done,
'Till thou hast got the crown.

Fight on, my soul, till death
Shall bring thee to thy God;
He'll take thee, at thy parting breath,
Up to his blest abode.

The Christian Soldier.

Am I a soldier of the cross,
A follower of the Lamb?
And shall I fear to own his cause,
Or blush to speak his name?

Must I be carried to the skies,
On flowery beds of ease;
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas?

Are there no foes for me to face?
Must I not stem the flood?
Is this dark world a friend to grace,
To help me on to God?

Sure I must fight, if I would reign;
Increase my courage, Lord;
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by thy word.

Thy saints in all this glorious war,
Shall conquer though they die;
They see the triumph from afar,
With faith's discerning eye.

When that illustrious day shall rise,
And all thine armies shine
In robes of victory through the skies,
The glory shall be thine.

SERMON IV.

MORE OF JESUS' MIGHTY WORKS.

"Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you." Acts ii. 22.

Now that our Lord had received baptism from John, and God had owned him as his son by a voice from heaven, and the devil had tempted him in the desert until he gave it up in despair; now, I say, our Lord was ready to begin his work with men. He was to show them his great power and his goodness, so that they would listen and heed him when he taught them; then he was to give them his wise and holy counsels and commands; and then he was to offer himself upon the cross, a sacrifice for our sins. To-day I must begin to tell you about his wonderful works. There were two kinds of miracles he wrought; those that showed his power over the things of the world; such as winds and waves, water and bread, trees and fishes; and those that showed his power over men and devils. In my text, you see, the Apostle Peter says that Jesus was sent by God, and the proof was that God did miracles and wonders and signs by his hand. And I want to

show you that it was even so; that he did many things which no man could do, "except God was with him." And so Christ himself says, "If I had not done among them the works which no other man did, they had not had sin;" "but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father."

Early one pleasant morning, Jesus was walking by the lake of Galilee, the bright and beautiful water, where he spent so much of his life. As the people saw him and knew who he was, they began to gather around him, to hear what he would say. The sun was just rising over the dark, bare, rocky hills on the other side of the lake, and the morning breeze curled the little waves, and drove them up on the sandy shore. Close by were two boats drawn up on the beach. One belonged to Simon and Andrew, and the other to James and John, and their father Zebedee. They were not quite strangers to Christ; they had heard John the Baptist bear witness to him, when he cried out, "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world," and they had followed Jesus, and he talked with them, and taught them. And after that they had gone back home to make their living by hard work. Now here they were, washing and mending their nets, getting ready to go home and rest after their hard night's work.

Then our Lord asked Simon to launch his boat again, and push out a little way from the shore, so that he could talk to all the people at once, instead

of having a few crowded close against him, and hiding him from all the rest. So Simon and Andrew laid down their nets and pushed the boat into the water, with Jesus sitting in it; and they sat down by him and heard all that he said. How eager they must have been to learn all they could about religion! I'm afraid many of us would have excused ourselves, because we were tired and hungry; we would just have lent him the boat and gone home. But what a terrible mistake that would have been! They would have lost all his wise words that morning, lost the great miracle that he worked, and the joy and glory of being Apostles. So now, people often stay away from church because it isn't convenient to go, and they lose a great blessing by it.

Now when the Lord Jesus was done teaching the people, he said to Simon Peter, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets." He didn't tell them what he was going to do, but just gave them his commands. That's the way he treats his people now very often, tells them what to do, and keeps the blessing hidden in his hand, to astonish and reward them afterwards. Simon answered, "Master, we have toiled all night and taken nothing; nevertheless, at thy word I will let down the net." That was faith and obedience. "And when they had done it, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes; and their net brake;" that is, it began to give way. "And they beckoned to their partners, who were in the other boat, that they should come and help

them." And they came and filled both the boats, so that they settled down deeper in the water, and everybody could see that they were heavily loaded with the fish. Now, whether the Lord Jesus created these fishes just then, or gathered them by his mighty power from all parts of the lake, we don't know. But, either way, it was a wonderful work.

Peter was so astonished, yes, so *frightened*, at such wonderful power in this plain, gentle, humble man, that he fell down at Jesus's feet and worshipped him, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." At first you may think that was a very strange thing for Peter to say, but in truth it was very natural. When God draws near in his power and glory, it makes us feel our wickedness. And if we don't give up our sins, we are afraid to have him come so nigh; we are frightened, and not melted. Afterwards, when Peter had grown in faith and love, when he saw a far more wonderful sight at the Transfiguration, instead of praying the Lord to depart from him, he said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; let us build three tents, one for thee, and one for Moses and one for Elias."

When Peter and the rest had worshipped the Lord Jesus in their wonder and terror, he said to them, "Fear not; from henceforth ye shall catch men; follow me." And as soon as they had brought the boats to land, they forsook everything, boats, nets, friends, everything, and followed Jesus. So, from poor fishermen, they became Apostles; followed

the Lord in all his wanderings, mourned for him when he died, rejoiced and believed on him when he rose again, and bore witness for him everywhere, until the wicked world, that killed Christ, killed them too, and they went home to his glory.

Another time, he and these disciples were invited to a wedding in a little town called Cana. Jesus's mother was there, too. She had found out that he was a mighty prophet; she believed he was to be the king of the Jews; and she was watching for some chance when he could show the people who he was, and make them his soldiers and friends. While they were all rejoicing and feasting together, Mary found out somehow that the wine for the feast was nearly gone! Now, thought she, now is his time! and she hurried to the Lord Jesus and told him, "They have no wine." But he saw that she was impatient to bring on the time for him to be famous, and he reproved her. He said, "What have I to do with thee" in these things? "my time is not yet come." That is, "You don't understand my plan. I will do this wonder, but I'll do it quietly: my time to be famous and glorious is not yet come."

Then Mary saw her mistake, and said to the servants, "Whatever he tells you to do, do it." Presently he said to them, "Fill these jars with water;" and they filled them. "Now, carry some of it to the ruler of the feast." And when they carried it, behold, it was no more water, but wine, and better wine than what they had before!

What a beautiful picture that is, of the way God blesses our poor works, and makes them worth something! The servant could do no more than bring plain water and carry it here and there, as he was told. But while he was obeying, Christ was blessing his obedience, and the water became wine! And so you and I, poor, helpless, unworthy creatures, what can we do for our God? Nothing worthy of his glory or his love to us. But while we are humbly trying to do his will, behold, he puts forth his mighty power, and wonders are done by our feeble hands. The Christian's good works are Christ's wine cups. Despise them not, for a blessing is in them!

After preaching and working wonders for a while, the Lord Jesus chose twelve to be Apostles, that is, messengers, to carry his gospel abroad, and preach it all over the world. And though their great work was to be after he had gone to heaven, he sent them out for a little while, two by two, to tell the good news that a Saviour was come, and that all men must leave off their sins and get ready for the "kingdom of heaven." He gave them power to heal the sick and to cast out devils. So they went where he sent them, and preached. When they came back weary in body, but rejoicing because the devils were subject to them; he said, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while."

Jesus and his Apostles then took a boat and went away privately to a lonely place on the far

side of the lake, where nobody lived. But some people saw the boat and guessed who was in it; and as they couldn't find boats to follow him, they hurried along the shore, pressing on and on, to find our dear Lord, and hear his words, and see his mighty works. At last they found his boat drawn up on the shore. It was a smooth, level place, covered with green grass, and rocky hills and mountains rose up from it. Up among the rocks was a sheltered, retired place; and there Christ and his disciples were. But when he came forth, and saw the people, oh how sorry he felt for them! He said they were like sheep that had no shepherd, no food, nobody to protect them from evil, running after anybody that called them!

So he gave up trying to rest, and called the people round him, and taught them all day long, until the sun was ready to set. How patient and good our Saviour was! and how he loves us, in all our ignorance and weakness and wickedness!

All the time, more and more of the people were gathering around him, until his disciples began to be afraid that night would find them all there in the wilderness without a morsel of food. They came to Jesus and advised him to send the people away, while there was daylight left for them to reach the villages and get food. Then the Lord said, "Philip, where can we get bread, to feed all this company?" "Why," answered Philip, "two hundred pence (that is, thirty dollars) would not be

enough to give them all even a little." So thought Andrew, too: "There is a lad here, that has five loaves, and two small fishes; but what are they among so many?"

Then Jesus sent his Apostles to arrange all this great multitude by fifties in each company, and seat them on the green grass. No doubt they all wondered at it, and asked what it was done for; but they obeyed quietly. More than a hundred companies sat down that day, to such a feast as no man ever saw before. For Jesus took the loaves and fishes, and blessed them, and broke and gave to the Apostles to give to the people; and they did all eat *and were filled.* There were five thousand men, besides women and children! So, instead of sending them, weak and hungry and weary, to find food among the poor people in the villages, he fed them first, and then sent them home, wondering and rejoicing.

They found out, that day, how safe it was to leave everything else and attend to religion. In the sermon on the mount, the Lord Jesus told them, "Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed? For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." And now, when they neglected their very bread to follow their Lord, he fed them abundantly. And a few days afterwards, when there was the same need of it, he did the same wonder again, and fed four thousand men

with seven loaves. Then they knew that nobody need be afraid to follow him, for fear their bread should fail; "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

But the people's minds were full of the old notions about an earthly king; and they began to think what a fine thing it would be to have a king who could feed all his army with a handful of bread, and heal all their wounds and diseases by his word. They knew, by this time, that he didn't like that plan; and the foolish and selfish crowds began to talk about taking him by force and making him king. When Jesus saw that, he sent away his disciples in the boat they came in, and went back into the mountain and hid himself there, praying, until the people were all gone.

The twelve Apostles were unwilling to go away just then; but the Lord "constrained" them; that is, he made them go. But the wind blew hard against them, and they had to row hard all night. They had hoped for rest and comfort, and behold they got disappointment, and danger, and hard work. Ah, that's often the way with God's people in this world! Just when they think they will sit down and take their ease, trouble and toil lay hold upon them, and they find out that "this is not our rest."

While they were rowing hard, sorrowful and anxious and lonely, they saw something standing

on the waves, shaped like a man! They never dreamed that it could be a man, but thought it was a spirit. In mortal terror they cried out; perhaps they threw down their oars, and fell on their knees, and left their boat to the stormy sea. But the Lord Jesus called to them in his clear kind voice, "Be not afraid, it is I!" Oh, how they rejoiced to see their mighty friend so near them in their trouble! Peter couldn't bear to stay away from his Lord another minute, and yet he didn't dare to plunge into the wild waves in the dark, unless Jesus would take care of him. So he called aloud, through the gale, "Lord, if it is thou, bid me come to thee on the water." The Lord said, "Come;" and Peter sprung boldly out of the boat, and the waters bore him up! But the rough water and roaring wind frightened him, and his faith began to fail. As it gave way, he began to sink deeper and deeper, in the water, and he cried out, "Lord, save, or I perish!" "Then Jesus put forth his hand and caught him, saying, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

How often Peter must have thought of these things in his times of trouble and persecution, after Christ went up to his glory! When the wicked raged against the gospel, and against the Apostles like a stormy sea, and all their hard work seemed wasted, as it seemed that night while they rowed against the fierce and howling wind; then Peter would encourage himself and his friends by telling

them how the Lord Jesus was walking on the waters, and coming to his people. And though the world—the wicked, heathen world—would rejoice, expecting to see the church and the Apostles conquered and swallowed up, he would cheer them on to faith and duty, and promise them that, while they believed, they would never sink.

But the disciples had another story to tell about storms on the lake, that was more wonderful still. When their Lord and Teacher finished his sermon on the mount, he came down and healed some sick people that they prayed to him about, and then took a boat to go to the other shore, away from the multitudes. While his followers managed the boat, Jesus lay down and slept. Then a sudden storm arose; the winds came roaring down from the mountains; the clouds gathered thick and the lightning flashed; while the waves rose higher and higher, till they beat into the boat and were like to bury them all in the foaming water. In their terror the disciples threw down their oars and ran to him, sleeping quietly on his pillow, and woke him roughly, crying, "Master! Master! carest thou not that we perish?"

Then he arose and rebuked the raging of the sea and of the wind, saying, "Peace! be still!" And at once there was a great calm. The winds were gone, and the waters were still, at his word. And he turned to his disciples and said, "Where is your faith?" They had not a word to answer him; but

they feared exceedingly and were amazed; saying to one another, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!" But David had wondered at it hundreds of years before: "The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves! But the Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea."

All these miracles were works of blessing and gentleness; but there was one thing Christ did that warned the people of a judgment to come. When our Lord went up to Jerusalem to worship, which was once or twice every year, he used to go out to Bethany every night. He came out through the gate of the city, down a steep path till he crossed the brook, and then up over that high, bare hill, the Mount of Olives, where he often sat down and taught his disciples, looking down on the city, or out on the white villages that were sprinkled all over the brown hills. One of the pleasantest of them all was little Bethany—a little cluster of houses among the trees, where Mary and Martha, and Lazarus lived; we shall hear some wonderful and precious things about them some other time.

Once, when the Lord had gone out to Bethany and spent the night, he rose a great while before day and went back to the Mount of Olives to pray. There his disciples found him in the morning; and from that place he went right on towards Jerusalem. So, as they went, he became hungry, having eaten

nothing at all that morning. And seeing a fig tree covered with leaves, just as they are when they bear fruit; and knowing that the time to strip the tree of its figs hadn't come yet, he went to it to see if there were any there. But no! it made a great show with its leaves, but there was no fruit on it. Just like some church-members—all leaves and no fruit; all profession and no practice! It was a good chance to give such professors a warning; and he said to the tree, "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter." That very day the fig-tree dried up to the roots! So shall it be with every one that makes a show of religion, but disobeys and forgets God!

More and more, as we go on with the story of Christ, do we see his greatness and his goodness. He conquers Satan, he rules the storms, he feeds the people; he can save us! But we haven't found out yet, *just how* he is to do it. Our sin! our sin! oh! how shall it be put away?

The Penitent.

Prostrate, dear Jesus, at thy feet,
A guilty rebel lies;
And upwards to thy mercy-seat,
Presumes to lift his eyes.

If tears of sorrow would suffice
To pay the debt I owe,
Tears should from both my weeping eyes,
In ceaseless torrents flow.

But no such sacrifice I plead
To expiate my guilt;
No tears but those which thou hast shed;
No blood, but thou hast spilt.

Think of thy sorrows, dearest Lord,
And all my sins forgive:
Justice will well approve the word
That bids the sinner live.

The Messiah's Coming.

Joy to the world, the Lord is come,
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Saviour reigns,
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sin and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow,
Far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness,
And wonders of his love.

SERMON V.

SOME OF JESUS' MIGHTY WORKS.

"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." Matt. xi. 4, 5.

When that good man, John the Baptizer, saw the Lord Jesus face to face, he cried out, "Behold the Lamb of God!" But when he was shut up in prison, and couldn't see his face of heavenly love, or hear his sacred voice, it seems that doubts and fears came upon him. Perhaps he thought if the Lord Jesus was the Christ, he would hardly let him languish in chains and loneliness, and be in danger of death every day. Or perhaps it was only John's followers that doubted and found fault. Whichever it was, John sent two disciples to ask the Lord himself about it. That was the best and most manly way he could take in such a case.

So they went and asked him plainly, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" The Jews often asked the same question; but in all his life, Jesus never told anybody that he was Christ

while they doubted about it. He told them not to take his bare word for it, but consider his works. If they were a Saviour's works, then he was a Saviour; and if not, they must put their trust in somebody else. So he said this time, "Go and show John again those things which ye 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 unto them." That last thing, the preaching the gospel to the poor, went along with all the rest. Our dear Lord wasn't satisfied with just healing the body; he taught the minds and blessed the souls also.

The *first* kind of miracle that the Lord Jesus did was that which showed his power over the world, winds and waves, bread, fishes, and trees; you've heard about that already. The other kind showed his power over men, to heal them and make them live. Let me tell you of some of them now.

One strange thing about it is, that the first miracles Jesus did, are not told at all. It is written in John's gospel, "Now when Jesus was in Jerusalem at the passover, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles that he did." And Nicodemus when he came to Jesus by night, said, "Master, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles, which thou doest, except God be with him." But we don't even know what kind of miracles those were. Now if the

greatest things about our Lord had been his miracles, they would all be written down; even if Matthew and the rest had left out everything else. But instead of that, they pass by many miracles, to tell us other things. And so we will have to do; tell you a few of them and pass on to other things.

When the Lord Jesus came back from Jerusalem the first time, he went to Cana again; the same little town where he had turned the water into wine. The people were glad to see him; they honoured him, trusted in him, and followed him to listen to his words. While he stayed there, and all things were pleasant and happy about him, there was trouble and sorrow down in Capernaum, where many of his friends lived. One rich and powerful man, who didn't know Christ himself, had a little son that he loved dearly; and the child was sick. Nothing shuts out pain and sickness but God's power and blessing! Riches can't help us, nor friends, nor strength; right in the midst of the poor man's joy, or the great man's splendor, disease comes, and agony, and perhaps death! The windows must be darkened, and the merry voices hushed. The nobleman's son is sick; he grows worse and worse. All the wisdom of the doctors doesn't help him now. They shake their heads sadly, and whisper to the father, "Your child will have to die!"

Then some friends say, "Why don't you send for this wonderful man, Jesus of Nazareth? We saw him work miracles in Jerusalem; and now he

has come back—close by, up on the hills at Cana." Then, off hurries the anxious father, too anxious to send anybody else, that might loiter on the way and waste the precious minutes of his boy's life—to seek Jesus.

He found the Lord Jesus with his friends round him, listening and learning. But he pushed through the crowd to Christ's feet, and "besought him that he would come and heal his son, for he was at the point of death." The Lord tried him first for a little while, that all might see his faith and his earnestness; and said, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." But the nobleman could not stop to defend himself about that; he cried out, "Sir, come down, ere my child die!" Then Jesus tried him another way; "Go thy way, thy son liveth." How could the father believe that? He left his child ready to die; travelled those weary miles to Cana, doubting whether his dear boy would live even till he got there; and now this man, Jesus, declares he has healed him without going near him! Can it be so?

Ah! there was something in our Lord's face so full of goodness and truth and power that it *would not let him doubt.* "And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and went his way." And as he was now going down the hills to Capernaum, but still a great way off, his servants met him with joyful news: "Your son is living, and getting well!" Then he asked them when he began to

mend; and they answered, "Yesterday, about one o'clock, the fever left him. So the father knew it was the very same hour in which Jesus said to him, Thy son liveth; and himself believed on Jesus, and all his house."

Oh! what a happy meeting that must have been: the father, weary with his journey, and hardly able to believe his own eyes, that his child is nearly well; the son, weak and pale, no doubt, but feeling his health come back every hour; the mother, worn out with watching, but resting and full of peace now; and all believing on the gracious and wonderful Saviour, that has brought back their boy from the brink of death! We may hope this little boy lived long and well, and bore witness many a time to the Redeemer, when others hated and slandered him; and that now that same Lord has cured him for ever of all sickness and trouble and death!

After this, Jesus came to Nazareth, where he was brought up, and went into the synagogue and taught them. But he would not work the miracles they wanted to see; he put them in mind how often, in Old Testament times, God had passed by them and given blessings to the Gentiles. Then they got so angry with him that they tried to throw him down a steep place and kill him. But he quietly passed through the crowd in spite of their rage, and went to Capernaum to live.

The very next Sabbath, Jesus went into the synagogue and taught; and there the people listened

and wondered. They saw he was a great deal better than the teachers they had before ; and they heard him gladly. But while every thing was still, and he was gently explaining his gospel to them, all at once there was a loud voice crying out to him, "Let us alone, Jesus of Nazareth ;" hast thou come to destroy us? I know thee ; thou art the holy one of God!" There stood a poor fellow, *possessed with a devil*, his eyes rolling, and his whole body trembling with terror and pain. No doubt he wanted the Lord to help him ; but the evil spirit wouldn't let him pray. He spoke with the man's lips his dreadful hatred of Christ first: "Let us alone! what have we to do with thee?" And then, when he saw that the Lord would put forth his mighty power to cure the man, he confessed that Jesus was the holy one of God, to try and make the people believe that they had agreed together; so that they might fear and hate Jesus as well as the evil spirit.

But he rebuked the devil; he saw what those cunning words were meant for ; and he said sternly, "Hold thy peace, and come out of the man!" In his spite and rage, the evil spirit tore the poor man, so that he uttered a great cry of anguish, and then came out of him. Our Saviour had conquered Satan in the wilderness, when he was tempted ; and now, however the devils hated him, they had to obey him.

Then were all the people astonished and struck with wonder. They said, "What new thing is this!

for with authority he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey him!" And the news spread swiftly all over the country, that Jesus of Nazareth could cast out devils. But Mark says, the people began to ask another question too, "What *doctrine* is this?" What does Jesus *teach?* That was why he worked these miracles, to make the people listen better to his preaching.

But the wonders of this great Sabbath day were not done yet; they were just begun. As soon as they came from the synagogue, Jesus and his disciples went to Peter's house. There they found his wife's mother sick of a fever, lying weak and helpless on her bed. After a little while, they told the Lord of her sickness; and he went right to her side, took her hand, and lifted her up. "And immediately the fever left her," and her strength came back; so that she rose up at once and waited on them!

Then, when the sun went down, everybody that had a sick child, or a sick friend, or one possessed with a devil, brought them to the door of Peter's house, where Jesus was; "and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them!" Who ever heard, before, of even a little village where nobody was sick; not a pain, or wound, or disease, left among the people? But that was what our Lord did for Capernaum, healed every one! No wonder the whole city was moved. It makes us think of the great land and the glorious time when "there shall

be no more pain. The sun shall not light upon them, nor any heat:" and "the inhabitant shall no more say, I am sick." But that country is heaven. There this same Lord Jesus shall feed us, and lead us unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. Till then we shall never see such another day as that Sabbath was in Capernaum.

And yet that foolish and wicked city wouldn't believe on the Lord! Hear what he said about it afterwards: "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be cast down to hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for thee."

Sodom's wickedness brought down fire and brimstone from heaven to burn up the city; and yet God is more angry with Capernaum than with Sodom! Oh, what horrible things must be in store for you, who have more light and more blessings still, if you despise the gospel and refuse the Saviour!

Now after this, the Lord Jesus went out from one town to another, through all Galilee; which was the part of the Jews' country where he lived. He went about preaching the good news of a Saviour and healing the sick. At last, while he was in one of these towns, a man came to him full of leprosy, and prayed the Lord to cure him.

The leprosy is one of the most horrible diseases in the world. It begins with a little, rough, whitish spot on the skin, and eats a hole in the man's flesh. It spreads on and on, slowly at first, and then faster, till it eats into the very joints, and the limbs begin to fall off, and the lips and the nostrils are all gone. It makes the breath so foul, and fills the very mouth with such sores and corruption, that the poor leper can neither sleep, nor eat, nor rest, nor breathe in peace. And because this dreadful disease spreads from one person to another, God commanded the Jews to separate the lepers from all the rest of the people. He said, in the days of Moses; "The leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be torn, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering on his upper lip, and cry, Unclean! unclean! He shall dwell alone. Outside of the camp shall his dwelling be."

The real leprosy was never cured; sometimes it got well of itself, nobody knew how. There were other diseases that looked like leprosy at first, but they could be cured. And it seems likely that this poor fellow had found these spots coming on his flesh, and had gone to the physicians to see if they could help him. But, alas! the sickness spread more and more, till they gave him up entirely, and told him there was no hope for him; it was the plague of leprosy that was on him! And now he must leave home and friends; even wife and children, if he has any. He must not even take his little

daughter in his arms, and fold her to his heart once more, for fear she may be made a leper too.

So, with a sick and loathsome body, and a heart full of woe, he turned away from all that he loved, to go and live in some lonely place according to the law. But he meets this great crowd, and hears that the mighty Jesus, that has done such wonders everywhere, has come! Oh sweetly and quickly hope springs up in him, "Surely this gracious friend will help me too." Then he broke through the crowd, in spite of the law, and fell down at Jesus's feet. "Lord, if thou wilt, *thou* canst make me clean!" "Others fail, but thou canst not fail."

No doubt everybody else drew back, in disgust and fear. "Here's a vile leper, right in the midst of us," some heartless Pharisee might say; "he will make us all unclean;" and he would turn away with frowns and hard words. But the poor leper didn't regard him; he was watching the face of Jesus, to see if he would despise him too. But in truth, this was just what the Lord loved, to have a poor lost creature come and cast himself on his power and mercy, trusting him to save him. So, in a moment Jesus turned, and touched him, and said, "I will! be thou clean!" And as he said it, the terrible pains left him; the loathsome sores healed; the wasted flesh came back; and the clear, smooth, wholesome skin he used to have, covered all his frame again. The Lord told him not to stay among his friends to talk about it then, but hasten away to

the priest according to the law, and let him declare that he was cured. But even as he went he published it; told everybody the joyful news that Jesus of Nazareth had cured his leprosy.

But there was one other fearful disease in that country, called the palsy. Not the same that we call palsy now; a slow, lingering sickness, that may last for years; but a terrible cramp that twisted up a man's very frame with agony, and often carried him to his grave in a few hours.

When the Lord Jesus came back to Capernaum, the people heard about it, and gathered from all parts of the city. Besides that, there was a great crowd that had followed him from one village to another; some believing and loving, and some hating and finding fault. So it was, that a great multitude filled the courtyard inside of the house, and the gateway, and the narrow street. Pressing against each other, and pushing their way in, they listened to every word and watched every action.

All at once, four men came down the street as fast as they could, carrying a bed. Can that be a man on the bed? Yes, his limbs all knotted together in his horrible agony; moaning and tossing; it is a man with the palsy. "Make way for us," they call out; "let us carry this man to Jesus's feet; quick, before he dies!" But the answer is, "We can't make room, we are crowded too tightly." There isn't time for them all to file out and leave the way clear,

even if they were willing; but they all wanted to see the miracle, if any is wrought.

So they take up the bed and the sick man again, and go round to the back of the house; carry him up the outside stairs to the flat roof until they come right over the gateway where Jesus was. Then they pull away the earth and the boards that made the roof, and let the poor palsied man down, right at Jesus's feet. No doubt he stopped his groans, and lay still, and looked up to the Lord to see what he would do for him.

Presently Jesus said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee!" Very likely, he began to feel better at once, but he lay there watching Jesus, and wondering why he said that to him; perhaps thinking what a glorious friend he was; so ready with his goodness and power to help all that came to him, and loving him already as he looked at him. But the foolish Pharisees began to whisper to one another, "This man blasphemes! who can forgive sins but God only?" They were filled with wicked joy, because they thought they had found something to accuse him of.

The Lord turned to them and said, "Why do ye reason in your hearts about it? Which is the easiest—to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk?" Why, one is just as easy to say as the other; and he meant that likewise one was just as easy to do as the other. "But that ye may know that the Son of Man *has* power on earth to

forgive sins; he says to the sick man, Arise, take up thy bed, and go to thy house!"

Immediately his cramped limbs straightened, and he rose and took up his bed; pushed his way through the wondering crowd, and went home. But the people were astonished, and said to one another, We have seen strange things to-day! And they praised God, who had given such power to Jesus; *power to forgive sin.* Well might they praise him; for "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin;" ah, it was a joyful day for Israel when the people found out that Jesus could forgive!

Now, you see, we are getting a little more answer to our question, how we sinners can be saved. First, we found out that there was to be a Saviour; he was to be Abraham's son, and David's son; then, that he was the virgin Mary's son. Then Jesus was born, and baptized, and anointed with the Holy Spirit. Then he was tempted by Satan, but without sin. And now, he works a grand miracle to show that he himself has power to forgive sins. What a glorious and mighty King, all meek and lowly as he was! Oh let us trust him, for "He will save us!"

Confident Hope.

My God, the spring of all my joys,
The life of my delights,
The glory of my brightest days,
And comfort of my nights.

In darkest shades if he appear,
My dawning is begun;
He is my soul's bright morning star,
And he my rising sun.

The opening heavens around me shine
With beams of sacred bliss,
While Jesus shows his heart is mine,
And whispers, I am his.

My soul would leave this heavy clay,
At that transporting word;
Run up with joy the shining way,
To embrace my dearest Lord.

Fearless of hell and ghastly death,
I'd break through every foe;
The wings of love and arms of faith
Should bear me conqueror through.

Not Ashamed of Christ.

Jesus, and shall it ever be,
A mortal man ashamed of thee?
Ashamed of thee, whom angels praise,
Whose glories shine through endless days!

Ashamed of Jesus! sooner far
Let evening blush to own a star;
He sheds the beams of light divine,
O'er this benighted soul of mine.

Ashamed of Jesus! just as soon
Let midnight be ashamed of noon;
'Tis midnight with my soul, till he,
Bright Morning Star, bid darkness flee.

Ashamed of Jesus! that dear friend
On whom my hopes of heaven depend!
No, when I blush, be this my shame,
That I no more revere his name.

Ashamed of Jesus! Yes, I may,
When I've no guilt to wash away,
No tear to wipe, no good to crave,
No fears to quell, no soul to save.

Till then—nor is my boasting vain—
Till then I boast a Saviour slain;
And oh! may this my glory be,
That Christ is not ashamed of me.

SERMON VI.

SOME OF JESUS' MIGHTY WORKS.

"Verily, verily I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." John v. 25.

THESE were the Lord's own words; and the way he came to speak them was this: Whenever one of the Jews' great feasts came on, our Saviour always went up to Jerusalem, the holy city, and kept the feast. Not because the people were so good there, or because the city was better than any other place, but because God commanded it. And once, when he had gone up there to fulfil the law, he walked by a pool, called the pool of Bethesda. There were a great many of these pools in the city and round about, and they all had names; pool of Siloam, the King's pool, and so on. Now this pool was called Bethesda (that is, the house of mercy), because of a wonderful work of God's goodness that he used to show there, every year. "For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool and troubled the water; whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had."

So the sick people used to gather there, the lame, the blind, and the helpless of every sort, to wait for the moving of the water, and to try and be healed. And there were five large shady porches, built round the pool, where they could lie down comfortably while they were waiting. This was the place the Lord came to, and there he found a man who had been sick and helpless, and waiting to be cured, for *thirty-eight years*. Think of it! before the Lord Jesus was born, he had been lying in that porch; and now that he has grown up to manhood, and come to be our Redeemer, there lies that poor man yet, growing thin and old and hopeless, but waiting still!

Jesus said to him, "Wilt thou be made whole?" "Would you like to be cured?" The helpless man answered very patiently and well to this strange question: "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me." The Lord answered him, with that clear, kind, firm voice that made everything obey, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk!" And in a moment he was cured, and took up his bed, and walked. This was done just as the sun went down; and at sunset, the Jews' Sabbath began. So the people that met him, called out to him, "It's the Sabbath day, it's against the law for you to be carrying your bed." But he answered, "He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk." As if that was excuse enough, and so it was.

But the Jews didn't think so; and when they found out that Jesus had commanded him to carry his bed on the Sabbath day, they persecuted our Lord, and tried to slay him. Then Jesus told them that he and his Father were always working for their good, on Sabbaths as well as other days. But that provoked the Jews still more, that he should call God, his Father. And that made him bring up his miracles, to show who he was. "The Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth; and he will show him greater works than these." That means, "God is not angry with me for calling him my Father; he gives me these miracles to work, to prove it. And he will help me to do greater works still, that you may wonder and believe, instead of finding fault. Yes, the dead in their graves shall hear my voice, and live."

But if the Jews really didn't believe in him, when he said that, they would say, "Now let us watch him, and see if he raises the dead. If he does, then he must be the Son of God; if not, we will kill him for his blasphemy." And surely, any man would deserve to die, who claimed to be God's Son and the sinner's Saviour, when he wasn't. Let us see, now, if he kept this mighty promise to bring back the dead to life again!

Once, as he was travelling and preaching, he came to a city called Nain. He and his disciples had just got there, and were ready to enter in,

when the gates of the city opened wide, and a great crowd came out, mourning and weeping loudly. What could the trouble be? Presently, four men came out together, carrying a dead young man on a kind of frame, that they called a bier. "He was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." And there came the poor old mother, wringing her hands, and bowed down almost to the ground with her grief. Lonely and heart-broken, she was going to see her only son laid in the cold and dreadful grave.

And when the Lord saw her, he pitied her with all his heart, and said to her, "Weep not." Those who were carrying her dead boy were keeping right on to the tomb; but he turned and touched the bier, and then they stood still; thinking, perhaps, that he would preach to them there, or lament with the weeping mother. But they mistook it altogether, not knowing the power of God. He said, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise!" "And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak!" Then the Lord told the mother, in her wonder and terror and joy, to take him back for her son again. And there came a fear on all, and they glorified God, saying, A great prophet has arisen up among us; and God has visited his people!

This was one of the very few miracles the Lord Jesus ever worked without being asked to do it. You remember, when he was in Peter's house, he did nothing for the sick woman, Peter's mother-in-

law, until they came and told him about her. Often he made them ask him over and over, and tried their faith in many ways, and then did more for them than they asked. That's the way with God's blessings now, most of the time. "For these things I will yet be enquired of," he says; and then, when we have prayed and longed and waited, until we feel what a great blessing we are asking for, he comes to give us more than we hoped.

But this poor widow received exceeding abundantly, more than she even thought. Why, it was almost a thousand years, since anybody had been raised from the dead; and people no more looked for such a wonder then, than we do now. That was the reason the Lord didn't wait for her to pray to him; nobody ever dreamed of asking such a thing. Long after this, as you will hear presently, when Martha hinted to him about raising his dear friend Lazarus from the tomb, and he promised to do it, she hardly believed him. So God sometimes has mercy on our weak faith and our ignorance, and gives us blessings we were too foolish and unbelieving to pray for.

Not very long after this, he came back to Capernaum from the other side of the lake, and the people crowded round him again, and he healed their sick people and taught them. And behold, one of the rulers in the synagogue, named Jairus, came to him, in such distress and fear that he fell down at Jesus's feet, and began to beg him, and

plead with him, and urge him greatly, to come to his house and save him from the dreadful sorrow that was coming. "My little daughter lieth at the point of death," he said; "come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live." The Bible doesn't tell us why he begged so hard; he seemed to believe the Lord was able to do this, for he says, "Come and lay thy hands on her, and she shall live." Perhaps Jesus put on a stern look at first, to try him, and make him think more of his blessing when he got it. Perhaps he delayed on purpose, that the little girl might die before they got there.

Jesus went with him, though; and a great multitude followed, and pressed on the Lord to hear every word, and see every action. Presently the Lord stopped, and turned round in the crowd, and said, "Who touched me?" Those that were closest to him all denied it; they hadn't touched him. Still he kept asking, "Who was it? somebody touched me, for I felt the virtue go out from me to heal somebody." Peter and the other disciples were astonished that Jesus should linger so, when the child was dying. They might say, "You see how the crowd is pressing up to you and jostling one against another; and how can you ask who touched you? Some one has stumbled against you." Still the Lord stood there and questioned the people. Oh, how the poor grieving father's heart must have ached, all that time!

At last the woman that touched him, finding that she could not hide what she had done, and that she was partly healed already, came trembling—afraid that our dear Lord was angry with her—fell down at his feet and told him all. "Sir, I'm a poor afflicted creature; these twelve years I have had an issue of blood; I have spent all my property on the physicians, and they made me nothing better, but rather worse. I came behind thee secretly in the crowd; for I said in my heart, If I can but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be cured. And so it was: for in a moment my blood was stanched, and I felt in my body that I was healed of that plague." Then the Lord looked kindly on her, and said, "Daughter, thou needst not fear; thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace."

But now, a man comes pushing through the multitude, straight up to Jairus; and he says, "Trouble not the master any more, thy daughter is dead!" Poor man! there he had stood, waiting, and wondering, and weeping silently, afraid (perhaps) to urge Jesus any more; and now, it is all over! His dear little lamb, his joy and comfort for twelve years, is gone; she'll come back to his arms and his heart no more! But no; Jesus heard the sad message; and as soon as he heard it, he said, "Be not afraid, Jairus, *only believe.*"

Then the vast multitude hastened on again, to the house of woe. Soon they could hear the loud cries and lamentations, that told them death was

there, but the Lord only pressed on. When they came to the house, he made them all stand back; even his disciples had to wait outside. He took Peter and James and John, Jairus and the little girl's mother, and went in where the poor little thing was laid out. There were the hired mourners clapping their hands and tearing their hair, and screaming aloud; but he sent them all out of the room, and took the child's hand, and said to her, "Maiden, arise!" And immediately she rose up off the bed and walked! Oh what wonder and joy filled the mother's and father's heart! Don't you suppose he felt ashamed of his impatience and terror on the way? The Lord only held back the blessing a little while, to make it more glorious when it did come.

Jesus now charged them strictly not to talk about it, but to give the damsel something to eat. No doubt that was to keep them from boasting, and from showing their child to everybody as the one that had been dead and was alive again, until her mind was filled with vanity and pride. He wanted them to take her back into the family, as their dear little daughter, cherish and train her, just as they would have done if she had got well of some terrible sickness. They would have loved her more, and been more gentle with her, but they wouldn't have made a wonder of her; and that was what the Lord wanted.

Once more, before his death, the Lord brought

back a dead man to life; and that is such a beautiful and important story, that the Apostle John takes nearly a whole chapter, out of his short Gospel, to tell it in.

Jesus had been teaching in Jerusalem; and the people got so enraged at what he said, that they took up stones to stone him! That was the way they paid him back for all his love and his mighty miracles. After that, he did no more wonders of healing and mercy for the people, and only one for his nearest frieuds; and that's the one we are to hear about now. He pushed through the angry crowd that wanted to murder him, and went away two days' journey, over the river Jordan; and there he stayed.

Now, the Lord had three very dear friends, living in the little village of Bethany, close to Jerusalem, just over the hill that they called the Mount of Olives. They were a brother and two sisters; Lazarus, and Mary and Martha. Lazarus was taken sick; being Jesus's friend didn't save him from affliction. The Bible says, "Whom he loveth, he chasteneth," and so it was with Lazarus.

Then his sisters sent a message all the way over Jordan to Jesus, saying, "Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick." That was just right; they sent *at once*, as soon as trouble came; and they claimed the blessing from the Lord's love, although he had let the trouble come on them. They didn't say, as poor unbelieving Christians so often think now, "If

the Lord loved him, he would keep him from sickness, and us from sorrow." No; they claimed his love, and held on to it, all the more because they did not understand his ways. Remember that, when you go to pray in time of trouble. Don't say, "Lord, I did think thou didst love me, but I see by this affliction that I was mistaken." No! say, "Lord, *he whom thou lovest* is sick, or in sorrow." But what if we are guilty, impenitent, hard-hearted sinners? Ah! I can't advise them to do anything, but go and fall at Jesus's feet, confessing their sins and trusting in his blood. When that's done, then they can claim his love too.

When the Lord received that message, he said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby." But, strange as you may think it, just about the time that Jesus said that, Lazarus died! How can that be explained, that the Lord should say the sickness was not unto death, and yet the man died?

Why, it means that this sickness wasn't like deadly sickness generally, just to take the man out of the world once for all, and bring his life here to a final close. He died, that he might be raised again by the mighty power of the Son of God. That's what it means; his sickness was not *merely* to bring him to death, but to glorify God and our Saviour. Don't you suppose Lazarus would have

been willing to die, if he had known how his dear Lord would be glorified by it?

Here comes in another strange part of the story. "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. *Therefore*, when he had heard that he was sick, he abode two days still in the place where he was." That was a strange way of showing his love; to leave Lazarus in his grave, and his sisters lonely and almost heart-broken, when he could have saved them all that sorrow by one word! But the Lord was wise and strong as well as good. He meant to show them the glory of God, as it never was seen before since the world was made. So he left them to bear this short grief, and paid them for it with a joy that will last for ever—a joy and comfort, not for themselves only, but for all the people of God. Which of us, that has buried his dead out of his sight, hasn't stood by the dark and chilly grave, and remembered Lazarus, and been comforted? When our mourning, doubting hearts ask, "Can these dry bones live?" Faith answers, "The Lord Jesus will say, Arise! and the dead *will* live."

After two days, Jesus said to his disciples, Let us go into Judea again. That was the country round Jerusalem. But they answered, "Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?" Ah, they little knew that was the very last time they would go into Judea with him! He said, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth

not, because he seeth the sun. But if he walk in the night he stumbleth." That is, we have just so much time to do all our work, *and no more.* What we do, we must do *now.* The night comes, when no man can work.

Then he said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth: but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." They didn't understand him very clearly; but they answered, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will do well; no need for us now to go back to that dangerous country." As if this mighty Saviour wasn't able to take care of them!

Now Jesus said plainly, "Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that ye may believe; nevertheless, let us go unto him." Neither did they understand that saying; but they saw he was determined to go back. Then said Thomas, "Let us also go that we may die with him." Brave Thomas! he loved his Lord nobly, but he didn't believe on him enough.

The journey to Bethany took two days more; so when Jesus and his disciples arrived, Lazarus had lain in the grave four days already. Mary and Martha were still weeping at home, and many Jews from Jerusalem had come there to comfort them about their brother. Alas! man's consolation is not worth much in such a grief. Only the Lord can dry up those tears.

When they came near Bethany, some one saw them coming, and ran and whispered to Martha,

"The master is come!" Then she left her sister there and went to meet Jesus; and when she saw him, she said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." She could hardly help finding fault with him for not coming. "But I know," she said, "that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." That was a plain hint that it was not too late now for him to help her. As soon as Jesus heard that, he said, "Yes, thy brother shall rise again." Then Martha's heart failed her again; and she said, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection, at the last day." Oh how many Christians are like Martha; with faith enough to pray, but not faith enough to believe the promise and expect the blessing!

Now the Lord wanted her to know that the power to make men rise from the dead wasn't in the last day; it was in *him;* and so he told her. "*I* am the resurrection, and the life! He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and WHOSOEVER LIVETH AND BELIEVETH IN ME, SHALL NEVER DIE. Believest thou this?" Then Martha's heart was stirred, and her faith grew strong. She answered, "Yea, Lord! I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, that should come into the world."

And when she had said that, she went and called Mary secretly, and she rose up quickly, and came outside of the little town, where Jesus was waiting, in the same place that Martha first met him. The Jews thought she was gone again to the grave to

weep there; and they followed her. When she met Jesus, she said the same thing that Martha did, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died!"

Then was our dear Saviour's heart troubled, when he saw them all weeping. He groaned aloud, and said, "Where have ye laid him?" And as they went to show him, Jesus wept. Truly said the prophet, "In all our afflictions he was afflicted!"

Some of the Jews saw how kind and tender he was; they said, "Behold how he loved him!" But others mocked and doubted, saying, "Couldn't he have kept him from dying? He opened the eyes of the blind, even!" Jesus, still groaning, came to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone was rolled against the door.

Jesus said, "Take away the stone." But poor Martha's faith failed her again. She thought he only wanted to see his friend's body, and weep over it. She told him that the corpse must be decayed, for he had been dead four days. His answer was, "Have I not promised, if you would believe, you should see the glory of God?" So they rolled away the stone, wondering and waiting to see what he would do.

First of all, he praised God; saying, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me! And I know that thou hearest me always; but because of the people that stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come

forth!" And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus said, "Loose him, and let him go."

Of all the miracles that ever were done, that was the most splendid. The man being dead so long, our Lord either had to create his body again, as it were, out of corruption and decay; or he must have been working a miracle, all those days and nights, to keep it from corrupting. So Jesus proved that he was the Son of God, and the Judge of all the earth. He says, "The hour is coming when *all* that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Oh that we may meet him as a Saviour, before we meet him as a Judge! Prepare, prepare, my soul, to meet him!

Death Disarmed.

Why do we mourn departing friends,
Or shake at death's alarms?
'Tis but the voice that Jesus sends,
To call them to his arms.

Are we not tending upward too,
As fast as time can move?
Nor should we wish our hours more slow,
To keep us from our love.

Why should we tremble to convey
Their bodies to the tomb?
There the dear flesh of Jesus lay,
And left a long perfume.

The graves of all the saints he blest,
And softened every bed;
Where should the dying members rest,
But with their dying Head?

Thence he arose, ascending high,
And showed our feet the way;
Up to the Lord our flesh shall fly,
At the great rising day.

Life the only accepted Time.

While life prolongs its precious light,
Mercy is found, and peace is given;
But soon, ah soon! approaching night
Shall blot out every hope of heaven.

While God invites, how blest the day!
How sweet the gospel's charming sound!
"Come, sinners, haste, oh haste away,
While yet a pardoning God he's found.

"Soon, borne on time's most rapid wing,
Shall death command you to the grave,
Before his bar your spirits bring,
And none be found to hear, or save.

"In that lone land of deep despair,
No Sabbath's heavenly light shall rise;
No God regard your bitter prayer,
Nor Saviour call you to the skies."

No wonders to the dead are shown,
(The wonders of redeeming love:)
No voice his glorious truth makes known,
Nor sings the bliss of climes above.

Silence, and solitude, and gloom,
In these forgetful realms appear,
Deep sorrows fill the dismal tomb,
And hope shall never enter there.

SERMON VII.

WISE WORDS.

"The officers answered, Never man spake like this man." John viii. 46.

When the people began to think the Lord Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Pharisees were very much enraged. They knew very well what a difference there was between his religion and theirs; and if the common people believed on Jesus, they would certainly give up the Pharisees. Then all their power and all their praise would be gone. So, in their wickedness and rage, they agreed to kill him. How foolish! just as if religion was a trade, and, if you could kill off the other tradesmen, or drive them away, then you would be sure to do well and prosper in business. They *knew* better; they knew that the true religion, whichever it was, came down from God in heaven, and he would take care of it. But they wouldn't *think* so. They persuaded themselves that if they could only slay Jesus, their religion would flourish again, whether it was from God or not. So they sent officers to take him.

The officers came and stood in the crowd that

was listening to our Lord. He knew what they had come for, but he went calmly on teaching and reasoning, and answering the people's questions. Some of the multitude believed on him, and others mocked: but all the officers learned to respect and admire him, and would not lay hands on him. They went back to the Pharisees and chief priests, saying, "Never man spake like this man!"

That was the truth; the people bore him witness, and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth. As I told you before, the Lord Jesus didn't come into the world for the sake of working miracles; neither did he expect to save us by his mighty power. The miracles were to make the people listen to his teaching, by showing them that he was the Son of God, come down from heaven. Now we have heard of his miracles, we must next listen to his words. He had three great things to teach them:

1. The first was, that *God's law can only be obeyed with the heart.* "God is a Spirit," he says, "and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." "Blessed are the poor in spirit," the humble in heart, "blessed are they that mourn; blessed are the meek; blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness; blessed are the merciful; blessed are the pure in heart." His blessing and his praise were all for *right hearts*, not for outside obedience.

Now the Jews thought and acted just the other

way. According to their notion, it was no matter what a man's heart was, so his behaviour was right by the rule. They had thousands of little regulations about their whole life; their clothes, their words, their prayers, their Sabbaths and feasts and holy days; partly taken out of the Old Testament, and partly made up, *and that was their religion.* Moses and the prophets never taught them so. Their own evil hearts imagined it, so as to get away from repentance and holiness.

Now to bring them back to repentance, and to lead them to holiness, was one part of the Lord's great work, and one part of his teaching. "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment; But *I* say unto you, that whosoever shall be angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, (to make a thank-offering,) and there rememberest that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled with thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." As much as to say, "God doesn't care for your sacrifices, unless they come from a pure, just, and kindly heart."

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them." "Doing alms" is giving money or food or clothes to the poor. Christ says, "Don't make generous gifts for men to praise you,

otherwise, ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. When thou doest an alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward! But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thine alms may be in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly.

"When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward! (That is, men see them, and praise them for being so pious.) But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." If we would pray right, we must pray to please God, and not to get praise from men.

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me, in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity!"

That was why the Pharisees hated the Lord Jesus so much; they were the teachers and leaders of this very false doctrine that he contradicted and opposed; and he had to contend against them all the time. He called them "hypocrites," that is, *pretenders*. They made their lives look very devout, while their hearts were hard and cruel. "Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, saying, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; howbeit, in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." This he said, when they found fault with him for eating bread without washing his hands as much as they did. He went on and said, "Hearken to me, every one of you, and understand; There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him, can defile him; but the things which come out from him, these are they that defile the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye (envy), blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evil things come from within, and defile the man."

"Do not ye after the works of the Pharisees; all their works they do, for to be seen of men. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation! Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees,

hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; that ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone, Ye blind guides, which strain out a gnat, and swallow a camel! Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you make clean the *outside* of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee! cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful without, but are within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness! Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." So terribly did our Lord rebuke those who pretended to obey God, but kept back their hearts!

But this wasn't all; those that would serve God must serve him with *all* their heart. "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. *Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*" The very way he called his Apostles showed that. They had to forsake *all*, and follow him. "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head;" as much as to say, "If you would be my disciples, you must be ready for want and hardship,

worse than the birds or the foxes feel." To the young ruler he said, "One thing thou lackest; go, sell *all that thou hast* and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." Another time, he said, "Fear not them which kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do; rather fear him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him! He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." He bade one man follow him, who answered, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." Rather leave your dead father unburied, than neglect God's work, or disobey his command. "No man, having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God."

Once Peter asked him, and said, "Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or wife, or lands, for my

name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold and shall inherit eternal life." "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

And when they asked him, "Which is the first and great commandment?" he answered, "Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first and great commandment."

But one thing is very certain: if we are to serve the Lord with *all* the heart, it must be with a *new* heart; for the old heart will never do it. So our Lord said. When the Jews hated him and tried to kill him, he told them, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham; if God were your Father, ye would love me. He that is of God, heareth God's words; yet herefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do."

And when Nicodemus came to him by night, he spoke out still more plainly. "Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus didn't

understand that; but the Lord wanted him to hear and believe it first, and study it out afterwards. So he said again, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. *That which is born of the flesh, is flesh;* and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit." Out of our wicked race nothing can be born but wicked hearts; but God's Spirit can give us a new heart.

Now you see what a terrible state we are in. God made us to serve him; and his holy law shuts us in on every side. But we can't serve or please him with these wicked hearts; he is too holy for that. And he will not let us forget and disobey him, and never notice us; he is too just for that. And we can't change these vile and wicked hearts: for *our hearts are ourselves.* "Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his stature? Thou canst not make one hair white or black!" And if we can't do that, how shall we change our very heart's blood, and make ourselves new creatures?

You see now, that serving God and being saved are very different things from the notions that the scribes and Pharisees had. God is not pleased, nor our peace made with him, by standing in the streets praying, or by giving away money, or keeping fast days for men to see us and praise us. Obedience is better than sacrifice; but we are disobedient; we have not the love of God in us. We are condemned already! How shall we be saved?

2. The Jews, having such low and foolish thoughts about religion, saw no other use for a Saviour than to be a great king and general, and fight their battles for them. But the Lord Jesus came and showed them that *he was to be a Saviour first, and a king afterwards;* A SAVIOUR OF SINNERS, AND A KING OF SAINTS. That was the *second* great thing he was to teach us.

"I am come," saith he, "to seek and to save that which was lost. I am the door of the sheep; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. I am the good shepherd; and other sheep I have, which are not of this fold (not of the Jews); them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father who gave them to me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my father are one. I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

"Whosoever shall drink of this (earthly) water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life. Labour not for the meat which perisheth,

but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you. I am the bread of life! he that cometh unto me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. All that the Father giveth unto me shall come to me; and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out. And this is the will of Him who sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and *I will raise him up at the last day.*"

"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the only begotten Son of God. I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth in me, shall never die."

Then he showed them his dignity and greatness, and that he was worthy to be their Saviour. He told his disciple, Nathanael, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." To Nicodemus, that came to him by night, he said, "And no man hath ascended up to heaven (to bring down the Gospel), but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man who is in heaven."

He warned the Jews, "*I came down from heaven*, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him who sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. Verily, verily I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; *for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.* As the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." He called himself the Son of God, the Christ, the Saviour that was to come into the world.

He showed them, too, what strong reasons they had to believe that he was the Saviour. "Ye sent unto John, and he bore witness unto the truth. But I receive not testimony from man. I have greater witness than John; for the works which the Father gave me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me. And the Father himself which sent me hath borne witness of me; ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. (But) Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me. Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me. What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before? Say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, Thou

blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him."

When the Jews delivered our Lord up to the Romans, to be condemned and crucified, Pilate asked him, "Art thou king of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight; but now is my kingdom not from hence." And when the high priest said, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus answered, Thou hast said; nevertheless, I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

And so he taught his disciples, "Seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that do offend, and them which

do iniquity; then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." And to the dying thief, he promised, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

So we see our Lord's purpose is to take sinners and save them—make them saints, and then reign over them. He doesn't stand afar off and throw us a blessing; he takes us into his own care, loves us, leads us, and rules over us.

Thus we have found out two of the great lessons the Lord Jesus came to teach us; that we are lost, and that he is ready and able to be our Saviour. The other lesson, the greatest of all, the one we have been looking for all this time, *how* he will save us; must be left once more. But remember one thing; if the Lord hadn't *explained* anything, we ought to believe what he *declares*. Look up, O fainting soul, and live! That's the command, and that's the hope of the gospel. Oh that you all would take him at his word; take him for your Saviour; and learn by sweet experience how Jesus forgives!

Blessings of Christ's Advent.

Raise your triumphant songs
To an immortal tune,
Let the wide earth resound the deeds
Celestial grace has done.

Sing how eternal Love
Its chief Beloved chose,
And bade him raise our wretched race
From their abyss of woes.

His hand no thunder bears,
Nor terror clothes his brow;
No bolts to drive our guilty souls
To fiercer flames below.

'Twas mercy filled the throne,
And wrath stood silent by,
When Christ was sent with pardons down
To rebels doomed to die.

Now, sinners, dry your tears,
Let hopeless sorrows cease;
Bow to the sceptre of his love,
And take the offered peace.

Lord, we obey thy call;
We lay an humble claim
To the salvation thou hast brought,
And love and praise thy name.

Constancy of Christ's Love.

Hark, my soul, it is the Lord;
'Tis thy Saviour, hear his word;
Jesus speaks, and speaks to thee:
"Say, poor sinner, lovest thou me?

"I delivered thee when bound,
And, when wounded, healed thy wound;
Sought thee wandering, set thee right,
Turned thy darkness into light.

"Can a woman's tender care
Cease toward the child she bare?
Yes, she may forgetful be,
Yet will I remember thee.

"Mine is an unchanging love,
Higher than the heights above;
Deeper than the depths beneath,
Free and faithful, strong as death.

"Thou shalt see my glory soon,
When the work of grace is done;
Partner of my throne shalt be;
Say, poor sinner, lovest thou me?"

Lord, it is my chief complaint,
That my love is weak and faint;
Yet I love thee and adore,
Oh for grace to love thee more!

SERMON VIII.

WISE WORDS.

"Then Simon Peter answered and said, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." John vi. 68.

When the Lord Jesus declared to the Jews that he was the bread of life, come down from heaven to make them live for ever; and showed them in that way that he didn't come to make them a great nation again, and conquer this world for them, they were very much disappointed. "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." They were willing to follow him to war and danger and death, if he would promise them earthly blessings, that death would surely take away; but when he offered them the victory over death, and to deliver them from hell, they were disgusted and angry with him! Mercies for a day they would gladly buy at any cost; but mercies for eternity they despised!

That was very foolish, but it wasn't strange at all. That was what Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden, threw away God's everlasting

mercies for an earthly advantage. That's what every impenitent sinner is doing, when he hardens his heart against the gospel. He is throwing away eternity for the sinful pleasures of a day. How wonderful is our wickedness and madness!

> Why do we waste on trifling cares
> That life which God's compassion spares?
> While, in the various range of thought,
> The *one thing needful* is forgot!

The Lord turns from these blind, hardened, ruined Jews to his twelve Apostles; and says, "Will ye also go away?" Then Peter answered, as you heard just now, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." That is, "We want to live for ever; we would like a kingdom and a glory on earth, too; but the greatest thing of all is heaven! How can we go to anybody else, when only thou canst show us the way of everlasting life?" So Peter, with all his rashness, and all his sins, chose "that good part which could never be taken away from him."

And what he said that day was true; the Lord Jesus has *the words of eternal life.* He can lead us to the fountains of salvation. He can make our heart burn within us, while he opens the Scriptures to our understanding. From his wise words we can learn how sinners are saved, and saints rejoice in glory; how he redeems, and judges, and reigns, as the Son of God.

III. If we listen now, the Lord Jesus himself will

answer the question we have been asking all this time; how sin can be pardoned, and sinners saved. He will *partly* answer it, so we shall know what to hope for and what to do. But if we are his true followers, we shall be finding out more and more of the answer, for ever, and for ever. And in truth, the other parts of the New Testament can teach us a great many things about salvation that the Lord Jesus didn't make plain. He said to his Apostles once, "I have many things to tell you, but ye cannot bear them now;" and the Holy Spirit came afterwards and guided them into those truths. Yet the Lord will answer that great question for us to-day.

First, he tells us *what he must do for us, that we might be saved;* he must *die* for us.

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. Now shall the prince of this world be cast out! And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." The Apostle John says that Jesus said this, about being lifted up, to signify by what death he should die. "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to

take it again. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but because I live, ye shall live also. Greater love hath no man than this—that a man lay down his life for his friends; ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world and go unto the Father." "Let these sayings sink down in your ears; for the Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men." He showed his disciples, again and again, how that "he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Behold we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him unto the Gentiles, to mock and to scourge, and to crucify him; and the third day he shall rise again. The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life *a ransom* for many."

You see how often, when he speaks of dying, he speaks also of rising from the dead. That was another great thing. Paul says, "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification:" and that he was declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead. So the Lord Jesus himself said, as you heard it just now, "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again." And in another

place, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." After the transfiguration on the Mount, he charged Peter and James and John "that they should tell no man what things they had seen until the Son of Man was risen from the dead." "Destroy this temple," he said to the Jews, speaking of his body, "and I will raise it again in three days." "All ye (my disciples) shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee."

He also told them, but not so plainly, that he would ascend to heaven bodily, and so show them that he came down from heaven. "What, and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before? Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him that hath sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come." That was to the wicked, unbelieving Jews; but to Simon Peter he said, "Whither I go thou canst not follow me *now;* but thou shalt follow me afterward. I go (to my Father) to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye

may be also. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice because I said, I go unto the Father. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world and go to the Father."

Again, the Lord Jesus tells us *what we must do, that he may save us.* He begins by warning us to listen diligently. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me." And he goes on to show us that we must not only hear, but heed, and believe, and obey. "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh unto me, and heareth my sayings and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like. He is like a man which built a house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock; and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built a house upon the earth, against which the stream did beat vehemently; and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. If ye love me, keep my commandments. If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."

But what are these commandments, on which everything depends? It isn't only the great law of God; because that's our ruin, that we've broken

that law, and wandered clear away from it into God's wrath. The commandments of the Lord Jesus are to save us from the woe and eternal death that comes on sinners for breaking God's law. There are two great things, without which we can't get one step nearer to heaven; and then there are some other things that go with them. To-day we must learn what they are; when we come to the Parables, we will see how the Lord Jesus explained them.

The first great thing is, Repentance. "Repent! for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" that was what Christ and his Apostles preached from the very first. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, and they that mourn, and that hunger and thirst after righteousness. They shall rejoice and be filled, and theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Suppose ye that these Galileans (that Pilate killed) were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you nay; but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish. He upbraided the cities, wherein most of his mighty works had been done, because they repented not. I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. I say unto you, There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

The other great thing is, believing on him. "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye and believe the gospel. This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom He

hath sent. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but should have everlasting life. He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already. This is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day. If ye believe not that I am he (that is, Christ the Saviour of the world), ye shall die in your sins." When the blind man was cast out of the synagogue, because he wouldn't call the Lord Jesus, that healed him, a sinner, Jesus found him, and said, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" He answered, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" Jesus replied, "Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee." And he said, "Lord, I believe!" and he worshipped him. To Martha he said, as you have heard already: "He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth on me shall never die."

Sometimes our Lord calls this great thing by other names. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 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. All that my Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out. Verily I say unto you,

Whosoever shall not *receive the kingdom of God as a little child*, shall in no wise enter therein. Yet lackest thou one thing; sell all that thou hast, and distribute to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and *come, follow me.* Other sheep I have; them also I must bring, and they shall *hear my voice.* My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish."

These are the two great things, repenting and believing. But he that does them will do other things too. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me. Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me. If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, (*i. e.* cause thee to sin,) cut them off and cast them from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life

maimed, than having two hands or two feet to be cast into hell fire. And if thine eye cause thee to sin, pluck it out and cast it from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire."

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have anything against any one; that your Father which is in heaven may forgive your trespasses. Take heed to yourselves! if thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him."

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit. This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you."

And what will he do for us? What is this "salvation" and "eternal life?" His dying, and rising again, and ascending to heaven; what will they do for us?

First of all, the Holy Spirit shall change our hard and wicked hearts. "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much

more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. When the Comforter is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. He will guide you into all truth."

Again: the Lord will cause his Father to love us, as he loves us. God did love us before with a pitying love, and gave his own Son for us, as you have heard already; but now he is to love us as his dear children. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father. If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him. I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me."

Again: our sins shall be forgiven. Jesus came, preaching repentance for the remission (that is, the forgiveness) of sins. He said to the sick of the palsy, "Arise, take up thy bed and walk!" that the Jews might "know the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins." "Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blas-

phemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme;" except the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. And when he celebrated the Lord's supper, he said, "This cup is the New Testament in my blood, shed for many for the remission of sins."

He gives them peace and joy, as well as goodness. "These things have I said unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. These things have I spoken unto you, that ye might have peace. In this world, ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer—I have overcome the world."

But the chief blessing is that "everlasting life," of which you have heard so often, and which is in heaven, reserved for us, and not in this poor world. But before we come to that, we must first hear what our Lord says about the judgment. After death comes judgment, and then woe for the sinner and joy for the believer.

"As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man. Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation. What is a man profited if

he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then shall he reward every man according to his works."

"When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them, as the shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me. Then shall he say unto them on his left hand, Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels! And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."

"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be; if any man serve me, him will

my Father honour. They which are accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage, neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."

"Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness! there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. At the end of the world the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just. They shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

And now we see how it is that the Lord Jesus Christ is to save us. He suffered in our stead, laying down his life for us. He has power, now, to forgive our sins if we believe on him. More than that—he has power to send God's Holy Spirit and change our hearts, and so make us believe on him. He will give us new, living, loving, trusting hearts. He will cause us to serve him here below; and then he will take us to reign with him in glory. Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness; for his wonderful works to the children of men! This is the reason why John the Baptist called him the

Lamb of God; he was *our sacrifice.* Oh that his love might constrain us to love him! for if one died for all, then were all dead; and he died for all, that they who live might not live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again. Look unto him, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth!

CHRIST THE WAY.

Jesus, my all, to heaven is gone,
He, whom I fix my hopes upon;
His track I see, and I'll pursue
The narrow way, till him I view.

The way the holy prophets went,
The road that leads from banishment,
The King's highway of holiness
I'll go, for all his paths are peace.

This is the way I long have sought,
And mourned because I found it not;
My grief and burden long have been,
Because I could not cease from sin.

The more I strove against its power,
I sinned and stumbled but the more,
Till late I heard my Saviour say,
"Come hither, soul, I am the way."

Lo! glad I come, and thou, blest Lamb,
Shalt take me to thee as I am:
Nothing but sin I thee can give,
Nothing but love shall I receive.

Then will I tell to sinners round,
What a dear Saviour I have found;
I'll point to thy redeeming blood,
And say—"Behold the way to God!"

Christ the Friend of Sinners.

One there is, above all others
Well deserves the name of Friend;
His is love beyond a brother's,
Costly, free, and knows no end.

Which of all our friends, to save us,
Could or would have shed his blood?
But this Saviour died to have us
Reconciled in him to God.

When he lived on earth abased,
Friend of sinners was his name;
Now above all glory raised,
He rejoices in the same.

O! for grace our hearts to soften;
Teach us, Lord, at length to love;
We, alas! forget too often,
What a Friend we have above.

SERMON IX.

PARABLES—THE SOWER.

"All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them." Matt. xiii. 34.

God, that built the world, made it full of noble lessons about himself and his will. As Paul says, "The invisible things of God, even his eternal power and Godhead, are clearly seen from the creation of the world, being understood by the things that are made." Some of these lessons he makes very plain: every tree and flower, every rock and all the stars, show us what a wise and mighty God made them. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork." So David calls any man that says, There is no God, a fool.

I say, then, God has made some of his lessons very plain: then again, he has *hid* some of them, so that we have to study hard to find them out, or else he must teach us by his word, how to understand his works. Job says, "Canst thou by searching find out God unto perfection?" That shows

you that by searching we can find out some things about God, but not all; he is too vast for that. If we are so happy as to get to heaven, we shall always be finding him out, more and more; but in all eternity we'll never reach the end of that lesson! "It is as high as heaven—what canst thou do? Deeper than hell—what canst thou know?"

Now the Lord Jesus loved to draw out these lessons, and teach his people what God had hid in the world. When he wanted to teach them not to be too anxious about earthly things, this was the way he did it:—"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink. Behold the fowls of the air; they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." And when he warned them to look out for themselves, and see what danger they were in from the judgments of God, he put them in mind how they studied the signs of the weather, and showed them that they ought to look for higher signs than those. "When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites! ye can discern the face of the sky

and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time? Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?"

But especially our Lord loved to teach these lessons by *Parables*—by telling some story that might happen any day, or bringing up some common matter that every body knew, and teaching religion with it. He made them so plain that little children can understand them; so full of wisdom that learned men study them over and over again, and write great books about them; and so beautiful that everybody loves them. The hardened sinner is warned by the parable of the Tares in the Field. The heedless sinner is taught by the parable of the Good Seed. The trembling sinner is encouraged and brought near by the parable of the Prodigal Son. The young Christian, feeling how weak he is, so far from goodness and from strength, begins to hope again when he reads the parable of the Seed sown and how it grows. Every line of them is full of love and wisdom and blessing.

Let us begin with the parable of the Sower.

A certain man went out into his field to sow seed. In those countries, fields have no fences round them, and the paths run right through them. And as he scattered the seed out of his hand, some of it fell on the hard and trodden path, instead of the soft ploughed ground, where it could sink in, or be covered up. And the birds came and devoured it.

Some of it fell on rocky ground—where a little

earth covered the solid rock. There it sprang up quickly, and looked green and promised well. But soon the hot summer days came on, and the sun shone clear and fierce, and it withered away. The roots could not get deep, cool soil to hide in, because of the rock, and the bright and tender plants died.

Some seed fell where the roots of thorny plants were hid in the ground, waiting for spring. The thorns came up first, and grew fast and strong; and when the seed did sprout, the thorns choked it. The plants pined, and dwindled away, and brought no fruit to perfection.

But the rest fell on good, mellow, fruitful soil; and it brought forth fruit—some of it thirty times as much as was sowed, and some sixty times, and some even a hundred times. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" this parable!

Then the Lord Jesus went on and explained it to them. He said it was to show them how different people hear God's word. The Lord himself was busy, all the time from his baptism to his cross, sowing the good seed—that is, carrying God's messages to the people. He went through all Galilee and Judea, preaching, "Repent! for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He sent out *his* messengers, too; first twelve of them, and afterwards seventy, on the same errand—made them work miracles, heal the sick, cast out devils, and teach men. When he rose from the dead and ascended to heaven, he sent down the Holy Spirit to make

the apostles speak God's word, and nothing else, in their preaching; and then to make them write the rest of the Bible without any mistake—without leaving out his words or putting in their own. Then he appointed preachers, to preach the gospel—took Sunday away from the world, and made it a holy day—the day to sow God's good seed in. And he promised to help us, and bless the seed, and make it spring up, if his servants scatter it as he bids them.

Now think what a noble thing the gospel must be, that God and our Saviour should take such care of it. There is Jehovah to give it, Jesus Christ to preach it, the Holy Spirit to bless it; and all heaven to shout Glory and Hallelujah, when the harvest comes! And it is a noble thing, worthy of all this honour and blessing. It is the story of God's loving the world, and giving his own Son to die for it, and so saving sinners from the worm that never dies, and the fire that never shall be quenched, to make them "saints in light." And how do men receive this good seed?

Some are *wayside* hearers. Their hearts are a public road, for all sorts of worldly thoughts and passions to travel up and down and beat the ground hard. They are what we call *thoughtless* people. It isn't that their hearts are any harder or worse than other people's, at first; but they won't think or care about anything great or good. They are satisfied with such pleasures and such notions as come to us without our trying for them. They leave the

gates open for anything to run in, good or bad, just as it happens; and soon, all their best and tender feelings get covered under the hard road-track.

Now, let the preacher come to such a man, and talk as kindly and solemnly as man can talk. The tears are in his eyes; his faithful heart aches, because he sees the ruin the poor sinner is coming to; he tells him of death and judgment, an angry God, and an awful eternity. And while he talks, the sinner listens, the good seed falls on the ground; but as he turns away, some wretched little trifle—the rabbit that runs across the road, or the walking-stick that he cuts out of the bushes, or the idle word of somebody that he meets; some such trifle, I say, catches it out of his mind, and that's the last of it! Not *really* the last of it, as you know very well—only the last chance to be saved by that warning. He will hear it all over again, one of these days; but it will be from the lips of God the Judge, and not from man!

Some, again, are *rocky-ground* hearers; they are exactly the opposite sort. The wayside hearer's heart may be good soil *underneath*, but it is beaten hard by thoughtlessness, *on the outside*. But the rocky-ground hearer has a little good-looking soil on the outside, and within it is hard as stone. They are *fair-weather* people. They are well disposed to everything good, at first; they like religion, and good Christian people—praise the preacher—sing and

pray, and profess as loud as anybody. They're always ready for the good seed, *if it only could take root and grow.* But it can't. It is only the *outside* of their hearts that is tender, or that receives the good seed; everything below that is proud and hard and careless. Sometimes they are *kind, affectionate* people; when they see the preacher or the Christian friend distressed, it troubles them. If you weep, they'll weep too. If you look solemn, their faces grow grave and solemn too. But notice—it isn't a very deep or bitter trouble; there is even something pleasant mixed with the pain. Such people like to go to funerals and to big meetings. They like excitement—like to weep, and shout, and sing loudly. But under all that is a cold, dead, faithless heart.

Sometimes they are *good-natured*, amiable people. They see that their friends are anxious to make Christians of them, and they would like to please them. If you ask them to go to church, or to pray, or to give up their sins, they agree to it right off, to oblige you. It isn't God they care about, but man.

Then there are people who seem to have *a natural liking for religious things.* Some of them are timid and fearful, and some of them are serious and thoughtful. The timid ones are afraid of death, and they think about religion as something that will make death more safe and easy. So, whenever their fears arise; when they're sick, or when they come

out of any danger—even when a heavy thunder storm begins to boom and flash over their heads—they grow religious in a moment. A little soil on the top of their hearts grows soft just then, but the rock is all the same! The serious people are those that get weary of the silly babble of the world—weary of the foolish laughter and poor blind selfishness that makes up so much of men's talk. It is a comfort to them, after all the jangle and folly that they hear, to meet people whose heart is on higher things; and often they enjoy it so much, that they seem just as religious as any Christian could be. But it's only the outside of their heart after all.

Now all these different kinds of people look very well and very promising, at first, *if they would only last;* but that's the trouble. Nothing less than changing the whole heart will make a man firm and steady in religion. God must make him a "new creature in Christ Jesus;" but then, you know, he would not be a stony ground hearer. As he is now, a little persecution or temptation—a little discouragement or a scoffing friend—will wither up all his good resolutions, take all the thoughtfulness out of his face and out of his heart, and leave it as barren and hopeless as ever.

And how terrible a thing this is—that sinners can *make believe* that they are Christians, and cheat themselves! keep the stony heart in their flesh, and flatter themselves that it's fruitful soil! Oh

how many are ruining their souls just that way —looking as if they had God's blessing, but living and dying under God's curse! They are the stony ground hearers.

But there is still another kind of unfruitful hearers; the Lord likened them to *thorny* ground. The roots of thorns were hid in the ground before the good seed was sown, and they were left there, instead of being dug out and burned. In the course of time, both sprung up, the good plants from the seed, and the evil plants from the roots. Of course the evil plants had the advantage; the long root-branches filled all the ground, and sucked up all the juices and fatness of it, while the tender little seed-roots, pushing here and there, would be broken or pushed back, and starved. It's the old story of trying to be religious with the old heart; an idle and hopeless work!

> "The heart unchanged can never rise
> To happiness and God."

That's where our false professors come from; most of them. The old sins, that never were killed out of the heart, spring up and flourish again when their first terror and distress is over. In the winter, you know, the thorns die down to the ground, but the roots live on. The frost and snow may come, and the storms of sleet and bitter cold rain may beat, and the wild winds may howl; but all that doesn't hurt what's buried so deep. If you want to

kill them out completely, you must tear up the earth with the plough, and lay hold of them and drag them out and burn them. Then the wheat or corn may live and thrive ; but if you don't do that, the thorns will "spring up and choke them."

Now conviction for sin is like winter ; it makes the outside sins die off for a while, makes men mend their ways and change their bad habits. The profane man stops swearing, and the Sabbath-breaker goes to church, and the passionate man keeps his temper, and the covetous man gives something to the poor and something to the gospel. *If they did not, we wouldn't have any hope for them at all.* If the briers did not die, the farmer wouldn't even sow his seed. So conviction reforms men's lives, but it doesn't change their hearts. It takes *conversion* to do that; and if men are not thoroughly converted by God's grace, the thorn-roots will be there still ; and when conviction is over, and the clouds of winter break up, they will spring out of the earth and take possession of the heart.

In this way many a man comes out quite bright at first, and joins the church. But just when you expect to see the *plants of grace* flourishing, they begin to dwindle and die. The same old sins, or worse ones, are breaking out all over him ; and he goes back to his covetousness, or his angry passion, or his pride, or his swearing, or drinking again, and his last state is worse than the first. I say the same sins, or worse ones ; you know, after we clear

a piece of ground, other kinds of bushes and vines often grow up, that we never saw there before; and that second growth is tougher, and harder to root out, than the first one was. Just so it is often with the unconverted man that has been convicted, or that has professed religion. The second growth of sins is more wicked and hopeless than ever.

The only hope for any of us is to carry our evil hearts to God and give them to him, and earnestly pray him, for his mercies' sake, to tear up the whole soil and root out our best loved and besetting sins. Then, though sins will no doubt spring up again, they won't have that great advantage of *the old roots to grow on;* and by God's blessing, the good seed may spring up and fill our hearts, and choke down all evil plants together.

That was what the Lord spoke of last—the hearers that were like good ground; ground that is soft above and fruitful below, ground from which the evil plants have been completely rooted up. On such ground the seed may not spring up as quick as it does on the thin and stony places, nor spindle up as fast as if it grew among thorns; but it will take deep root, and thrive, and bear fruit; some more and some less, but it will all bear fruit.

And so there are some that, when they hear God's word, "receive it into good and honest hearts." Not holy hearts yet; that isn't what the Lord Jesus meant to say; but hearts *ready for the seed.* They are willing to be taught of God. They don't hate

his counsels and scoff at his word. They feel a great need of instruction. They have found out that they are poor, lost, and ruined sinners. They know that only God can help them out of their trouble, and that he helps us by his word. So they come, like Mary, and sit down at Jesus' feet. They listen to the gospel, and say as David did, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak."

They are also tender hearts. They remember how shamefully they have treated that kind and holy Father who is in heaven. They feel that he must be angry with them, and they want peace with God. They are cut to the heart and cry out, "Men and brethren, what must we do to be saved?" They look up to the Saviour's cross, and are ashamed to think how often they have taken his name in vain, and profaned his Sabbaths, and wasted his grace. And when the message of the gospel comes, they take good heed to it. It is just the news they want to hear.

They are also "honest" hearts. A great many sinners are trying to cheat themselves about religion. They don't want to think that their hearts are so vile as conscience says they are. They reason and reason about it, to make out that the sinner's danger is not so dreadful after all. But these *good ground* hearers receive it all. And though our Saviour's way of saving us is very humbling, and very hard to our wicked and unbelieving hearts, they don't try to

persuade themselves that it is any other way than it is. They receive the word into *honest* hearts.

Those hearts—those teachable, tender, humble, honest hearts are the ones God loves and blesses. They learn the terrible lesson of our sin and woe. Their contrite hearts are broken with shame and sorrow. They "go to Jesus, though their sins high as a mountain rise." And while they're weeping, like poor Mary Magdalene, at Jesus' feet, and not daring to look up into his face, the Lord of glory is smiling on them; he beholds and loves them. Presently he says, "Go in peace! thy sins are forgiven thee." Oh, wasn't that word worth waiting for, praying for, weeping for? The old war is all over. The guilty, dying soul is reconciled to God, and made to live. Hope and joy break out, like flowers in spring. Sweet praises fill his heart and tune his lips—Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace!

But Christ says, "They bring forth fruit." All our growing and promising would come to nothing without that. Those that really "live unto God" very soon learn to ask Paul's question—"Lord, what wilt thou have me *to do?*" The heart that loves anybody always tries to do something for the person it loves. You like to bring something home at night for your child, or your wife, or your mother. And so, if we truly love God, we will want to serve him, please him, honour him. Some people are naturally more active than others; some

true Christians are more in earnest than others; and so, some will bring forth more fruit, and others less. But the idle and heartless and fruitless are weeds, and not wheat. At the last, they will be gathered up and burned; but of the wheat God says, "Gather it up into my garner."

It's a poor business to make loud professions, and not stick to them. Such church members will rise to "shame and everlasting contempt." But the humble soul that strives to do its duty and fill its place, God will value above gold and precious stones; that soul, however lowly and poor its place on earth may be, God will honour. "She hath done what she could," says our Lord Jesus; "wherever my gospel is preached in the whole world it shall be told of her, that she hath done this."

Let us now search our hearts, and know what kind of "hearers" we are. For God's word never returns to him void. The seed he sows shall not be wasted. He will require it of us again. And oh how dreadful will be the end of those who can show no good fruit of all *his* labour! God be merciful unto us and bless us, and give us good and honest hearts, to receive his precious word and live!

"WATCH."

A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify;
A never dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky.

To serve the present age,
My calling to fulfil,
Oh, may it all my powers engage
To do my Master's will!

Arm me with jealous care,
As in thy sight to live;
And Oh! thy servant, Lord, prepare
A strict account to give.

Help me to watch and pray,
And on thyself rely,
Assured, if I my trust betray,
I shall for ever die.

"OH HOW LOVE I THY LAW!"

Holy Bible! book divine!
Precious treasure, thou art mine!
Mine, to tell me whence I came;
Mine, to teach me what I am.

Mine, to chide me when I rove;
Mine, to show a Saviour's love;
Mine art thou to guide my feet,
Mine, to judge, condemn, acquit.

Mine, to comfort in distress,
If the Holy Spirit bless;
Mine, to show by living faith
Man can triumph over death.

Mine, to tell of joys to come,
And the rebel sinner's doom,
O thou precious book divine,
Precious treasure, thou art mine!

SERMON X.

PARABLES—THE PRODIGAL SON.

"For this my son was dead, and is alive again: he was lost, and is found." Luke xv. 24.

ONE of the kindest of all God's words to us, is "*sons*." Considering our wickedness, we could very well expect him to call us rebels, transgressors, or anything else that is wretched and vile. But even when he rebukes us for sin, how often he takes some tender name to give us! "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! for I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me!" And again, "If I be a Father, where is mine honour?" And again, "Is Ephraim my dear son?" And again, "The rich and the poor meet together, and the Lord is the Father of them all."

And among all the beautiful parables of the Lord Jesus Christ, there is none that his people take more delight in, than the story of the prodigal son. In that he tells us both how wicked we are to treat God as we do, and how he loves us through all our ingratitude and sin. I know very well that the parable has another meaning too; but we are busy

with the lessons of salvation. We can't turn aside to other matters till *that* is settled; we can only praise and wonder at the wisdom and goodness that can teach us so much in a few and simple words.

There was a man that had two sons. The youngest one could not wait till his father should die, or till he was ready to divide his property; he came and said, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. So the kind father shared all that he had between his two sons. Now this younger son was the prodigal.

Not many days after, he gathered everything together, turned his back on his father and his home, and travelled to a far country. There he wouldn't see the tears in his mother's eyes, or the sorrow in his father's heart; there, no kind friends would rebuke and warn and try to save him. And he wasted what his father gave him in wickedness. It was because he loved such evil ways that he went away from home.

Then when his property was all gone, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want. When bread was plentiful, he despised and wasted it; now he needs it, but there is none for him! Till at last, the proud and miserable young man had to hire himself out to take care of somebody's swine; the lowest business a man could follow in that country, a calling that everybody scorned. But even that way he couldn't live; so great was

his hunger that he was ready to eat even of the swine's food.

And now at last he began to see how foolish and wicked he had been. All his vain and idle thoughts left him; his pride was gone; he found that he was a poor, miserable, helpless creature. He remembered his happy home, but he felt that it never could be his home again. He had sinned away his peace, his property, and his father's love! He remembered the gentle arms that used to be round him; the sweet safety of his childhood; the joy of doing right and being loved for it. But alas! there's no more joy for him! If they will only take him now for a servant instead of a son, that's all he can hope for. And oh! how he'll rejoice to be under that blessed roof again, even as a servant! "He came to himself, and said, 'How many hired servants of my father have 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.'"

And so he set out, with heavy heart and feeble steps, to seek his father's face. He knew not, in his humble shame, how his father would treat even that small petition. "Perhaps he will be so angry with me, he won't even hear me out, won't let me confess my sin, but drive me away as I deserve.

But I must try him. I'm perishing with hunger, and where else can I go?"

The Lord Jesus doesn't tell us how the poor prodigal got along and obtained food on his journey. No doubt he had often to beg for a morsel of bread and a cup of water. But that was a small matter to him, with the fear and sorrow he had in his heart. It wasn't worth mentioning, after that. But at last he comes in sight of home. Don't you think his heart must have failed him then, more than ever? Oh what thoughts of his young days must have rushed on his mind! how his father used to smile on him and his mother to bless him! what bright hopes filled his heart, and now they have all come to this! Then he remembers the day when he broke away from that happy shelter; how his weeping father plead with him; how his gray hairs bent down in sorrow, and he mourned aloud over a wicked son. "Can he forgive me? If he curses me and drives me away, it will be just what I deserve!" So he weeps and trembles. His heart fails him, and he stops and turns back; then he thinks how desperate his case is, and he falters on again.

But while he lingers and trembles, his father sees him! "While he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion on him, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him." Then the prodigal son began to say what he had resolved to say; "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy

son"—Why does he stop? why doesn't he finish his prayer—"make me as one of thy hired servants?" Ah, he has ventured at last to lift up his weary, longing eyes to his injured father's face. He sees the tears of compassion, and he hears the words of blessing. "This isn't the way to meet a hired servant; I'm a son again; I'm a son!"

Then the father said to his servants, "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it; for this my son was dead, and is alive again—he was lost, and is found!"

Now you can see for yourselves what a picture this story is of the returning sinner and the forgiving God. The sinner is a son, because God made him, and rules over him, and loves him. He is a son, because all that he has is given to him by God—the portion of goods that the Father shares out to him. He is a son, because his proper home is in heaven, where God lives, and not here.

But the sinner is a disobedient, wasteful, wicked son. What noble possessions God gave him! A mind to think and a heart to feel—health and strength—a body so curiously and wonderfully made to do everything that we need to do, and to bear so much toil and hardship—friends and kindred—homes and hopes and joys—time to turn unto God—a Bible to teach him religion—a Sabbath to learn it and a life to practise it—a church to worship in and privileges to enjoy—a crucified Saviour to

atone for his sins—a Holy Spirit to restrain and turn him—a prayer-hearing God seated on the throne of grace! And what has he done with them all?

Why he has gone as far from God as he could, carrying God's gifts along with him. I know we can't go from God *in fact:* "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." But the sinner can shut God out of his thoughts and out of his love. He can make his plans, and spend his days, and waste his powers, just as if there never was a God. He can make a mock at sin, he can forget God's law, he can neglect his privileges and break the Sabbath, and trifle away the day of grace: and so he wastes his substance in riotous living. He makes the world his home, and forgets and despises heaven. As I said, he gets as far from God as he can. He sins away his early tenderness, he burdens his conscience, he resists the Spirit. He brings himself to awful dangers, and utter helplesness.

And then, when he has tried all that sin can do for him, then comes the "mighty famine." It is just as sure as the rising and setting of the sun, that the pleasures and labours of this world will

leave the immortal soul hungry and thirsty. God has made our hearts to enjoy heaven and Himself for ever; and do you think anything earthly can satisfy us? You might as well try to fill the great bed of the ocean with a cupfull of water! You have all tried it—all have had comforts and enjoyments here below; and when could you say that you were happy? A man once tried to find somebody that would declare that he was happy. He went to a farmer's house whom God had prospered in his business; and while they talked, the farmer pointed to his waving fields and green meadows—his full barns and his fine cattle; he boasted that everything was flourishing and doing well, and his eyes sparkled with pleasure. "Then, friend, I suppose you can freely say, I am happy—can't you?" But the farmer's face fell; he could say he was well off—comfortable—prosperous; but he wasn't happy.

Then this man called on a lady who had several fine children. She told him how well they were coming on in school—how good their health was—how well they behaved—above all, how they loved their mother. Pride and pleasure shone in her face, until he said—"Well, surely you are happy." She shook her head; she was fond of her children and they were a great comfort to her; but she couldn't say she was happy.

He tried many others with the same question—the rich man with his luxuries, the learned man with his books, the newly married man with his bright

and loving wife; but nothing could he find—nothing in the wide world—to make a man happy without the grace of God.

"Oh cease, my wandering soul,
On restless wing to roam!
All this wide world to either pole,
Has not for thee a home!"

All these vain disappointing pleasures only make the man long more for true peace, just as drinking salt water makes you more thirsty. And besides that, conscience keeps stirring. The restless spirit gets more and more burdened with a sense of sin. The sinner don't understand himself yet, and he imagines all sorts of reasons for his feeling so badly. He never dreams that it is *peace with God* that he wants, and a clear conscience. So he hurries from one worldly pleasure to another—tries to divert his mind—tries dissipation—tries to shake off gloomy thoughts by keeping lively company, and having merry friends about him, to laugh, and sing, and joke—but it's all in vain.

"He went and joined himself to a citizen of that far country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine." As the prodigal son would do anything for a little bread to eat, so the sinner will plunge into almost any sin that he thinks will ease his mind, and bring him a little comfort. Like the thirst that torments us in fever, and makes us catch at anything to relieve us; just like that is the troubled sinner's distress. He shakes off serious thoughts;

he dances, laughs; perhaps drinks hard, in the vain hope of getting light-hearted and cheerful again. But the prodigal son couldn't live on the wages he got for feeding swine; neither can the sinner satisfy his heart with sinful pleasures.

Then he would fain have filled himself with the husks the swine did eat. The husks looked like food, and swine could live on them, but not men. So, when everything else fails the sinner, he tries *religious practices;* singing and praying, reading his Bible and going to meetings, not because his heart desires them, but because he wants to ease the pain in his mind. He takes them as *physic*, when they are meant for *food.* If he could be careless and at ease again in sin, how soon he'd quit his pious ways! That's the kind of worship the blind and brutish heathen have; some words and postures and offerings that will keep their gods from getting angry. And that's what the foolish and troubled sinner wants to do—quiet God's anger and his own conscience by a little outside religion. He would fain fill himself with these husks! But it's all in vain;

> "Here at his heart the burden lies,
> And past offences pain his eyes."

And now at last he begins to come to his senses; he begins to feel that nobody can help him but his heavenly Father. "What have sins and Satan done for me? What good have I got by all my heartless prayers and unwilling worship? How can God be

pleased with a mockery that man would despise? Why, the lowliest of God's family, those whom he blesses the least, how much better off they are than I! Oh the riches of his power and goodness! If he would only speak kindly to me; if he would just smile upon me! I could live on that; but now I perish with hunger. How can I ask him for any mercy, when I've treated him so shamefully? I'm utterly unfit to be called his son.

"'Oh whither shall I fly,
Burdened and sick and faint?
To whom shall I my troubles show,
And pour out my complaint?'

"And yet he is a God of mercy; what wonders of love he has shown us already! If I stay away, I shall die for ever; if I go, he *may* pity and receive me. I will arise and go to my Father. But ah, dare I go? Can he pardon such a wretch as I am? Yes, I must try him, it is my only hope! I will go and say unto my Father—'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.'"

Now here are two great points gained: the sense and confession of sin, and the willingness to pray. Often the sinner begins by feeling as if God was a hard master, unwilling to let him enjoy himself, and threatening to destroy him, soul and body, for ever, if he doesn't give up everything to him. And when he goes to pray in that spirit, it's mere *begging off*.

He wants to escape punishment, and he's willing to beg and pray, if he can only get off safe, whether he deserves to be punished or not. There's more hatred than love in that.

But true repentance is ashamed of sin, as much as it's afraid of woe. It doesn't wait to make a bargain with God that we will confess everything, if he will only forgive us this time. Oh no! the sinner that truly repents, can't keep from owning his sin. His weary and sorrowing heart is sick of its own wickedness; and it would grieve over it, if there wasn't any ruin for us after death. He remembers the goodness and mercy and holiness of God, and compares them with his careless and ungodly ways, and he can't so much as lift up his eyes to heaven. He cries, "Unclean! unclean!" as the leper did. "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done all this evil in thy sight!"

But the other great step is *willingness and courage to pray*. At first, the more we see our sin and danger, the more unwilling we are to go near to God; just as the prodigal son would rather hire himself out to feed swine in a far country than go home to his father. It isn't pleasant to look even a man in the face, when we know we have behaved badly to him; how much worse to go to God, when we know we've been ungrateful and rebellious sons! And then, even when we are willing to go, often we are afraid. Our foolish hearts shrink from it, as though somehow it made matters worse for us to

confess and pray! We know it isn't so, but the feeling—the unbelieving, cowardly *feeling*—is there. And when at last, by God's grace, we make our way to his mercy-seat in spite of all these doubts and fears, it's a great and happy victory.

Oh what a terrible venture it seems to the poor guilty, orphan soul, when it resolves to go to Jesus, *now, as it is!*

"I'll go to Jesus, though my sin
High as a mountain rose;
I know his courts—I'll enter in,
Whatever may oppose."

He goes, as a man might leap from the top of a burning house, or the platform of a breaking railcar; hardly hoping to escape with his life, but not daring to wait any longer. O blind sinner! can the everlasting arms of mercy fail? Can almighty love forsake or slay? The venture and the peril is all in *lingering;* only let go everything else, and cling to Christ, and all is well.

But there was one strange mistake in the prodigal's prayer—it was, going to *his father*, and asking to be made *a servant.* I know he was thinking of his sins and his unworthiness; but still it showed how little he knew of a father's heart. That father thought a great deal more of his infant days, and of the joy of getting his son home again, than of all his disobedience. So it turned out that when he did fall down before his father and confessed his

faults, he stopped short in his prayer. He saw that such forgiving love *couldn't* make him a servant, but only a son.

Now when we go to God repenting, it is true the words of our prayer are not like the prodigal son's. The Gospel has taught us better. "NOT SERVANTS, BUT SONS," is the glorious promise. And yet the feeling in our hearts is just the same. We never understand beforehand that we are to be sons and daughters of God. We humbly hope that he will treat us kindly just as long as we behave ourselves well and pray regularly. But when at last we fall at Jesus' feet, lost in wonder, love, and praise, we begin to understand it. "Would our God give his Son to die for any but his children? Would he take our sorrowing and guilty hearts into his hands, and comfort and heal us, if we were only to be hired servants? This is a father's love! I feel it! Glory to my Saviour, I was a rebel and a wretched sinner, but now I am a son! My inmost soul cries, Abba, Father!"

Behold then what manner of love he hath bestowed upon us. He comes forth to meet us, in spite of our unbelief and hard heart, and pours his love upon us. He puts the robe of Christ's righteousness upon us. He comforts us by his word, and he feasts us at his table. Henceforth, O returning sinner, you have a home with God. Your loneliness and your hunger, your misery and your sin, are all passed away together.

Why, now, poor wandering and wicked souls, why will ye die? In your father's house is bread enough and to spare. There is room for you in Jesus' bleeding, gracious heart; room in the covenant of life, room among the ransomed here—room yonder where rest, and glory, and God are.

Come ye weary, heavy laden,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore;
Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity, love, and power.
He is able,
He is willing, doubt no more.

"The full Assurance of Hope."

How happy every child of grace,
Who knows his sins forgiven!
This earth, he cries, is not my place;
I seek my place in heaven;
A country far from mortal sight,
Yet, oh, by faith I see;
The land of rest, the saints' delight,—
The heaven prepared for me.

A stranger in the world below,
I calmly sojourn here;
Nor can its happiness or woe
Provoke my hope or fear.
Its evils in a moment end;
Its joys as soon are past;
But oh the bliss to which I tend
Eternally shall last!

To that Jerusalem above
With singing I repair;
While in the flesh, my joy and love,
My heart and soul, are there.
There my exalted Saviour stands,
My merciful High Priest,
And still extends his wonnded hands
To take me to his breast.

"THE REPENTING SINNER RETURNING."

Come, humble sinner, in whose breast,
A thousand thoughts revolve;
Come, with your guilt and fear oppressed
And make this last resolve:

"I'll go to Jesus, though my sin
High as a mountain rose;
I know his courts, I'll enter in,
Whatever may oppose.

"Prostrate I'll lie before his throne,
And there my guilt confess;
I'll tell him I'm a wretch undone,
Without his sovereign grace.

"I'll to the gracious King approach,
Whose sceptre pardon gives;
Perhaps he may command my touch,
And then the suppliant lives.

"Perhaps he will admit my plea,
Perhaps will hear my prayer;
But if I perish, I will pray,
And perish only there.

"I can but perish if I go,
I am resolved to try;
For if I stay away, I know
I must for ever die."

SERMON XI.

CHRIST'S FRIENDS AND ENEMIES.

"He that is not with me is against me." Matt. xii. 30.
"He that is not against us is for us." Luke ix. 50.

In that sad day on Mount Sinai, when God sent Moses down in great haste, because Aaron and the people had made and worshipped the golden calf; and when Moses threw down the sacred tables of stone, where the law was written with God's own finger; threw them down and broke them in his holy sorrow and anger; in that sad day, the man of God stood in the gate of the camp, and cried aloud, "Who is on the Lord's side?" There stood the shameful idol, lifted up on high where all could see it; most of the people stood round, with nearly all their clothes thrown off, ashamed and frightened when they saw Moses come back, that they thought was dead; but many kept right on with their wicked idol-worship, and rioting, and feasting, caring neither for Moses nor his God. There too, almost over their heads, were the awful rocks of Sinai, with the cloud and fire of Jehovah, gleaming fierce through the blackness, but silent and still. Clear and loud,

over all the heathen tumult, came that solemn question: Who is on the Lord's side? And the sons of Levi, that had hidden their shame and tears in their tents till then, came out and gathered around the leader that God had given them, and stood ready to obey his commands. As they went through the camp, killing the headstrong and obstinate rebels who would not give up their idol, they saved all Israel from destruction by coming out manfully on the Lord's side.

And now, as we study the life of the Lord Jesus, the question keeps coming up in our thoughts; who was on his side, and who was against him? The world was full of wickedness. The honour of God was insulted on every hand. Our Saviour came preaching repentance and salvation to dying men. He was man's true, brave, and gracious friend. Who loved him? Who helped him? Who hated, and hindered, and grieved him?

Those two short verses I read you just now, will show you that everybody that had anything to do with him at all was on one side or the other. He had to be either Christ's friend, or his enemy. So it is now. Every man and woman, in a Christian country, is either the enemy or the friend of our great Redeemer! But we'll come back to that point after a while. Now, I want to show you some of the people that lived when the Lord was on the earth; and that were plainly on his side, or turned against him.

I. And first, some of his *enemies*. Does it seem strange to you, that such a pure and gracious being should have enemies? Ah! that only shows you what a vile and wicked world this is. The nobler and purer anybody is, the more he is hated. Why, who is blasphemed and dishonoured like our God? And because the Lord Jesus was so beautifully good; because he would not give up an inch to the proud and wicked of this world; because he abhorred all manner of sin, they gnashed their teeth at him, and finally betrayed and killed him.

His first enemies were *the Pharisees*. As I have told you about them before, a very few words will be enough now. They trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. Their righteousness stood in meats and drinks; in fasting and long prayers; in washing their hands often, and keeping all the ceremonies of the law strictly. All the while, their hearts were proud and selfish; no deep repentance; no faith, no love; nothing but what they called good works. And when the Lord Jesus came, they were offended at him. He kept the law carefully; but then he told everybody that keeping the law wouldn't do them any good, if their *heart* wasn't right. And the very thing the Pharisees wanted was some good works that would answer for a religion *without* changing the heart. No wonder they quarrelled with him, then. The trouble wasn't that they were overcareful of good works. A man can't be a good Christian

without being very particular about his conduct; true religion will make him particular. But the trouble was that they wanted to do without a Saviour: they would not receive the Lord Jesus Christ, and love and obey him. And so, the more glorious he appeared, the more their hearts were hardened against him; until they hated him enough to kill him.

Then came *the Sadducees.* They didn't believe in angels nor in devils; nor that there was any more living after we died; any heaven, any hell, any eternity! Of course *they* had no use for a Saviour of souls. If the Lord Jesus would have agreed to reign over them, and lead them in battle, and conquer all the nations for them, they would have followed him over the whole world. But he was "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world;" his kingdom was "the kingdom of heaven." So the Sadducees despised and hated him, and at last actually joined in the plot against him, and helped to kill him.

Another company of his enemies was the *scribes and lawyers.* The scribes' business was to take care of the books of the Old Testament. They copied them and compared different copies together, to see if they were all right. They even counted the very letters of their Bible, and every one must have just the right number of letters in it, or they would cut it up or burn it up. So far, it was all very well; but their proud and foolish hearts went on to think the sacred letters and books so holy, that it made a

man righteous above everybody else, just to copy and study them. They made their Bible their God; they made a Saviour for themselves out of their pen and ink! They neglected true religion, and lived selfish and wicked lives, and kept impenitent and unbelieving hearts, and yet expected to be saved for their righteousness! So they were jealous of the Lord, from the first day he began to preach. They rejected and hated him, because he taught men so wisely that they could not answer his words. They, too, took a place among the enemies of Christ.

And what a dreadful thing it is to think of, that the specially religious persons in the Jewish nation should be the very ones to hate and hinder the Lord of glory! "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." The more light and knowledge they had had, the more their souls were set against the only Saviour of men. While he lived, they opposed him; when he worked wonders and saved men, they plotted against him; and when he was dying they mocked him!

Then again, there were *the Gadarenes.* So far as we know, our Lord visited them but once. Perhaps you will think they were very unfortunate, to be passed by, while Capernaum and Cana had so many visits. But I think it was a mercy that the Lord Jesus stayed away. For how did they treat him when he did come to them? He had sailed over the Sea of Galilee, on purpose to do them a great

kindness by healing some of their sick people. As he went up the hill from the water's edge, two men met him. They were possessed with devils—so wild and fierce that nobody dared to travel that way. People had caught them and chained them, sometimes; but in their mad strength they broke the chains and tore off the fetters—ran out of the city, and lived in the holes dug out of the rocks to bury dead bodies in. There they lived—wandering over the mountains, crying out and cutting themselves with stones.

But when they saw Jesus—wild and terrible as they were—they ran to him, fell down at his feet and worshipped him! He bade the devils come out of the men; but instead of obeying him at once, they dared to delay and pray to him, using the men's voice. "What have we to do with thee thou son of the most High God? We adjure thee, torment us not before the time!" Still the command came back to them, clear and firm—"Come out of the men!" And again the devils begged him not to send them out of the country, but at least to let them go into the swine! That shows you what a great victory the Lord Jesus won, when Satan tempted him. What a difference in their words, now and then! Then Satan tried to bribe our Saviour to worship him; now they make those mean and foolish cries before him, and confess that he is the Master, and they are his servants. They hate him; they do him and men

all the harm they can; but they have to obey his commands.

Now the Gadarenes had no right to keep those herds of swine. It was against their own law. So our Lord was willing to save these two poor men, and cure the people of their sin, and punish the devils by granting their prayer, all at once. So he said to the devils, Go! Then the whole legion left the men, and entered into the swine. In a moment the men were cured, and in their right mind again; they sat at Jesus' feet, clothed decently, and full of thanks to him who had done such wonders for them. But the swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and were drowned.

Then the men who kept the swine went into the city and told what had happened; and the Gadarenes came out to see about it. And when they found it was even so, they had to choose between the Saviour, who had cured their friends and was ready to bless them, and their unlawful business. And alas! they were all agreed about it; they couldn't give up their wicked gains. They besought the Lord Jesus to depart out of their country. They had rather give up their Redeemer than their swine! So he heard their prayer, and got into his boat, and went away. And, so far as we know, he never went to them again.

Now, I say, these Gadarenes must be counted among Christ's enemies. They wouldn't have him to reign over them, and they drove him out of their

country. All his love and blessing and mighty grace went with him. They had sold all their heavenly hopes for their swine!

I might go on to speak of other enemies. There was king Herod, who could have saved Christ's life by a word, as you will see when we come to his trial, but his proud and cruel heart turned against our meek and lovely Saviour. So he mocked him, and wrapped him in purple robes, and sent him back to Pilate to die. There was Judas, who betrayed his Master, and sold him to the priests for thirty pieces of silver—partly because he was enraged against him, and partly because he loved money. But these are as many as we have time to speak of, and enough to show you what kind of people they were.

You see there was a great variety among them in other points. From the self-righteous and haughty Pharisees to the Gadarenes feeding their swine—whom the Pharisees would hardly speak to, except to curse them for breaking the law; from the miserly Judas to king Herod—all kinds of people could be our Lord's enemies. But they all agreed in this; *they refused to receive him as the Son of God*—to take him into their hearts, as the Saviour of their souls, and the Master of their lives. That was their sin; and that was their ruin.

II. We come now to Christ's friends. They were not so many as his foes; but what a glory it is to them to be told of in the Bible and in every church, and

in every land, as the faithful and true hearted ones! Poor and simple as they stand, they have a name of honour, and a store of blessing, that will outlive the sun and the stars. They are the jewels in Jesus' crown, and the best loved of his heart.

First on the list come *the Apostles.* There was a great difference among them. Some were rich, and some were poor. One was a publican, and another was "an Israelite indeed in whom there was no guile." One was a Thomas—wilful, positive, full of unbelief; another was called James the Just. But they all agreed in one thing. They "left all and followed him." They gave up all their prospects of earthly comfort—their hopes of a happy home, and a quiet life, and honour among their countrymen, and a peaceful old age, and to die in the bosom of their families—sacrificed it all, to follow Jesus. They didn't understand him at first; they were full of pride and prejudice and ignorance and mistake; but nevertheless they obeyed and trusted him when they were most perplexed, frightened, and cast down; and they at last committed their souls to him to be saved. They forsook him when he was betrayed; but they returned to their love and faithfulness when he died; and so the Lord, when he rose from the grave, called them his brethren—"Go and tell *my brethren* that I go before them into Galilee; there shall ye see me!"

Lazarus and Mary and Martha were also friends of Jesus. And it's a singular and comforting thing

that we are not told of anything that Lazarus *did* for his Lord; only that Jesus loved him. He wasn't a great preacher, or a wise man, or even a rich man, so far as we can find out. But the Lord loved him. Mary was the gentle daughter; Martha was the bustling, energetic friend; and he had a place in his heart for them all. When his day's work was done in Jerusalem—his miracles, and preaching, and reasoning, and rebuking; when his weary head must rest, and his lonely heart wanted comfort, he went out through the gates in the cool of the evening, tarried a little while, maybe, in the garden of Gethsemane, and then as night came on, he sat down in Lazarus' house in Bethany, just over the hill. Perhaps they sat on the flat house-top together; they washed his aching feet with cool water; and when he was refreshed, they sat down at his feet, and listened to his wise and gracious words, that were "like cold waters to the thirsty," because they were "good news from a far country."

They were not called on to give up all and follow him, like the Apostles. They were not "persecuted for righteousness' sake," that we know of, until after Lazarus was raised from the dead. But they were the friends of Jesus, because they received him as their Saviour, and owned him as their Lord. And all earth and heaven shall hear of them, because of their faith, as the people whom the Lord loved.

And there were "*Joanna*, the wife of Chuza.

Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who followed him," and supplied his wants out of their property. Our lowly Saviour, who could feed five thousand with a few loaves, and to whom the whole world belonged, was not above receiving his daily bread and his simple clothing from these women who believed on him. They also accepted, trusted, and obeyed him; and they also are written down among his friends.

We mustn't forget *Zaccheus*, whom the Lord Jesus so publicly acknowledged as his friend. He, too, was a publican, and was hated for it by the Jews. "They murmured at Jesus, because he was gone to eat with a man who was a sinner." But he showed his gratitude and love that day, by giving away half of all his goods to the poor, and paying back to every man whose money he had taken unjustly, four times as much as he took away. Now, it wasn't the giving away and paying back that made him Christ's friend, but *the reason why he did it.* He had found his Saviour, and his heart was full of love and joy. "This day," the Lord said; "this day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as Zaccheus also is a son of Abraham."

And we must also count *the Samaritan woman* as one of the friends, though she had been such a sinner, and though she was so ignorant. For she accepted Christ as soon as he told her who he was, and ran to bring others to see and hear him.

One more we must remember, fearful and faint-

hearted as he was; *Nicodemus*. He was a ruler of the Jews, and a master in Israel; the same came to Jesus by night. He was afraid of the other rulers and the Pharisees. He never forgot what he learned that night; but he hadn't the courage to come out manfully on the Lord's side, while Jesus lived. When he tried to defend his Saviour in the council, he did it cautiously and faintly, and without professing to be his disciple. Nevertheless, he trusted in him silently, prayed for him, watched over him; and when the Apostles forsook him and fled, and Peter had denied him, he and Joseph grew brave, took the poor broken body under their care, and were seen by all men to be his followers. Thus, feeble and fearful as he was, the Lord didn't disown him and cast him off. He "received him," though he was "weak in the faith."

These all believed on the Lord, and were owned and blessed of God; they, and such as they, were the *friends of Christ*, because they all received him as the Son of God; the Saviour and the King of men. And the enemies of Christ, as you heard just now, became so by refusing him as their Saviour and Master, and God's Son. That made the difference in those days, and it makes the difference now.

Now let us try this rule on Peter and the young ruler, and see how they are to be counted; on the Lord's side, or against him? You remember Peter was very rash and hasty: had to be rebuked very

often and very sharply. It was to him the Lord Jesus said, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" And in the terrible time when our Lord was seized and bound, and tried, and scourged, Peter denied him, over and over again, with oaths and curses!

On the other side, there was the young ruler, so much in earnest that he ran to the Saviour and kneeled at his feet before all the multitude, crying, "Good master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" When Christ told him to keep the commandments, he was able to say, "All these have I kept from my youth up." And Jesus looked earnestly at him and *loved him.* So correct was his life, and so tender was his heart! Jesus loved Lazarus who was his friend; he also loved the young ruler; was he also a friend?

Alas! he went away sorrowful, refusing to sell all that he had and follow Christ; "for he had great possessions." He longed to be saved; but *he wouldn't give up all for Christ.* There stood his meek but mighty Saviour, offering him eternal life. He was to purchase that life for him with his precious blood. But all his love and all his blood was rejected, for the sake of earthly riches. Correct and even lovely as he was, he refused to take his Saviour into his heart; and so he must take his place among the enemies.

But Peter, with all his faults and all his sins, was a friend of Christ. He owned our Lord as Son of God, and Saviour of the World. "Blessed art thou,

Simon son of Jona!" said Jesus; "flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." He repented bitterly of his sins; he gave up all his hopes and friends and worldly prospects to serve him. He entrusted his soul to him. So rash, headstrong, Christ-denying Peter was a friend, while the virtuous young ruler made himself an enemy.

Now let conscience take up the question: Who is on the Lord's side? Look at the Lord Jesus Christ to-day; he came into the world to be a Saviour. His whole heart was in it. He never turned aside to any other work, as long as he lived. He was the good shepherd, that gave his life for the sheep. Cruel enemies howled round him like wolves, and rested not till they nailed him to the shameful cross. Some plain people loved him with a true though fearful heart. They followed him through his journeys, in his poverty and reproach and loneliness. They were willing to be despised and hated of all men for his sake. And though they were frightened and fled for a little while when he was first seized, they came back, one by one, to weep for him when he was dead, and to hail him with fear and great joy when he rose from the grave. And then they went everywhere, trusting him, serving him, preaching for him, till he called them into his glory.

Whose partner are you? Do you belong to the company of those who received, or of those who re-

jected him? Do you go to his bleeding feet with all your sins, and all your idols, and surrender yourself to him? Or do you hold on to something earthly; some pride or passion or vain hope, and "let your God, your Saviour, go?"

You may not answer that question to me; you may not answer it plainly and bravely to yourself. But remember, *it is answered;* every day it is answered, one way or the other. And when the great last day comes, the angels will divide us, and bring us to the right hand or the left hand of the Judge, according as we have answered that question in our hearts. There will be the heavenly King in all his glory, and all the holy angels with him, calling his loved ones into heaven, and sending the wicked down to hell. Ah! it will be a great matter to us that day, how we settled this plain question: ARE WE THE KING'S FRIENDS, OR HIS ENEMIES?

REPENTANCE.

Oh! for a glance of heavenly day,
To take this stubborn stone away;
And thaw, with beams of love divine,
This heart, this frozen heart of mine.

The rocks can rend; the earth can quake;
The sea can roar; the mountains shake;
Of feeling all things show some sign,
But this unfeeling heart of mine.

To hear the sorrows thou hast felt,
Dear Lord, an adamant would melt;
But I can read each moving line,
And nothing move this heart of mine.

Thy judgments, too, unmoved I hear,
(Amazing thought!) which devils fear:
Goodness and wrath in vain combine,
To stir this stupid heart of mine.

But power divine can do the deed,
And much to feel that power I need;
Thy Spirit can from dross refine,
And move and melt this heart of mine.

Love to Christ.

Do not I love thee, O my Lord?—
  Behold my heart and see:
And turn each worthless idol out,
  That dares to rival thee.

Do not I love thee from my soul?
  Then let me nothing love:
Dead be my heart to every joy,
  Which thou dost not approve.

Is not thy name melodious still
  To mine attentive ear?
Doth not each pulse with pleasure beat
  My Saviour's voice to hear?

Hast thou a lamb in all thy flock,
I would disdain to feed?
Hast thou a foe, before whose face
I fear thy cause to plead?

Thou know'st I love thee, O my Lord;
But yet I long to soar
Far from the sphere of mortal joys,
That I may love thee more.

SERMON XII.

LAST DAYS.

"Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people."—Luke xxii. 1, 2.

Among all the mighty works which the Lord Jesus did, the most wonderful was raising Lazarus from the grave, after he had been four days dead. It was the only miracle of that sort that he did near Jerusalem; the others were done away off in Galilee. It made a great stir in that blind and wicked city, which "killed the prophets and stoned them that were sent to her;" and the chief priests and scribes were so enraged, that they wanted to murder both Christ and Lazarus, for fear the people would believe on Christ! So the Lord had gone back over the Jordan, and stayed there until the feast of the Passover was ready to begin. That was the appointed time when he was to come out boldly, and show himself as our Saviour and King. You remember how often he said—"My hour is not

yet come;" now at last it came and he was ready.

The great council of the Jews sent out their order, that if anybody knew where he was, he must make it known so that they might take him. So, instead of going on to Jerusalem with the great company of people that came up to the feast, Jesus stayed at Bethany, with his friend Lazarus. And as the news spread in the city that he was close by, in the village, a great many people went out to see him and hear him. They wanted to see Lazarus too; for since the world began, such a sight was never seen before as a man come back to life, after he had lain in the grave four days already.

Many of these people spent the whole night in Bethany, because they wanted to go with Jesus in the morning; but others went back and told the great multitudes that it was all true, what they had heard about the rising from the dead. They also gave notice that he was coming to the Temple the next day.

And when morning came, our Lord, who had kept his work so quiet before, now made everything ready to enter the city like an ancient king. He sent for a young ass' colt, that was never ridden before; some of the disciples laid some of their clothes on its back, and he sat on them. In a moment the people, that had stayed in Bethany, saw what he was going to do, and rejoiced, and joined in the procession—throwing green branches in the way, and

even the very robes that they wore. As they went on, over the Mount of Olives, hundreds and thousands of the people met them from the city and followed on together, till they passed the top of the hill, and could see the Temple where they were going.

Then they broke out with songs and shouts of joy; they sang the very words, taken from the Psalms, that the Jews were keeping to hail the Messiah with, when he should come:—

Hosanna!
Blessed is the King of Israel
That cometh in the name of the Lord!
Blessed be the kingdom of our father David,
That cometh in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest!*

Louder and louder rose the mighty shouts—Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord—Peace on earth, and glory in the highest—till the whole city heard them, and was moved. The people cried—Who is this? And the multitude answered—This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth. And so was fulfilled the word of God's ancient prophet, Zechariah: 'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout; O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee! He is just and hath salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even a colt the foal of an ass."

* Taken from Kitto's Daily Bible Illustrations.

He went right on to the Temple, and cast out all them that sold and bought in it, and overthrew the tables of tbe money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves. He used no "scourge of small cords" this time; for nobody dared to resist him, while the thousands of the people were shouting his praises, and the very children caught up the joyful song, and cried, Hosanna to the Son of David. The chief priests were sore displeased that he should be received as the Christ; but Jesus said—"Have ye never read—Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise!"

No doubt, now, the disciples and the multitude all expected the Lord Jesus to go right on and make himself King in Zion—turn out the Romans—gather an army and conquer the world. And they would certainly have fought like heroes under his banner. But there was one thing they hadn't courage for—*waiting patiently, and trusting him.* And when he disappointed their worldly hopes, they began to fall off from him, and all their Hosannas came to nothing. They saw their Saviour, owned him, and then forsook him. And Christ showed them what he thought of it, the next day, by one of the strangest things he did in his whole life.

As soon as he had reached the Temple and looked about on all things, he went back to Bethany, and finished the day and spent the night there. In the morning, as he went over to Jerusalem before breakfast to attend on the morning sacrifice, he was hun-

gry, and turned aside to a fig tree, that made such a show of leaves while the other trees were bare, that anybody might expect to find it full of figs. That's the way with the fig tree—its leaves flourish most, just when the fruit is getting ripe and fit to eat. So the tree made great promises; but when Jesus came to it, there was no fruit there! Just like this foolish multitude, that shouted so loud and seemed so earnest, and yet forsook him because they had no faith. Jesus said to the tree—"No man eat fruit of thee hereafter," and straightway it withered away! And just so was the curse of God ready to fall on the Jewish people and wither them away.

No wonder that our kind Lord had stopped, the day before, in the midst of their praises and songs, to weep over beautiful but lost Jerusalem! "If thou hadst known," he said, "even thou, at least in *this* thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation." And the long day of their mercy was over at last!

Now the chief priests and elders were resolved to destroy our Lord in some way, but they were afraid of the people; unless they could make them turn

against him, or the Roman Governor seize on him, they could not touch him. So they agreed with the Sadducees and the Herodians to send cunning messengers and to ask him ensnaring questions, so that he should either vex the people or provoke the governor.

First they asked him, by what authority he drove the traders out of the temple. If he said by his own authority, they would call it blasphemy to claim any power in God's house; or if he said that any man had a right to do so, then they would call him a disturber of the peace and an enemy to government. But he answered them by asking a question of them: "Was John the Baptist a true prophet, or a false prophet?" If they said, a true prophet, they saw he would ask them why they wouldn't believe on him. If they said, a false prophet, the people would stone them; for their minds were all made up, that God did send him. So they answered, "We cannot tell." Then our Lord said, "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."

They asked him again, "Shall we pay tribute to the Romans, or not?" The Romans had the power over them, and they had to pay it; but the Jews all hated to own it. So if our Lord said Yes, the Jews would be enraged against him; and if he said No, they would accuse him to Pilate. Now, the money we use is stamped with a certain mark, and that shows what country we belong to; and so the money the Jews had was stamped with a Roman

mark, and that showed what country they belonged to. Then the Lord Jesus said: "Ye hypocrites! why do ye tempt me? Show me a penny." They brought it, and behold there was the Roman mark on it. He answered: "Render therefore to Cesar the things that are Cesar's, and to God the things that are God's." That is: If you confess that the Romans reign over you, obey them; and if you confess that God reigns over you, obey him.

Then the Sadducees asked him: "If a woman was married seven times, and had no children by any marriage, whose wife would she be in heaven?" For these Sadducees didn't believe in a heaven. But Jesus told them that they understood neither the Bible nor the power of God. In heaven, people neither marry nor are given in marriage; they are like the angels of God. But as to the resurrection; did not God say to Moses, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?" God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. So Abraham and Isaac and Jacob must be alive, though they died so many hundred years ago.

That silenced the Sadducees; and all the rest were astonished and delighted. But they questioned him once more: "Which is the greatest commandment of all in the law?" Now the wise men disputed a great deal about that, but the people believed the commandments were all equal. The Lord answered them by putting all the law into two

great commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." When the scribe that asked the question heard that, he could not keep silence, it was so beautiful and so true. He cried out, "Well, master, thou hast said the truth! To love God with all the heart, and our neighbour as ourselves, is more than burnt offerings and sacrifices."

While his enemies stood there, perplexed and put to shame, Jesus asked them a question. "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?" They said, "The son of David." "How then does David call him Lord; 'The Lord said unto *my Lord*, sit thou upon my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?' If David called him Lord, how is he his son?" And they could not answer him a word; for they looked for a Messiah that would be a mere man, and a king; but David was a king too, and wouldn't need to call any human being Lord. So they were silenced, and their wicked plans defeated. Neither did they ever try again to puzzle him by hard questions.

Then the Lord turned upon them, and showed the people what blind guides and hypocrites the Pharisees and lawyers were. He pronounced dreadful woes upon them, for hardening their hearts, and

cheating and ruining the poor ignorant multitudes; and though they thirsted for his blood, yet the people loved him too much yet for them to hurt him in open day. So he poured out his holy indignation, and told them how they had destroyed themselves and their nation.

While these great crowds were still pressing around the Lord Jesus, several men who had been heathens, but had given up their idols and taken the Jews' religion, went to the Apostle Philip, and said; "Sir, we want to see Jesus." It seems that Philip was a little doubtful about it, because our Lord had hardly ever taken notice of any people, except those that were born Jews. So Philip asked Andrew, and they both went to Christ and told him about these "Greeks," as they were called. And our gracious Saviour sent for them at once, and preached the gospel to them, too. It was a very solemn time, because that was the passing away of the gospel out of the hands of the Jews, and taking in both Jews and Greeks alike. While our Lord was talking to them, and telling them that he should soon leave the world, and those who loved him should follow him where he was going, a sudden fear and great sorrow fell upon him. The awful scenes that were coming began to fill his soul with shadows and trouble. He cried out, "Now is my soul troubled! what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this cause I came to this hour. FATHER, GLORIFY THY NAME!" That

was his victory; he would ask nothing but his Father's glory.

Then once more came a voice from heaven to him, as at the first—"I have both glorified it, and I will glorify it again." Some, when they got over their first astonishment, said it was thunder; some, that an angel spoke to Jesus. But he said it was a voice that came for their sakes; and he prophesied that when he had been lifted up on the cross, he would draw all sorts of people to him. And so it has turned out. Jews and Gentiles, the wise and the savage, black people, red people, white people —all kinds of men over the whole world have found the blood of our Redeemer precious to their souls. Those three or four Greeks were only the first of many millions that have come to Jesus and found life in believing in him.

Soon after this, as the Lord Jesus with his apostles was coming out of the Temple, which Herod was still building up and making more beautiful, they said, "Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!" Jesus answered—"See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

How shocked and grieved they must have been! That wonderful and splendid house began to be built before Jesus was born; and sometimes thousands of men were working on it together. Gold and marble and precious stones shone every-

where; until even the Jews who hated Herod so bitterly, grew proud of it, and were ready to kill anybody that said a word against it. And now the Lord tells his disciples that it will soon vanish away —all its glory and all its mighty pillars will tumble into ruins together! And as they thought over it, they began to imagine that the fall of the Temple, and his coming in glorious power, and the end of the world, must all come together. So they came to him privately, to ask him about it; saying "Tell us—when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

They were sitting on the Mount of Olives, just between Bethany and Jerusalem; and they could look down right into the streets and grounds of that sacred city. It used to be called the Holy City, and many of the Jews call it so still; but it was truly a wicked city, because they sinned so wilfully against such great light. Beautiful for situation —proud and strong—was Jerusalem! Hundreds of thousands of people crowded there to the feasts; and every man of them was ready to die, fighting for their glorious Temple. But those streets were to be red with murder, and those walls would be torn to pieces by the heathen. All because the blind and wicked people rebelled against God, and rejected the Lord Jesus. They would not have this man to reign over them; and therefore the sentence went out—"Those my enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them

before my face." And to save his people from being destroyed with those condemned and miserable rebels, the Lord went on to tell them some of the signs of that terrible time, that they might escape before it came on.

"There will be a great many *false Christs*," he told them. The Jews wanted a great king to fight for them; you remember they wanted to take Jesus by force and make him such a king. So "many will rise up and say 'I am he;' but believe them not. If they tell you, 'He is in the desert,' go not out; or 'in the secret chambers,' believe it not; for when the Son of man does come, it will be like the flashing of the lightning, that blazes from east to west in a moment, and needs nobody to tell you where it is.

"Then there will be many wars, and many more reports of wars. In those troubled times, everybody will be ready to believe anything that is horrible. The world will be full of bloody deeds and bloody fancies. Earthquakes will break out and shake the world. Sorrow and fear will hinder the farmers, and God will blast the fields; and there shall be terrible famines, and diseases, and plagues. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; false prophets will come and deceive many.

"The people of God shall be persecuted, because they believe on the Son of God. Men shall deliver you up to be afflicted and shall kill you:

and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And in their misery and danger, many shall fall back into sin; yea, they shall hate and betray one another! Thus iniquity shall abound, both in the world and in the church, and the love of many for their Lord shall grow cold and feeble. But those that stand faithful, and endure to the end, *they shall be saved.*

"All these things shall come before the great destruction. Don't be frightened, or run from your duties yet. The blessed gospel must be preached to all nations, and the offer of mercy travel out to all the kingdoms. And when that is done, then indeed the end will come, and Jerusalem, and all the land of Israel will perish. Then keep watch for the sign I give you. And as soon as you see the idol of the heathen soldiers brought to the holy temple grounds, then escape for your lives! Let all that believe on Christ flee to the mountains, and hide till the awful woes of the Jews are over. For such anguish and distress shall come then as never fell on the world before, and shall never fall again while the world stands. If it wasn't for pity of the Lord's people, *nobody* would live through those days; but for their sake the days of trouble shall be shortened. Jerusalem shall be destroyed, and laid even with the ground, and the Jewish nation shall be scattered and peeled and trodden down to the dust; but the children of God shall be delivered.

"But as to that other day—the day of judgment and the end of the world—no man knows the time of it; no, not even the angels of God, but the Father only. The world shall have no sign of that time; men will go on, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the Son of Man comes. Just as it was in Noah's days; nobody knew of the flood till it burst on the earth, and swept away the nations. And so it will be when Christ comes.

"And the way to be ready for that day, isn't to know just when it is coming. It is to *live ready.* Always praying, always watching — keeping our hearts and our lives so that they can go before the great Judge whenever he comes—so we can be safe, and no other way. If you knew when the thief was coming to break into your house, you would be watching for him *then;* but if you only know he is coming, and not when he will break in, you must watch *all night.* So the Son of man will surely come. Nothing else is so certain as that. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my word shall not pass away. But you will have no hint of it. You will awake and find the Judge here!"

He will sit on his glorious throne, brighter than the noonday sun, and all the holy angels will be there, shining like the stars. Every living soul will be gathered before him, and all the countless dead will awake and arise, at the voice of the terrible trump of God. Then the angels will come

and separate us from one another. "Your place is on the right hand, yours on the left—*you* must go to the left—you to the right!" Oh does not your heart cry out already—"Great God, my Saviour, where shall I be found?" What partings will be there—what shrieks, and desperate prayers, and hopeless wailings, as parents and children, husbands and wives, pastors and people, "part to meet no more!" Yes, sinners, and Jesus will be parting too: but there will be no sorrow on that heavenly face. Here, he was a man of sorrows; there he will be God the Judge.

But how shall we be parted? What will make the difference between us? We have all sinned here, and all gone to church, and all intended to be saved some time. O sinner, hear it—hear it! *As you have treated the Lord Jesus and his people in this world, so shall your doom be.* If you have loved and trusted him here, and cared for the least of those he loves, he will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father! inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." But if you harden your heart against him here, he will frown upon you yonder, and say, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!" Go and live with my Father's worst enemies, and take the endless woe that he created for them.

Now may God's Holy Spirit bless the warnings of Jesus to our hearts—cure us of our thoughtless-

ness—shame us out of our sins—break down our wicked pride—fill our souls with sorrow and prayer—and bow us in humble repentance at his dear feet! Then shall we have new hearts, pardoned sins, sweet peace, hope of heaven, and a crown of glory.

Death welcome in prospect of Heaven.

There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign;
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain.

There everlasting spring abides,
And never withering flowers;
Death, like a narrow sea, divides
This heavenly land from ours.

Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,
Stand dressed in living green;
So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
While Jordan rolled between.

But timorous mortals start and shrink,
To cross this narrow sea;
And linger shivering on the brink,
And fear to launch away.

Oh! could we make our doubts remove,
Those gloomy doubts that rise,
And see the Canaan that we love
With unbeclouded eyes;

Could we but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er,
Not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood,
Should fright us from the shore.

REJOICING IN CHRIST.

Oh! for a thousand tongues to sing
My dear Redeemer's praise;
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of his grace.

My gracious Master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad,
The honours of thy name.

Jesus, the name that calms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
'Tis music in the sinner's ears;
'Tis life, and health, and peace.

He breaks the power of reigning sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood availed for me.

SERMON XIII.

LAST DAYS.

"Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." John xiii. 1.

You have heard already how it was that the chief priests and scribes came to be so resolved that Jesus should die—so resolved to kill him at this very feast; it was because of the wonderful miracle he performed in raising Lazarus from the dead. Now we must find out how one of the Lord's chosen apostles came to betray him. It grew out of this same business of Lazarus.

He and his two sisters made a feast for the Lord, to honour their kind and mighty friend. Lazarus sat at the table with Jesus; and Martha stood by and waited on them. But where was Mary? Surely not forgetful now of the Master she had loved so dearly before this last great kindness? Oh no; she came behind him, as he sat upon the couch at table, and poured a sweet and costly oil upon his

head. They were ready to own him as their king now, and she made haste to anoint him like a king. The sweet perfume filled the whole room, and made everybody notice what she had done. Some of the apostles were distressed, and even vexed, that she should spend so much money on such a thing, when she might have fed and comforted so many poor people with it. But they said nothing; only one man spoke out sternly, and said—"Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" This noisy friend of the poor was named Judas; and he said this, "not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief." He was the keeper of the money bag for Christ and his disciples, and used to steal from it: and he was enraged to think that money should be spent in such a way, that he could get none of it.

But the Lord said nothing about Judas' wickedness then. He answered—"Let her alone! why do you rebuke and pain her? she hath done well. The poor are always here, but not I! She hath done what she could: *she hath come beforehand to anoint my body for the burying.*" She didn't mean that, but so it was. "Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this that she hath done shall be spoken of, for a memorial of her."

Then Satan entered into Judas. He was mad against his Lord for rebuking him and taking Mary's part; and he determined to get money from

the priests and rulers, as he was disappointed about stealing it. Perhaps he expected Jesus to break out in great power and glory, and save himself. Perhaps, in his rage, he was willing to kill his Master and Friend. However that was, he went to the Lord's enemies, and said—"How much will you give me to betray him unto you?" They agreed to give him thirty pieces of silver; that was exactly what the prophet said they would give him, hundreds of years before Judas was born!

But this miserable man did not leave the company of Jesus and his disciples then. His heart was so hard and shameless that he could bear to stay with him, and look into his gracious face, and hear his holy words, while he was watching for a chance to give him up to his cruel enemies! Do you think he was the vilest man that ever lived? Ah, if God's grace had not kept us, you and I would have been just like Judas. Let us thank Him, and not be boastful.

At last the day of the Passover arrived, and Jesus sent two of his apostles into the city to make ready for them to eat that last supper with him. In the evening he and the others came in and sat down at the table. It seems that the twelve had gone back to their old folly of quarrelling about who should be the greatest man in the land, when Jesus Christ should take the kingdom. Each one wanted the place for himself; and they were so full of this wordly ambition, that they couldn't understand what

the Lord was always saying of his crucifixion and death. He had rebuked them, and taught them, and set them right about it a great many times. Now he determined to give them a lesson about it that they would never forget.

He waited until the regular Passover supper was over: then he arose, gathered his long robes up about his waist as the servants did, took a towel and some water and began to wash their feet. He said not a word, and they were so astonished and perplexed that they kept silence too. Perhaps he began with John, or may be with Judas—who can tell? but all was still until he came to Peter. He couldn't bear that his Master should do such a humbling service for him; and he cried out, "Thou shalt never wash my feet!" But the Lord would not suffer even such disobedience as that; he answered, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me." When Peter heard that, he changed his mind again, and prayed—"Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!" But Jesus told him there was no need of that; so when he had gone round the table, and washed all their feet, he came and sat down, and explained this strange thing to them.

"Ye call me Master and Lord," he said, "and ye say well, for so I am. If I, then, your Master and Lord, wash your feet, ye ought to wash each other's feet. Instead of disputing, who shall be high in my kingdom, and who will be low down, ye

ought to honour and help and uphold one another. Ye know these things already; happy shall ye be, if ye do them."

Presently our dear Saviour's face grew sorrowful again. He was "troubled in spirit, and testified, saying, 'Verily, verily I say unto you, *one of you shall betray me!*'" Now the other apostles didn't know how wicked Judas was. They were amazed and shocked; they looked at one another and wondered which of them he could mean. Peter made a sign to John, who was close by our Lord, to ask him who it was. Now they had come to that part of the evening's feast, when the head of the family used to break bread, and dip it in the dish, and give it to those who were sitting at the table: and Jesus was so doing just then.

And when John asked him in a low voice who was going to betray him, the Lord answered privately—"It is he to whom I give this first piece of bread"—and then he gave it to Judas Iscariot. No doubt Judas understood what they were saying; and instead of being ashamed and sorry, and falling down on his knees to confess his sins and beg Christ to forgive him, "Satan entered into him," and he hated his Lord worse than ever. And when Jesus saw that, he couldn't bear the cruel and wicked traitor near him any more. He turned to him and said—"That thou doest, do quickly." Then Judas rose up and went out to betray his Master. The others didn't dream what Christ meant by those words, or

what Judas went out for; if they had, he would hardly have escaped out of that upper room alive. Little they thought that was the very last night they would ever spend with their Lord!

So Judas was gone, at last, and Jesus went on to another thing that the world will never forget. Yea, we shall remember it and keep it up in heaven! I mean the Lord's supper. "Jesus took bread, and blessed it"—he gave thanks to God for it, and called down God's blessing on it. Then he broke it up and gave each of them a piece to eat; and he said—"This is my body, broken for you; this do in remembrance of me." Now you must remember that the apostles didn't understand this at all. They saw his sad face, and heard his strange and dreadful words; and they obeyed him, and ate the bread, with sorrow and wonder and perplexity. And so they drank the wine, too, as he bade them. "This cup," he said, "is the New Covenant in my blood, shed for the forgiveness of sins; drink ye all of it." And they drank, and were sorely troubled in mind.

But after the wonderful and awful history was over, and they could look back on it all, they saw what he meant. He was giving his very body and blood to save them, and get their sins pardoned. And he commanded them to break bread and pour the wine every little while, as long as they lived —and then the other believers after them, so that his churches every where should keep up the mem-

ory of his wonderful and glorious love, and show forth his death until he comes again. For he will come, to judge the world, and to gather his blood-washed people to himself; then we shall no more need these emblems, for we shall have *him* to lead us and to crown us with glory.

Then the Lord Jesus began to prepare them for the terrible events that were coming. "Little children," he said, "it is only a little while more I shall be with you; and then as I told the Jews—where I go you cannot come. Not yet; but you shall come, after a time." And Peter answered, quick and earnest, "Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake!" Yes, poor, weak-hearted Peter! You *will* lay down your life for him, but not now." Wilt thou? said Christ: "verily I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow, until thou hast denied me thrice!"

What a terrible shock those words must have been! There they had sat, disputing who should be the greatest, and flattering themselves that the days of their poverty and suffering were almost over, and then they would be rich and glorious, and reign like kings; and now, all in a moment, their Master tells them that such fearful times have come on them, *that very night*, that one of the bravest of them will deny his Lord before midnight! They had had mystery and sorrow and fear before; but this comes like the burst of sudden thunder on their ears. They sat silent and overwhelmed, and looked

at him, and looked at each other in utter dismay.

Then Jesus began those last beautiful and holy counsels—"Let not your hearts be troubled—ye believe in God, believe also in me." Oh where would sorrowing Christians go for their best consolation, if those precious chapters were gone out of the Bible! When our hearts grow weak and sad and discouraged; when fear and trouble gather over us like thick clouds, that shut out the summer sun; then we read those wise and solemn words, and rest on them.

"You have been believing in God," our Saviour says; "that was beginning in the right place; now trust me too. I have some happy news for you, if you'll only believe it. There are many mansions in my Father's house in heaven, and I'm going there now to get ready a place for you. That's the reason why you can't follow me now, I must go first, and get my people's heaven ready for them. If there was no room there for you, I would have told you. But if I go and make ready for you, I will come again and take you to myself, that ye may be where I am.

"You know where I'm going, and what way I have to go." Some of them had begun to guess the truth, and believe it in spite of themselves; but not all. Thomas said, "Lord, we know not where thou art going, and how can we know the way?" The Lord Jesus answered this question very

strangely; he answered it so that Thomas would hardly understand it then. But he would see that the Lord didn't mean a journey, or a warfare, but something more dark and solemn still. "I am the way and the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

There was another one there that didn't understand; that was Philip. He said—"Lord, show us the Father, and that will satisfy us and relieve our hearts." He wanted to see God, and walk by sight when Jesus was gone, just as he did while Jesus was there. But our Lord was teaching them to walk by *faith*, instead of sight. So he answered, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that has seen me, has seen the Father. The Father dwells in me, and does these great works. *Believe me, on my word*, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or, if you can't believe my bare word, believe me because of these wonders and miracles that I do."

Then our dear Saviour went on to promise them that if they would trust in him, they should do glorious miracles themselves; and more even than that, whatever they asked the Father in his name, he would do it for them.

He told them, too, that they should not be left as orphans, after he was gone." I will pray the Father, and he will send you another Comforter, that *he* may abide with you *for ever;* and I also will come unto you." That other Comforter was the

Holy Spirit. The Lord kept that wonderful promise; and when he ascended up to heaven, he sent down that blessed and mighty Spirit of God, to abide with his people always. Jesus himself had to go away; but this heavenly Friend never leaves this dark and sinful world. You and I may drive him away from our hearts by wilful and stubborn sin; but he is blessing some poor soul, and helping on Christ's church, all the time.

And while they were talking of these things, they rose up from the table, and walked away to the Mount of Olives, and the little garden where Jesus often went to pray. Very likely, as they walked, they came upon a vine clambering up out of some yard to the windows, high overhead. Perhaps they could see where the master of the house had been pruning the branches and tilling the ground, to make his vine bear fruit. And Christ said, "I am the true vine, and my Father dresses it and takes care of it. I am the vine, and ye are the branches. Now if the branch is broken off, it dies and bears no fruit. No more can ye do anything, if you give me up and forget to trust in me. But if you do cleave to me, and bear fruit, you must expect to be pruned —to have afflictions and sorrows—to make you more fruitful. The more useful and fruitful you are, the more is my Father glorified: and if you glorify him I will love you. *Continue ye in my love!*

"You know how the world has hated me; and you must not be astonished or dissappointed if it

hates you also. They will persecute you and put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time comes when whoever kills you will think that he is serving God. In this world you shall have tribulation; but let not your courage fail—for I have conquered the world."

And then lifting up his eyes to heaven, Jesus prayed for his chosen ones. It was the last prayer he offered for them in this world. He prayed after this for himself in his awful agony—and for the cruel men that nailed him to the cross; but this was his last supplication for his people on this side of the grave. But in heaven, he *ever liveth* to make intercession for them.

For what did he pray, in the last solemn hour? First, that his Father would take him back into the heavenly glory, now that he had finished the work he had to do on the earth—take him safely through his agony and death to his throne and joy on high. But do you say that was praying for himself? So it was, in part; but it was for them too. For where would be *their* heaven, if Jesus wasn't glorified?

Then he besought his Father to keep his people safely for him, and bring them home to heaven. He prayed that God would keep them out of Satan's power, and make them holy, by teaching them his word, and by his Spirit. And then, oh how earnestly he prayed that his people might love one another, and live at peace, and be one people! And how terrible it is to see those who call themselves Christians so full of grudges and quarrels, bitter

words and heart-burnings, when their Lord that died for them, plead so hard that they might be peaceful and tender-hearted and forgiving!

And last of all, he offered this request—"Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." Yea, Lord—let every Christian say—let us see thy glory, and be with thee where thou art! That will be heaven itself.

I suppose our Lord must have been standing close by the wall of the city, in the very shadow of it, while he was praying; and his disciples were gathered close round him—listening and wondering and sorrowing. When he had finished, they went on, over the little brook Kedron, and walked up the hill a little way to the gate of the Garden of Gethsemane. There he left all his apostles except Peter and James and John. They went in under the olive trees; and then he said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Groans began to break out of his heart; anguish and trembling laid hold of him. The awful wrath of God began to fall on him, all holy as he was; for he was to bear our sins, and be bruised for our iniquities. "Tarry ye here and watch," he said, "while I go yonder and pray." And he went about a stone's throw farther, into the darkest part of the garden, and there threw himself down on his face and wrestled in dreadful agonies of prayer. And the cry that he lifted up again and again and again, for

nearly an hour, was—"Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me! nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done." And the dreadful anguish of his spirit brought out great drops of bloody sweat on his forehead, which fell on the ground.

The Scriptures don't tell us plainly *what* cup it was the Lord Jesus dreaded so much; but Paul says that he was heard and answered about what he feared; and we know that at last an angel from heaven appeared and strengthened him. Perhaps he was afraid that his human soul would give way, in the terrible sufferings he had to bear, and not endure perfectly his Father's will. And he shuddered at the very thought of such a disaster. It would have ruined our salvation, and turned all that wonderful story to nothing.

Oh, well might Peter and John and the rest have wept and prayed and wrestled, if they had dreamed what was going on so close to them! And how did they spend the time in that tremendous moment, when heaven and hell trembled in expectation over Christ's agony? How did they wait and watch for Jesus, when deadly fear sickened his heart, and clouds and thunder and awful darkness closed over him? They were asleep!

Again our Lord went back, after waking them and rebuking them—went back to pray and suffer; and again they slept. Once more he warned them, and entreated that they would watch; but all in vain. They were weary and sad, and sleep prevailed

over them the third time. Vain was the help of man, in Christ's distress; but he had not even the comfort of one wakeful, sympathizing friend. But this wasn't the worst.

While he sat by them in the dark, and let them rest, Jesus heard the clash of armed men, and saw the torches of those who were coming to take him. And he called aloud—"Rise up! let us go! behold, he that has betrayed me is come!" Then the three sleeping ones, and those who were waiting by the gate, sprung up and ran together, frightened and bewildered, not knowing what it all meant. Jesus sat quietly, till Judas came up first, and gave the soldiers the sign he had promised—he came up to his Master and Friend—oh shame and woe! saying, Hail Master! and kissed him. Still our dear Lord sat there, only answering, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"

But as the soldiers drew near, he rose up and went out to meet them, and said, "Whom seek ye?" They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Then said Christ, "I am he;" and in a moment they drew back and fell on the ground. They remembered his mighty power, and almost expected that he would destroy them. But his hour was come, as he said. He only asked them to let the apostles go; and then he gave himself up to them, and they bound him, and led him away.

This was the way those glorious three years of preaching and wonder-working came to an end. His

own countrymen plotted to kill him: one of his twelve chosen ones betrayed him; and the rest forsook him and fled! Those blessed hands, that never struck a blow—that were never stretched out but to heal men, or teach them, or forgive them, or pray for them—were tied together with cords. That gentle voice, that taught Mary, and comforted the childless widow, and sung hymns with sinful men to God their Father, was drowned now by the shouts and curses of the crowd.

If any man thinks that we can work out a religion for ourselves, or that men love good things and a good God, just out of our own hearts, let him remember how *they* treated our dear Lord, who had lived all those years with him. If his love, and his wisdom, and the sight of his mighty power, left men so blind and wicked as this, surely you and I must be saved by the hand of God, or we shall be lost.

Salvation by the Blood of the Lamb.

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

The dying thief rejoiced to see
  That fountain in his day;
And there may I, though vile as he,
  Wash all my sins away.

Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved to sin no more.

E'er since by faith I saw the stream,
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.

Then, in a nobler, sweeter song,
I'll sing thy power to save;
When this poor lisping, stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave.

Crucifixion by the Cross.

When I survey the wondrous cross,
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

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?

His dying crimson, like a robe,
Spreads o'er his body on the tree;
Then am I dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me.

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.

SERMON XIV.

TRIAL AND DEATH.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows!"—Is. liii. 4, 6.

When the Lord Jesus went from the city to the garden it was about twilight; but when the soldiers seized him and carried him back, it was deep dark night. It was no pleasant walk, with loving friends all around him to lean upon, this time! He was dragged and pushed this way and that, with his hands bound fast, down the rough path, and up the crooked streets, to the house of Annas. No doubt he was the ringleader in the whole plot, but he wasn't high priest any longer; so he hurried him off to Caiaphas, his son-in-law, who was the high priest that year.

There they kept him till daybreak—his chief enemies being all met there together—asking him questions to make him accuse himself, and trying to hire false witnesses to accuse him. But he answered nothing, and the witnesses disagreed so much

that they couldn't make any use of their witness. All their scheming came to nothing, until the high priest called on Jesus with a solemn oath, as the law commanded—"I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ the Son of God?" Then our Saviour spoke out, and said, "Yes, I am the Christ! and ye shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven."

Then the high priest tore open his robes, as if he was dreadfully shocked and grieved at such language. He cried out—"He has spoken blasphemy! What think ye all?" They answered, "He deserves to die." *So they proved no crime at all on the Lord Jesus, even by false witnesses, only that he said he was our Saviour and our Judge.*

While all this was going on, John and Peter had partly got over their fright, and come quietly into the high priest's house, "to see the end." On the stone floor, in the middle of the great hall, the servants and the soldiers had built a fire, because the night was so chilly and dark; and there these two sat down and warmed themselves. One of the servant-girls, looking at Peter, said,—"Thou wast also with Jesus of Galilee;" and in haste he answered, "No: I don't know the man." Again one of them said, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth;" but he denied it with an oath, saying, "I know not the man." Soon they all came around him, and said, "Surely thou art one of them; thy speech betrays thee; thou art a Galilean, like Jesus."

Then he began to curse and to swear that he didn't know his own dear Lord! But in the midst of it all, the cock crew, and Jesus turned and looked on Peter. Then he remembered his Master's word—"Before the cock crow, thou wilt deny me thrice." And when he thought of all his boasting and all his sin, he went out and wept bitterly.

The Lord had said to him—"Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." And now, by his own rashness and foolish pride, Satan had prevailed over him, and his faith had failed! Oh how he must have despised himself, as he looked back on all his Master's tenderness and wisdom — all the blessings he had received from him—and all the promises and professions he had made! You see *privileges won't save anybody.* Capernaum, that was exalted to heaven, was cast down at last to hell. And Peter, who went with Jesus when he raised the little maiden from the dead; who was on the Mount when Jesus was transfigured; who was under the olive trees in the time of his agony—Peter not only denied his Lord, but blasphemed loud and long in Jesus' very presence, that they might see and know that he had nothing to do with him! But Peter repented and was forgiven. Oh the riches of his long suffering and patience!

It seems that this sinning and repenting apostle was ashamed to look his Lord in the face, after what

he had done, and we hear no more of him till the resurrection. But all this time the priests and scribes were studying and contriving how they could accuse Jesus to the Romans, so that they would kill him. The Jews couldn't execute a prisoner themselves; the Romans wouldn't let them. And besides, they wanted the Lord to be put to the most shameful death they could find, so that nobody might respect him or honour him after he was dead.

At last they decided what to do; so they bound his sacred hands again, and sent him away to Pilate, the Roman Governor. This was about daybreak in the morning; and they meant to follow him in a very little while. But Judas stopped them. He had been watching secretly what was going on; and when he found that Jesus was really condemned and sent to Pilate to die, his conscience woke up at last. He took the money they had paid him, the thirty pieces of silver, and went to them to buy back his Lord. "I have sinned"—he said, "I have betrayed innocent blood!" But they mocked him—"What have we to do with that? That is your concern." Ah, it was too late then to save Jesus from the hands of his enemies! And in his despair and anguish of soul, poor lost Judas dashed down the money on the Temple floor, and went and hung himself.

Now you see the difference between *repentance* and *remorse*. Peter repented and lived on to serve his

Master; Judas suffered as much, may be, as Peter, or even more; but he was too blind and unbelieving to turn to his God and be forgiven; so he laid violent hands on his own life, and went down to his ruin!

Then these priests, that didn't shrink from murdering an innocent man and a mighty prophet, like Jesus, couldn't put back this blood-money into the treasury. So they bought a field with it, called the Potter's Field, to bury strangers in. Just as the ancient prophet said they would hundreds of years before! But the people remembered how the field was bought; and instead of calling it the Potter's Field, they called it the Field of Blood.

Now those that carried Jesus to Pilate wouldn't go into his Judgment Hall themselves, because then they couldn't join in the sacrifices; but they sent him in, and waited outside for the Governor. And they sent him word that this was the man that called himself King of the Jews. Then Pilate came out and arranged his court to try Jesus in an open paved yard, where the Jews could come. True Pharisees! willing enough to persecute and kill; but they couldn't bear to be "unclean," as they called it, at the Passover!

When Pilate asked Jesus, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" he said, "*Thou* sayest it:" that is, It is even so. Then the chief priests and scribes came on from the Temple and accused him, and he answered not a word. Pilate said—"Hearest thou

not what they say against thee?" And still he kept perfect silence; so that Pilate wondered at it. Presently he took Jesus away from them all, and asked him secretly if he was a King. Our Lord said, "*My kingdom is not of this world*, else would my servants fight." So Pilate brought him back, and declared before all the people and all the rulers —"I FIND NO FAULT IN HIM AT ALL." So when the Jews tried him, they couldn't make an accusation against him, except that he claimed to be our Saviour; and when the Romans tried him, they found no fault in him.

Now it was the custom to let the Jews choose a prisoner out of the Roman jail, to be set free at the passover. And Pilate, hoping that the common people would be glad to save Christ's life, gave them their choice—Jesus, or Barabbas. But alas! their hearts were blinded and hardened now; and they chose the robber and murderer to live, and left their holy and mighty Friend to die!

Again the governor tried to save Jesus. He took him and scourged him: bound him to one of the pillars, and made the soldiers take a whip that had pieces of lead plaited into the lash, and scourge him with that. It was a terrible punishment; men often died with the scourging; but our dear Master said not a word. They "bared his back to the smiters;" but "as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." The soldiers made a crown out of some thorny plant, and fastened it on his

head, and put a splendid robe on him to mock him. Then Pilate brought him out, bleeding and faint, and dressed so cruelly, and said, "Behold him!" But they cried out fiercely, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him! crucify him!" "What!" said Pilate—"shall I crucify your king?" They answered, "We have no king but Cesar." They would rather own the heathen for their masters, than the Lord Jesus for their Saviour.

The more Pilate thought about it, the more afraid and sorry he was to take the life of Jesus. His wife sent and begged him to spare that good man, as she called him. The Jews told him that Christ called himself the Son of God. But he hadn't the noble courage to do right and leave the consequences to God. He sent Jesus to King Herod, who was there, in Jerusalem then, hoping that he would settle the cause for him; but Herod mocked Jesus and sent him back to Pilate again. Then he took water, and washed his hands before all the Jews, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person." And in their blind rage they agreed to that, too. They answered, "His blood be on us, and on our children!"

And so the Lord Jesus was condemned to be crucified, for nothing but this—that he declared he was our Saviour. Remember that!

But what is this "crucifying?" Why, they placed the wooden cross on the ground, and laid our Lord on it, with his arms stretched out on the cross-piece, and his feet fastened together. Then

they nailed his dear hands and his feet to the cross. Then they lifted it all up together, and planted it in a hole or socket in the rock. When they dropped the foot of the cross into this socket, it gave a dreadful wrench to the wounded hands. That made the poor sufferers scream often, with agony. Our Redeemer cried out then, too; but it was, "Father, forgive them! they know not what they are doing!" That was the way he paid them back for his awful pain.

But he wasn't alone in his anguish on Calvary that day. There were two thieves crucified with him. And while the priests and Pharisees were mocking him, they joined in and derided him. But Jesus said nothing—bore it all silently and patiently. Soon one of the thieves broke off from that cruel mocking, and rebuked the other one for what he said. Then he turned to the Lord and said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." And our gracious Master forgave all his sins, and answered, out of all his dying distress—"Verily I say unto thee, This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise!"

But who is this woman, weeping so bitterly at the foot of the cross? Ah poor Mary! you remember now what old Simeon said, thirty years ago, when that dying Jesus was a little baby in your arms—"Yea, and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also!" Jesus looked down on her, and on John who was close by, and told her to take John for her

son, now he was gone; and told John to take care of her as if she was his mother. And when it was all over, John took her home with him; and she lived out the rest of her sorrowful life there.

Now a dreadful darkness began to gather over all the land—neither sun, nor moon, nor stars would shine when Jesus was dying. But a more bitter and awful darkness was in his heart; for God, his Father, withdrew from him, and left him to groan and die like a sinner! This woe had been coming on ever since he went to the garden of Gethsemane; but now it was worse and deeper than ever. There in the pitchy darkness, cruel pains gnawing his frame, and Satan pouring wicked thoughts and temptations into his ear—there God left him to groan and die all alone. Ah, *he* promised *us* not to leave us orphans; but in his terrible time of need he was left orphan himself, and robbed of his eternal Father's gracious arm and glorious smile. No wonder his heart broke at last, as he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

For three long hours that mortal agony went on in the dark; then Jesus cried out with a loud voice —"It is finished!" Oh what a victory was in that word! All his mighty work was done, and the dreadful curse of the law was borne and finished, and his glorious rest could begin. When he said, "It is finished," he died. In a moment the earth heaved and shook, and with a crash like wildest thunder, the rocks on Calvary, and the cliffs of the

mountains, burst open. Dead men sprang up out of their grave clothes, and came to life; and at last escaped out of their tombs, after he rose from the dead, and came to Jerusalem, where many people saw them. The great curtain in the temple, that divided the Holy Place from the Most Holy, was torn in two. That showed that it wasn't God's home any more, and that the true temple now was to be in heaven.

And as the people heard and felt these mighty wonders in the darkness, they beat their breasts in terror, and the heathen captain of the guard said, "Surely this was the Son of God!" When the sun began to shine again, Pilate sent out word to kill those crucified men, because the next day was the Jews' Sabbath. But when the soldiers came to Jesus, they found he was already dead; but to make sure, they pierced his side with a spear, so that blood and water poured out on the ground. So our dear Lord had both lived and died for poor sinners.

O sacred Head thus wounded,
With grief and pain weighed down!
How scornfully surrounded,
With thorns thine only crown!
O sacred Head, what glory—
What bliss, till now, was thine!
Yet, though despised and gory,
I joy to call thee mine.

How art thou pale with anguish,
With sore abuse and scorn!
How does that visage languish,
Which once was bright as morn!

Thy grief and thy compassion
Were all for sinners' gain:
Mine, mine was the transgression,
But thine the deadly pain!

What language can I borrow
To praise thee, heavenly Friend,
For this thy dying sorrow,
Thy pity without end?
Lord, make me thine for ever,
Nor let me faithless prove!
Oh let me never, never,
Abuse such dying love!

Now Joseph, a rich man, and Nicodemus, the ruler, who had believed on the Lord secretly, and with faint hearts, while he lived and had many friends, grew brave, now that he was dead and almost everybody had forsaken him. Joseph went boldly to Pilate, and asked leave to take the body of Jesus down from the cross and bury it. Then he bought fine clean, linen, cloth, and Nicodemus bought a hundred pounds weight of spices. And they went to the cross and took down the dear "broken body" from the nails by which it hung, and wound it up with the spices in the linen cloth. That was the way the Jews prepared a body for burying. There were other such things they meant to do; but it was nearly sundown now, and at sunset the Sabbath began. So they carried the body, wrapped up as it was, and laid it in Joseph's new tomb, that he had dug out of the solid rock for himself. Nobody had ever been buried there yet. So he

died with the wicked thieves, and was buried in the rich man's grave, as the prophet had said.

Then Joseph and Nicodemus rolled a great stone to the door, and departed. But in the Sabbath twilight, there sat Mary, his mother, and Salome, John's mother, and Mary Magdalene, weeping by the still and solemn grave.

For—if you have listened to all I've been telling you—you can see how perplexed and despairing, as well as sorrowful, all Jesus' friends must have been. They wouldn't believe or understand that he really was to die. And they couldn't make anything of these terrible events, but that the Pharises *had conquered Christ.* They were completely staggered and overcome. They said—"We had hoped that it was he that should redeem Israel." That shows you that they had nearly, or quite, given up that hope. So they thought they had lost their Friend, and their King, and their Saviour, all at one blow! No wonder they met together to weep and pray and consult together, and contrive what they should do after such an overwhelming disappointment.

But our Lord had given them one positive command before he died—"Tarry ye here in Jerusalem." And even in their woe and despair, his word was sacred with them. They couldn't imagine what it meant; they didn't know what they were waiting for; but even then his wish was law to them. What beautiful faithfulness! And how richly they were repaid for it, on that happy morning when he burst

the bars of death, and rose victorious out of his grave! For you know the Lord did rise from the dead, as he had promised them, to die no more. If they had forgotten his commandment, or disobeyed it, and left Jerusalem, they would never have seen their Lord again.

As it was, they were all assembled together, Sunday night, with the doors shut for fear of the Jews. And the Lord Jesus, that they had heard about in the morning, but couldn't believe in, suddenly stood among them, and said—"Peace be unto you!"

I have told you the story of the resurrection before;* how the disciples could not believe for joy, at first, but finally confessed that it was he indeed, and clung to him as their Master and Saviour once more. Like old Jacob, when he found that Joseph was indeed alive, their heart fainted, and there was no more strength left in them. But *he* cheered and taught and blessed them once more, and convinced them that he had kept his largest promises, and "risen again for our justification."

Do you know what that means? "Justification" is *taking us back to be God's servants and God's children once more, after all our wickedness.* Now when our Lord rose from the dead, he showed that he was a perfect Saviour, that God received his blood as our ransom, and was well pleased with the work that Christ had done. So we who believe on

* Sermon V., Plantation Sermons, 1st Series.

him are justified freely by his grace—God bearing witness that it is so, by raising him from the dead.

Now, therefore, let all men know assuredly that God hath made this Jesus, who was crucified, both Lord and Christ. Through his name forgiveness of sins is preached to every one that believeth. Neither is there any other name given under heaven whereby men can be saved.

Repentance at the Cross.

Alas! and did my Saviour bleed,
And did my Sovereign die?
Would he devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?

Thy body slain, dear Jesus, thine,
And bathed in its own blood,
While all exposed to wrath divine,
The glorious sufferer stood.

Was it for crimes that I had done,
He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity! grace unknown!
And love beyond degree!

Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And shut his glories in,
When God, the mighty Maker, died,
For man, the creature's sin.

Thus might I hide my blushing face,
While his dear cross appears,
Dissolve my heart in thankfulness,
And melt my eyes to tears.

But drops of grief can ne'er repay
The debt of love I owe:
Here, Lord, I give myself away;
'Tis all that I can do.

The Resurrection and Ascension of Christ.

Hosanna to the Prince of light,
That clothed himself in clay;
Entered the iron gates of death,
And tore the bars away.

Death is no more the king of dread,
Since our Immanuel rose;
He took the tyrant's sting away,
And spoiled our hellish foes.

See how the Conqueror mounts aloft,
And to his Father flies,
With scars of honour in his flesh,
And triumph in his eyes.

There our exalted Saviour reigns,
And scatters blessings down;
Our Jesus fills the middle seat
Of the celestial throne.

Raise your devotion, mortal tongues,
To reach his blest abode:
Sweet be the accents of your songs,
To our incarnate God.

Bright angels, strike your loudest strings,
Your sweetest voices raise;
Let heaven and all created things
Sound our Immanuel's praise.

SERMON XV.

HOW JESUS WILL COME AGAIN.

"This same Jesus—" Acts i. 11.

THE Lord Jesus spent forty days on the earth after he rose from the dead; but the Bible doesn't tell us where and how he passed all that time, or even half of it. It only shows him to us a few times, when he met the apostles, or some of the disciples, and repeats some of the "gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth." In truth, he did not spend much of the time with them, but appeared and blessed, and taught, a little while, and then vanished out of their sight. And you can easily see, by the way the Gospels speak, that there was more dignity and reverence about him than ever before. We don't hear of John's head lying upon the Lord's breast, nor of his taking even a little child into his arms. There was a certain loftiness and awe about him, since he had conquered death and hell. As you might suppose a king's son might change, when he became a king. He wouldn't for-

get his old friends, or cast them off; but they would surely feel that he was "exalted" and look up to him more than ever.

So it was with our Lord. He had gone patiently through all the days of his lowliness; he had "humbled himself," even to the death of the cross; and now he was going to ascend "far above all principality and power and might and dominion; and every name that is named not only in this world, but in that which is to come." "All things" were to be put under his feet! And they might well begin to learn the lesson of awe and reverence, which it is the joy of his ransomed people to practise in heaven!

When these forty days were over, he led his followers out from Jerusalem as far as Bethany—no doubt it was to bless Mary and Martha and Lazarus once more—and then back to the Mount of Olives. I suppose his manner showed them that something new and great was to be done then. And they asked him eagerly—"Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" They could not give up that vain and foolish notion, as long as the Lord Jesus was on the earth. But he only answered, that it wasn't for them to know the times and seasons—they were in the Father's power. Then he told them that God had promised to send the Holy Spirit upon them, and they must wait in Jerusalem until he, the Holy Spirit, came. When he had visited them, they would be ready for their

work. They should be the witnesses of Jesus all over their country, and to the uttermost parts of the earth.

And now he stretches out his hands to bless them as he used to do in the happy days that will never, never return on earth. They bow humbly before him, and look earnestly at him. But behold, they have to raise their eyes higher and higher—he isn't standing on the ground any longer—he is floating away! up—up—soaring now swiftly into that splendid cloud yonder! Now he is lost in it, and the cloud is flying up into the very heavens. "Farewell, dear Master! farewell, Lord of glory! our weeping eyes will see thee no more! Now are we orphans indeed!"

They were watching that bright cloud so earnestly, that they didn't see the two angels at their side, until they spoke to them. "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

"This same Jesus!" wasn't that the very word of consolation they wanted? It told them that he at least, was a friend that heaven itself couldn't change. Other friends change as fast as the moon, or the wind; other friends are ashamed of us in trouble, or afraid of us when happier days begin to shine: but Jesus is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever!"

Let us look back a little now, and see what kind of Jesus they had found him. Then we shall know some of the hopes that the angels put in their hearts, that day. When they remembered what he had been, and what he had done, they could cheer their hearts in fear and trouble, by thinking he was the same strong and gracious Friend still. Yes, even when they had fallen into sin, and were cut to the heart with shame, they could look back to his pity and his patience, and humbly rejoice, and smile through their tears, as they thought of this very same Jesus forgiving and healing sinners.

They had beheld his power. Think of that sultry summer afternoon, when the twelve took a boat to cross the Sea of Galilee, and carry him on to his work. Their weary Master took a pillow and lay down to sleep, and they rowed cheerfully on. Presently the clouds gathered swift and dark; the wind blew in sharp gusts; the face of the sun was hid; the thunders chased one another over the black sky. Soon the quiet sea began to heave; the foamy waves beat higher and higher, and tossed the boat this way and that. Larger and wilder rolled the waves as the wind whistled and roared; their boat settled down, deeper and deeper; until the water began to pour in, and they were just ready to sink. But Jesus slept on: why should he be afraid?

Then they threw down their oars in despair, and ran to him—"Master, master, carest thou not that *we* perish? It may be safe for thee, but we shall

die." Then he awoke, as quietly as he had slept; he looked about him as the storm raved on, and saw just how wild and terrible it was. Then at last he spoke—"Peace! be still!" Oh what manner of man is this? Where are the rushing waters, and the blazing clouds, and the mighty wind? Gone—all gone to rest! There was a great calm. The boat glided gently along; and behold, "He bringeth them to the desired haven." The power of Jesus had saved them with a word.

Or see him touch the eyes of the blind man; they open, and he sees all things clearly. Hear him command the fever of a man dying in another town, miles away; that selfsame hour the fever left him. He stands by the rocky tomb of Lazarus; Mary and Martha fear to have the stone taken away from the door, because their brother's body has been decaying so long; but because Jesus wept for him, and asked to have it so, they rolled away the stone. He doesn't go in and take hold of him, or pray and stretch himself upon the body, like the prophet Elisha. But he said with a loud, commanding voice—"Lazarus, come forth!" That was all, and that was enough. He that was dead rose up, and came forth alive and well! They had seen his power then, while he lived; and they rejoice as they remember that he is the same Jesus still.

They had adored his wisdom. How *exactly right* he treated everybody! He didn't judge as men

did ; they mocked at his ways and thoughts, very often. The Pharises thought he couldn't be a prophet, becanse he let that great sinner, Mary Magdalene, kneel near him, and weep, and wipe his feet with her hair. The woman that had an issue of blood thought she could touch him and not be found out. The scribes and lawyers thought they could puzzle and tempt and ruin him by their questions. Even his mother thought he was losing a fine opportunity to show the people his glory, and begin his course as the Messiah. But he was always right, and they were all wrong. He cast seven devils out of Mary Magdalene by his wisdom and kindness, and made her a brave, holy woman. He brought the sick woman to confess her faith, and then healed her thoroughly, *soul and body*. He answered the scribes' questions so wisely, that they never dared to ask him any more. And he taught his mother that his hour, and his plan, and his chosen work, were infinitely better and more glorious than what she had dreamed of.

Then his teachings ; how wise and deep they were ! Look at his parables—why, there isn't one of them that the wisest men in the world could improve—no, nor one that the wisest men will ever get all the meaning out of, either ! The deeper you go, the more meaning you find in every one of them—the more noble and true it seems. Never, indeed, did man speak like this man. He never made a mistake—never had to undo anything he had done

—to confess that he was wrong, or hasty, or foolish —*never once.* He was hated and tempted; he had cunning enemies and foolish friends,—yes, and false friends! But he "knew what was in man;" he said and did just the right thing at the right time and place; and he brought all his gracious purposes to pass, at the very time he meant to do it. So his disciples knew that this same Jesus would reign on, victorious and happy, wherever he was—that all his threatenings and promises and prophesies would come true in good time, and that when he returned to them, they would adore his wisdom more than ever.

More than all, *they had tasted his love.* They knew that he had come into this world to seek and to save lost sinners, and they had seen him do it. He called Mary Magdalene, "daughter," and bade her go in peace, for her sins were forgiven. He went about, doing good—using his almighty power so tenderly and graciously that even the thankless people wondered, and said, "He hath done all things well." He loved his own unto the end; forgave the twelve for forsaking him, and Peter for denying him; prayed for his *murderers*; took the dying thief to heaven with him: laid down his life for vile sinners. When they thought of the tender words he spoke on that dreadful night—how he taught and comforted them, and how he prayed for them—it thrilled their very hearts to see how Jesus died lov-

ing them, and rose again loving them, and went up to heaven loving them.

"So then," they would think, "our Lord has gathered all his mighty power into his hands, and his glorious wisdom lives in his mind, and his matchless love reigns in his heart! He has gone up into his glory; but he is our Lord Jesus still. Oh how our poor lonely hearts will hunger to see him again! We have so many things to learn of him—all our fears and unbelief to confess—all our wants to spread before him; but we shall see him no more for many weary days. So it must be! But then in all that time he will not change. He will love us still, watch over us still, bless and preserve us still. And when our longing hearts can hold out no more; when we have worn out these poor bodies, doing his will on the earth; he will come—oh *he will come*, and take us to himself. Lord help us to wait patiently!"

Let us now consider how we can "comfort our hearts with these words." Who was it, brother Christian, who was it that visited you in your days of conviction? Ah, well you remember that sorrowful time! You had found out that you were a sinner against a holy, just, and jealous God. All your transgressions rose up before your thoughts, as the clouds roll up and shut out the sun, on the wings of rushing winds. You trembled and wept, and tried to pray. Some sins you made excuses for; some you owned; but oh how many you didn't dare to name, or even think of! God looked

so pure and good, and yet so angry, you wondered at his glory, but you beat your breast and shuddered with fear and woe. That awful law of God —how it thundered over you, like Mount Sinai! The grave that was waiting for you—it was a little place to look at, but hell seemed to be burning just under it! There was no goodness left in your life, and death could only bring you to endless woe.

Who was it, now, that broke in on that terrible gloom? Who was in the boat with you, as with the twelve in Galilee? You didn't go to him at first; you thought he didn't care if you perished! But at last you ran to him and called him—"Master, Master, have mercy on me." Who was it that heard that despairing cry—stood up and rebuked the waves and the howling tempest—smiled on you, and asked you why you were afraid, and made "a great calm" in your heart? Who bade you go in peace, and put the sweet and blessed peace in your heart—showed you your mighty Redeemer, and gave you the happy sense of pardoned sins? Oh it was Jesus; you know it was—this same Jesus!

There was another sad day—the day of affliction. Somebody that you loved was swept away from you by death; perhaps it was your wife. Some fierce disease had laid hold upon her. The hymn says, they "wait around, to hurry mortals home." At first you didn't think there was much the matter: two or three days more would ease the aching head and cool the fevered lips, and raise her up to sit by

the fire, and to sing and pray in the family worship, as she used to do. But the two or three days went by, and still the doctor said—"No better—no better," every day. You saw the flesh was wasting away—oh how bright her eyes were burning, while the poor, thin, weak hand could hardly guide itself any more. All at once, the thought flashed upon you—perhaps she will never be well again! It was like a stab in your flesh; you were angry with yourself that you ever thought it; but it was true. The dreary days rolled by and swept away her life, as the river-freshet washes away the bank. She sank—lower, and yet lower—and then the dear frame crumbled away and was gone!

These are hard times to live through. The world gets to be a weary place, when those we love best are taken away from us. When the chair she always sat on is empty—when there's no head but yours on the pillow—when you forget, and call to her as if she was alive and near you, and then the woeful truth leaps back on your heart that you will never, *never* see her again—she is dead—buried out of your sight! oh it is bitter—more bitter than tongue can tell! Brother Christian, whose hand held you up? Why didn't you "curse God and die?" Whose gracious arm was round you, to still the wild beatings of your heart, and to put you in mind that you weren't *all* alone—that your Brother, Shepherd, Redeemer, was there? Who whispered of heaven, and endless peace? It was Jesus.

But you have had bright days, as well as gloomy ones. Ah, you remember them as soon as I speak of them. There was that "happy Sunday." You woke in the morning with a strange, sweet tenderness in your soul. When you kneeled down to say your prayers, God seemed so great, and yet so near, that you hardly knew whether to sing aloud for joy, or to fall on your face and keep silence before Jehovah's awful throne. You trembled, but you were not afraid. You sank down on your knees, but your spirit was lifted up. There was Some One there to sprinkle the burning throne with blood. You talked to him—told him your wonder and love and joy—told him how beautiful and holy and glorious God was to you—told him what a comfort it was to remember that you were his, and he was yours! Somehow or other, as you sang his praise, the happy tears would come, and your voice would falter and fail with sweet longings to see him, and worship at his very feet, and pour out your heart to him.

Whose visit was it that made you so happy? Whose peace rested on you? Who lit up your dark soul with joy and love—kept you by his side all the day, and breathed an evening blessing on you, when you lay down to sleep? Who took the sting and shame of sin out of your heart, and showed you a pardoning and reconciled God? In whose face did you see God's unspeakable glory with fear and great joy? OH WHO BUT JESUS! Yes, 'twas he. His royal robes brought their crimson brightness from

Calvary. And though he's all glorious and blessed now, you feel it's the same voice that cried—"My God, my God!" and "It is finished!"

Yes, Jesus is our only, and our unchangeable Redeemer. In heart and nature, he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. There are some things in which he has changed. That body of dust and weariness and anguish, which he had on earth, is glorified. The corruptible has put on incorruption, and the mortal has put on immortality. His lot of suffering is changed into the "glorious rest" that the prophet promised him. No more hungry visits to barren fig trees! No more weary and thirsty waiting by Jacob's deep well, with nothing to draw. No more agonies in the garden! No more fainting under the cross!

He has taken his great power, and begun to reign. His face shines with a brightness above the sun. His crown of thorns shines more splendid than the stars. All heaven worships him, whom earth crucified! And happy is the saint, and happy is the angel, that can bow at Jesus' feet, and cast his crown there, and adore him! Because he smiles, there is no night there. If he should frown, heaven would be heaven no more!

But has all this changed our Lord Jesus? Oh no! Thank God for that blessed word—"this same Jesus!" Whom he loved then, he loves now. What he did then, he does now—saves poor sinners, and ransoms them from death and hell. He does

not forget, in his glory, the church he redeemed in his anguish and humiliation. "My Beloved is mine, and I am his."

The angel said—"This same Jesus will so come again, in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." That is, he went up on a bright cloud to heaven, and he will come back, as he said, "in the clouds of heaven." Did you ever try to think what those "clouds of heaven" were like? Sometimes I stand in my door, in the bright fall evening, looking at the sinking sun among his clouds, and thinking which of them are like *those* clouds. Half the sky is glowing red: the great cloud-mountains burn as if they were on fire. But the "clouds of heaven" are not like them. Then the deep purple sweeps in toward the sun, and the bright gold flashes, and flushes, and shines, till my eyes can hardly bear the glory. But "the clouds of heaven" are not like them. Now look away—in and up—close by the blinding sun itself—see the soft, starry, silver splendours that watch all round him. How they tremble with a sweet glory—how they fill their crystal flakes with light! They sweep down with him as he sets; and when he vanishes, they are gone. I think those pure and glistening clouds are a little like the clouds of heaven; but they are as much brighter and lovelier than these, as the Lord Jesus is nobler than the sun.

Brother Christian, will you know your Saviour when he comes? I don't ask you if you'll know

him by his throne, or his judgment-words, or the worship of the angels; but will you know *Him?* Like Mary, when Jesus called her by her name—when you behold his face, will you clasp your hands—your hands that tremble with joy, and cry, "My Master!" Yes! though you haven't seen his face in the flesh, or walked by the Sea of Galilee with him, something in your heart, your true and faithful heart, will leap up at the sight of him, and almost die of rapture in a moment. O Lamb of God! My King! My Saviour! *My Jesus!* Tongue can say, and heart can feel, no more on earth. Heaven will be begun.

Remember that day, believer, amid the sicknesses and toils and sins of earth. *It will come*, and will not tarry. BE THOU FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH, AND I WILL GIVE THEE A CROWN OF LIFE." Jesus said that—this same Jesus.

Dying sinner, one farewell word with you. You heard that great question with which we started—"How can a sinner be saved?" I began at that same word, and preached unto you—Jesus. You have heard how he came down from heaven, and for what he came. You have listened while I told you how he was born and how he lived—of his mighty works, and wise words, and gracious parables; of his friends and enemies; of his shameful, dreadful death, and of his own solemn declaration, that he died so that sinners, just like you, might find mercy. *You know they can find mercy no where else;* for,

if they could, the spotless and glorious Jesus would never have been sent to the cross.

You will have to meet him, yet—this same living, holy, mighty Jesus! How will you meet him? Oh how? All your eternity is in that question. All heaven waits to hear your answer: Will you have this Jesus to be your Saviour, or no?

ACCESS TO GOD BY CHRIST.

Come, let us lift our joyful eyes,
Up to the courts above,
And smile to see our Father there,
Upon a throne of love.

Once 'twas a seat of dreadful wrath,
And shot devouring flame;
Our God appeared consuming fire,
And Vengeance was his name.

Rich were the drops of Jesus' blood
That calmed his frowning face,
That sprinkled o'er the burning throne,
And turned the wrath to grace.

Now we may bow before his feet,
And venture near the Lord;
No fiery cherub guards his seat,
Nor double flaming sword.

The peaceful gates of heavenly bliss,
Are opened by the Son;
High let us raise our notes of praise,
And reach the eternal throne.

To thee ten thousand thanks we bring,
Great Advocate on high;
And glory to the almighty King,
That lays his fury by.

Aspiring after Heaven.

Rise, my soul and stretch thy wings,
Thy better portion trace;
Rise from transitory things,
Towards heaven thy native place;
Sun and moon and stars decay;
Time shall soon this earth remove:
Rise, my soul, and haste away,
To seats prepared above.

Rivers to the ocean run,
Nor stay in all their course;
Fire ascending seeks the sun;
Both speed them to their source;
So a soul that's born of God,
Pants to view his glorious face,
Upwards tends to his abode,
To rest in his embrace.

Cease, ye pilgrims, cease to mourn;
Press onward to the prize;
Soon our Saviour will return,
Triumphant in the skies.
Yet a season and you know,
Happy entrance will be given;
All our sorrows left below,
And earth exchanged for heaven.

PRAYERS.

[N. B. It will be well to teach your servants the Lord's Prayer, and let them repeat it after you, as either the opening or closing act of worship. For the rest, any short, sensible, earnest prayer of yours will be better than any you can read. But if you positively *cannot* honour your Saviour by lifting up your voice in supplication and thanksgiving; then the following are offered to assist you in seeking the blessing of God and the grace of the Holy Spirit on your labours.]

I.—Opening Prayer.

O Lord God, Father and Maker of us all, we thank thee that our lives are spared, and our reason continued to us, until another Sabbath day. We thank thee for appointing one day in every week to worship the living God; and above all for making it so precious to us by raising the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, on this day. He took away the terror of the grave from his people, and opened a way for them into thy rest.

We come to thee, O Holy God! trusting in his blood, and endeavouring to worship thee in spirit and

in truth. Help us by thy mighty Spirit! Make believers love thee better, and serve thee more perfectly. Turn poor sinners from their way to ruin and despair. Bless us all, both bond and free, and send thy gospel all over the world to call dying souls to everlasting life, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, Amen.

II.

Our Father, God! we adore thy mighty power, which made the world out of nothing, and formed us out of the dust of the ground, and gave us souls that live for ever. We praise thy perfect holiness and justice, which filled the heavens with eternal glory. But most of all, we thank thee for thy wonderful love, that pitied dying sinners in their woe, and prepared salvation for them; so that whosoever believeth on thy dear Son shall not perish, but have everlasting life. Glory to thy name, and glory to the Son of thy love, and glory to the Holy Spirit, that calls us out of darkness into light!

Oh that we might honour thee, our Father, with our lives as well as our lips! But we are poor sinners, not worthy to speak to thee, or to lift our guilty eyes to heaven. We cannot praise thee, or obey thee, or even trust thee, unless thy grace is given unto us. Oh pity our hard hearts, forgive our sins, bless thy word to us, and receive our unworthy worship, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our crucified Redeemer, Amen.

III.—At the close of service.

We thank thee, O Lord, our Master and our Friend, that we have heard again a part of thy blessed Gospel. And we pray thee to cause it to sink down from our ears into our hearts, and make us obey God, and trust the Lord Jesus. Oh may we love to hear of him while we live, and do his holy will! And when our short lives are over, may we go to live with him, and see his glory, and sing his mighty power and dying love!

And the glory shall be thine, Father, Son, and Spirit, for ever, Amen.

IV.

Be merciful unto us, O God, and bless us, and make us remember thy messages of love, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ! Soften our hard hearts, we beseech thee, that we may not hear the story of the cross carelessly, or trample under foot the blood of the Son of God! Oh save us from wasting our day of grace and destroying our souls.

Break down the sinner's pride, and convince him of his wickedness; and then lead him to the cross, and wash away his sins. Make thy people faithful; stir up their cold hearts; make their sins hateful to them; stamp the image of Jesus on their souls; and give him all the glory of their salvation.

Hear this our prayer—pardon all our sins—and save us for Christ's sake, Amen.

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